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Autor: Csató, Éva À.

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Kontakt/Contact

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

✉ info@digizeitschriften.de

Report

Turkic Linguistics: The State of the Art. Workshop at the University of Mainz in March 2016

Éva Á. Csató

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This report gives an account of an international workshop organized at the University of Mainz in March 2016 on the occasion of the incorporation of the Department of Oriental Studies (Seminar für Orientkunde) into the newly established Department of Slavistics, Turcology and Circum-Baltic Studies. The workshop also commemorated the 80th birthday of Lars Johanson, professor of Turcology at the University of Mainz. All of the more than fifty participants had some relation to the Turcology in Mainz, as former doctoral students, research fellows, or project participants.

Éva Á. Csató, Department of Linguistics and Philology, Uppsala University, Box 635, SE-751 26 Uppsala. E-mail: eva.csato@lingfil.uu.se

In January 2016, the Department of Oriental Studies (in German *Seminar für Orientkunde*), at Johannes Gutenberg University Mainz, became part of a larger administrative unit together with Slavistics and Circum-Baltic Studies. The name of the new department is the Department of Slavistics, Turcology and Circumbaltic Studies (in German: *Institut für Slavistik, Turkologie und zirkumbaltische Studien*). This provided a good occasion for Turcologists Hendrik Boeschoten and László Károly to convene a workshop with the aim of discussing the state of the art in Turkic linguistics and to stipulate promising paths for further research collaborations.

The over fifty participants were Turcologists, linguists, former doctoral students, visiting scholars at the former Department of Oriental Studies, and colleagues who for many years had collaborated with the Turcologists in Mainz in various ways.

The participants also commemorated Lars Johanson's 80th birthday. Lars Johanson was born in Sweden and studied at Uppsala University. He has been affiliated with the University of Mainz since 1972, first as a Humboldt scholar and since 1973 as a "Privatdozent". In 1981 he succeeded Professor Johannes Benzing to the chair of Turcology at the Department of Oriental Studies. During his time as professor, Mainz became an internationally known center of Turkic linguistics. Johanson supervised over ten doctoral students, most of them today themselves professors at different Turkish and West European universities. Several leading Turcologists worked as Humboldt scholars in Mainz. Johanson initiated and, during the first two

periods, led the project “Historical and Linguistic Aspects of Turco-Iranian Contacts in the South Anatolian and West Iranian Area”, at Mainz University 1997–2008.

The opening speech was held by Professor Hendrik Boeschoten, who in 2002 was appointed professor of Turcology in Mainz as the successor to Lars Johanson.

The first lecture, on *Diminutive and Honorific Language Means in Kazakh and Siberian Turkic*, was given by Irina Nevskaya of Goethe University of Frankfurt and Novokuzneck State Pedagogical Institute. The written version of this talk, co-authored by Saule Tazhibaeva, will be published in *Turkic Languages*. Nevskaya was awarded a Humboldt scholarship and worked as a research fellow in Mainz in 1998 and 1999.

Marcel Erdal, Free University of Berlin, also a former Humboldt fellow in Mainz, reported on *The Dialectological Status of the Runiform Sources*. Between 2013 and 2016, Erdal has been engaged in a research project on Old Turkic language varieties (*Alttürkische Sprachvarietäten*). The project aims to identify dialectal variation in Turkic inscriptions and manuscripts from the period 800–1300, found mainly in Mongolia, South Siberia, and Kyrgyzstan.

Uli Schamiloglu, University of Wisconsin, gave a talk on *The Rise of Runic Turkic as the First Turkic Vernacular Literary Language*. He argued that Syriac Turkic, Volga Bolgharian, and the Middle Turkic literary language of the Golden Horde all ceased to exist as a result of the Black Death and were later replaced by epigraphic and literary languages closer to the vernacular. A written version of this paper will be published in *Turkic Languages*.

