

OPPONENT REVIEW

of the Doctoral Dissertation

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Title of the dissertation: Turkish loanwords in Hungarian: A study concerning loanword adaptation

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Ali Can Yalçinkaya's PhD dissertation can be considered topical in several aspects, including linguistic, cultural, and geopolitical. The timeliness of the work from a linguistic point of view is that it aims to present new, relevant results in areas of the study of Turkish-Hungarian linguistic relations that have been less studied so far. The cultural and geopolitical topicality can be provided by the joint Hungarian-Turkish cultural year announced for this year, as the defense and publication of such a thesis will definitely contribute to the range of scientific works on Turkish-Hungarian cultural (and of course linguistic) relations.

The thesis consists of five main chapters and a number of sub-chapters, which have been compiled in a very logical and coherent manner, with a deep scientific background and a wide knowledge of the literature. The first chapter, which also serves as an introduction, is well written, logical, and informative. The main concepts are summarized in a way that gives a good anticipation of the issues to be covered in the work and thus provides a clear guide for the reader. It also provides a comprehensive overview of the fundamental and common trends in loanword adaptation across languages, as well as the models of loanword adaptation available in the current literature. The literature review is most detailed and provides a very solid basis for the reader to understand the specificities of the different models and the differences between monolingual and bilingual loanword adaptations.

The author of the dissertation precisely defines the aims of the research, stressing that the material he examines can provide valuable information on the Turkish-Hungarian linguistic relations of the 6-10th centuries, as well as on the study of the early Hungarian languages and those languages that died out without leaving much trace, the scientific classification of which is nowadays rather problematic. The main research questions (four

of them), which are formulated in details and provide detailed answers, as well as the extensive description of the use of the Levenshtein distance algorithm, which was chosen as the research method, and which also points out the shortcomings of the method, attest to the author's professional competence and purposefulness. The chapter dealing with the Turkish elements in the Hungarian language gives a thorough review of the relevant literature, discussing in detail the ongoing scientific debates about the Hungarian and Turkish-Tatar word combinations that developed in the second half of the 19th century and emphasizing that the Turkish influence is not only lexically but also phonetically detectable, for example in the case of Turkish loanwords such as *findzsa*, *dzsida*, and *handzsár*. Ali Can Yalçinkaya also draws attention to the fact that the large number of Turkish words used in the Turkish vocabulary does not necessarily indicate genetic relationships, and this can be verified by examining the basic vocabulary (e.g., numerals, body parts, kinship expressions). In the context of the research material, the author makes it clear that the orthographic information on the 377 pairs of western old Turkish-Hungarian words he has examined is based on the unique work by András Róna-Tas and Árpád Berta, which is still considered the best in the field of science, and he also provides precise information on the meaning of the conventional signs used in the analyses. However, he also, quite properly, points out that new etymological research can of course bring changes to words that are still considered to be of uncertain origin.

In the second chapter of the dissertation, Ali Can Yalçinkaya describes in detail the specifications of the Levenshtein distance algorithm used in the research (e.g., “PMI-pointwise mutual information,” “Sound class-based Levenshtein algorithm,” and “Key Components of the Distinctive Feature Weighted Levenshtein Algorithm”), along which the investigations can be performed with higher accuracy. In addition to a detailed phonetic analysis illustrated with a few specific examples, the author presents the main features of the phonetic changes that took place during the adaptation of Turkish words, which he makes even clearer to the reader with the help of two very detailed phonetic tables.

The third chapter is the main body of the dissertation, in which we find a detailed presentation of the results, which also clearly shows the assimilation peculiarities that may have occurred after the old Turkish words were integrated into the Hungarian language.

In the analysis of the material under study, the author found a minimal rate of deterioration (7.21% in total) in the borrowing phase, and the summary result is that 47% (i.e., 178 pairs of words) of the analyzed word material show a distance of 0%; in other words, the old Turkish loanwords do not show significant phonetic changes at this phase

(see Table 12). In the course of the many centuries-long process of assimilation, the words under study have, of course, as in the case of borrowings from the mother tongue and other languages, been significantly adapted to Hungarian pronunciation. These changes are illustrated in the second data table (Table 13) compiled by the author, in which the old Turkish adaptations are compared with the modern Hungarian variants. Typical phonological and phonetic patterns, such as heavy syllables, nasal palatalization, high back unrounded vowels, voiced velar fricatives, and labialization of vowels, are presented in more detail. The fourth chapter provides a summary analysis of the research findings, in which Ali Can Yalçinkaya describes the differences between the data the author examined for the two periods and the related phonological and phonetic phenomena.

The fifth and final chapter draws conclusions, in which the author points out that the study of the phonetic changes in the old Turkish loanwords in the two time periods can provide valuable information not only about the establishment of the loanwords but also about the phonetic development of the Hungarian language itself.

In addition to the positive features listed above, the dissertation contains a few inaccuracies and shortcomings that may be worth correcting in a possible publication:

- in the dissertation, the author refers to the work by András Róna-Tas and Árpád Berta published in 2011. However, the relevant entry is missing from the bibliography. András Róna-Tas - András Berta 201: *West Old Turkic. Turkic Loanwords in Hungarian*. Part I: Introduction, Lexicon » A-K«; Part 2: L-Z. Conclusions, Apparatus. Harrassowitz. Wiesbaden.

- technical detail, in some places in the work (pages 56, 57, 58) the following error message appears: “*Error! Reference source not found.*” This is probably due to a broken link to the source file.

- for Tables 10 and 11, as in the previous tables, it would be useful to include a source flag. These have obviously been compiled by the author, i.e. only the *Own editing* turn would be appropriate.

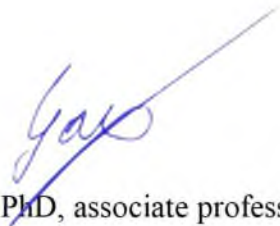
Questions to the candidate:

Are you planning to continue research of the same kind as the one mentioned in your dissertation, that is, the recognition of Turkish borrowings in the Hungarian language by native speakers of Turkish? In what way do you think they could contribute to the results of the current research?

Recommendation

In addition to the above, Ali Can Yalçinkaya's work, through its detailed and synthesizing analysis of the literature, can add new aspects to the results of research on Turkish-Hungarian language relations and, moreover, through the method applied in the work, can indeed help to gain a more accurate picture of the nature and dynamics of the contact effects between the two people and languages. The dissertation fully meets the requirements for the content and layout of a doctoral thesis, so I recommend it for public defense, and I strongly support the award of the PhD degree to the author.

Zápszony, 20th September, 2024



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