On the non-actuality inferences in Turkish avertives*

Furkan Dikmen[1], Ömer Demirok[2]

ORCID: [1] 0000-0003-1192-3612, [2] 0000-0002-2536-5247

[1]*Université Côte d'Azur, CNRS, BCL, 06357 Nice, France*

[2]*Boğaziçi University, Department of Linguistics, 34342 Istanbul, Türkiye*

[1]*furkan.dikmen@etu.univ-cotedazur.fr,* [2]*omerfaruk.demirok@bogazici.edu.tr*

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ABSTRACT: Languages have various forms of expressing implications of imminency and non-actuality. While a variety of constructions such as imperfectives, proximatives or adverbs like *almost* crosslinguistically imply the counterfactuality of the event in question, some languages like French and Turkish have exclusive morphemes expressing imminence while at the same time logically asserting the non-actuality of an event. This study has a particular focus on the Turkish morpheme *-(y)Ayaz*, which when combined with a predicate indicates that the event expressed by the predicate has not been actualized although it was close to be so. We argue that this is part of what *-(y)Ayaz* asserts, and provide a compositional semantics for sentences involving this morpheme. Finally, we show that our semantics sheds light on the combinatorial restrictions concerning lexical aspect and outer aspect.

Keywords: frustrative, avertive, actuality, Turkish, semantics

Türkçede avertif yapılardaki gerçekleşmemişlik çıkarımı üzerine

ÖZ: Diller, gerçekleşmemişlik çıkarımlarını ifade etmek için çeşitli yollar kullanır. Bitmemişlik görünüşü ya da yaklaşma ifade eden çeşitli yapılar, ilgili olayın gerçekleşmediğini birçok dilde ima ederken, Fransızca ve Türkçe gibi bazı diller, bir olaya yaklaşıldığını ancak olayın gerçekleşmediğini mantıksal düzeyde ifade etmek için özel biçimlere sahiptir. Bu çalışma, bir yüklem ile birleştiğinde, yüklem tarafından ifade edilen olayın gerçekleşmediğini bildiren Türkçe bir biçimbirim olan *-(y)Ayaz'a* odaklanmaktadır. Bu çalışmada,

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gerçekleşmemişlik çıkarımının *-(y)Ayaz*'ın mantıksal anlamının bir parçası olduğu savunulmakta ve bu biçimbirimi içeren tümcelerin anlamlarının parçalarından nasıl üretildiği gösterilmektedir. Son olarak, bu biçime verdiğimiz anlamın, sözlüksel ve dilbilimsel görünüşle ilgili birleşimsel kısıtlamalara ışık tuttuğunu gösteriyoruz.

Keywords: frustratif, avertif, gerçekleşme, Türkçe, anlambilim

1 Introduction

Turkish has a construction on a par with what has been dubbed under "frustrative" in the literature (Schwellenbach 2013). An illustrative example is provided in (1b). The type of construction presented in (1b) is generated when the verb is suffixed with the bold-faced morpheme *-(y)Ayaz*, which is categorized as a bound auxiliary, along with a number of morphemes sharing common composition such as "*-(y)Abil*, *-(y)Iver*, *-(y)Agel*, *-(y)Adur*, *-(y)Ayaz*, and *-(y)Akal*" (Göksel & Kerslake 2005: 141).[1]

(1) a. Çocuk düş-tü.
child fall-PST
'The child fell.'
b. Çocuk düş-**eyaz**-dı.
child fall-(y)AYAZ-PST
'The child *almost* fell.'

Frustratives are a group of constructions that express approximation or imminence regarding the event that the predicate describes (Schwellenbach 2013). As Schwellenbach (2013) rightly points out, several different constructions such as imperfectives, approximatives and avertives might be subsumed under frustratives. For example, imperfectives in Spanish might trigger the inference of non-accomplishment as illustrated in (2a). However, this inference is easily cancellable as shown in (2b).

(2) Spanish (Schwellenbach 2013:118)
a. Salía cuando llegó su madre.
leave.IMPF.3.SG when arrive.PST.3.SG his mother
'He was about to leave when his mother arrived.' (→ He didn't leave.)

