

1. Introduction

The Turkic languages, as members of the Altaic language group, possess a relatively remarkable verbal structure which is based on *verb + verb* combinations. These verbal formations are composed of a verb which ends in an adverbial marker and another verb which describes the first verb; that is, simply, one adverbial and one descriptive verb create a verbal form which is called a descriptive verb combination or, as some scholars prefer, a compound verb.

This book examines descriptive verbs in Kazakh, the official language of Kazakhstan. The main focus of my book will be a number of descriptive verb combinations that are formed by a verb (adverbial) ending in the past adverbial marker *-p*, and the present adverbial marker *-A* (*-a*, *-e*, *-y*) followed by a descriptive verb used in written and spoken Kazakh. Both a descriptive verb and an adverbial combine together to form the predicate, or the verb phrase, (the ‘VP’, in broad, generative terminology) of a sentence in Kazakh.

The Kazakh language has a large number of descriptive verbs which contribute significantly to the meaning of the sentence. For instance, a sentence with a simple verb (predicate) which is not followed by a descriptive verb might have a noticeably different meaning from a sentence which uses the same verb when followed by a descriptive verb. Thus, descriptive verbs are a kind of verb which alters the meaning of sentences in various ways.

At this point the expected question of what exactly a descriptive verb is and how it functions in grammatical constructions can be put forward. That is one of the reasons why I shall endeavor in this work to argue that a descriptive verb is a verbal unit that combines with the preceding verb which ends in either in a past or present adverbial and loses its original lexical meaning in the structure and gains a new meaning. To better illustrate the semantic contribution of a descriptive verb to a sentence, we can take a look at the following examples:

1. <i>Xatt-ı</i>	<i>caz-di-m</i>	
letter-ACC	write-PAST-1S	
‘I wrote the letter.’		
2. <i>Xatt-ı</i>	<i>caz-ıp</i>	<i>ber-di-m</i>
letter-ACC	write-AVB	give-PAST-1S
‘I wrote the letter for someone’s benefit’		
3. <i>Xatt-ı</i>	<i>caz-a</i>	<i>ber-di-m</i>
letter-ACC	write-AVB	give-PAST-1S
‘I kept writing the letter’		

In all of these examples the main verb which indicates the action is *caz-* ‘to write’; however, each sentence has a different meaning. The first sentence (1) does not have an adverbial or a descriptive verb; therefore, its meaning is not as multifarious. In other words, the first sentence does not contain the aspectual information present in the subsequent sentences. We notice that the second sentence (2) and the third one (3) are followed by the verb *ber-* ‘to give’. In these two sentences the meaning of the verb *ber-* has nothing to do with the act of giving *per se*. Here the verb *ber-* does not signify its original meaning; that is, it loses its lexical meaning and gains a new function. The second sentence (2) has the past adverbial *-p* which combines with *ber-* (*-p ber-*) and gives the meaning: ‘to do for someone’s advantage’. The third sentence (3) has the present adverbial *-a* combined with the verb *ber-* (*-a ber-*) indicating duration.

In the same way, there are big differences between the following verbal combinations: *oqıy cür-*, *oqıp kör-*, *oqıy al-*, *oqıy ber-*, *oqıp şıq-*. In fact, all of the combinations are related to the act of reading, while at the same time all of them have different meanings. While *oqıy cür-* denotes ‘reading continuously’, *oqıp şıq-* indicates a reading activity which is ‘complete.’ Likewise, *oqıp kör-* indicates the meaning of ‘asking someone to try reading’, *oqıp ber-* solely indicates an act of reading ‘for someone else’; *oqıy al-* shows the ‘physical and mental ability of reading’. It is rather noteworthy that none of the verbs attached to *oqı-* has its own lexical meaning in these combinations. In reality, *cür-* means ‘to walk’, *kör-* means ‘to see’, *al-* means ‘to take’, *ber-* means ‘to give’, *şıq-* means ‘to go out.’ As is clear from these examples and as will be shown in the coming chapters, the above examples related to *oqı-*, and any sentences of that nature do not make very much sense when they are translated word by word/literally. Needless to say, those who are not familiar with the role of descriptive verbs are most likely to have difficulty understanding the exact meaning of a sentence in which a descriptive verb is used. Consequently, my first and chief objective in this dissertation is to create a practical relevant work that will focus on the expressive analysis of the descriptive verbs of Kazakh. I seek to provide the English speaking audience with a functional and convenient work which aims to support the reader with any type of Kazakh text in which descriptive verbs will be encountered.

