



T Ü R K B İ L İ G

T Ü R K O L O J İ A R A Ş T I R M A L A R I Y A Y I N D İ Z İ S İ

BENGÜ BİTİG

DURSUN YILDIRIM ARMAĞANI

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ON THE EVOLUTION OF OTTOMAN TURKISH VOWEL HARMONY AND THE (IL)LABIALITY OF THE SUFFIX *+lık*

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1.

In his edition of a 14th century Ottoman Turkish translation of *Kelile ve Dimne* A. Zajączkowski (1934: 155) characterizes the suffix *+lık*, forming mostly abstract nouns and adjectives with the meaning ‘destined/meant/intended for sth’, as having three features:

- [1.1] it is generally non-labial, i.e. *+lık* ~ *+lik*;
- [1.2] it sometimes displays labial variants, mostly if followed by a possessive suffix of the 3rd person singular (= Px3Sg), e.g. *dostlık* ‘friendship’¹ but *dostlugı* ‘his friendship’; cf., however, the possessive suffix of the 2nd person singular (= Px2Sg): *dostlugun* ‘your friendship’;²
- [1.3] it sometimes has a labial vowel in non-possessive forms, e.g. *artukluk* ‘majority’, *eylük* ‘goodness’.

One cannot but pose some questions. The first problem is why the illabial Px3Sg *+ı* should have triggered the labialization of *+lık* if the labial Px2Sg *+un* did not. The second question concerns the reasons for the labialization of this suffix in [1.3] – in the case of *artukluk* one immediately thinks of an assimilation ($*u - ı > u - u$) but it seems at first sight that *eylük* cannot be explained in this way. In reality, however, *eylük* goes back to *eyülık* which can easily be explained as an assimilated reflex of the older Ott. *eyülık* (< Ott. *eyü* ‘good’).³

In conclusion one is tempted to ask whether a reverse scenario is better: this suffix was originally labial and retained its labial vowel before the Px3Sg (so that a “dislabial”, i.e. labially disharmonized vowel sequence *u - ı* came into being) but

¹ Zajączkowski’s transcription is somewhat simplified here because indications of vowel length (being as a matter of fact a graphemic feature only) and the (similarly graphemic) distinction between different *h* sounds in Arabic loanwords are from the Turkish point of view purely conventional and have no bearing on vowel harmony.

² In view of these data as well as of those from other transcription texts the idea of Turkish labial harmony commencing only in the 17th century (Develi 1998: 32) cannot possibly be supported.

³ Both *eyülık* and *eylük* are still attested in the 15th century (Timurtaş 1994: 39).

changed it into an illabial one before the Px2Sg (which led to another “dislabial” vowel sequence: $\iota - u$). This matches quite well five (out of seven) examples with “dislabial vowel sequences” in the grammatical description of *Kelile ve Dimne* (Zajączkowski 1934: 155): *ayruluk* ‘separation’, *hoşnudluk* ‘cheerfulness’, *ululuk* ‘greatness’, *buyruklik* ‘ordering, commanding’. The other two formations are: *yakınlık* ‘closeness’ and *bilmezlik* ‘ignorance’. – See also [3.2] below.

The picture becomes more complex if we go beyond the five examples with “dislabial vowel sequences” in the grammatical description as adduced above and include other *+lık* derivatives occurring in this source. I found exactly 55 *+lık* derivatives in the vocabulary compiled in Zajączkowski 1934. Below they are all divided according to the (il)labiality of the two last syllables of the given derivative, i.e. the last stem syllable and the suffix syllable (the symbols used are: I = illabial, U = labial):

[1.4] Illabial + Illabial (= II), 28 examples:

agırlık ‘importance’, *aplık* ‘courage’, *aşaklık* ‘humility’, *baylık* ‘richness’, *belüersizlik* ‘inconspicuousness’, *berklik* ‘power’, *bilgelik* ‘wisdom’, *böliklik* ‘party, faction’, *dartışmaklık* ‘dispute’, *dirlık* ‘life’, *düleklik* ‘stability, solidity’, *dürişmeklik* ‘diligence’, *egrilik* ‘curvature’, *eymenmeklik* ‘anxiety, fear’, *ınamlık* ‘warranty’, *issilik* ‘warmth’, *işirgenmeklik* ‘friendship’, *ivmeklik* ‘hurry’, *katılık* ‘difficulty’, *kıyıklık* ‘military power’, *kızlık* ‘becoming (more, very) expensive’ (!), *nitelik* ‘quality’, *oñatlık* ‘prosperity’, *öğütçilik* ‘consultation’, *saklık* ‘caution, precautions’, *yalavaçlık* ‘diplomatic mission’, *yiglik* ‘preponderance’, *yufkalık* ‘softness’.

