



IDIOMS IN THE PROSE WRITINGS OF TURKISH AUTHORS FROM NORTH MACEDONIA

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ABSTRACT

Over centuries, the Macedonian language, influenced by Turkish, has absorbed not only Turkish words and phrases but also numerous idioms. Some of these idioms were translated word for word, some were adapted by translating a single word, while others were directly incorporated, and some were translated into Macedonian using words that roughly convey their original meaning.

Over time, the meanings of some of these idioms have changed or diversified. Following the onset of an influence, or rather, an influence in the opposite direction – namely, the impact of Macedonian on the language of the Macedonian Turks – these idioms, which underwent changes, began to settle into the language of the Turkish community in North Macedonia. Consequently, the Macedonian Turks have forgotten the original meanings and forms of their idioms and have adopted their altered meanings and forms from the Macedonian language.

The subject of this study is Turkish idioms that have lost their original meanings and forms when used in the written language of the Macedonian Turks. For this purpose, certain prose writings by Macedonian Turkish writers have been examined, errors in the use of idioms encountered there have been identified, and their original meanings and correct usage have been demonstrated.

As a result, it has been determined that some of the errors in the use of Turkish idioms stem from their adoption of altered meanings and forms in the Macedonian language, some from misconceptions about the meanings carried by the idioms, and others from the consistent misuse of the second verb in idiomatic expressions formed by semantic shifts.

Key words: idioms, prose writings, compound verbs, Turkish language

INTRODUCTION

Idioms are the mark of a nation's linguistic world; they are a mirror reflecting that nation's history, way of life, and traditions. They emerge from the creative power of a nation's language. A small vocabulary can encapsulate an entire world.

Tahir Nejat Gencan defines idioms as fixed expressions whose meanings have drifted somewhat from the literal meanings of the words. They cannot be easily explained or categorized by rules and often require deep examination. It is often better not to analyze them, as they are fixed phrases that cannot be easily translated into other languages without changing their structure (1).

Vecihe Hatiboğlu states that idioms are 'patterns that enhance the power of expression and, while some words remain unchanged, others change and undergo inflections, deviating somewhat from logic (2).

Ömer Asım Aksoy characterizes idioms as fixed expressions or phrases that convey a concept or situation either through an appealing narrative or within a specific structure, many of which possess meanings distinct from their literal interpretations (3).

Zeynep Korkmaz describes an idiom as "a phrase that conveys a meaning distinct from its literal interpretation and possesses an engaging narrative quality." (4)

The Turkish Dictionary defines an idiom as "a fixed expression or phrase that generally conveys a meaning somewhat separate from its

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literal interpretation and is interesting in nature." (5)

There are numerous definitions made for idioms. Among the common features presented in these definitions are: the use of at least one word that goes beyond its literal meaning, and the emergence of situations that sometimes defy logic.

An idiom is a construction consisting of multiple words that conveys a specific concept, emotion, or situation, or occasionally a single word used in its figurative sense.

Examples of idioms that consist of multiple words include **gökte arayıp yerde bulmak** (looking for something in the sky but finding it on the ground), **bir dediğini iki etmemek** (not going back on your word), **dört gözle beklemek** (waiting eagerly), **ön ayak olamak** (taking the initiative), **ele avuca sığmamak** (being uncontainable) etc.

For single-word idioms, we can mention examples like **gözde** (favorite), **kaşarlanmış** (experienced) and **akşamcı** (night owl).

Ömer Asım Aksoy, who has made significant contributions to the study of idioms in Turkey, initially considered words such as "doğrusu" (truly), "sözde" (in name only), "gözde" (preferred), "havadan" (from the air), "sudan" (from the water), "toptan" (wholesale), "ayaktan" (on foot), "gittikçe" (increasingly), "veresiye" (on credit), "başlıca" (mainly), and "boşuna" (in vain) as idioms. However, he later changed his perspective, stating that these words are metaphorical expressions. He argued that the essence of an idiom is rooted in a common meaning expressed by multiple words, thus requiring the existence of at least two words for something to be classified as an idiom (6).

Although idioms share certain characteristics with proverbs, terms, and compound words, they differ from them in many respects. The fixed nature of idioms is not as rigid compared to these types of words. As a result, other words can occasionally be inserted between the words of an idiom, and they can take inflectional suffixes. Just as the noun forms of the idiom can take noun inflectional endings, the verb forms can also take all person and tense suffixes.

For example:

- **Başıma** (veya başına) **devlet kuşu kondu** (konmuştu, konacak).

