

The Emergence, Development and Spread of the First Person Plural Suffix **-K** and Its Variants in Turkic

Fikret Turan

Istanbul University

fikretturan@hotmail.com

Abstract

This article investigates the emergence, development, and spread of the first-person plural suffix *-K* in Turkic. As a personal suffix, *-K* first appeared in the conditional paradigm in Khwarezmian and Qipchaq during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Current data suggest that its development is related to the use of the participle *-DUK* for the first-person plural in the preterite. I argue that it derived from the final *-K* of the *-DUK* through the processes of back-formation, suffix clipping, and suffix grammaticalization, in which speakers thought of the first part of it as a variant of the preterite *-di*, and the final *-K* as the personal marker. Although the majority of Turkic languages use it in the preterit and conditional, Azerbaijani employs it in all tense, mood, and copula paradigms in the above-mentioned position. The *-K* also creates dual plurality in optative-imperative *-(y)AK* in some Azerbaijani and Anatolian dialects involving the speaker and addressee, while its extended form *-(y)ağm / -(y)eyin (< -(y)AKIN)* claims the generic first-person plural.

Keywords: Turkic morphology, first person plural *-K*.

1. Introduction

It is generally accepted that the system of Turkic personal suffixes in finite forms is highly syncretic as at least in theory they are either the derivatives of the personal pronouns or of the possessive suffixes, or are the unique original set suffixes that emerge in the optative modal formations as oblique morphemes (Ergin 1977: 281-282). Although those derivatives of personal pronouns and possessive suffixes demonstrate a certain degree of clarity and regularity in tense paradigms, person is historically indicated in the optative forms by zero markers or by certain suffixes the origins of which are not easily traceable and explainable. Against this backdrop, my main objective in this article is to explore the origin, development and spread of the first person plural *-K* and its variant *-(y)IK* mainly in Oghuz languages including Standard Turkish, Azerbaijani, Türkmen and their various dialects as a personal

suffix that emerged and began spreading during the period of Middle Turkic and that structurally falls outside the realms of those three supposed sets of personal suffixes and enclitics. Although it is commonly known that Turkic doesn't have grammatical genders in the pronoun and verbal forms, and except for very limited cases, it doesn't have a dual plurality, the form -K also occasionally establishes dual plurality in the first person in certain modal settings in some dialects apart from its established common feature of generic plurality. Thus, among all the personal suffixes in finite forms, the plural first person -K presents a unique case in terms of its selection of verbal paradigms, its frequency of occurrence in literary idioms and dialects and its occasional unique semantic feature of dual plurality.

2. Distribution, forms and functions of the -K

A cursory survey in modern Turkic languages would demonstrate that the first person plural -K and its extended allomorphic forms are rather a common phenomenon of the South-Western Turkic, namely the Oghuz languages including standard Turkish, Azerbaijani, Türkmen and their dialectal variants. In this context, standard Turkish employ the -K in the preterit as in *geldik* 'we came' and the conditional *gelsek* 'if we came' as opposed to the other first person plural -(y)Iz, which occurs in all other tense paradigms including the reported past *gelmişiz* 'we have come', simple present *geliriz* 'we come', present continuous *geliyoruz*, *gelmekteyiz* 'we are coming' and 'we have been coming' and the future *geleceğiz* 'we will come', and the optative-imperative -(y)AlIm *gidelim* 'we should go' and 'let's go'. In the distribution of the -K, Standard Türkmen has also a similar situation as it employs it in the preterit as in *aytdıq* 'we said' and the conditional *döönsek* 'if we returned' and the suffix -As / -Is in other paradigms such as the reported past *görüpdiris* 'we have seen', simple present *ğaraaris* 'we look', present continuous *ğaraşyaas* 'we are waiting', the future without a personal marker *biz baqcaq* 'we will look', and the optative-imperative -Allİñ / -All *söyeliñ* 'we should love' and 'let's love' (Kara 2000: 48-55). Similar distribution is also observable in Uzbek, Uighur and some other non-Oghuz Turkic languages.

Although standard Turkish, Türkmen and others employ it only in the preterit and the conditional inflections as shown above, Azerbaijani choses the -K (-k/-ğ) and its allomorphic variants -(y)ağ / -(y)ığ / -(y)uğ, -(y)ek / -(y)ik / -(y)ük as the only first person plural marker by employing it in all tense, mood and copula paradigms as is the case in the preterit *geldik* 'we came', reported past *gelmişik* 'we have come', present *gelerik* 'we come', present continuous *alırığ* 'we are taking/buying', future *ğedeceyik* 'we will go', optative-imperative *alağ* 'we should take' and 'let's take', necessitative *ğörmeliyik* 'we must see', wish-necessitative *ğelesiyik* 'we'd better come', conditional *vuruşsağ* 'if we fought' and copulative *hekimik* 'we are doctors'

