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Autor: Turan , Fikret

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Kontakt/Contact

Digizeitschriften e.V.
SUB Göttingen
Platz der Göttinger Sieben 1
37073 Göttingen

✉ info@digizeitschriften.de

Turkic grammar books written in Mughal India during the 18th and 19th centuries

Fikret Turan

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A corpus of handwritten manuscripts on Turkic languages written in India during the 18th and 19th centuries provides rich linguistic materials in comparative approaches. Among them, two comparative grammars *Qānūn u Qavā'id-i Ruz-marra-i Zabān-i Turkī* and *Şarf u Na'iv Ma'a Luyāt-i Turkī*, which are critically analysed here, put forward original linguistic data and terminology in explaining various grammatical and lexicological problems. Thus, these works open up an area of scholarly investigation with a strong potential to contribute to historical Turkic linguistics in terms of fresh data and methodology.

Fikret Turan, University of Manchester, SLIC, Middle Eastern Studies, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9PL, UK. E-mail: Fikret.Turan@manchester.ac.uk

Introduction

A group of manuscripts of Indian origin on the grammar and lexicon of the Turkic languages written in Persian during the 18th and 19th centuries present rich linguistic materials of their times, creating an area of scholarly studies not only in Turkic linguistics but also in cultural studies concerning the cultural identity and worldview of the Mughals of India. These works make up an important part of a wider body of manuscripts on historical, literary and religious subjects that were produced in India and kept mostly in Indian and British libraries.¹ These lexical and grammatical works often demonstrate the most current varieties of lexical items and grammatical forms of their time of production in a comparative approach explaining each case with a number of sample words, phrases and sentences. They often yield such a degree of detailed information that helps explain various problematic issues in Turkic linguistics and philology. From the number of the grammatical and lexicological works produced and the highly rich and advanced degree of scholarship presented in them, it is clear that a school of Turkic linguistics existed in Mughal India and that it

¹ So far only a few number of limited handlists, catalogues and studies have been produced on these manuscripts. Among them see especially Bodrogligeti (1981), Schimmel (1981), Türkmen (1985) and Bilkan (2006).

was widely supported by the members of the ruling class that were mainly of Turko-Mongolian origin until the mid-nineteenth century.²

General features of the linguistic works on Turkic written in India

One of the main characteristics of these grammar and lexicography works is that almost all these works are explained in Persian, as the Persian language had become the official language of the Mughals after about the mid-16th century.³ As it had happened in the Mamluk State in Arabic-speaking Egypt and Syria between the 14th and early 16th centuries, where the rulers supported scholars working on grammatical and lexical works of Oghuz and Kipchak Turkic in Arabic, the rulers in Mughal India used their Turkic idioms among themselves as the idiom of the ruling class, and sponsored the scholars who produced linguistic works on Turkic languages, which, in this case, predominantly concern Eastern Turkic, namely Chaghatay.

The second characteristic of these works is that they are mostly written in such combinations of linguistic subjects that include sections on grammar, lexicon, everyday conversation and dialogs, and proverbs of one or more Turkic languages and dialects. In these works the authors prefer comparative approaches explaining linguistic elements by comparing and contrasting between two or more Turkic lan-

² From these comparative linguistic and literary works it is clear that the members of the Mughal ruling class and the scholars at their courts kept close contacts and identified themselves with the wider Islamo-Persian and Turko-Mongolian cultural system of the values of the time. On most recent discourses about the multi-dimensional cultural identity politics of the Mughals, see Balabanlilar (2007). That these scholars produced works on Turkic languages up until the latest years of the Mughal rulership in the mid-nineteenth century shows clearly that the Mughals learned, used and showed the Turkic languages as an important aspect of their identity. This fact has clearly been observed by Hadi (1995: 218), the author of the *Dictionary of Indo-Persian Literature*, who states that “[t]he Mughals entertained deep attachment toward the language of their ancestors, and all the princes including ladies of the imperial palace assiduously developed proficiency in Turkish idiom and speech.” However, although the Mughals produced, copied and circulated many linguistic, literary and artistic works in and about Turkic languages, not many comprehensive modern studies of the literature and cultures have been carried out. New studies on these works will not only explore and explain the features of Turkic languages treated in these works but also extend our current knowledge on the degree of Turkish contribution to the modern languages and the cultures of the South Asia such as Urdu and Hindi.

