ON THE ORIGIN, PHONETIC VARIANTS, SEMANTIC AND STYLISTIC PECULIARITIES OF THE USE OF THE AFFIX -LAR IN THE TURKIC LANGUAGES

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The article is devoted to the research of theoretical works on the grammatical category of number in Turkic linguistics. The category of number is one of the topical and controversial problems in the theoretical grammar of the Turkic languages as evidenced by plentiful works on this issue written over decades. The study of this grammatical category is closely linked with the history of the study of Turkic languages and has an ancient tradition. The article discusses the history of plural forms formation on the basis of the material from modern Turkic languages, as well as in the ancient period. In addition, a comparative historical analysis of the study form has been carried out on the basis of the material of different languages of the Turkic group – including Tatar, Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Uzbek, Uighur, Chuvash, Khakass, Nogai, Yakut amongst other languages. The proposed analysis demonstrates the different phonetic variants of this form, as well as the features of its use and the existing differences. Taking into account that the plural forms in the Turkic languages are mainly formed by the affix -lar, it is evident that the specificity of the form under study is determined not only by the rule of vowel harmony, but also depends on the specific historical conditions of functioning and formation of the grammatical system of the Turkic languages. The analysis of the works of famous classical and modern turcologists regarding this issue allows to better define the grammatical essence, semantics and stylistic capabilities of the category of number, as well as to reveal its functionality in the Turkic languages.

Keywords: the Turkic languages, a comparative historical analysis, the category of number, the plural, a noun, an affix, collective plurality.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Turkic languages present a family of languages spoken by many nations and peoples of Russia and the CIS, Turkey, a part of the population of Iran, Afghanistan, Mongolia, China, Romania, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia and Albania. Speakers of these languages are Azeri, Turkmen, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Kumyk, Karachai, Balkar, Chuvash, Tatar, Bashkir, Nogai, Yakutia, Tuva, Khakassia, Mountain Altai, Gagauz Turk, and Uighur peoples.

The meaning of plurality is universal in all languages of the world. In modern Turkic languages, the meaning of plurality is mainly expressed through special plural affixes.

Studying and determining the genesis of affixed morphemes of certain noun categories of Turkic languages (including the Tatar language) is one of the most urgent problems of the present stage of development in Turkic linguistics.

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Research into the national and foreign Turkic linguistics conducted in recent decades has greatly expanded opportunities for conducting scientific research of the history of a particular language or a group of languages. This period in the development of linguistic thought was marked by a tense search for new research techniques and methods at a higher theoretical level than at previous stages of the formation of the Turkic linguistics.

At the same time, a number of studies of the historical grammar of Turkic languages implies the description of language features of written artifacts in their correlation with the linguistic phenomena of modern languages (Zamaletdinov et al., 2014; Yusupova et al., 2014; Sattarova et al., 2014; Islamova et al., 2014; Nurieva, 2014).

The category of number in the studied language presents both main structural inflectional category and correct interpretation of the essence, which can positively contribute to the theoretical understanding of other grammatical categories of the language. The collected material makes it possible to objectively show a certain diachronic sequence of the development of plural affixes in the Turkic languages, as well as to reveal its functional-semantic features in speech.

The category of the plural number in all Turkic languages is primarily a morphological category in which the affix \(-lar\) and its allomorphs are the main means of expression. In the Chuvash language the plurality is expressed by the affixes \(-sem/\sen\). Their functional characteristics can be revealed only through analyzing their use in different parts of speech.

The affix \(-lar\) and its allomorphs attaching to nouns, pronouns, substantivized parts of speech, action nouns and verbs in the third person, makes a plural form and express a number of categorical and non-categorical meanings of plurality. As one of the general categories occupying an important place in the grammatical structure of the Turkic languages, the category of number covers almost all parts of speech. The place of the grammatical category of number in the system of language categories is defined by its nominative (substantive) nature (Fattakhova, 2004, 45-46). Therefore, a noun is a dominant part of speech in expressing the meaning of the plural number.