[1] In this paper, we focus on the semantic contribution of *-(y)Ayaz*; however, we also comment on its morphological properties and its relationship with other suffixes in the final section.

b. Salía cuando llegó su madre,
leave.IMPF.3.SG when arrive.PST.3.SG his mother
pero no la vio.
but not her see.PST.3.SG
'He was leaving when his mother arrived, but he did not see her.'

Similarly, Romance languages like Italian, Spanish and Catalan have a construction called approximative composed of the imperfective form of the verb *be* and a prepositional expression as shown in (3). Although these constructions also trigger the inference of counterfactuality, it can easily be overridden with enough contextual support, as shown in (4).

(3) Spanish (Schwellenbach 2013:118)
a. Estaba para salir cuando
be.IMPF.3.SG PREP leave.INF when
sonó el teléfono.
ring the phone
'He was about to leave, when the phone rang.' (→ He didn't leave.)
Catalan
b. Estava a punt de marxar quan
be.IMPF.3.SG on point of go.out.INF when
va sonar el telefón.
go.PRS.3.SG ring.INF the phone
'He was about to leave, when the phone rang.'

(4) Spanish (Schwellenbach 2018:119)
Estaba para ganar la carrera y,
be.IMPF.3.SG PREP win.INF the race and
de hecho la ganó.
in fact it win.PST.3.SG
'He was about to win the race, and, in fact, he won it.'

In contrast, avertives seem to strongly imply the inference of aversion; i.e., the inference of non-accomplishment or counterfactuality. For example, in French, this inference cannot be canceled as understood from the infelicity of the follow up clause in (5b) that negates the inference that the patient did not fall.

(5) French (Schwellenbach 2018:119)
a. J'ai failli tomber.
have.PRS.1.SG fail.PTPC fall.INF
'I almost fell.'

b. #J'ai failli tomber,
have.PRS.1.SG fail.PTPC fall.INF
et je suis tombé.
and I be.PRS.1.SG fall.PTPC
#'I almost fell and I fell.'

Similarly, the Turkish example in (1a) without the morpheme *-(y)Ayaz* guarantees that the child fell. However, the same predicate with *-(y)Ayaz* triggers the inference that the event has been averted. In other words, the truth of (1b) does not entail the truth of the child having fallen. In fact, it triggers a strong implication that the falling event has not taken place, i.e., it has been averted, just like the French example in (5a).

A number of questions arise. First, although the negation inference is strong, its status needs to be clarified. It is not immediately clear whether the inference is part of the entailments of (1b) or whether it is a type of conversational implicature; if the former, whether it is a presupposition or a regular entailment. If the latter, one needs to illustrate whether the inference can be canceled in any way. Our empirical facts show that the aversion inference is part of the assertion of frustrative constructions like (1b). Therefore, we will argue that they should be categorized as avertives. Accordingly, we will, henceforth, gloss this suffix in the examples as AVERT, standing for avertive.

2 Semantic properties of *-(y)Ayaz*

A crucial issue regarding the semantics of *-(y)Ayaz* is the implication that the described event has been averted, i.e., has not been actualized. As we previously indicated, the clause in (1b) strongly implies that the child was close to falling but did not fall. Although the inference of aversion is strong, it is not immediately clear whether it is an implicature or part of the meaning of *-(y)Ayaz*. While speakers of Turkish judge a continuation that negates the inference contradictory as in (6a), the reinforcement test does not yield redundancy as would be expected if this were part of the meaning of the suffix. This is illustrated in (6b).

(6) a. Çocuk düş-eyaz-dı, #ve düş-tü.
child fall-AVERT-PST and fall-PST
'The child almost fell and fell.'
b. Çocuk düş-eyaz-dı, ama neyseki düş-me-di.
child fall-AVERT-PST but fortunately fall-NEG-PST
'The child almost fell, but fortunately did not fall.'

To better understand the precise nature of this inference, let us consider the dialogue in (7).[2] In a scenario where one of the interlocutors asks whether a falling event has been actualized as a response to an assertion of almost-falling, our prediction is that if the aversion is part of what is expressed with the avertive suffix, the interlocutor's question must be inappropriate. Indeed, speakers judge (7b) infelicitous as a response to (7a).