³ The acceptance of Persian by the Mughals as cultural and literary language and its contribution to the birth of Indian Persian have been analysed in several studies by Muzaffar Alam. Although these studies consciously or unconsciously do not touch upon the Turkic idioms used by the ruling elites and the works written in and about Turkic languages by them, they yield important insights into the linguistic policies of the Mughals. See Alam (1998 and 2004).

guages and dialects in terms of their grammatical, lexical and semantic features. They also occasionally put forward hypotheses on the etymology and historical developments of certain lexical units, and speculate on the correctness of their usages, occasionally suggesting “more correct” alternative forms.

In comparing the grammatical and lexical features of the Turkic languages, the authors often express their views about which one or two of those idioms are more literary, advanced and correct (*faṣīḥ*) and which ones are less advanced, and unrefined (*saqīl*). In these works almost all authors agree that Chaghatay is more literary and advanced than the others. The fact that authors were writing their works for the Chaghatay-speaking Turko-Mongol leaders must have played an important role in their upholding Chaghatay over the other Turkic languages and dialects compared.⁴

General characteristics of *Qānūn u Qavā'id-i Ruz-marra-i Zabān-i Turkī*

Two comparative grammars from among these works stand out as highly methodical and informative. Because they yield both new and original information on various aspects of the Turkic languages and dialects of the time as well as the grammar methodology for the Turkic languages, they demand a scholarly investigation. One of these two works is entitled *Qānūn u Qavā'id-i Ruz-marra-i Zabān-i Turkī*, running between the folios 9b and 27b of a bound handwritten manuscript collection numbered Or. 404 and kept in the British Library. As it appears in the beginning of the work, the author is a certain “Ārşūr veled-i Niyāz Bēg ibni Dost Bēg” who completed the work in 1837 (Hijri 1253, 6 Rabi'-al-Awwal) in Puth near the city of Meerut. The manuscript is penned in the *nasta'lik* style with 17 lines per page, each measuring 29 x 16 cm.

In the Introduction, the author talks about those Turkic languages, the grammatical and lexical features of which he compares, contrasts and explains in his work. He names the subject languages as the most current (*ruz-marra*) forms of *Tūrānī*, *Uzbekī*, *Īrānī*, *Rūmī*, *Qızılbaşī*, *Kāşyarī* and *Nogoy*.⁵ Although the author doesn't discuss the geographical areas where *Tūrānī*, *Uzbekī*, *Īrānī*, *Rūmī* and *Qızılbaşī* are spoken, we can deduce from various data in the work that *Tūrānī* is used for Chaghatay (probably the version used in and around Transoxiana), *Qızılbaşī* for the Türkmén spoken in parts of Afghanistan, Iran, Azerbaijan and Eastern Anatolia, and *Rūmī* for Ottoman Turkish. According to the author, among these Turkic languages,

⁴ Kāşyarī had a similar prescriptive approach in his *Dīvānu Luṡātī 't-Türk* earlier in the 11th century claiming a dialect of Eastern Turkic namely the Karakhanid Turkic (Uighur) as the most correct one among Turkic languages of his time. See Dankoff & Kelly (1982: 83).

⁵ This last Turkic language is explained as *el-i Noyo ki išānrā Noyoy miguyand* ‘the people of Nogho that are called Nogho’. Same manuscript, Folio 11a.

Tūrānī and Uzbekī are the most correct and literary (*afṣaḥ*), and the other ones are vulgar and unrefined.⁶

The author describes the formal grammatical differences between Turkic languages and dialects and often provides unique information on the differences between their literary and spoken idioms. For instance, while explaining the compound perfect tense 3rd person suffix *-ibtur*, he points out that this form is used only in writing, and the final /r/ in this form is dropped in spoken Türkmen, turning into *-ibtu* as it occurs in words like *kelibtu / kelibtular* 'he has come / they have come'.

