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LINGUISTIC STUDY OF SELECT TURKISH PLACE NAMES THROUGH THE KALEIDOSCOPE OF GREEK VOCABULARY

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Abstract

This present study zeroes in on the elucidation about the often bypassed but tacit linguistic ligature between two languages namely Turkish & Greek spoken in two maritime border sharing countries namely Turkey and Greece. The study revisits the glorious past by alluding to historical contexts to justify the indispensability of the Juggernaut Grecian linguistic Influence on Turkish. The study underscores the fact that it is a naturally acceptable phenomenon that one language will influence the other through mutual vocabulary acclimatization due to geographical proximity and vice versa To do justice and to lend weight to the very defense of the influence on the first language of the second mostly in the domain of placenames, the study resorts to the broaching of a curated list of Turkish words vis-à-vis their Greek counterparts through the usage of search engines namely lexilogos.com and etymonline.com . It embarks upon the odyssey of elucidating the behind-the-scenes operationalization of linguistic techniques such as Grin's Law and Vowel Mutation Law accentuating the very process of derivation of select Turkish place names from Grecian Parallels by attempting a kaleidoscopic analysis. The study ultimately logically drives in home a conclusion that Turkish capitulation to Greek for the appellation of select place names in the Turkish mainland was both an inevitable phenomenon and is a linguistically acceptable no-surprise experientiality.

Key Words: Ligature, Geography, Greek, Kaleidoscopic, Turkish

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Objective:

The nuanced objective of this paper is to bring out to the fore the spectrum of influence of Greek as a language upon Turkish Placenames and to study the very linguistic techniques harnessed in derivatological study of the select placenames in Turkish.

Methodology:

With a view to elucidating the impact of Greek words on the so-called placenames, 1st of all the Turkish Placenames have been etymologically studied through both online and offline Turkish Dictionaries posterior to studying the Greek word formation technique involving phonotactics and then through comparative meaning accommodation or transition in the concerned languages.

Area of Study:

The study area covers almost entire prominent placenames of Turkey with extreme focus on places around the Mediterranean and Adriatic Seas.

Introduction:

Greek is one of the proto languages in the world like Sanskrit and Latin to name a few. The origin of the term Greek as per Greek Etymological Dictionary is rooted in the Turkish word 'kirik' which literally means furrowed and troughed. It is one of the branch of the greater Indo European Family of Languages which encompasses branches such as Indo Aryan, Balto-Slavic, Italic, Finno-Ugric & Germanic. A conviction that may often protuberantly rise up in literary and linguistic deliberations is that there can be possibly no language, literature, culture, philosophy and history where Greek has not left its imprints and this judgement warrants broaching of not an iota of controversion as it is irreversibly enshrined in the literary pantheon as the most influential language in the world. Probably the domains of knowledge such as natural sciences and physical sciences and literary criticism are nothing without accommodating Greek concepts, and vocabulary. Most of the sub-branches of Indo European have fallen to the influence of this very juggernaut. Linguistic Geography both postulates and evidences that geography demarcates the acculturation of specific dialects and languages and hotchpotching of Vocabulary from two languages resulting first in the birth of Pidgin, gradually evolving into Creole.[Adrados,2005; Anson,2009; Brown,2005; Crystal,1968;Hickman, et al, 2015]

What geography tells us is that Greece Mainland is sea-locked contrary to what the poet Rupert Brookes terms land-locked in his poem “. But at the same time it deserves mention that the surrounding seas both Mediterranean and Adriatic are saddled with tiny Greek islands that bestraddle Greek & Turkish maritime boundary. The naturally obvious scenario is that of the prominence of linguistic switching in those islands where one switches from Greek to Turkish and vice-versa and it climaxes in the orchestration of the code-mixing phenomenon. Even going by the theory of language variety and change , the influence of words from one language to another and vice versa becomes a domineering phenomenon.

