

Stylistic Features of Dialectisms In Turkish Folk Songs

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Received: 26 February 2026; **Accepted:** 22 March 2026; **Published:** 11 April 2026

Abstract: This article examines the stylistic features of dialectisms found in the language of Turkish folk songs. It demonstrates that dialectisms, as an integral component of the national language, perform important functional roles in literary texts. Based on examples from Turkish folk songs, phonetic, grammatical, and lexical dialectisms are analyzed in detail.

Keywords: Dialectism, folk songs, dialect, phonetic dialectism, grammatical dialectism, lexical dialectism, stylistics.

Introduction: Dialectisms – constitute an inseparable part of the national language and are primarily represented by lexical units, expressions, and grammatical forms typical of spoken language. However, they also occupy a distinctive place in literary discourse (Normurodov, 2000).

In many linguistic studies, dialectisms have been considered as elements within the framework of the national language, and due to their deviation from literary norms, their usage in literary texts has been regarded as limited (Fayzullayev, 1979).

Nevertheless, the use of dialectisms allows authors to individualize characters' speech, create a local color, and depict the social and psychological state of characters. At the same time, it is important to maintain a balance in their use and avoid excessive application that may negatively affect the clarity of speech.

The study of dialectisms in literary texts enables us to evaluate how effectively an author utilizes the richness of the national language, depending on their talent and artistic mastery. Indeed, dialectisms can perform various functions in literary language.

Since Turkish folk songs are a form of collective narod creativity, they naturally incorporate numerous lexical and grammatical dialect features. In other words, folk songs represent a vivid manifestation of artistic texts enriched with dialectal elements.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Numerous studies have been conducted in Turkey on

Turkish dialects and vernaculars. One of the earliest works belongs to I. Kunos, who classified Anatolian dialects into several groups, including the:

Zeybek dialect (between Izmir and Bursa);

Kastamonu dialect;

Laz dialect of the eastern Black Sea coast;

Harput dialect;

Karamanli dialect;

Ankara dialect;

Yoruk and Turkmen populations (Kowalski, 1931).

However, Kunos's classification of these dialects was not based on any solid scientific sources. Another attempt to classify dialects was carried out by A. Caferoğlu. In his 1946 article, relying on materials he personally collected, he pointed out the existence of the following dialect groups in Anatolia:

The Eastern regional dialects (Kars, Elazığ, Van and its surroundings, Malatya);

The dialect region of Erzurum, Trabzon, and partly Rize;

The dialect region of Sivas and partially Tokat;

The dialect region of Amasya, Çorum, Ankara, and partly Yozgat;

The Central Anatolian dialect region (including Kayseri);

The Gaziantep dialect region (including dialects of the northern borders);

The Western regional dialects (Eskişehir, Balıkesir, Manisa, Izmir, partly Afyon, Aydın, and up to Antalya);

The Konya dialect region;

The Kastamonu dialect group.

In his subsequent work, A. Caferoğlu presented this classification in a more concise form, reducing it to six major groups (Caferoğlu):

Southwestern dialects (from Bandırma to the vicinity of Antalya);

Central Anatolian dialect (from Afyon to Elazığ and Erzurum);

Eastern dialects (up to the Elazığ and Erzurum regions);

Northeastern dialects (from Samsun to Rize);

Southeastern dialects (Gaziantep, Adana, Antalya, and surrounding areas);

Kastamonu.

One of the most recent and comprehensive studies within this field is L. Karahan's work entitled "Anadolu Ağızlarının Sınıflandırılması" ("Classification of Anatolian Dialects") (Karahan, 2014). In this study, L. Karahan classifies Anatolian dialects into three major groups based on their phonetic, morphological, and syntactic features:

Eastern dialects: Ağrı; Artvin (including its central part as well as Şavşat, Ardanuç, and Yusufeli); Bingöl; Bitlis; Diyarbakır; Elazığ; Erzincan; Erzurum; Gümüşhane; Hakkari; Kars; Mardin; Muş; Siirt; Tunceli; Urfa (excluding Birecik and Halfeti); Van;

Northeastern dialects: Hopa; Borçka; Arhavi (Artvin); Rize; Trabzon;

Western dialects: Adana; Adıyaman; Afyon; Amasya; Ankara; Antalya; Aydın; Balıkesir; Bartın; Bilecik; Bolu; Burdur; Bursa; Çanakkale; Gaziantep; Giresun; Hatay; Isparta; İçel; İzmir; İzmit; Kahramanmaraş; Kastamonu; Kayseri; Kırşehir; Konya; Kütahya; Malatya; Manisa; Muğla; Nevşehir; Niğde; Ordu; Sakarya; Samsun; Sinop; Sivas; Tokat; Uşak; Yozgat; Zonguldak.