(Caferoğlu & Doerfer 1959, Kazımov 2010: 270-275). Its wide range of usages in a number of finite situations also created multiple allomorphic variations including the forms --(y)ağ / -(y)eğ / -(y)ıg / -(y)ig / -(y)uğ / -(y)üğ, -(y)eĥ / -(y)iĥ / -(y)üĥ, -(y)aχ / -(y)ıχ / -(y)uχ and rarely -(y)eχ / -(y)iχ / -(y)üχ in Eastern Anatolian, Iraqi Türkmen and Iran Azerbaijani dialects including the local speeches of Arpaçay as in *goyuruχ* ‘we put down’ (Olçay & Ercilasun & Alpay 1988: 19), Erzurum *gelirdiĥ* ‘we used to come’ (Olçay 1995: 42), Kars *gétmişik* ‘we have gone’ (Adamović 1985: 37-38), Iraqi Türkmen *gülmürmüşüg* ‘supposedly we hadn’t been laughing’ (Bayatlı 1996: 400), Salmas *bülmediχ* ‘we did not know’ (Gökdağ 2006: 84, 126), Tebriz *gelduχ* ‘we came’ (Ergin 1981: 129), Trabzon *gideruk* ‘we go’ (Brendemoen 1998: 240). Similar forms are also common in Central and Southern Anatolian variants including Antep regions as in *açarıq* ‘we open’ (Adamović 1985: 37-38).

3. Historical context: Formation and development of the -K as a first person plural suffix

As a unique form the first person plural suffix -K at first emerged in the conditional paradigm in the literary texts of Khwarezmian and Qipchaq Turkic produced during the 13th-14th centuries as in *alsaq* ‘if we took’, *qırsaq* ‘if we broke’, *körsek* ‘if we saw’, and it appeared at a time when the earlier pronoun-based enclitic *biz* or -mIz / (<biz ‘we’) was commonly being used for the first person plural as it had been in Köktürk, Old Uighur and Qarakhanid (Argunşah & Sağol Yükksekaya 2013: 201, 343). Textual data suggest that the beginning of this development in the first person plural is very much related to the reassignment of the past participle suffix -DUK to the first person plural in the preterit paradigm, and this was accepted as a new alternative suffix to the former -dImIz. It is often used together with -dImIz interchangeably in the same texts in varying degrees (Şükürov 1976: 14, 29). This phenomenon is observed especially in *Tefsîr* by an anonymous author as in *bulmaduq* ‘we did not find’, *körkütdimiz* ‘we showed’ (Borovkov 2002: 217), *Qısasü'l-Enbiyâ* by Rabguzi *ayduq / aydımız* ‘we said’ and it became more common in *Nahju'l-Ferâdis* by Kerderi Mahmud bin Ali, and replaced the suffix -dImIz altogether in *Khusrev u Şîrin* by Qutb in the same period (Ata 2014: 88). Qipchaq and Old Anatolian Turkish followed the tendency in the 14th and 15th centuries as -dImIz disappeared in the texts and -DUK became the only form for the first person plural in the preterit.¹ A similar development occurred in Chagatay, Uzbek and some other Eastern Turkic literary idioms as well (Eckmann 1966: 156, Öztürk:

¹ -K also occasionally appears as the first person plural in the present tense in Anatolia as early as the 14th century as the Old Anatolian Turkish translation of Marzubân-nâme of Sadruddin Şeyhoğlu shows *ta^obir ederük* ‘we interpret’ as an isolated example (Korkmaz 1973: 175).

2010: 74, Uygur 2008: 9). As a result, from about the 15th century onwards the suffix -DUK came to be the most widely used first person preterit form in Turkic.²

In this context, the suffix -K, in our view, was derived from the final -K of the form -DUK through a back-formation, suffix clipping and suffix grammaticalization processes, where the speakers at first commonly thought of the first part of the suffix as a variant of the preterit -DI and, by analogy, perceived the final -K as the personal marker.³ This interpretation and reassignment of the parts of the suffix -DUK resulted in the splitting and reconstruction of the final -K as the first person plural suffix.⁴ Thus, within this morphological division and realignment, the -K was grammaticalized and commonly used as the first person plural at first in the conditional inflection -sAK 'if we' from the 13th century on. Just like the -DUK in the preterit, -sAK has also become the dominant form in the conditional inflection in a number of Turkic languages and dialects since.⁵

² Although there aren't satisfactory data and evidence on how and under what conditions the participle -DUK gained the quality of the first person plural form at a time when -DIMIZ was fully in use, certain pieces of information that Kashghari provided in *Divânü Lugâti't-Türk* enable us to have an understanding on the origin and causes of this development. According to him, Oghuz, Qipchak and Suvar had one certain preterit form that was made with -DUK (more specifically -duğ/-duq/-dük) and that didn't require personal suffixes, and thereby it always had to be used with personal pronouns, which is exemplified as *men yâ qurduq* 'I bent and stringed a bow', *biz yâ qurduq* 'we bent and stringed a bow', *ol keldük* 'he came', etc. (Kashghari 1998, II: 60-65, Adamović 1985: 185). However, as it was gradually replaced by the common preterit -DI+personal suffix system, this paradigm remained to be used only for the first person plural in the dialects in question. I should add that this type of verbal paradigms without the personal marker isn't very common in Turkic, but not fully absent as the future paradigm in modern Türkmen shows similar features; *men bakcak, sen bakcak* 'I will look, you will look,' etc. (Kara 2000: 51).