All grammar systems of the Turkic languages confirm the common Turkic nature of the affix \(-lar\). The affix \(-lar\) is used in all ancient and modern Turkic languages except for the Chuvash language. The secret of the origin of the affix \(-lar\) has attracted the attention of researchers for a long time. Many specialists in Turkic and Altay languages paid much attention to this problem. We would like to study the works of these scientists in detail.

2. METHODS

During this study, the authors used the following research methods: a theoretical analysis and synthesis of scientific literature on Turkic linguistics, a bibliographic literature review, a comparative analysis and synthesis of the actual material.

3. MAIN BODY

3.1. On the genesis of the affix -lar in the Turkic languages

O. Böhtlingk was the first to begin the research of the genesis of the affix -lar -. He tried to link the first component of the affix -lar -l with the affix of verbal nouns -la in the Yakut language (1851, 159). Later, V. Kotvich developed this idea. The scientist greatly expanded the etymological connection of the first constituent element -l in the plural affix -lar. It was linked not only with the similar sounding element -l in the affixes of the common case -lun in the Yakut language, but also with -l in the affix of the ablative case -la, -lan and with the adjectival affixes, -lu, -lux, -laax (the Yakut language), collecting numerals -a(u)i, -la, the comparative degree of adjectives and adverbs -laj, -lu, etc. The materials of the Mongolian and Tungus-Manchurian languages have been compared (1936, 30).

A.M. Kazembeck compared the affix -lar with the Mongolian affix -nar, and this comparison is not accidental. The author meant the affinity of the Turkic affix -lar with the Mongolian affix -nar. Notes on the affix -lar made by A.M. Kazembek are considered the first works on morphology and the origin of the indicated affix in the study of the Turkic languages (1846, 49-50).

G. Ramstedt assumed that the Turkish affix -lar originated from the original -nar in the Mongolian languages. However, the author provided numerous examples to support the primary comitative meaning of the formant -l (1951, 60).

According to N. Poppe, the affix -lar was formed as a result of the addition of two other plural affixes: -la (compare with the Tungus-Manchurian affix -l) and -r. The second component of the affix lar -r is also currently considered as a specific indicator of collective plurality (1952, 73-75).

D. Sinor did not consider the element -r in the affix -lar as direct continuation of the common Altai affix of collective plurality -r on the basis of the hypothesis on primary -z and secondary -r in the Turkic languages. The scientist states that the indicator of plurality -z is the reflection of the Altai indicator of plurality -r in the Turkic languages (1952, 22). For this reason, D. Sinor tends to support the hypothesis of M. Räsänen, who linked the formant -r with the Turkic formant -ar "human, man" (1939, 3-6).

A.N. Kononov, who also supported the hypothesis on primary -r and secondary -z in the Turkic languages, states that -r as the indicator of collectivity and plurality is preserved in Chuvash, compare ere-r “we” with eze-r “you” in Chuvash. According to the author, the affix -r, an indicator of plurality, is preserved as a part of the possessive second-person plural affix: in Altai- Uryanhay -yar/-ger<*n -ny (-ng)+ -ar(-er): ada-yar “your father”, in Tuvanian, Khakass, Kyrgyz -*nar, -*ner< *n+ -ar/ -er: ata-nar “your father”. To explain the origin of the second element of the affix (-r) affixes -lär/-ler>-ar/-er should be considered. The affix -r as an indicator of collectivity and plurality can be found in the old Turkic borrowed...
word in the Russian language – the word бояр-ин (boyar) boë-ar<boiëa+r. The affix -r as an indicator of collectivity and plurality is widely used in the Tungus and Mongolian languages. Ultimately, A.N. Kononov also concluded that the affix -lar was formed by the fusion of two common-Altai indicators of cumulativeness-collectivity-plurality l + r (1961, 7-8).

