

Analytic modal constructions in Gagauz

Astrid Menz, Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz

1. Introduction

Gagauz is a Turkish variety that has been spoken for centuries in a non-Turkic environment in the Republic of Moldova, the Ukraine, and Bulgaria. Due to language-contact phenomena it shows significant deviations from Turkic patterns, most obvious on the syntactic level. In what follows, I will deal with a set of modal constructions expressing volition, necessity, ability and possibility. Expressions for volition and necessity are formed in Gagauz analytically using the same lexical and morphological material as their Turkish counterparts but deviate in respect to constituent order and/or frequency. For ability and possibility on the other hand, Turkish uses the synthetic construction in *-Ebil-*. This modal marker can be found in Gagauz too, but serves only to express ability, whereas for possibility Gagauz has invented new analytically built constructions copied¹ from a Bulgarian pattern.

The modal shades of finite predicators such as the prospective in *-(y)EğEk* and the low focal intraterminal present in *-r* will not be dealt with in my presentation. They seem, however, to exhibit the same modal connotations as their Turkish counterparts.

2. Modal constructions in Bulgarian and Russian and the infinitive

Gagauz has an infinitive marker in *-MÄÄ*, which is a contracted form of *-mÄk* plus dative see Pokrovskaja (1964, 162), and is frequently used in cases where Turkish uses the infinitive in *-mEk*.²

In addition, Gagauz shows a set of syntactic patterns copied from Bulgarian or Russian. This led to a significant decrease in the use of the verbal noun in *-mÄ* plus possessive marker, both in modal constructions where the modal predicate and embedded verb have different subjects, and in complement clauses.

In Bulgarian as well as in Russian, modal constructions are formed with a modal verb or auxiliary and an embedded verb. In Russian the embedded part in same-subject constructions consists of an infinitive, and a verb in the subjunctive in cases with different subjects. Bulgarian on the other hand uses in all cases a so-called *da*-construction consisting of the particle *da* and a finite verb. This construction without a modal marker serves as an optative or quasi-imperative similar to the usage of the optative mood in Turkish as in the first example.³

- (1) Da piše
ti write3s
'Let him/her write.' (Rudin 1986, 56)
Turkish: yazsın
write-OPT3SG

3. Volition

To express volition, Gagauz uses among other devices the modal verb *istä-* 'want', as does Turkish. In the modern language of Moldova one can observe a distinction

between constructions with same subject and those with different subjects.

3.1. *Istä-* + same subject

As mentioned above, in cases where the modal and embedded verb share the same subject, i.e. constructions with subject control, where Turkish uses the infinitive in *-mEk*, Gagauz in most cases uses the infinitive in *-mÄÄ*. The main difference between the Turkish and the Gagauz construction lies in the constituent order, which is always left-branching in Turkish but usually right-branching in Gagauz, as can be seen in example (2) and its translation into Turkish.⁴

- (2) *bir iş isterim sormaa* TX⁵
 one thing want-PRS1SG ask-INF
 ‘One thing do I want to ask.’
 Turkish: *bir şey sormak istiyorum*
 one thing ask-INF want-PRS1SG

A left-branching construction, as in example (3), is also possible but is not frequent compared to the right-branching one.

- (3) *O uyumaa ister pek* TX
 she sleep-INF want-PRS3SG very
 ‘She really wants to sleep’

Another difference between the Turkish and Gagauz constructions is that whereas in the left-branching Turkish construction all complements of the infinitive precede the whole modal construction. In Gagauz on the other hand both in the left- and in the right-branching construction complements of the infinitive can come between it and the modal verb: compare examples (4) and (5) with their translations into Turkish. In example (4) the complement precedes the infinitive and is thus in focus position.

- (4) *ister bolnicaya gitmä* T3 266
 want-PRS3SG hospital-DAT go-INF
 ‘She wants to go to the hospital.’
 Turkish: *Hastahaneye gitmek istiyor.*
- (5) *kesmä bän onu bu sirada istemedim* T3 176
 cut-INF I it-ACC this celebration-LOC want-NEG-DI.PST-1SG
 ‘I didn’t want to slaughter it at this celebration.’
 Turkish: *Ben onu bu düğünde kesmek istemedim.*

Besides the infinitive in same-subject constructions in some cases we can observe that the subordinated predicate is in the optative mood, as in example (6) from the modern language of Moldova.

