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Titel: Gender in the Turkish language system

Autor: Braun , Friederike

Ort: Wiesbaden

Jahr: 2000

PURL: https://resolver.sub.uni-goettingen.de/purl?666048797_0004|LOG_0014

Gender in the Turkish language system

Friederike Braun

This article examines how gender distinctions are coded in Turkish, a grammatically genderless language. Linguistic means of expressing gender are described on three levels: (a) lexical (lexemes such as *kadın*, *erkek*), (b) morphological (suffixes such as *-e* in *memur-e*), (c) syntactic (combinations of a gender lexeme with another nominal form, e.g. *kadın polis*). Factors determining the occurrence of such gender expressions are discussed. The article also deals with inherent gender biases of terms without overt gender markers and the tendency to equate humanness with maleness (as in *adam* or *bir genç*).

Friederike Braun, Seminar für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Universität Kiel, Olshausenstr. 40, 24098 Kiel, Germany.

1. Introduction

It is well known that Turkish is spared the "curse of grammatical gender" (Lewis 1967 [1991]: 51). Descriptions of Turkish therefore tend to assume that gender plays a negligible role in the language system. The only thing Underhill (1976: 32) has to say is, for example, that: "Turkish has no grammatical gender, that is, no distinction between 'he', 'she', and 'it', and the pronoun *o* serves for all three". Other descriptions of Turkish briefly point to the existence of gender-specific lexemes, of gender-marking attributes or suffixes (cf. for example Kissling 1960: 117; Lewis 1967 [1991]: 25 or Kornfilt 1997: 270), but in general, the question of gender and its linguistic expression receives little attention in Turkish linguistics.

It is the aim of the present article to give a more extensive and systematic account of gender expressions and their linguistic status in Turkish.[1] It will be argued that

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[1] The observations made in the present article are based on data from the following sources: Literary texts, newspaper articles, the text corpus of the project "Turkish Natural Language Processing" (which is conducted at the universities of Bilkent and Orta Doğu and accessible on the internet), empirical studies conducted by the author, as well as interviews with native speakers of Turkish. In order to distinguish literary texts from linguistic sources, literary texts will be cited in a different format using keywords from the title rather than the year of publication, e.g. "Pamuk, *Sessiz ev*, p. 31". The full references are given in the list of literary sources at the end of the article.

the linguistic forms concerned are neither few nor simple and that a number of questions regarding the grammar of these forms still need to be answered. The observations and findings presented are the result of six years of research on the linguistic treatment of gender in Turkish and on the gender semantics of Turkish terms for person reference. This research comprises among other things a series of empirical investigations in which over 1,000 native speakers participated. On the basis of these data, it will also be argued that overt expressions of gender are more frequent than is usually assumed and that they occur even where they are neither necessary nor central to the point made in an utterance.

In particular, the following aspects will be dealt with: The linguistic means for expressing gender in Turkish (lexical gender, suffixes, and syntactic gender marking) are presented in sections 2 and 3. The conditions under which gender expressions are used are discussed under 4; this section also summarises results of an empirical study on overt gender marking. Section 5 is concerned with the tendency to equate humanness with maleness, which has various manifestations in Turkish. Reference will also be made to the covert gender of terms without overt gender markers. The conclusion in section 6 will recapitulate the main aspects of the preceding sections and briefly compare them to findings on Finnish.

2. Means of expressing gender in Turkish

There are basically three ways of expressing gender in Turkish: the use of (a) lexemes with gender as an inherent lexical feature, (b) gender-marking suffixes, and (c) syntactic gender marking.

2.1. Gender as an inherent lexical feature

Lexemes with inherent gender are, among others, expressions such as *kadın* 'woman', *erkek* 'man', *kız* 'girl', or *oğlan* 'boy', in which gender is the core of the designation. But lexical gender distinctions are also common in kinship terms and terms of address.[2] Note that these lexical fields overlap so that the same differentiations recur (cf. Tables 1 and 2).

Table 1: Kinship terms

Female		Male	
anne	'mother'	*baba*	'father'
abla	'older sister'	*abi (ağabey)*	'older brother'
nine	'grandmother'	*dede*	'grandfather'

Newspaper articles will be identified with the date of publication and the page number, e.g. "*Hürriyet*, 22 August 1995, p. 3".

[2] The following description disregards terms for animals, where lexical gender distinctions are found as well, cf. *kısrak* 'mare' vs. *aygır* 'stallion', *inek* 'cow' vs. *boğa* 'bull'. As for kinship terms, cf. also Kornfilt (1997: 519-520).

teyze 'aunt'		*dayı*	'uncle'
(mother's sister)			(mother's brother)

Table 2: Terms of address

Female		Male	
hanım	'Mrs, lady'	*bey*	'Mr, sir'
hanımefendi	'lady'	*beyefendi*	'sir'
bayan	'lady'	*bay*	'sir'
abla	'older sister'	*abi*	'older brother'
teyze	'aunt'	*amca*	'uncle'

Within the whole field of person reference, however, lexical gender words constitute only a minor subgroup, since the majority of lexemes are not gender-specific (e.g. *işçi* 'worker', *öğretmen* 'teacher' or *komşu* 'neighbour').

2.2. Gender-indicating suffixes

There are a few gender-marking (mostly female-marking)[3] suffixes in Turkish. Almost all of them were borrowed from gender languages in combination with lexemes to which they were attached (Kornfilt 1997: 270). They are not productive and cannot freely derive feminine terms from Turkish stems.

The ending *-e* is the most frequent of these suffixes. It was borrowed from Arabic and occurs in Arabic loanwords such as *sahib-e* 'owner-fem', *müdir-e* 'director-fem', *rakib-e* 'rival-fem' or *memur-e* 'employee-fem' (Kissling 1960: 244). In Modern Turkish, the suffix is not mandatory, so that the bare lexemes *sahip, müdür, rakip,* and *memur* can refer to females as well. In spite of the purist efforts of the Turkish Language Reform, however, even modern Turkish texts contain *-e* forms like the ones mentioned above, cf. example (1).

