

Werk

Label: ReviewSingle

Autor: Árpád, Berta

Ort: Wiesbaden

Jahr: 1997

PURL: https://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?666048797_0001 | LOG_0043

Kontakt/Contact

[Digizeitschriften e.V.](#)
SUB Göttingen
Platz der Göttinger Sieben 1
37073 Göttingen

✉ info@digizeitschriften.de

- Hankamer, J. 1988. Parsing Nominal Compounds in Turkish. In: *Morphology as a computational problem*, Occasional Paper 7, University of California at Los Angeles.
- Johanson, L. 1977. Bestimmtheit und Mitteilungsperspektive im türkischen Satz. *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* (Wiesbaden), Supplement III: 2, 1186-1203.
- Kornfilt, J. 1986. The Stuttering Prohibition. In: Aksu-Koç, A. & Taylan, E. E. (eds.) *Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Turkish Linguistics*, İstanbul: Boğaziçi University Press. 59-83.
- Köksal, A. 1975. *A first approach to a computerized model for the automatic morphological analysis of Turkish*. [Ph.D. dissertation, Hacettepe University, Ankara.]
- Lewis, G., 1967. *Turkish grammar*. Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- Nilsson, B. 1985. *Case marking semantics in Turkish*. [Ph.D. dissertation, University of Stockholm, Stockholm.]
- Solak, A. & Oflazer, K. 1991. Implementation details and performance results of a spelling checker for Turkish. *Computer and Information Sciences* 6, 1057-1066.
- Tura, S. 1981. 'Yes, he hasn't' and a few other not's in Turkish. In: *Proceedings of the Seventh Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*. Berkeley: Berkeley Linguistic Society. 317-327.

Árpád Berta: Review of Lars Johanson. *Strukturelle Faktoren in türkischen Sprachkontakten* [Structural Factors in Turkic Language Contacts]. (Sitzungsberichte der Wissenschaftlichen Gesellschaft an der Johann Wolfgang Goethe-Universität Frankfurt am Main 29, 5.) Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1992. 137 pages. ISBN 3-515-06176-2.

Árpád Berta, József Attila Tudományegyetem, Egyetem utca 2, H-6722 Szeged, Hungary.

The question at the core of all the issues Lars Johanson addresses in this book is the following: Assuming a contact situation between languages, is it possible to specify those structural features which tend to promote language change, and define its dynamics and intensity? Conversely, is it possible to specify the structural features that inhibit language change?

What has already been published on this question would fill a small library, but a conclusive answer is yet to be had.

Johanson does not—indeed, cannot—undertake to discuss the correlation between language contact and language change in all its complexity, and significantly restricts both the subject and the range of his investigation. Essentially, he focuses on language contacts with “an immediate, non-lexical impact on the spoken language” (p. 7). As for the range of his investigation, it is confined to *long-term, intensive* influences in contact situations where one of the languages involved is a Turkic language. Johanson proposes, in particular, to discuss language contacts—both those showing Turkic dominance, and those showing non-Turkic dominance (p. 11)—which have been the staple of linguistic and sociolinguistic analyses of contact situations: The Turkic influence on the Greek dialects that were spoken in Central Anatolia, for instance; the Balto-Slavic influence on the Karaim spoken in Lithuania, Poland and the Ukraine; and Iranian-Turkic language contacts. Fortunately for the reader, however, the author does not always stay within these self-imposed limits, and illustrates his points with a much wider range of examples.

Johanson is primarily a linguist, but he is at home in sociolinguistics, and is very much aware that the outcome of any particular contact situation will depend to no small extent on extralinguistic factors: Political, economic and / or cultural dominance, numerical superiority, which language was autochthonous in the area of contact, the measure of bilingualism in the area, and so on.

