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Aspectual Marking in Turkish Sign Language: A Focused Critical Review

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Aspectual meaning in Turkish Sign Language (TİD) has been described through verb-internal movement, manual signs, nonmanual markers, and postverbal constructions, but the evidence remains dispersed across studies that differ in method and terminology. This focused critical review synthesizes ten documents representing eight distinct study families and evaluates the proposed functions and empirical support of the forms discussed in the literature. The most detailed evidence concerns the manual marker BİT and the nonmanual marker 'bn'. BİT is best analyzed as a completive marker associated with an event-internal result or target boundary, whereas 'bn' functions as a perfective marker that bounds the event as a whole. Telicity is central to this contrast because event-bounding yields different interpretations with telic and atelic predicates. Movement structure also makes event boundaries visible, although its status as productive grammatical inflection remains uncertain. Habitual [verb + VAR] has a corpus basis, while the proposed inceptive 'ee' and continuative 'lele' have not been independently replicated. The picture that emerges is of a multimodal system whose component analyses rest on markedly different amounts of evidence.

Keywords: *Turkish Sign Language; aspectual marking; telicity; perfectivity; tense–aspect interface*

Introduction

Tense and aspect both contribute to the temporal interpretation of a situation, but they do so in different ways. Tense locates a situation in time, generally in relation to the time of utterance, whereas aspect concerns its internal temporal organization or the way in which it is viewed (Comrie 1976, 1985). A further distinction is commonly made between situation aspect and viewpoint aspect. Situation aspect concerns properties of the event itself, including duration, change, and the presence of an inherent endpoint, while viewpoint aspect determines whether the event is presented as ongoing, bounded, or viewed as a whole (Smith 1997). Telic predicates contain an inherent endpoint, whereas atelic predicates do not (Vendler 1957; Smith 1997). These distinctions are especially important because perfectivity does not necessarily entail completion. With a telic predicate, a perfective viewpoint may indicate that the endpoint has been reached, whereas with an atelic predicate it may simply indicate that the event has stopped or is viewed as bounded (Comrie 1976; Smith 1997).

Against this background, the present study offers a focused critical review of aspectual marking in Turkish Sign Language (TİD). It asks which forms have

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been proposed as aspectual markers in the literature, how their functions and distributions have been analyzed, how strongly the relevant claims are supported, and how telicity and temporal interpretation shape the analysis of these forms. Particular attention is given to how completion differs from termination and perfective event-bounding, and to whether past-time readings arise from grammatical tense or from the interaction between aspect, event structure, and discourse. The review contributes an evidence-graded comparison of claims that have often been presented using different labels or investigated at different linguistic levels. The following sections examine the literature on sign-language aspect and temporal reference, outline the review approach, synthesize findings across movement-based, manual, nonmanual, and constructional resources, discuss their implications, and present the conclusions.

Aspectual Marking and Temporal Reference in Sign Languages and TİD

Sign languages provide a particularly useful perspective on these distinctions because grammatical information can be distributed across several visible articulators. In addition to independent manual signs, aspectual meanings may be expressed through changes in a predicate's movement, repetition, holds, facial expressions, mouth gestures, and other nonmanual components (Meir and Sandler 2008; Pfau et al. 2012). Nonmanuals may carry phonological, prosodic, morphological, or syntactic information and therefore cannot be treated as merely affective or paralinguistic (Crasborn 2006; Sandler and Lillo-Martin 2006). Crosslinguistically, signs meaning 'finish' may also develop grammatical aspectual functions (Pfau et al. 2012). Moreover, the visible form of a predicate may reflect properties of event structure: salient movement boundaries tend to support telic interpretations, whereas repetition without a clear endpoint is more often associated with atelic events (Strickland et al. 2015).

