

EVENT MODALITY IN BALKAN TURKISH: FORMAL AND SEMANTIC VARIATION IN CONTACT Part 1. Possibility and Necessity

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The present article constitutes the first part of a two-part study on event modality in selected Turkish varieties of Kosovo, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Eastern Thrace (Turkey). The linguistic structures will be compared with corresponding expressions in Modern Standard Turkish and pre-modern Ottoman Turkish varieties. The study identifies both common features and differences among the Balkan Turkish varieties. Variation occurs in different slots within the investigated constructions and concerns lexical, semantic and morphosyntactic features, including complementation patterns, where both infinitive and subjunctive structures can be found. The linguistic variation is partly dialect-specific and distributed differently among the eastern and western dialects of Balkan Turkish, but intra-dialectal variation is also observed. It will be argued that while some processes that have led to the present situation in Balkan Turkish may be attributed to internal developments of inherited structures and to universal tendencies, impact of language contact has also contributed to the distribution of certain structures within the Turkish dialects of the Balkans.

Keywords: dialectology, semantics, morphosyntax, complementation patterns.

**ПРЕДИКАЦИСКАТА МОДАЛНОСТ ВО БАЛКАНСКИОТ ТУРСКИ
ЈАЗИК: ФОРМАЛНА И СЕМАНТИЧКА ВАРИЈАНТНОСТ
ВО ЈАЗИЧЕН КОНТАКТ**
Дел 1. Веројатност и нужност

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Оваа статија го претставува првиот дел од истражувањето на модалноста на настаните, изразена во одредени турски варијанти од Косово, Северна Македонија, Бугарија и од Источна Тракија (Турција). Јазичните структури се споредуваат со нивните функционални еквиваленти во модерниот стандарден турски јазик и со постојните варијанти во османлискиот турски јазик. Во истражувањето ги определуваме заедничките карактеристики и разлики меѓу балканските турски јазични варијанти. Варијантноста е карактеристична за различни синтаксички позиции на истражуваните конструкции и се однесува на лексички, семантички и на морфосинтаксички особини. Таа се појавува и на ниво на комплементација, како инфинитивна така и субјунктивна. Јазичната варијација е делумно присутна во дијалектите на балканскиот турски јазик, но со различна застапеност во источните и во западните дијалекти. Во статијата се тврди дека некои процеси, коишто довеле до денешната ситуација во балканскиот турски јазик, можат да се должат на внатрешниот развој на наследените структури, но контактот со соседните јазици исто така придонел за постоење на одредени структури во турските дијалекти на Балканот.

Клучни зборови: дијалектологија, семантика, морфосинтакса, стратегии на комплементација.

1 Introduction

The present study investigates expressions of event modality (root modality) in Balkan Turkish.¹ Event modality, as used in this article, encompasses possibility, necessity, and volitive modality (cf. Palmer 2001; Rentzsch 2015). Some neighbouring semantic domains such as procedural and practical knowledge, as well as intention will be included in the study. The expressions under investigation are of particular interest for the documentation and analysis of the Balkan Turkish dialects, especially in terms of their similarities and differences compared to other Western Oghuz varieties. Moreover, they are also relevant in the context of Balkan languages, as certain features of Balkan Turkish may be attributed to contact with neighbouring languages.

Special interest will be dedicated to more or less transparent morphosyntactic constructions and the problem of linguistic variation. The modal constructions under investigation generally involve a morphosyntactic mechanism of complementation (cf. Dixon 2006; Noonan 2007; Achard 2007), i.e., a strategy for linking the lexical element contributing the modal value to the state of affairs (SoA) over which it scopes. The range of formal realizations covers, on the one hand, constructions consisting of a matrix clause and a subordinate clause, and, on the other hand, auxiliary constructions. The boundary between these two poles is fluid as there are constructions that can be conceptualized in either ways, as will become evident in the course of this paper.² In order to have a terminological tool at hand that covers various degrees of syntactic integration, both predicates of matrix clauses and auxiliaries will be labelled in this paper with the umbrella term *matrix segment*. The item effectuating the connection of the matrix segment to the SoA which it scopes over will be labelled *linking segment*. In Balkan Turkish, as in Turkic languages in general, matrix segments may be nominal and verbal. SoAs minimally consist of a predicate, but may also include arguments and adjuncts. The linking segments may be of various kinds, including case-marked or unmarked verbal nouns and finite mood forms functioning as subjunctives. Complementizer particles also occur, although they play a minor role.

Given the structural complexity of the expressions of modality, there is a considerable potential for linguistic variation. Variation may concern the matrix segments, the linking segments and complementation strategies, as well as the degree of conventionalization (grammaticalization or idiomatization).

The database for this study consists of dialect texts from Kosovo, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Eastern Thrace. The modal constructions will be described structurally, and questions of heritage, universal tendencies of linguistic change, and language contact will be discussed. The focus will be on synchronic data but a limited amount of historical data will be added to provide the diachronic context. Besides Old and Middle Ottoman data from the 15th to 17th century, dialect texts from Adakale³ collected by Ignác Kúnos between 1890 and 1895 (Kúnos 1907), and from Vidin (Bulgaria) collected by Gyula [Julius] Németh in 1931 (Németh 1965) represent more recent historical data. In order to convey an idea of the specific Balkan Turkish features, the corresponding Modern Standard Turkish constructions will also be shown for the sake of comparison. The present paper elaborates on phenomena mentioned in work

¹ The investigation on root modality in Balkan Turkish is divided into two parts: the first discusses possibility and necessity in the present article, whereas the second part focusing on volitive modality will be published in the next issue of the *Journal of Contemporary Philology*.

² Constructions of a matrix clause and a complement clause are biclausal by definition, while auxiliary constructions are usually considered monoclausal.

³ Adakale was an island in the Danube River that was depopulated in 1968 because of the construction of a dam and became submerged in 1971. The dialect, which belonged to Western Rumelian Turkish, is extinct.

such as Menz's study on Gagauz (1999) – an Eastern Rumelian Turkish variety with its own standard language.⁴

To narrow down the rich material, the study will be limited to a selection of matrix elements comprising *bil-* 'to know', *mümkün* 'possible', and *yok* 'absent' for the domain of possibility, *lazım* 'necessary', and *var* 'present, available' for necessity, and *iste-* 'to want', *dile-* 'to wish', and *niyet* 'intention' for the domain of volitive modality. A few other items will be touched upon to supply further relevant information.

In the course of the description and analysis, some terms will be used that are potentially ambiguous, or used in various ways across the literature. There are several approaches to the notion connected to the term *infinitive* in historical and comparative linguistics. In Turkish Studies the conventional use of this term can be particularly misleading. Among the linguistic approaches which have informed the present study is a historical account proposed by Haspelmath (1985), which essentially treats the infinitive as a category that evolved from a purposive verbal noun.⁵ In addition, a functional approach developed by Joseph (1983), with particular reference to the Balkans, has also been influential. It describes infinitives as non-finite verb forms that perform typical functions, such as expressions of purpose, systematically occupying complement slots of verbs and adjectives, and potentially fulfilling additional functions language-specifically (Joseph 1983: 30–36).