> (1) *Ertesi yıl laboratuvarının karşısında, yıllardır para işlerini yürüttüğü banka şubesinin* **müdir-e-si** *Şule Hanım'la evlendi.*
> 'In the following year he married Ms. Şule, the **director-fem** of the bank opposite his laboratory, where he had conducted his financial affairs for years.' (Uzuner, *Susamuru*, p. 171)

Similarly, the form *memur-e* 'official-fem' was used by several speakers around the age of twenty in the empirical study described in 4.2. below.[4]

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[3] Exceptions are borrowed word pairs such as *aktör / aktris*, where both endings may be perceived by Turkish speakers as gender-marking.

[4] The existence of the secondary derivation *sahib-e-lik* 'owner-(fem)-ship' from *sahib-e* 'owner-fem' is a further indicator that *-e* suffixation is rather established with certain lexemes.

The suffix *-içe* is a loan from Slavic (Banguoğlu 1986: 178) and is found in the originally Slavic words *kral-içe* 'queen' (cf. *kral* 'king'), and *çar-içe* 'tsarina' (cf. *çar* 'tsar').[5] *İmparator-içe* 'empress' may have come into Turkish via Slavic as well (Lewis 1967 [1991]: 25), even though Italian is the donor language of the base *imparator* 'emperor' (*Türkçe sözlük*, 702). In addition to these "three old borrowings" (Lewis 1967 [1991]: 25) we find the more recent coinage *patron-içe* 'boss-fem', which is derived from the originally French stem *patron* 'boss' (*Türkçe sözlük*, 1169). For female heads of state, *kraliçe*, *çariçe* and *imparatoriçe* have to be used with the suffix, for the unsuffixed bases are understood as exclusively male. *Patron*, however, can refer to females even without the suffix.[6] According to Banguoğlu (1986: 178) and Lewis (1967 [1991]: 25), the ending *-ça* in *tanrı-ça* 'godd-ess' is related to *-içe* in that *tanrıça*, a neologism, was coined in analogy to *-içe* forms.

Some gender-differentiated word pairs borrowed from French brought along further gender suffixes, e.g. *aktör / aktris* 'actor / actress', *dansör / dansöz* 'male / female dancer', *prens / prenses* 'prince / princess'. These suffixes are not used consistently in Turkish, however: Although *kuaför* 'hairdresser', for example, was borrowed into Turkish, a word **kuaföz* 'female hairdresser' is not used. It is also worth noting that the gender distinction in such pairs is not always adhered to. *Dansöz* 'female dancer', for example, changed its meaning to 'belly dancer', with the consequence that males as well can be referred to as (*erkek*) *dansöz* '(male) belly dancer (fem)'. Similar tendencies are reported for words with the French feminine suffix *-es*: According to Steuerwald (1963: 129, note 328), *metres* 'mistress' can be used to designate male "mistresses", and Brendemoen & Hovdhaugen (1992: 38, note 12) observe that *hostes* 'female flight attendant' can be used to refer to the male service personnel in long distance buses.[7]

The only native candidate for a gender "suffix" is the ending *-(a)nım* as in *hocanım* 'teacher-fem' (from *hoca* 'teacher'). This ending is an enclitic version of the lexeme *hanım* 'lady', which, due to frequent use in address and reference (e.g. *hoca hanım*), has fused with the stem and acquired a suffix-like quality. Occurrences of *-(a)nım* are not very frequent today and are basically restricted to forms such as *hocanım* 'teacher-fem', *müdir-anım* 'director-fem', and *hemşir-anım* 'nurse'.[8]

The above overview has shown that gender-marking suffixes do exist in Turkish. But their limited distribution and frequency assigns them a secondary role in the language system. Even though a systematic gender differentiation could have origin-

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[5] According to Lewis (1967 [1991]: 25) and Kornfilt (1997: 270), the source language is Serbo-Croatian.

[6] The suffixed form *patroniçe* 'boss-fem' also has the more specialised meaning 'manager of a brothel'. This usage may prevent *patroniçe* from becoming the regular reference to female bosses.

[7] Informants, however, preferred the term *muavin* 'assistant'.

[8] The stem *hemşire* is a gender lexeme, so that the suffix is a redundant gender marker in this case.

ated from suffixes, such a development has not taken place. It can be assumed that the language reform, with its efforts to abolish foreign grammatical elements, contributed to a decline of suffixation.[9] Ergin's (1958 [1993]: 120) observation, however, that there are no gender suffixes in Turkish can only be confirmed in so far as the suffixes described above do not form part of a grammatical gender system.

2.3. Syntactic gender marking

Expressions of the type *kadın doktor* 'woman doctor (= female doctor)', *erkek arkadaş* 'male friend (= boyfriend)' or *kadın bir polis* 'woman a police (= a female police officer)' are instances of syntactic gender marking: They constitute complex noun phrases in which a gender lexeme is combined with another nominal. Since this kind of gender expression exceeds the word boundary, it is regarded here as a syntactic phenomenon. In what follows, the gender lexeme in such an expression will be called "gender marker" or "marker", while the other term will be referred to as "unspecified" (with regard to gender). The present section will give an overview of "female" and "male" markers, while the structural aspects of syntactic gender marking will be dealt with under 3.