In this introductory part the author briefly talks about his methodology also. Here he states that he investigates the Turkic grammar under the rubrics of *ism* (noun), *fi'l* (verb) and *harf* (suffixes, postpositions, prepositions, conjunctions and some adverbs), explaining each concept with examples, which was the common way of linguistic analysis designed according to the Arabic grammar tradition in Islamic societies in pre-modern times. In exemplifying the noun, he employs words like *at* ('name'), *ay* ('Moon'), *quyaş* ('Sun'). The author then describes the class of verb in more detail, giving the samples of verbal paradigms organised the same way as in Arabic grammars, running from the 3rd person singular to the 1st person plural inflection. In this context he shows the paradigms of the verbs *keldi* 'he came', *bardı* 'he went', *olturdi* 'he sat down'. He then talks about transitive and intransitive verbs in Turkic, and so on. As for the class of *harf*, he enumerates 10 suffixes of *mute'addi* (factitive, causative), which are *dur*, *tur*, *yuz*, *güz*, *yur*, *gür*, *t*, *r*, *z*, *s*, and gives the following words as examples: *yügürdürmay* 'have someone run or hurry', *sağlaturmay* 'have someone tend to somebody/something', *olturyuzmay* 'have someone sit, seat someone', *ötgüzmay* 'have someone pass, show someone to somewhere', *yetgürmay* 'have someone/something reach, to deliver', *yayurmay* 'have something fall like rain, shower', *oqutmay* 'have someone read something, have a book, etc. read', *içürmay* 'have someone drink something', *ëmizmay* 'have someone suck something, suckle/breastfeed a baby', *görsetmay* 'have someone see something, show'.

Explaining the Turkic *masdar* (verbal noun) *-maq*, the author demonstrates the variants of the suffix each individual Turkic language uses. On this, the author states that this suffix appears in four forms, which are *-may*, *-maq*, *-maç*, *-mek*, with Tūrānī people using *-may*, the Özbeks and Turks of Iran *-maq*, the Kāşgarīs *-maç*, and the Qızılbaş, Rūm and Nogay people *-mek*. (Folio 11a)

The less common verbal conjugations are introduced by the phrase *gāh bāṣad ki* 'at times, sometimes' after the common paradigm forms are shown. For instance, the *māzī* (past tense) is explained as follows: *Ol keldi* 'he/she came', *olar keldiler* 'they came', *Sən keldiñ* 'you [singular] came', *siz keldiñiz* 'you [plural] came', *Mèn keldim* 'I came', *biz keldük* 'we came'.

⁶ "Turkī-yi Tūrān u Özbek faṣḥ u afṣaḥ ast, u digarān saqıl u yalız..." (Folio 11a).

Wa gāh bāšed ki keldinizler, siz keldinizler, sizler keldiniz ‘you came’, singular or plural in a courteous talk, *sizler kedinizler* ‘you go, you may go’, *keldim mēn* ‘I came’, and so on.

Maḥḥūl (passive): *kelinmay* ‘to be arrived, reached’, *qılınmay* ‘to be done, made’, *oqulmay* ‘to be read’, *bilinmay* ‘to be known’, and so on. (Folio 12a)

Nafy (negative): *kemedi* ‘he/she didn’t come’, *kemediler* ‘they didn’t come’, *kemediniz* ‘you didn’t come’, and so on. (Folio 13a)

The author sometimes coins grammatical terms that demonstrate the semantic attributes of the subject matter in a clear way. These terms usually do not exist in the classical terminology of the Arabic grammar tradition, and thus, they are formed specifically for the grammatical forms found in Turkic languages. For instance, the past perfect tense form *-ibidi* is classified with the term *fī‘l-i māzī-i ma‘rūf-i ba‘īd* meaning ‘the verb of past known for long, a verbal form indicating an already known event’ which has some similar characteristics with the past perfect *-mišti* in Modern Turkish. The basic paradigms of the verbal forms and their variants demonstrated in the work are as follows:

Fī‘l-i māzī-i ma‘rūf-i ba‘īd (Past Perfect):

ol kēlibidi ‘he/she had come’, *olar kēlibidiler* ‘they had come’, *sēn kēlibidiñ* ‘you had come, singular’, *siz kēlibidiñiz* ‘you had come, plural’, *mēn kēlibidim* ‘I had come’, *biz kēlibidük* ‘we had come’.