Only the geographical positioning of Greece & Turkey do not avouch for or underlie the factuality that Greek words stipple the domain of Turkish Placenames in terms of etymology but what needs to be reiterated with utter conviction is that almost the entire Asia Minor was once under the Greek dominance and most of the cities in Turkey were founded by Greek victors. Obviously till today the Greek names of the Turkish Placenames would have been extant till today but for the fact that as evidenced by history Turks under the august leadership of Utman orchestrated the Gotterdammerung of Greco-Roman Empire and then linguistically maneuvered the islamization of those names.[Bayram,2020; Beek & et al,2009;Buxton,1999; Chrissis & et al,2016; Colak, 2021]

In-depth Deliberation into the Penetralia of the subject:

The subject is very interesting given the fact that it is very much constricted to the domain of language which is innately evolutionary, metalinguistic and trans-linguistic. Any particular language harbours the motto of percolating through its surrounding and coterminous languages. This is what can be asseverated about Greek with aplomb. Bodrum is one of the most beautiful cities in Turkey and interestingly through the linguistic method of Consonant Shifting from the original Greek ‘petronios’ this semanteme or glosseme has been derived which radically also involves Vowel Shifting phenomenon as well.

Analytically speaking, Greek ‘p’ has become shifted to Turkish ‘b’, vowel ‘e’has become shifted to vowel ‘o’; consonant ‘t’has become shifted to consonant ‘d’. Furthering into the penetralia, it becomes excogitable that vowel ‘o’has become reduced to vowel ‘u’ and nasal ‘n’has become reduced to nasal ‘m’. This example serves just as the tip of the iceberg. The following list of fifty Turkish cities will serve the purpose of making an in-depth analysis to have a succinct assessment regarding the said influence.[Hickman & et al, 2015; Hickey,2012 ; Horrocks,2014; Kazazis, 2018; Matras,2009; Murray & et al ,1949]

Turkish	Greek	Turkish	Greek	Turkish	Greek
Agri	Acros	Sivas	Sebastios	Saglun	Sagalassos
Ispir	Jasperos	Serkis	Sergios	Yuvarlak	giouvarlakos
Fasuliye	Phaseolis	Trakya	Thracios	Pandaluz	Pandalusios
Of	Topos	Chorum	Chromos	sandraz	Cassandros
Rize	Oryza	Mersin	Myrsinos	Giz	Girogios
Ordu	Orthos	Antakya	Antiochos	Calp	Carpos
uniye	Oinos	Cankiri	Gangra	Menemen	Menosmenos
Bafra	Papyros	Derkes	Dracos	Ege	Aigios
adana	Athenaios	Kale	Castros	Dalama	Talamos
Tarsus	Tarsos	Adyman	Andromenos	finik	Phonecios
Maltaya	Melitos	Kastramonu	Kastrakomenos	Milas	Melos
Gurun	Chronos	Larende	Larawanda	Ade	Isthos
Iskendrun	Alexandros	Ermene	Germanicos	menderes	Meandros
Yesil	Azaleos	Eregil	Heracleios	Edremit	Adramyttios
Turhal	Talaouros	Silifke	Seleucos	Foca	Phocaios
Tokat	Dokeios	Anamur	Anemorios	Bolu	polis
Kilis	Ecclesios	Mut	Matros		

Source: designed through Lexilogos & Google Translate

The Turkish Placename 'agri' has its origin in Greek word 'acros'. Obviously in this case Greek 'c' has become shifted to Turkish 'g' and vowel 'o' has become reduced to 'I'. In case of Ispir, it has been derived from Greek 'jasperos' and the derivatological process demonstrates the reduction of Greek 'j' to Turkish 'I'. The Turkish placename fasuliye has been derived from original Greek phaseolis through Consonant Shifting and Vowel Shifting process where it is evident that 'p' of Greece has become 'f' of Fasuliye and vowel 'o' of Greek has been shifted to Turkish 'u'. Greek orthos, oinos, papyros, chronos, dokeios, sebastios, sergios, gangra, pandulosios, cassandros, athenaios, talamos, phonecios, phocaios and polis have become Turkish ordu, uniye, bafra, gurun, tokat, sivas, Serkis, cankiri,

pandaluz, sandraz, adana, dalama, finike, foca and bolu respectively through the operationalization of the very same linguistic process. This overall linguistic process reminds us of the greater Consonant Shifting, the so-called characteristic feature of the Germanic languages. When we tend to dwell upon Grim's Law, we are reminded that as part of that very law in Germanic Languages 'p' becomes 'b' and vice versa and furthermore as the aspirated form of 'p' is f, so it becomes a recurring phenomenon to watch out for the intra-shifting between p and f on the one hand and between b and f on the otherhand. In the same vein, it becomes obtrusive how the consonant group of 't,d' combo of stressed and unstressed have become mutually interchangeable with other as part of the greater consonant shifting process. The same phenomenon has been observed about the cluster of 'j and y', 'k and g' and 'f and v'. Along with this very phenomenon, Germanic languages evidence the linguistic phenomenalities of ablaut, umlaut, i-mutation and j mutation.

