



ON THE THEORETICAL GRAMMAR OF TURKISH

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Abstract

The theoretical grammar of Turkish is a major research area with interesting topics. An important book which is written by V. G. Guzev on the theoretical grammar of Turkish was published in Petersburg in 2015. In Guzev's work, remarkable determinations are made on the grammar of Turkish. First of all, I would like to mention that I found this work successful. The book consists of four main headings following a preamble and a long introduction. Phonology, morphonology, morphology, and functional syntax of Turkish are investigated. Research on the understanding of many linguistic cases has been advanced, and opinions based on the foundations of the Indo-European languages have begun to be abandoned in order to create a more effective grammar in additive languages. Studies on the grammar of Turkish have also accelerated in the last decade. However, these studies were not completed unfortunately. According to Guzev, Turkish writers do not follow the linguistics developments in the world because Turkish writers think that the researches of non-native Turkish speakers would not be understandable enough. Guzev has rightness in terms of these ideas. Unfortunately, it is true that studies conducted on Turkish in the world are not followed well. The native Turkish speaker researcher may occasionally lose sight of the characteristics, functionality, and subtleties of language in a natural language environment. The non-native Turkish speaker can clearly see these functions when compared to other languages. In this respect, I believe that the studies to be conducted by considering the foreign literature will be healthier. In this article, the book is evaluated and some of the topics are discussed.

Keywords: Theoretical grammar, phonology, morphonology, morphology, functional syntax, Turkish, Turkology.

The work of Victor Grigor'evič Guzev who is a professor in Turkish Philology Department in Petersburg University and has been producing valuable studies on Turkish for years published *Theoretical Grammar of Turkish*¹ only a few years ago. Guzev is among the exceptional people conducting studies on modern Turkish in Russia and these studies were appreciated and honored with an order of merit of the presidency of the Republic of Turkey.

When my dear colleague Guzev signed and sent his book to me, I realized that this book is prepared with a great fund of knowledge, effort, and extraordinary attention after I examined it. Unfortunately, this significant work of Guzev was not introduced well enough in Turkey. As far as I know, only Musaoğlu (2017) focused on the agglutinating structure of Turkish in his assessment paper that he mentioned this work of Guzev. I decided to analyze Guzev's work in my Ph.D. coursenamed Linguistic Methods in Turkology Studies in Türkiyat Researches Institute of Hacettepe University. I need to mention that I found Turkish language researches in the subjects that Guzev mentioned are seminal in readings we did in Guzev's book for a semester. I believe that presenting the crucial points to Turcology environment in this introductory paper will be beneficial.

Guzev's work consists of four main headings following a preamble and a long introduction: Phonology, Morphonology, Morphology, and Functional Syntax. The widest part of the study is Morphology. I would like to capture attention to certain subjects that Guzev mentioned in preamble and introduction before focusing on the other parts.

Guzev states that the weakest grammar studies of Turkic languages are that Turkish grammar is tried to be adapted to Indo-European language structures although many studies are conducted on Turkish word structure. Justifiably, Guzev argues that Turkish must be analyzed with methods suitable to its grammar structure. Analyzing agglutinative languages according to Indo-European languages is not correct. Guzev who states that explaining the structures of languages according to only one language structure is wrong also adds that this is not correct for Turkic languages as well.

In his study, the main phonological, morphonological, morphological, analytical and syntactic tools of modern Turkish literary language were examined, and the most productive means of production

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¹ В. Г. Гузев, *Теоретическая Грамматика Турецкого Языка*, Издательство Санкт-Петербургского Университета, 2015.

and the busiest vehicles are shown. In recent years, research on the understanding of many linguistic cases has been advanced, and opinions based on the foundations of the Indo-European languages have begun to be abandoned in order to create a more effective grammar in additive languages. Studies on the grammar of Turkish have also accelerated in the last decade. However, these studies were not completed, unfortunately. According to Guzev, Turkish writers do not follow the linguistics developments in the world because Turkish writers think that the researches of non-native Turkish speakers would not be understandable enough.

Guzev has rightness in terms of these ideas. Unfortunately, it is true that studies conducted on the Turkish in the world are not followed well. Foreign articles and books are also found not only about grammar but also lexicology in foreign literature. I think the situation is more attractive in grammar. The native Turkish speaker researcher may occasionally lose sight of the characteristics, functionality, and subtleties of language in a natural language environment. The non-native Turkish speaker can clearly see these functions when compared to other languages. In this respect, I believe that the studies to be conducted by considering the foreign literature will be healthier.

