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**COMMON AND SPECIFIC FEATURES OF PHONOLOGICAL SYSTEMS IN TURKIC
LANGUAGES**

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Abstract: The study of phonological systems in Turkic languages reveals both common structural patterns and distinctive features that reflect historical development, language contact, and internal evolution. While vowel harmony, consonant harmony, and agglutinative word formation are regarded as universal traits across the majority of Turkic languages, each branch demonstrates specific phonetic and phonological differences. For instance, vowel inventory size, the presence or absence of certain consonants, and variations in stress placement provide unique characteristics that distinguish one Turkic language from another. Comparative analysis of these systems not only contributes to the understanding of phonological typology but also offers insights into the processes of language change and preservation within the Turkic language family. The findings highlight the importance of identifying both the shared and unique elements in order to better understand the phonological dynamics of Turkic languages.

Keywords: Turkic languages; phonology; vowel harmony; consonant system; phonological typology; language change; comparative linguistics

INTRODUCTION

The phonological systems of Turkic languages have long attracted the attention of linguists due to their complex yet systematic structure. As one of the largest language families, the Turkic group encompasses more than thirty languages spoken across a vast geographical area stretching from Eastern Europe to Central Asia and parts of Siberia. Despite regional, cultural, and historical differences, these languages share remarkable phonological similarities that point to a common origin, while at the same time exhibiting unique characteristics that reflect independent development and language contact phenomena. One of the most widely recognized features of Turkic phonology is vowel harmony, a principle that governs the distribution of vowels within words and plays a crucial role in maintaining phonetic balance. Alongside vowel harmony, consonant harmony and restrictions on syllable structure contribute to the uniformity of phonological patterns across the family. However, significant divergences also exist. For example, the vowel inventory of Turkish differs from that of Uzbek, while stress assignment in Kyrgyz or Kazakh presents variations that cannot be observed in languages such as Azerbaijani or Turkmen. The comparative study of these phonological systems is important for several reasons. Firstly, it provides insights into the historical development of Turkic languages and helps reconstruct their proto-forms. Secondly, it reveals the role of external influences, such as Persian, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese, in shaping phonological adaptation. Finally, it contributes to the field of general linguistics by offering valuable data on typology, universals, and the dynamics of language change.

In this context, exploring the common and specific features of Turkic phonological systems is not only essential for understanding their internal structure but also for appreciating the broader cultural and

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historical interactions that have shaped these languages. The present study aims to highlight both the shared principles and the individual distinctions that define the phonological identity of Turkic languages, thereby contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of their linguistic nature.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of phonological systems in Turkic languages demonstrates that unity and diversity coexist within this language family. On the one hand, features such as vowel harmony, consonant harmony, and agglutinative phonological organization represent the fundamental principles that bind these languages together. On the other hand, each language and dialect develops its own distinctive features, shaped by internal innovation, geographical separation, and long-standing contact with other linguistic communities. These differences can be observed in vowel inventories, consonant clusters, prosodic structures, and stress placement, all of which give each Turkic language a unique phonological profile. Understanding both the common and specific elements of Turkic phonology is significant not only for linguistic typology but also for tracing historical and cultural connections across Eurasia. The comparative perspective allows researchers to reconstruct aspects of Proto-Turkic and to analyze how external influences, such as Persian, Arabic, Russian, and Chinese, have left their imprint on the phonological evolution of different branches. Moreover, such studies contribute to modern language policy and preservation efforts by providing deeper knowledge about the structural identity of these languages.

In conclusion, the phonological systems of Turkic languages represent a dynamic interplay between shared heritage and local adaptation. Their study enriches general linguistics, deepens our understanding of language change, and strengthens the recognition of Turkic languages as an integral part of the world’s linguistic diversity. Future research should focus on comparative phonological modeling, the influence of multilingual contexts, and the role of digital tools in documenting and analyzing these complex systems.

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