(7) CONTEXT: Selin watches a football game. Her favorite footballer Ali almost falls but manages to avoid it and continues to play. The following day Selin tells her friend Melih:
   a. Ali maç-ta düş-eyaz-dı.
      Ali game-LOC fall-AVERT-PST
      'Ali almost fell in the game.'
   b. #Peki düş-tü mü?
      well fall-PST Q
      'Well did he fall?'

If the frustrative suffix in Turkish expresses the meaning of aversion, the infelicity of (7b) is quite unsurprising. Given that Selin's utterance expresses the outcome of the close-to-falling event (namely not-falling), her friend Melih cannot utter a polar question that inquires whether Ali fell or not. Based on the judgments on (7b) in the context provided in (7), we conclude that the aversion inference is part of what is expressed by *-(y)Ayaz*. This makes the morpheme *-(y)Ayaz* fall under the avertive category within frustratives in the sense that aversion is part of the meaning of the morpheme.

Indeed, the aversion inference is non-cancellable in implicature canceling environments, either. It is known in the literature that scalar implicatures can be canceled when they occur in questions and in downward monotonic contexts (Atlas & Levinson 1981, Krifka 2003, Sauerland 2004 among others). For example, the logical disjunction *or* in (8) implies that only one of the disjuncts can be true.

(8) Ali drank tea or coffee. ⇝ Ali drank tea or coffee, but not both.

However, when it occurs as part of a question, it has been observed that this inference is not present anymore, for the yes-answer to the question can truthfully assert that both of the disjuncts are true.

[2] We thank one of the reviewers for suggesting this method of testing for the status of the inference.

(9) a. Did Ali drink tea or coffee? ⇝ Ali drank tea or coffee, but not both.
b. Yes, he drank both.

Similarly, the inference that only one of the disjuncts must be true is absent in downward monotonic contexts such as the restrictor of the universal quantifier and the antecedent of a conditional, as shown in (10) and (11).

(10) Everybody who took the test or submitted the assignment will pass the course. ⇝ Those who did both will fail the course.
(11) If you take the test or submit the assignment, you will pass the course. ⇝ Those who did both will fail the course.

In the following, we show that the inference of aversion cannot be canceled in these contexts, which suggests that it is part of the meaning of the avertive suffix in Turkish. To illustrate, the yes-answer to a question like (12a), roughly asking whether Ali almost fell, cannot assert that he fell. The incompatibility of this assertion as one of the answers to the question in (12a) suggests that the aversion inference cannot be an implicature. If it were so, namely if the question only asked for whether Ali was close to falling, the yes-answer would indeed be compatible with the assertion that he fell given that Ali's being close to falling does not exclude him having fallen.[3]

(12) a. Ali düş-eyaz-dı mı?
Ali fall-AVERT Q
'Did Ali almost fall?'
b. #Evet, düş-tü.
Yes fall-PST
'Yes, he fell.'

Similarly, if the frustrative suffix indeed only conveyed the aversion inference as an implicature, this inference would be canceled in the antecedent of a conditional and in the restrictor of a universal quantifier. This would mean that the people who actually fell would still have the right to ask for a candy given

[3] Upon a reviewer's comment, we would like to highlight that here if the meaning of *-(y)Ayaz* did not entail that there was no falling, then we would expect "yes, he fell"' to be felicitous as the stronger answer. To illustrate, if somebody asks the question "Does John live in France?", it is perfectly felicitous to utter "Yes, he lives in Paris." This is also the reason why *Evet, düşmedi* ("Yes, he did not fall") is equally out in the above dialogue. The yes-answer to (12a) is stronger than *Evet, düşmedi* ("Yes, he did not fall"). This would be analogous to an exchange where "Yes, he lives in France" is given as an answer to the question "Does John live in Paris?".

that having fallen entails having been close to falling. Somebody uttering (13a) or (13b) would not break their promise if they do not give candy to those who fell.

(13) a. Düş-eyaz-an herkes-e şeker ver-eceğ-im.
fall-AVERT-REL everyone-DAT sugar give-FUT-1.SG
'I will give candy to everyone who almost fell.'

b. Eğer düş-eyaz-ar-sa-n san-a şeker
if fall-AVERT-CON-2.SG 2.SG-DAT sugar
ver-eceğ-im.
give-FUT-1.SG
'If you almost fall, I will give you candy.'

c. ⇝/ Those who fell will get a candy.