Language, for Johanson, is both a technique and a product. Every language is a—historically determined—creative technique, one suitable for generating (inventing), implementing and modifying (changing) the rules regulating the realization of a linguistic variable. It is, at the same time, a product, one capable of being described and analyzed. In describing language change, we can speak of *new linguistic factors* having taken the place of the *old*.

The author, as noted above, is interested primarily in asymmetrical language contacts, i.e., those in which we can distinguish a *dominant* language (language B) and a *dominated* language (language A). The dominance relationship between languages can be one of *social* dominance or *structural* dominance.

While optimally, the factors underlying social dominance (political, economic and cultural dominance, numerical superiority, autochthony in the area of contact, etc.) can be described with a fair degree of accuracy, structural dominance is not quite so easy to define.

The first step toward its definition is to determine how far the two contact languages are similar from the point of view of their structure and typology, and to what extent they differ. Johanson ascribes particular importance to a language’s structurally attractive features, which experience has shown to be particularly suitable for

copying. “Copying” is a term Johanson has recommended to replace “borrowing” or “transfer” in a number of other works (cf. Johanson 1993a, 1993b), and the latest literature indicates that this term is becoming accepted by more and more Turkic scholars. It is, undoubtedly, a more adequate term than “borrowing”. What both terms are meant to describe is a change in the rules regulating the realization of a linguistic variable in a particular language: A language copies into its own code elements from the code of the contact language. The copied elements of the contact language enter the copying language, which incorporates these elements in its own code.

Johanson differentiates two types of influence on a speaker of language A: a) When language B influences the A speaker’s use of A (the classical example of “borrowing” in traditional linguistics); and b) when, in the case of a native A speaker becoming bilingual, language A influences the A speaker’s use of language B (Johanson calls this *Unterschiebung*, i.e. imposition due to language shift).

Linguistic interaction can give rise to several types of copying. *Global copying*—where B units, “blocks”, are copied into A as a whole—is to be distinguished from *partial or selective copying*, where only certain properties of B are copied into A.

Johanson then gives a comprehensive, 46-point typology of the Turkic languages (pp. 22-32), a summary that will be welcomed, and not just by linguists who know little of Turkic studies but like to use Turkic examples nevertheless.

Chapter II (p. 33-61) is much more than a critical review of the part that structural factors have, to date, been thought to play in language contacts. As so often in his works, Johanson warns against the kind of unsubstantiated conclusions one so often encounters in the literature, and is very guarded in the wording of his own findings. He discusses the preconditions of structural influence in language contact, the question of the stability of linguistic elements, and the matter of attractive features. I found myself subscribing to a great deal of what he had to say about relative attractiveness (p. 47-51). Judging by the Turkic influence on Greek, and the Russian influence on Turkic, Johanson concludes that the want of a typological similarity between linguistic sub-systems (i.e., the want of “objective structural equivalence”) is no impediment to copying. (Karaim, which was influenced by Slavic, is particularly rich in phonetic and syntactic examples to this effect.) What counts is the *subjective evaluation* of the presence or absence of structural equivalence, though admittedly, in the case of structurally dissimilar languages, the copy in language A is usually strikingly different from the language B original.

Johanson specifically calls attention to influences productive of far-reaching language change, pointing out that these are inconceivable without the requisite social conditions. Far-reaching language change, however, does have some structural aspects, the gradualism (successiveness) of the copying process being a cardinal one. Optimally, a linguist will be able to substantiate the assumption of gradualism with