Nafy (negative): *Kēlmebidi* ‘he hadn’t come’, *kēlmebidiler* ‘they hadn’t come’, *kēlmebidiñiz* ‘you hadn’t come’, *kēlmebidim* ‘I hadn’t come’, *biz kēlmebidük* ‘we hadn’t come’ (Folio 13a-b)

The inferential past forms are mostly made with the converbial *-b* (*b / ib / ib / ub / üb*) and the personal suffixes, which is the common form in Chaghatay and other Eastern Turkic languages as opposed to the *-miş* forms in Oghuz languages: *olturub* ‘he/she has sat’, *sanab* ‘he/she has counted’. However, the 3rd persons often appear with the copular *-tur*: *kēlibtur* ‘he/she has come’, *kēlibtur* ‘he/she has gone’, *aḡtarabtur* ‘he/she has searched’, *kēlibturlar* ‘they have gone’, and the final *-r* of the *-tur* may be dropped: *kēlibtular* ‘they have come’, *kēlibsēn*, *sēn kēlibsēn*, *sēn kēlibsēn*, *sē kēlibsēn*, *sē kēlibsēndur*, *sē kēlibsēn* ‘you have come, singular’, *siz kēlibsiz*, *sizler kēlibsiz*, *sizler kēlibsizler* ‘you have come, plural’, *kēlib mēn*, *kēlib tur mēn*, *kēlibtü mēn* ‘I have come’, *kēlibtü*, *barıbtük*, *bizler kēlibtü*, *kēlibtübiz* ‘we have come’. (Folio 17a)

The author makes clear distinctions between simple present and present continuous tenses. These are shown under the term *ḥāl* (present time):

Simple Present Tenses: *kēler* ‘he comes’, *kēlerler* ‘they come’, *kēlersen ve kēlersēn* ‘you come, singular’, *kēlersiz* ‘you come, plural’; or *kēlesēn* ‘you come, singular’, *kēlesiz* ‘you come, plural’, and so on.

Present Continuous Tense: *kēleysēn* ‘you are coming, singular’, *kēleysiz* ‘you are coming, plural’, and so on (Folio 13b).

Although it is traditionally used for the non-past tenses as a generic term in Arabic grammar writing, the term *muzāri‘* is used specifically for the future tense in this

work: *kəlgey* ‘he will come’, *olar kəlgeyler* ‘they will come’, *kəlgeysən* ‘you will come, singular’, and so on; *kəlmegeysiz* ‘you won’t come, plural’, *kəlmegeymən* ‘I won’t come’, and so on.

The paradigms of the imperative are in general widely used variants in Turkic. However, among all the variants the form with the word *ušan* is unique: *kəl*, *kəlgil*, *kəlgin* ‘come you, singular’, *kəlseñ*, *sən kəlseñ* ‘come you’, ‘you should come, singular’, *kəliñiz*, *kəliñizler* ‘come you, plural’, *kəlseñiz*, *siz kəlseñiz* ‘come you, plural’, ‘you should come, plural’, *olar kəlsünler*, *olar kəlsünler ušan* ‘let them come’, ‘they should come’, *kəlməsün* ‘let him not come’, ‘he shouldn’t come’, *kəlməsəñ* ‘you don’t come, singular’, ‘you shouldn’t come, singular’, *kəlməsem* ‘I don’t come’, ‘I shouldn’t come’, and so on.