The facts discussed above further confirm our conclusion that the aversion inference is not an implicature but an entailment of the frustrative suffix in Turkish.

A related issue regarding avertives cross-linguistically is whether the inference of aversion is a regular entailment, namely is part of the assertion, or a presupposition. (Penka 2006). In the following discussion, we will argue that avertives in Turkish express the implication of aversion as part of their assertions. Accordingly, in our view, the sentence in (1b) asserts that the subject was close to falling, but did not fall.

A sentence S1 presupposes another sentence S2 if and only if S1 and its negation, that is ¬S1, entail S2 (Coppock & Champollion 2024). Accordingly, we observe that although an avertive sentence such as (14a) entails a not-falling event, its negation does not, as illustrated in (14b). Indeed, its negative counterpart can only be true either when Ali was not close to falling, i.e., he was not falling at all, or when he fell. This shows that the aversion inference is affected by negation unlike presuppositions, which escape the scope of negation.

(14) a. Ali düş-eyaz-dı.
Ali fall-AVERT-PST
'Ali almost fell.'
⊨ Ali did not fall.

b. Ali düş-eyaz-ma-dı.
Ali fall-AVERT-NEG-PST
'It is not the case that Ali almost fell.'
⊨ Ali was not close to falling or Ali fell.
⊭ Ali did not fall.

These facts suggest that the inference of aversion is part of the assertion of *-(y)Ayaz* in Turkish. Accordingly, we will suggest that the avertive in Turkish expresses a conjunction of two conditions; namely, that the eventuality was close to taking place and it did not take place.

This brings us back to the observation that we reported in the beginning of this section, namely a continuation which asserts that the averted event did not take place is felicitous. All things being equal, the continuation should feel redundant and it does so, but not in a way that strikes speakers as an infelicitous utterance. We argue that this construction is not unique in this regard. Panther & Thornburg (2018) argue that reinforcements of entailments and presuppositions do indeed occur if what is entailed presents "strong evaluative and emotional attitude toward some state-of-affairs: shock, sadness [...] (Panther and Thornburg (2018:19). For example, although being killed entails being dead, the following excerpt does not sound like a redundant assertion.

(15) "Some of them have been found killed, dead, in different parts of the city. One was hit by a car. It's just not safe."
(globalnews.ca as quoted in Panther and Thornburg 2018:18)

We believe that the same effect is observed in (6b), where the adverbial *neyseki* 'fortunately' indicates a certain sense of evaluation and emotion towards Ali's not having fallen, which obviates the sense of redundancy. We observe other instances of this effect as exemplified in (16).

(16) Ali olay günü oradaydı. #(Neyseki)
Ali event day there.COP.PST fortunately
oradaydı. Şahitlik edebildi.
there.COP.PST witness do.MOD.PST ü
'Ali was there on the day of the event. Fortunately, he was there. He could act as a witness.'

Importantly, similar to (16), the continuation in (6b) is degraded without the adverb.

3 Analysis

Based on the discussion in Section 2, we argue that an avertive construction in Turkish roughly asserts (17).

(17) Let P be any predicate,
P-AVERT = almost-P ∧ ¬P

(17) indicates that a predicate with the avertive suffix asserts a conjunction of two sentences; namely that P was close to being accomplished, but it was not accomplished. Our task is, now, to adapt this meaning to the lexical entry of the avertive suffix in Turkish.

We will argue that *-(y)Ayaz* combines with a predicate of events and returns a predicate of events of the sort which only contains those that are close-to-P, but not P. One strong piece of evidence that P-*(y)Ayaz* has to denote a set of events is its behavior under nominalization. We observe that avertive constructions can be nominalized with *-mA* in Turkish. Demirok (2019) shows that *-mA* clauses minimally denote a set of events, which can be further predicated of event-referring expressions, as opposed to *-DIK* clauses that are propositional in nature. This is illustrated in (18).

