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İlhama Babanlı
Baku State University
babanlıilhama@gmail.com

The Indicative Mood of the Verb in the Epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”

Abstract

As in other sources of our linguistic history, the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud” contains all the verb moods that express the subject’s attitude toward reality. It is precisely in this epic that the foundations of our modern grammar can be traced. In this article, we have aimed to explore the historical roots of the indicative mood of the verb and examine its traces in both our literary language and dialects. Throughout the epic, we observed that verbs are conjugated with tense, person, and number suffixes, and we compared their similarities and differences with our modern literary language.

Keywords: *epic, verb, tenses, mood forms, suffixes*

İlhamə Babanlı
Bakı Dövlət Universiteti
babanlıilhama@gmail.com

“Dədə Qorqud kitabı” dastanında feilin göstərici əhvali-ruhiyyəsi

Xülasə

Dil tariximizin digər mənbələrində olduğu kimi, “Kitabi Dədə Qorqud” dastanında da subyektin gerçəkliyə münasibətini ifadə edən feilin bütün şəkillərinə rast gəlirik. Məhz dastana söykənib müasir qrammatikamızın köklərini izah etmək mümkündür. Bu məqalədə feilin xəbər kateqoriyasının tarixi köklərini açmağa, onun ədəbi dilimizdəki və dialektlərimizdə izlərini araşdırmağa çalışdıq. Dastan boyunca feillərin zaman, şəxs və kəmiyyət şəkilçiləri qəbul edərək təsrifləndiyini, müasir ədəbi dilimizlə oxşar və fərqli məqamlarını müşahidə etdik.

Açar sözlər: *dastan, feil, zamanlar, xəbər şəkli, şəkilçilər*

Introduction

The epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”, deeply ingrained in the collective memory of the Azerbaijani people and embodying our national identity, language, history, customs, culture, and ethnography, gained recognition in the scientific world at the beginning of the 19th century. However, a focused semantic analysis of the work did not begin until the 1950s. Linguists have invested considerable effort into studying the epic, resulting in numerous articles, monographs, and books dedicated to this remarkable piece of folklore. The verb is the most dynamic part of speech, which is why studying word order, meaning groups, and the structural types of verbs in the “Book of Dede Gorgud” remains highly relevant today.

Research

The verb, with its distinct categories, plays a prominent role in the language of written monuments, characterised by its rich style and subtle nuances. As with other sources of our linguistic heritage, the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud” showcases all the verb moods that convey the subject’s perspective on reality. This epic serves as a key to understanding the origins of our contemporary grammar. This article aims to explore the historical roots of the indicative mood in the verb and examines its presence in both our literary language and regional dialects.

In world linguistics and Turkology, verb tenses are typically categorized based on how the action relates to the moment of speaking. In the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”, we see three primary

tenses that reflect this temporal connection: past, present, and future. Verbs are inflected for tense by adding appropriate tense and person suffixes.

“The past tense concept refers to a semantic relationship that defines the connection between objects, events, and their characteristics, primarily focusing on correlating them within the past domain” (Tanrıverdi, 2017, p. 76). I. Tahirov identified the primary morphological markers of the past tense as the core elements of its micro-field, while he classified the use of other tense forms to express the past as secondary morphological markers, placing them in the perinuclear zone (Tanrıverdi, 2017, p. 76).

In the article, the terms “past simple” (*şühudi*) and “past perfect” (*nəqli*), which have been in use since 1941, were employed to discuss the past tense.

The past tense is formed in the epic using the suffixes *-dı/-di/-du/-dü*, *-mış/-miş*, *-ıb/-ib/-ub/-üb*.

According to A. Tanrıverdi, in text fragments such as “*Gögdən ildirım ağ-ban evim üzərinə saqır gördüm. Qarğu kibi qara saçım uzanır gördüm, uzaniban gözümi örtür gördüm*”, the present tense suffix *-ar*, *-ir* expresses the meaning of the past tense (Veliyev, 1984, p. 505).

The simple past tense indicates that the action has ended definitively, with the witness of the speaker. This tense is formed by the suffix *-dı/-di/-du/-dü* in the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”.

