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The Interaction Between Turkish and Persian in the Context of Language-Culture Relationship

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1. Introduction

Language, which is an integral aspect of human beings, serves as an important tool in human relations that enables positive or negative interaction between people and societies. The relationships that exist between people in different dimensions of life makes almost an unavoidable impact to the interacting languages, in a spectrum that extends from borrowed words and idioms to grammatical rules.

Societies have different characteristics in terms of their cultures, the geography surrounding them and the regions they inhabit. As such, they have dissimilar living conditions. Accordingly, languages, like other characteristics that exist in the societies in which they are spoken, shape and continue to develop due to many factors some known and others unknown to humans.[1]

In the light of all these facts, the relations between societies bring about transference of many features in the language, culture, and geography of one society to another in reciprocal terms. This transfer also prepares the substructure for extension of the interaction between the two societies. Societies transfer the linguistic characteristics of other societies to their own language areas through several instruments such as translation and copying in a more process-oriented manner.

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[1] Ali Göçer, "Dil-Kültür İlişkisi ve Etkileşimi Üzerine" ("On Language-Culture Relationship and Interaction"), *Türk Dili* 729, no. 1 (2012): 53-54, Ruhattin Yazıcıoğlu, "Dil-Kültür İlişkisi" ("Language-Culture Relationship"), *Ekev Akademi Dergisi* 6, no. 11 (2002):40-41.

Turkish and Persian, as the two major languages of the Islamic civilization, have developed and evolved together in a common climate and environment, and shared the same cultural basin. Traditionally nomadic, the Turks had the experience of living with many neighboring people throughout the centuries, yet it may be argued that, Turks had the longest interaction with the Persian people.[2]

After Turks converted to Islam, Turkish was influenced by Arabic and Persian as evidenced in Ottoman Turkish. During this long interaction period, many words and grammar elements have entered into Turkish language from Persian.

Turko-Persian relations, which began in the pre-Islamic period, have written history of at least fourteen centuries. Since Sogdiana came under the rule of Gokturk Empire between 6th - 8th centuries B.C., the military, administrative, commercial, diplomatic relations between the Turkish and Iranian speaking people developed further. The process of interaction between Turkish and Iranian languages has been ongoing for centuries in a wide geography that covers Iran, Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan.[3] As in many areas, there has been constant and intense communication between Turks and Persians over the centuries in the field of culture.The basis of this interaction is undoubtedly the influence of the elements of common religion and neighborhood.

It is known that the Qur'an was translated into Persian about a hundred years before the first Turkish translations. The Islamic-Iranian tradition, which emerged as the amalgamation of the ancient Iranian tradition with the Islamic sources, has been a model for religion, language and literature not only for the Turkish world but also for the other Muslim communities since the 10th- 11th centuries. Persian translations, adaptations and copyright works are taken

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[2] Mustafa Balcı, *Türkçe-Farsça İlişkileri Türkçenin Farsça Üzerindeki Etkilerine Dair Bir İnceleme (Turkish-Persian Interaction An Analysis of the Influence of Turkish on Persian)* (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2014), 13.

[3] Süer Eker, "Türkçe-Farsça Dil İlişkilerinde Anlam Kopyalamaları Üzerine Notlar" (Notes on Meaning Copies in Turkish-Persian Language Relations), *in Sosyoloji Yazıları 1*, ed. Nevin Güngör Ergan, Esra Burcu and Birsen Şahin (Ankara: Hacettepe Universitesi Yayınları, 2010), 198. Adnan Karaismailoğlu, "Tarih Boyunca Türkler ve Farsça: Modern Yaklaşımlara Bir Eleştiri" ("The Turks and the Persian Language Throughout History: Criticism Against Modern Approaches"), *Kırıkkale Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi* 3, no. 1, (2013):13-14.

as models throughout the history of Turkish culture and literature during the Islamic period. Pre-Islamic Turkish Persian relations have become more complex, being deepened, and expanded during the Islamic period by way of common cultural and literary works.[4]

The main object of this study is to investigate how these two languages affect each other and what changes occurred in both languages due to the interaction between Turkish culture and Persian culture. The chapter is organized into three parts The following part deals with the theoretical background of the cultural interaction between Turks and Persians, as well as the influence of this interaction on the respective languages. The third part focuses on the specific examples of commonalities in Turkish and Persian and the final part concludes the chapter.