The author employs the term *ism-i fā’il* (active participle, agent) in a wider sense, adding to it the attributes of agent nouns. Thus, according to him the following sets of suffixes make *ism-i fā’il*: *gü / yuçı / quçı / güçi / yuç*: *kəlgü*, *kəlyusı*, *kəlyuçı*, *kəlqıçı*, *kəlgüçi*, *kəlyuç* ‘coming’, ‘comer’; *mayçı*: *kəlmayçı* ‘coming one’, ‘comer’; *+çı/çi*: *yayçı* ‘bowman’, *oqçı* ‘arrowman’, ‘archer’, *öyçi* ‘wise man’, *söyçi* ‘teaser’, ‘insulting one’.

The author provides a rich catalogue of variants of the pronouns used in Turkic languages without much specific information on their usages in the dialects. Some of these samples are rare and archaic:

Žamir (Pronoun)

Personal Pronouns:

<i>men, mən, mē</i> ‘I’	<i>biz</i> ‘we’
<i>sen, sən, sé</i> ‘you, singular’	<i>siz</i> ‘you, plural’
<i>o, vo, ol, ušol</i> ‘he/she/it’	<i>olar, ollar, vollar, ušollar</i> ‘they’

Demonstrative Pronouns:

<i>o, vo, ol, ušo, ušol, ušal, uša</i> ‘that, it, he, she’
<i>olar, volar, ollar, vollar, ušallar, ušollar, ušalar, ušolar</i> ‘those, they’
<i>bu, mu, bol, mol</i> ‘this’
<i>bular, mular, bullar, mullar</i> ‘these’
<i>šu, šol, ušo, ušol, ušbu, ušbol, šolbu</i> ‘that’
<i>ušbulo, šolar, šollar, ušolar, ušollar, ušbular, ušbullar, šolbular, ušbulbular</i> ‘those’.
(Folio 20b)

The author occasionally shows the variants of the pronouns in the dialects:

Rūmiyān guyand “bene vér”. ‘Ottoman Turks say “give [it] to me.”’

This work elaborates on denominal and deverbal noun suffixes, converbial and participial suffixes, and the varieties of phrase structures in Turkic. It also puts forward new grammatical terms for certain structures in Turkic, uses some Arabic grammatical terms in different meanings, and explains grammatical classes with rich examples drawn from the Turkic languages and dialects in question.

General characteristics of *Şarf u Naḥv Ma'ā Lugāt-i Turkī*

The work *Şarf u Naḥv Ma'ā Lugāt-i Turkī* is another Turkic grammar book in Persian in this tradition that contributes highly to our knowledge of Turkic languages and dialects. It is between the folios 199b and 236a in a bound book of manuscripts measuring 16x10.5 cm, and, like the previous work described above, it is kept in the British Library, call number Or. 1912. Although the name of the author and the date of completion are not mentioned in the work, there are indications that Muhammad Ya'qūb Jangī, the author of the following lexical work entitled *Kitāb-i Zabān-i Turkī* in the same collection is also the author of this work, which leads us to the early 18th century as the possible approximate date of its completion.

Even though this grammar work also includes the parts *ism*, *fī'l* and *harf* organised according to the Arabic grammar tradition, the author often makes original approaches to the elucidation of certain morphological and syntactic constructions. For instance, when describing appearances of the morphological models of the imperatives in Turkic languages, he demonstrates the phonological peculiarities of certain suffixes as well, stating that the people of Tūrān pronounce the formal imperative suffixes *-yl/gil* and *-qil/kil* as *-qin* in speaking, and the Iranian Turks and Türkmens as *-qil* (*urqil* 'hit you'), the Nogays as *-yin* (*kēlyin*), and the Özbeks as *kin* (*jelkin*). On this last point concerning the Özbek example *jelkin*, he adds that the Özbek people use the consonant /j/ very often, changing most word-initial consonants into /j/ as they pronounce the word *yok* ('no', 'not', 'there is not') as *jök*, and *neme* ('what', 'why') as *jeme*. (Folio 213b) Although this last piece of information is more relevant for the Kazak language, it is clear that the author sees this linguistic phenomenon as a dialectic feature of Özbekī in that period.