Guzev states in the introduction of his work that he thinks the word-grammatical transformation ways of agglutinative languages must be understood. These transformation ways include word formation and conjugation, progressive and regressive phonetic assimilation processes and consonance. Guzev, who assess the studies of Serebrennikov, Melnikov trying to reveal the formation reasons of agglutinative language, points out that when an appendix is exposed to a change in terms of semantics of phonetics, the agglutinative language have the feature of re-junction, and this is one of the powerful factors that protect the structure of agglutinative languages for thousands of years.

The phoneme is the simplest material as a sub-system of phonetic knowledge. It can also be defined as the most basic unit of the phonology that forms the sub-system of a language and the individual form of the abstract form in which the sound of the mouth is functionally equivalent.

Unlike the established tradition, the term lexeme has a simplified content. There is no specific grammatical form of lexemes. Lexicalize is the grammatical-functional transformation of a word in writing or in speech. As a result of the word construction, lexeme emerges in another language, and the word appears in the speech.

Guzev studied phonology in the first part of the work and stated that all phonemes are systematically organized. Intonation and accenting in speech is required for transferring phonemes, words, expressions, accent, syllables, producing sound harmony, detecting and transmitting the necessary meaning.

The phoneme is the form and an inventory unit of the sub-system of the language. It is unilateral and its main function is constructive. It forms meaning with the structure. Guzev's view on the new Turkish letters is as follows: The Turks who created the new Latin alphabet by adapting the Turkish to the phonology of the Turkish language had to find the same function that would correspond to the sounds. As a result, the differences between phonemes can be easily differentiated due to the presence of signals corresponding to each sound.

I have to mention a wrong judgment incidentally. There are those who say that Turkish is a language that is written and spoken as it is written. This mistake, which is rejected by dictation experts, must be corrected by the nature of the Turkish alphabet and the rules of writing in Turkish. The truth is that each letter in the Turkish alphabet has one sound equivalent. As Guzev has stated, the Turkish alphabet has an important quality that shows the differences between phonemes.

In the second part of his work, Guzev examined the morphonology of contemporary Turkish. As distinct from phonology, morphonology includes morphology, word formation and syntax in addition to phonetics. Additive morphonology can be perceived as a sub-system that contains the rules and order of phonological structures in language, as well as voice information of words and word forms in speech. The most vivid morphological feature of agglutinative language is the harmonization of improved voice harmony, that is, the speech sounds within the word and word forms.

In this chapter, Guzev discusses the sound harmonies in Turkish with examples in detail according to its types, and he points out that palatal adaptation is also present in some borrowings: *akribâ* > *akraba* 'relative', *âdem* > *adam* 'man', *çâne* > *çene* 'chin', *gonia* > *gönye* 'miter', *sûret* > *surat* 'face'.

I should also note that I think different about lip harmonization than Guzev. The harmony of the lip is, in fact, the unroundness and roundness of the vowel. Guzev discussed this harmony in terms of narrowness and width discrimination. We know that this harmony is very strong in Kyrgyz language.

The first rule is that unrounded vowel is followed by unrounded vowel again. The first rule is that unrounded vowel is followed by strait vowels again. In this respect, Guzev's examples of *bilge* 'wise' and *ıslak* 'wet' words have harmony.

Narrowness or wideness harmony is important in words with rounded vowels. According to the rule, there is harmony in the case of round-wide or round-narrow vowel in the word starting with a rounded vowel. It would be helpful to take this issue into account in subsequent editions of the book.

In the assimilation and dissimilation section, Guzev's examples of assimilation *nisbet* > *nispet* 'defiance', *afv* > *aff* 'mercy', *rençber* > *rençper* 'laborer' are correct. However, I do not agree with the opinion that there is no assimilation in /İç/ sounds in word *Nalçacı* 'Heel Iron' which means the steel rammed under the shoe. In my lectures, I divide the consonants into three groups when explaining the consonant assimilation in Turkish: *voiceless consonants*, *voiced consonants with voiceless reciprocity* and *voiced consonants without voiceless reciprocity*. The important feature of voiced consonants without voiceless reciprocity /l/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /r/, /y/ in assimilation is that they can be with two types of consonants. The most interesting example of that is *ilçe* 'county' word. During the language reform years, the word created as *ilce* was suitable to assimilation; however, it became *ilçe* after years. This form is also suitable for assimilation because the voiced consonants without voiceless reciprocity can come together with all the consonants.

Another interesting aspect of this chapter is the detailed examination of the accent. In the grammar books, Guzev discussed accent which is a subject only focused on a couple of articles in Turkish under thirteen items with examples.