2. The Theoretical Background of the Interaction Between Turkish-Persian Languages

The reasons for the interchange of words or various language factors that occur between languages differ according to the languages and societies in question. The human beings' various occupations, living conditions, responsibilities, daily tasks and roles usually generate their own linguistic elements. For example, several linguistic innovations were and are currently being made as a result of the creation of novel living spaces that did not exist before. These innovations may lead to formation of full-fledged linguistic areas in line with the requirements that the new living conditions pose.

Even though there is no definite limit on the areas in which the exchange between languages takes place, it is possible to categorize the reasons for the interchange of words between languages under several specific headings such as religious, geographical, political, social, and administrative.

Religion is usually one of the most compelling reasons which pull and push languages to each other. The reason why religious affinity comes at the forefront in the interaction between languages, may be explained by several factors. The first is the efforts of societies to establish a close connection with their new religions and

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4 Süer Eker, "Türkçe Farsça İlişkilerine Ses, Biçim ve Tümcebilgileri Düzeyinde Eşzamanlı Bir Bakış" ("A Simultaneous Analysis of Turkish Persian Relations at the Sound, Style and Sentence Level"), *in Essays On Turkish Linguistics,* ed. by Sıla Ay et al. (Göttingen: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2009), 373-374.

incorporate the most accurate forms of prayer, worship and living. Another reason may emanate from the societies' desire to dominate the language of religion as a strategy for more power and influence across the societies that adhere to the religion.

The cultural relations and interaction between the Turkish and Persian people, are much more than a simple relationship between two countries or two societies, evident in the transformation of both languages over time. As Peter Golden and many other Turcologists argue, while the Iranian languages partly became Turkic in typological terms, the Turkish languages were under the influence of Iranian languages partially for syntax and especially through borrowing of words and meanings.[5]

As a result, there is an extraordinarily rich vocabulary of common words, concepts, idioms, and proverbs.

Language is considered as a technical tool in the formation and development of cultures and societies. The fields of descriptive linguistics and historical linguistics study variations and developments in the language, family trees, and connections between the languages as well as relations between the societies.

Lars Johanson, studied the relations between Turkish and different languages with a theoretical perspective and, tried to explain the transformation of Turkish language through its relations with other languages. He also traced the languages it interacts with and the changes in the structures of the other languages because of this interaction. Johanson examined language interaction in a theoretical framework and drew attention to two basic concepts: 'Copying' and 'Attractiveness'. "The term code-copying is employed for the common interaction of linguistic codes mostly referred to as 'borrowing'"[6] He encourages analyzing the language product as an object and describes the process, as follows:

> "The best metaphor for the process of analyzing the language product as an object is the idea of showing the elements of a

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5 Peter B. Golden, "Turkic Peoples: A Historical Sketch" in *The Turkic Languages'* ed. by Johanson L, Csató ÉÁ. (New York: Routledge, 1998), 16–29; Peter B. Golden, "Turks and Iranians: A Historical Sketch." *in Turkic-Iranian Contact Areas: Historical and Linguistic Aspects,* ed. by Lars Johanson and Christine Bulut (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2006), 17-38.

6 Lars Johanson, "Attractiveness and relatedness: Notes on Turkic language contacts." *Annual Meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society.* 25, no. 2 (1999): 87-94.

foreign code as if they were copied into the code of the receiving language."[7]

The concept of attractiveness is defined as the presence of features that are more susceptible to copying in a language. According to Johanson, most Turkic languages are attractive, in the sense that their structures offer transparency and regularity, which makes them source languages that can exert influence in the target language.[8]

3. The Interaction of Turkish-Persian Languages

According to Gerhard Doerfer, Persian has had a tendency to act like a Turkish language type for many years and considering some of its features, it may seem that it does not belong to the Indo-European language family at all. This distinct grammatical appearance, which especially shows a significant level of influence on syntax, suggest that there might be a merger point with Turkish since 'Middle Persian'.[9] When the sentence structures in Persian and Turkish are taken into consideration, the similarities of Turkish, and Persian, especially in terms of syntax are remarkable. This is particularly unexpected as Turkish is an additive language and part of Ural-Altai language family, whereas Persian belongs Indo-European language family.