Oğuz genə əyyamla gəlüb, yurdına qondı (Islamov, 1968, 90); *Qazan sağına baqdı, qas-qas güldü. Solına baqdı, çoq sevindi. Qarşusına baqdı, oğlancığını – Uruzu gördü. Əlin əlinə çaldı, ağıladı* (Islamov, 1968, p. 66); *Dəpəgöz aydır: “Oğlan, qurtulduğunu?”* (Islamov, 1968, p. 92).

The **negation of the past tense** is formed by adding the suffix *-ma/-mə* (did not, had not), and there is no significant distinction in its usage: *Ərə varalıdan bərü daxı qarnım doymadı, yüzüm gülmədi; ayağım başmaq, yüzüm yaşmaq görmədi, -der* (Islamov, 1968, p. 38).

The **conditional form of the past simple** tense is also used in the epic:

Qarşu yatan Ala tağdan bir oğul uçurduñsa, degil maña

Qamın aqan yügrək sudan bir oğul aqıtdıñsa, degil maña (Islamov, 1968, p. 42);

Biñ-biñ ərdən yağı gördümsə, “oyunum” dedim.

Yigirmi biñ ər yağı gördümsə, yiləmədim (Islamov, 1968, p. 104)

The **past perfect** is formed using the suffix *-mış/-miş* in the epic. For example: *Dəpəgöz soylamış, görəlīm nə soylamış* (Islamov, 1968, p. 92); *Mərə qavat! Ağ saqallu babamı ağılatmışsan, Qarıcıq ağ birçəklü anamı bozlatmışsan. Qarındaşım Qıyanı öldürmüşsən* (Islamov, 1968, p. 93). As observed, in these lines, the suffix is used in its complete form, *-mış*, without the [s] sound being omitted.

Although examples of the past tense can be found for all persons in the epic, the second-person plural is not observed. A. Tanrıverdi explains this by stating: “The absence of the past tense suffix *-mış*⁴ in the second-person plural in the language of the epic is due to the lack of a suitable syntactic context. Additionally, the *-mış*⁴ + *sınız/sız*⁴ model was not common in the language of our monuments before the 16th century. Turkological literature even notes that it was not used at all in the language of several monuments” (Veliyev, 1984, p. 501).

Similar to its usage in our modern language, the suffix *-ıb/-ib/-ub/-üb* is also employed in the third person here.

Sağım ələ baqduğumda qardaşım Qaragünəyi gördüm, Baş kəsübdür, qan dökübdür. Çəndi alubdur, ad qazanubdur (Islamov, 1968, p. 66). The noteworthy point here is the use of the personal-narrative suffix after the tense form *-ub*, *-üb*.

Throughout the epic, the past tense with the suffix *-ıb* appears infrequently. In the examples provided, the suffix *-ıb* is attached to the third person. However, in written monuments from the 16th to the 19th centuries, there are instances where the suffix *-ıb* is added to the first person as well (Akhundov, 2012, p. 61).

It is interesting that in our modern literary language, particularly in journalistic writing, the suffix *-mış*⁴ has been largely abandoned, while the morpheme *-ıb*⁴ is steadily gaining a stronger presence.

The text includes the abbreviation of the particle “*idi*” in the forms *-dı*, *-di*, *-du*, *-dü*: *Bir gün Qamğan oğlu xan Bayındır yerindən durmuşdı. Şami günlüğü yer yüzünə dikdirmişdi. Ala sayvanı gög*

üzünə aşanmışdı (Islamov, 1968, p. 39); *Doqsan tümən gənc oğuz söhbətinə dərilmişdi*. *Ağzı böyük xümrələr ortalığa salınmışdı* (Islamov, 1968, p. 66). *Məgər qız meydanda bir köşk yapdırmış idi* (Islamov, 1968, p. 81).

To enhance the poetic quality, the abbreviated form of the particle *-di*⁴ is sometimes used. For example: *Qaçub gedərkən Aruz qocanın oğlanlığı düşmüş, bir aslan bulup götürmüş, bəsləmiş* (Islamov, 1968, p. 90).