The most interesting point of reckoning is that whereas Greek is a branch of Proto Indo European whereas Turkish belongs to non-PIE or the Ural-Altai Group of languages (Sprachbund) which encompasses other languages such as Mongol, Tungusic, Japonic and Korean. But here geographical coterminousness between the two countries have brought two languages of two different families into a cauldron of interaction resulting in the influence of one over the other and that too adopting a linguistic technique alien to both the languages. Mentionable point is that in terms of influence, Greek has the upper hand.

As mentioned above, not only consonant shifting but linguistic method of Vowel Shifting and word formation techniques as specified by Frederik T Wood in his phenomenal work 'An Outline History of the English Language' encompassing procopation, syncopation and apocopation too have played pivotal roles in the derivatological study of Turkish Placenames from Greek. Most of the Greek words or placenames are distinguished by the desinence of 's' alphabet/phoneme. But as part of restructuring of phonotactic arrangement of Turkish, totally differentiated from Greek through the operationalization of the linguistic phenomenon of 'procoping' or procopation as known to Linguists, the phoneme 's' altogether vanishes and simultaneously the phenomenon of apocopation too becomes distinct while considering the fact that Greek oryza has become Rize in Turkish and Greek topos has become 'Of' in Turkish and same phenomena have been ostensibly exercised in deriving Turkish city name 'Kilis' from Greek 'Ecclesios', Eregil from Greek Heracleios and Eremine from Greek 'Germanicos'. As for the rest of the cities such as turhal, yesil, tarsus, maltaya, trakya, mersin, antakya, derkes, kale, larende, anamur, these Turkish cities have been linguistically derived from the toponymic point of view from original Greek names such as talauros, azaleos,

melitos, myrsinos, antiochos, dracos, castros, lawaranda and anemorios respectively. Another linguistic phenomenon pressed into service for the very same purpose is that of syncopation wherein many vowels are run together so that Turkish cities namely mut, adyman, saglun, giz, ege, ade and castramonu have been respectively derived from Greek originals namely matros, andromenos, sagalassos, giorgios, aigios and isthos respectively.[Porter ,et al, 2008;Room ,1997; Slobin , et al ,1986; Spitzer , et al, 2011; Susan-Saraeva,2015;Woods, 1906]

Observations:

It is natural to watch out for the phenomenal extravaganza of derivatological quotient of the Greek language known for its opulence of concepts and its draconian bludgeoning over other languages with tacit and intrinsic impact being perceived in almost all the language branches of Proto-Indo- European. And for English , most of the life science , physical science and mathematical science phenomena apart from literature philosophy, history, sociology and economics have been blatantly derived from Greek and even rhetoric , stylistics, linguistics too could not have kept itself uninfluenced by Greek language. Going back to the phenomenon of language, it deserves no reiteration that translanguaging has become the rule of the roost as part of which languages directly or indirectly influence their kins which do not have any patrilineal ties with them. Turkey today boasts of having more than 300 cities including few metropolitan cities. From the geographical aspect on both west and south west Greek mainland and Greek micro-isles circumvallate this Altaic nation . But on the east and northeast , it is bounded by countries such as Georgia and Armenia where respectively both Georgian and Armenian serve as the official language and hence the influence of those languages in conditioning the genesis of Eastern Turkish Placenames will be passed off as an ordinary phenomenon. But analysis of most of the city names (which however does not fall within the ambit of this thesis) unveils the obtrusive phenomenon that not Georgian or Armenian but Greek has influenced the placenames of Turkey in a choc-a-bloc pattern i.e., east to west & north to south. For instance the cities namely Trabzon and Samsun are located north-east towards the Black Sea far way from the Greek Mainland but analysis upholds the fact that both the cities are Greek in origin with Trabzon from Greek ‘Trapezountos’ and Samsun from Greek ‘ Sampsuntos’ (meaning hill point in Greek). Erzurum , the easternmost city of Turkey is derived from Greek word ‘Arturos’meaning bear. Same is the case with southern cities namely Adana and Iskendrun with both being derived from Gk ‘Athenaios’ (wisdom) & ‘Alexandros’(defender of men). And coming to the capital city of Ankara an innermost city , this name too have been found rooted in Greek ankura/anchora(meaning

anchor).[Porter ,et al, 2008;Room ,1997; Slobin , et al ,1986; Spitzer , et al, 2011; Susan-Saraeva,2015;Woods, 1906]