Research on TİD reflects this formal diversity. Previous studies have described movement-based marking of completedness, proposed relations between verb movement, aspect, and tense, and identified both manual and nonmanual aspectual markers (Zeshan 2003; Gökgöz 2009; Dikyuva 2016). Later work distinguished the manual marker BİT from the nonmanual marker 'bn', showing that they differ in meaning and selectional properties even though they can occur together (Karabüklü 2016; Karabüklü and Wilbur 2021). Other studies have questioned whether TİD has grammatical tense marking and have instead emphasized the role of time adverbials, discourse-level temporal frames, and spatial timelines (Karabüklü 2018). More recently, the postverbal construction [verb + VAR] has been shown to have a habitual function alongside evidential and assumptive uses, extending the documented aspectual domain beyond completion and perfectivity (Makaroğlu 2024). The SIGN-HUB reference grammar also describes TİD aspect in terms of imperfective, perfective, and more specific categories such as completive marking (Kelepir 2020). As a broad descriptive account, it provides a useful point of comparison but does not independently replicate all the focused analyses reviewed here.

Despite these contributions, the literature remains difficult to interpret as a whole. The relevant studies differ in their aims, data, methods, terminology, and theoretical assumptions, and some forms have received competing analyses. The nonmanual marker ‘bn’, for example, has been described as past-telic, completive, and perfective. Similarly, the relationship between BİT, completion, perfectivity, and event structure has been revised as new evidence has become available. The empirical basis is also uneven: BİT and ‘bn’ have received detailed attention, whereas other proposed markers, including ‘ee’ and ‘lele’, remain largely dependent on a single research line.

Review Approach

This study was conducted as a focused critical review rather than as a systematic review or meta-analysis. The aim was to synthesize studies that directly address aspectual marking, telicity, event structure, or the tense–aspect relationship in TİD. Relevant sources were identified through targeted searches using combinations of terms such as Turkish Sign Language, aspect, tense, telicity, perfective, completive, BİT, bn/pt, ee, lele, VAR, and FINISH. The reference lists of the identified studies were also checked for earlier work.

Sources were selected for detailed comparison when they reported TİD data or presented a specific analysis relevant to aspectual marking, event structure, or temporal interpretation. General works on aspect and crosslinguistic sign-language research were used to establish theoretical background, rather than counted as independent TİD study families. The SIGN-HUB reference grammar (Kelepir 2020) was consulted as an additional descriptive point of comparison, outside the eight primary study families.

Peer-reviewed articles formed the main evidence base. However, theses and a book chapter were also included because some early and detailed analyses of TİD aspect have not been published as journal articles. One recent conference poster was retained because it presents new corpus-based observations, although its findings were treated as preliminary. The final set included ten documents representing eight distinct study families. When a thesis and a later publication developed the same research line, they were not treated as independent evidence. Two thesis–publication pairs were grouped in this way: Dikyuva (2011, 2016) and Karabüklü (2016) with Karabüklü and Wilbur (2021). These pairs were treated as two research lines rather than four independent sets of evidence.

The studies were compared in terms of their data, methods, proposed aspectual functions, relation to telicity and temporal interpretation, and main limitations. Because the sources differ substantially in design and terminology, no quantitative synthesis was attempted. Instead, the review distinguishes between well-supported findings, claims based on a single study family, and emerging proposals that still require further evidence. Table 1 provides an overview of the study families included in the review, their main data sources, proposed analyses, and principal limitations. A distinction was maintained between claims supported by observations from separate research lines and

claims repeated in publications drawing on overlapping thesis-based research. This prevents the number of publications from being mistaken for the number of independent empirical tests.

Table 1. *Overview of the Studies Included in the Review*

Study	Data and method	Main focus	Proposed analysis	Main limitation
Zeshan (2003)	Natural conversation and elicitation	Movement-based completedness	Putative completive movement modification	Productivity not systematically tested
Gökgöz (2009)	Elicitation; two signers	Verb movement, aspect and tense	Internal movement as aspect; head nod as tense	Very small sample
Dikyuva (2011, 2016)	Conversation, elicitation and judgments	bn, ee, lele	Completive, inceptive and continuative markers	Single study family
Karabüklü (2016); Karabüklü and Wilbur (2021)	Corpus, elicitation and judgments	BİT and bn	BİT as completive; bn as perfective	Some distributions need further testing
Karabüklü (2018)	Elicitation and temporal judgments	Tense–aspect relationship	TİD as morphologically tenseless	Seven participants
Strickland et al. (2015)	Experimental study	Lexical telicity and visual form	Visual boundaries correspond to telicity	Not a study of grammatical aspect
Makaroğlu (2024)	Large naturalistic corpus	[verb + VAR]	Habitual, evidential and assumptive functions	Development inferred synchronically
Makaroğlu (2025)	Corpus-based poster	FINISH-type signs and bn	Broader FINISH family and multimodal grammaticalization	Preliminary, not yet a full article

Source: Author's synthesis based on the reviewed studies.