According to John G. Kiekbaev, the plural form was historically evolved from the primary word stem starting with -l. But in the Turkic languages the primary plural affix starting with -l has gradually lost its meaning of plurality. Therefore, the indicator of definiteness -a/-e joined the word stem starting with -l upon the general model, as a result of which the plural affix -la/-le was formed, which retained the meaning of plurality only in names in the Karachai-Balkar languages and in verb forms in the Kyrgyz language. In other Turkic languages the ancient indicator of plurality starting with -r joined the affix -la/-le (1996, 171).

F.A. Ganiev assumes that the affix -lar was formed as a result of the fusion of two affixes: -ly and -r. The affix -ly expressed the meaning of possessiveness, while the affix -r functioned as an indicator of plurality (Tatar Grammar, 1997, 255).

3.2. On phonetic variants of the affix -lar in the Turkic languages.

As for phonetic variants of the affix -lar, the affix -lar in the Turkic languages is multivariate. This fact was first recorded in the works of N.F. Katanov (1903, 208-212) and later by F.G. Iskhakov (1956, 78-89). According to these authors, in some modern Turkic languages we can find from 2 up to 16 phonetic variants of this affix. Their total number in the Turkic languages is up to 22: -lar, -ler, -lar, -lor, -lar, -nar, -ner, -nør, -nor, -nør, -dar, -der, -dør, -dar, -tor, -tor, -zør, -zar, -zar.

In the Uzbek language, depending on the quality of the stem vowel, the affix -lar varies between -lar and -lUr, but orthographically it is written only as -lar in all cases: bola-lar “children”, tog-lar “mountains” (Uzbek grammar, 1975, 54).

In the Azerbaijani and Uighur languages the affix -lar is used in two phonetic variants: -lar and -lor. The first variant is used with the “solid” word stems and the second variant is used with the “soft” word stems. For example, in the Azerbaijani language – alma-lar “apples”, tebe-ler “students”; in the Uighur language – kitap-lar “books”, ishichi-ler “workers”, etc. (Shiralev, Sevortyan (eds.), 1971, 120).

In the Turkish, Turkmen and Nogai languages this affix has almost the same two phonetic variants -lar and -ler, for example, in the Turkish language – tas-lar “stones”, cicek-ler “flowers”; in the Turkmen language – at-lar “horses”, kol-lar “lakes”; in the Nogai language – yangyr-lar “rains”, aydem-ler “people” (Kononov, 1956, 67; Turkmen Grammar, 1970, 85; Nogai Grammar, 1973, 97; Tahsin Banguoğlu, 2015, 324; Zeynep Korkmaz, 2014, 563).

In the Kumyk and Karachay languages this affix also has two variants of vocalic harmony, but they do not always use the final -r of the affix – -r is omitted before
the affixes of the genitive, dative and accusative cases. Examples: In the Kumyk language – at-lar “horses” – al-la-ny, at-la-g’a, at-lar-dan, at-lar-da, at-lar-ny; in the Karachay-Balkar language the affixes -la/-le are also used in the nominative case, for example: bala-la “children”, iynek-le “cows” (Sottaev, 1968, 48). In the Tatar language the affix -lar has four variants: -lar, -lar, -nar, -nlar. Here are the examples: ukuchy-lar “students”, kishtə-lər “shelves”, urman-nar “forests”, kënn īr “days” (Fattakhova, 2004, 53-54). In the Khakass and Shor languages, the plural affix has six phonetic variants: -lar, -ler, -nar, -ner, -tar, -ter. Here are the examples: bala-lar “children”, tulgu-ler “foxes”, chir-ler “land”, sos-ter “words” (in Khakass); chon-nar “peoples”, kun-ner “days”, kap-tar “bags” (in Shor) (Khakass Language Grammar, 1975, 61-62).