- (6) *Isterim öleyim /.../* TX
 want-PRS1SG die-OPT1SG
 ‘I want to die /.../.’

Whereas this is very scarce in both the spoken and written language of Moldova, it accounts for nearly half the cases of same-subject constructions found in Zajączkowski's (1966) material from Bulgaria. In my own material from Bulgaria the infinitive construction is the marginal one and the construction with a subordinated predicate in the optative mood clearly dominates. Example (7) from an informant from Varna illustrates the use of both infinitive and optative.

- (6) *kardašin burda mi istee kalmaa?* Bul. TX
 brother-POSS2SG here Q want-PRS3SG stay-INF
Istemää. Gelän senäistee yašasin Sofyada
 want-NEG-PRS3SG coming year want-PRS3SG live-OPT3SG Sofia-LOC
 'Does your brother want to stay here? No, next year he wants to live in Sofia.'

The more frequent use of the infinitive in Moldova is clearly an effect of the influence of the Russian pattern for same-subject constructions based on the infinitive, whereas the increasing frequency of the optative mood in cases with same subject is a result of the fact that Bulgarian uses a *da*-construction in which the subordinated predicate is an inflected verb to express volition. Zajączkowski's and my own material from Bulgaria, however, clearly demonstrate that the Gagauz variety spoken there has retained the infinitive in these constructions.

3.2. *Istä*- + different subjects

In cases with different subjects Gagauz, instead of the infinitive in *-mÄ* and a possessive as subject marker, uses the optative, as in example (8). All examples in my material from the spoken language of Moldova are right-branching.

- (8) *Istemišlärj sa:de onnarij fronda yollamasinnar.* TX
 want-MIŠ-PST-3PL onlythey-ACC front-DAT send-NEG-OPT-3PL
 'They_j only wanted them not to send them_j to the front.'

In colloquial Turkish, different-subject constructions in which the complemented predicate is in the optative mood can be both left-branching, as in *gitsin istedim* 'I wanted him to go', or right-branching, as in *ben istemiyorum köy okuluna gitsin* 'I don't want him to go to a village school'. This construction is, however, far from being as frequent as its Gagauz counterpart and mostly displays a third person subject of the subordinated predicate. Nevertheless, its existence in Turkish could be one factor behind the complete loss of the infinitive construction in modern Gagauz.

In a few cases the embedded verb is introduced in Gagauz by one of the complementizers *ki* or *ani*. This happens both with identical and non-identical subjects. Constructions of this type are found, with a significantly lesser frequency, in colloquial Turkish too.

4. Necessity

Gagauz, like Turkish, has a necessitative marker in *-mEII*. This synthetic device to express necessity is, however, very infrequent in spoken and written Gagauz. In my material and in the modern written language it is used only in the petrified adverbial form *olmalı* 'probably'. Pokrovskaja (1964) states that it is only used together with

personal pronouns and is itself not marked for person, i.e. the paradigm is *bân gelmeli* ‘I must come’, *sân gelmeli* ‘you must come’ and so on. In Moškov’s data from Bessarabia on the other hand we encounter *-mEll-* forms with personal markers, as illustrated in example (9). In addition, one of my informants cited to me the whole paradigm with personal markers. Such forms are, however, absent in my data. In my opinion, the question of whether the necessitative form can be marked with personal markers may be a matter of dialect.⁶

- (9) /.../ *siz a:č olmalisîñiz* Moškov, 112
 you hungry be-NEC-2PL
 ‘/.../ you must be hungry.’

A construction with the modal predicate *la:zîm* is very frequently used to express necessity. In impersonal constructions this is used with the infinitive in *-mĀĀ*, as in example (10), which shows the same word order as its Turkish counterpart.