Findings and Synthesis

The findings are organized by the form of marking: changes in verb movement, independent manual signs, mouth and tongue gestures, and postverbal constructions. This organization also brings a methodological problem into view. Forms that appear to mark an event boundary do not necessarily operate at the same linguistic level. Some patterns may reflect lexical event structure, while others have been analyzed as grammatical aspect. The following sections examine how telicity shapes these analyses and where the evidence supports a grammatical distinction.

Movement-Based Marking and the Visibility of Event Structure

Zeshan (2003) provided the earliest account of movement-based aspectual marking in TİD. In conversational and elicited data, she observed that verbs otherwise produced with repeated movement could occur with a single, more forceful movement, sometimes with a lengthened path and marked movement of the head or upper body, in contexts interpreted as completed. She also noted independent signs such as TAMAM 'done/complete' and BİTTİ 'finished'. However, the study remained deliberately cautious: the movement pattern was not systematically tested across predicate classes, and an emphatic interpretation could not be excluded.

Gökgöz (2009) developed this observation into a formal syntactic analysis. In his account, a single, relatively long and accented movement realizes completive aspect, whereas shorter repeated movement yields an incompletive reading. The contrast is analyzed as the overt realization of an Aspect head to which the verb moves. This proposal connects visible form to clausal structure and offers a possible explanation for the distribution of movement-based meanings. Its empirical basis is nevertheless limited because the study involved only two signers and focused more broadly on verb movement, negation and clausal architecture.

Strickland et al. (2015) support the relation between movement and event structure from a different direction. Their experiments concerned lexical or situation aspect rather than a grammatical aspect morpheme. Nonsigners nevertheless distinguished TİD signs denoting telic events from those denoting atelic events above chance. Salient visual boundaries, such as abrupt endpoints or clearly delimited changes in movement, favored telic interpretations, while repeated movement without a comparable final boundary favored atelic interpretations. Related experiments with pseudosigns further showed that these visual properties were sufficient to bias interpretation.

The studies therefore address different linguistic levels. Strickland et al. (2015) demonstrate that movement can make properties of lexical event structure perceptually accessible, whereas Zeshan (2003) and Gökgöz (2009) concern a possible grammatical modification of the verb. Situation aspect must consequently be distinguished from viewpoint aspect, which determines how an event is presented in a clause. The available evidence supports a general association between visible movement and event boundedness, but it does not yet establish that a single productive completive inflection applies across the TİD verbal lexicon. Movement-based patterns may reflect grammatical aspect, lexical iconicity, prosodic emphasis, or an interaction among these factors.

Manual Marking of Completion: BİT and Related FINISH Forms

The most extensively studied manual aspectual marker in TİD is BİT, a form related to the lexical meaning 'finish'. Earlier work mentioned TAMAM, BİTTİ, BİT and SON in completion-related contexts, but Karabüklü (2016), later developed in Karabüklü and Wilbur (2021), provides the first detailed account

of BİT's aspectual function and distribution. The evidence combines existing recordings with elicitation and judgment tasks. Corpus observations show that the form is multifunctional: it may occur as a lexical predicate, an aspectual marker following another verb, a sequencing device, or a discourse marker signalling the end of a turn or narrative segment. Its position, surrounding context and behavior with negation are therefore important for identifying genuinely aspectual uses.

Karabüklü and Wilbur (2021) analyze aspectual BİT as completive rather than generally perfective. A perfective marker presents an event as a bounded whole, whereas a completive marker is more directly connected to the attainment of a result or target boundary. Following Ramchand's (2008) event decomposition, they show that BİT is compatible with predicates containing a path toward an endpoint, with some process predicates, and with at least some stative expressions. Its distribution is therefore more restricted than that of FINISH-derived perfective markers reported for several other sign languages. The acceptability of BİT may also depend on the semantic contribution of the arguments and on whether the context supplies a sufficiently clear result boundary.