In this research, L. Karahan provides a detailed description of the phonetic, morphological, and syntactic characteristics of each dialect group, highlighting both their similarities and differences.

In the present study, Karahan's classification serves as the primary theoretical framework, and the analysis is conducted based on this system of dialect classification.

Dialectisms are defined as dialectal words used in literary texts as a stylistic device (Akhmanova, 1966). They function as expressive and aesthetic means, enhancing the richness and emotional impact of literary language (Doniyorov, 1990).

According to B. Fayzullayev, who conducted research on dialectisms, dialectisms are words and word

combinations that, for certain reasons and with specific purposes, are used within the structure of the literary language, perform particular functions therein, and reflect the phonetic, morphological, lexical, and syntactic features of a given dialect or local vernacular (Fayzullayev, 1977).

Continuing his argument, the scholar emphasizes in another work that dialectisms represent a distinct branch of the national language, and that literary works which do not draw upon this resource are less likely to be well received by a broad readership. This is because the popular character of language determines the close relationship between a literary work and its audience. The Explanatory Dictionary of the Uzbek Language defines a dialectism as a word that has entered the standard literary language from dialects.

Dialectism is not a phenomenon of the general language as a whole, but rather pertains to its local varieties – dialects. Accordingly, such units are typically used in the speech of speakers of a particular dialect and are often not characteristic of other dialects or of the standard literary language.

In linguistic literature, dialectal units are commonly classified into phonetic, lexical, and grammatical dialectisms. Phonetic dialectisms are manifested primarily through sound substitution, addition, deletion, or duplication. Lexical dialectisms, in turn, are subdivided into several groups: pure lexical dialectisms, ethnographic dialectisms, and semantic dialectisms. Ethnographic dialectisms refer to the names of customs and traditions specific to a particular region. Semantic dialectisms are words that exist in both the standard language and dialects but acquire meanings in dialects that are absent in the literary language.

Grammatical dialectisms are also divided into morphological and syntactic subtypes. In addition, dialect-specific expressions serve to indicate the regional affiliation of characters in literary texts and to emphasize the setting in which events take place.

As can be seen from the various definitions of dialectisms, scholarly approaches to this phenomenon differ. Some sources consider only words used exclusively in local dialects as dialectisms. Others define dialectisms as words appearing in literary texts that are used solely by speakers of a particular dialect. Still others restrict dialectisms to the lexical level alone.

Among these perspectives, the views of U. Tursunov, J. Mukhtorov, and Sh. Rahmatullayev are particularly noteworthy, as they emphasize the existence of phonetic, grammatical, lexical, and phraseological types of dialectisms. This diversity of interpretations indicates that dialectisms have not yet been sufficiently studied within Uzbek linguistics.

In Russian linguistics, dialectisms are defined more broadly, and their diversity is strongly emphasized. Dialectisms are understood as words borrowed from various dialects and used in literary texts to convey stylistic nuance, local color, and the speech characteristics of characters. They are classified into phonetic, grammatical, lexical-phonetic, semantic, lexical, phraseological, ethnographic, and word-formational dialectisms.

Phonetic dialectisms reflect features of a dialect's sound system; grammatical dialectisms reveal specific patterns of inflection and word formation; lexical-phonetic dialectisms involve pronunciation differences from the standard language; semantic dialectisms represent shifts in meaning; word-formational dialectisms differ in their structural formation compared to standard synonyms; lexical dialectisms denote region-specific names of objects; phraseological dialectisms consist of expressions unique to dialects; and ethnographic dialectisms refer to local cultural items.

Another source in Russian linguistics notes that the term dialectism, derived from Greek, denotes linguistic features characteristic of territorial dialects used within the literary language. These are further divided into phonetic, grammatical, and word-formational types, while lexical dialectisms include ethnographic terms, proper dialectisms (with standard synonyms), and semantic dialectisms with meanings differing from those in the literary language.

This article analyzes the distinctive phonetic, morphological, and lexical features of dialectisms found in Turkish folk songs.