Both approaches are fruitful for the discussion in this paper, and, although departing from different perspectives, they are ultimately compatible. Note that the conventional use of the term infinitive in Turkish Studies differs significantly from these frameworks. In this tradition, the term infinitive refers to the morpheme *-mAK*, and (depending on the author) possibly to a shorter morpheme *-mA*,⁶ which may occur in some auxiliary constructions (including constructions relevant for this paper) but do not entail the purposive component, neither diachronically nor synchronically. Rather, these forms are plain non-factual verbal nouns lacking case marking and purposive semantics, though they can take nominal inflectional elements such as possessive and case markers. Using the term infinitive for these items is misleading from a general linguistic point of view and will be avoided in this paper. On the other hand, various items in certain Turkic languages, including Balkan Turkish, could be appropriately described as infinitive in terms of both Haspelmath's and of Joseph's frameworks. In the specific Balkan Turkish context, these include the dative forms of the verbal nouns *-mAK* and *-mA*,⁷ surfacing as *-mAGA* (predominantly in the west) and *-mAyA* (predominantly in the east), respectively. What makes the situation particularly confusing is the fact that the form *-mAGA* (i.e. verbal noun *-mAK* plus dative *-(y)A*) may frequently undergo a formal reduction to *-mĀ* and even *-mA*, in the extreme case resulting in a form which looks identical to the unmarked, short verbal noun in *-mA*. The synchronic distinction between these two forms is evident in their combinability: the plain verbal noun in *-mA* can take possessive and case markers, whereas the form *-mA* derived from *-mAGA* does not allow any additional suffixation. For the sake of clarity, I will use expressions such as "verbal noun in the dative"

⁴ See especially Menz 1999: 47–66), Friedman's description of subjunctive-type constructions in Western Rumelian Turkish and their parallels in Macedonian and Albanian (2003: 62–64; 2006: 38), as well as Römer's investigation (2012) of notable dative complements in Middle Ottoman texts of the 16th century.

⁵ Haspelmath (1985: 288) speaks of "purposive action nominal", without saying much about the syntactic functions of the items.

⁶ This term is widespread in the grammars, dictionaries and teaching manuals of Turkish. Among the linguistic literature consulted for this study, it is also adopted in Brendemoen (2014) and partly in Brendemoen (2013).

⁷ As the shorter form *-mA* gained a wider dissemination in Ottoman Turkish only during the 17th century, as Brendemoen (2014) has shown, the morpheme *-mA* has only a limited distribution in the western dialects of Balkan Turkish. However, it is extremely productive in Standard Turkish, where it is always preferred against *-mAK* when possessive suffixes are added, and in most case forms. The combinability of *-mAK* in ST is basically limited to the dative and the ablative, although it also frequently appears in an unmarked form.

or “the item **-mAGA*” in this paper and use the term infinitive only in quotation marks, or as a term to refer to a specific subordination strategy.

The term *subjunctive* will be used as an umbrella term for finite mood forms whose function in a given construction is to subordinate a verb to a matrix segment (whether it be a matrix clause or an auxiliary). The inventory of forms suitable for this function includes mood forms traditionally labelled *voluntative* (in Turkish, these are the first person singular and plural items *-(y)AyIm* and *-(y)Allm* and the third person singular and plural items *-sIn* and *-sInAr*) and *optative* (in Turkish *-(y)A* plus personal markers) in the Turcology literature. These items can also serve as predicates in independent sentences, where they encode meanings such as willingness, readiness, desire, obligation, etc. (cf. Rentzsch 2015: 173). These original meanings are bleached in their subjunctive function. Importantly, then, the term subjunctive in this study does not refer to a specific morphological class but rather to finite items that function as linking elements between the matrix segment and the SoA.

Finally, the term *aorist* must be commented on, which is of marginal relevance in this study but occasionally will be used to refer to a specific morphological class of verb forms in *-Ir*, *-Ar*, and *-r* in Turkish. The term is well established in Turkish and Turkic Studies (cf., e.g., Lewis 1967: 115; Göksel and Kerslake 2005: 339). However, semantically, these morphological forms differ significantly from the aorist in Ancient Greek or Balkan Slavic, where the terms denote a completed past (preterite), to put it simply (cf. Friedman 2003: 128–131). Since the category labelled “aorist” in Turkish is not central to the analysis presented here, I see no need to introduce an alternative term or to delve into its semantic nuances.

To provide an approximate picture of the situation of Balkan Turkish within the Turkic language family, it should be noted that the Balkan Turkish dialects can be subclassified into Eastern Rumelian Turkish (ERT) and Western Rumelian Turkish (WRT). These two subbranches are not sharply delimited; Németh (1956) defines some distinctive criteria for WRT which, however, can be disputed in detail.⁸ Together with Anatolian Turkish and Azerbaijani, Balkan Turkish constitutes the western branch of the Oghuz languages. The Oghuz branch (or South West Turkic) furthermore includes Turkmen, Khorasan Turkic, and South Oghuz languages such as Qashqai. The Western Oghuz languages Turkish, Gagauz, and Azerbaijani have standard norms. Among those, Turkish and Gagauz essentially represent Eastern Rumelian varieties.⁹

This study considers both Western Rumelian and Eastern Rumelian varieties of Balkan Turkish. The primary database consists of text collections of selected varieties in Kosovo, North Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey. The sources include both published books and unpublished MA and doctoral dissertations. The transcription principles of these works differ considerably. In some cases, the accuracy and adequacy of sound representation may be open to question. However, this issue is of minor importance for the present study, which primarily focuses on morphosyntactic constructions. The transcription system used in this study is a broad transcription loosely based on the orthographic conventions of Standard Turkish, supplemented with additional symbols to indicate important phonetic features. For the sake of brevity, when a given structure is attested both in WRT and in ERT, fully glossed examples will be drawn from Western Rumelian Turkish, while representative ERT equivalents will be provided in brackets without glossing.

The sources provide only a limited picture, as not all dialects and variations are covered. When I refer to “attested” items, I mean those occurring in the text corpus. The absence of a structure may be due to the corpus’s limitations or an oversight.

⁸ This is partly due to the fact that the Turkish dialects of Bulgaria and North Macedonia were still insufficiently documented when Németh wrote his study.

⁹ For details on the internal classification of Oghuz Turkic, see Doerfer (1990).

Frequent comparison with Standard Turkish (ST) in this paper does not mean that ST is considered the structural “original” from which Balkan Turkish is a “deviation”. Rather, both varieties result from distinct, though partly interacting, historical developments within their specific contact settings and may feature conservativisms and innovations in different domains.

Certain similarities may result from either shared innovations or common heritage. ST inevitably exerts a certain influence on Balkan Turkish, which has been growing due to schooling, mass media, and increased mobility and communication. On the other hand, given the massive impact of Istanbul Turkish in the formation of Standard Turkish, Balkan Turkish has also contributed to the development of both spoken and literary standard language in the late Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey, as Istanbul Turkish itself is an Eastern Rumelian dialect.

