

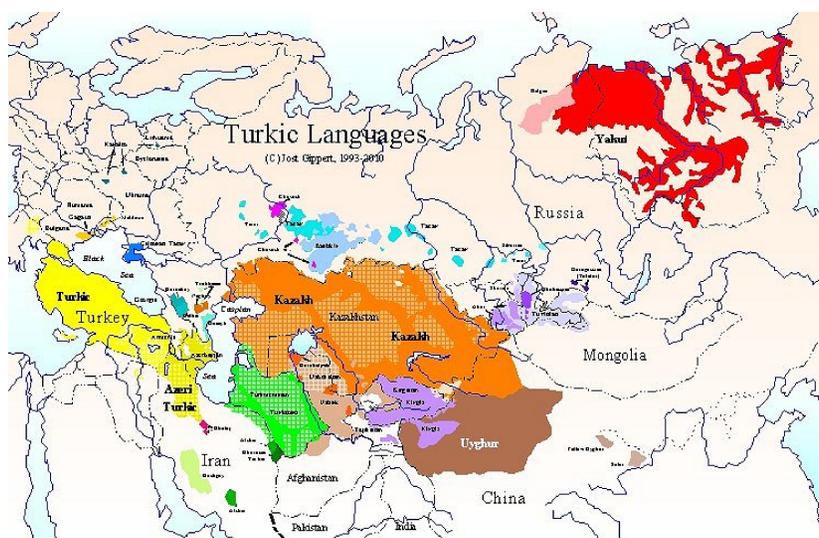
TENSE, ASPECT & EVIDENTIALITY in AZERI

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Azeri

Azeri or Azerbaijani, a member of Oghuz Turkic, belongs to the Altaic language family. It is widely spoken in North-West Iran. Azeri is an SOV language and has been dominantly influenced by Persian.



Question

What is the morphology and semantics of the *miş* morpheme in the language?

Morphological expression of Tense

The verb is realized by a combination of a root and suffixes. The root is unmarked for features and in its bare form is the equivalent of the second person singular imperative.

- (1) gül
laugh.2SG
[lit.] you laugh'

The language has one overt tense morpheme that marks past. Present is unmarked for tense. The simple form of the present is not common and it mostly occurs with an aspect marker.

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|---|--|
| (2) dər-ir-əm
pick-DUR-1SG
'I am picking' | (3) dər-ər-əm
pick-HAB-1SG
'I pick (frequently)' |
|---|--|

Past is formed by adding the past tense marker *-di*.

- (4) dər-ø-di-m
pick-PERFEC- PAST-1SG
'I picked'

Future is not a tense marker but rather an aspect marker, (5). The evidence for its aspectual character is its co-occurrence with the tense marker, (6).

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|--|--|
| (5) dər-əcək-im
pick-FUT-1SG
'I will pick' | (6) dər-əcək-di-m
pick-FUT-PAST-1SG
'I was supposed to pick' |
|--|--|

An order of suffixes with respect to co-occurrence in the language is as follows:
Stem - Causative - Passive - Aspect - Tense - Evidentiality - Person

Semantics of Aspect in Azeri

- The semantic denotation for perfective aspect inspired from Kratzer(1998):

$$(7) \quad [PERFECTIVE] = \lambda P_{\langle I, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle} . \lambda t_i . \lambda w_s . \exists e [P(e)(w)=1 \ \& \ \tau(e) \subset t]$$

- The semantic denotation for perfect aspect inspired from Kratzer (1998):

$$(8) \quad [PERFECT] = \lambda P_{\langle I, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle} . \lambda t_i . \lambda w_s . \exists e [P(e)(w)=1 \ \& \ \tau(e) < t]$$

- The semantic denotation of future aspect:

$$(9) \quad [FUTURE] = \lambda P_{\langle I, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle} . \lambda t_i . \lambda w_s . \exists e [P(e)(w)=1 \ \& \ \tau(e) > t]$$

(Kratzer 1998)

Proposal : Aspect *miş* ≠ Evidential *miş*

Present perfect morphology expresses an evidential category which indicates the availability of indirect evidence for the truth of a proposition (Izvorski 1997).

- (10) Gel-*miş*-im. Turkish
come-PERF-1SG
'I have come.' (present perfect) and/or 'I apparently came.' (Izvorski 1997)

Izvorski claims that evidentiality is simply a reading of the perfect morpheme *-miş*. As illustrated in (10), the suffix *-miş* from Turkish is the present perfect inflection and it has an indirect evidential interpretation.

On the contrary, it is undeniable that the perfect of evidentiality morphology cannot entirely preclude the temporal reading of the perfect. The perfect meaning can still be present on evidentials. In Azeri:

- The Perfect reading remains where *-miş* has an evidential sense. In example (11) below, the sentence still has its temporal reading along with its evidential reading.

- (11) Ali ömründə iki dəfə gızıl tap-*ıp*¹
Ali life.POSS.DAT two times gold find-ASP.3SG
'Ali has discovered gold twice in his life.' (I have witnessed that/universal perfect)
'Reportedly, Ali has discovered gold twice in his life.' (I have an external source for my statement)

- The appearance of the evidential reading with the future morpheme does not agree with Izvorski's analysis either. Despite the example given in Izvorski (1997:2), Azeri

can get an evidential reading in the future. In (12) the speaker is giving a statement without making any commitment to the truth of the information.

- (12) bügün gəl-əcək-*miş*
today come-FUT-ASP.3SG
'(lit.) Reportedly, he should have come today.'

- We also need to be able to explain the double occurrence of the morpheme in the evidential form of the pluperfect, as illustrated in (13).

- (13) o zaman gəl-*miş*-i-*miş*-lər
that time come-ASP-EP-EV-3PL
'Reportedly, they have had come at that time.'

Analysis & Summary

In this study I investigate the morphology of tense and aspect in Azeri. I conclude that *-di* is the only tense marker in the language and it marks past tense whereas the other tenses do not have morphological instantiations in the language. Future morpheme recognizes aspect and present is [-Tense].

I propose that there are two *-miş* morphemes in Azeri: one marks aspect and the other is an evidentiality operator.



- miş* as an aspect morpheme:

$$(15) \quad [PERFECT] = \lambda P_{\langle I, \langle s, t \rangle \rangle} . \lambda t_i . \lambda w_s . \exists e [P(e)(w)=1 \ \& \ \tau(e) < t]$$

- miş* as an evidentiality operator:

$$(16) \quad [EV] = \lambda P_{\langle s, t \rangle} . \lambda w_s . \forall w' \text{ compatible with the indirect evidence in } w, P(w')=1$$

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Kratzer, A. 1998. *More structural analogies between pronouns and tenses*. Proceedings at SALT. Izvorski, R. 1997. *The present perfect as an epistemic modal*. Proceedings at SALT.

¹-*ıp* is an allomorph for *-miş* that is diachronically taking over *-miş*