The early sections of the book have some explanatory analyses that aim to help the reader better understand the major arguments to come in the following chapters. In carrying out this effort, the first chapter starts with the current Kazakh alphabet. The Kazakh language and its place among the Turkic language family, and the classificatory features of Kazakh among the Turkic languages will be specified as subchapters. After the preparatory background information, the verbal system of Kazakh will be scrutinized in subchapters under the title of the ‘Kazakh Verbal System’. This chapter will demonstrate that Kazakh as an agglutinative language has simple,

derivative and compound verbs. Different types of verbs and their time and person declensions are also given in the introductory pages.

Towards the end of the book the meanings and functions of the descriptive verbs are examined. As Cirtautas states (1974: 149-150), the Turkic tenses or rather tense-like finite verbal forms express not only the 'when' of an action, but also the 'how'. The Turkic languages have attached more importance to the latter, i.e., to the question of the nature and manner of an action, than to the exact definition of the time of the action. Thus, in the second chapter we observe the importance of the 'how' by looking at the main actions and the descriptive verbs of those main actions. Each descriptive verb with the adverbial it is attached to will be examined separately to illustrate how it contributes to the meaning of the sentence; in fact, it will be observed that there are a set of descriptive verbs preceded by either a present or past adverbial that indicate modality ('Mood' in the classicist, Indo-European tradition), duration (Aspect), request (Mood), demand (Mood), frequency (Aspect), etc. of an action. Therefore, I will apply the theory of grammaticalization, aspect, modalization and some other descriptive categories such as benefactive and request/imperative usages to the descriptive verbs. This will also be my classification of the descriptive verbs in Kazakh. Other classifications proposed by different scholars will be listed as well. The list of descriptive verbs in other major Turkic languages will be followed by an appendix, which is the original text of a Kazakh story with an English translation. I believe that the Kazakh text in which the adverbials, full verb constructions and descriptive verbs are indicated in bold will furnish the reader with the opportunity to examine such structures first hand.

2. Kazakh Alphabet

The letters of the Kazakh Cyrillic alphabet and their phonetic transcription in my dissertation are as follows:

Kazakh	Latin	Kazakh	Latin
Аа	a	Пп	p
Әә	ä	Рр	r
Бб	b	Сс	s
Вв	v	Тт	t
Гг	g	Уу	u, uw, üw, w
Ғғ	ğ	Үү	u
Дд	d	Үү	ü
Ее	e	Фф	f
Ёё	ë	Хх	h
Жж	c	Җҗ	h
Зз	z	Шш	ş
Ии	i, iy, iy	Щщ	şç
Йй	y	Ыы	ı
Кк	k	Чч	ç
Ққ	q	Цц	ts
Лл	l	Ээ	è
Мм	m	Яя	ya
Нн	n	Юю	yü
Ңң	ŋ	Ъъ	”
Оо	o	Ьь	’
Өө	ö	Іі	i