The analysis clarifies the difference between completion and termination. Completion involves reaching an inherent or contextually defined endpoint, whereas termination merely indicates that an event has stopped. An activity such as writing may terminate before the intended text is completed; BİT does not merely report cessation but is more closely tied to the endpoint or resulting state. In Karabüklü's (2016) analysis, it consequently has access to the event's internal structure and occupies a relatively low aspectual position. This contrasts with 'bn', which takes wider scope over the event. The detailed analysis also distinguishes grammatical BİT from its lexical source without assuming that one has replaced the other. Lexical, aspectual and discourse-related uses coexist, which is consistent with an ongoing or incomplete grammaticalization process. At the same time, the published studies do not treat all FINISH-related signs as interchangeable, and the evidence for BİT cannot automatically be extended to every form glossed as 'finish' or 'done' in earlier descriptions.

Makaroğlu (2025) proposes that aspectual uses may extend beyond BİT/FINISH.OVER to related signs glossed as FINISH.DUST and FINISH.TIME. The poster reports that these forms can co-occur with 'bn' and links them to predicates containing both process and result structure. It also raises a possible multimodal grammaticalization pathway connecting manual FINISH-type signs, Turkish mouthings and tongue protrusion. This corpus-based proposal may broaden the manual aspectual inventory, but the distributions and semantic contrasts of the individual forms have not yet been presented in a full publication. BİT can therefore be treated as the best-supported completive marker in TİD, while the broader FINISH-family analysis remains preliminary.

Nonmanual Aspectual Marking

Dikyuva (2016), drawing on his earlier MA research, examines three mouth and tongue gestures: ‘bn’, ‘ee’ and ‘lele’. He associates them with completive, inceptive and continuative meanings and investigates their distribution across 48 predicates using naturalistic observations, elicitation and grammaticality judgments. The predicates were grouped semantically and considered in relation to telicity. Later work substantially revises the analysis of ‘bn’, while ‘ee’ and ‘lele’ have not yet received comparable independent investigation.

The Nonmanual Marker ‘bn’

The tongue-protrusion marker ‘bn’, also referred to in earlier work as ‘pt’, has received competing analyses. Kubuş and Rathmann (2009), as reported in later studies, linked it to past and telic meaning; Dikyuva (2016) treated it as completive; and Karabüklü (2016) and Karabüklü and Wilbur (2021) argue that it is perfective. These labels converge in completed telic events, where bounding, completion and past-time interpretation frequently coincide. The distinction becomes clearer only when the marker is tested across event types and in contexts where an event stops without reaching an inherent endpoint.

Karabüklü and Wilbur (2021) provide the most detailed account. In their analysis, ‘bn’ does not introduce a culmination but bounds the event and presents it as a whole. With a telic predicate, this commonly yields a completion reading because the predicate already contains an endpoint. With an atelic predicate, it may instead indicate termination without culmination. The interpretation therefore depends on the temporal structure of the underlying predicate rather than on ‘bn’ supplying the same endpoint in every context. This broader compatibility is a central reason for analyzing the marker as perfective rather than narrowly completive.

The fact that BİT and ‘bn’ can co-occur supports their treatment as distinct morphemes rather than manual and nonmanual realizations of one category. BİT contributes an event-internal result or completion meaning, whereas ‘bn’ has wider scope and bounds the event as a whole. Their selectional restrictions and behavior in temporal contexts also differ. The co-occurrence pattern therefore fits a layered aspectual structure in which lower and higher meanings are simultaneously expressed.

Although ‘bn’ is frequently associated with past events, the available evidence does not support analyzing it as a grammatical past-tense marker. Bounded and completed events readily receive past interpretations, especially in the absence of explicit temporal expressions. This inference explains much of the earlier association between ‘bn’, telicity and past time without collapsing aspect into tense.

The Inceptive Marker ‘ee’

Dikyuva (2016) proposes that ‘ee’, produced with a tongue-and-teeth configuration, marks the beginning or imminent beginning of an event. Its clearest uses occur with action predicates and are comparable to ‘begin to do’ or

‘be about to do’. Although the marker was accepted with several predicates, judgments involving process and state predicates were less consistent, leaving its selectional limits unclear. Moreover, ‘ee’ has not been independently re-examined in a larger or corpus-based study. It is therefore best described as a proposed inceptive marker whose grammatical status and full distribution remain uncertain.