The most frequent and most general "female" marker is the word *kadın* 'woman'. The use of *kadın* presupposes that the female in question is an adult and / or is married.[10] *Kadın* is widely used in syntactic gender marking, cf. combinations such as *kadın başbakan* 'woman prime minister', *dilenci kadın* 'beggar woman', *kadın dedektif* 'woman detective', *kadın yazar* 'woman author'.[11]

Another gender marker for adult women is *bayan* 'lady', which was introduced during the language reform as an equivalent to European titles of the type *Mrs* or *Madame*. *Bayan* is a little more formal than *kadın* (hence classified as "unvan" 'title' in *Türkçe sözlük*, 158), but has gained wide currency and can be used with terms that do not express very dignified or "lady-like" roles, e.g. *bayan futbolcu* 'lady football player', *bayan mahkûm* 'lady convict'. However, a certain formal flavour still prevents combinations such as **dilenci bayan* 'beggar lady', **köylü bayan* 'villager lady', or **bayan katil* 'lady murderer'. In syntactic gender marking, *bayan* is much more frequent than *hanım* 'lady', which otherwise has a similar distribution and status.

Kız 'girl' is the gender marker for young and / or unmarried females. It occurs in many combinations, of which *kız çocuğu* 'girl child', *kız arkadaş* 'girl friend', *kız*

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[9] The literature on the lanugage reform (e.g. Steuerwald 1963, 1966; Brendemoen 1990) contains surprisingly little information on these suffixes, although Arabic *-e*, for example, should have been a typical target of the kind of purism pursued in the reform.

[10] The aspect of marriage referred to here is 'loss of virginity'. This aspect is also manifest in a news text (Turkish Natural Language Processing Project, file "trtnews1") where 12 and 13-year-old girls are referred to as *genç kadınlar* 'young women', because they are prostitutes—and hence not virgins.

[11] The order of the respective elements will be dealt with under 3.1. below.

öğrenciler 'girl students' are typical examples. With *kardeş* '(younger) sibling' *kız* does not express the actual age of the referent, but her age relative to the person who is the point of reference. A *kız kardeş* 'girl sibling (= sister)' can thus be 50 years of age provided that the other one is older.

Apart from these common markers of female gender, there are a few others with more specialised uses: *Karı* 'woman, broad' is distinctly pejorative and can be found in expressions such as *köylü karıları* 'village women (broads)'. *Teyze* 'aunt' appears in combinations of the type *komşu teyzeler* 'neighbour aunts', where it signals familiarity (and thus parallels the use of *teyze* as a term of address). The markers *madam* 'madam' and *matmazel* refer to non-Muslim or non-Turkish women, cf. *terzi matmazel* 'dressmaker Miss' for a European referent.

For male gender there are only two markers which are commonly used: *erkek* 'male, man' and *adam* 'man, human'. With *erkek*, there are restrictions concerning age, but they depend on its position in the complex expression: When *erkek* is the modifier, as in *erkek çocuk* 'male child' or *erkek okuyucu* 'male reader', it expresses only gender and says nothing about age. Where it serves as the head noun (cf. *komşu erkekler* 'neighbour men'), it refers to adult men.[12]

That *adam* serves as a 'male' marker might seem surprising considering its second, gender-neutral reading 'human'. The context, however, usually disambiguates the two meanings: *Adam* means 'man (male)' when it is used in the singular in reference to a specific person. As a 'male' marker, *adam* implies adulthood of the referent, but is otherwise widely combinable, cf. *makinist adam* 'engine driver man', *dilenci adam* 'beggar man', *cüce adam* 'dwarf man'. The subjects participating in the empirical study mentioned under 4.2. showed a preference of *adam* over *erkek* as marker of male gender.

In contrast to its 'female' equivalent *bayan*, the marker *bay* 'Mr, sir' rarely appears in syntactic gender marking. It seems to be more or less restricted to job offers and wanted ads, where *bay eleman* 'sir personnel / staff member (= male employee)' is an established expression. *Bey* 'Mr, sir', the equivalent to *hanım*, is hardly ever used as a gender marker.

Oğlan 'boy' serves as a 'male' marker for non-adults. It is found in combinations such as *oğlan çocuğu* 'boy child' and *oğlan kardeş* 'boy sibling (= younger brother)' where *erkek* 'male, man' can be used as well.[13] In contrast to attributive *erkek*, *oğlan* gives definite information about the age of the referent.

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[12] Some of the informants regarded the use of *erkek* in head noun position as somewhat unusual. For them, *erkek* has slightly sexual connotations when it appears in a "noun" position, since *erkek* then refers to biological sex (cf. *Türkçe Sözlük*, 463). As to the word class of nominals in syntactic gender marking, cf. 3.1. below.

[13] In general, the word *oğlan* refers to persons that are not regarded as fully male, either because they are too young and sexually inexperienced or because they are homosexuals. Due to the association with homosexuality, some informants were hesitant about using *oğlan* as a gender marker and expressed a preference for *erkek*.

The lexeme *herif* 'guy' can be regarded as the male counterpart of *karı* 'woman, broad' as it is similarly pejorative. Its use in syntactic gender marking is rather rare; it was found for example in the combination *hademe herif* 'servant guy' where it was clearly negative.

To conclude, there are a number of gender lexemes in Turkish which serve as gender markers when they are combined with unspecified nominals. They have additional semantic components of evaluation, formality and reference to age. These aspects rather than the expression of gender can be the primary motivation for speakers to use a given marker. A speaker may choose to add *karı*, for example, to the unspecified term *satıcı* 'salesperson' in order to convey a negative evaluation (rather than marking gender). Similarly, a speaker may use *oğlan* 'boy' in combination with *kardeş* '(younger) sibling' to signal that the younger brother is still a child. But no matter what is foremost in the speaker's mind, these markers always convey gender information. Since gender is the main component in their lexical meaning, they are treated as gender markers.