[1.5] Illabial + Labial (= IU), 2 examples:

arılık ‘purenness’, *çakuculuk* ‘calumny’.

[1.6] Labial + Labial (= UU), 2 examples:

yatluluk ‘misfortune’, *yogunluk* ‘thickness’.

[1.7] Labial + Illabial (= UI), 13 examples:

aluluk ‘weakness’, *artuklık* ‘preponderance’, *azgunlık* ‘rebellion’, *burunluluk* ‘conceit, pride’, *delülik* ‘stupidity’, *görklülük* ‘beauty’, *karañuluk* ‘darkness’, *konuklık* ‘visit’, *kutluluk* ‘good luck’, *sayruluk* ‘illness’, *saknuklık* ‘caution, precautions’, *yavuzluk* ‘evil, wrong’, *yetütlik* ‘sufficiency’.

[1.8] Double representations (= UI ~ UU), 5 examples:

bilüsüzlik ~ *bilüsüzlük* ‘ignorance’, *danuklık* ~ *danukluk* ‘testimony’, *esrüklik* ~ *esrükük* ‘getting drunk’, *tanuklık* ~ *tanukluk* ‘testimony’, *uzlık* ~ *uzluk* ‘craftiness, dexterity’.

This distribution does not actually fit our conjecture about the original labiality of the suffix *+lık*. But what is even more perplexing is the fact that these data can hardly be correlated with the *+lık* derivatives in Filippo Argenti’s work, see § 2 and cf. [3.2].

Newer studies do not offer any solution to the problem. They are even less informative in that they usually just mention the existence of rare labial variants and the quantitative predominance of illabial ones, not even noting their possible connection with possessive suffixes. Nevertheless, their testimony appears very

important on two counts: they all repeat the observation of the predominance of illabial variants and, at the same time, show examples that do not match our suggestion particularly well, cf. *hoşlığım* ‘my pleasantness’ vs. *hoşluguy* ‘your pleasantness’,⁴ as well as *sayrulığı(ndan)* ‘(because of) his disease’ vs. *ayrulugı* ‘his isolation’ (Timurtaş 1976: 338sq.). It can thus be viewed as quite possible that the labiality of the suffix vowel does not (or at least, does not entirely) depend on the quality of other vowels in the given word.

An exception in the context of the generally accepted original illabiality of *+lık* is L. Johanson and his 1979 study “Die westoghusische Labialharmonie” (here cited after his volume of reprints: Johanson 1991: 26-70). Johanson has doubts about the originality or predominance of the illabial variants⁵ and suggests instead a neutral vowel [ɘ]⁶ that we can presumably understand, at least in phonetic terms, as a sort of *schwa*. This conjecture can, however, hardly be accepted. It is true that the letter ⟨e⟩ was sometimes used both for *e* and *ı* in transcription texts.⁷ However, it is also true that *ı* and *u* can be readily distinguished from each other in all sources, and this is also valid for *i* and *ü*.⁸ Thus, P. F. Viguier consistently used ⟨è⟩ for *e*, and ⟨e⟩ for *ı* in his *Vocabulaire* of 1790, e.g. ⟨tchèshmè⟩ stands for *çeşme* ‘fontaine’, whereas ⟨tchebeq⟩ is for *çibik* ‘pipe’ (Stachowski S. 2002: 67), so that it is not readily clear why the same letter ⟨e⟩ should have been used to render not *ı* but a neutral vowel in the suffix *+lık*. In addition, no European author has ever noticed anything peculiar about the pronunciation of this suffix. Similarly, the orthography in Meninski’s 1680 dictionary is absolutely unequivocal because it is based on the Polish orthography with its ⟨y⟩ for *ı*; thus, a word like ⟨arkalyk⟩ ‘support, protection’ (Meninski 1680: 4738)⁹ can on no account be read **arkalɛk* (≈ **arkalək*), the only possible reading being *arkalık*. The [ɘ] thesis is still less possible in the light of Ottoman Turkish sources written in the Russian script that makes an absolutely clear distinction between ⟨e⟩ ~ ⟨э⟩ for *e*, ⟨и⟩ for *i* and ⟨ы⟩ for *ı* (cf. e.g. Starčevskij 1886). Why, then, should the letter ⟨ы⟩ render not *ı* but some other vowel, say [ɘ], in the suffix *+lık*?