Some remarks on notation principles: Capital letters in morpheme writings represent rule-based sound changes, e.g. *-mAGA* = {-*ma**ɣ**a*; -*me**ɣ**e*}; *-DA* = {-*da*; -*de*; -*ta*; -*te*}. Letters in parentheses represent sounds that occur in certain phonological environments, e.g. *-(y)A* = {-*ya*; -*ye*} after vowels and {-*a*; -*e*} after consonants. An asterisk (*) denotes archiforms or reconstructed forms in this paper; e.g., **-mAGA* represents forms such as {-*ma**ɣ**a*/*-me**ɣ**e*; -*mā*/*-mā*, -*ma*/*-me*}, etc., regardless of whether the archiform (in this case *-ma**ɣ**a*/*-me**ɣ**e*) is attested.

2 Possibility

Turkish has a fully grammaticalized marker of possibility: *-(y)Abil-* in its positive, unnegated form and *-(y)AmA-* in its negated form. In the unnegated form, the historical origin in the converb *-(y)A* and the auxiliary verb *bil-* (originally ‘to know’) remains transparent. However, the two components are rather strongly fused, with only the particle *da/de* ‘too’ able to intervene. The historical predecessor of *-(y)Abil-* has been sporadically attested in Turkic since ca. the 11th century (cf. Rentzsch 2014: 361) and became especially widespread in Oghuz Turkic, though similar forms also occur in other branches of Turkic. One hypothesis for the origin of the negated form *-(y)AmA-* is that it arose from a converb combined with the negation form of an obsolete verb *u-* ‘to be able’. This construction is very old and is firmly attested in Old Uyghur from around the 9th century.

The possibility markers *-(y)Abil-* and *-(y)AmA-* cover a broad field on the semantic map of possibility, ranging from ability to participant-external possibility and deontic possibility (permission). It is also used in epistemic expressions.¹⁰

These markers are common across all varieties of Balkan Turkish, both Eastern and Western Rumelian, and have been attested in Anatolia from the oldest written sources. In Old Anatolian Turkish, negated forms also appear with the negation suffix attached to the auxiliary, i.e. *-(y)V bilme-*. Such negation forms are nowadays frequent in Azerbaijani but they are not typical of Rumelian Turkish.

Although the exact distribution of functions between the possibility markers *-(y)Abil-* and *-(y)AmA-* on the one hand, and competing forms, on the other, may vary among varieties and even be subject to dialect-internal variation (cf. Rentzsch, Mitkovska and Nedelkoska 2020 for the Ohrid dialect), these items will not be considered further in this study. They are firmly established throughout both Anatolian and Rumelian Turkish and do not display any exciting variation in our dialect material. There are, however, other constructions denoting possibility involving the auxiliary verb *bil-* ‘to know’. Semantically, these constructions usually encode learned and/or inherent skills (the precise semantic profile has to be established language- and

¹⁰ See van der Auwera and Plungian (1998) for the terminology.

dialect-specifically), i.e., domains of participant-internal possibility. These constructions show considerable formal variation in regard to the linking segment.

Since *bil-* as a full verb is transitive and governs the accusative or the unmarked case,¹¹ the auxiliary construction involving this verb in ST generally uses the non-factual verbal noun *-mA* in the accusative as a linking segment, resulting in the construction *-mAyI bil-*, as shown in example (1). Furthermore, a possessive suffix of the third person may be added (*-mAsInI bil-*) without a noticeable change in meaning, as in example (2).

- (1) *Sen surat oku-ma-yı bil-ir mi-sin?*
 you face read-VN-ACC know-AOR Q-2.SG
 ‘Can you read faces?’
 (ST, Pamuk 1990: 195)
- (2) *Kuran bu konu-da yalnızca harf-ler-i oku-ma-sın-ı*
 Qur’an DEM topic-LOC only letter-PL-ACC read-VN-POSS.3-ACC
bil-en-ler için açık.
 know-PTCP-PL for clear
 ‘The Qur’an is clear about this only for those who know how to read the letters.’
 (ST, Pamuk 1990: 151)

These two constructions seem to be rare in the Rumelian dialects, although an instance of *-mAyI bil-* is attested in a Turkish variety spoken in the Central Rhodopes:

- (3) *[Duva] kıl-ma-yı da bil-ir-im aşā yukarı*
 prayer do-VN-ACC too know-AOR-1.SG more.or.less
kendi-m-e kadar.
 self-POSS.2.SG-DAT until
 ‘I also know how to pray more or less, according to my abilities.’
 (BG/Rhodopes/Karabulak, Mustafa-Rashidova 2024: 220)

More frequently, however, we find *bil-* combined with the unmarked verbal noun in *-mAK*, a construction that resembles the expression of wish in *-mAK iste-* (see part 2). This construction *-mAK bil-* is attested both in Eastern and Western Rumelian dialects, although not frequently.

- (4) *Ben oku-mak bil-mëm, yaz-mak bil-mëm*
 I read-VN know-NEG.AOR.1.SG write-VN know-NEG.AOR.1.SG
nasıl müneccim ol-ayëm.
 how astrologer be/come-VOL.1.SG
 ‘I cannot read, I cannot write, how could I become an astrologer?’
 (MK/Ohrid, Kakuk 1972: 261)
 [cf. ERT: *İlle var bi tane turun ne duy-mak bil-ir* ‘Anyhow, there is one grandchild that knows to listen’ (TR/Edirne/Uzunköprü, Kalay 1998: 248)]

In the Balkans, the same verbal noun in the dative is more widespread as a linking segment in this type of construction. The linking segment may, depending on dialectal and idiolectal parameters, either appear in its full form *-mAGA* or in contracted forms such as *-mĀ* or *-mA*. The construction **-mAGA bil-* is attested both in the East and the West of the Balkan Peninsula,

¹¹ Turkish has differential object marking.

as evidenced by the examples from Eastern Thrace and Kosovo. However, no instances have been identified in North Macedonia.

- (5) *Cid-alım çağır-alım cüzel hanım-i cür-sün*
 go-VOL.1.PL call-VOL.1.PL beautiful lady-ACC see-VOL.3
nasıl bun-lar bül-me-y=miş-le ekmek ye-ma.
 how DEM-PL know-NEG-PROG=EVID-PL bread eat-VN.DAT
 ‘Let us go and summon the beautiful lady so that she sees that [“how”] they are unable to eat bread.’
 (RKS/Mamusha, Hafız 1985: 235)
 [cf. ERT: *E motor hayda-mā bil-en var mı?* ‘Is there anybody who can drive a motorbike?’ (TR/Edirne/Enez, Kalay 1998: 202)]

The construction itself is not particularly recent as evidenced by the examples such as *Biz daha baba de-meg-e bil-meyiz* ‘We cannot yet say father [to him]’ from Adakale (Kúnos 1907: 261). Furthermore, it is also attested in the *Colloquia Familiaria Turcico-Latina* by Jakab Nagy de Harsányi (ed.: Hazai 1973), a so-called transcription text in Latin script from 1672, which probably represents a variety of Istanbul Turkish of that time: *Arpaşu bu vilajetlerde jap-mag-a bil-mezler* ‘They don’t know how to make beer here’ (Hazai 1973: 68).

Since *bil-* as a full verb governs direct objects, the shift toward the dative in this construction is noteworthy. It reflects a universal tendency in the development of infinitives, which originate in purposive verbal nouns. In fact, the form *-mAyA* (corresponding to *-mAGA* in Middle Ottoman) can also be used to form purpose clauses in Modern Standard Turkish.