3.3. On the order of addition, semantic and stylistic peculiarities of the use of the affix -lar.

In the Turkic languages, as well as in the Tatar language, there is a strict order of attachment of affixed elements to the word root (Fatkhullova et al., 2013). For example: 1) bala-lar-ym-yn ‘my children have’; 2) ukuchy-lar-dyr ‘they are pupils’; 3) baryr-lar ‘they will go’; 4) bar-lar ‘they go’. Therefore, the affix -lar in the order of grammatical indicators of the composition of nominal word forms is placed as follows: the word root (stem) – the plural affix – the possessive affix – the case affix – the predicative affix. In the verbs the indicator of plurality -lar follows the affixes of voice, mood, tense, person. This linguistic feature should be taken into account when teaching the Tatar language to Russian-speaking students as it is grammatically difficult for students (Aidarova, 2012; Yusupov et al., 2015).

This procedure of the affixes can be found in other Turkic languages. Noting the use of the affix -lar after the word root before possessive and case affixes in ancient Turkic languages, A.M. Shcherbak gives the following example: tag-lar-ym-ka ‘to my mountains’ and writes that these rules remain in force for all modern and ancient Turkic languages (1977, 21). However, it should be noted that in the Chuvash language the affix -sem/-sen, unlike -lar, is added after possessive affixes and it may be followed only by the case affix.

The singular number in the Turkic languages may express collective, undifferentiated plurality, and the plural number is not a fixed component of the morphological category, it is not confined within its own plurality. In addition to its basic meaning, this form expresses the awareness of functional and semantic nature of this category in the Turkic languages. The study of semantics of plural nouns has shown that the semantic structure of the plural number is complex and it presents a set of semantic features. It includes differential and potential semes that reflect different aspects of quantitative relations between the objects and phenomena of reality.
Functional features of the plural can be observed only in its application in the analysis of various parts of speech. The affix -iar and its allomorphs attaching to noun-pronouns, substantivized parts of speech, action nouns and verbs in the third person make a plural form, expressing categorical and non-categorical meanings (Fattakhova, 2004, 62). The difference between a characteristic property of the objects included in the set and a property of the set of objects determines particular values of the plural. Numerous references can be found in the grammars of Turkic languages. For example, in “Essays on the Comparative Morphology of the Turkic Languages” A.M. Shcherbak describes five meanings of the plural (1977, 82-95), in the “Historical Typological Morphology of Turkic Languages” N.A. Baskakov points out six meanings (1979, 216-221), in the article “On the Meanings of the Affix -iar in the Yakut Language” N.L. Nikiforov indicates ten meanings (1951, 136-146), in the “Grammar of the Modern Uzbek Literary Language” A.N. Kononov indicates nine meanings (1960, 74-84), and the “Grammar of the Turkmen Language” under the editorship of N.A. Baskakov contains thirteen meanings of the plural form (1970, 85-92), in “Studies on the Comparative Grammar of Turkic Languages” N.K. Dmitriev indicates four meanings (1956, 65), and A.M. Shcherbak in his “Essay on the Comparative Morphology of the Turkic Languages” indicates five shades of meanings (1977, 90), etc.

The authors have the same opinion on the category of number insofar as this category has specific lexical-semantic, expressive and stylistic features different from other languages, for example, from Indo-European languages. In this respect, a form with an indicator -iar is a particularly “strong” form. The singular form in the Turkic languages is more commonly used, as depending on syntactic conditions and a speech situation it may express the plural number (general, generic, indefinite, collective plural number).

4. RESULTS

There are only assumptions on the occurrence of the affix -sem/-sen in the Chuvash language. In most cases the meaning of this affix in the Turkic languages is associated with the meaning of the word san “figure” (Iskhakov, 1956, p. 67). This affix cannot be found in the ancient Turkic written artifacts and among contemporary Turkic languages it remained only in the Chuvash language. And according to researchers, this fact resulted from the historical development of the language, that is why in comparison with the other Turkic languages the Chuvash language has a number of peculiarities in phonetics and grammar. The scientists explain these peculiarities by the fact that the Chuvash people early separated from other Turkic peoples during the Middle Ages and merged with the Finno-Ugric and Mongolian peoples. Thus, the difference of the plural affix in this language in comparison with other Turkic languages can also be explained by the peculiarities of their historical development. The use of such variants as -la, -le in the Karachai-Balkar
language is connected with non-constant use and loss of sound -r, as in this language, as well as in other Turkic languages, there are variants of plural endings -lar, -ler (Tursunova, 2012, 93-94).