(18) a. *Ali-nin düş-tüğ-ü korkutucu bir olay-dı.
Ali-GEN fall-DIK-POSS scary one event-PST
*‘That Ali fell was a scary event.’

b. Ali-nin düş-me-si korkutucu bir olay-dı.
Ali-GEN fall-mA-POSS scary one event-PST
‘Ali’s falling was a scary event.’

c. Ali-nin düş-eyaz-ma-sı korkutucu
Ali-GEN fall-AVERT-mA-POSS scary
bir olay-dı.
one event-PST
‘Ali almost falling was a scary event.’

The contrast in (18) illustrates that avertive constructions in Turkish refer to predicates of events. More specifically, we argue that they are composed of events that are almost accomplished, but averted. Notice that this description requires us to be able to refer to the stages of an eventuality being accomplished. In particular, we should be able to refer back to the individual parts of an eventuality, to retrieve the non-final parts of it. Given this, we should be able to define a set composed of almost-p events as in (19).

(19) *for any p standing for predicate of events*,
almost-p = λe. ∀e′ [p(e′) → e is a non-final part of e′]

(19) states that almost-p events are those that make up the non-final stages of a given event. As one of the reviewers points out, the definition in (19) assumes that events can be composed of structured parts. Importantly, this assumption is not unusual at all. Moltmann (1997) shows that events present part-whole structure on a par with other individual entities.

(20) John partly / halfway agreed. (Moltmann 1997: 184)

According to Moltmann (1997), partly in (20) refers to a partial instantiation of the event/situation described by the sentence John agreed. Additionally, many current models of Vendler's (1967) event types, particularly of accomplishment and achievement types, are taken to include structured parts, i.e., a result state and a causal event leading to that state (Dowty, 1979, Moens and Steedman 1988, Klein 1994, Ramchand 2008 among others). The meaning postulated in (19), in essence, makes reference to a causal process leading to a culmination/telos (Garey 1957, Parsons 1990). In other words, it generates a set of events consisting of the processes leading to the culmination/final point of the relevant event. Given this, we could integrate this notion into the meaning of *-(y)Ayaz* to be able to generate a predicate of events referring to non-final parts of a given event. In other words, we could make it assert the existence of almost-p subevents of p-events. Accordingly, we present the lexical entry of the avertive suffix in (21).[4]

(21) $[\![\text{-(y)Ayaz}]\!] = \lambda p_{\langle v,t\rangle}.\ \lambda e.\ [\text{almost-p}(e)] \wedge \neg\exists e'\ [p(e')]$

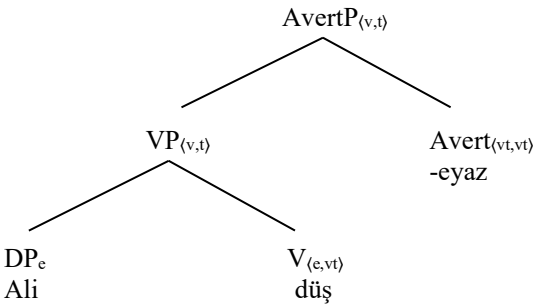
The lexical entry for *-(y)Ayaz* in (21) has two components: Combining with a predicate of events p, *-(y)Ayaz* asserts the existence of an almost-p event as explicated above, and the non-existence of the input p-event, i.e, non-culmination. Hence, both the inference of aversion and the inference of approaching culmination are at issue in avertive constructions built with *-(y)Ayaz* in Turkish.

As for the syntax of *-(y)Ayaz*, given that it directly combines with a predicate of events and returns another predicate of events, we propose that it is merged in the event domain on top of a VP/VoiceP. Since *düş* 'fall' is usually taken to be an unaccusative verb, we will simply assume that its sole argument is VP internal (Perlmutter 1978). Therefore, we could represent the syntactic structure of (22a) as in (22b).

[4] For ease of exposition, we do not intensionalize the meaning of *-(y)Ayaz*, nor do we introduce time variables in its meaning. Although its complete characterization would involve such variables, they are orthogonal to the discussion in this paper. Needless to say, they are compatible with the meaning presented in (21).

(22) a. Ali düş-eyaz-dı.
Ali fall-AVERT-PST
'Ali almost fell.'

b.



Hence, according to our analysis and the semantic types specified in the tree in (22b), we can calculate the final truth conditions of a sentence like (22a). This is illustrated in (23).