3. Structural aspects of syntactic gender marking

There are two ways in which the combination of a gender marker and an unspecified nominal may vary: First, in the respective order of the two elements. Both gender marker – unspecified nominal and unspecified nominal – gender marker are attested, as in *kadın polis* 'woman police (= female police officer)' and *polis kadın* 'police woman'. The second area of variation concerns the type of construction that the two elements form. Here again there are two possibilities. One is that the two are simply juxtaposed, as in *bayan sürücü* 'lady driver', with no further formal indication of their relationship. The second possibility is that the two combine in a compound with a third person singular possessive marker on the head noun, as in *kız çocuğ-u* 'girl child-poss (= girl)'.

3.1. The order of elements in syntactic gender marking

Combinations of the type *kadın öğretmen* 'woman teacher' constitute complex nominal expressions in which the last element is the syntactically dominant head noun, and the initial element the modifier.[14] The examples in the preceding section have already shown that markers and unspecified nominals can occur in either position so that there are expressions of the type *kız öğrenci* 'girl student' (marker-un-

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[14] It is obvious that a modifier such as *kadın* 'woman' (in *kadın öğretmen* 'woman teacher') is grammatically rather different from a modifier such as *iyi* 'good' (as in *iyi öğretmen* 'good teacher'). *Kadın* and *iyi* are therefore usually not coordinated in a phrase such as **iyi ve kadın bir öğretmen* 'a good and woman teacher'. This is at least partly due to the different degree of nouniness of *kadın* and *iyi*, cf. below. This question is not central to the present considerations, though, and will not be discussed any further here.

specified nominal) as well as *köylü kadın* 'villager woman' (unspecified nominal-marker). It is not unusual for the same two lexemes to occur in both orders and even to alternate within the same text. For example, both *hastabakıcı kadın* 'hospital attendant woman' and *kadın hastabakıcı* 'woman hospital attendant' were found in the same text, as were *trafik polisi bayan* 'traffic police lady' and *bayan trafik polisi* 'lady traffic police'. In a series of standardised interviews conducted in Ankara, informants mentioned *futbolcu bayan* 'football player lady' and *bayan futbolcu* 'lady football player' as possible expressions which were to be inserted in the same sentence frame. There are, however, semantic nuances between the different orderings and a few restrictions with certain types of forms.

Where both orders are possible, the nominal in head noun position gives the primary classification of the referent, with the modifier adding further information (cf. Haig 1998: 74 on the relationship of modifier and head in general). A person referred to as *kadın polis* 'woman police', for example, is first and foremost a police officer, but one who is female. A person designated as *polis kadın* 'police woman', on the other hand, is seen primarily as a woman, but one who is a police officer. As Kissling (1960: 118) and similarly Lewis (1967 [1991]: 252) rightly note, the modifier is often the focus of attention, since it names the feature which distinguishes persons from the same basic category. Thus, *öğrenci kız* 'student girl' and *dilenci kız* 'beggar girl' both refer to the category 'girl', but the modifiers highlight the difference between the two girls. On the other hand, *kız öğrenci* 'girl student' refers to the basic category 'student', as does *erkek öğrenci* 'male student', but the modifier contrasts the two on the basis of gender. The head noun may thus be seen as the theme of the construction and the modifier as the rheme. A corresponding view is proposed by Dede (1982: 88), who postulates underlying sentences following the pattern "HEAD NOUN is MODIFIER". According to this view, *kız öğrenci* 'girl student' expresses the underlying sentence 'the student is a girl', with 'student' the theme and 'girl' the rheme. The underlying sentence for *öğrenci kız* 'student girl' would be 'the girl is a student', with 'girl' as the theme and 'student' as the rheme. These semantic distinctions are very subtle, however. In many contexts they are so small that native speakers do not perceive a tangible difference between the two orders.

In addition, there are a few restrictions in the order of elements which concern certain lexemes: Expressions of origin, such as *Alman* 'German' or *Ankaralı* 'Ankaranian', usually occur in the modifier position,[15] with the marker as the head noun (cf. *Alman kadın* 'German woman', but not **kadın Alman* 'woman German'). The markers *adam* 'man' and *karı* 'woman, broad' are always in head noun position, hence *dilenci adam* 'beggar man' or *komşu karı* 'neighbour woman' and not **adam dilenci* 'man beggar' or **karı komşu* 'woman neighbour'. With *çocuk* 'child' and *kardeş* 'sibling' the gender marker has to be in the modifier position, as in *erkek çocuk* 'male child' and *kız kardeş* 'girl sibling'.

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[15] Cf. Braun & Haig (1998) on the relatively low degree of "nouniness" of these terms.

The order of elements in forms like *Alman bayan* 'German lady' is of course not merely a question of semantics, but is related to the question of word class membership: Across languages, it is a prototypical function of adjectives to act as modifiers within noun phrases, hence as attribute to the head noun (cf. Croft 1991: 52; Bhat 1994: 49-50, 167; Wierzbicka 1986: 373; on Turkish cf. Kornfilt 1997: 105). The word class membership of lexemes should thus predict the preferred order in syntactic gender marking. In Turkish, however, the distinction of adjectives and nouns is far from clear and is the subject of considerable controversy (cf. Johanson 1990: 187-191). As the overview in Johanson (1990) shows, it is difficult, if not impossible, to draw a strict line between the two word classes. This position is supported by the results and the discussion in Braun & Haig (2000), where it is argued that no individual linguistic criterion is capable of separating an adjective class from a noun class. The empirical study on Turkish terms for person reference reported in Braun & Haig (2000) shows that these terms can be positioned on a scale of "nouniness" stretching from adjective-like to noun-like nominals: Adjective-like terms are for instance *zengin* 'rieh' and *Ankaralı* 'Ankaranian', whereas *polis* 'police officer' and *kadın* 'woman' are noun-like terms; nominals such as *hasta* 'ill, patient' and *genç* 'young, young man' occupy an intermediate position. Speakers tend to prefer more adjective-like terms in modifier function and more noun-like ones in head noun position, but these rules are gradual rather than categorical. There is thus no definite word class distinction between adjectives and nouns and therefore only a very small number of rules for the ordering of elements in syntactic gender marking. As was argued above, it depends on the demands and contents of the text which position is the suitable one for a given element.