- *A state bird has landed* (had landed, will land) *on my head* (or your head).

However, the words of an idiom cannot be replaced with other words – even if they carry the same meaning - nor can the idiom's syntax be altered. (7)

PURPOSE

This study aims to help create a common written language among Turkic peoples by focusing on the written language of the Turkish community in North Macedonia, which differs from standard Turkish in many ways. To keep the article focused, only idioms are examined, highlighting how language interaction has changed their usage based on standard Turkish.

METHOD

This study uses qualitative research and applies document analysis. Document analysis involves examining written materials that contain information about the topics being investigated. In our case, the documents are prose writings by Macedonian Turkish writers. We have examined some of them, errors in the use of idioms encountered there have been identified, and their original meanings and correct usage have been demonstrated. We marked the sentences containing incorrect idioms with the letter F, and the correct versions with the letter C.

THE USE OF IDIOMS IN THE PROSE WRITING OF TURKISH AUTORS FROM NORTH MACEDONIA

Different cultures sometimes express the same idea with different words. As a result, each language has developed its own unique idioms, leading to distinctions between languages in terms of idiomatic expressions.

For example, the Turkish idiom "bardaktan boşanırcasına (as if pouring out of a cup)" which is used to describe extremely heavy rain, has its equivalent in the English language as "it's raining cats and dogs."

However, it has been observed that there are also similarities, closeness, and even correspondences among the idioms of different languages.

On the other hand, it has been observed that there are also, connections, similarities and even matches among the idioms of different languages. No matter where people live or what

language they speak, they often react in similar ways to certain situations and ideas. They also use similar expressions to share these thoughts. An example of this is the Turkish idiom "iki yüzlü," which describes people who are not sincere and adapt their actions based on the situation. We can see that this idiom is expressed in the same way in English as "two-faced" and in French as "à deux faces."

Over the centuries, the Macedonian language has been influenced by Turkish, absorbing not just Turkish words and phrases but also many idioms. Some idioms were translated literally, some adapted by changing just one word, others were taken directly, and some were translated using words that convey a similar meaning. However, most idioms were transferred from Turkish to Macedonian exactly as they are.

For example:

akla yakın (make sense) – блиску до умот,
aklı kesmek (believe that something is possible) – му сече умот,
gözü korkmak (be daunted) – му се уплаши окото,
yan gözle bakmak (look askance) – со криво око гледа,
gözün aydın (congratulations) – светло ти око,
iki yüzlü (two faced) – дволичен.

Over time, the meanings of some idioms have changed or varied. After the influence of Macedonian on the language of the Macedonian Turks, these idioms began to integrate into the Turkish community in North Macedonia. As a result, the Macedonian Turks have forgotten the original meanings and forms of their idioms and now use the altered meanings and forms from the Macedonian language.

This study focuses on Turkish idioms that have lost their original meanings and forms in the written language of the Macedonian Turks. To achieve this, we examined selected prose works by Macedonian Turkish writers, identified errors in their use of idioms, and demonstrated their original meanings and correct usages.

Examples:

F/ Ahmet günlü geceli çalışarak başardı. (*Ahmet succeeded by working **day and night**.*)
 (Alevden Yıldıza- Şükri Ramo)

C/ Ahmet gece gündüz çalışarak başardı. (*Ahmet succeeded by working **night and day**.*)

Influenced by the Turkish language, this idiom entered Macedonian and is used as "дено-ноќе" (day and night) in Macedonian. As mentioned earlier, the Turks in Macedonia have forgotten

the original meanings and forms of their idioms and have adopted their altered versions from Macedonian. Therefore, they use this idiom as "gündüz gece" (day and night) instead of the way it is used in Turkish "gece gündüz" (night and day).

This idiom, meaning "without interruption, continuously, all the time," was originally also used in Macedonian as "ноќе дење" (night and day). We see this in the example "Ноќе-ден та си гледал воденицата..." (gevg. M. Pr. III, 2, Nik., D. Raçev) which is present in Olivera Nasteva Yaşar's work titled "Турските лексички елементи во Македонскиот јазик." (8)

In Macedonian Turkish idioms, we can also provide the following examples where the elements of the idioms are used in a different order.

F/ Geç vakit işten argın yorgun evine döner, yemeden içmeden yatarmış.

(*He would return home late from work, **worn out and tired**, going to bed without eating or drinking.*)

(Sevinç dergisi – 2002 – Nusret Dişo Ülkü)

C/ Geç vakit işten yorgun argın evine döner, yemeden içmeden yatarmış.

