

TENSE AND STATUS IN ALBANIAN, BALKAN SLAVIC
AND TURKISH: THE CATEGORY OF ADMIRATIVITY vs.
ADMIRATIVE USAGE

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The Albanian admirative comprises a series of paradigmatic sets based on an inverted perfect (participle+auxiliary) and is traditionally defined as a mood expressing surprise. The Bulgarian and Macedonian past tenses based on the old perfect participle in *-l* and the Turkish past tense based on the old perfect participle in *-miş* can also be used to express surprise in a manner which has been compared to the Albanian present admirative, e. g. *Ai qenka kaxanxhi!* (Alb.), *Toj bil kaxandžija!* (Bul. Mac.), *O kaxanci imiş!* (Turk.) 'He is a kettlemaker! (much to my surprise)'. The chief contextual variant meaning of reportedness and the clearly derivative meaning of dubitativity which occur in the Balkan Slavic and Turkish forms, however, also serve as possible meanings of the Albanian admirative. Thus there is a constellation of meanings in similar perfect - based verb forms in all these Balkan languages.

While it is clear that the traditional descriptions of these forms contain much that is accurate, they are not adequate for the complexities involved, and this paper will attempt to deal with two such problems. (1) Given the past tense marking of the Balkan Slavic and Turkish forms, how can one account for their apparently present meaning in admirative usage? (2) What is the invariant meaning of the Albanian admirative, since it cannot be 'surprise', and is this admirative really a mood, or is it marked for some other category? In each of these questions, it is the verbal systems of the languages not mentioned, i. e. Albanian for (1) and Balkan Slavic and Turkish for (2), which must be examined to suggest an answer.

I will propose the following solutions. (1) It has not been previously noted that whereas the Albanian admirative can occur with any verb, admirative usage in the other languages is limited to expressions of state primarily those meaning 'be' and 'have'. The resulting suggestion that the apparently present meaning in this admirative usage is based on the inherently past existence of the state is supported by the heretofore

unobserved fact that it is exclusively with these same statives that Albanian permits the use of any past admirative tense (perfect, imperfect, pluperfect) with the same type of apparently meaning. (2) I have argued elsewhere that the reported and dubitative meanings of the Turkish and Balkan Slavic forms result from their being unmarked with respect to other past tense forms, which are marked for confirmative status. The Albanian admirative is a mirror image of these other languages' confirmatives, i. e. it specifies the speaker's present or past noncommitment to the truth of the statement. The noncommitment inherent in reported or dubitative usage is clear, and surprise by its very nature implies that at a previous moment the speaker would not have supported the statement. Thus the Albanian admirative is marked for status, i. e. the speaker's attitude toward the event, rather than mood, i. e. the ontological evaluation of the event.

The paper will conclude that the perfect appears to have undergone related developments in all these languages. In all of them it has retained a nuance of connecting the present with the past in its use to express surprise at a previously existing state. But whereas the old Balkan Slavic and Turkish perfects have become unmarked pasts with non-confirmative chief contextual variant meanings, the Albanian perfect has split: the plain perfect has become the unmarked past while the non-confirmative nuances became attached to the inverted perfect, which is now the admirative.