3.2. Juxtaposition vs. suffixation in compounding

It is conspicuous that some combinations of gender marker and unspecified term have a possessive suffix on the second element, while most of them do not, cf. for example *kız çocuğ-u* 'girl child-poss (= girl)' vs. *kadın polis* 'woman police (= female police officer)'. This is not simply a matter of word classes (with unsuffixed forms consisting of adjective-like element + nouny element and suffixed forms of two nouny ones), for the same two lexemes can occur both with and without suffixation, e.g. *köylü kadın* 'villager woman' and *köylü kadın-ı* 'villager woman-poss'. It is therefore necessary to take a look at juxtaposition and suffixation in compounding in general.

In Turkish, compounding is achieved by means of (a) juxtaposition of two nominals (e.g. *altın yüzük* 'gold ring'), and (b) suffixation of the 3sg possessive to the head noun (e.g. *doğum gün-ü* 'birth day-poss = birthday'). Suffixation is the more frequent mechanism and is regarded as the standard pattern of compounding, so much so, that Ergin (1958 [1993]: 362) speaks of juxtaposition as "feci bir yanlışlık" 'a terrible mistake'. Nevertheless, juxtaposition is the rule under certain conditions, e.g. when one of the elements refers to material as in *altın yüzük* 'gold ring' or *demir kapı* 'iron door' (for an overview of the respective rules cf. König 1987; Kornfilt

1997: 473-475; Dede 1982 or Lewis 1967 [1991]: 41-44). In combinations of gender markers with unspecified terms, juxtaposition is clearly the dominant type, cf. *bayan sürücü* 'lady driver' or *komşu erkekler* 'neighbour men (= male neighbours)'. Use of the possessive suffix would in many cases introduce considerable changes in meaning, as described in the literature (e.g. Lewis 1967 [1991]: 252; König 1987: 166-167): While *kadın terzi* 'woman tailor' refers to a female tailor, *kadın terzi-si* 'woman tailor-poss' is a tailor for women's clothes, but not necessarily a woman.

In his analysis of suffixation vs. juxtaposition in Turkish compounds, König (1987) arrives at a rule which should predict the occurrence of the possessive suffix in syntactic gender marking. According to König, juxtaposition is used when the nominals concerned form a conjunction of predicates, i.e. parallel statements about the referent. *Kadın doktor* 'woman doctor', for example, conjoins two predicates in stating that the referent is a woman and also a doctor. The suffixed form *kadın doktor-u* 'woman doctor-poss (= gynaecologist)' contains no such parallel claims, but gives a specification of the head noun. Viewing combinations of gender marker and unspecified term from this angle, it becomes apparent that practically all of them consist of conjoined predicates: A *kız çocuk* 'girl child' is both a girl and a child, a *köylü kadın* 'villager woman' is both a villager and a woman, and a *dilenci adam* 'beggar man' is both a beggar and a man. It is thus not surprising, following the rule proposed by König, that juxtaposition is the dominant type of compounding in such combinations. What is surprising, however, is that suffixation does occur as well.[16] There are instances such as *kız çocuğ-u* 'girl child-poss', *oğlan çocuğ-u* 'boy child-poss', *erkek çocuğ-u* 'male child-poss', *çingene kadın-ı* 'gypsy woman-poss', and *köylü kadınlar-ı* 'villager women-poss'. Especially *kız çocuğ-u* is so frequent that the juxtaposed form *kız çocuk* has to be regarded as a minor variant, although the suffixed form clearly violates the rule formulated by König.[17]

The occurrence of suffixed forms cannot be explained at this point, but it may be understandable at least from a semantic point of view why, for quite a number of combinations, the coexistence of juxtaposed and suffixed variants is tolerable (cf. Haig 1998: 81): For in many of these cases, suffixation does not lead to ambiguity or misinterpretation. While *kadın doktor-u* 'woman doctor-poss (gynaecologist)' is a doctor *for* women and *erkek kuaför-ü* 'man hairdresser-poss' is a hairdresser *for* men, there is no corresponding concept that could be referred to by *kız çocuğ-u* 'girl child-poss' or *köylü kadın-ı* 'villager woman-poss', for there is no such thing as a child *for* girls or a child *concerned with* girls, nor is there a woman *for* or *concerned with* villagers.

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[16] Several authors note fluctuation and language change in the two patterns of compounding in Turkish (König 1987, Lewis 1967 [1991]: 47; Brendemoen & Hovdhaugen 1992: 62), but what they observe is an increase of juxtaposition and not of suffixation.

[17] In the study described under 4.2., *kız çocuğ-u* occurred 18 times, compared to only one instance of *kız çocuk*.

4. When is gender made explicit?

The grammar of Turkish does not demand gender distinctions when persons are mentioned. But, as in any language, discourse conditions can necessitate explicit reference to gender, examples of which will be given in 4.1. below. Even more interesting are the many cases where gender is not a central piece of information and is not essential for the understanding of an utterance, but is overtly expressed nevertheless. Empirical data on the frequency and distribution of such markings are presented in 4.2.

4.1. Discourse conditions for gender marking

Gender has to be expressed when an utterance aims at comparing or contrasting female and male representatives of a category (example 2), when the validity of a statement is limited to only one gender (example 3), or when gender is the central topic of an utterance or stretch of discourse, as in (4).