⁴ My thanks go to Robert Woodhouse (Brisbane) for discussing some aspects of this study and especially for his accurate comment on *hoşlığım* and *hoşluguy*: “[...] the first seems to have more labiality in the suffix than the second, which has more velarity”. It is true that the more labial suffix *+um* could scarcely have triggered a delabialization of the preceding syllable if the form had originally been **hoşlugum*.

⁵ “Für das Altanatolisch-Türkische wird das betreffende Suffix als {IIQ} [= illabial – M. S.] angesetzt, was uns zweifelhaft erscheint und in Frage gestellt werden sollte.” (Johanson 1991: 60).

⁶ “Das Novum des altanatolisch-türkischen Standes ist also nicht, wie bisher behauptet, die sporadische *Rundung* eines illabialen Suffixvokals, sondern eine durch *Entrundung* entstandene Neutralvariante [ɘ], die zuerst nach illabialen Stammvokalen auftritt” (Johanson 1991: 63).

⁷ This fact will probably reflect a European spelling convention (cf. English *taken* with ⟨e⟩ for *schwa*, as well as, for instance, the German infinitive suffix *-en* and the word-final *e muet* in French songs), rather than an actual Turkish pronunciation. West European travellers who wrote down Turkish vocables had no adequate letter for Turkish *ı* at their disposal. That is why they used the letter ⟨e⟩ signaling a *schwa* whose real pronunciation was relatively similar to that of the Turkish *ı*.

⁸ The use of ⟨ü⟩ for *ı* in F. Meninski’s *Thesaurus* (1680) is an exceptional device (Stachowski M. 2012a) and does not concern us here.

⁹ On Meninski’s *-lık* derivatives see also Siemieniec-Gołaś 1986.

Generally, the [ɛ] thesis seems not to originate from an analysis of different spellings but rather be a free conjecture. Johanson's study has some other peculiar features, as well. Its author is generally not interested in a close examination of graphical systems used in the sources,¹⁰ adduces only a few specific examples, to boot without presenting their background (are there any counterexamples?, how many?, and so on) and discusses alternately Ottoman Turkish and Azeri words. In my opinion, it is still too early to seriously speak about Western Oghuz as a whole¹¹ if we do not even know how the labial harmony developed in the light of (precisely analyzed) Ottoman Turkish sources.

In what follows I am going to focus on the first half of the 16th century, as represented in Filippo Argenti's (1533) Ottoman Turkish grammar (cited after Rocchi 2007). The *+lık* derivatives attested by Argenti are listed in five groups considering their vocalic structure. Since this source is readily available in a German (Adamović 2001), an Italian (Rocchi 2007) and a Turkish (Adamović 2009) edition no meanings or page numbers (these being irrelevant in our phonological considerations) are given in the lists below. These lists are followed by observations, conclusions and questions concerning *+lık* derivatives.

2.

All the derivatives from F. Argenti's work are categorized below along the same lines as was the case in § 1:

[2.1] Illabial + Illabial (= II), 38 examples:

açıklık, açlık, aralık, as(s)uluk, ayıplık, barışıklık, canlık, carralık, çeviklik, çimenlik, derlik, dirlik, eksiklik, erlik, ganimetlik, güzellik, hanlık, haşarlık, kemallik, kesetlik, maşlık, müneccimlik, nekeslik, ortaglık, pelitlik, pintilik, pirlık, rüsfaylık, satlık, sayrılık [!, = *sayrılık], *sinsilik, şavklık, şenlik, şiplik* (? *şıplık*), *tekirlik, usluluk, yassılık (yer), zagallık*.

[2.2] Illabial + Labial (= IU), 80 examples:

abdalluk, adamakıyarluk, adamluk [!, = *adamluk], *ahsentlük, alatluk, apansızluk, aşçılık* [!, = *aşçılık], **asılzadaluk* [disguised as *asılzilzaduk*], *aydınluk ~ aydanluk, ayıkluk, azatluk, baganakluk, bekrilük, benavaluk, bezergenlük, büzevenklük, cadılık, cömertlük, çibinlük, çiftlük, doyumluk, edepsizlük, elçilik, ensizlük, epsemlük, evliyaluk, fakirlük, farmudaluk, fuçluk, gençlük, gügercinlük, hacılık, hainlük, halvaluk, hekimlük, horyatluk, hünerlük, igitlük, intizarluk, kalabaluk, kulpluk, kariplük, kartluk, kıskanluk, kızlık, kocaluk, koşuluk, matrapazluk, mekriflük, muhan(n)atluk, murdarluk, mutilük, müzevirlük, namilük, nemlük, oğlanluk, okuculuk, osanluk, pahılluk, pegamberlük, pehlivanluk, pişmanluk, rençperlük, safaluk, saglık, satılık(tur), semizlük, şa(h)irlük, şahitlük, şeytanluk, tangrılık, tatlılık, tatsızlık, tellalluk, temizlük, tiryakilük, yeramazluk* (!), *yoldaşlık, zayıfluk*.