Among the Turkic languages variants of plural endings -la, -le can be found in the Karachai-Balkar language. For example: adamlar (adamlar) “people”, zherler (zherler) “land” (Sottaev, 1968, 120).

F.G. Iskhakov pointed out that in the Chuvash language the plural affix is used in the form of -sem only in those cases when it is the final morpheme in the word or when a noun is in the ablative case. Before the rest of the case affixes the endings -sem/-sen are commonly used as plural forms, which Chuvash scholars consider the original variant, while -sem/sen are considered later variants, for example: the main case: yyvassem (trees), genitive case: yyvassemen, dative case: yyvassene (Iskhakov, 1956, 81).

In the Chuvash language the affix -sem/-sen, unlike -lar in other Turkic languages, is added after possessive affixes and it may be followed only by the case affix.

N.A. Baskakov highlights such meaning of the plural number as quantitative heterogeneity of subjects, irregularity of the use of concepts of various types, aspect or gender, for example, kushlar “different birds”, mallar “different farm animals”, etc. (Baskakov, 1979, 125).

The form ending with -lar from nouns denoting a substance, material or state can express a special shade of expressiveness and is used as a means of hyperbolization: Agyydell ar asha uk attym “I threw an arrow across the Belaya river (lit.: Belyye Rivers)”, chyl ar echtem “I was drinking tea (lit.: much tea)”.  

5. DISCUSSION

One thing remains unclear: why did the second indicator of collective plurality -r join the affix of collective plurality -l? B.A. Serebrennikov tried to explain this based on the fact that the Turkic languages had a collective case which was characterized by the specific case affix -la. Its relics in the Turkic languages can evidence this. These relics include primarily the postposition bir-la “together”, “jointly”. This affix could be complicated by the affix of another collective case -n or -un, that can explain the formation of the postposition be-la-n “with”. The affix -la can be found in the Yakut affix of the collective case -lan, for example, Anna-lan “with Anna”, as well as in the Balkar numeral affixes of the collective case -len, for example, ekew-len “together” (1970, 40-50).

Thus, the ancient indicator of the collective plurality -la was similar in form to the affix of the collective case. The desire to eliminate homonymy of suffixes obviously became the main reason that the other affix of collective plurality -r joined the ancient affix of collective plurality, thus the modern affix -lar was formed. At a later point in time in some Turkic languages some variants of the affix -lar
appeared with the initial letter \( t \) or \( d \), compared to Kazakh \textit{zoldas} “comrade”, \textit{zoldas-tar} “comrades”, in Kyrgyz – \textit{sart} “condition”, \textit{sart-tar} “conditions”; in Altai – \textit{at} “horse”, \textit{at-tar} “horses”, \textit{kul} “slave”, \textit{kul-dar} “slaves”; in Bashkir – \textit{jeget} “young man”, \textit{jeget-tar} “young men”, \textit{jyl} “year”, \textit{jyl-dar} “years”.

B.A. Serebrennikov explains the origin of these variants by the fact that the initial consonants \( t \) and \( d \) are the variants of the plural affix \textit{-lar}. Affixes \textit{-tar} and \textit{-dar} were formed as a result of assimilation of \textit{-l} to the final vowel of the word stem, for example: \textit{at} “horse”, \textit{atlar} > \textit{attar} “horses”. Then the variant \textit{-tar} was generalized for all the stems ending in a voiceless consonant. The variant of the affix with the initial letter \( -d \) began to be used after the word stems with final voiced consonants, as well as sonorous and nasal consonants, for example in the Kazakh language: \textit{kyz} “girl” – \textit{kuz-dar} “girls” (1970, 52).