Another distinction is that the verb in the past perfect tense, which takes the particle *-di*, is used with the preposition *-mi*. In this case, the preposition precedes *-di*: *Ölmüşmiydin, yitmişmiydin*, a Qazan! (Islamov, 1968, p. 48). In our modern language, this is expressed as *ölmüşdümmü, itmişdinmi* (are you dead or are you lost).

When we compare the modern era with the “Book of Dede Gorgud”, we observe that the past perfect tense in the first person plural takes the suffix *-uz/-üz*, rather than *-iq⁴*: *Kafir aydır: “Bəglər, Qazanın tövlə-tövlə şahbaz atlarını binmişüz, altun-aqçasını yağmalamışuz, qırq yigidlən oğlu Uruzu dutsaq etmişüz, qatar-qatar dəvələrini yetmişüz, qırq incə bellü qızlan Qazanın halalını tutmuşuz, bu hayıfları biz Qazana etmişüz”*, – dedi (Islamov, 1968, p. 46).

The epic also uses the conditional form of the past tense:

Ana haqqı Tanrı haqqı degilmişsə,

Qara polad uz qılıcum dartaydım... (Islamov, 1968, p. 106)

Present tense

In the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”, the present tense is formed using the suffixes *-ır, -ir, -ur, -ür*. For example: *Ayrı-ayrı yollar izin dəvə bilür; Yedi dərə qoxuların dülkü bilür* (Islamov, 1968, p. 36-37).

Disharmony is also evident in the use of the present tense suffix: *Bən bu gün Qonur ata qaqaram, üç günlük yolu bir gündə aluram, öylə olmadın yurdum üstünə varıram; əgər sağdır-əsəndir, axşam olmadın genə bən saña gəlürəm* (Islamov, 1968, p. 47). The notable point here is the violation of lip harmony, where the rounded variant of the present tense suffix is added after an unrounded vowel.

In the text, verbs ending in a vowel often take the suffix *-r* in the present tense: *Qapaqqan derlər, bir kişi var idi* (Islamov, 1968, p. 90); *Oğlan aydır: “Baba, çün məni evərayim dersən, maña layiq qız necə olur?”* (Islamov, 1968, p. 80); *Bağrım ilə yürəgim nə dağlarsan?* (Islamov, 1968, p. 96); *Aydi: “Bəli, canım baba, eylə istərəm”* (Islamov, 1968, p. 80). In these lines, the verb “derlər” means “they say”, the verb “dersən” means “you say”, the verb “dağlarsan” means “you burn”, and the verb “istərəm” means “I want”.

A similar situation is observed in the Nakhchivan dialect today: – *Xorək var qazanda bişi:rıx, xorək var tavada bişi:rıx. O vaxtdan yaxçı işdi:rəm. – Mən bı ipəxlərdən başqa, yaçılı tanıram* (Encyclopedia of the “Book of Dede Gorgud”, 2000, p. 123).

The suffix *-r*, which expresses the present-future tense, is also found in later periods of the literary language (Azizov, 2016, p. 172).

Sometimes the suffixes *-er* and *-ar* are also used: *“Həm şimdi nə yersən, nə içərsən və nəyə binərsən?”* – dedi (Islamov, 1968, p. 104). From a psycholinguistic perspective, it is known that the *-ər* form expresses the present tense, not the future. The use of the word “şimdi” leaves no room for doubt.

A. Demirchizadeh writes about this: “...it is evident from the explanations of both ancient and modern linguists that in the language of the “Book of Dede Gorgud”, or in Azerbaijani during the period of its formation as a national language, the present tense and the future tense were expressed using the same suffixes (*-r/ər/-ar/-ür/-ur*). In other words, the distinct suffixes for each tense had not yet been differentiated or independently expressed” (Dialects and accents of the Nakhchivan ASSR, 1962, p. 94).

Sometimes the present tense expression has the effect of present continuous:

Oğul, sən varacaq yerin

Dolamac-dolamac yolları olur.

Atlu batub şıqamaz anuñ balçığı olur.

Ala yılan sökəməz anuñ ormanı olur (Islamov, 1968, p. 80). The concept of time in these verses, although grammatically in the present tense, conveys the meaning of “always there is.”

