



glottothèque
languages of Anatolia, Caucasus, Iran, Mesopotamia



Turkic in the LACIM area

Morphology, morphophonology and sound harmony

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Morphology

Some typological characteristics of the Turkic languages

With regard to their structural properties, the Turkic languages are rather conservative; even geographically distant representatives are very similar to each other. On the other hand, changes of characteristic properties may develop under the influence of structurally different languages.

- In Turkic languages that display very strong contact-influenced structural changes,
 - the **morphological skeleton** remains relatively stable,
 - while **phonology and syntax** are more accessible to contact influences.
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An agglutinative language

Turkic represents the agglutinative type of languages. Verb stems and noun stems combine with suffixes. The relationship between stems and their suffixes can be compared to a train: While the stem is the locomotive, each separate wagon attached to it carries one suffix.

- Despite some minor phonological changes ('allomorphs'), the suffixes (wagons) preserve their form within clear-cut morpheme borders:
- They are attached to each other, but they don't merge.
- As a rule, each suffix is carrying a distinct morpho-syntactic function.
- With the exception of some lexicalized combinations, the meaning formed by longer trains is the result of the combination of the individual contents of stem and wagons.

Compare this orderly Turkic arrangement to the picture of a, for instance, Indo-European train: Two locomotives (past and present stems), wagons in front (prefixes) and behind (suffixes) the respective locomotive, some wagons crushed and merged into unrecognizable forms (irregular verbs) etc.





An agglutinative language

Derivational suffixes allow to build

- denominal nouns or denominal verb stems on the basis of noun stems
- deverbal nouns (verbal nouns) and deverbal verbs (diathesis) on the basis of verb stems

Noun stems combine with plural + possessive + case suffixes, and (if needed) + postpositions ('locatives') -- in this order; see, for instance, the complex form *bəbə-lar-ımız-a doyru* (< forefather + plural marker + possessive suffix 1PL + dative + postposition) 'towards our forefathers'.

(SE Anatolian
pronunciation,
given
in IPA)

				
<i>bəbə</i>	<i>+lar</i>	<i>+ımız</i>	<i>+a</i>	<i>doyru</i>
father	PL	POSS1PL	DAT	POSP

An agglutinative language








Verb stems combine with one or more suffixes denoting

- diathesis (reciprocal/cooperative, causative/factitive, passive, or reflexive);
- negation;
- thematic suffixes (tense/mood/actionality/viewpoint);
- **and** the suffix indicating person and number of the actant.

Due to the agglutinative structure of Turkic, there are almost no periphrastic constructions consisting of semantic verb + auxiliary to indicate diathesis, modality, or actionality.

Example: **Gör -üş -tür -ebil -ecek -ler mi?** 'Will they be able to make them see each other?'

(Ex. from
Standard
Turkish)

						
gör	-üş	-tür	-ebil	-ecek	-ler	mi?
stem 'to see'	diathesis 1: reciprocal	diathesis 2: causative /factitive	modal: possibility	prospective /'future'	person marker: 3rd plural	question particle
allomorphs	{-I ¹ ş}	{-DI ¹ r}	{-A ² bil-}	{-(y)A ² cA ² K}	{-lA ² r}	{ml ⁴ }

Morphophonology and sound harmony

Suprasegmental sound harmony

Connectivity between stem and suffixes is additionally marked by phonological rules of sound harmony: Stem and suffixes display the same qualities of sounds. According to the color of the locomotive, the whole train may either display light colors (+front vowels: i, ä, ö, ü) or darker colors (back vowels: a, i, o, u).

There are 2 types of vowel harmony:

- **Palatal harmony: {A²} = [ä, a]** Suffixes of the first type consider only the feature **+front or +back**. If the preceding syllable contains a front vowel (i, ä, ö, ü), the suffix vowel will be {ä}, while after back vowels (a, i, o, u) the same suffix displays {a}. These suffixes have 2 variants/allomorphs.
 - **{I⁴} = [i, ü, i, u]** the second type of harmony additionally considers the feature **+labialization/+rounding** and has 4 =high variants:
 - After +front/-rounded vowels (**ä, i**), the suffix vowel is **{i}**,
 - after +front/+rounded (**ö, ü**) it is **{ü}**.
 - After +back/-rounded vowels (**a, i**), the suffix vowel is **{i}**,
 - after +back/+rounded (**o, u**) it is **{u}**.
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Suprasegmental sound harmony

Again: 2-fold suffixes/allomorphs (+/-front)

4-fold suffixes/allomorphs (+/- front, +/- rounded)

REMEMBER: Suffix vowels display reduced pronunciations; as a rule, they are pronounced shorter and therefore more centralized.

	Front				Back			
	Unrounded		Rounded		Unrounded		Rounded	
Vowels	ä [ɛ]	ɨ [ɪ]	ü [y]	ö [œ]	a [a]	ɯ [ɨ]	u [u]	o [ɔ]
Twofold {-A ² } = < ä , a> (unrounded open)	ä				a			
Fourfold {-I ⁴ } = <i, ü, ɨ, u> (high rounded/unrounded)	ɨ		ü		ɨ		u	

Deviations in supra-segmental harmony

Across the areal, both palatal and labial types of harmony deviate from this ***ideal model***. The reasons for these deviations are various:

- Under the influence of contact languages, the quality of Turkic vowels may change, creating **borderline cases** between the sets of +/-front or back vowels, such as, e.g. the **near open á** [æ].
 - While palatal harmony is a relatively early development across Turkic languages, **labial harmony has developed at some later stage**. Certain suffixes of the spoken varieties display an older stage of the phonological development that does not allow for labial allomorphs.
 - The so-called **unique suffixes** have preserved an archaic form and don't display allomorphs or harmony at all.
 - In some cases, the grammaticalization of former auxiliaries to suffixes is less developed.
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... and sound harmony reflected in real life

Let us look at a complex verb form from South Oghuz, pronounced as:

[*âgâr*] *dân-iš-dur-ma-sa-youz* '[If] you don't make (her) speak, ...' (147: 33):

<i>dânı</i>	<i>-š</i>	<i>-dur</i>	<i>-ma</i>	<i>-sa-</i>	<i>youz</i>
<i>danı</i>	<i>-š</i>	<i>-tîr-</i>	<i>ma-</i>	<i>sa-</i>	<i>yüz</i>

- The stem *dânı-* combines with the reciprocal/cooperative suffix in $\{-(I^4)š\}$; the combination of which is lexicalized with the meaning 'to speak (with each other)'.
- The suffix $\{-DI^4r\}$ signalizes causative/factitive 'to make someone else (speak)';
- $\{-mA^2\}$ is the negative suffix,
- followed by the conditional in $\{-sA^2\}$,
- and the personal suffix of the 2nd PL in $\{-(y)ouz/i:z\}$.
- Conditionality is sufficiently expressed by the conditional/potential suffix in $\{-sA^2\}$; it may also be emphasized by the conjunction *agar*, which is a copy from Iranian.

(-> To compare this form with its StT equivalent in the 2nd line; see: Exercise on morphophonology!)

this lecture

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A banner for the LACIM glottothèque project. It features a dark blue background with a faint image of the Earth. The word "LACIM" is written in large, semi-transparent blue capital letters at the top. Below it, the word "glottothèque" is written in a white, elegant serif font. On the left side, there is white text providing information about related lectures and the website. On the right side, the project's title is repeated in a white, monospaced font.

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