³ For the linguistic processes of back-formation, suffix clipping and grammaticalization as the mechanisms of morphological formations and some pertinent examples and cases of it in other languages see Lehmann 1992: 224-225.

⁴ For the views on some aspects of the formation and distribution of this suffix, see also Deny 1921: 416-18, 1110-11, Good & Yu 2005, Karamanlıoğlu 1994: 120, Korkmaz 1964, Nalbant 2002. Jankowski, on the other hand, proposes a hypothetical Proto-Turkic personal pronoun *bik (< *bi+*k < oq/ök) as its origin (Jankowski 1987). The -K has also briefly been discussed in a number of grammatical studies including Böhtlingk (1851: 306) and Räsänen (1957: 200) among others. As I specifically focus on the linguistic mechanism of the emergence, development and spread of the suffix in the historical texts on the one hand and on its variants and distribution among modern Turkic languages and dialects on the other, I limit my analysis by these areas as my research questions only, and thus, I prefer not to recount all earlier views that don't specifically cover these questions as the set problem of investigation.

⁵ Certain hypotheses on the etymology of the -DUK have been put forward by several Altaists and Turkologists. Among them, Ramstedt and Poppe view it a verbal noun made of the deverbal verb suffix -d and the deverbal noun -q / -γ / -g, whereas Benzing and Tekin accept it as a blend form created by the verbal noun suffix -(I)d and the particle ok/ök (Tekin 1997).

4. -K as a dual plural and its extended form -(y)ayın / -(y)eyin (< -(y)AKIN)

Although Turkic doesn't have dual plurality in verbal inflections as a general rule, -K has come to be a dual marker limiting the extent of the first person plural to the speaker and the listener (you and I) in certain areas and speech situations. This semantic development occurs in the optative-imperative paradigm -(y)AK (-Ağ / -Aχ) -predominantly in Azerbaijani, and to a lesser degree in certain Anatolian dialects (Adamović 1985: 253). However, in all this, according to varying actual, hypothetical and register situations, certain semantic nuances could be observed with regard to the number of person it might involve. This dual plurality is often strengthened by another verb in the imperative second person singular or by the particle *di* 'then, come on, let us' by immediately preceding it. İğdir, Kars, Ardahan and Nakhchivan *gidek~gideh* 'let's go you and I ~ we shall go you and I', *dur gideh* 'stand up and let's go you and I', *di oxuyax* 'then let's read' (my unpublished research notes), Yıldızeli *yatax* 'let us sleep you and I', *otur yeyek* 'sit down and let us eat you and I' (Doğan 2012). In contrast to this, however, in the same regions, an extended construction of -(y)AK appears in the form of -(y)ayın / -(y)eyin (< -(y)AKIN) claiming the generic first person plural signifying more than two people.⁶ Azerbaijan and North-eastern Anatolia *gideyin* 'let's go we all together', *aparmıyayın* 'let's not take away we all', *yıyayın* 'let's collect we all together'⁷, Kerkük *bağayın* 'let's look we all together', Urmiye *çimeyin* 'let's bate we all together', and a contracted form of this, -(y)āñ / -(y)āñ (< -(y)AKIN) is observed in Yıldızeli *sayāñ* 'let's count we all together' (Doğan 2012).⁸

5. Conclusion

Having departed from the preterit first person plural -DUK through a suffix clipping, the form -K found its way as a personal marker first in the conditional paradigm in the 13th and 14th century Khwarezmian and Qipchaq Turkic texts and eventually replaced the already existing form *biz* / -mIz in the conditional and the preterit in many Turkic languages. However, it later became the only first person plural suffix in all verbal and copula paradigms in Azerbaijani Turkic and in various dialects spreading in certain areas of the Caucasus, Iran, Iraq, Syria and

⁶ On the earlier studies and analyses of this issue, see Demir 2000.

⁷ The examples are from my as yet unpublished notes.

⁸ As these two structures always include the speaker and the hearer in a given action, it cannot be viewed within the contexts of the so-called opposition inclusive/exclusive hypothesis. For a general analysis and explanation of the opposition inclusive/exclusive in Turkic, see Jankowski 1987 and Nevskaya 2009.

Anatolia. This development, therefore, created such a morphological system that presently counts for one of the most distinguishing dialectal features of Azerbaijani Turkic.

That the main trigger behind the emergence of this suffix is an analogy and its morphological strategies of back-formation, suffix clipping and grammaticalization also indicates how one common perception on a morphological form could give rise to new formations in Turkic in particular and thereby in human languages in general. Yet, all these morphological and semantic processes that the -K has gone through also raise a number of questions on the morphology and semantics of the person and number in finite forms in Turkic including replaceability of the person/number marker and changeability of its semantic boundaries.

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