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## Review

Fatoş Erozan & Javanshir Shibliyev: Review of Orhan Kabataş, *Kıbrıs Türkçesinin etimolojik sözlüğü*. Lefkoşa: Kıbrıs Türk Yazarlar Birliği, 2007. 720 pages.

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### Introduction

Although the history of the Turkish language in Cyprus dates back to the 16th century, the Cypriot Turkish dialect started to be mentioned in publications after 1930, when the movement known as *Dil Derlemesi* (searching for pure Turkish words) began. Since then various articles, monographs and books concerning Cypriot Turkish have been published. Some of these publications (e.g. Hasan Eren and Mustafa Gökçeoğlu) are truly seminal (see the Reference section of Kabataş (2007) for a comprehensive list of publications of these authors).

The publications cover such aspects of the dialect as folklore (Saraçoğlu 1989, 2004, 2005; Yorgancıoğlu 1998, 2006; İslamoğlu 2004) and linguistic features (Vancı-Osam 1990; Gürkan 1997; Duman 2000; Demir 2003). However, the main bulk of the studies has been devoted to the lexicology of Cypriot Turkish (İslamoğlu 1996; Gökçeoğlu 1994; Öztürk 2000; Osam 2006). Despite the abundance of publications dealing with the dialect, the attitude toward the dialect has seemed to be fragmentary. Therefore, there appears to be a gap in Turcology regarding Cypriot Turkish. The book written by Kabataş (2007) seems to be a serious attempt to fill this gap.

The book begins with a preface in which the writer states his aim and justifies the need to write the book. Commenting on the publications written about Cypriot Turkish, Kabataş mentions that some of these publications are written by non-professionals. Even the publications written by professionals mainly deal with the lexical stock of the dialect and its relationship with Standard Turkish. According to the author, the etymology of the Cypriot Turkish lexis has been ignored. Therefore, he believes that the book under review is the first study in a field that has been neglected so far.

The study concentrates on the lexis of Cypriot Turkish, its analysis from phonetic, morphological and semantic viewpoints, and the origins of the words that make up the Cypriot Turkish vocabulary. In the book, Standard Turkish is taken as a basis in

defining the vocabulary items, and the words that demonstrate discrepancy between the written forms and their semantic-phonetic features are analyzed. There is also focus on words with their original meanings that are in use in Cypriot Turkish but are becoming archaic in Standard Turkish.

### Content

The book consists of three parts. Part One deals with two specific topics: phonetic properties of Cypriot Turkish and sound change in the dialect. It begins with information about the geography of Cypriot Turkish and the historical evolution of the dialect. According to Kabataş, the dialect was first referred to in four volumes of *Söz Derleme Dergisi*, which appeared between 1939 and 1951 and was published by Türk Dil Kurumu.

The first academic research on the dialect was carried out by Hasan Eren (1963), who organized field trips to Cyprus and published articles about the lexicon of the dialect and its origins. Much has been written since then. As Demir mentions, “considering the size of the area and the size of the Turkish speaking community, the Cypriot varieties are among the most investigated Turkish dialects” (Demir 2003: 268). Nevertheless, according to Kabataş, it is very difficult to find truly academic research on Cypriot Turkish (p. 21).

In his brief review of the literature on Cypriot Turkish, the author mentions that the majority of the studies on Cypriot Turkish are conference presentations, studies of amateur researchers (non-professionals), graduate studies and publications that report these studies. Among these studies are both professional studies and studies that have been carried out without taking academic discipline and methods of investigation into account (p. 21).

The writer finds it fallacious to speak of a unique Cypriot Turkish dialect as it has some varieties. Although Turkish settlers came from different parts of Turkey and exchanged words with the languages they coexisted with, they have managed to maintain their features of speech. Referring to the data elicited from different parts of the island, Kabataş supports the view that one has to speak of varieties of the Cypriot Turkish dialect rather than of one dialect. He does not agree with researchers who are of the opinion that the present concentration of Turks in the North, more intensive cultural ties with Turkey, the increasing influence of Standard Turkish on Cypriot Turkish and some other facts minimize the differences that exist among local varieties. According to the writer, the process currently taking place cannot be characterized as a process in which one of the local dialects reflecting common features of all Cypriot Turkish dialects is becoming dominant. Rather, the discrepancy among the dialects and the standard language is in the process of narrowing down. To support this, the writer refers to Pehlivan (2003).

