

The Study of Mahmud Kashgari's Work "Devonu Lugotit Turk" In German Linguistics

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Abstract: This article explores the linguistic, cultural, and encyclopedic significance of Mahmud Kashgari's seminal work *Devonu Lugotit Turk* ("Compendium of the Turkic Languages"). As one of the earliest and most comprehensive dictionaries of the Turkic world, the *Devon* not only documents over 9,000 lexical units but also offers a linguistic map of the 11th-century Turkic-speaking world. The study highlights the functional-semantic, areal, and linguocultural dimensions of the text, positioning it as an invaluable resource for the study of historical Turkic languages, dialectology, ethnography, and intercultural communication. The work has been instrumental in forming the foundation of comparative-historical Turkology and continues to serve as a key source for understanding the lexical and cultural identity of Turkic peoples. Although the *Devon* has been widely studied, a comprehensive monographic analysis of its linguistic features remains an open and significant field of research in modern linguistics.

Keywords: Mahmud Kashgari, *Devonu Lugotit Turk*, Turkic languages, historical linguistics, lexicography, areal linguistics, linguistic heritage, comparative-historical linguistics, dialectology, cultural transmission, dictionary, linguistic map, lexical units.

Introduction: There exist works of enduring scholarly significance that, even after centuries, continue to captivate researchers across disciplines. Among them is Mahmud Kashgari's *Devonu Lugotit Turk* — an encyclopedic dictionary that remains foundational to the study of Turkic languages and cultures. Composed in the 11th century, the *Devon* presents not only a comprehensive lexicon of more than 9,000 words but also valuable insights into the socio-cultural and geographical landscape of the Turkic world. It includes a linguistic map, explanations of dialectal variation, and detailed accounts of daily life, beliefs, traditions, and values. This article examines the lexicological, linguistic, and cultural importance of the *Devon*, analyzing its role in the development of Turkology and advocating for further study of its unexplored linguistic features in light of contemporary linguistic theories.

Literature Review

The scholarly legacy of *Devonu Lugotit Turk* spans across both Eastern and Western traditions. In Western linguistics, foundational work was laid by German

scholars such as K. Brockelmann (1928) and V. Radlov (1882), while G. Bergstrasser, F. Hommel, O. Pritsak, and I. Havenschild focused on word formation, proverbs, areal linguistics, and cultural semantics. In Turkic studies, scholars such as Rustamiy (2006), Sanakulov (2008), and Haziyeva (2019) have emphasized its importance as an ethnolinguistic and encyclopedic source. Despite such advances, much of the *Devon*'s rich linguistic data remains to be analyzed from a monographic and structural-linguistic perspective. Uzbek, Kyrgyz, and Uyghur scholars have recognized Kashgari as a foundational figure, and his work is often cited in studies of Turkic language history, dialectology, and cultural identity.

METHODS

This study applies a qualitative, interdisciplinary approach combining historical-comparative linguistics, lexicographic analysis, and cultural linguistics. Textual analysis of lexemes is conducted using methods of functional-semantic analysis and cognitive ethnolinguistics. The methodology also includes the

identification of semantic fields within the dictionary and the classification of lexical units based on cultural domains such as kinship, economy, belief systems, and daily practices. Areal linguistic principles are used to map dialectal features and regional distributions. Data is drawn from both primary sources (the facsimile edition of the *Devon*) and secondary literature in historical and modern Turkology

The main part

There are works that, even after years, centuries, and millennia, continue to attract the attention of scholars with their value and significance. Through such excellent sources, it is possible to gain important ideas about the history, ethnic structure, and culture of people, as well as their language, and to study them in comparison with the present day. The fact that Mahmud Kashgari's "*Devonu Lugotit Turk*" is among such works is a source of pride for all Turkic peoples, including the Uzbeks.

"*Devon*" as an encyclopedic dictionary is one of the sources that served as the basis for the development of Turkic studies, as well as linguistics. The fact that the author laid the foundation for areal linguistics, the fact that the work presents a linguistic map of the territories inhabited by Turkic peoples, explains more than nine thousand lexemes in use at that time, and highlights the characteristics of dialects is also a clear evidence of the scientist's activity as an accomplished linguist and dialectologist. Perhaps for this reason, Uzbeks, Uyghurs, Kyrgyz, and, in general, all Turkic peoples recognize Mahmud Kashgari as a representative of their ethnic group and nation (Dwyer, 2005), and repeatedly refer to this rare work of the encyclopedic scientist. The constant study of "*Devon*" will be the basis for discovering new facets of this unique work, introducing the general public to such a magnificent heritage, and presenting evidence of the history of the language. In this sense, this study serves to draw conclusions not only about the history of Turkic languages, but also about the history of Turkic peoples and ethnicities, by shedding light on the functional-semantic, methodological, and linguocultural characteristics of noun lexemes in the dictionary, and to introduce the rich cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples to the world community. Because the dictionary reflects all aspects of the life of the Turkic peoples thousands of years ago: language and literature, history and geography, culture and economy, moral values and beliefs, psychology and attitude to existence, everyday life and customs, traditions, family, family and community relations, clothing and jewelry, weapons and tools, and names of games. It combines the features of linguistic and encyclopedic dictionaries (Haziyeva, 2019).