The Continuative Marker ‘lele’

The marker ‘lele’, produced through repeated upward and downward tongue movement, is analyzed by Dikyuva (2016) primarily as continuative, although iterative and interrogative uses are also noted. Its clearest property is a strong preference for atelic predicates, which lack an inherent endpoint and can readily be construed as continuing. Telic predicates were generally unacceptable under a continuative reading; when accepted, they often received a repeated-event interpretation or were influenced by the interrogative use of the same form.

This interaction with telicity gives ‘lele’ a more clearly delimited distribution than ‘ee’ and suggests that the marker is constrained by event structure rather than freely added to any predicate. However, its frequency in natural discourse, spreading domain, and relation to iterative meaning have not been independently tested. The continuative analysis is therefore semantically coherent but still rests on a single study family and requires replication.

Habitual Aspect and the Postverbal Construction [verb + VAR]

Makaroğlu (2024) expands the documented aspectual inventory by identifying a habitual use of the postverbal construction [verb + VAR]. VAR is canonically an existential and possessive predicate, but corpus evidence shows that it may follow a verb with habitual, evidential and assumptive functions. The analysis draws on a large, geographically diverse corpus containing naturalistic data from 86 native signers in 23 cities, giving this part of the literature a broader empirical base than most earlier studies of TİD aspect.

In its habitual use, [verb + VAR] presents an event as regular, recurring or characteristic rather than as a single occurrence. It may describe routines and stable patterns and can occur with frequency expressions. The construction differs from lexical repetition and from repeated movement within a verb because habituality is contributed by a larger postverbal configuration. Its evidential and assumptive uses also show that the construction’s development crosses the conventional boundary between aspect and modality.

Makaroğlu (2024) proposes a pathway from existential to possessive and then to habitual, evidential and assumptive meanings. Because direct historical records are limited, this trajectory is inferred from synchronic polysemy and apparent-time differences between age groups rather than demonstrated through diachronic documentation. The age pattern is not equally strong for every function and therefore should not be taken as direct proof of each stage. Even with that limitation, the naturalistic corpus provides strong evidence that habitual [verb + VAR] forms part of the current TİD aspectual inventory.

The Boundary between Tense and Aspect

The literature also differs on whether forms associated with bounded events encode aspect, tense, or both. Gökgöz (2009) proposes that movement reorganization marks aspect while head nod realizes tense: a single head nod is linked to past, repeated head nod to future, and its absence to present. Under this account, temporal interpretation results from the interaction of head movement and the aspectual movement of the verb. The proposal is theoretically explicit, but it was developed from a small data set and required direct empirical testing.

Karabüklü (2018) tests this analysis using judgments on sentences containing different verb types, time adverbials and head movements. Head nod did not consistently predict temporal interpretation: repeated head nod was not uniformly understood as future, single head nod was not uniformly understood as past, and head nod also occurred with imperatives, where tense marking would be unexpected. Instead, time reference was more reliably established by lexical time adverbials, discourse-level temporal frames and spatial timelines. Once introduced, a temporal frame may remain active across subsequent clauses until another expression resets it. These findings support an analysis of TİD as morphologically tenseless despite its ability to express past, present and future reference.

Aspect nevertheless influences temporal interpretation. Without an overt time adverbial, telic events in Karabüklü's (2018) study often received recent-past readings, while atelic events tended to be interpreted as present or ongoing. This helps explain why 'bn' and other bounding forms have sometimes been associated with past meaning. A past-time inference, however, is not grammatical past tense: an event may be interpreted as past because it is bounded or completed even when no tense morpheme is present.

The temporal behavior of BİT and 'bn' supports the same distinction. Neither marker can be reduced to tense. 'bn' is restricted in many future contexts, as expected for a form that presents an event as bounded, whereas BİT may occur in future sequencing when one future event is understood as completed before another (Karabüklü and Wilbur 2021). These contrasts show that temporal compatibility follows from the markers' aspectual contributions. Overall, the evidence favors distinct aspectual meanings and discourse-based time reference rather than competing tense specifications.