exact linguistic data. For instance, Johanson mentions the case of A languages whose B language loanwords can be shown to have entered those languages at different stages of linguistic development, and cites the Russian loanwords in the Turkic languages as examples. In other cases, it is more difficult to obtain empirical confirmation of successiveness. For though researchers have no doubt that Hungarian was exposed to a long period of Turkic influence prior to the tenth century, they have yet to conclusively identify which Turkic loanwords entered Hungarian at which stage of its development. The problem, of course, is much more complex than the case of the Russian loanwords in the Turkic languages. The early Turkic loans in Hungarian are unlikely to have come from one and the same Turkic language, and so are likely to reflect not just chronological differences, but linguistic and dialectal differences as well. Insufficient knowledge of Turkic linguistic history as well as the linguistic convergence resulting from this protracted period of far-reaching Turkic influence on Hungarian have made it impossible to distinguish the various chronological layers. (Little wonder, then, that Johanson has failed to cite the example of Turkic influence on Hungarian at any of the number of places where he might have. Hungarian Turcologists are just beginning to make some headway in the fields of concern to him; the area of lexical copying, where we have the most concrete results, is not among the subjects he deals with in this book.)

The second chapter ends with Johanson distinguishing what he calls the two basic types of strong linguistic influence: Case a, where, in spite of being powerfully influenced by language B, the A speech community keeps its native A language; and case b), where the A speech community gives up its native A language and becomes B-speaking. It is this process, completed, that is meant by "language shift". An interesting variant of case b, Johanson points out, is when a large A-speaking community, which has acquired language B, influences the B spoken by the original B speech community. As a historical illustration of this variant, Johanson cites the Turks who spoke Bulgarian as an acquired language. I believe that we can assume a similar development in the wake of the language change that took place among the Khazar-speaking Kabars, who joined up with the Hungarian tribes in the 9th century.

Chapter III (p. 61-114) discusses instances of the global and selective copying that have resulted from the contact between the Turkic and non-Turkic languages. Johanson gives examples for every system within the language system as a whole, from the phonological system to morphology and syntax. One can only regret that this wealth of material is not itemized in an index.

Johanson summarizes his findings in the concluding chapter of the volume, "General and areal trends" (p. 114-127). All Turkic language contacts, we learn, independently of whether they were relatively superficial, or were protracted, intensive and conducive to far-reaching change, were characterized by the same fundamental

feature: It was always the structurally attractive features that were copied. Long-term, intensive contacts, however, also tended to lead to the convergence of the languages involved. Convergence, in such cases, was always in the direction of greater simplicity.

Convergence, Johanson points out, can occur spontaneously as well, and is not necessarily the result of language contact. Accordingly, one needs to weigh all the evidence very carefully before describing any particular instance of convergence as the result of language contact, rather than spontaneous development. (For my part, I would take a more skeptical position on this score. For there are cases where all the care in the world can not satisfy us that a particular instance of convergence has one, rather than the other cause.)

The author makes two further significant points in conclusion, one historical, the other of relevance to comparative Altaic studies.

Johanson finds that the history of the Turkic languages shows a two-fold pattern of development: Though there was a natural trend to linguistic differentiation (divergence), time and again a koine would also develop, showing that there was a trend to convergence as well.

The second point has to do with the established fact that the later any Mongolian source is, the more structural similarities it will reveal between the Mongolian and the Turkic languages. This, Johanson emphasizes, is not necessarily incompatible with the assumption that historically, Mongolian and Turkic belonged to the same family of languages. He does note, however, that if the Altaic languages are related, their relationship must date back to be the very earliest times; this would account for the extreme paucity of their common features. It would make sense to look for further common features in the area of the language that has shown the greatest stability. From the point of view of the Turkic languages, this would be seem to be the complex verbal system, which appears to be particularly archaic and intact.

One can only hope that researchers will follow up on both of these points in the future.

Obviously, a concise review cannot do justice to every important thing that an author says. My own objective in reviewing Johanson's book has been to call attention to this seminal work, to recommend it to the attention of general linguists, those doing research on language contacts, and not least of all, specialists in Turkic studies.

As befits the significance of Johanson's contribution to the subject, this is a book that will likely be quoted time and again. Chances are that scholars will also be inspired to rethink and develop some of his conclusions, which is another effect of an outstanding work.

Johanson, as noted above, has opted to disregard the examples of Turkic-Hungarian contact, and—as already explained—for good reason. All this serves to bolster