

WORD STRUCTURE

IN THE DICTIONARY “KITABI AL-IDRAK AL-LISAN AL-ATRAK” BY ASIRADDIN ABU HAYYAN AL-ANDALUSI

ESTRUCTURA DE LAS PALABRAS EN EL DICCIONARIO “KITABI AL-IDRAK AL-LISAN AL-ATRAK” DE ASIRADDIN ABU HAYYAN AL-ANDALUSI

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ABSTRACT

The objective of this research is to analyze the dictionary part of the medieval work “Kitab al-idrak li-lisan al-atrak” by Asireddin Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, which holds a special place among classical Turkic dictionaries. The morphological structure of the words in the dictionary was taken as a basis, and mainly root words were involved in the analysis. The vast majority of the words in the dictionary are of simple Turkish (Azerbaijani) origin, some of which are used in the same meaning in modern Azerbaijani, while others have become archaic over time and have passed into the passive vocabulary fund. As a result, it was revealed that the suffixes and morphemes in those words are fully consistent with the structure of our modern language. In addition, the dictionary also includes words of Arabic and Persian origin, many of which are still in use today. It is then emphasized that the dictionary is not only a lexical but also an important source in terms of historical and linguistic studies.

Keywords: Lexicography, Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, “Kitab al-idrak li-lisan al-atrak”, Cassical dictionaries, Linguistic research.

RESUMEN

El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar la parte del diccionario de la obra medieval “Kitab al-idrak li-lisan al-atrak” de Asireddin Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi, que ocupa un lugar destacado entre los diccionarios turcos clásicos. Se tomó como base la estructura morfológica de las palabras del diccionario, y el análisis se centró principalmente en las raíces. La gran mayoría de las palabras del diccionario son de origen turco (azerbaiyano) simple, algunas de las cuales se utilizan con el mismo significado en el azerbaiyano moderno, mientras que otras se han vuelto arcaicas con el tiempo y han pasado al vocabulario pasivo. Como resultado, se reveló que los sufijos y morfemas de estas palabras son plenamente coherentes con la estructura de lengua moderna. Además, el diccionario también incluye palabras de origen árabe y persa, muchas de las cuales aún se utilizan en la actualidad. Se destaca que el diccionario no solo es una fuente léxica, sino también una fuente importante para los estudios históricos y lingüísticos.

Palabras clave: Lexicografía, Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi, “Kitab al-idrak li-lisan al-atrak”, Diccionarios clásicos, Investigación lingüística.

INTRODUCTION

Language is one of the main indicators of the national-spiritual identity of each nation, its historical and cultural memory (Huang et al., 2024; Mendes, 2024). One of the most important forms of manifestation of this memory is words, their origin, structure and changes over time. Each word carries a history, a period and a socio-cultural environment (Jeewa, 2024). From this point of view, dictionaries are not only sources that explain lexical units, but also carriers of the development, change and living memory of a language over time. The semantics, morphology and phonetic characteristics of words in dictionaries provide important information about the language structure and intra-linguistic regularities of that period (LaViers, 2025).

The Middle Ages were one of the richest periods in terms of the lexical heritage of the Turkic language (Huseynova, 2022; İbrahimov, 2023). Numerous dictionaries and grammar books written during this period are of great importance in terms of studying the historical stages of development of the Turkic languages, including the Azerbaijani language. Among such sources, the work of Asir al-Din Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi entitled “Kitab al-idrak li-lisan al-atrak” (Book on Understanding the Atrak Language) occupies a special place. This work, dating back to the 13th-14th centuries, is rich in both vocabulary and grammatical analysis and is considered one of the important steps taken towards the scientific study of Turkic languages (Kassymova, 2022).

In this work, Abu Hayyan collected words mainly belonging to the Oghuz-Turkic languages, presented their semantic explanation and morphological structure. His work is rich in interesting nuances from the point of view of the history of the Turkic, Arabic, and Azerbaijani languages. It is known that Abu Hayyan tried to analyze the Turkish language based on the principles of Arabic grammar and in some cases wanted to create a bridge between the different structures of these two languages. This makes the work not only a dictionary, but also an example of comparative linguistics.