(23) a. ⟦VP⟧ = ⟦V⟧(⟦DP⟧) by Function Application
b. ⟦VP⟧ = [λx. λe. fall(e)(x)](Ali) = λe. fall(e)(ali)]
c. ⟦AvertP⟧ = ⟦Avert⟧(⟦VP⟧) by Function Application
d. ⟦AvertP⟧ = [λp⟨v,t⟩ . λe. almost-p(e) ∧ ¬∃e′ [p(e′)]](λe′. fall(e′)(ali))
e. ⟦AvertP⟧ = λe. [almost-fall(e)(ali)] ∧ ¬∃e′ [fall(e′)(ali)]

The result of existential closure of the event variable in (23e) results in the truth conditions in (24).

(24) ⟦(22a)⟧ = 1 if ∃e [almost-fall(e)(ali)] ∧ ¬∃e′ [fall(e′)(ali)]
= 0 if ¬∃e [almost-fall(e)(ali)]
OR ∃e′[fall(e′)(ali)]

These truth conditions correctly model speakers' intuition that a situation involving somebody's false belief that *S* (= (*22a*)) has to make true either the statement that Ali was not close to falling at all or Ali fell. These conditions are explicitly stated in the two disjuncts of the negative extension of the sentence in (22a), as presented in (24).

Additionally, an anonymous reviewer invites us to consider the alternative where *-(y)Ayaz* directly combines with the verb rather than a phrasal object, e.g., VP. Although this is a complex issue, we discuss here a piece of data concerning the attachment site of modifiers. We argue that the fact that there is no contradiction in (25) is derivable under the assumption that event modifiers target the VP. That is, the contradiction is avoided if the event modifier *bahçede* 'in the

garden' modifies the VP right below *-(y)Ayaz*. This makes sure that the modifier is evaluated under the scope of *-(y)Ayaz*. Notice that if the only attachment possibility were above *-(y)Ayaz*, we would expect (25a) to be contradictory, as shown in (25c). Given that (25) does have a non-contradictory reading as shown in (25b), we infer that there must be a possibility for event modifiers to attach below *-(y)Ayaz*, which under standard assumptions about semantic composition and syntactic structure means that *-(y)Ayaz* combines with a VP, rather than the verb.[5]

(25) a. (Dün) Ali bahçede düşeyazdı ama parkta düştü.
'Yesterday, Ali almost fell in the garden, but he fell in the park.'
b. 1 iff ∃e [almost-fall(e)(ali) ∧ in-the-garden(e)] ∧ ¬∃e′ [fall(e′)(ali) ∧ in-the-garden(e′)] ∧ ∃e″ [fall(e″)(ali) ∧ in-the-park(e″)]
c. 1 iff ∃e [almost-fall(e)(ali)] ∧ ¬∃e′ [fall(e′)(ali)] ∧ in-the-garden(e) ∧ ∃e″ [fall(e″)(ali) ∧ in-the-park(e″)] ⊥ (contradiction)

4 Summary and remaining issues

Both the inference that the eventuality was close to taking place and the inference that it did not take place follow from the meaning we have assigned to *-(y)Ayaz* in our account. In other words, we capture both the actuality of the almost-P event and the non-actuality of the P-event. We achieve this by making sure that *-(y)Ayaz* combines with an event P, asserts that there is no P event in the world of evaluation, and returns its sub-event Q such that for P to have occurred Q must have occurred. This proposal logically models the meaning of *-(y)Ayaz* that we have laid out in Section 2. We briefly discuss below some further issues concerning the distribution of *-(y)Ayaz*.

The first issue concerns the fact that *-(y)Ayaz* appears to be sensitive to the lexical aspect or eventuality type of the event it combines with. While there may not be a sharp contrast in grammaticality of the two sentences in (26), we

[5] Deciding on the attachment of affixes has always been a non-trivial issue in Turkish morphosyntax given that Turkish also allows what is known as suspended affixation with certain affixes, but not all (Bozşahin 2002, Hankamer 2004, Kabak 2007). It is true that *-(y)Ayaz* seems to be part of the same morphological word along with the verb. Setting aside the argument for VP-attachment that we present here; this may suggest that *-(y)Ayaz* directly combines with the verb rather than with the VP. However, as standardly assumed, head-movement or a post-syntactic mechanism like M-merger (Matushansky 2006) can be assumed to model the morphosyntactic fact that *-(y)Ayaz* is not an independent morphological word. Any morphosyntactic model assuming phrasal attachment for *-(y)Ayaz* is readily compatible with the semantics that we have proposed. Deciding on a particular implementation of such morphosyntactic facts is orthogonal to our purposes here and is beyond the scope of this paper.