Morphology, the largest part of the book, is divided into thirteen subsections. These subsections contain subheadings. Guzev defines morphology as a word whose main purpose is to word structure and inflection in speech and built-in a communicative and grammatical way and strategic frontal formation of the lexeme in writing. The word structure in languages that can be conjugated is generally ready to use in speaking languages. In agglutinative languages, creating word structure in speech means a functional-grammatical transformation of the word. Functional-grammatical transformation means changing the appearance of the word. This transformation should not be confused with the historical, diachronic change, variants of different dialects or change of a word individually.

According to Guzev, five conversion methods are used in Turkic languages:

- 1) Adding appendix at the end of the word.
- 2) Using analytical indicators.
- 3) Repetitions and dilemmas.
- 4) Reinforcement particles that change the structure of the word.
- 5) The place of accent.

In the noun conjugation section, highlighting the functions of the attachments was useful. In this chapter, despite the variety of functions of the appendix $\{+lXk\}$, showing its single function is a lack. However, it is interesting that Guzev also draws attention to the form of magnification and intensification along with a diminutive suffix known in Turkish. Guzev mentions the function of $\{-DXr\}$ appendix which shows semantic similarity but not same with diminutive appendix with the following example:

Bitişikte ise bir kalabalık vardı galiba; bir gürültüdür gidiyordu orada.

'I guess there was a crowd next door, loudness was being heard.'

I must admit that the most interesting part for me is the Multitude Categories. Some structures that are seen as singular even they do not take plurality appendix in Turkish create the plural categories:

Sen patavatsızın birisin.

'You are a tactless person.'

...belki ağzında diş vardır.

'...there may be teeth in his mouth.'

...akşam olunca misafir geldi. Misafirlerin elini öptüm.

'...the guests have arrived in the evening. I kissed the all guest's hands.'

Bu çocuklarda çok cevher var.

'There are many ores in these kids.'

-Neyin var? -Yumurtam var.

'-What do you have? -I have eggs.'

According to Guzev, Multitude Categories is one inflectional category. It clearly shows the authenticity and uniqueness of agglutinating languages. Contrary to the flexional languages, the word is not in the form of separate and single word without the numerical indicators in agglutinating languages. It does not represent any numeric value. This feature is seen both in historical and modern Turkish.

For example, in the above sentences the word *misafir* ‘guest’ which is singular, but its use as гости ‘guests’ attracted Guzev’s attention. The functional and semantic multiplicity of the structures seen in these and similar sentences is one of the subjects that are not mentioned in Turkish grammar.

The noun inflexional categories are the subject that Guzev has been paying attention to for years. I remember that Guzev complained that this issue was not adequately addressed in Turkish grammar. In this section, it is examined in detail with plenty of examples. For example, the following sentences clearly showed that this issue must be discussed in detail considering the co-occurrence of dative and ablative categories as well:

Boşluğa gebeydi sanki.

‘It’s like she was expecting emptiness.’

and

...yolculuktan bıkmış.

‘...tired of the journey.’

Guzev discussed the adjectives extensively as well. It is known that the words are not directly adjectives or adverbs in Turkish and they gain function according to their usage. Guzev gives the following example:

İyi öğrenci iyi okuyor.

‘The good student reads well.’

Guzev mentioned that there is a prejudice in Turkic languages that it is not possible to distinguish nouns and adjectives and it is even more difficult when it comes to root adjectives such as *ak* ‘white’, *yeşil* ‘green’, *iyi* ‘good’. The difference between noun and adjective can be understood in the derivative adjectives.

Guzev mentioned the adjectives made with $\{+IX\}$, $\{+sXz\}$, $\{+IXk\}$, $\{+sAl\}$, $\{+mSX\}$; $\{-(y)XcX\}$, $\{-XIX\}$, $\{-mA\}$, $\{-GXn\}$, $\{-Xk\}$, $\{-sAl\}$ in adjective appendix section. Guzev determined the functional and semantic features of the appendixes according to derived words. However, I do not agree in some parts in this section. Guzev determined five functions for $\{+IX\}$, which is an adjective appendix, and gave the following example for the fourth function:

Kızlı oğlanlı beş-on çocuk alanda toplanmıştı.

‘Five to ten children including boys and girls gathered in the field.’

The appendixes $\{+IX\}$... $\{+IX\}$ in words *kızlı oğlanlı* ‘boys and girls’ are different as root. (comp. *kadınli erkekli* ‘women and men’ Kornfilt, 1997, p.457). This appendix which is used differently from $\{+IX\}$ appendix is actually meant ‘and together’. Functionally, it is again adjective or adverb.