This article focuses mainly on the morphological structure of the words included in Part I (Turkish-Azerbaijani part) of Abu Hayyan's aforementioned dictionary, examining issues such as how those words were formed, what suffixes were used to modify them, and whether they are functional in the modern Azerbaijani language. As a result of the analysis conducted on the modified words in particular, many interesting conclusions were reached. For example, great parallelism is observed between the simple and modified words in the work in terms of semantic and formal correspondence with our modern language, which serves

as an indicator of whether those lexical units have remained historically stable or have survived to this day with certain phonetic changes.

Our research shows that many words used in that period are either actively used today in the same sense, or have become archaic and passed into the passive vocabulary. In addition, words of Arabic and Persian origin were also found in the dictionary, and it was determined that most of these words are still used in our modern literary language today. This fact proves that Abu Hayyan's work is a valuable source not only for the Turkish language, but also for tracing the history of language contacts and loanwords.

Thus, the main goal of the research is to examine the morphological structure of the words in the dictionary, to show their traces in our modern language, and to reveal the historicity, semantic stability or variability of these words. The information obtained as a result of the research conducted in this direction can be useful not only for linguistics, but also for the fields of language history, word formation, lexicology and etymology.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

In this study, a systematic and multidisciplinary approach was chosen for an in-depth analysis of the language and social phenomena. The research process aimed to obtain objective and reliable results by referring to existing theories and practical data. This research work was conducted on the basis of Part I of the work “Kitab al-idrak li-lisan al-atrak”. First, the words in the work were selected; then, the morphological structure of those words was analyzed. In the morphological analysis, the root and suffix division of words was carried out, and word formation models were determined.

In the next stage of the research, it was investigated whether these words are functional in the modern Azerbaijani language. For this purpose, various dictionaries of the modern Azerbaijani language were used, including the “Explanatory Dictionary of the Azerbaijani Language” and the “Orthography Dictionary”. Modern press samples and Internet resources were also considered as objects of observation. During the research process, the comparative method, morphological analysis method (defined by Qiao et al., 2025) as form of problem solving to work out the meanings of unfamiliar words by applying knowledge of morphemes), and lexical-semantic analysis methods (Oinotkinova. et al., 2024) were used. Through these methods, the correspondences and differences of the words belonging to the ancient Turkic language with their forms in the modern Azerbaijani language were clarified. Thus, analytical, historical-comparative,

and systematic approaches have been taken as the basis for this work.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Some of the words in the vocabulary of any language gain newness, are polished as they are used, and are passed on to future generations; some of them reduce their functional scope over time, while others lose their functionality, leave the active vocabulary of the language, become obsolete, move to the passive, inactive vocabulary of the language, and are replaced by new words that substitute for those words. In the words of Professor Akhundov (2003):

There are no words that die in the language; it is simply that some words in the language, due to changes in society and the development of science and technology, pass into the inactive vocabulary of our language, and some of those words, when the time comes, return to the active vocabulary of the language, becoming part of the list of common words in one sense or another. (Akhundov, 2003).

For example, orman, mavrı, ırag, ıl-ırag, etc.

Wise men have said that words are sweeter than honey, bitter than poison, softer than silk and cloth, and sharper than a sword. It is appropriate to recall the words from the great poet Nizami Ganjavi, highlighting that when translating into English it is important to preserve both the meaning and the poetic harmony (Ismayilov, 1998):

Sözün də su kimi lətifəti var,

Hər sözü az demək daha xoş olar.

Bir inci saflığı varsa da suda,

Artıq içiləndə dərd verir o da.

Words have the same charm as water,

It is more pleasant to say each word less.

Even if there is a pearl of purity in water,

It also causes trouble when drunk in excess.