In Indo-European languages, syntax is arrayed as subject-verb-complementary. In Persian however, in contrast to Indo-European languages, it is observed that the order of the sentence elements is subject-complementary-verb which is possibly due to its interaction with Turkish.

Table 31.1. Turkish-Persian Simple Sentence Example

Zeynep	dün	tren	-le	İstanbul	-dan	geldi
زینب	دیروز	قطار	با	استانبول	از	آمد
Subject	Adverb	Postposition		Object		Verb

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7 Lars Johanson, *Türkçe Dil İlişkilerinde Yapısal Etkenler. (Structural Factors in Turkish Language Interactions)* trans. Nurettin Demir, (Ankara: TDK Yay., 2007), 27.
8 Johanson, "Attractiveness and relatedness."
9 Johanson, *Türkçe Dil İlişkilerinde Yapısal Etkenler*, 75-76.

One of the most striking examples of lexical Turkish effects on Persian can be found in personal pronouns. First-person singular من/ben (I) and third-person singular او/o in Persian is exactly similar to Turkish since the New Persian period. Since personal pronouns, like digit order, family tree and organ names, are among facets of language that are least likely to change due to the interactions between languages, the influence is most extraordinary.

In the other example for the interaction between Turkish and Persian in the linguistic category, it is seen that کی/Kim "Who" is used as interrogative pronoun and introductory in Persian; word 'kî' (relative pronoun) was copied into Turkish as a conjunction. Considering the conjunctive sentences associated with Indo-European languages, it can easily be said that Persian is the giving language of this replication.

Considering both languages, it is clear that words, idioms and proverbs have a collocation pattern in terms of both semantics and usage areas and most of the time it is almost impossible to ascertain the source and the target language. It is particularly difficult at the word level to determine which concept, object, or action is copied from which language or whether this commonality is random.

When we look at the common words in Turkish and Persian, which have similar usage, there are differences in pronunciation in both languages at unit base. This may come as a result of the fact that some writing units in Turkish are not available in Persian and due to differences in the pronunciation rules of the languages. For example, the writing units and voice units in Turkish and Persian of the joint words given in 'Table 31.2' are different and voice units of the words in both languages are separated at unit base.

Table 31.2. Turkish-Persian Common Words

آتش / Ateş	چاره/Çare	دیوار/Duvar	انجیر/İncir
باجاناق/Bacanak	چوپان/Çoban	قالی/Halı	کوفته/Köfte
باغ/Bağ	جوراب/Çorap	خانه/Hane	کتابخانه/Kütüphane
بهار/Bahar	دایی/Dayı	هویچ/Havuç	الاله/Lale
بابا/Baba	دوست/Dost	هرکس/Herkes	مهر/Mühür
جام/Kadeh	دشمن/Düşman	هنوز/Henüz	انار/Nar
پنیر/Peynir	برنج/Pirinç	سبزی/Sebze	شهر/Şehir
تخته/Tahta	توپ/Top	تو/Ütü	یواش/Yavaş
زهر/Zehir	زنجیر/Zincir	تنبل/Tembel	شیرین/Şirin

Another interaction area in the grammatical category is the verb exchanges. There are mutual interactions in the verb exchanges between Persian and Turkish. In both languages, nominalization suffix ش‎ / -ş, -ış, -iş is available, which may be result of copying the interaction.