Discussion

A central difficulty in describing TİD aspect is that similar interpretations can be associated with different forms. A movement pattern, a manual sign and a tongue gesture may all draw attention to an event boundary, but this does not establish that they have the same grammatical function. The reviewed studies also differ in what they test: some investigate lexical event structure, whereas others examine scope, selectional restrictions or temporal interpretation. The analysis must therefore proceed form by form rather than assume a single aspectual paradigm. The broad categories in the SIGN-HUB reference grammar

(Kelepir 2020) provide useful descriptive context, but the distribution and grammatical status of individual markers still have to be established empirically. This distinction is especially important when a familiar label, such as ‘completive’, is used in studies working with different kinds of data.

The strongest case for separating forms comes from BİT and ‘bn’. Karabüklü and Wilbur (2021) show that both can occur in descriptions of ended events, but their contributions differ. BİT relates to an event-internal target or result; ‘bn’ imposes a perfective viewpoint over the event as a whole. Their co-occurrence is especially informative, since it would be difficult to explain if the two forms simply expressed the same category through different articulators. Instead, a construction containing both can be analyzed as combining completion with broader event-bounding. This account also fits the differences in predicate selection and temporal compatibility reported by Karabüklü (2016) and Karabüklü and Wilbur (2021). A shared translation such as ‘finished’ is therefore not sufficient evidence for a shared grammatical function. The relevant question is what each marker contributes when the lexical predicate and the wider context are taken into account.

Telicity helps explain why earlier descriptions of ‘bn’ sometimes brought completion and boundedness together. With a telic predicate, a perfective interpretation can coincide with reaching an endpoint; with an atelic predicate, bounding the event does not supply an endpoint that the predicate lacks. The writing scenario discussed above illustrates the difference: an activity can stop even though the intended text remains unfinished. This is a semantic illustration, not an attested TİD example. The pattern reported for ‘lele’ is different. Its continuative reading is most natural with atelic predicates, while telic predicates tend to require reinterpretation or are judged unacceptable (Dikyuva 2016). The movement-based findings of Strickland et al. (2015) add another dimension by showing that visible boundaries correlate with lexical telicity. These results make telicity relevant across several lines of research, but they do not justify treating lexical event structure and grammatical viewpoint as the same phenomenon. One consequence is that a formal resemblance between two signs or constructions should not be mistaken for identical aspectual scope.

Movement-based aspect raises a different problem. Zeshan (2003) observed a movement modification associated with completedness, and Gökgöz (2009) analyzed a contrast between single accented and repeated movement as grammatical. Yet a visible boundary may be part of a lexical sign or may serve an emphatic function. This is why Strickland et al. (2015), whose experiments concern lexical telicity, cannot by themselves confirm a morphological analysis. Evidence for productive inflection would require comparisons of the same lexical predicates across controlled aspectual contexts and across signers, while examining prosodic emphasis separately. Such a design would help distinguish a reusable grammatical contrast from a pattern associated with particular verbs or discourse conditions. Until these tests are available, movement structure is better treated as a possible resource for grammatical aspect than as an established, general inflectional pattern in TİD.

The need to separate grammatical function from contextual interpretation also applies to tense. Gökgöz's (2009) head-nod account offers an explicit grammatical analysis, but Karabüklü (2018) found that the proposed head-movement contrasts did not reliably determine temporal reference. In particular, the occurrence of head nods in imperatives weakens a straightforward tense interpretation. Time adverbials, discourse frames and spatial timelines provided more consistent cues. Event structure nevertheless affected interpretation when those cues were absent: telic events tended to receive recent-past readings, whereas atelic events were more often construed as present or ongoing (Karabüklü 2018). The temporal restrictions reported for 'bn' and the future-sequencing uses of BİT are compatible with this distinction (Karabüklü and Wilbur 2021). Thus, the available findings favor treating past-associated readings as something to be explained, rather than automatically identifying the forms that accompany them as past-tense morphemes. This is consistent with the analysis of TİD as morphologically tenseless, without denying its full range of temporal interpretations.