Let us analyze the poem line by line: In the first line, "Words have the same charm as water" words are likened to water. Just as water is vital, distinguished by its purity and elegance, words are also presented as a delicate and valuable element that affects the human soul. The second verse, "It is more pleasant to say each word less" emphasizes that, in contrast to saying too much or talking excessively, it is more appropriate to use words in moderation, in the right place and briefly, as silence and stillness are sometimes more valuable. The third line, "Even if there is

a pearl of purity in water "again praises water for its delicacy. Just as water has a pearl of purity – that is, it has a pure, transparent, valuable nature – words should also be valuable and pure. Finally, in the last line, "It also causes trouble when drunk in excess" the poet warns that even this valuable water can be harmful if consumed in excess. Similarly, excessive and redundant talk can have a negative impact on a person and those around them, demonstrating that the value of words lies in their moderation, place, and purpose. We, too, follow the words of the immortal artist and move on to the main point.

The aforementioned dictionary of Abu Hayyan, the author of sixty-five works, consists of three parts. This dictionary was published in Istanbul in 1891 by a person named Mustafa (there is no detailed information about him). It is also known to the scientific world that there are a large number of errors in this publication (al-Andalusi, 1934). The dictionary was republished by Ahmed Jafaroglu in 1931, where previous errors were corrected. It is clear from this book that the dictionary consists of three parts. The first part, consisting of 2300 words, provides a Turkish-Azerbaijani dictionary. The second part discusses the grammar of the Arabic language and the morphology of Turkish based on it (Hasanov, 2012). The third part provides an explanation of syntax. This grammar was developed on the basis of the grammar of the Arabic language. Because of this book, Abu Hayyan was called "Grammar Abu Hayyan" (al-Andalusi, 1992). Taking the grammar of the Arabic language as a basis, the grammar of the Turkish language is also included; some comparisons are made, and overlapping or different aspects are explained. It should also be emphasized that the author faced many difficulties because the Arabic language is inflected, while the Azerbaijani language is included in the group of affixal languages (Jafarov, 2007).

As we mentioned above, we will give examples of the structure of a group of words in this dictionary, that is, in its latest improved edition, published in 1992. First, let's pay attention to the grammatical structure of some words of original Azerbaijani, that is, Turkish origin, included in the dictionary, their meaning at that time, and their functionality in the present tense in the same sense.

Arı - clean - It has the same meaning in the epic poem "Kitabi - Dede Korkut." In the dictionary, this word is also given in the form -arındı (cleaned)- (al-Andalusi, 1992). In the present tense, it is used in the form of arıtlamak, artılamak. There is also such a saying in the common vernacular: "Filankəsin qızı aydan arı sudan durudur." This means "The daughter of someone is as pure as the moon and as pure as water." Thus, the root of the word has retained its meaning. Art(maq) verb, in the dictionary -artuq, now

artıq; the art(maq) verb with -ıq suffix makes an adjective and an adverb (al-Andalusi, 1992). Əridi (weakened) is a genuine Azerbaijani word (al-Andalusi, 1992). For example, “filankəsin oğlu əriyib çöpə dönüb yaxud ona yaxın mənada” (someone’s son lost weight and became as thin as a stick) – The oil melted, the snow melted, etc. Ərəndi - get bored, get tired (al-Andalusi, 1934). This word is simple; however, it is not used in our modern language. It is a word of Turkmen origin, but it has become archaic. Urtə - (tomorrow) (al-Andalusi, 1934). This word is used in the meaning of the next day, tomorrow, or early in the morning (for example, “the next day we reached the district”).

Ərkək – in the meaning of male partner (al-Andalusi, 1934). Currently, this word is used in all Turkic languages, including as a word to indicate the gender of animals (Veliyev, 2022). The root of the word means -er (male); for example, it means male lamb, ram, etc. In our opinion, -kək is not a suffix, but rather an archaic word. Örtük - ört(mək) (to cover). This is a verb where -ük is a lexical suffix that creates a noun from a verb. It means a scarf, a large towel, a veil, etc. (Hasanov, 2005). Arsız - in the meaning of timeless (suddenly). This is a derivative word, meaning a small moment, time, moment, or the blink of an eye (al-Andalusi, 1934). The -sız suffix functions like an adverb, as in “it suddenly disappeared.” It has been and continues to be developed in our modern literary language and poetic language.

Bir an qəlbimizin səmindən qaçaq,

Bir an ağılımızın dərsindən qaçaq.

İnad ikiləşsə, tərsindən qaçaq,

Yad olaq sonrası nə ola, ola...