Table 31.3. Turkish-Persian Nominalization Suffix - ش‎Interaction

گستردن‎(Gosterden) yaymak, yayılmak	گسترش‎/Gosteriş
دانستن‎(Danisten) bilmek	دانش‎/Dâniş
جوشیدن‎(Cûşîden) suyun kaynayarak taşması	جوش‎/Cûşiş
سر زدن‎(Ser zeden) başvurmak	Serzeniş

There are also some Turkish verbs that were transferred directly as a base or reproduced by the adding of Persian modal verbs کردن‎ and شدن‎ into the directly received Turkish names:

Table 31.4. Turkish-Persian Verb Interaction

تپیدن‎	Çarpmak, vurmak, atmak
کوچیدن‎	Göç etmek, göçmek
چاپیدن‎	Basmak
چاپ شدن/چاپ کردن‎	Basılmak
آلو کردن‎	Alevlendirmek, yakmak
به ییلاق رفتن‎	Yaylaya çıkmak

The word screening studies determined that there are 140-compund verbs in Persian that were constituted with Turkish words and word groups. The fact that more than half of these verbs are related to the nomadic culture, military and state administration of the Turks, is essentially in line with the historical roles of the Turks in the geography of Iran.

There are a lot of dependent or independent morph units, which constitute a strong belief that they are copies, rather than accidental similarities between Turkish and Persian.

Table 31.5. Turkish-Persian Morpheme Views

Turkish	Persian
-taş, daş (karındaş, kardeş)	ikiz (هم – شکم) هم-
- taş, daş (arkadaş)	(هم – پشت) هم-
-cı, ci (dinci)	دین-دار

Finally, as can be seen in Table 31.6, there are several common idioms and proverbs in both languages. These idioms and proverbs also show similarity in terms of the usage areas and contexts. There is semantic integrity in most of them and they do not have an exact collocation in the selection of word and word groups.

Table 31.6. Turkish-Persian Common Idioms and Proverbs

عزا از دل در آوردن	Acısını çıkarmak
حیران ماندن	Ağzı açık kalmak
زبان دارد دهان ندارد	Ağzı var dili yok
بخت سیاه	Bahtı kara
خود را در دردسر انداختن	Başına iş açmak
سبیل‌هایس تازه سبز شده	Bıyığı yeni terlemek
زیر لب خندیدن	Bıyık altından gülmek
سراپا گوش بودن	Can kulağıyla dinlemek
از هر انگشتش یک هنر ریختن	On parmağında on marifet
دشمن دانا به است از دوست نادان	Akıllı düşman akılsız dosttan iyidir
کار امروز را به فردا میفکن	Bugünün işini yarına bırakma
سواره از پیاده خبر ندارد	Tok açın halinden anlamaz

4. Conclusion

As the main medium reflecting emotions, thoughts, beliefs, and culture, language is one of the founding elements that makes nations. The language constantly changes, develops, and renews itself along with the society, and acts as a solid bridge that provides communication between the peoples' past and the future. The vocabulary of a language gives information about different subjects such as the way of living, traditions, and customs of the people who speak the language. Undoubtedly, language also shapes and

is shaped through interactions with other societies. Through what we call inter-linguistic relations, societies borrowed items from one another, firstly as part of religious exchange, and later as literary interactions. Through ensuing commercial, political and cultural contacts, societies made transfers from one language to another in proportion to the intensity of these relations. Language, a part of cultural identity, helps to ensure unity and integrity between members of a society. Accordingly, languages inevitably influence other languages sharing the same geography over a long period of time.

Like others, the Turks had various political, social, and cultural relations with neighboring states and societies throughout history. As a result, Turkish has been under the influence of different foreign languages, both eastern and western. After the Turks accepted Islam, Turkish was influenced by Arabic and Persian as evidenced in Ottoman Turkish. During this long interaction period, many words and grammar elements have entered into Turkish language from Persian. This interaction, in both linguistic and cultural terms, is the main subject of this study. This study investigated how these two languages affect each other and what changes occurred in both languages due to the interaction between Turkish culture and Persian culture. Turkey and Iran, two neighboring countries that have lived together and intertwined for centuries, have influenced each other in both linguistic and cultural fields and have made clear the importance of etymological and linguistic studies on these two languages.

The given examples ranging from, common words, word groups, idioms and proverbs to grammatical structures and verbs between these two languages attest to the high interaction between with Turkish and Persian societies.

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