(2) **Kız çocuklarındaki***beslenme bozuklukları ve buna bağlı ölümler,* **erkek çocuklardan** *çok fazla.*
'Problems of nutrition and deaths resulting from them are much more frequent with **girl children** (= girls) than with **male children** (= boys).'
(*Hürriyet*, 22 April 1996, p.17)

(3) *Ekvador'un ilk* **kadın devlet başkanı** *olma şansını yakalayan 41 yaşındaki Arteaga'nın da Bucaram gibi bir lakabı var.*
'41-year-old Arteaga, who grasped the chance to become Ecuador's first **woman state president** (= female president of state) also has a nickname just like Bucaram.' (*Milliyet*, 10 February 1997, p. 13)

(4) *... İSEDAK toplantılarına bu yıl 53 ülkeden uzmanlar katılıyor. Bu uzmanlar arasında birkaç kadın da yer alıyor.* **Kadın uzmanlar,** *genellikle tesettürlü.*
'... This year, specialists from 53 countries attend the İSEDAK conferences. There are also a number of women among these specialists. The **women specialists** are generally veiled.' (*Milliyet*, 13 November 1996, p. 4)

The term *arkadaş* 'friend' constitutes a special case when it comes to gender marking: The bare lexeme does not primarily point to an intimate kind of relationship, but explicit reference to the opposite gender frequently changes the meaning to that of 'lover' or 'partner'. In example (5), *arkadaş* 'friend' is directly contrasted with *erkek arkadaş* 'boyfriend', marking a decisive change in relationship:

(5) **Arkadaş** *olalı altı ay ama,* **erkek arkadaşım** *olalı üç ay falan oldu.*
'It has been six months since we became **friends**, but three months or so since he became my **male friend** (= boyfriend).'
(Çerezcioğlu, *Mavi saçlı*, p. 189)

When *arkadaş* is used to refer to a person the speaker has an intimate relationship with, gender marking is almost obligatory. Use of a gender marker with *arkadaş* is thus often a pointer to this kind of relationship.

Without being strictly necessary, gender marking can be used to conjure up the image of a multitude and diversity of people, as in (6):

> (6) *Girenler, çıkanlar, beyazlı* **kadın hastabakıcılar,** *beyazlı* **erkek hasta-**
>   **bakıcılar,** *sedyede taşınan bir ihtiyar, kollarına girilmiş adım adım*
>   *götürülen bir kadın ...*
>   '[People] coming in and going out, **woman hospital attendants** (= fe-
>   male hospital attendants) in white, **male hospital attendants** in white,
>   an old person carried on a stretcher, a woman, led by the arms step by step ...'
>   (Altan, *Gökyüzü*, p. 182)

Overt gender marking is also frequent when an unspecified term alone would lead readers or hearers to expect a different gender, i.e. when the gender of the referent deviates from the norm. In (7) for example, which is the headline of a newspaper article, the marker *bayan* 'lady' signals from the outset that the *futbolcu* 'football player' whom the text is about is not a man, as readers would otherwise assume:

> (7) **Bayan futbolcudan** *kaza kurşunu*
>   'Accidental bullet from **lady football player** (= female football player)'
>   (*Milliyet*, 25 January 1996, p. 3)

In cases as the ones described, gender marking is either necessary to convey the intended message or is a means for conveying useful background information.

4.2. "Unnecessary" gender marking

Many linguists claim that in Turkish an explicit expression of gender occurs only where it is inevitable (Kissling 1960: 117) or "where it is important for understanding" (Brendemoen & Hovdhaugen 1992: 38, my translation), in other words, in cases like the ones mentioned above. Closer inspection of Turkish texts, however, reveals an astonishing number of instances where gender marking cannot be explained in this way and, in fact, appears unnecessary. In (8), for example, marking seems rather redundant since the context contains several clues to the gender of the (female) referent, a model depicted in an advertisement for motor oil and compared to another woman, Ceylan:

> (8) *Şaşkınlıkla duvardaki Mobil-Oil afişine baktım: Elinde yağ tenekesi tutan*
>   **manken kadın** *inanılmayacak kadar Ceylan'a benziyordu.*
>   'In confusion I looked at the advertisement for Mobil Oil on the wall: The
>   **model woman** (= model), who held an oil can in her hand, resembled Cey-
>   lan to an unbelievable degree.' (Pamuk, *Sessiz ev*, p. 244)

In another novel by Orhan Pamuk, *Cevdet Bey ve oğulları*, there is a conspicuous and similarly unexplainable frequency of 'female' markers with the lexeme *kardeş* '(younger) sibling': (Younger) sisters are almost always referred to as *kız kardeş* 'girl sibling (= sister)', even where none of the motivating conditions hold. (Younger) brothers, on the other hand, are simply referred to as *kardeş* '(younger) sibling'.

To investigate the occurrence and distribution of such overt markers systematically, an empirical study was conducted which focussed on gender marking not strictly necessary for understanding.[18] In the study, 404 subjects were asked to translate an English text about a traffic accident in which one person was injured. The gender of that person was irrelevant for the reported events, but was identifiable through the English pronouns used in the text (*she* vs. *he*). The text was presented in a number of different versions, created by varying the gender and occupation of the central character. In this manner, provision was made for occurrences of unexpected gender: Where the main character was referred to as *secretary ... he* or as *basketball player ... she*, gender was a noteworthy (though not strictly necessary) piece of information.

It would have been possible to formulate an understandable, coherent and correct Turkish text for all versions of the story without using any overt gender marker. This is what happened in 72% of the translations. But the remaining proportion of 28% gender-marked texts is surprisingly high, considering the lack of grammatical or textual necessity of gender marking. The expression of unexpected gender was of course a potential motivation for gender marking in certain text versions. But it soon became obvious that this was not the decisive factor: There was a tendency to mark unexpected female gender with the stimuli 'basketball player' and 'police', but no corresponding tendency to mark unexpected male gender with 'secretary' and 'housekeeper'. Instead, marking was always more frequent for female than for male gender, even where both were equally expectable (as with 'American' and 'child') or where female gender was more expectable.[19] In the latter case, however, the frequency of 'female' markers was only marginally higher than the frequency of 'male' ones, and the difference did not attain statistical significance.