Grammaticalization raises a separate set of questions. BİT has lexical, aspectual, sequencing and discourse-related uses, so a lexical FINISH source and an aspectual function can coexist without one having replaced the other. Makaroğlu's (2024) analysis of [verb + VAR] points to a different development, from existential and possessive functions toward habitual, evidential and assumptive readings. Their coexistence suggests that a construction can acquire aspectual and modal meanings without becoming a single-function marker. The proposed history of VAR, however, is reconstructed mainly from synchronic polysemy and apparent-time patterns; neither type of evidence alone establishes a chronology of change. Keeping this distinction explicit allows grammaticalization to remain a plausible explanation without presenting the historical stages as directly observed. It also prevents the existence of several related meanings from being interpreted as evidence that every proposed function is equally frequent or equally entrenched.

A related possibility is raised in Makaroğlu's (2025) corpus-based poster, which extends the discussion from BİT/FINISH.OVER to other FINISH-type signs and considers links between manual marking, Turkish mouthings and tongue protrusion. If further corpus analyses confirm the proposed distributions, they could help explain how different articulators participate in related aspectual developments. At present, however, the poster provides preliminary observations rather than a fully tested comparison of these forms. The wider FINISH-family account should therefore be treated as an emerging proposal, not as evidence that all signs glossed 'finish' share the same meaning or developmental history. The distinction matters because grammaticalization pathways must ultimately be supported by patterns of use, not by formal or translational resemblance alone.

The studies also provide different kinds of evidence, which should not be ranked as though they answered identical questions. Corpus attestations can establish that a construction occurs in natural discourse, but they do not, by themselves, determine whether it excludes a particular predicate class.

Conversely, acceptability judgments may reveal semantic restrictions that are difficult to observe in spontaneous data, without showing how common a marker is in everyday signing. This matters when comparing the corpus basis for habitual [verb + VAR] (Makaroğlu 2024) with the detailed event-type contrasts used to distinguish BİT and 'bn' (Karabüklü and Wilbur 2021). Neither type of evidence substitutes for the other. The most informative next studies would combine corpus annotation and controlled comparisons of the same forms and predicate classes. They would also state explicitly when a thesis and its subsequent publication draw on overlapping data, so that repeated analyses are not mistaken for independent replications.

The next step is less a search for additional candidate markers than a test of contrasts already proposed. For 'ee' and 'lele', independent judgment studies with more signers, together with naturalistic examples, could establish whether their reported distributions are stable across predicate types. For movement-based marking, the crucial question is whether changing a verb's movement changes aspect while lexical identity and emphasis are held constant. Corpus work should also annotate manual signs and nonmanuals together, so that co-occurrence, scope and discourse context can be examined rather than inferred from isolated forms. This would make it easier to study regional variation, the contribution of arguments to event boundaries, and uses in future or modal contexts. It would also provide a basis for testing the FINISH-family distinctions suggested by Makaroğlu (2025). The relatively stronger evidence for BİT, 'bn' and habitual [verb + VAR] offers a starting point for that work, not a reason to assume that all proposed markers are equally established.

Conclusion

This review shows that although several aspectual markers have been identified in TİD, the evidence supporting their functions varies considerably. The contrast between completive BİT and perfective 'bn' is supported by analyses of predicate compatibility, scope and co-occurrence, while habitual [verb + VAR] has a substantial corpus basis. Together, these findings make it difficult to treat completion, event termination and perfective viewpoint as interchangeable notions. They also show why a shared translation or a visible movement boundary cannot, on its own, establish a grammatical category. What matters is how a form behaves across predicates and contexts, and whether the proposed function can be distinguished from lexical meaning or discourse inference.

Other parts of the proposed inventory are less secure. The inceptive 'ee' and continuative 'lele' await independent replication; the productivity of movement-based marking remains unsettled; and the wider FINISH-family hypothesis is still preliminary. Work on temporal reference likewise cautions against equating past readings with grammatical tense. The literature therefore points to several interacting resources rather than a single uniform mechanism, but it does not yet provide equally detailed accounts of each resource. A fuller picture of TİD aspect

will depend on studies that combine naturalistic multimodal data with controlled comparisons across event types. Such work can test not only which forms occur, but also which semantic contrasts signers consistently make when those forms appear together or in different contexts.

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