A. Akhundov noted that in the example: “*Uruz aydır... Qazan genə aydır... Ağam Qazan! Sası dinli Gürcüstan ağzında oturursan, ordun üstünə kimi qoyursan?*”, although the verbs “ayıtmaq,” “oturmaq,” and “durmaq” are presented in the present tense, they describe a state or action that occurred in very ancient times. From a logical perspective, these actions belong to the distant past (Akhundov, 2012, p. 82-83).

The **present tense narrative form** is also widespread in the epic:

Doquz qara gözli, örmə saçlı, əlləri biləgindən qınalı, parmaqları nigarlı, boğazları birər qarış kafir qızları al şərabi altun ayağla Qalın Oğuz bəglərinə gəzdirirlərdi (Islamov, 1968, p. 66); *Oğuz zamanında Qanlı qoca derlərdi, bir gürbüz ər vardı* (Islamov, 1968, p. 80); *Qazan aydır: “Mərə Qılbaş, bu Daş Oğuz bəgləri xanım bilə gəlülərdi”* (Islamov, 1968, p. 109).

Throughout the epic, the plural suffix is often used before the particle “idi” (as in these lines). Today, we encounter the same phenomenon in our dialects. For example, in the Qirag Kaseman dialect of the Gazakh region, we observe a similar situation: – *O toru payalara keçirellərdi, içinə ya cücə, ya bir quş bağlərdilər* (Zeynalov, 1975, p. 136).

It is also sometimes found in **present tense narratives**. For example: *Övrət aydır: “Vay, səniñ əliñdən nə yer yüzində dirimiz və nə yer altında öülümüz qurtulmuş!”-dedi* (Islamov, 1968, p. 104). *Qanlı qoca aydır: “Oğul, sən qız istəmənmişsən, cilasun-bahadır istərmişsən, anuñ arqasında yeyəsən-içəsən, xoş keçəsən!”* (Islamov, 1968, p. 80).

There are also some noteworthy points in the negation of the present tense. For example: *Mərə kafir, sən məni bilməzmişin?* (Islamov, 1968, p. 104). *Bilməzmişin* feili “tanımırsan” anlamındadır. Digər məqam, bu gün həmin fikri əgər *bilmirsən* şəklində ifadə etsək belə *mi* ədadı şəxs şəkilsindən sonra gəlir.

The verb “bilməzmişin” means “don't you know.” Another point to note is that if we were to express the same idea today as “bilmirsən,” the preposition “belə mi” would come after the personal suffix.

The negation of the present tense takes the suffix *-iz⁴*, not *-iq⁴*, in the first person plural: *Ayıldılar: “Bilməzüz”* (Islamov, 1968, p. 109). *Biz bunu tanımazız* (Islamov, 1968, p. 58).

H. Mirzadəh stated that until the mid-19th century, the plural of the first person was expressed with the element *-z, -üz*, which is considered an ancient form of the plural suffix, instead of the personal suffixes *-k, -q* (Tahirov, 2007, p. 237). According to A. Tanrıverdi, the stabilization of the personal suffix *-iq⁴*, which denotes the first person plural in our modern literary language, dates back to the later period of the 18th century (Veliyev, 1984, p. 304).

Sometimes the infinitive form of a verb also expresses affirmation and negation of the present tense:

Qalqubanı yerimdən durmağım çoq.

Yelisi Qara Qazlıq atıma binməgim çoq.

Arqubeli Ala dağı avlayuban aşmağım yoq.

Ağ alınlu Bayındırıñ divanına varmağım yoq (Islamov, 1968, p. 96).

In these lines, the expressions *durmağım çoq, binməgim çoq* semantically mean “I stand”, “I ride”; while the combinations *aşmağım yoq, varmağım yoq* mean “I do not cross”, “I do not come”.

Future tense

In the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”, the suffixes *-ar/-ər; -ır/ir/ur/ür/* are used to express the future tense, just like in the present tense. For example: *Qaçan Qazan evin yağmalatsa, halalınıñ əlin alur, dışra çıqardı, ondan yağma edərdi* (Islamov, 1968, p. 109); *Qolça qopuz götürüb, eldən-elə, bəgdən-bəgə ozan gəzər* (Islamov, 1968, p. 37).