In addition to this non-finite (“infinitival”) complementation strategy, Balkan Turkish also employs another strategy, in which a finite mood form (typically the voluntative in the first and third persons and the optative in the second persons) serves as a subordinator and linking segment. This strategy, which can be termed the subjunctive strategy, is attested with the auxiliary verb *bil-* in WRT:

- (6) *Ama çöyce bil-mez=miş lafet-sın,*
 but boy know-NEG.AOR=EVID speak-VOL.3
çok kirli imiş saç-lar-i, uzun tırnak-lar-i var imiş.
 very dirty EVID hair-PL.POSS.3 long nail-PL.POSS.3 present EVID
 ‘But the boy does not know to speak properly, his hair is very dirty and he has long fingernails.’
 (MK/Struga, Ahmed 2004: 319)

It is likely that the precursor to this construction can be traced to non-factual complement clauses governed by the matrix verb *bil-*, which contain a question word and express how, where, when, to whom or what shall be done, as in examples (7)–(9).

- (7) *Valla bil-me-y-m nasıl de-e-m, ādet.*
 by.god know-NEG-PROG-1.SG how say-OPT-1.SG custom
 ‘I don’t know how to say it [= how I shall say it], it is a custom.’
 (MK/Skopje, Erdem et al. 2024: 211)

- (8) *Bu kız hu yalnız ev-de kal-i, bil-me-y*
 DEM girl all.alone house-LOC remain-PROG.3 know-NEG-PROG.3
ne yap-sın, başla-y ağla-sın.
 what do-VOL.3 begin-PROG.3 weep-VOL.3
 ‘The girl is left home all alone, she does not know what to do [= what she shall do], and starts crying.’
 (RKS/Mitrovica, Hafız 1985: 204)
- (9) *Bil-mez=dın kim-e selam, kim-i sor-a-sın,*
 know-NEG.AOR=PST.2.SG who-DAT greet who-ACC ask-OPT-2.SG
kim-a ne ver-e-sın. boyle idi.
 who-DAT what give-OPT-2.SG such PST.3
 ‘You didn’t know whom to greet, whom to ask, whom to give what. It was like this.’
 (MK/Gostivar, Erdem et al. 2024: 250)

This type does not exist in ST and it is not attested in the ERT data investigated for this study. In ST, the same notions are expressed by a construction involving a question word, a prospective verbal noun *-(y)AcAK* with a possessive suffix and the accusative: *ne yap-acağın-ı bil-mi-yor* ‘s/he does not know what to do’ (cf. Rentzsch, Mitkovska and Nedelkoska 2020: 89–90).

While expressions with *bil-* ‘to know’ of the type just described clearly represent participant-internal renewals of the less specific possibility markers *-(y)Abil-* and *-(y)AmA-*, expressions based on the Arabic adjective *mumkin* ‘possible’ have been broadly attested across the Islamicized Turkic world since the early Middle Turkic era. These expressions usually cover participant-external domains of possibility and, in many Turkic languages, also have epistemic uses. In Modern Standard Turkish, two constructions dominate, one using the verbal noun *-mAK* in impersonal expressions (example [10]), and another using the verbal noun *-mA* with a possessive marker in expressions in which the projected performer is present (example [11]). The performer is encoded by a possessive suffix; if expressed overtly, it occurs in the genitive case to agree with the possessive marker.

- (10) *Üzerinde ‘polis’ bile yaz-ıyor, yanlış-mak mümkün değil.*
 on.it police even write-PROG err-VN possible NEG
 ‘It even says ‘police’ on it, it is not possible to go wrong.’
 (ST, Pamuk 1990: 147)
- (11) *Çok ünlü bir kadın yıldız-ın [...] bir hanımefendi olarak*
 very famous one woman star-GEN one lady as
film hayat-ın-a devam et-me-si de mümkün=dü.
 film life-POSS.3-DAT continue-VN-POSS.3 too possible=PST
 ‘It was even possible for a very famous female star to continue her film career as a lady.’
 (ST, Pamuk 2008: 366)

The range of morphosyntactic variants is considerably broader both diachronically and synchronically. Example (12) from North Macedonia represents the subjunctive complementation strategy, with the third person volutative functioning as a linking segment between the auxiliary and the main verb. Notably, the negation is marked by *yok* ‘absent’, which usually operates on nouns rather than adjectives. Additionally, *mümkün* carries a possessive suffix. Both facts suggest that *mümkün* in this example is structurally interpreted as

a noun.¹² In Adakale, the complementizer *ki* occasionally occurs between *mümkün* and the subordinate clause, a construction not found in the recent data.¹³

- (12) *O gelin gel-sın ev-in-e mümkün-i yok.*
 DEM bride come-VOL.3 house-POSS.3-DAT possible-POSS.3 absent
 ‘It [was] impossible for the bride to come his house.’
 (MK/Tetovo, Erdem et al. 2024: 230)

A different kind of linking strategy is observed in the next example, where the verbal noun in *-mAK* is followed by the postposition *için*. This strategy resembles the infinitive strategy, as *-mAK için*, similarly to *-mAYA*, can be used to form purpose clauses in ST and other varieties. It also reflects the universal affinity of purposive and infinitive.

- (13) *Yürü-r yürü-r, bi dere-ye cel-ır.*
 march-AOR march-AOR one river-DAT come-AOR
On-i apuş-mak için mümçün yok.
 DEM-ACC transgress-VN for possible absent
 ‘He walks and walks and comes to a river. It is impossible to cross it.’
 (RKS/Prizren, Hafiz 1985: 189)

More non-finite linking strategies are found in the Adakale data, including the plain verbal noun in *-mAK* and the dative-marked form in *-mAGA*. The latter, often realized in the contracted form *-mĀ*, is illustrated in the following ERT example from Bulgaria.

- (14) *Eh tä bereket vā-sın çocūm=län, kız-lar-ım=lan*
 PTCL PTCL luckily son.POSS.1.SG=with daughter-PL-POSS.1.SG=with
geçin-eme-mā mümkün yok. Torun-lar-ım=la
 get.along-NEG.POT-VN.DAT possible absent grandchild-PL-POSS.1.SG=with
geçin-ēm çok şükür allah-ım-a, bu gün-ä.
 get.along-PROG.1.SG many thank god-POSS.1.SG-DAT DEM day-DAT
 ‘Well, look, luckily, it is impossible not to [be able to] get along with my sons and daughters. Thank God I get along with my grandchildren until now.’
 (BG/Silistra, Karaşinik 2011: 181)

This example is particularly intricate as it combines two negated expressions of possibility, the one in *-(y)AmA-* and *mümkün yok*. The exact pragmatic force of this complex construction is not entirely clear but the context suggests that semantically at least the combination – negated possibility within the scope of another negated possibility – conveys a meaning akin to ‘it is absolutely possible’ or ‘it is not impossible’. Given that this is a singular attested instance, its relevance to the overall language system is unclear. This recorded instance may represent an idiolectal feature or even a slip of the tongue.