Phonetic dialectisms

Phonetic dialectisms are primarily manifested through sound substitution, addition, deletion, and gemination. Several types of phonetic dialectisms can be observed in Turkish folk songs.

I. Realization of b as m

Ahu kimi gözlerin

Şirin şirin sözlerin

Sen menimsen men senin

Niye lazım sözlerin (p. 104)

Eyvah Dimme Dimme

Nazlı yar Dimme

Men özüm sarhoş

Sen şarap verme (p. 196)

This phenomenon is mainly observed in folk songs belonging to the Kars region, which is part of the Eastern dialect area. The realization of the phoneme b

as m occurs predominantly in the first-person singular personal pronoun (ben → men).

II. Realization of k as g

Keklik idim vurdular

Ganadımı gırdılar

Daha ben ne idim ki

Anamdan ayırdılar (p. 151)

Merdimenden endim endim yıkıldım

Mevlam izin verdi gine dikildim

Her çiçekten aldım aldım takındım

Gırmızı gül sende galdı tamahdım (of of) (p. 81)

The above examples belong to the Western dialect group, where the phoneme k is realized as g. For instance:

kanadımı kırdılar → ganadımı gırdılar

kırmızı → gırmızı

kaldı → galdı

Grammatical Dialectisms

I. Use of the present tense suffix -yor in the form -yo

In Turkish, the present continuous suffix -yor has various forms specific to different dialect regions. In the primary sources analyzed in this study, the form -yo, characteristic of the Western dialect area of Turkey, is frequently observed in Turkish folk songs:

Köprüden geçemiyom

Az doldur içemiyom diloy loy

Halden bilmez diloy loy

Söz anlamaz ne fayda (p. 135)

This quatrain belongs to a folk song from the Kırşehir region, which is part of the Western dialect group. Here, the present tense suffix -yor appears in the reduced form -yo. Specifically, the consonant r in the suffix is dropped, followed by the addition of the first-person singular ending -m.

Similar patterns can also be observed in folk songs from regions such as Malatya, Çukurova, Zonguldak, and Tokat:

Atam dedim atamıyom

Satam dedim satamıyom

Gece gündüz yatamıyom

Güzel bu nasıl sevdaymış (p. 25)

Ağam Adanalı paşam Adanalı

Evde duramıyom sana dadanalı

Sebeğim sen oldun şişman delikanlı (p. 125)

(Aman ey aman of) Gidiyom gidemiyom

Az doldur içemiyom

(Yandım aman yanasın aman öldüm aman)

Sen benden geçtin ama

Ben senden geçemiyom (Vay Vay) (p. 233)

Gidiyom gidemiyom

Sevdim terkedemiyom

Sevdiğim pek gönüllü

Gönlünü edemiyom (p. 69)

II. Use of the future tense suffix -acak/-ecek in the form -aca/-ece

Kabağın kökeniyim

Sapının bükeniyim

Ben güzeli alacam

Çirkine tövbeliyim (p. 139)

In folk songs characteristic of the Western dialect area, the future tense suffix -acak/-ecek appears in the reduced forms -aca/-ece (e.g., alacağım → alacam).

III. Uniform use of the indefinite past tense suffix

In folk songs belonging to the Northeastern dialect area of Turkey, the indefinite past tense suffix -mış, -miş, -müş, -muş is consistently used in a single form, namely -mış:

Dost hasreti zor imiş

Her dem ahuzar imiş

Dert adamı yer imiş

Yine gönlüm hoş değil (p. 101)

IV. Use of the accusative case instead of the dative case

Davuluma vurdum turayı

Dolandım geldim burayı

İki (de) gözüm (de) tahir Efendi'm

Bugün bırakmam bu sırayı (p. 153)

In this example, the accusative case suffix is used instead of the dative case suffix. Such usage is characteristic of certain dialects, where forms like burayı are used in place of the standard buraya.

Lexical Dialectisms

Lexical dialectisms consist of words characteristic of the speech of people living in a particular region and not included in the vocabulary of the standard literary language. Numerous examples of such units can be found in Turkish folk songs.

Melek misin yeşil dallar giyersin

Cellat misin tatlı cana kıyarsın

Çocuk musun el sözüne uyarsın (p. 79)

This song belongs to the Kütahya region. In this dialect, the word dal is used in the meaning of clothing. In this context, the lyrical persona addresses the beloved,

implying: "Are you an angel, that you wear green garments?"