H. Mirzadəh observed that the future tense does not suggest that the action or event will occur at a specific and definite time. On the contrary, the future tense spans a period between the present and the future, and thus, the concept of time here is somewhat expansive (Tahirov, 2007, p. 255).

In the language of the Ahıska Turks, the future tense of the verb has two forms: *-ar, -ər; -ır, -ir, -ur, -ür*. For example: *Qarşıda çıraq yanar, \\ Baxduxca irax yanar (mani); Bənim üstümü açar, əl-*

ayağımı yaxar (“*Şah Abbasınən usta*” nağılından); *Böyüğün sözünü tutmiyan uluya-uluya qalur* (*əski söz*); *Dəmür nəmdən, insan qəmdən çürür* (*əski söz*) və s. (Mirzazadə, 1962).

In the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”, there are instances where the future tense is used with the suffix *-a*. For example: *Anası ağladı, aydır: “Oğul, babañ sağdır, amma söyləməyə qorxudum, kafirə varasan, kəndözünü urasan, həlak olasan”*; “*Qanqıñuza yapışurlarsa*” “*Qazan xatunu qanqıñızdır*” deyü, *qırq yerdən avaz verəsiz*”, -dedi (Islamov, 1968, p. 106).

E. Azizov stated that in Azerbaijani dialects, the suffix *-a/-e* expresses both indefinite future and definite future tense content (Azizov, 2016, p. 175).

Today, in the Nakhchivan dialect, the future tense negation with the suffix *-a* is observed: *amasan, qaşmasan*, etc. (Encyclopedia of the “Book of Dede Gorgud”, 2000, p. 128). A similar situation is also recorded in the Sheki dialect. For example: *gələsən “gələrsən”, gələsuz “gələrsiniz”, vurasan “vurarsan”* (Language of the Ahıska (Meskhetian) Turks, p. 130).

There are several examples of **indefinite future tense narratives** in the text: *Oğlanın iki kəlbçüğü vardı, qarğayı-quzğunu qovardı, qondurmazdı* (Islamov, 1968, p. 42); *Qayıbdən dürlü xəbər söylərdi. Haq Taala anın köñlinə ilham edərdi. Qorqut ata Oğuz qövminin müşkili həll edərdi* (Islamov, 1968, p. 36).

As in the present tense, the plural form is used before the particle “*di*”: *Yeməgini-suyunu dəgirmən daşı dəlüğindən verərlərdi* (Islamov, 1968, p. 104).

In the epic, we encounter the **conditional form of the future indefinite tense** of the verb: *Qazanı birağur gedərsəvüz, evində bizi qovarlar*” (Islamov, 1968, p. 104). The concept conveyed by the modern term “*getsək*” is presented here in the future indefinite tense, with the personal suffix also incorporated. Another distinction is that the future indefinite tense does not accommodate the particle “*isə*” in modern language.

Although the suffix *-acaq²* is not typically used to indicate the future tense in the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”, an exceptional instance drew our attention: *Əgər Çobanla varacaq olursam, Qalın Oğuz bəgləri bənim başıma qaqınc qaxarlar, “Çoban bilə olmasa, Qazan kafiri alamazdı”, deyərlər, -dedi* (Islamov, 1968, p. 49). In these lines, the expression *varacaq olursam* means *vararamsa* – “*if I marry*”, in fact, the second part of the verb (*olursam*) is in the conditional future tense. Speaking about the suffixes *-acaq, -əcək*, H. Mirzazadəh writes that these suffixes were used in the written language of all periods (Tahirov, 2007, p. 250). He also observes that the suffixes *-acaq, -əcək* are less prominent in the language of literary and artistic works compared to modern usage. This less frequent form was later refined (Tahirov, 2007, p. 251).

The **negation of the future indefinite tense** is in the form *-ma/-mə +-z*, just like in the present tense. For example:

Qadir tanrı verməyincə ər bayımaz.

Əzəldən yazılmasa, qul başına qəza gəlməz.

Ölən adam dirilməz

Çıxan can gerü gəlməz (Islamov, 1968, p. 36); “...*Əgər böylə öldürməzsən bir dürlü dəxi öldüriməzsən, ballı bilgil!*” – dedilər (Islamov, 1968, p. 41) *Qızıl dəvələr olan yerdə Bir köşəgi olmazmı olur?* (Islamov, 1968, p. 50).

