

On the derivation of nominals in $-(y)I\text{ş}$ and $-mE$ in Turkish

Christian Bassac^{a,b,c,*}, Mehmet Cicek^d

^a *Université de Lyon, France*

^b *CRTT EA 656 74 rue Pasteur, 69007 Lyon, France*

^c *INRIA-Signes, France*

^d *University of Gaziantep, Faculty of Pedagogy, 27310 Şehitkâmil, Gaziantep, Turkey*

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Abstract

In this paper we address the problem presented by the syntax and semantics of two types of nominals derived by the suffixes $-(y)I\text{ş}$ and $-mE$ in Turkish. We show that each derived nominal form in $-(y)I\text{ş}$ and $-mE$ can be considered as originating either in a verb or in a clause and we identify the criteria that can allow to determine what kind of derivation a given form is an example of. Adopting a lexicalist stance, we then show how a Generative Lexicon can provide an adequate representation of the semantics of the base verb and how lexical rules we designed capture the semantics of the derived nominals. We finally show how these rules allow various predictions to be made regarding productivity and compatibility with matrix predicates.

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to investigate the syntax and semantics of two nominalizing Turkish suffixes, which are realizations of the morphemes $\{-I\text{ş}\}$ (whose allomorphs are $-(y)u\text{ş}$, $-(y)ü\text{ş}$, $-(y)I\text{ş}$ $-(y)i\text{ş}$) and $\{-mE\}$ ¹ (with allomorphs $-me$ and $-ma$), and to analyze the correlated opposition between the syntax and semantics of the nominalized forms derived by the affixation of these suffixes, which *prima facie*, are very productive. The phonology of the allomorphs is constrained by vowel harmony, and y is an optional linking consonant generally in between two vocalic phonemes.² (1)–(4) are examples of nominals derived by these suffixes:

* Corresponding author at: Université de Lyon, France. Tel.: +33 4 78 69 71 95; fax: +33 4 72 80 94 52.

E-mail addresses: Christian.Bassac@univ-lyon2.fr, Christian.Bassac@inria.fr (C. Bassac), mcicek@gantep.edu.tr (M. Cicek).

¹ Capitals are used to indicate an underspecified vowel or consonant in the representation of a morpheme. The realization of the vocalic nucleus in the suffixes mentioned is ruled by vowel harmony: E is realized as $/e/$ or $/a/$, depending whether the base ends in a front ($/i, e, ü, ö/$) or back ($/ı, u, a, o/$) vowel respectively, and I is realized as a high vowel $/u, ü, i, i/$ depending whether the base ends with $/o, u, /, ö, ü, /, /a, ı/$ or $/e, i/$ respectively. Other underspecified representations include D, which is underspecified for voice and whose value is given by assimilation (and is consequently realized as $/t/$ or $/d/$), and K which is realized as $/k/$ when it is in word final position (or coda of a suffix), or $/ğ/$ when it is followed by the vocalic onset of a suffix. The suffix $-DIK$ is an example of a suffix whose phonological realization is completely underspecified, see example (6). It must be added that if an accusative or dative suffix is attached to $-mEK$, the expected $/ğ/$ undergoes palatalization and is spelt y , like in (5) below.

² Linking consonants appear between the final vowel of a base and the initial vowel of a suffix. More specifically, y appears before accusative $\{I\}$ and dative $\{E\}$ suffixes:

(a) $ev-i$ vs. $baba-y-ı$ (b) $ev-e$ vs. $bahçe-y-e$
house -ACC father y-ACC house-DAT garden-y-DAT

- (1) yaz-ma
write -mE
manuscript
- (2) gör -üş
see Iş
sight/point of view
- (3) Ahmet'in araba -s -ı -n -ı kullan-ma -s -ı
Ahmet GEN car LC POS LC ACC drive mE LC POS
Ahmet's driving of his car
- (4) Ahmet'in araba-s -ı -n -ı kullan-ış -ı
Ahmet GEN car LC POS LC ACC drive Iş POS
Ahmet's driving of his car

In (1) and (2) above *yaz-* and *gör-* are the verbal roots to which various other affixes can be attached, and both forms *yaz-ma* and *gör-üş* are the derived forms, which unambiguously have nominal properties. The same goes for *kullan-ma* and *kullan-ış* in (3) and (4) with *kullan-* as the verbal root.

The picture is not as clear as this simple presentation might suggest though, as it has been known for quite a long time now, following observations going back to Chomsky (1970), that derived nominals of form $[[X]_V\text{-affix}]_N$ can either be derived from a verb (in which case they are lexically derived) or from a clause (in which case they are syntactically derived). Therefore, it is necessary to examine whether nominals such as those in (1)–(4) are either lexically derived or syntactically derived.³ Consequently, in section 2, after showing that these derived elements of form $[[X]_V\text{-affix}]$ undoubtedly have noun properties, we will then briefly present the empirical data and the various criteria that can help us decide what kind of derivations (lexical or syntactic) the forms in (1)–(4) are examples of. In section 3, we will provide an outline of a Generative Lexicon, which is the framework in which our theoretical modelling is cast. We will then propose in section 4, a modelling of the empirical phenomena described, and show how lexical rules can generate the two nominalized forms, provide an explanatory account for their semantics, and allow various predictions. Section 5 is a brief comparison between relevant English and Turkish derived nominals and section 6 is a discussion and an assessment of our theoretical stance and of our analyses. Section 7 concludes.

2. The derived nominals in *-mE* and *-Iş*

2.1. Nominalization suffixes

The two suffixes under study here, which are exemplified by (1)–(4) above, are not the only nominalizing suffixes of Turkish. The other relevant⁴ suffixes that Kural (1998) recognizes are the suffixes *-mEK*,⁵ *-DIK* and *-EcEK*, illustrated by (5), (6) and (7), respectively (all examples from Kural (1998)):

The other linking consonants are *s*, which appears before 3rd person possessive suffixes (see section 2.2.1), *n*, which appears before genitive suffixes and is obligatory in between the 3rd person possessive suffix *-ı* and all case morphemes:

- (c) ev -i (d) ev -i -n -de
house POS PER3 house POSPER3 LC LOC
his/her house in his/her house

Finally before the distributive suffix *-Er*, the linking consonant is *ş*:

- (e) üç -er (f) iki-ş-er
three-Er two-ş-Er
three each two each

³ The theoretical stance of this analysis, in which there are two distinct potential origins for the derived nominals studied here (one in the lexicon, the other in syntax), is used in the presentation of the phenomena, but it will not be followed in our theoretical approach. We will show that both nominals can be analyzed as originating in the lexicon, the so-called “lexically derived” nominal consisting of an unexpanded word, the so-called “syntactically derived” nominal heading a clause.

⁴ We say “relevant” because the nominals derived with these suffixes head clauses just as the two suffixes *-mE* and *-(y)Iş* do. Yet, they are not the only nominalizing suffixes, as some other suffixes, most of which are not productive, derive nouns from verbs (for a list of these suffixes see Göksel and Kerlake (2005:53)).

⁵ It is necessary to state how *-mE* and *-mEK* differ. First *-mE* can receive plural, genitive and possessive suffixes (see Table 1), whereas *-mEK* cannot. Second, *-mEK* is used in PRO control clauses, whereas clauses in *-mE* have a subject (examples from Göksel and Kerlake (2005:413):

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