In contrast, at least some of the aforementioned constructions can be traced back to pre-modern Turkish varieties. The Old Ottoman *Ferec ba’d eş-şidde*, a text from the 15th century or potentially earlier, contains two types discussed above: the **-mAK mumkin (değil)* construction (example [15]) and the subjunctive-type construction (example [16]). The Modern Standard Turkish type *-mAsI mümkün* can be identified in the Middle Ottoman *Tārīh-i Peçevī*

¹² In ST the adjective *mümkün* is usually negated with *mümkün değil* as in example (10). There is an alternative nominal construction *imkan-ı yok*, literally ‘its possibility is absent’.

¹³ *Mümkün dıl mi ki kendi kelligini de geçirtir-e-sın güzel bir delikanlı ol-a-sın?* ‘Isn’t it possible that you have your baldness removed and become a handsome young man?’ (Kúnos 1907: 133).

(example [17]), a chronicle by İbrâhîm Peçevî (1574–ca. 1649), an Ottoman from Pécs in Hungary, completed between 1642 and 1649 (Schaendlinger 1972: 186). The *-mAsI mümkün* type itself is unlikely to be much older, because the “short” verbal noun in *-mA* did not emerge significantly earlier than 17th century, as shown by Brendemoen (2014).

- (15) *Yalan=u gerceg-ünüz hod mühre-sin-de ma'lüm=dur*
 lie=and truth-POSS.2.PL self marble-POSS.3-LOC known=COP
kimse bun-dan söz yaşur-mak mümkin degül.
 somebody DEM-ABL word conceal-VN possible NEG
 ‘Whether you speak a lie or the truth is understood in her marble; no-one can conceal the truth from it.’

(Old Ottoman/FBŞ 183a13–14, Hazai and Tietze 2006: 506)

- (16) *Cihân-ı gez-er=se-ñ mümkin degül=dür*
 world-ACC tour-AOR=COND-2.SG possible NEG=COP
nazîr-in-i bul-a-sın.
 match-POSS.3-ACC find-OPT-2.SG

‘If you travel around the world it is not possible that you will find its match.’

(Old Ottoman/FBŞ 136b20–21, Hazai and Tietze 2006: 406)

- (17) *Bir vakt-i mu'ayyen-de gel-me-si mümkün ol-an-lar*
 one particular.time-LOC come-VN-POSS.3 possible be/come-PTCP-PL

‘Those for whom it is possible to come at a particular time’

(Middle Ottoman/TP 91b5, Özbal 2005: 41)

An interesting type of impossibility markers is based on the copula element *yok* ‘absent’. In most of the instances, this type appears to encode negated participant-external possibility, including negative deontic possibility. In the latter domain, there is an overlap with deontic necessity, resulting from the translatability of negated permission (i.e., negative deontic possibility, $\neg \diamond p$) into a prohibition (i.e., the obligation not to do something, $\square \neg p$).¹⁴ This affinity is reflected also in the interpretation of such constructions, which may oscillate between ‘cannot’ and ‘must not’, depending on the context.

A variant also available in ST combines the verbal noun in *-mAK* with *yok*. As expected, this variant occurs frequently in ERT, but it is also found in WRT, as illustrated in example (18) from Kumanovo.

- (18) *Pope, darıl-mag yok=tur.*
 pope be.offended-VN absent=COP

‘Pope, you should not be offended.’

(MK/Kumanovo, Eckmann 1962: 128)

[cf. ERT: *Türkçe bilir, yannız, kızıl çin tarafınna konuş-mak yok* ‘They know Turkish, but it is forbidden to talk to the Red Chinese’ (TR/Tekirdağ/Naip Köyü, Tosun 2003: 335)]

The verbal noun in *-mAK* seems to be interchangeable with *-mA* both in Eastern and Western varieties. However, since the available data do not contain instances with *-mAGA* and

¹⁴ For more details, see van der Auwera and Plungian (1997: 99–100).

-mā combined with *yok*, it is not totally clear whether *-mA* in this construction represents the **-mAGA* type or the unmarked short verbal noun in *-mA*.¹⁵

- (19) *Salde yok=tor darıl-ma.*
 only absent=COP be.offended-MA
 ‘You only should not be offended.’
 (RKS/Prizren, Hafız 1985: 231)
 [*Büle sāya sola gez-me yok* ‘It is not possible to simply walk around here and there’
 (TR/Edirne/Lalapaşa, Kalay 1998: 219)]

In WRT, *yok* as an auxiliary can also combine with finite mood forms (the subjunctive complementation strategy). This construction is especially common in North Macedonia.

- (20) *Mare adam, açan gid-eceys anam-da, ev-de,*
 PTCL man when go-FUT.1.PL mother-LOC house-LOC
yok yēsin sen boyle bitevi el=le.
 absent eat.OPT.2.SG you so continuously hand=with
 ‘Hey, man, when we go to my mother’s house, you must not/cannot eat with your fingers like this all the time.’
 (MK/Resen, Ahmed 2001: 141)

As with the case of *bil-*, it is reasonable to assume that formally similar constructions containing a question word form the basis from which the construction exemplified in (20) has developed:

- (21) *Dövlet bil-mes, şaşır-ır o, yok*
 ruler know-NEG.AOR.3 be.confused-AOR.3 DEM absent
ne yap-sın.
 what do-VOL.3
 ‘The ruler does not know what is going on, there is nothing he can do.’
 (MK/Resen, Ahmed 2001: 134)

- (22) *Em işte, orda yok iç kimse, yok kim gör-sün*
 and PTCL there absent at.all somebody absent who see-VOL.3
orda biz-i.
 there we-ACC
 ‘And there is nobody, there is no-one who could see us there.’
 (MK/Resen, Ahmed 2001: 170)

- (23) *Açan ol-ur akşam, yok nerde kal-sın.*
 when be/come-AOR.3 evening absent where stay-VOL.3
 ‘When it becomes evening, there is no place for her to stay.’
 (MK/Resen, Ahmed 2001: 157)

¹⁵ In terms of syntax, in the construction *darılmak yok*, *darılmak* is the subject and *yok* is the predicate, so one might ask how the use of **-mAGA* in this slot can be justified. However, the same can be said of the construction *-mAK mümkün* (cf. ex. [15]), where we have alternative constructions with **-mAGA* nonetheless, see ex. (14). It seems possible that at least in the east, where the verbal noun *-mA* is highly frequent, *-mA* might partly be the unmarked form of the short verbal noun in *-mA*. In contrast, in the west, where this verbal noun is scarce, it seems more likely that this segment belongs to the **-mAGA* type and is inserted into this auxiliary construction by analogy with other auxiliary constructions containing **-mAGA*.

- (24) *O sokak-lar... yog idi ner-den geç-e-sın araba=yle.*
 DEM street-PL absent PST where-ABL pass-OPT-2.SG car=with
Dar sokak-lar idi-ler, çamur-lar, aman aman...
 narrow street-PL PST-PL mud-PL for.goodness.sake
 ‘Those roads... There was nowhere you could pass with a car. The roads were narrow,
 and there was mud, my goodness!’
 (MK/Resen, Ahmed 2001: 190)

All these constructions have parallels in Macedonian: (20') *Nema da jadeš so raka* ‘You shall not eat with the hand’,¹⁶ (21') *Nema što da pravi* ‘There is nothing she can do’, (22') *Nema koj da nè vidi* ‘There is no-one who can see us’, (23') *Taa nema kade da prestojuva* ‘She has no place to stay’, (24') *Nema kade da pomineš so kolata* ‘There is nowhere to pass with the car’. Thus, it seems reasonable to assume that the structures underlying examples (20)–(24) result from code-copying from Macedonian.¹⁷ Regarding (20), the existing autochthonous structure *-mAK yok* may have played a role in the formation of the item through selective copying of combinational features from Macedonian onto a Turkish structure.