3. The Kazakh Language and Its Place in the Turkic Languages

Kazakh is the national and official language spoken by roughly 7 million people in the Republic of Kazakhstan. Together with major Turkic languages like Tatar and Kırgız, Kazakh belongs to the Kıpçak (Qipchaq) group. The Kıpçak and Karluk Turkic (i.e. Uzbek, Uygur and Salar) groups can be traced back most closely to [so-called] Middle Turkic, the language of the Karakhanids, but more distantly to the Oguz group (e.g. Turkmen, Turkish, Azeri) (Krippes 1996: 2). Grimes, B. F states that an estimated 8 million people speak Kazakh: 6.5 million in Kazakhstan (of which 98 percent speak it as a first language); 1.2 million in China; and 100,000 in Mongolia. Smaller groups of speakers can also be found in Iran and Afghanistan, as well as in expatriate communities in Turkey and Germany, and, to a lesser extent, throughout Europe (Grimes 1992). The majority of Kazakh-speakers live in the vast territory of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the steppe belt between the Caspian Sea and the Altay area, with a high density in the southern parts. In the northern and northeastern parts of the country we find Russian and Ukrainian settlers as well as so-called Volga Germans and other groups who were exiled there in Stalin's time (Johanson 1998: 10). In 1989, more than 90 percent of the Kazakhs living in the Soviet Union reported Kazakh as their first language.

Since independence in 1991, Kazakh has been declared the state language of the republic. Nevertheless, Russian is still predominant in many spheres of life. Nearly 50 percent of the Kazakhs do not have full command of their mother tongue. There is a significant reason for this, because unlike other major Turkic languages such as Turkish, Uzbek and Tatar, Kazakh was not a written language in the pre-Russian period. As the Kazakh economy was mainly based on cattle breeding in the vast steppes, nomadism or semi-nomadism was the most appropriate way of life; therefore a written language was not necessary. Social norms and culture were preserved in oral form. In the nineteenth century, Kazakh was established as a written language under the influence of the Russian administration and its Tatar helpers. Kazakh was written with the Arabic script until 1928. After an experiment with Latin script from 1928 to 1940, a modified Cyrillic script was introduced (Krippes 1996: 3). This alphabet was modified slightly in 1954 and the Cyrillic now used employs the thirty three letters of standard Russian, plus several additional symbols for sounds specific to Kazakh. The new literary language was based on Kazakh of the dialects of the northwestern regions where Russian and Tatar influences were strong (Kirchner 1998: 318). It has been suggested that in the early Soviet period, the northern Kazakh dialect spoken in Orenburg and Semipalatinsk was designated a standard because the northern dialects had a small number of Arabo-Persian loanwords and a larger layer of Russian loanwords and this thought influenced the choice (Krippes 1996: 3).

There is no doubt that the Russian influence on spoken and written Kazakh is still very strong. When I went to one of the major libraries in Almati to check out some books, I experienced a problem in communication with the Kazakh people in their mother tongue. Although I was reminding them, in advance, that I did not speak Russian and my Kazakh was not very good either, so Kazakh would be the only language of communication, they kept speaking Russian with me. Whenever I asked some questions related to language and culture they would explain it to me in Russian.

Since Kazakhstan gained its independence in 1991, there has been a tendency among the Kazakhs to leave their diasporan countries, especially Mongolia, in order to return to Kazakhstan, where there are vacancies left behind by Russians and Germans leaving the republic. Together with the above-mentioned trend there is a belated or newborn nation-building process in the country. In order to increase the number of Kazakh speaking people there are large official billboards on the streets of Almati advertising the importance of speaking the native language by using the pictures of some Kazakh teenagers. *Biz Qazaqşa söyleyemiz!* ‘We speak Kazakh!’ This indicates the fact that no matter how strong the Russian influence on Kazakh was, and still is, it is safe to claim that the language is experiencing a tremendous transition.

Despite the fact that most people still speak Russian in their daily life as their first language on an official level since independence, observations illustrate that the activities of the Terminological Commission have been more intensely focused on de-Russifying the literary language. Consequently, even the post-Soviet Kazakh literary language is distancing itself from its closest cognate language, Kırgız, because the Kırgız are still using Russian borrowings. For example, the following chart shows Kazakh neologisms correspond to Russian loanwords in Kırgız:

Kazakh	Kırgız	English
beynetaspa	video	videotape
gazqağar	protivogaz	gas-mask
örkeniet	tsivilizatsiya	civilization
tölquccat	pasport	passport
zeynetker	pensioner	retired person
keşen	kompleks	series, system
mereyger	lavreat	laureat (Krippes 1996: 4).