A. Demirchizadəh states that, similar to how both the present and future tenses in affirmative verbs are primarily expressed with *r*, both tenses in negative verbs are expressed with *z* (Dialects and accents of the Nakhchivan ASSR, 1962, p. 96).

The phrase “*olmazmı olur*” in the above line serves as an excellent example of the periphrastic verb forms found in the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”.

In general, periphrastic verbs are formed by combining the auxiliary verb “*olmaq*” (*to be*) with main verbs in various tenses. This phenomenon is observed in all Turkic languages. However, there is a limited amount of scholarly research on the historical study of periphrastic verbs. However, there are quite interesting examples in ancient written monuments. These examples are quite interesting facts from a modern linguistic point of view.

Periphrastic verbs can be used in both affirmative and negative forms. At the same time, these verbs can also be used with the auxiliary verbs *idi, imiş, isə*. Researchers examining periphrastic

verb forms primarily focus on those created by combining the infinitive form of a verb with the word *ol* (*be*). However, they also demonstrate that these forms can be created using words such as “*deyil, var, yox, lazım, gərək*” (*not, there is, there is not, need, must*) and others.

F. Zeynalov conducted a comparative study of periphrastic verb forms using materials from Turkic languages and concluded that periphrastic forms are primarily a category unique to the verb. “As a result, all the characteristics specific to the verb are reflected in these forms, which also accounts for the diverse range of periphrastic verb forms” (15, 38).

A. Aliyev observed that the Azerbaijani language contains numerous types of periphrastic verbs. “Some of these specific types, widely used in our written monuments, including the “Book of Dede Gorgud”, have since fallen out of use in our language, though they are still present in modern Turkish (Aliyev, 1999, p. 211). The periphrastic verbs in the epic were also studied by I. Veliyev. He noted that periphrastic verbs were used extensively in the “Book of Dede Gorgud”, adding various nuances of meaning. Veliyev also observed that the periphrastic verb forms in the language of the monument do not differ significantly in structure from those in our modern language (Western group dialects and accents of the Azerbaijani language, 1967, p. 50).

Let’s examine some of the periphrastic forms representing different tenses in the epic “Book of Dede Gorgud”:

Ağ saqalı, qarışı tutdı ola, gözüüm, səni? (Islamov, 1968, p. 93); *Qanturalı aydır: “Baba, mən yerimdən durmadın ol durmış ola! Mən qaraquc atıma binmədin ol binmiş ola! Mən qanlı kafir elinə varmadın ol varmış, maña baş gətürmüş ola!”– dedi!* (Islamov, 1968, p. 80); *Atam adın sorar olsan,– Qaba Ağac! Anam adın dersən,–Qağan Aslan!* (Islamov, 1968, p. 93); *Qarşu yatan qara dağlar istər olsa, el yaylar* (Islamov, 1968, p. 72); *Çağırdılar, Dədəm Qorqut gəlür oldi* (Islamov, 1968, p. 40); *Ağ saqallu babasını, ağ birçəklü anasını bozladurmuş olur?* (Islamov, 1968, p. 101); *Amma gətürməyəcək olursan, bu qatla öldürmədim, ol vaqtın öldürərin!*”– dedi (Islamov, 1968, p. 57).

Thus, throughout the epic, verbs are conjugated by accepting tense, person, and number suffixes, and their similarities and differences with our modern literary language have been analyzed.

Conclusion

The study of verb forms in the epic has always been of significant interest. In the language of this monument, the verb moods and tenses closely resemble those of modern Azerbaijani in both meaning and structure. There is also a parallelism or semantic similarity between tense suffixes in the epic, reflecting the features of tribal languages. Although some tense suffixes have become archaic in the modern literary language, they continue to retain their functional role in regional dialects. As observed, the verbs in the epic undergo changes over time by adopting tense and person suffixes. A notable aspect is the use of the suffixes *-r, -ər, -ar, -ur, -ür*, which serve both present and future tenses. Additionally, the past perfect tense form with the suffix *-ib* is rarely found in the epic’s language. Another distinctive feature is the violation of vowel harmony, with a rounded variant used after an unrounded vowel.

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