

*Two evidentials or two commitment phrases in Turkish?
They differ from and complement each other*

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Turkish has a number of tools to express certainty or direct knowledge versus lack of those, thus expressing indirect knowledge or inference based on observation. It also has various tools to express emphatic statements/assertions of fact or commitment to an educated guess. I shall focus in this talk on two such tools, one of them discussed rather widely in the literature, the other one hardly discussed at all. The first one is -mİş, the so-called evidential or reported speech suffix, and the second one -DİR, referred to as an epistemic copula in the limited literature where it is mentioned. (In prescriptive and traditional grammars, it is described as a “finite” third person agreement morpheme.) The talk argues that these two tools differ, in the sense that the first is indeed an evidential, based on its distribution and semantics, while the second is a copula (a view criticized by some), and that it is epistemic. At the same time, these two morphemes have, in part, something in common: While -mİş can be used as an inference marker, that is as an expression of an educated guess, based on observation and/or knowledge of facts, -DİR can likewise be used for educated guesses, based on knowledge and/or observations. Nonetheless, the two morphemes differ even with respect to these similar components. In addition to discussing those differences, there will also be a discussion of -mİş, claiming that the so-called “two -mİş’s”, that is -mİş and -Imİş, actually consist of just one -mİş, with the second being an inflected copula: -(I)-mİş.