Martine Robbeets, Max Planck Institut für Menschheitsgeschichte, Jena, earlier Humboldt fellow and now affiliated to Mainz University as “Privatdozent”, has had a long and inspiring collaboration with Lars Johanson. The two scholars introduced and consolidated the term “Transeurasian languages” for a grouping consisting of Japonic, Koreanic, Tungusic, Mongolic, and Turkic. They have contributed several edited volumes to the theoretical discussion of genealogical and areal relations among these languages. At the symposium, Robbeets presented her concept of core structures of Transeurasian as a follow-up to Lars Johanson’s paper *So Close and Yet So Distant... On Turkic Core Structures, Genealogical and Typological Grouping of Varieties, and Mutual Intelligibility* published in *Ankara Papers in Turkish and Turkic Linguistics* (Zeyrek, D. et al. eds. 2015: 583–592). The written version of Robbeets’ paper is published in this issue of *Turkic Languages*.

A. Sumru Özsoy, Bogaziçi University, has been working on Turkish Sign Language since 2004. She gave an interesting talk on comparatives in Turkish Sign Language with a number of videos illustrating the strategies used by Turkish signers to express different types of comparisons. A written version co-authored with Hünar Kaşıkara will be published in a forthcoming volume, “Comparative Constructions” (edited by Wojtylak, K. & Treis, Y. & de Vries L., Free University of Amsterdam).

Carol Pfaff, Freie Universität Berlin, has carried out comprehensive and pioneering studies on Turkish as spoken in Germany. For many years she has collaborated with Lars Johanson on building a network of scholars studying the development of

spoken varieties of Turkish in Northwestern Europe (TINWE). At the workshop, she spoke about continuity and contact-induced change in pronominal and demonstrative usage in Turkish in Germany, summarizing her findings from her empirical studies of three generations of children and adolescents in Berlin.

Fikret Turan, Istanbul University, compared grammars of modern Turkish used as textbooks in the undergraduate and postgraduate degree programs in Turkish Language and Literature in Turkey. He demonstrated certain differences in their approach, interpretation, and overall methodologies concerning the presentation of Turkish sentence types and phrase structures.

Delio V. Proverbio, Vatican Apostolic Library, Rome, has in recent years published a series of studies analyzing the writing systems used for East Old Turkic texts. In his talk, he analyzed graphotactic regularities in Old Turkic texts in Syriac script. The written version is published in this issue of *Turkic Languages*.

Gülschen Sahatova, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, dealt with the 18th century Turkmen text *Destan Sayatlî Hemra*. She gave a short description of the content of this literary work and analyzed some linguistic aspects of the text: orthography, morphophonemics, and the morphological inventory.

Mustafa Uğurlu, University of Muğla, and Ahmet Aydemir, Hacettepe University, received their PhD degrees in Mainz under the supervision of Lars Johanson. Uğurlu gave a comprehensive review of research on Turkic languages in Turkey. Aydemir presented interesting results of his first fieldwork in a Tuvan community in Western Mongolia.

Sema Demir Aslan, Hacettepe University, has visited Mainz University as a research fellow. Her studies in the field of Turkish and Turkmen verbal systems are based on Lars Johanson's viewpoint aspect theory. The written version of her talk on viewpoint aspect in Turkmen is published in this issue of *Turkic Languages*.

Nurettin Demir, Hacettepe University, also a former PhD student in Mainz, arrived with a special gift, the Turkish translation of Lars Johanson's book *Aspekt im Türkischen*, published in Uppsala in 1971. The Turkish translation *Türkçede Görünüş* (Ankara: Grafiker) will help Turkish scholars to get acquainted with this work. Demir has also translated a number of other publications by Lars Johanson into Turkish, for instance *Türkçe Dil İlişkilerinde Yapısal Etkenler* (Türk Dil Kurumu, 2007) (original title *Structural Factors in Turkic Language Contacts*, 2002) and *Türk Dili Haritası Üzerinde Keşifler*, 2002 (original title *Discoveries on the Turkic Linguistic Map*, 2001).

A memorable contribution to the workshop was Göran Hammarström's talk on *New Linguistic Fundamentals*. Göran Hammarström, emeritus professor at the University of Melbourne, has on several occasions been guest professor in Roman Linguistics in Mainz. His acquaintance with Lars Johanson goes back to the years 1959–1960, when Hammarström was professor of phonetics in Uppsala and Lars Johanson was a student.

The participants agreed that it is vital to continue the fruitful cooperation in the field of Turkic linguistics in the future. The next project will be a comprehensive *Encyclopaedia of Turkic Languages and Linguistics* to be published by Brill.