Guzev tackles the appendix $\{-XIX\}$, which was an appendix that confused some researches and remained unsolved, under a separate heading as an appendix that derives adjective from the verb in a very correct way with *gömülü* ‘buried’, *bezeli* ‘adorned’, *sarılı* ‘wrapped’ examples. In fact, this appendix which is used in new analogical derivative mostly is actually in a composite construction in Turkish spoken in Turkey. Kornfilt (1997, p.459) described this structure with the following examples:

ört-ü+lü ‘having or wearing a covering; with a cover’

ört-ü-l-ü ‘covered’

The most interesting example of this use is *ruhsata işli* ‘recorded to the car license’ which is used as jargon in car buying and selling a business and is also used in official correspondences today. I discussed this interesting structure as an example for lexicalization in my article (Akalin, 2014, p.20).

The appendix $\{+sAl\}$ which derives adjective from noun must be distinguished from appendix $\{-sAl\}$ which derives adjective from verb since they were given under the same heading with the examples *kutsal* ‘holy’ and *tarihsel* ‘historical’. There are two separate appendixes; one derives adjective from noun and the other adjective from the verb. The most interesting example in modern Turkish for adjective derived from verb is the word *görsel* ‘visual’ which was made similar to word *uysal* ‘malleable, docile’. The word which is used as adjective initially is now used as nouns which are ‘photograph, picture, video, etc. whole image.’

Guzev also examined adverbs in detail. Three categories are determined for adverbs which are related time and place, those mentions the verb and those with lexeme. I would like to draw attention to

the structures that have become idioms and terms when lexeme structure of adverbs are examined. The words *ağırdan* ‘slowly’, *aniden* ‘suddenly’, *ardından* ‘subsequently’, *baştan* ‘initially’, *çoktan* ‘already’, *erkenden* ‘early’ are adverbs. However, in Guzev’s examples the idiom *ağırdan almak* ‘act slowly’ which was used as doing something reluctantly actually is a nautical term *baştan kara etmek* ‘ashore stem on’ which means ‘berthing a boat to coast or beach’. I must say that the adverbs are determined correctly and examined with a variety of examples.

A detailed analysis on the functions of *{+ki}* possession appendix in Turkish, lexicalization of the structures taking this appendix, verb categories with noun root, verb formation, and verb conjugation are other elaborative topics of the book. The most interesting subjects of the verbs are aspect categories. The following structures were analyzed with an interesting approach *-Ar ol-*, *-mAz ol-*, *-mXş ol-* / *-mXş bulun-* etc.

It is intriguing that Guzev examined those under two sections named as Turkish type combined expression model and Indo-European combined expression model in the syntax part.

Guzev refers to these kinds of combined structures as Turkish type:

Gelmeyecekler diye beklemedi.

‘He did not wait in case they did not come.’

Ben seni uyuyor zannettim.

‘I though you are sleeping a lot.’

Çocuğun olsun çok mu istiyorsun, Neriman?

‘Do you really want to have a child, Neriman?’

The author states that combined structures made with *ve* ‘and’, ... *da ... da* ‘both...and’, *hem ... hem de* ... ‘so and so’, *nitekim* ‘in fact’, *yani* ‘namely’; *ama* ‘but’, *ancak* ‘however’, *fakat* ‘but’, *karşın / rağmen* ‘although’, *kâh ... kâh ...* ‘in turn’, *ki* ‘as’, *ne... ne...* ‘neither nor’, *ne var ki* ‘however’; *çünkü* ‘because’, *zira* ‘likewise’ conjunctions are Indo-European combined sentence structures.

Guzev briefly mentions the subjects that he wants to draw attention to in the conclusion. Guzev, who explains the scope and the nature of the works in the field of Turkish grammar, emphasizes giving importance to Turkish syntax in theoretical terms.

The references of the work are extremely wide. Guzev almost assessed publications made in each country in the world regarding the Turkish grammar in European countries, Russia and Turkey so that he successfully completed his work. The corpus of the book is composed of almost seventy literary works from modern Turkish literature. Hundreds of example sentences were taken from literary language material. This shows that the work is written with scientific methods in a correct and realistic perspective.

As a result, I see my dear colleague Viktor Guzev’s *Theoretic Grammar of Turkish* work as an eye-opening and enlightening work in the field of Turkish linguistics. I congratulate Guzev for contributing this important work to Turkish language studies and I wish him to contribute new works to Turkology.

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