- (10) *išlemää la:zîm T7 38* (Turkish: çalışmak lazım)
 work-INF necessary
 ‘One must work’

In agentive constructions the embedded verb is in the optative mood and the right-branching neutral constituent order is one in which the modal predicate precedes its complement as in example (11).⁷

- (11) *laam koysunnar reñgin* T3 37
 necessary lay-OPT-3PL X-ray
 ‘They must X-ray (her).’

Example (12) shows that this word order can be inverted. The subject is expressed by a personal pronoun and in these cases always in the nominative. In the written language there is a strong tendency to express the subject explicitly.

- (12) *o göstersiz la:zîm ani o başka adam* TX
 he show-OPT3SG necessary that he different man
 ‘He must show that he is a different man.’

Tense markers such as the copula forms *idi* and *olağëk* or the inferentiality marker *imiš* are added to *la:zîm* in the third person singular, and personal markers are added to the embedded predicate. This is shown in examples (13) and (14). The prospective marker *olağëk* does not appear in my spoken-language material.

- (13) *Sân lâazîm olağëk gidâsin bîrdan* SB 151
 you necessary be-FUT3SG go-OPT-2SG from here
 ‘You will have to go away.’

- (14) *o la:zîmdî her zaman okusun* T6 284
 he necessary-IDI3SG every time read-OPT3SG
 ‘He had to read each time (his speech).’

In this construction only copula elements, adverbs and possibly the question particle come between *la:zim* and the finite verb in the optative mood. In impersonal constructions on the other hand complements of the embedded verb can stand between it and *la:zim* as in example (15).

- (15) *önğedän la:zim anama bobama sormaa*
 at first necessary mother-POSS1SG-DAT father-POSS1SG-DAT ask-INF
 ‘First one must ask my parents.’ T7 312

Modality is negated by means of the negative copula *diil*, Turkish *de©il*, which, as in example (16), always precedes the modal predicate. In theory a negative verb should also be possible; this is, however, absent in my material.

- (16) *güvää diil laam koymaa* TX
 bridegroom-DATnot necessary put-INF
 ‘One does not need to put it in front of the bridegroom.’

Another possible construction for expressing necessity is formed by *la:zim* and an infinitive and a pronominal subject in the dative. This construction which is a selective copy of the Russian type with modal *nužno* plus infinitive and a pronominal subject in the dative is not very frequent and seems to be used mainly in the written language.

- (17) *Sana läözim olağök aaramaa eni konak* SB 151
 you-DAT necessary be-FUT3SG search-INF new lodging
 ‘You will have to look for a new lodging.’

5. Ability and possibility

The synthetic form in *-(y)Ebil*, negated *-(y)EmE-*, in Turkish expresses ability as well as possibility. This modal marker is used in Gagauz only to express ability. It is worth noting that in my spoken-language data almost all examples are in the negative ability mood, which in Turkish, according to Boeschoten (1990, 87), ”/.../ exhibits a tendency to express stronger modalities than its indicative counterpart *-’Abil=*” In my opinion this is also valid for Gagauz.

- (18) *otuzdokuz gündä üürenememiş bir kolada* TX
 39 day-LOC learn-NEG.ABIL-MIŞ.PST3SG one christmas song
 ‘He couldn’t learn a single Christmas song in 39 days.’

5.2. Possibility

To express possibility Gagauz has invented a construction consisting of the predicative *var* ‘exist’ and the question words *nasil* or *niğä* ‘how’ plus a lexical verb either in the optative mood as in example (19) or, in impersonal constructions, in the infinitive as in (20).

- (19) *var nasil su kabuletsinnär* T2 177
 POSSIB water get-OPT-3PL
 ‘They can get water (from a fountain).’

- (20) *dokunzunğu kattan var nasil siiretmää yarim Moskovayı* T2 34
 9th floor-ABL POSSIB look at half Moscow-ACC
 ‘One can look at half of Moscow from the 9th floor.’

Negative possibility is expressed by *yok* and the same construction, while the negation of the lexical verb negates the lexical content: compare examples (21) and (22).