The data thus suggests that there is a tendency to mark female gender in Turkish, even in cases where gender is irrelevant and / or where female gender is expectable.

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[18] This study was one of the series of empirical investigations on gender in Turkish mentioned in 1. It is described in more detail in Braun (1997) and (1998b). Inevitable expressions of gender were not taken into account because it is self-evident that inevitable expressions of gender occur in Turkish, as they do in any language. They do not contain information about the specifically Turkish distribution of gender markers.

[19] Female gender was marked in 50% of all cases, and male gender in only 5%. This is a highly significant statistical difference.

Male gender, on the other hand, is rarely marked, even where it is unexpected.[20] This finding was backed by statements made by interviewees in a later study (cf. Braun 1998b, study 4C). When pondering the use of gender markers, they frequently took marked forms for male referents into consideration (e.g. *erkek sekreter* 'male secretary', *çocuk bakıcısı adam* 'nursery school teacher man'), but dismissed them as 'impossible' or 'strange-sounding'. Apparently 'male' marking is much less conventionalised in Turkish than the marking of female gender.

On the whole, then, overt expressions of gender are not as rare in Turkish as is often assumed, and they are certainly not restricted to contexts where the expression of gender is a textual necessity. Kornfilt's (1997: 270) statement that only a small number of nouns are gender-marked—namely the ones with gender suffixes—is thus rather misleading.

5. Human = male?

The empirical data on gender marking document a fundamental asymmetry in Turkish person reference: While female gender tends to be highlighted by overt expressions, male gender is often treated as the normal case that does not need to be specified. This tendency exemplifies what Silveira (1980) calls the "male = people-bias": Males are referred to with general terms (e.g. 'person', 'people'), while gender-specific expressions (e.g. 'woman', 'girl student') are used for females. A semantic corollary of this phenomenon exists in the "covert gender" of Turkish nouns, i.e. the gender biases inherent in the semantics of Turkish terms without gender marking. In two empirical investigations on covert gender, the following regularities were found:[21] Terms from typically male occupations such as *polis* 'police officer' or *işportacı* 'street vendor' have a male bias and evoke 'male' associations in native speakers, their covert gender is male. Similarly, the covert gender of terms from female domains such as *sekreter* 'secretary' or *temizlikçi* 'cleaning person' is female, as they are associated with female persons. Words from gender-neutral domains, however, have a bias that does not correspond to the statistical distribution of women and men—the covert gender of words like *kişi* 'person' or *birisi* 'someone' is male. Terms whose lexical meaning refers to people in general are thus more readily understood as 'male' than as 'female'. This is what Silveira (1980) calls the "people = male-bias", i.e. the tendency to give general terms a preferred 'male' reading. There

[20] It might be argued that translations do not give a realistic picture of Turkish language usage. But even if gender distinctions in the source text should have pushed the subjects towards gender marking, the asymmetrical tendency in the Turkish data cannot have resulted from English influence, for gender expressions were always symmetrical in the English originals (e.g. *child-she* : *child-he*). Comparatively infrequent marking with the stimuli *basketball player* and *secretary*, moreover, shows that subjects did not automatically imitate gender markings present in the source text.

[21] These studies are described in Braun (1997, 1998a) and in more detail in Braun (1998b).

is empirical evidence that the male bias in *kişi* 'person' and similar words is not an artefact caused by gender biases in the context. In another investigation, where context was experimentally controlled, *kişi* 'person' was interpreted as 'male' by 64% of 386 subjects and as 'female' by only 14% in the gender-neutral context (the rest being inclusive interpretations). The distribution of overt gender markers as well as the gender semantics of terms for person reference thus attest to the existence of a male-as-norm principle in Turkish, a principle that was found to exist in many languages. The following paragraphs will give some additional examples of Turkish words with a blending of the meaning 'male' and 'human'.

Modern Turkish *oğul* 'son' originally meant 'child'; in the course of time this was overridden by the preferred reading 'son'. Pre-thirteenth century Turkish, as described in Clauson's (1972: 82) etymological dictionary, shows a strong preference for the 'male' reading:

> "*oğul* 'offspring, child' originally of either sex, but with a strong implication of 'male child'; by itself it can mean 'son', but not 'daughter'; in the Plur. it might mean 'sons and daughters', but *oğul kız* would be the more normal expression."

Apparently *oğul* went through a stage where its male bias required gender-marking for female referents, cf. the historical form *qız oğul* 'girl child (= girl)' mentioned by Grönbech (1936: 24), and later acquired the entirely gender-specific meaning that it has today. A parallel tendency can be observed with the word *çocuk* 'child' in Modern Turkish. In the study summarised under 4.2. above, it was found that the gender-marked combination *kız çocuğu* 'girl child (= girl)' is preferred for girls, whereas *çocuk* alone is the normal expression for boys. It is also worth noting that *çocuk* has a second reading which is even exclusively 'male'. On that reading, *çocuk* means "genç erkek" 'young man' (*Türkçe sözlük*, 317) and is used for male persons up to an age of about 25 years. Sentence (9) exemplifies the use of *çocuk* in its second meaning:

> (9) *Partide Semra'nın yanında çok yakışıklı bir* **çocuk** *gördüm.*
> 'At the party I saw Semra with a very handsome **child (= young man)**.'