correctly predict that many speakers have a hard time accommodating (26b) where the event is an activity verb rather than a change of state verb. An activity verb, unless coerced into inceptive or accomplishment uses, denotes an eventuality with homogenous subparts. Informally, any subpart of a running event is still a running event. This is different from a falling event, where a culmination subevent and a distinct subevent that leads to it are lexically entailed.

(26) a. Ali düş-eyaz-dı.
Ali fall-AVERT-PST
'Ali almost fell.'
b. ?Ali koş-ayaz-dı.
Ali run-AVERT-PST
'Ali almost ran.'

Recall that *-(y)Ayaz*, combining with P, retrieves a subevent of P thanks to how we defined almost-p events in (19), and it asserts not-P. If the verb in (26b) contributes a homogenous event, any subpart of P that (19) could plausibly return would still be a P event and would contradict the not-P assertion that *-(y)Ayaz* will make. Notably, some speakers are able to avoid the oddness of (26b) by coercing it to an *inceptive* reading (i.e. almost began to run). This also follows from our account in that under an inceptive interpretation there is clearly a subevent which is not a running. This would satisfy the membership condition of the set denoted by almost-p and let speakers avoid a contradictory utterance. Nevertheless, there may be other complex interactions with lexical aspects that should be explored in future research.

The second issue is concerned with the possibility of further morphological decomposition for *-(y)Ayaz*. The form *-(y)Ayaz* along with *-(y)Abil* and *-(y)Adur* form a class of complex units that could be further decomposed into *-(y)A* and a verbal root. Direct evidence for the decomposition of the abilitative/possibility modal *-(y)Abil* comes from the fact that the additive particle *dA* can associate with [V-(y)A] effectively separating *-(y)A* from *bil*, as shown in (27).

(27) a. Bu robot koş-a+bil-iyor.
this robot run-A+BIL-IMPERF
'This robot is able to run.'
b. Bu robot koş-a da bil-iyor.
this robot run-A ADD BIL-IMPERF
'This robot is also able to RUN.'

One immediate question is whether *-(y)Ayaz* is also amenable to such decomposition. Although speakers vary, many speakers do accept forms such as

(28) where the question particle *mI* associates with [V-(y)A] effectively separating *-(y)A* from *yaz*.

(28) a. Merve koşarken düş-e+yaz-dı
Merve run.WHILE fall-A+YAZ-PST
'Merve almost fell while running.'
b. Merve koşarken düş-e mi yaz-dı?
Merve run.WHILE fall-A Q YAZ-PST
'Did Merve almost FALL while running? (Or did she almost FAINT?)

While this type of decomposition appears to be justified morpho-syntactically, it is unclear whether it should lead us to question our semantics for *-(y)Ayaz*. We will offer two speculations here. The first possibility is that the meaning of *-(y)Ayaz* is tied to the *yaz* part, with *-(y)A* being present for morphological well-formedness reasons. Indeed, *-(y)A* could be argued to serve the function of a linker that forms a complex verb, compounding a lexical verb with another element that was historically a verbal root but grammaticalized into a morpheme that operates on verbal meanings. Under this hypothesis, it remains unclear whether or not *-(y)A* could be assigned any meaning that is common to *-(y)Ayaz*, *-(y)Abil* and *-(y)Adur*. The second possibility is taking the historical verbal roots *yaz*, *dur*, *bil* to be essentially meaningless, serving as different contexts for the contextual allosemy (Harley 2014) in *-(y)A*. Under this type of approach, the meaning that we have provided for *-(y)Ayaz* would be listed as one of the meanings of *-(y)A* that is available only in the context of the root in the technical sense within Distributed Morphology pronounced as *yaz*. Both types of approaches are compatible with the morphosyntactic facts as well as consistent with our semantics for *-(y)Ayaz*.

