

EVIDENTIAL NUANCE (–MIŞ)

by Seda Sürel

INTRODUCTION

1. Function

–miş marks the source and status of information. It is used when the speaker does not present the event as a directly confirmed fact, but as:

- reported information
- inferred information
- newly discovered information
- questioned or ironic information

The same event can be expressed with –DI or –miş.
The difference lies in how the speaker positions the claim.

2. Forms

–miş / –mîş / –muş / –müş

The suffix follows four-way vowel harmony.

Examples:

gelmiş
kalmış
olmuş
görmüş
duymuş
bitmiş

3. Morphology

verb stem + (negation) + –miş + personal ending

Affirmative (different vowel harmony groups shown):

a / ı group

- kalmışım
- kalmışsın
- kalmış
- kalmışız
- kalmışsınız
- kalmışlar

e / i group

- gelmişim
- gelmişsin
- gelmiş
- gelmişiz
- gelmişsiniz
- gelmişler

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ö / ü group

- görmüşüm
- görmüşsün
- görmüş
- görmüşüz
- görmüşsünüz
- görmüşler

o / u group

- olmuşum
- olmuşsun
- olmuş
- olmuşuz
- olmuşsunuz
- olmuşlar

Negative (–mA before –miş):

- gelmemiş
- kalmamış
- görmemiş
- olmamış

Negative – with personal endings:

- gelmemişim
- gelmemişsin
- gelmemiş
- gelmemişiz
- gelmemişsiniz
- gelmemişler

4. Structural Guide

The structure has two distinct chains:

Affirmative: verb stem → –miş → personal ending

Negative: verb stem → –mA → –miş → personal ending

- –miş occupies the same slot as –DI.
- The structure does not change.
- The interpretation changes.

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5. Usage

A) Reported information

The speaker reports information learned from others, news, or general talk.

B) Inferred information

The speaker observes present evidence and concludes a past event.

C) Newly discovered information

The speaker realizes something at the moment of speaking and corrects an assumption.

D) Contradictory / Ironic information

The speaker signals doubt, disbelief, irony, or contradiction.

The form suggests “so they say”, “supposedly”, or “I don’t believe this.”

Examples

A) Reported

Müdür istifa etmiş.

— The manager resigned (reported).

A: Ali nerede?

B: Eve gitmiş.

— He went home (reported).

Ayşe gelmemiş.

— She didn't come (reported).

B) Inferred

Işıklar kapalı. Herkes çıkmış.

— The lights are off. I infer that everyone left.

Kapı kilitli. Ali evden gitmiş.

— The door is locked. I infer that Ali went out.

Zemin kuru. Yağmur yağmamış.

— The ground is dry. I infer that it didn't rain.

C) Newly discovered

Aaa, anahtar masanın üstündeymiş!

— Oh, the key is on the table! I realize it now.

PURPOSE AND REASON CLAUSES

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Seni yorgun sanıyordum ama enerjikmişsin.

— I thought you were tired, but you're actually energetic.

— I correct my assumption.

Adres yanlışmış.

— The address is wrong.

— I realize it now.

D) Contradictory / Ironic

Sen de çok çalışkanmışsın!

— Oh, you're so hardworking! (ironic)

Güya beni arayacakmış.

— Supposedly he was going to call me.

Çok zenginmişler.

— They're "very rich." (I doubt it.)

Negative, ironic:

Çok ilgiliymiş ama bir mesaj bile atmamış.

— He was "so interested," yet he didn't even send a message.

–DI vs –miş (same event, different stance)

Ali kapıyı açtı.

— Ali opened the door. (presented as confirmed fact)

Ali kapıyı açmış.

— Ali opened the door. (reported or inferred)

Toplantıyı iptal ettiler.

— They canceled the meeting. (confirmed)

Toplantıyı iptal etmişler.

— They canceled the meeting. (reported or questioned)

Notes

- –miş marks information source and speaker stance.
- Reported, inferred, discovered, and ironic uses are all common.
- –DI presents information as directly confirmed.
- Negation: –mA + –miş (gelmemiş, yapmamış).
- Personal endings remain fully visible in all uses.