Let’s run away from the voice of our hearts for a moment,
Let’s run away from the lesson of our minds for a moment.
If stubbornness doubles, let’s run away from the opposite,
Let’s be strangers, whatever happens next, whatever happens...

Açıldı - Opened - is used as in modern language (al-Andalusi, 1934). Aç(maq) with -ıl is used as an intransitive verb to form an intransitive verb from an active verb, and is also used as a passive verb, as well as a reflexive verb. For example, “the door was opened,” “the flower blossomed.” It is also used as a polysemic word (my heart was opened, the secret was revealed, etc.). Asıldı - (to hang)

is a derivative verb (al-Andalusi, 1934). It is used in the same form and meaning in our modern literary language. -As- is a transitive verb; -ıl- forms an intransitive verb from the active verb and is used as an intransitive verb. Atladı (to ride a horse, to go somewhere) (al-Andalusi, 1992). It is a derivative word. The suffix -lan- is a lexical suffix that forms a verb from a noun. It was used historically as it was, but its range of use in modern language has decreased. Undoubtedly, this is also due to the rapid development of science and technology.

Otlaq (to graze) - both words are derivative. The root of both words is -ot-, but in “grassland” -ot- is the root of the word, -lu is the lexical form that creates an adjective, processed as “a place with a lot of grass,” and the -q formative is used as a noun. “Grassland” is derived from the root of the word otlaq (otla-maq). For example, “the lambs grazed well today.” The phoneme -q is a morpheme that creates a relative adjective from the verb. There is a very subtle distinction here: Ot-lu-q represents noun-adjective-noun. Otlaq - ot-la-q (grassland), that is, noun-verb-relative adjective (al-Andalusi, 1934). Əkildi - (Planted) - In our opinion, this is a simple verb (al-Andalusi, 1934). Əndərildi (əndərmək) in the meaning of “pour” is a verb form: əndər(mək) is an active verb, meaning to pour water or liquid all at once with force, to pour it out in anger. -ıl is an intransitive infinitive verb suffix derived from the active verb. The functional meaning of this word is narrowing, or rather, becoming archaic.

Aydınlađı - In the dictionary we mentioned, it is used in the meaning of “parladı” (shining) (al-Andalusi, 1934). It is a verb formed from “aydın” (clearly shining) in our modern language. -Laş is a lexical suffix that forms the verb from “aydın.” It is not correct to split this suffix into the form “la-ş” because the word “aydınlı” is rarely used in our language. However, it is used in some contexts, for example, in phrases such as “aydınlı” (clarify) and “ızah et” (explain). Əylədi - is used in the meaning of “keep” or “stop” (Jafaroglu, 1931). Əylə(mək) is a simple verb. This word has entered the active vocabulary of our language in the last 30-40 years. The verb “to sit” has the phoneme morpheme -l, which creates a causative meaning, and this word is used in the active vocabulary of our language as a synonym for “to sit.” One of these synonyms, “to sit,” is a cultural, refined word, while the other “to sit” seems to us to be somewhat informal.

Ot - Grass is a noun that has the same meaning in modern language; it is simple and is among the common words (al-Andalusi, 1934). Otuz - Thirty is a cardinal number (Asireddin). Needless to say, there is no fundamental change in numbers. This will be discussed later. Uyu(maq) - means to sleep (al-Andalusi, 1934). It is used

in this sense in most Turkic languages. In most Turkic languages, including Turkish, it is used as a fully common word. Furthermore, (uy-ğu) contains -ğu, a lexical suffix that forms a noun from the verb *uyu*. Although the verb *uyumak* is used as a common word in modern Azerbaijani, the noun *uyğu* is used less frequently. In most modern Turkic languages, it forms an adjective *uy-ğu-suz*, meaning “sleepless,” from the verb. *Uyandı* - in the meaning of “to wake up”. As we can see, historically, “to wake up,” “to get up,” etc., are from the same root. Over time, while retaining the meaning of that root, it underwent some phonetic changes and took on its current form. Historically, “to wake up” is a simple verb, and in modern terms, it maintains this basic meaning.