Mahmud Kashgari is considered a great encyclopedist who made a worthy contribution to the civilisation of world linguistics with his work "*Devonu Lugatit Turk*" and was able to scientifically and practically analyse the spiritual and cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples thousands of years ago, leaving an indelible mark on the history of Turkish linguistics (Sanakulov, 2008). "*Devonu Lugatit Turk*", of which only one manuscript has survived to our time, is also worthy of special attention as the oldest among the works on Turkology. The publication of this ancient manuscript by Ahmad Rifat and the appearance of facsimile editions introduced Mahmud Kashgari and his work to orientalists. As a result, work began to translate and study it (Rustamiy, 2006). In world linguistics, a great deal of scientific research has been conducted on Mahmud Kashgari's work "*Devonu Lugatit Turk*", books have been published, and articles have been published. "*Devon*", recognized as "the masterpiece of the treasure of world linguistic science" (Ragimov, 1985), has been thoroughly studied as an object of research by many Western and Eastern linguists.

The services of German scholars in the study of the life of Mahmud Kashgari and the "*Devon*" should be especially recognized. K. Brockelmann published "*Devon*" in German in alphabetical order, and the total number of words in this edition is 7993 (Brockelmann, 1928). According to linguist U. Isabekova, one of the German orientalists, Markart, together with the historian Miller and the Arabist Gensler, tried to study the linguistic map presented in "*Devon*" in 1931 (Isabekova, 2017). However, they could not fully master the map because they did not refer to the work itself.

Linguists such as V. Radlov, G. Bergstrasser, F. Hommel, O. Pritsak, I. Havenschild studied the historical features of Turkic languages based on the work "*Devonu Lugotit Turk*". In particular, V. Radlov refers to "*Devonu*" when providing evidence for the dialects of Turkic languages (Radloff, 1882). G. Bergstrasser conducted research on word formation in the work of Mahmud Kashgari (Bergsträsser, 1921), while F. Hommel widely used the work in studying proverbs specific to Turkic languages (Hommel, 1924). O. Pritsak, in his article "Kashgari's Statement on the Language of the Bulgarians", expressed his views on the distribution of languages in the territories and areal linguistics (Pritsak, 1959). I. Havenschild studied the animal names (zoonyms) used by Mahmud Kashgari from a linguistic and cultural-historical point of view. The author acknowledges that the "*Devon*" lists the names of about 250 domestic and wild animals, and that they provide information not only on the species, but also on the gender and age of the animals, and that the proverbs and sayings

associated with these names allow us to imagine the people's concepts related to animal husbandry and hunting (Havenschild, 2003).

In the study of Turkic languages, in elucidating the features of their formation and development, it is impossible to ignore the "Devon". For this reason, in almost all studies that study the historical aspects of Turkic languages, there are cases of relying on it through examples from "Devon".

In modern Turkology, the study of Turkic languages from a comparative-historical point of view occupies a special place. The main tasks of the comparative study of the history of the lexicon of Turkic languages are the following: 1) analysis of vocabulary; 2) identification of root and derived lexemes related to languages; 3) genetic identification of lexical units and elucidation of the laws of their semantic development. The solution of these problems, with some exceptions, ensures the identification of common Turkic roots that make up the ancient Turkic layer, and makes it possible to trace the evolution of lexical units with a simple and complex structure (Habibullina, 2004). "Devon" serves as the main source for the implementation of these tasks, i.e., for illuminating the historical roots of Turkic languages.

Despite the fact that significant scientific sources have been created in world Turkic studies on the work of Mahmud Kashgari "Devonu Lugotit Turk", all the linguistic features of the work have not been specifically studied in a monographic direction. Because, as S. Muminov emphasised, the legacies left by our ancestors, who laid the foundation for the treasury known as "Eastern wisdom", are incalculable. However, any idea, any wise thought, will pass from generation to generation and serve the people only if it is often repeated and remembered. Especially in a time of great changes and a new independent life, it is extremely important to listen to the teachings left by our ancestors and act based on them (Mo'minov, 2004). Therefore, studying the rich heritage left by our ancestors allows us to reveal its undiscovered facets. Studying the vocabulary of the work based on new directions in linguistics allows us to form a complete picture of the national-cultural, socio-political, and economic life, customs, and values of the Turkic peoples, as well as the linguistic landscape of the world in the 11th century.

Thus, it can be rightly said that this unique written monument, with a ten-century-old history, has not lost its significance and value. A more extensive study of the linguistic features of this masterpiece by world linguists is one of the important issues of modern linguistics.

CONCLUSION

Mahmud Kashgari's *Devonu Lugotit Turk* remains a

linguistic monument of inestimable historical and cultural value. It encapsulates not only the lexicon of a vast linguistic landscape but also the worldview, traditions, and identity of Turkic peoples in the 11th century. While the *Devon* has been studied extensively in the fields of Turkology, dialectology, and areal linguistics, a full-scale linguistic analysis of its vocabulary through the lens of modern linguistic theory remains largely undeveloped. Renewed attention to the *Devon*, especially its noun lexicon, promises to reveal new insights into the cultural and semantic structures of the Turkic world and to contribute meaningfully to global linguistic heritage studies. This underscores the need for continued multidisciplinary research, which would not only preserve but also revitalize the enduring relevance of Kashgari's masterpiece for generations to come

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