- (21) *üç kerä sıra yok niğä yapıim* T3 65
 3 times celebration IMPOSSIB make-OPT1SG
 ‘It is impossible for me to make three celebrations.’

- (22) *Fasıl, nasil bän var nasıydı görmeyim seni /.../* SB
 70
 strange how I POSSIB-IDI see-NEG-OPT1SG you-ACC
 ‘It is strange how I could stand not to see you /.../.’

In my opinion this construction for expressing possibility, which is unique in Gagauz, is a copy of a very similar Bulgarian construction consisting of modal *ima* ‘exist’, negated as *njama*, and *kak* ‘how’, and a *da*-construction. As can be seen from the afore-mentioned constructions of volition and necessity, the Gagauz optative mood is often used in selective copies where the Bulgarian original uses a *da*-construction or Russian uses a subjunctive. The main difference between original and copy is that in the Bulgarian construction the first element *ima/njama* ‘exist’ can be marked for person, whereas this is never the case in Gagauz. One does, however, note a strong tendency to use the personal pronoun in the first and second person, immediately preceding or following the modal marker, as seen in (27b) and (24).

Anteriority and indirectivity markers, as well as the question-particle, follow *var/yok* in most cases. Only in a few examples from the written language does the anteriority marker *idi* follow *nasil*: compare examples (23) and (24).

- (23) *Bu lafları vardı nasil sölesin saade en iy dost.*
 this word-PL-ACC poss-IDI say-OPT3SG only SUPP good friend
 ‘Only the best friend could say these words.’ SB 13

- (24) *Nasil bän var nasıldı amazlayım onu /.../* SB 50
 How I possib-IDI betray-POSS1SG he-ACC
 ‘How could I have betrayed him ...’

The neutral word order in this construction is modality marker preceding the embedded predicate. An inverted word order with a preceding embedded predicate is very rare in my material. All examples of it are in impersonal constructions, as in (25). All in all I found five examples, of which four have a sentence initial-complement of the lexical verb, which is thus in focus position.

- (25) *her bir işi dā resimlemää yok niğä* T2 324
 every one thing-ACC PTCL photograph-INF IMPOSS
 ‘You cannot take a photograph of every single thing’.

Var nasil and *yok nasil* can appear without a lexical verb, with a meaning similar to Turkish *olur* and *olmaz*. This usage is parallel to Bulgarian *ima kak* and *njama kak* without an embedded predicate, see Rudin (1986, 191).

I could not observe any difference in meaning between the usage of *nasil* and *niğä* in these constructions. Some of the informants seemed to prefer one to the other, while others used both of them. However, *nasil* seems to be more frequent. Speakers who prefer *niğä* in this combination tend to use a contracted form *varinğa*.

In a very similar type of construction, which also bears modal connotations, instead of *nasil* and *niğä* a set of question elements, such as *kim* ‘who’ *naşey* and *ne* ‘what’, *nereyä* ‘where’, *neredä* ‘where’, *neredän* ‘from where’, can occur. For this too we find a parallel construction in Bulgarian: compare examples (27a and b).

- (27)a. Imam kakvo da četa. Rudin (1986, 156)
 have-1s what to read-1s
 ‘I have something to read.’
- b. *bän yok naşey yapim* T3 63
 I not exist what do-OPT1SG
 ‘There is nothing I can do’.

A difference, however, is that in Gagauz uses almost exclusively negative constructions with *yok*, as in example (27b).

Bulgarian *ima* denotes both ‘have’ and ‘be’. Since Turkish has no verbs expressing ‘have’ and ‘be’, *var* and *yok* are used in these constructions.

The same type of construction can be found in Turkish dialects of Bulgaria (see, for example, Németh’s material (1965) from the Turkish dialect of Vidin), whereas the modal construction with *nasil* and *niğä* seems to be unique in Gagauz.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the material presented here, Gagauz has copied Slavic combinational patterns on to Turkic material. The invention of the modal constructions with *var nasil* and *yok nasil* by copying a Bulgarian pattern does not mean, as Pokrovskaja (1978, 104) states it, that Gagauz has invented a synonymous form that replaces the synthetic modality marker in *-(y)Abil-*. Rather, it has split the expressions for ability and possibility into two forms.