As a final point in the documentation and discussion of expressions of possibility in Balkan Turkish, constructions using a form of the verb *ol-* ‘to become, to be’ as an auxiliary deserve mention. The form commonly called aorist in Turkish studies of this verb – *olur* – is a widespread independent expression of consent in Turkish which can be analysed as a lexicalized interjection denoting ‘alright, okay’. The construction relevant for the present discussion predominantly occurs in interrogative sentences. Semantically, this type covers participant-external possibility, including deontic possibility (permission). In Eastern varieties, the linking segment is *-mAK* (example [25]), while in Western varieties the non-finite complementation strategy involving **-mAGA* as in example (26) coexists with a finite complementation strategy (examples [27] and [28]). Example (28) differs from (27) in two respects: it includes the complementizer particle *ki* between the matrix verb and the complement clause, and the predicate of the complement clause is negated.

- (25) *Hep otur-mak ol-ur mu beyāv?*
 always sit-VN be/come-AOR Q PTCL
 ‘Is it possible to always sit around, eh?’
 (TR/Edirne/Merkez, Kalay 1998: 200)
- (26) *Deli mi-sın, akilli mi-sın? Devlet-in kız-ın-i*
 crazy Q-2.SG clever Q-2.SG rich-GEN daughter-POSS.3-ACC
ol-or mi ara-ma?
 be/come-AOR Q ask-VN.DAT
 ‘Are you in your right mind? Can one ask for the hand of the rich man’s daughter?’
 (RKS/Prizren, Hafız 1985: 213)

¹⁶ Also negative future: ‘You will not eat with the hand’ (i.e., with fingers), cf. Koneski (1967: 487).

¹⁷ The constructions with question word (i.e. constructions similar to [21]–[24], but not [20]) are also well attested in Gagauz, where possibility is mainly expressed by *var/yok* with one of the question words *nasıl* and *nicā* ‘how’ and either *-mAA* (< *-mAGA*) or a subjunctive mood form (Menz 1999: 59). Other question words can be used in the same construction types for procedural and practical knowledge (Menz 1999: 63–66). Hence, we may assume that such constructions also exist in other Eastern Rumelian Turkish dialects, although they are not attested in the material considered for this study.

- (27) *Ol-or* *mi bu cece* *bu ineg-i* *siz-de* *koym?*
 be/come-AOR Q DEM night DEM cow-ACC you.PL-LOC put.VOL.1.SG
 ‘Can I leave this cow with you tonight?’
 (RKS/Prizren, Hafız 1985: 187)
- (28) *Hiç ol-ur* *mi ki* *dunyā-de bun-in* *yara-lar-ın-a*
 ever be/come-AOR Q COMP world-LOC DEM-GEN wound-PL-POSS.3-DAT
çāre bul-un-ma-sın?
 cure find-PASS-NEG-VOL.3
 ‘Is it possible that no cure for his wounds is found in this world?’
 (Adakale, Kúnos 1907: 74)

3 Necessity

The most frequent expressions of necessity in Balkan Turkish are constructions based on the Arabic adjectives *lāzim* ‘necessary’ and *mecbur* ‘forced’. The former occurs significantly more often than the latter, which is not considered in detail here. Notably, the nominal auxiliary *gerek* ‘necessity’, which is frequently used in ST alongside *lazım* and is well-attested in Old and Middle Oghuz, rarely occurs in the texts under investigation, even in Eastern Rumelian varieties. The same applies to the necessitative in *-mAlI*, a mood form directly attached to verb stems and highly frequent in ST. Several authors remarked on the absence (or almost absence) of this item in the dialects they investigated, including İgci (2010: 68) for Vushtrria (Kosovo), Karasinik (2011: 136–137) for Silistra (Bulgaria), and Mustafa-Rashidova (2024: 156) for the Central Rhodopes (Bulgaria).

In ST, *lazım* (alternative writing: *lāzim*) is constructed similarly to *mümkün*, i.e., with the verbal noun *-mAK* expressing impersonal necessity (example [29], cf. [10], and with the verbal noun *-mA* followed by a possessive suffix when the projected performer of the action is indicated (example [30], cf. [11]).

- (29) *Bacak-lar-ı* *uygun* *ol-ma-yan-a* *mini eteğ-i*
 leg-PL-POSS suitable be/come-NEG-PTCP-DAT miniskirt-ACC
yasakla-mak *lazım.*
 forbid-VN necessary
 ‘One should ban miniskirts for those with unfit legs.’
 (ST, Pamuk 2008: 101)
- (30) *Konuş-ma-nız* *lazım.*
 talk-VN-POSS.2.PL necessary
 ‘You must talk.’
 (ST, Pamuk 2008: 204)

Not surprisingly, non-finite linking strategies with verbal nouns in the *casus rectus* are frequent in Eastern Rumelian dialects, but they do also occur in the west, as the following examples from North Macedonia illustrate.

- (31) *O şey-ler-e lazım austos-ta gel-mek.*
 DEM thing-PL-DAT necessary august-LOC come-VN
 ‘One has to come in August for these things.’
 (MK/Debar, Erdem et al. 2024: 359)
 [cf. ERT: *Allah ne kadā verisā o kadā yaşa-mak lāzım* ‘One must live as long as God wants you to’ (BG/Silistra, Karaşinik 2011: 177)]
- (32) *On-un için aç-lar-ı kes-me-n lazım.*
 DEM-GEN for tree-PL-ACC cut-VN-POSS.2.SG necessary
 ‘Therefore you have to cut down the trees.’
 (MK/Budakovo, Alievska 2003: 130)
 [cf. ERT: *Cenāzā günündā az da olsa yemek yapıl-ma-sı lāzım* ‘On the day of the funeral at least a bit food must be prepared’ (BG/Silistra, Karaşinik 2011: 187)]

In WRT, however, *lazım* much more frequently combines with finite mood forms. This structure is similar to the one exemplified by (12) with *mümkün*. An example from Prizren (Kosovo) is given in (33). The pattern is common throughout Kosovo, North Macedonia, Western Bulgaria (including Vidin), and historically also documented in the Adakale texts (where it is represented roughly on par with patterns known from Modern Standard Turkish). It is also not uncommon in ERT and very widespread in Gagauz (Menz 1999: 54–58). In addition, the **-mAGA* type is found in WRT, particularly in Kosovo (example [34]). This non-finite item is especially suitable for impersonal constructions, as *-mA* (< *-mAGA*) does not accept further suffixation.¹⁸ Note the **-mAGA* type is also found in Gagauz (Menz 1999: 55); therefore, its presence in ERT dialects must be considered, even though it did not appear in the texts consulted for this study.