Greek language after Persian again a member of the Indo-Iranian Group belonging to the Proto-Indo-European Super Group has functioned as a juggernaut to which Turkish has been found to expose itself. The Turks originally from Western Part of Mongolia, having been splintered into tiny batches due to the internal strife for survival among their group in Inner and Western Mongolia migrating by 2000BC as per historiographic records and then having emigrated westwards and northwards settling in the Ural-Altai mountains and South Western Russia (where in provinces such as Buratiya, Ingushetiya, Chechniya, Magadan, Altai , Tuva, and Sakha the people speak Turkish-Tungushic language) emboldened themselves in search of new territory and arrived at the Western part of Anatolia and tried to exert their warlike overlordship over the native roman Christian residents in around 6th century with the foundation of Seljuk Dynasty , ultimately routing the people, destroying their civilization since then have embarked upon the mission of turkifying entire Asia Minor. By the time the Ottoman empire came to the fore, extreme dehellanization or debyzantianization set itself unleashing at a volcanic celerity the mission to expurgate the least bit of Hellenic insignia . As the very part of which indispensably already named Greek and Roman Settlements have been renamed though the renaming process of Greek ruins in Turkey actually started in the time of Seljuk Turks by way of negating the contribution of Greek Culture started by mythological Lydian King Croesus who once colonized the entire Turkish territory, lasting up to more or less to the end of 1st century BC.[Amelina,2012;Thomasson,2001; Toynbee, 1922; Woods,1906]

Takeaways:

No doubt the once blossoming with Greek Culture, cities have undergone orchestrated dilapidation and extinction besides revisioning of their toponyms. But the Greek aroma is still found to be effervescent in certain placenames such as didyma, nemrut, ephesus, aphrodisias and hallicarnassus to name a few. Frankly speaking from the linguistic point of view, when a word is coined, the sonority or sweet-sounding aspect of the particular word is always taken into account. Whereas German is a masculine language, Greek is feminine in the sense that most of the words contain minimum three vocoids such as a, o,u and at maximum all the five with i, e joining the list. That is why probably most of the phobias in English are Greek-derived. To speak the harsh truth, it may so happen that in the times to come Turkish will be acclimatizing Greek words directly, or through loan translation as part of embarking a mission of cosmopolitanizing itself as has been done by many other languages taking the leaf from the

book of English Language, likely to be serving a total contrariety to the fact that majority of the placenames turkified today once were totally Greco-Roman in phonotactic aspect.[Matras,2009;Matthews,2014;Room, 1997]

The phonotactic aspect of the original Greek Place names and the derivative Turkish placenames are very much sensed to be unique. Where as in Greek the vowels are often found to cosy up to each other , that coziness is not to be found in the derived Turkish toponyms. For instance Greek Heracleios has become reduced to Ergil in Turkish. Here apparently in the original Greek vowels do occur in a word at regular intervals as per law of phonotactics in Greek. Whereas Turkish as a language shows vowel clustering constraint in stark opposition to Government and Binding Theory applicable to vowel and consonant clustering in Greek.[Scholes,2016]

Conclusion

As has been reiterated that language is evolutionary by nature, in that consideration, one is judgmental enough to accept the viewpoint that as very part of evolutionary restructuring linguistic items such as hydronyms, oronyms, toponyms must go through modification. That is what has befallen the toponyms of Greek origin as far as Turkey is concerned. One important observation deserving consideration is that the Greek Toponymic words considered in the list are the ones that since time immemorial have been known for their academic significance. Mention-worthy is the fact that the list contains Greek heroic figures such as heracles, dracos and Alexandros on the one hand and on the other hand it also contains words from material attributes such as melitos and natural phenomena such as meandros. Consequently in Turkish, they do not undergo radical modifications not because it was not essayed but because there was left no option A concrete study of all the major placenames of Turkey will however reveal the fact that maximum influence upon the appellation of those placenames is exercised by Greek, followed by Persian with Georgian and Armenian too showing signs of influence. However placenames of Persian origin followed by those of Georgian and Armenian too have undergone turkification in Turkey However that introspection is out of question as the scope of this paper is restricted to the exploration only of the influence of Greek on the select major cities of Turkey. [f

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