Notes

¹ For the terminology employed see Johanson 1992 and 1993.

² Some works on Gagauz state, that Gagauz has, as a result of language contact with Bulgarian, replaced its infinitive constructions with the optative mood, see Hetzer (1993). Pokrovskaja (1978: 91ff.) lists in paradigms for ‘want and ‘must’ the optative forms as the primary strategy and the infinitive as a variant. The infinitive in *-mÄk* clearly is very rare and mostly used as a derivative suffix which forms nouns, as for example in *yaşamak* ‘life’. In this paper I will show that Gagauz does not lack infinitive constructions but employs them frequently, albeit exclusively in impersonal or same-subject modal constructions.

³ This Bulgarian pattern could be one explanation for the fact that Gagauz uses the optative in cases where Bulgarian uses a *da*-construction. However, in Turkic languages influenced by Iranian one can also observe the usage of the optative mood in modal constructions; see for example Bulut, in this volume and Kiral (1997).

⁴ Most of the cited examples are taken from my own material, gathered in 1996 in the Republic of Moldova. Other examples stem from Moškov (1904) or books published in Gagauz. The abbreviation SB after an example refers to Stepan Bulgar's book, see references. TX refers to my own unpublished material, TT2 - 6 refers to texts published in Menz (1999). Spoken language material is given in italics.

⁵ Note that in this utterance the object *bir iŝ* is pre-located and in focus position. The unmarked order would be *isterim sormaa bir iŝ*.

⁶ This could also be valid for the *-DIK*-form in adnominal position; see Menz (1999).

⁷ *Laam* in this example is a colloquial form of *lāzīm*.

References

- Boeschoten, H. E. (1990). *Acquisition of Turkish by immigrant children : A multiple case study of Turkish children in the Netherlands aged 4 to 6*. (Turcologica 6). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz.
- Bulut, C. (1999). Optative constructions in Iraqi Turkmen.
- Hetzer, A. (1983). Wortkundliche Probleme bei Sprachbünden unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des südosteuropäischen Areals. *Zeitschrift für Balkanologie* 19, 16-47.
- Johanson, L. (1992). *Strukturelle Faktoren in türkischen Sprachkontakten*. (Sitzungsberichte der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft an der J. W. Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main, 29:5) Stuttgart: Steiner.
- Johanson, L. (1993). Code-copying in immigrant Turkish. *Immigrant languages in Europe*. edited by G. Extra & L. Verhoeven, 197-221. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Kıral, F. (1997). *Syntaktische Einflüsse des Persischen auf das gesprochene Aserbaidŝanisch von Iran*. Doctoral dissertation, Universität Mainz.
- Menz, A. (1999). *Gagausische Syntax: Eine Studie zum kontaktinduzierten Sprachwandel*. (Turcologica 41). Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz. [Doctoral dissertation, Universität Mainz].
- Moškov, V. A. (1904). *Narečija bessarabskich gagauzov* (=Radloff, W.: Proben der Volksliteratur der türkischen Stämme, X. Theil) St. Peterburg.
- Németh, J. (1965). *Die Türken von Vidin: Sprache, Folklore und Religion*. (Bibliotheca Orientalis Hungarica, X). Budapest.
- Pokrovskaja, L. A. (1964). *Grammatika gagauzkogo jazyka. - Fonetika i morfologija*. Moskva: Nauka.
- Pokrovskaja, L. A. (1978). *Sintaksis gagauzkogo jazyka v sravnitel'nom osveščeni*. Moskva: Nauka.
- Rudin, C. (1986). *Aspects of Bulgarian syntax: Complementizer and WH constructions*. Columbus, Ohio: Slavica.
- SB = Bulgar, St. (1990). *Ťanavar yortuları* : Annatmaklar. Kiŝinev: Literatura artistike.
- Zajączkowski, Wł. (1966). *Jezyk i folklor Gagauzów z Bułgarii*. Kraków.