¹⁰ “Die graphischen Repräsentationsverhältnisse [= letter and sound equivalents – M. S.] der bisher bekannten Transkriptionstexte sollen hier nicht ausführlich diskutiert werden” (Johanson 1991: 29). – In truth the equivalents are not discussed at all in this article.

¹¹ Cf. the title of Johanson's article: “Die westoghusische Labialharmonie”.

- [2.3] Labial + Labial (= UU), 24 examples:
baykuşluk, bölük, çokluk, donluk, dostluk, gözlük, günlük, hırsuzluk, ilduzluk, kaunluk, kışsohonluk, kolauzluk, konukluk, kuşuluk, mahmurluk, müsküllük, ogurluk, otluk, soukluk, tekeb(b)ürlük, yauzluk, yorgunluk, yügrüklük, zabunluk.
- [2.4] Labial + Illabial (= UI), no examples.
- [2.5] Double representations (= IU ~ II), 3 examples:
agırlük¹² ~ ağırlık, hastalık ~ hastalık, karalık ~ karalık.

The first thing that immediately makes itself conspicuous is the total lack of UI combinations. This automatically means that the UU group has no UI variants and thus the double representations only concern the II and IU groups.

Two further features then attract attention: the IU examples predominate in quantitative terms and all three of the word pairs in [2.5] are velar. The latter observation can hardly yield a meaningful interpretation since the number of examples is fairly low (but see [2.9]). By contrast, both former observations make thinkable the following tentative scenario:

- [2.6] Originally, the *+lık* suffix was labial. Otherwise at least a few examples in the UI group would be expected to have survived.
- [2.7] The assimilation of an unrounded vowel of the last syllable of the lexeme to a rounded suffix vowel resulted in UU sequences (i.e. *IU → UU; for the possibility of regressive vowel harmony see § 4). Their number is substantially smaller than that of non-assimilated IU cases which presumably signals that the assimilation (at least the regressive one) was not (yet ?) well advanced in the first half of the 16th century.
- [2.8] The problem of double variants in [2.5] is purely imaginary. They only reflect a transitional period of the IU → II process, i.e. Phase 1: IU; Phase 2: IU ~ II; Phase 3: II.
- [2.9] There are 20 velar and 18 palatal examples in the II group. This means that the IU → II process simultaneously concerned velar and palatal formations. Thus, the fact that all three of the word pairs in [2.5] only display velar vowels is mere coincidence.

3.

Let us present some problems and suggestions for future research:

- [3.1] Examples like (1533 Argenti:) *donluk* ~ (1680 Meninski:) *donlık* ‘clothing money’ contradict the idea of the original illabiality of the *+lık* suffix because *donluk* was actually expected to remain unchanged. A broader background is necessary to explain such a case.
- [3.2] Does the comparison of (1533 Argenti:) *ayıplık* and *ayıklık* point to a special status of *-p-*? If *-p-* is viewed as a labial element the **p* – *u* > *p* – *ı* change (i.e. **ayıpluk* > *ayıplik*) matches the conjecture in § 1 about

¹² Certainly a misprint in Rocchi 2007: 28, because originally spelled: <agherluch>, i.e. *agırluk*.

“dislabial sound sequences” (except that the labial element is a consonant here). This explanation appears a bit weird because a usual (and traditional) $*i - u > i - i$ assimilation is much easier; however, the easier explanation leaves *ayıkluk* unexplained.

- [3.3] Since the Arabic script was usually rather conservative the original orthography did not change very quickly. This fact may be probably also used for a better understanding of the (il)labiality of *+lik*. However, this knowledge has to be linked with an analysis of transcription texts. Thus, future research should go along the following lines: [3.3a] analysis of transcription texts; [3.3b] comparison of transcription texts from different centuries; [3.3c] analysis of Ottoman Turkish sources in the Arabic script; [3.3d] comparison of transcription texts with those in the Arabic script. The main role will no doubt fall to [3.3a] and [3.3b], whereas [3.3c], because of the conventional character of the Ottoman Turkish orthography applied with the Arabic script, can only be used as auxiliary material. Attention should be paid to keeping apart, if possible, literary and colloquial texts. One cannot rule out the possibility that we actually have to do with two distinct evolutionary models of vowel harmony in Ottoman Turkish.