Bərkidi - in the meaning of “to strengthen” as an adjective that formed the verb (*bərk-i-mək*) with the help of the phoneme morpheme -i- (Asireddin). This word is used in the same sense today as it was used in the dictionary. *Burç* - in the meaning of decorative material, has already become archaic and has passed into the passive vocabulary of the language. Today, the word “decoration” is among the common words in the active vocabulary of our language, forming nouns from the verb “beza-k.” *Bozlaş* - Although it is given in the dictionary as “to reconcile,” in most Turkic languages it is used in the sense of “to cry” or “to whine,” and sometimes it means “to make small”. *Açıq* - *aç*ıq (open). Today, it is used in the same sense. The verb *aç* (*maq* - to open) has undergone a phonetic change; namely, the thick, closed-lip vowel (u) has been replaced by a thin, closed, unrounded vowel (ı) and has formed an adjective (open window) or adverb with the help of the suffix (-ıq). Like most verbs, this word is used metaphorically as a polysemic word because its root (open) is polysemantic.

Acu - *acı* (bitter) - It is a simple adjective. It is used in the same sense today, with just a phonetic change. *Ozan* - *Ashiq* (folklore musician) is a simple word, and even now it is used in the form of “ashiq” to refer to a person with this profession, but the word “ozan” is also used and understood alongside it. *Tümən* - is a type of currency that is still understood by everyone. It is the currency of Iranian Azerbaijanis, or rather, those in South Azerbaijan. In our modern language, it is understood by everyone, especially in the language of trade workers. *Cəcə* - (little finger) (al-Andalusi, 1934). Although it does not mean an entire finger in our modern language, it refers to a fingertip or the tip of the smallest finger. *Azu* - molar tooth (al-Andalusi, 1934). However, nowadays, this tooth, namely the last tooth, is called a molar. *Azu* refers to a tooth. For example, “a molar has been extracted, so he cannot chew well.” *Əyərlədi* - saddled; saddle is an object for riding a horse (al-Andalusi, 1934). If we pay close attention, the word

“saddled” has undergone some phonetic changes, sometimes with sound additions, and has reached our modern era with the same meaning.

Oynaş - mistress. This word used in the dictionary is actually a compound word; it is a noun made by adding the lexical suffix -ş- to the verb “to play.” However, this is a word with many meanings that can be used metaphorically. For example, playing at a wedding, playing football, playing chess, etc. But the word “*oynaş*” here has transformed the metaphorical meaning of the verb “*oynaş*” into a noun (Ismayilov, 1998). That is, *oynaş* refers to a person with whom one has a romantic relationship. *Qoşıldı* – joined (al-Andalusi, 1934). In our modern language, it has undergone phonetic changes and is used in the same sense. The compound active verb *qoş(maq)* has formed a reflexive, intransitive verb through the lexical suffix -ıl (-ul). *Qandurdu* - to explain (al-Andalusi, 1934). This verb has also undergone phonetic changes in modern Azerbaijani and is used in the same sense. However, although the word “*qandırdı*” is among the common words, it is considered vulgar. This word is used in literary language as “*baş*a saldı, izah etdi” (explained) and is structurally a derivative. *Anla(maq)* is an intransitive verb; -dır- is a causative suffix.

Görklü - *gözəllik* (beauty) (al-Andalusi, 1934). Although this word partially retains its lexical meaning in our modern language, it undergoes phonetic changes and is used in the forms *gör(mək)*, -k, -əm, -li (attractive, good-looking) (Rzayev, 1992). According to its morphological structure, *gör* (see) is a verb, *görk* is a noun, and -əm is a non-productive suffix that has formed words (*gündəm*, *ötkəm*, *güzəm*, *ortam*, *dönəm*, etc.). Although the word “*güz*” is used in our language, it is an archaic word that is also used in “*Kitabi-Dade Korkut*.” *Güz* means wool sheared in autumn. *Güzdek* refers to a pasture that turns green in autumn. *Görkəm* is a word that is used less often. For example, “you look better in this appearance.” *Görkəmli* (good-looking) is an adjective (*gör-kəm-li*) and is among the common words.

