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# **An anchorage for Turkic language studies**

**Lars Johanson**

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The journal *Turkic Languages* is an international periodical devoted to Turkic language studies in a broad sense, established to meet the growing scholarly interest in the languages of the Turkic-speaking world and to promote the development of linguistic Turcology. It is intended to be a common forum for scholars of various theoretical orientations, an anchorage for all kinds of serious studies in the field, committed to both tradition and innovation. It aims at presenting a variety of topics of interest to a wide range of readers. Besides articles, review articles and reviews, *Turkic Languages* will contain reports on interesting scholarly activities.

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## **Introducing Turkic Languages**

The journal *Turkic Languages* introduced with this issue aims to be an international scientific periodical devoted to Turkic language studies in a broad sense. Its goal is to meet the rapidly increasing scientific interest in Turkish and other languages of the extensive Turkic family.

While planning this journal, the editors have received highly positive reactions from numerous scholars in the field. Currently, there is no central forum for Turcological linguistics, and the existing journals of Oriental studies can only devote rather limited space to Turkic language studies. It is often difficult to find one's way through the thicket of periodical literature containing relevant contributions.

Moreover, the last two decades have seen the emergence of strong currents of Turkish and Turkic language studies outside traditional Turcology. The lack of a common forum has led to unnecessary barriers between different circles with basically similar scholarly interests. The results achieved within one group have often remained unknown to other groups. It is necessary to overcome such hurdles, which have

seriously hampered Turkic linguistics in its evolution and prevented it from establishing standards. Many people active in the field have stressed the need to revive linguistic Turcology in all its aspects.

As a result of recent political developments, Turkic languages of Central Asia and other areas have attracted considerable general attention. In spite of their growing importance, however, Turkic language studies have by no means attained the position they merit. Turcology faces serious problems when trying to cover its enormous field of study in a reasonable way. Joint efforts of scholars of different orientations are needed to help incorporate Turkic studies into education systems around the world. It is hoped that *Turkic Languages* will at least be able to contribute positively in this direction.

### **Language studies**

*Turkic Languages* will be concerned with the languages of the entire Turkic-speaking world and cover descriptive, historical, comparative, areal, social, typological, acquisitional as well as other aspects. The scope of interest will not be restricted to linguistic issues in a narrow sense; however, Turkic language data must play a central role in all contributions. Discussions on questions of philology, literature, oral texts, history, etc. are most welcome provided they are based on language data. Contributions basically dealing with theoretical issues but referring to Turkic data will also have a natural place in the journal.

Attention will be paid to genetic, typological and contact relations with other languages, in particular Altaic (Mongolic, Tungusic, etc.), Paleoasiatic, Indo-European (Iranian, Slavic, Germanic, Greek, etc.), Uralic, Chinese. We also invite representatives of neighbouring disciplines to submit articles on topics of common interest. In order to set and maintain high theoretical and methodological standards, linguistic Turcology needs stimulation “from outside” as well.

### **Coexistence and exchange of ideas**

While the editors do have their own theoretical orientations and preferences, the journal as such is not committed to any linguistic theory. The editorial policy will be open-minded rather than dogmatic, the primary goal being a reasonable qualitative level. We welcome all well-argued and methodologically sound contributions based on available knowledge.

As a result of this flexibility, many readers will certainly find a good deal of controversial material in the journal, for example, in questions concerning theory and method or the genetic affiliation of Turkic languages. Different opinions will be allowed to coexist and even clash, provided they are properly argued and free from insulting personal attacks. The diversity that arises when many currents flow together will certainly stimulate a fruitful exchange of ideas.

### **Tradition and innovation**

It is hoped that the journal will promote the development of Turkic linguistics by bringing together scholars dealing with Turkic data under different perspectives. The journal is meant to be an anchorage for all kinds of serious Turkic language studies, a platform where scholars of different traditions and orientations may come together to talk and listen to each other, to establish contacts and interconnections. This should provide for innovation and contribute to the broadening of the perspectives in a field where there is still so much more to discover.

Tradition is no less important—a certain continuity based on knowledge accumulated in the field. The journal would like to contribute to the development of a certain culture in this respect in order to preclude “the invention of the wheel” over and over again. Authors are therefore asked to try to take notice of previous work relevant for their topics. It is hoped that the very existence of *Turkic Languages* will facilitate the much-desired flow of information.

### **A path of communication**

While Europe-based in the sense of being edited by a group of European scholars, the journal will be open to contributions from all directions of the compass. All those engaged in Turkic language studies, however geographically dispersed, are invited to support the journal by submitting articles, reviews, etc. Each volume should contain a balanced mixture of topics that interest a wide range of readers. Since one goal is to reach a broad international readership, the preferred language of publication will be English.

*Turkic Languages* will also publish reports on interesting ongoing scholarly activities (projects, research groups, conferences, etc.), making it possible for readers to keep up-to-date on research initiatives.

The ultimate aim is thus to clear a path of communication through the landscape of Turkic language studies.