Semantic narrowing of a similar kind can be observed in *genç* 'young, young person, young man'. Used as a modifier, *genç* is gender-neutral and therefore freely combinable, cf. *genç sporcular* 'young athletes', *genç kız* 'young girl' or *genç adam* 'young man'. Used as a head noun, however, *genç* has a perceptible male bias and is usually interpreted as 'young man'. In a series of interviews conducted with 42 Turkish speakers in Ankara in 1997, a majority of 30 interviewees stated that *genç* in head

noun function was exclusively 'male'.[22] Example (10) illustrates the use of *genç* as a modifier vs. head noun: In this sentence, *genç* 'young (man)' (*genç* as head noun, hence 'male') contrasts with *genç kız* 'young girl' (*genç* as modifier, hence 'unspecific'):

> (10) *Ailesinin evlenmelerine karşı çıkması üzerine sevdiği* **gençle** *birlikte kaçan* **genç kız**, *onları yakalayıp öldürmek için ant içen ağabeyinin tabancasının namlusunu ensesinde hissediyordu.*
> 'The **young girl** who had eloped with the **young** (**man**) she loved because her family was opposed to their marriage felt the barrel of her elder brother's pistol in her neck, who had sworn to catch and to kill them.'
> (*Hürriyet*, 30 August 1995, p. 2)

In (11), a young girl describes her mother's reactions to attention paid to her by young men. Again, *genç* is clearly gender-specific and is treated as almost synonymous with *erkek* 'man', which occurs later in the sentence:

> (11) *Bir yerde tesadüfen bir* **genç** *olsa, biraz bana baksa ... [annem] sanıyor ki;* **erkekler** *benimle iligilendikleri zaman çok seviniyorum.*
> 'If there happens to be a **young** (**man**), if he happens to look at me ... [my mother] assumes that I am happy when **men** are interested in me.' (Özgül, *Lise defterleri*, p. 47)

Turkish *genç* thus resembles English *youth*, which is also gender-specific ('young man') when used as a term for person reference. It is worth noting, however, that the plural form *gençler* 'the young, young people' can refer to both females and males, cf. (12):

> (12) *Gerlingen Diesel caddesi üzerindeki Flic-Flac diskoda Türk Pop Geceleri'nin ilkine gelen Türk* **gençlerinin** *yüzde 65'ni [sic] genç kızlar oluşturdu.*
> '65% of the Turkish **youths** that came to the first of the Turkish Pop Nights in the Flic-Flac disco at Diesel Street in Gerlingen were young girls.'
> (*Sabah*, 4 November 1996, p. 11)

On the whole, *genç* seems to be undergoing a similar development as *çocuk* and *oğul*: A term whose lexical meaning should be applicable to humans in general is semantically narrowed so that it receives a preferred 'male' reading.

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[22] The 'male' covert gender of *genç* has repercussions in the perceived compatibility with gender-specific predications. In an empirical study it was found that a sentence combining the subject *genç* with the predication *çeyizini düzmek* 'to prepare one's trousseau' was rated as significantly less acceptable than a sentence combining *genç* with *askerliğini bitirmek* 'to finish one's military service' (cf. Braun forthcoming, 1998b).

6. Conclusions

Gender plays a more important role in the Turkish language system than the absence of grammatical gender distinctions might suggest. Expressions of gender are rather varied and are used more frequently than textual necessity in a strict sense would demand. But the distribution of gender is conspicuously asymmetrical, for it is first and foremost female gender that is marked by overt expressions.

The most frequent and productive means to make gender explicit is syntactic gender marking: Any unspecified term can be combined with a gender lexeme to express gender; at the same time, additional aspects of evaluation, formality or age can also be conveyed by the individual gender markers. The structure of expressions formed by syntactic gender marking is not unproblematic for linguistic description: The distribution of juxtaposition vs. possessive marking needs further clarification and the word class membership of elements in syntactic gender marking is not readily statable in terms of "adjective" or "noun" but will have to be determined on a scale of nouniness.

The majority of terms for person reference are unmarked for gender in Turkish. But, semantically at least, gender is an important element even here. Unspecified terms such as *yolcu* 'passenger', *şoför* 'driver' or *temizlikçi* 'cleaning person' have a "covert gender" which makes speakers and hearers associate them primarily with either male or female gender and which affects the way these terms are used (cf. Braun 1998b, forthcoming).

Though, in general, little research has been done on the role of gender in grammatically genderless languages, it can be assumed that the findings presented above are not unique for Turkish. As is known from research on Finnish, conducted above all by Engelberg (1993, 1998, 1999), there are considerable parallels in this language, which is not only grammatically genderless but shares many other structural features with Turkish. In Finnish as well there is rudimentary gender suffixation: There is the "feminine" ending *-tAr* (an originally Baltic loan) as in *myyjä-tär* 'salesperson-fem', which is however heavily on the decline, and the ending *-kkO* as in *sisä-kkö* 'interior-fem (= female househelper)', which is not always gender-specific (cf. Engelberg 1998). As in Turkish, there is a tendency towards asymmetrical gender marking, whereby female rather than male gender is overtly expressed, e.g. with the stem *nais-* (< *nainen* 'woman') as in *nais-arkkitehti* 'woman architect'. Such markings can occur even where they are redundant, for example, where gender is evident from the context (Engelberg 1999). In addition, unmarked terms for person reference seem to have a covert gender, with terms from gender-neutral domains frequently displaying a male bias (Engelberg 1993, 1999).[23]

In conclusion, gender has to be reckoned with as a factor for language structure and language use as long as gender is an important social category in a language community. The impact of gender takes on a different and more veiled form in lan-

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[23] The male bias seems to be less pronounced than in Turkish, though.

guages where it is not grammaticalised, but linguistic descriptions should nevertheless account for the linguistic forms concerned.

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[24] This novel first appeared in the seventies, but I was unable to determine the exact date.

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