(*He would return home late from work, **tired and worn out**, going to bed without eating or drinking.*)

F/ ... hepimiz iki bir demeden kalkıyorduk. (*We would all get up **without saying two words or a word**.*)

(Küçük Balıkcı – Lütfi Seyfullah)

C/ ... hepimiz bir iki demeden kalkıyorduk. (*We would all get up **without saying a word or two**.*)

F/ Böylece güneye daha sıcak yerlere gitme zamanı çattı geldi. (Sevinç dergisi – 1998 – Enver Ahmet)

C/ Böylece güneye daha sıcak yerlere gitme zamanı geldi çattı. (*Thus, **the time has come** to go to warmer places in the south.*)

F/ Ve göz kapatıp açınca kadar köylerine varmışlar. (Çocukların Elleri – Nusret Dişo Ülkü)

C/ Ve göz açıp kapayınca kadar köylerine varmışlar. (*In the blink of an eye, they had reached their village.*)

The examples we provide below are instances of Macedonian Turkish idioms in which most of the words have been altered while the meaning remains unchanged.

F/ Aklınız alınır!.. (*Your mind would be taken*)
 (Sevinç dergisi – 2002 – İskender Müzbeğ)

C/ Başınız döner!.. (*You will get dizzy*)

In the context of feeling dizzy and losing one's balance, Macedonian Turks use the expression "aklı alınmak," while Turkish speakers refer to it as "başım dönüyor." The structure "aklı alınmak" is a direct translation of the Macedonian expression "my ce zema umot" resulting in a compound phrase that combines both noun and verb elements, which differ from each other.

F/ Dünya kalksa onu düşüncesinden alıkoyamaz. (*Even if the world were to rise, it cannot distract him from that thought.*) (Kara İsmet – Nusret Dişo Ülkü)

C/ Dünya bir araya gelse onun düşüncesini değiştiremez. (*Even if the world comes together, it would not change his mind.*)

In the Turkish language, there is no fixed phrase like "Dünya kalksa" (if the world were to rise). Based on the meaning intended in the sentence, using the expression "Dünya bir araya gelse" (even if the world comes together) is the correct choice here. This expression indicates the situation where someone continues to act according to their own belief, even if everyone else argues the opposite.

F/ Korkuyorum bu badiyava sucuklar çok **pahalıya tutulmasın**. (Küçük Erler – Mustafa Karahasan)

C/ Bu bedava sucukların çok **pahalıya mal olmasından** korkuyorum. (*I'm afraid these free sausages will end up being very expensive.*)

"Pahalıya tutulmak" is a misusage that arose from a literal translation of the Macedonian phrase "ни се фати скапо" (to cost a lot) into Turkish.

Due to the influence of the Macedonian language, the Turkish speakers in Macedonia have not fully understood the characteristics and functions of Turkish case endings. Consequently, they have used them incorrectly, leading to a lack of consistency in the idioms and disrupting their structure.

F/ ... paraların altına girip üstüne çıktığını söylemişlerdi. (*They said that he was making money hand over fist*) (Kara İsmet- Nusret Dişo Ülkü)

C/ ... paraların altından girip üstünden çıktığını söylemişlerdi. (*They said that he was making money hand over fist*)

The correct form of the idiom meaning "to waste goods and money unnecessarily, running out of them in a short time" is altından girip üstünden çıkmak. In this idiom, the use of the

wrong suffix has led to a deviation both in form and meaning.

In Macedonian, there are no case endings. Instead, the function of these endings is taken over by prepositions like: в, во, на, од, со, за, до, etc. In Macedonian, these prepositions serve as case equivalents, but they do not always convey the same meaning when forming relationships between words.

During our research on this topic, we can also present other examples we encountered.

F/ Mektubu bir yudumdan okudu. (*She read the letter in one gulp.*)

(Sevinç dergisi – 1999 – İbrahim Abdullah)

C/ Mektubu bir solukta okudu. (*She read the letter in one breath.*)

In this example, we observe not only the misuse of an incorrect case suffix but also the improper usage of a word. Since 'yudum' is a noun used to refer to the amount of liquid taken into the mouth, it is generally associated with the act of *drinking*.

F/ Bana üst yok, bilir misin ben kimim? (Sevinç dergisi – 1996 – Fahri Ali)

C/ Benim üstüme yok, bilir misin ben kimim? (*I'm unmatched, do you know who I am?*)

F/ Babam hiç oralıklı olmadı! (Sevinç dergisi – 1993 – Şükrü Ramo)

C/ Babam hiç oralı olmadı! (*My dad never paid any attention to that!*)

The expression 'to be unconcerned' is used in the sense of 'to feign ignorance, to appear not to notice, or to not care.' The term 'oralık' (derived from 'ora') is a product of incorrect derivation and is not used in our language or found in our dictionaries.

