

Reviews and Annotations
Рецензии и анотации

A NEW LOOK AT TURKISH GRAMMAR THROUGH THE PRISM OF THE POLISH LANGUAGE

Milena Jordanowa. (2018). *Język turecki: minimum gramatyczne*,
Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademickie "Dialog". 260 p.

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The book *Język turecki: minimum gramatyczne*, by Dr. Milena Yordanova, Associate Professor in the Department of Turkic and Altaic Studies at "St. Kliment Ohridski" University of Sofia, is in many aspects a high-quality and above all an innovative textbook intended as a guide to acquiring the grammatical minimum of the Turkish language. This monograph consists of the following chapters: I. "Przedmowa" [Introduction and conceptual framework] (pp. 9–14); II. "Część I – 15" [Grammar units: 1 – 15] (pp. 15 – 193); III. "Gramatyka języka tureckiego w skrócie" [Short Turkish grammar] (pp. 194 – 258). At the end of the book there is a bibliography (pp. 259 – 260) listing just under forty academic works in Bulgarian, Turkish, Russian, and English. The book, as one may surmise from its title, has been published in Polish as an academic book for the students at University of Warsaw.

The book is built on the basis of the theoretical model set up in the paper "Theoretical Foundations of a Grammatical Minimum of Turkish Language" (Yordanova 2015: 498 – 504), published in 2015, in which it was emphasized that the monograph could be basis for *constructing* a correlative binary model. So what kind of model is this? – One that offers a *common* core to students of Turkish



studies, but also to students in other areas of the humanities who want to learn the Ottoman language. The core here refers to a minimum of grammatical knowledge of the phonetics, morphology, and basic syntax needed to be able to understand and use contemporary Turkish. That same minimum is necessary to (relatively easily) attain the competence to read, analyze, and translate texts written in that language. In accordance with this, the grammatical minimum set down in this book can be learned by Turkologists and non-Turkologists alike.

The author of the monograph bases her grammatical description of the Turkish language on the language of literature. She deems it necessary to focus on the literary language because it is the basis for mastering the contemporary standard language. The target audience of that book will include both Turkologists who are interested in Modern Turkish and non-Turkologists to whom the Turkish language is important for reading, for translation, and for communication.

In the making of this monograph, M. Yordanova made use of contemporary glottodidactic methods. As a result, the grammatical material is very well presented, supported with carefully chosen Turkish examples, and adapted to the beginning phase of learning the Turkish language for all interested learners. Compared to classical comparative and normative grammars, in which the material is presented according to the principle of linear progression (phonetics – phonology – morphology – syntax), her book is primarily founded upon the glottodidactic principle of *known > unknown (new)*. In addition to Turkish grammar, the book includes a part dedicated to morphological derivation, namely, the most frequent suffixes, which not only help simplify the acquisition of vocabulary, but also illustrate the agglutinative structure of the Turkish language. As far as vocabulary is concerned, Associate Professor M. Yordanova has made a point of using lexical items that are fairly frequent in both Turkish and Polish. Still, the book's primary focus is on basic Turkish grammar, rather than vocabulary. The author has chosen her metalanguage bearing in mind that the book is meant for beginners. The examples were taken from the literary language, but they also include its spoken varieties. In short, this book describes the structure of the Turkish language.

In the introductory chapter, the author provides a brief set of facts that students should know about the Turkish language, about the family to which it belongs and its position and status within the Turkic language group, and about the stages of its historical development on the territory of Anatolia. She then briefly presents its agglutinative structure, the principles of agglutination as compared to fleective languages (primarily Polish), and a structural model of the Turkish sentence (SOV).

In the same chapter the author recounts the unsuccessful attempts at language reform that were made in the nineteenth century, as well as the language reforms (*Dil devrimi*) that were started in the late 1930s with the aim of purging Turkish of Arabic and Persian words and replacing them mainly with neologisms. Even today, linguistic purism is still an issue of heated debate that receives much

attention from the *Türk Dil Kurumu*, the top Turkish institution for language and linguistics. The information she provides can be of use even to Turkologists whose native language is not Polish because it tells us about the history of Turkish studies in Turkey and in the Balkans and about the extent of interest in the Turkish language in general.

In the fifteen units (pp. 15 – 193) that make up “Theoretical framework”, we find a concisely and clearly presented grammar of the Turkish language, beginning with the Latin alphabet and ending with elementary syntax. In all fifteen units, the grammatical explanations, supported with good examples, deal with the most common usages and meanings of grammatical forms, in just enough detail so as to be manageable for students and without surpassing the planned and assigned level of knowledge that they are expected to acquire. The metalanguage has been deliberately reduced in terms of both Turkish and Polish terminology. The meanings of the verb tenses are provided with concise and clear Turkish examples, without delving into semantic or pragmatic nuances that will be learned in subsequent years of study. The basic aspects of verbal nouns, participles, and gerunds are compared with those in the Polish language.

In the chapter “*Gramatyka języka tureckiego w skrócie*” [Short Turkish grammar] (pp. 194 – 258), conceived as a theoretical approach to the grammatical part from the previous chapter, M. Yordanova offers a more detailed functional and syntactic description of the entire material described earlier. This chapter is structured so as to complement the previous one and the representation of the elements involved is closer to normative grammar.

In terms of its relevance and innovativeness, but also due to the fact that it contains an “integrated” grammatical minimum for the Turkish language, Milena Yordanova’s book *Język turecki: minimum grammatyczne* differs from other grammars and textbooks of the Turkish language published previously in Poland, or even elsewhere. To reiterate, it is structured so as to provide a minimum of grammatical knowledge about the contemporary Turkish language, knowledge that enables the user to analyze and read texts and to understand speech as a dynamic and creative process. On the other hand, it offers the grammatical minimum necessary for the student to learn a dead language – Ottoman. This shows that Milena Yordanova’s book is a creative work that, from a new point of view and using an innovative method, helps the beginning learner see the parallels between Turkish and Polish. Her book will be very useful for students and teachers alike – perhaps even more for teachers who have never thought about the subject matter in the way she does. The model developed could be applied in teaching Modern Turkish to students through other Slavic languages apart from Polish and Bulgarian. We congratulate Associate Professor Milena Yordanova and impatiently await the publication of her next monograph, the second part of *Grammatical Minimum for the Turkish Language*.

REFERENCES

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