Additionally, in the Kütahya dialect, the verb kayırmak is used in the meaning of to worry (merak etmek). This can be observed in the following example:

Kayıрма sevdiğim gün böyle kalmaz

Yanar yüreğimin ateşi sönmez (p. 79)

In folk songs belonging to the Gümüşhane region, which is part of the Eastern dialect area, the word toplu is used in the meaning of window (pencere):

Karşıdan gel göreyim

Topludan gül vereyim

Sınanmamış güzelsin

Nasıl gönül vereyim (p. 197)

Hiç ulu kavakta (anam) meyve biter mi

Oğulsuz evlerde (anam) tütün tüter mi

Çağırın anamı (anam) gele yanıma (p. 205)

In Western dialects, the word tütün is used instead of ocak (hearth).

Davulumun ipi kaytan

Sırtımda kalmadı mintan

Ver efendim bahşışimi

Bayrama alayım mintan (p. 93)

In both Northeastern and Western dialects of Turkey, the word mintan is used in the meaning of clothing. This dialectal unit appears frequently in the analyzed song texts.

The study leads to the following conclusions: dialectisms in Turkish folk songs function as important lexical units that embody the distinctive linguistic and stylistic features of song language. Phonetic, grammatical, and lexical dialectisms are widely represented in the corpus of folk songs.

Dialectal units found in each song were analyzed in terms of their regional distribution. As a result, region-specific dialect features of Turkish folk songs were identified and their distinctive characteristics were described from a scientific perspective.

The findings indicate that phonetic, grammatical, and lexical units characteristic of the Western dialect area occupy a more prominent position compared to those of the Eastern and Northeastern dialect areas.

Based on the analysis of 175 folk songs, if the collected dialectal units are taken as 100%, their distribution is as follows:

Western dialects – 60%, representing the largest proportion of the dialectal units identified in the folk songs. This indicates that Western dialect features are

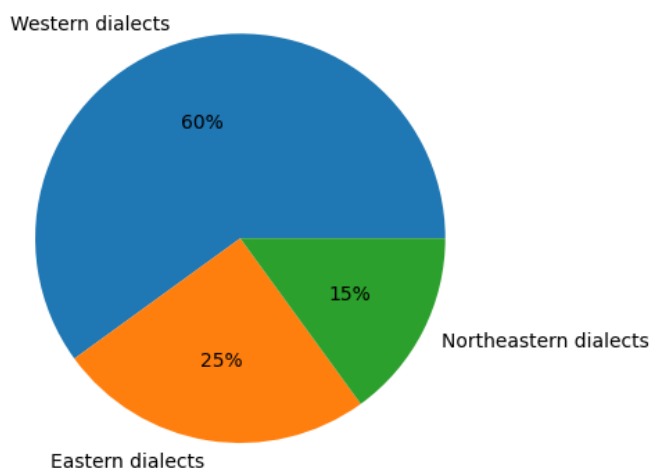
the most frequently used and have the strongest presence in the analyzed material.

Eastern dialects – 25%, which demonstrates a moderate level of representation compared to the

Western dialects.

Northeastern dialects – 15%, forming the smallest group of dialectal units within the corpus.

Distribution of Dialectal Units in 175 Folk Songs



These results demonstrate the dominant position of Western dialects in the language of Turkish folk songs.

Overall, the results suggest that Western dialect elements dominate the linguistic landscape of the analyzed folk songs, while Eastern and Northeastern dialects contribute a smaller but still significant portion to the dialectal diversity of the material.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of Turkish folk songs demonstrates that dialectisms represent an essential stylistic component of folk poetic language and serve as an important means of expressing regional linguistic identity. The study confirms that phonetic, grammatical, and lexical dialectisms are actively used in the texts of folk songs and contribute to the creation of local color, emotional expressiveness, and authenticity of the lyrical discourse.

The analysis of 175 folk songs shows that dialectal units are unevenly distributed. Western dialects dominate with 60%, while Eastern dialects account for 25% and Northeastern dialects represent 15% of the total corpus. These findings suggest that Western dialects have had a stronger influence on the linguistic formation of Turkish folk songs, while Eastern and Northeastern dialects, although less frequent, still contribute to the dialectal richness and stylistic diversity of the genre. Overall, dialectisms in folk songs not only reflect regional linguistic characteristics but also preserve elements of spoken language and cultural traditions, thereby highlighting the close relationship between language, folklore, and national identity.

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