Kilitlədi – locked (al-Andalusi, 1934). “*Kilit*” is a noun; in our modern language it is used like “lock” or “key.” *Kilit* is a noun, and *kilitləmək* is a verb. This verb expresses the same meaning both in the dictionary in question and in our modern language. Sometimes it is used figuratively and becomes a colloquial word or expression (Zeynalov, 2004). For example, when several people are arguing and another person intervenes in the conversation, one of the parties says to him, “You lock it,” etc. *Gülüş* – smile (al-Andalusi, 1934). Both in the dictionary and in our modern language, it is used in the same structure and with the same meaning. That is, *gül(mək)* (to laugh) is an

intransitive verb, and gülüş (smile) uses -üş- as a noun-forming suffix. For example: öpüş, dönüş, bildiriş, giriş, çıkış, vuruş, uçuş (kiss, return, notification, entry, exit, hit, flight), etc.

Observations of the morphological and lexical analysis of Abu Hayyan's dictionary

From the compilation we conducted above and the words involved in the analysis, it is clear that Asireddin Abu Hayyan Al-Andalusi's "Kitabi al-idrak al-hisan al-atrak" dictionary is a book that holds a special place among classical dictionaries. More than fifty percent of the words in the dictionary given in Part I of the book are of Turkic origin, or are purely original Azerbaijani words. We rarely encountered derivative words of Turkic origin in the dictionary and if we compare, the number of simple words is 2-3 times greater than the number of derivative words. We did not involve those simple words in the analysis; although there were exceptions. We almost did not come across any compound words in the dictionary; two or three words are exceptions.

In the mentioned dictionary, we came across a large number of words that have entered our language from Arabic-Persian. Whatever lexical meaning those words had at that time, they still have the same meaning now and are structurally identical. All three parts of the mentioned book, that is, both the dictionary and the grammar sections, deserve to be studied from a linguistic perspective. Thus, it is especially important to analyze the words given in the dictionary from phonetic, lexical-semantic, and morphological points of view. Most of the 2300 words in the dictionary are simple words. Although the number of derivatives is less than the number of simple words, all of the suffixal morphemes coincide with the lexical suffixal morphemes in modern Azerbaijani language, or rather, they are identical. Indeed, this is one of the most significant contributions of Abu Hayyan to Azerbaijani linguists and lexicographers.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research shows that Asireddin Abu Hayyan al-Andalusi's "Kitab al-idrak li-lisan al-atrak" is not only one of the classical sources of Turkology, especially Azerbaijani linguistics, but also one of the works with serious scientific potential in the fields of language history, lexicology and morphology. Our analysis of the words in the Turkish-Azerbaijani part of the work showed that a significant part of the 2300 words in the dictionary - approximately more than 50% - are of Turkish origin, as well as genuine Azerbaijani words. A large part of these words continues to be used in the modern Azerbaijani language with the same or similar meanings. Many words are so

morphologically stable and durable that their root, suffixal structure and semantics have been preserved almost unchanged for centuries. The fact that the suffixes used in the affixes, in particular, are the same as the suffixal system in the modern Azerbaijani language, clearly proves the morphological continuity and historical stability of this language.

During the analysis, the historical roots, phonetic and semantic changes, and transitions to the active and passive lexical background of both simple and affixal words were also in the spotlight. It was determined that although some words became archaic over time and left the common language, their semantic load and morphological structure are parallel to modern linguistic facts. At the same time, the fact that most of the loanwords of Arabic and Persian origin in the dictionary are still in use today is evidence of the Azerbaijani language's contact with various languages throughout its history. From this point of view, "Kitab al-idrak" should be considered not only a dictionary, but also a rich linguistic treasure, one of the rare sources explaining not only the lexical, but also the morphological history of words.

This work of Abu Hayyan provides extensive and valuable information about the state of the morphological system of Turkic languages, especially the Azerbaijani language in the Middle Ages, the word creation process and lexical fund. This shows that the work is important and relevant not only from a historical perspective, but also for contemporary linguistics. Consequently, the analysis of such classical dictionaries, in addition to playing a fundamental role in modern linguistic research, is also of great importance in terms of understanding the past of our language more deeply, following its richness and development path. The systematic study of such works is necessary both in terms of preserving our linguistic history and lexical heritage and passing it on to future generations.

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