Additionally, there are questions concerning the interaction between outer aspect/tense and *-(y)Ayaz*. All the examples featuring *-(y)Ayaz* on a finite verb that we have reported in this paper were in past tense with no overt aspect marker. This was primarily because this is the most commonly attested and natural combination for *-(y)Ayaz* to occur in. Combining *-(y)Ayaz* with other markers is also possible. It can combine with the evidential-past marker *-mIş*, the anterior aspect marker *-mIş* under past tense. These are still both past tense forms, talking about eventualities located before the utterance time. There also seems to be no problem with embedded *-(y)Ayaz* under a habitual/generalizing form. However, the progressive construal of the same form is not readily available with *-(y)Ayaz*. The evidence that the oddness of this combination is semantic in nature comes from the fact that the syncretic habitual/generalizing use of *-Iyor* is fully acceptable while the same form under the progressive use sounds odd. Our account may provide an intuitive answer to why *-(y)Ayaz* cannot co-occur with the progressive aspect. We speculate that given that p-*(y)Ayaz* asserts that there

is an almost-p event and there is no p event, it seems to lead to a clash with the semantics of the progressive aspect. Elaborate analyses of the progressive aspect take it to have modal-like semantics, quantifying over inertia (non-actualized yet potential) worlds which are exactly like the world of evaluation until the time of evaluation yet may have different continuations from the actual world (Dowty 1979). What this complex semantics associated with the progressive aspect tries to deliver is an implication that arises when the progressive aspect combines with an eventuality with non-homogenous subparts (such as accomplishments). This implication is similar to the inference we have associated with the truth conditions of *-(y)Ayaz* yet does not arise from an assertion of non-culmination (unlike in *-(y)Ayaz*). Hence, the progressive aspect contributes a weaker meaning than *-(y)Ayaz*, which could be the reason why *-(y)Ayaz* precludes it.

(29) a. Merve koşarken düş-eyaz-mış.
Merve run.WHILE fall-AVERT-EVID.PST
'I've heard that Merve almost fell while running.'

b. Merve koşarken düş-eyaz-mış-tı.
Merve run.WHILE fall-AVERT-ANT-PST
'Merve had almost fallen while running.'

c. Merve koşarken hep düş-eyaz-ıyor.
Merve run.WHILE always fall-AVERT-IMPF
'Merve always almost falls while running.'

d. #Bak! Merve düş-eyaz-ıyor!
Look! Merve fall-AVERT-IMPF
'Look! Merve is almost falling!'

Finally, as one of the anonymous reviewers points out, we have mostly used the examples containing *düş* 'fall' in this paper. One of the reasons behind our choice is that this is one of the most well-known and natural examples of avertives with *-(y)Ayaz* in Turkish. Although the productivity of this construction could be limited to some speakers, below we enumerate examples involving different predicates from the corpus.

(30) a. Bir yıl-dır yeterli yağış al-ma-yan
one year-DUR enough rain take-NEG-REL
İstanbul-da baraj-lar kuru-yayaz-dı.
Istanbul-LOC dam-PL dry-AVERT-PST
'The dams almost dried in Istanbul, which has not received enough rain for a year.' (Cumhuriyet Gazetesi, 16 Feb 1990, p. 7)[6]

[6] https://egazete.cumhuriyet.com.tr/katalog/192/1990/2/16/7

b. Heyecan-dan mal gibi kalb-im dur-ayaz-dı.
excitement-ABL stupid like heart-1.SG stupid-AVERT-PST
'My heart almost stopped like an idiot from excitement.'
("Birleşik Fiil" Wikipedia, accessed June 22, 2024)[7]

c. Bacağ-ı kır-ıl-ayaz-dı.
leg-POSS break-AC-AVERT-PST
'Her leg almost broke' (Gülsevin 2016:279)

d. … bir sürü reklam, virüs de cabası, sistem
one ton ads virus also on.top system
çök-eyaz-dı.
collapse-AVERT-PST
'A bunch of ads, and on top of that, a virus, the system almost crashed.'
(CHIP, 31 Mar 2022, adapted from a visitor comment)[8]

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[7] https://tr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birle%C5%9Fik_fiil

[8] https://www.chip.com.tr/haber/en-iyi-5-video-oynaticisini-masaya-yatirdik_14790.html

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