- (33) *Ne iste-yeceg-ımız-i lazım düşün-alım.*
 what want-PRO.VN-POSS.1.PL-ACC necessary think-VOL.1.PL
 ‘We have to think what we shall ask for.’
 (RKS/Prizren, Hafız 1985: 215)
 [*Gelin güvā, güvā lāzım o çāşırı giy-sin, gelin de bindallıyı giy-sin lāzım* ‘Bride and groom, the groom has to wear that *çāşır*, and the bride has to wear the *bindallı*’ (BG/Silistra, Karaşinik 2011: 171)]
- (34) *Dert dane lazım=dır cütür-ma o yer-e*
 four piece necessary=COP bring-VN.DAT DEM place-DAT
da o kardaş-i çık-sın ora-dan.
 and DEM sibling-POSS.3 come.out-VOL.3 there-ABL
 ‘It is necessary to bring there four [rams] so that his brother comes forth.’
 (RKS/Prizren, Hafız 1985: 225)

In 19th century WRT as documented for Adakale, the complementizer particle *ki* could intervene between the matrix segment and the subjunctive form (as with *mümkün*).¹⁹

Another matrix segment frequently used in expressions of necessity is *meçbur* ‘forced’, an adjective of Arabic origin. It primarily governs the dative and occurs in **-mAGA* type constructions, but also appears with the subjunctive and in various other constructions. In

¹⁸ It cannot be emphasized enough that this statement applies to the item *-mA* ~ *-mĀ* ~ *-mAGA*. As already mentioned, there is another plain verbal noun in *-mA*, experiencing an upsurge in the 17th century and highly frequent in ST. It readily accepts inflectional suffixes such as possessive markers and case markers.

¹⁹ *Lāzım ki şimdi sen onnarı dāvet ed-e-sin* ‘It is necessary that you invite them’ (Kúnos 1907: 43–44).

addition, there is a significant amount of miscellaneous expressions of necessity, some of which resemble items from other Turkish varieties such as Standard Turkish or Anatolian dialects, including constructions such as *-mAGA hacet yok* (Adakale, Kúnos 1907: 148), *-mAGA mutaç* (MK/Struga, Ahmed 2004: 304), *-mAsA olmaz* (Adakale, Kúnos 1907: 202), *-mAK mecburiyetinde kal-* (RKS/Vushtrria, Hafız 1985: 242), *-mAGIn luzumu yok* (Adakale, Kúnos 1907: 207), etc. These examples will not be discussed in detail here; however, two more types (with their variants) deserve mention in this study due to their potential significance for Balkan linguistics. Both types contain the auxiliary segment *var* ‘present, existent’.

The first type consists of *var* with the subjunctive as in the following example from Kosovo:

- (35) *Biz meclis-te karar al-misık. Çoban*
 we assembly-LOC decide-EVID.PST.1.PL shepherd
var as-ıl-sın!
 present hang-PASS-VOL.3
 ‘We have decided in the assembly. The shepherd must be hung!’
 (RKS/Mamusha, Hafız 1985: 251)

This example seems to be paradigmatically related by opposite polarity to the construction <yok+SBJV> in example (20) from Resen. As previously mentioned, there is a logical relation between possibility and necessity in combination with negation, which also manifests linguistically. While <yok+SBJV> encodes impossibility and prohibition, <var+SBJV> in example (35) seems to convey necessity. Moreover, Macedonian has a similar pattern *ima da* (‘be present, have’ + subjunctive), which expresses, among others, obligation (Mitkovska and Bužarovska 2012). A similar construction *ka për të* (active) and *ka për t’u* (non-active) with subjunctive exists in Albanian (Buchholz and Fiedler 1987: 85–86). Given these structural similarities, it seems highly likely that the WRT construction has developed under contact influence.

Another construction involves *var* ‘present, existent’ and a prospective verbal noun. This type, which is very old²⁰ and attested in many different Turkic languages, has been described by Rentzsch (2015: 154–156) as a volitive marker. Some Balkan Turkic examples of this construction can, in fact, be interpreted in terms of a desire, but others exhibit clear readings of participant-internal necessity (urge, need). In this construction, *var* is interchangeable with the verb *gel-* ‘to come’,²¹ often in a preterite form (simple past in *-DI* or evidential past in *-mİş*), without any noticeable semantic difference. The negative variant of the type <PRO.VN+var> is <PRO.VN+yok>. Consider the following two examples from ST (cf. Rentzsch 2015: 155–156), before turning to the Balkan Turkish examples.

- (36) *Gör-d-ün mü derviş efendi,*
 see-PRET-2.SG Q dervish master
döv-üş-esi-m yok=tu ama döv-üş-t-üm.
 beat-COOP-PRO.VN-1.SG absent=PST but beat-COOP-PRET-1.SG
 ‘Did you see that, Mister dervish, I didn’t want to fight but I fought.’
 (ST, Şafak 2009: 52)

²⁰ The oldest known occurrence is from the Ongi Inscription (ca. 732–734 AD) in present-day Mongolia. The Old Turkic specimens of this type are still semantically diffuse between necessity, volition and possibility (Rentzsch 2015: 51–52).

²¹ The oldest attested occurrence of the variant with *kel-* ‘to come’ is even older; it is found in the Tonyukuk Inscription (726 AD).

- (37) *A ne gör-eceğ-im gel-di!*
 PTCL what see-PRO.VN-1.SG come-PRET
 ‘Oh, how much I would like to see them!’
 (ST, Tanpınar 1973: 148)

In the above examples, we observe two different prospective (“future”) verbal nouns as linking segments, the archaic *-(y)AsI* and the widespread, fully productive *-(y)AcAK*. Both are combined with possessive markers to indicate the “wisher”; and both occur with two different auxiliary segments, *var/yok* ‘present/absent’ and *gel-* ‘to come’. Both parameters – linking segment and auxiliary segment – are interchangeable without altering the semantic interpretation, which produces a clear volitive reading.

Turning to the data from Balkan Turkish, it is notable that only the verbal noun **(y)AcAK* occurs as a linking segment in this type of construction; the verbal noun in *-(y)AsI* is not attested.²² It remains unclear whether this absence is a coincidence or it reflects a broader pattern in the distribution of the morpheme *-(y)AsI* across the Turkish dialects. This question necessitates further investigation. The auxiliary segment *var* ‘present’ is found in examples (38) and (39). Example (38) evokes a volitive reading, while the reading of example (39) is necessitative.

- (38) *Adam benim şarko inek et-i*
 man my spotted cow meat-POSS.3
yeci-m var, yarın kasap-lar-ı
 eat.PRO.VN-POSS.1.SG present tomorrow butcher-PL-ACC
çar-tır bizim bu şarko ini-y kes-tir.
 call-CAUS.IMP.SG our DEM spotted cow-ACC cut-CAUS.IMP.SG
 ‘Man, I want to eat the meat of a spotted cow, summon the butchers tomorrow and have them slaughter this spotted cow of us.’
 (MK/Kanatlarci, Alievska 2003: 151)

- (39) *Otur-a otur-a uyku-sı gel-ir,*
 sit-CVB sit-CVB sleep-POSS.3 come-AOR
çiş ed-eceg-i de var=miş.
 pee-PRO.VN-POSS.3 too present=EVID
 ‘While he is sitting and sitting, he becomes sleepy, and he has to pee.’
 (Adakale, Kúnos 1907: 181)

The remaining examples contain the auxiliary *gel-* ‘to come’. There is some morphological variation: in example (41) from Resen (North Macedonia) the third person possessive marker appears in its postvocalic variant *-sI*, indicating that the suffix **(y)AcAK* has undergone phonetic reduction to *-(y)AcA*.²³ In contrast, the third person variant in *-eciy* in the Budakovo dialect (examples [40] and [42]) builds on underlying **-ecegi* and represents a more conservative formation.