Some researchers consider predicative and possessive affixes as indicators of plurality along with plural affixes of the nouns. In the modern language they have turned to indicators of other categories. Speaking about the category of number, the researchers are right to refer only the affix \textit{-lar} and some archaic unproductive indicators (-\textit{k}, -\textit{z}) to the morphological means of expression of the plural number (Iskhakov, 1956, 78-89).

It should be mentioned that in some cases the plural affix in the Tatar language may be placed between the word root (stem) and some preformative and formative affixes: \textit{batyr-lar-cha} ‘as heroes’, \textit{bala-lar-syz} ‘without children’ \textit{ati-lar-dzy} ‘as fathers’, etc.

In the study of the Turkic languages, the issue of functional-semantic use of the category of number has always been relevant. In the grammar of the Turkic languages, we can find numerous references to the meanings of the plural number. The amount of these meanings is provided in different ways. For example, in the “Grammar of the Turkmen Language” 13 shades of the plural number are described (1970), in the “Grammar of the Modern Uzbek Language” written by A.N. Kononov – 8 (1960), in the article “On Meanings of the Affix \textit{-lar} in the Yakut Language” written by N.L. Nikiforov – 10 (1951), in “Historical and Typological Morphology of the Turkic languages” of A. Baskakov – 6 (1979), in “Studies on the Comparative Grammar of the Turkic languages” N.K. Dmitriev points out 4 meanings (1956), and A.M. Shcherbak in his “Essay on the Comparative Morphology of the Turkic languages” describes 5 shades of meanings (1977), etc.

One of the main meanings of the plural, which is indicated by almost all turkologists, including Tatar linguists, is an expression of indefinite or collective plurality. In addition, the linguists describe such a meaning as plenty of similar items. “In this case a noun denoting uncountable objects is the basic stem. The word \textit{suvlar} in a particular context may mean not only various types of water (irrigation, pump, sea, mineral water, etc.), but also an abundance of water (Kononov, 1960, p. 74).”
N.K. Dmitriev points out the so-called “expansive plural number” which, according to the author, is used when we do not talk about a similar concept, but about the concept containing different separate dissimilar elements. For example, in the Turkmen language the expression suvlar agler “water flows” (lit.: waters flow) is understood so that the water flows in different places in a form of separate sprays and streams (Studies on the Comparative Grammar of the Turkic languages, 1956, p. 65).

6. CONCLUSION

Thus, having analyzed the works of many turkologists, it can be concluded that the most fruitful research in this regard is based on the assumption of the complex structure of the affix -lar consisting of two indicators of collective plurality: l and r.

The affix -lar is used in all ancient and modern Turkic languages. The only exception is the Chuvash language. The article also notes multivariantness of the affix -lar: in some Turkic languages its phonetic variants vary from 2 to 16. The total number of them in the Turkic languages is equal to 22. Thus, this indicator of the plural number within the area of distribution is practically common among the Turkic languages, as for the frequency of occurrence it is quite commonly used, as for semantics – it is a multiple-meaning morphological means.

The place of the affix -lar among other grammatical categories of noun and verb is also of particular interest. Its strictly defined place of the indicator -lar in the sequence of other affixes attached to the word root proves its ancientness, and from the grammatical point of view – it gives evidence of its standartized use and stable position in the word. In the Turkic languages this indicator, as noted above, has different semantic and functional diversity.

Review of nouns in modern Turkic studies on the meaning of number has shown that the plural number has plenty of meanings and functions. The affix -lar expresses different shades of the meaning arising from the content, as well as from the syntactic relations in a sentence.

Thus, it is considered that the use of the affix -lar, features of its distribution and the character of expressed meanings are such that we can consider it as an element that has long been developed and undoubtedly existed in the Turkic proto-language.

The further study of the origin of morphonological features of this affix will allow to disclose its grammatical essence, rich semantic features and stylistic features.

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