According to Kabataş, the conclusion that Cypriot Turks originate from a certain part of Turkey (Konya and surrounding places, for example) on the basis of their vocabulary and its phonetic features is another fallacy. However, when comparing

the lexical items used in Cypriot Turkish with Anatolian Turkish, it can be seen that these words originate from different parts of Turkey, and also that some of these items are even found in Old Anatolian written texts (p. 22). The author believes that the analysis of Cypriot Turkish cannot be carried out on the basis of the phonetic features of modern Standard Turkish since Cypriot Turkish developed in a different geography and in a different cultural context throughout its history, which began in the 16th century and continued up to 1974. In fact, Cypriot Turkish has proceeded through an evolution period specific to any dialect (p. 23). Moreover, most of the phonetic changes that are specific to Cypriot Turkish date back to the period preceding the 16th century.

In the second section of Part One, the book describes the phonetic changes that have been taking place in Cypriot Turkish. Kabataş believes that in its phonetic features Cypriot Turkish fundamentally differs from Anatolian dialects. When compared with Old Turkish, it can be seen that some lexical items have maintained their original phonetic structures, while others have changed (p. 27). The writer carries out a detailed description of both the words that have preserved their phonetic features and those which have undergone serious phonetic changes (pp. 27-44) and supports his views with examples (pp. 27-44).

Part Two focuses on etymology; i.e., the words that comprise Cypriot Turkish are analyzed from the etymological viewpoint. The main emphasis is on the changes that these words have undergone at various historical stages. The words are compared with analogous forms in Old Turkish, Old Anatolian Turkish, other dialects of the Turkish language and the standard forms of other Turkic languages. The original written forms of the borrowed words are also introduced. This is especially true for the words borrowed from Greek, Arabic and Persian.

Part Three concentrates on Turkish borrowings used in Cypriot Greek. Kabataş points out that some of these words are archaic while others are still in use.

### **Critical evaluation**

The book deserves the attention of Turcologists for several reasons. First, the book is the first attempt to focus on the etymology of Cypriot Turkish. It enables the reader to go beyond fragmentary knowledge of the topic. Second, the book is a result of a gigantic effort as illustrated by the number of words subjected to scrupulous analysis. Suffice it to note that the number of words in the index section exceeds 3230 words. Kabataş also introduces more than 1560 Turkish borrowings used in Cypriot Greek. Finally, the number of languages involved is impressive. Among the abbreviations (pp. 13-16) are references to nearly fifty languages and all dialects of Turkish. Also, the number of languages represented in the References section is another indicator of the writer's enormous effort. In fact, he has used sources in seven languages, namely, Turkish, English, Azeri, German, Russian, Latin and Greek.

However, as Kabataş notes, errors may have occurred since the book is the first of its kind. In some Azeri words there are spelling errors (e.g. *boxça* is written as *boğça*,

*gayış* as *kayış*, *pambığ* as *pamıx*). Also, there are some spelling errors in the References section. Moreover, it may not seem reasonable to include words that are still in use in modern Standard Turkish (*adamotu, akak, anaç, analık, andız, arasta, bel, biz, bülbül, davar, kelepir, kuşluk, labada, mangal*). In addition, there seems to be inconsistency regarding certain languages. For instance, in some cases, when referring to the etymology of some words the writer mentions the fact that these words are shared with the Azeri language. However, in many analogical cases, the writer ignores this (e.g. *biz, bura, cehiz, gaş, ilan, magnit, pinti, zibil*, etc.).

As can be seen, some of our comments concern insignificant errors, while others are just recommendations. Despite these minor deficiencies, the book can be considered as a serious contribution to the field of Turcology and can be used not only by professionals in the field but also by a wide audience who are keen on lexicological matters.

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