F/ Bu eni sonu hepimizin borcudur. (Üçgen – Nusret Dişo Ülkü)

C/ Bu eninde sonunda hepimizin borcudur. (*This is a debt we all have, sooner or later.*)

F/ Haklısınız, yerden gökde dek haklısınız ... (Sevinç dergisi – 2000 – Ethem Baymak)

C/ Haklısınız, yerden göğe kadar haklısınız. (*You are right, you are absolutely right from the ground to the sky.*)

Some of the idioms we encountered during our study consist of fixed compound actions formed through semantic shift. Typically, these idioms, which we often find in two-part structures, have incorrectly used a verb as their second component. As a result, these idioms, having lost their original meanings, have failed to align with the overall meaning of the sentence.

F/ Güneş, dağın arkasından ışıltılarıyla **göz atıyordu.** (Sevinç dergisi – 2002 – Sabit Yusuf)
(*The sun was peeking with its glimmers from behind the mountain.*)

C/ Güneş, dağın arkasından ışıltılarıyla **göz kamaştırıyordu.**

(*The sun was dazzling with its glimmers behind the mountain.*)

F/ Ali, altısına **ayak atmış** ... (Orhan – Necati Zekeriya)

C/ Ali, altısına **ayak basmış.** (*Ali has reached the age of six.*)

The idiom **ayak basmak** (to set foot) is generally used to indicate reaching a certain age.

F/ Babası bu soruyu **duymazlıktan geçti.** (Rumelinin Canevi – Enver İlyas)

C/ Babası bu soruyu **duymamazlıktan geldi.** (*His father pretended not to hear the question.*)

The verbal component of this idiomatic expression, which means ‘to pretend not to hear,’ is ‘**gelmek**’ (to come). The nominal component should be used in its negative form with the suffixes -ma or -me.

F/ En sonunda bir şey **aklına ermiş.** (Sevinç dergisi – Cevahir Selim)

C/ En sonunda bir şey **aklına gelmiş.** (*Finally, something came to his mind.*)

In Standard Turkish, there is no idiom such as ‘aklına ermek.’ In accordance with the intended meaning of this sentence, the idiom ‘aklına gelmek,’ which conveys the meanings of ‘to remember’ and ‘to have a thought occur to one,’ should be employed.

F/ – Talihimiz **işledi!** – dedi Karabaş. (Sevinç dergisi – 2000 –Enver Ahmet)

C/ – Talihimiz **yaver gitti!** – dedi Karabaş. (– Our luck has turned in our favor! – said Karabaş..)

F/ “1001 Gece” masallarından parçalar dinliyorlarmış **gibilerine gidiyordu** çocukların.

(Kır Çiçeği-Şükrü Ramo)

C/ 1001 Gece” masallarından parçalar dinliyorlarmış **gibi geliyordu** çocuklara.

(*It seemed to the children as if they were listening to excerpts from the ‘1001 Nights’ tales.*)

The expression ‘gibi gelmek’ is used to mean ‘to assume,’ ‘to seem,’ or ‘to appear.’ The usage of ‘gibilerine gidiyordu’ is incorrect.

CONCLUSION

During the course of our research, we identified notable deviations and errors in the usage of idioms.

As a result, it has been determined that some of the errors in the use of Turkish idioms stem from their adoption of altered meanings and

forms in the Macedonian language, some from misconceptions about the meanings carried by the idioms, some from incorrect usage of the Turkish suffixes and others from the consistent misuse of the second verb in idiomatic expressions formed by semantic changes.

We must cherish one of the most valuable treasures of our linguistic world: idioms. We should use them carefully, avoiding incorrect interpretations and improper usage of their elements, while maintaining their original meanings and forms.

To protect Turkish idioms from the influence of foreign languages, we can:

- Organize educational programs that emphasize the value and cultural significance of the language;
- Promote Turkish literature and art to create a foundation for the use of local idioms;
- Create content in television, radio, and social media that increases the use of Turkish idioms;
- Organize seminars, panels, and competitions that highlight the importance of idioms;
- Support projects backed by organizations like the Turkish Language Institution to ensure the preservation of local idioms;
- Keep up with contemporary language use while acknowledging the evolution of language, but ensuring the protection of established idioms;

Ultimately, safeguarding Turkish idioms is vital for the future of our shared written language and cultural heritage.

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