Following up on the same subject, he says that the first person singular and plural forms of the imperative have the following variants: *kelsem*, *kelsem mēn*, *kelsün mēn*, *kēlinsem* 'I should come', *kētsemizler* 'we should go', which covers not only the imperative but also the voluntative mood. The work also shows phrasal structures that are encountered in Chaghatay dialects, such as *ēytkinem kēlelsin* 'tell you "come"', 'please come', *ēytkinem kēl* 'tell him "come"', 'let him come', *ēytkinem kētlense* 'be gone', 'let him go', and so on.

In a similar way, while explaining the comparative adjective (*ism-i tafzīl*), the author shows the variants and the usages of *+raq* in Turkic, providing unique information on its use with verbal roots. According to him, the people of Tūrān (*ahl-i Tūrān*) employ the variant *+ray*, Iranian Turks *+raq*, and Kāšyarīs, Türkmens, Nogays, Khazaras, Machinis (people of Eastern Turkistan) and the Ottomans

+/*raḡ/rek*. The examples provided for these variants are *yaḡşıray* 'better', *yamanray* 'worse', *kêlraylar* 'those who come more?', and *kêtraylar* 'those who go more?'. Although the author does not give any specific information about its frequency and spread in the dialects, the use of this suffix with the verbal roots must have been very rare, being limited to only a few verbs in some dialects as this usage is not encountered in other linguistic materials.

The author mentions the variants of grammatical forms used for formal and informal registers preferred by the educated and privileged class (*ḥavāşş*) and the uneducated commoners (*‘avām*). On this point, for instance, while explaining the *ism-i fā'il* (active participle, agent) he mentions the existence of two forms for this class one *-jī* (*kêljī* 'coming one, comer,' *kêtjī* 'going one, goer'), and the other *-gūjī* (*urgūjī* 'striking one, striker') adding that both forms are widely known (*muta‘ārif*) and used (*munşaraf*) in everyday speech both by the common people (*‘avām*) and the elite (*ḥavāşş*), whether they are educated (*ahl-i kitāb*) or not (*ḡayr-i kitāb*).

In addition to grammatical matters, the work occasionally discusses etymological developments of certain words, discrediting popular usages and offering correct and literary forms in a prescriptive linguistic understanding. For example, explaining the meaning and the etymology of the word *piçaq* 'knife', the author states that "the word *piçaq*, which is widely used among people, is [originally] an incorrect word (*yalat*), but it has become correct (*faşḥ*) [later]. The original word for knife is *kesek*, derived from the verb *kesmek* ['to cut'] while the original word for the sickle is *piçaq*, stemming from the verb *piçmek* ['to mow, reap']. Similarly the word *qıçaq* is the derivation of the verb *qıçmaq* ['to shear, clip, cut with scissors'], but people call it *qıçı* ['scissors']". (Folio 206b)

Based on these data it is clear that although this work puts forward a number of linguistic materials within the traditional Arabic grammatical classes, like the previous work, it does not demonstrate in a strictly systematic way in which dialect or geographical area each variant of grammatical units is commonly used. Yet, it is a rich source with regard to the use and appropriation of grammatical terms, invention of new terms for certain Turkic grammatical constructions, exemplification of grammatical concepts, etymological explanations of certain lexical units, and detailed information on under-investigated elements of colloquial dialects.

Conclusion

A group of linguistic works on Turkic languages written in Persian in India during the 18th and 19th centuries demonstrate such similarities in their grammatical method and comparative approach, and provide such rich language materials drawn from both formal and colloquial dialects of Turkic languages that they translate into a linguistic school exploring various aspects of the Turkic languages analysed. Two of these works, namely *Qānūn u Qavā'id-i Ruz-marra-i Zabān-i Turkī* and *Şarf u Naḥv Ma'ū Luyāt-i Turkī*, described here, represent this new body of comparative studies putting forward original linguistic data and terminology in explaining gram-

matical problems. Thus, these works open up an area of scholarly investigation with a strong potential to contribute to historical Turkic linguistics.

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