While examples (40)–(42), drawn from folk tales, use the evidential past in *-miş* as default TAM form of this discourse type, examples (43) and (44) represent direct speech. In spite of past tense marking, they express synchronic modalities, which aligns with usage in ST. The

²² Generally, it can be stated that the verbal noun in *-(y)AsI* is not particularly frequent and productive in Turkish, except in curses and benedictions, and specifically in the construction *-(y)AsI var/yok/gel-*.

²³ In the future, contraction forms such as *içecem* (1.SG), *içecen* (2.SG), *içecek* (1.PL) in the finite paradigm and *içecem* (1.SG), *içecen* (2.SG), *içeceyi* (3.SG) in the non-finite paradigm can be found even in casual spoken Standard Turkish, but the form *içecesi* for 3.SG non-finite seems rather unusual.

semantic development underlying this idiomatic expression can be conceptualized as follows: *su iç-eceğ-im gel-di* (lit.) ‘my prospective water-drinking has come’ ≈ *su iç-eceğ-im var* (lit.) ‘my prospective water-drinking is present’ → ‘I want to drink water’.

Examples (42) and (43) demonstrate that the order of the segments is variable in this type of construction as well. Examples (42) and (44) mention the subject overtly; the possessive suffix in the predicate requires the subject to appear in the genitive (as in ST). In terms of interpretation, examples (40)–(42) are understood as expressing a wish, whereas examples (43) and (44) convey necessity.

- (40) *Kız baba-sın-ı çok özle-miş,*
 girl father-POSS.3 much miss-EVID.PST
gör-eciy gel-miş.
 see-PRO.VN.POSS.3 come-EVID.PST
 ‘The girl missed her dad a lot and wanted to see him.’
 (MK/Budakovo, Alievska 2003: 150)

- (41) *Su iç-ece-si gel-miş.*
 water drink-PRO.VN.POSS.3 come-EVID.PST
 ‘He was thirsting for water.’ (= ‘He wanted to drink water.’)
 (MK/Resen, Ahmed 2001: 132)

- (42) *Asan-in gel-miş su iç-eciy.*
 NP-GEN come-EVID.PST water drink-PRO.VN.POSS.3
 ‘Hasan wanted to drink water.’
 (MK/Budakovo, Alievska 2003: 147)

- (43) *Abdes boz-acay-ım g’âl-di.*
 abolutions anul-PRO.VN.POSS.1.SG come-PRET
 ‘I have to go to the toilet.’
 (BG/Vidin, Németh 1965: 156)

- (44) *Kız-ım, benim ül-eceğ-im gel-di.*
 daughter-POSS.1.SG my die-PRO.VN.POSS.1.SG come-PRET
 ‘My daughter, my time has come to die.’ (= ‘I must die.’)
 (Adakale, Kúnos 1907: 181)

Some general observations about the examples (38)–(44) can be made: In the texts consulted for this study, only positive (i.e., unnegated) examples are attested. As noted previously, only **(y)AcAK* occurs as the linking segment; *-(y)AsI* does not appear. Semantically and pragmatically, the examples involving events such as eating, drinking, and meeting people evoke a volitive reading, i.e., a reading based on desire. In contrast, examples involving actions as urinating, defecating, and dying produce a necessitative reading, i.e., a reading based on need. A plausible hypothesis (which will require further investigation) is that controllable actions trigger volitive readings while uncontrollable or less controllable actions trigger a necessitative reading. Thus, the interpretation seems to be related to the degree of control encoded in the state of affairs.

It seems that volitive modality and necessity are not semantically coded by the construction itself, but rather emerge as pragmatic interpretations of a broader, more diffuse semantic base. These context-dependent interpretations are influenced particularly by the degree of control associated with the state of affairs. Historical data show that in Old Turkic, this type of

construction was semantically more “fuzzy” than in most modern Turkic languages, where the volitive meaning has become dominant. This raises the question whether the necessitative usages of this item in Balkan Turkish reflect a retention of an earlier situation compared to ST, or represent a semantic shift influenced by the semantics of the item <var+SBJV> (see example [35]), which itself most probably developed under the influence of contact with Balkan languages. This issue remains an area for future investigation.

4 Conclusion

The expressions of possibility and necessity investigated in this part of the study constitute a subset of a broader system of event modality markers. This system also includes additional, less frequent expressions of possibility and necessity, as well as expressions of volitive modality, which will be explored in Part 2 of the study.

The items focussed on in this study share the morphosyntactic property of including a component of complementation, in which a matrix segment takes an SoA into its scope. The complementation in Balkan Turkish is achieved by a linking segment, which may be finite or non-finite, giving rise to various complementation strategies.

The matrix segments considered in this study are either verbal or nominal in nature. The combinational features of the underlying lexical items vary, ranging from either casus indefinitus (nominative) or accusative as seen with *bil-* ‘to know’, to nominative as in the case of *mümkün* ‘possible’, *lazım* ‘necessary’, *yok* ‘absent’ and *olur mu* ‘is it possible’, as they originally occur in subject-predicate constructions. In addition, some items may also require other cases such as the dative with *mecbur* ‘forced’ and *muhtaç* ‘dependent’.

In the Balkan Turkish dialects we observe a tendency for complementation patterns to shift into two directions: constructions involving a non-factual verbal noun in the dative, yielding an infinitive-type pattern; and constructions using a finite mood form resulting in a subjunctive-type pattern. Both strategies are attested with *bil-*, *mümkün*, *lazım*, *yok*, *olur mu*, and also *mecbur*.

Regarding the distribution of these strategies, both constructions are attested in eastern and western varieties of Balkan Turkish, though there is a preference for the subjunctive strategy in WRT. In contrast, the dialects in North Macedonia employ non-finite complementation strategies far less frequently than other Balkan Turkish varieties, a phenomenon consistent with the so-called infinitive loss, which is particularly pronounced in Macedonian, the dominant contact language.

The construction *var/yok* ‘present/absent’ plus subjunctive (examples [20] and [35]) can be argued to have developed under the contact influence of both Macedonian and Albanian.

In contrast, a different construction involving *var* ‘present’ or *gel-* ‘to come’ and a future verbal noun, appears to have older roots in the Turkic languages. Semantically, this construction occupies a space between participant-internal necessity and volitive modality.

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Abbreviations

AOR	aorist
BG	Bulgaria
ERT	Eastern Rumelian Turkish
EVID	evidential
FBŞ	Ferec ba'd eş-şidde
MK	Republic of North Macedonia
OPT	optative
POT	potential
PRET	preterite
PRO	prospective
PTCL	particle
RKS	Kosovo
SoA	state of affairs
ST	Standard Turkish
TP	Tārīḥ-i Pečevī
TR	Turkey
VN	verbal noun
VOL	voluntative
WRT	Western Rumelian Turkish

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