4.

One idea runs like a common thread through all studies concerned with the evolution of Turkish vowel harmony: the tacit presumption of a progressive (= left to right) direction of the assimilation process. However, there are some interesting counterexamples. A few variants displaying a genuine tendency to regressive vowel harmony are discussed in Stachowski M. 2012b. Similarly, the most probable etymology of Turkish *bıçak* ‘knife’ interprets this word as a modern reflex of a Proto-Turkic derivative $*biç-ak < *biç-$ ‘to cut’, possibly $< *bi$ (or $*bī$) $>$ Turkish $bi+z$ ‘awl’. If this is so then the $*biçak > bıçak$ change resulted from the regressive influence of the suffix $*-a-$ upon the stem $*-i-$.¹³

Let us have a look at two word pairs, as adduced in the *Kelile ve Dimne* vocabulary:

[4.1] *bilüsüzlik* ~ *bilüsüzlük* ‘ignorance’;

[4.2] *belüsüz* ‘unknown’ ~ *belüsizlik* ‘inconspicuousness’

The [4.1] pair looks like a typical phonetic form pair and one cannot readily decide which phonetic variant is older here.

If we accept A. Zajączkowski’s (1934: 154) assertion that the privative suffix $+suz$ was originally labial in Ottoman Turkish and the suffix $+lik$ was originally illabial we have to introduce a “missing link” between the words in [4.2]: *belüsüz* $>$ $*belüsüzlik > belüsizlik$. And this is then another example of regressive vowel harmony.

Now, both variants in [4.1] can be assessed as: older *bilüsüzlik* $>$ newer *bilüsüzlük*. But here the vowel harmony acted progressively.

¹³ For the first discussion of the terms *progressive* and *regressive* in Turkology see the correspondence in Knüppel/van Tongerloo 2012: 82-88.

In addition, the question whether the vowel in *+lık* was originally velar or otherwise remains to be examined. It was briefly discussed in Zajączkowski 1934: 157sq. and nowadays we owe to M. Duman two valuable articles devoted to this phonetic puzzle and supplementing each other in chronological terms (Duman 2004 [Old Anatolian Turkish], 2005 [Ottoman Turkish]) in which the suffix *+lık* also comes in for some comment.

Another problem is why the suffix *+lık* has produced such a complicated set of phonetic combinations. Other suffixes (or is it only some of them?) seem to be substantially more regular. For instance, the *nomina auctoris* suffix $\pm(y)(i)ci$ appears in its illabial form in earlier sources and in both illabial and labial guise in newer ones, e.g. (14th c.): *okuyıcı* ~ (1828:) *okuyucu* ~ (1838:) *okuyucu* ‘reader’ (Stachowski S. 1996: 126); NB, in other sources the first suffix vowel was sporadically labialised as early as in the 14th century, cf. derivatives in *Kıyas-ı Enbiyâ*, e.g. *biyâlık okuşıcı* ‘cursing, wishing somebody ill’, *degürici* ‘communicating’, and so on, but also *göyündürücü* ‘burning (active)’, *yagdurucu* ‘causing raining’ (Demir 2005 *passim*). Is it indeed likely that *+lık* is the only Ottoman Turkish suffix displaying such a diversity of phonetic combinations?¹⁴

Or is it maybe possible (especially regarding the basic functions of *+lık*, see § 1, that hardly build up a coherent semantic whole) that two originally different suffixes, say Proto-Turkic **+luk* for nouns and **+lık* for adjectives (being of course different from *+lig*), melt together in the course of time?

The way leading to an ultimate solution and a perfect understanding of *+lık* seems to be, I fear, still quite long and winding.

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¹⁴ Some formulations occurring in the Turkological literature point to the opposite rather. Here only one example shall suffice: “Kıpçak sahası eserlerinde de sıkça geçen ekin [with *+sız* understood – M. S.] ünlü uyumu tamdır. Öte yandan nadiren uyuma aykırı durumlar da eserlerde dikkati çeker: *közsiz* ‘gözsüz’ [...], *arıksuz* ‘pis’ [...], *körksiz* ‘çirkin’ [...], *tilsüz* ‘dilsiz’ [...]” (Cin 2004: 22). The fact that this statement (structurally most resembling descriptions of *+lık*) concerns Kipchak suggests that the question relates to different Turkic idioms and, thus, cannot be completely new in Ottoman Turkish.

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