THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE STUDY OF TURKISH LINGUISTICS AND LITERATURE IN JAPAN
— Concentrating on Turkologists since 1970 —

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Introduction

The development of the study of Turkish linguistics and Turkish literature dealt with in this article basically targets the era of the Republic of Turkey (1923-Present). Furthermore, the term “Turkish linguistics” also includes the aspects of Turkish language studies in which language education is implemented. This is to recognize that Turkish language education plays an important role in supporting the core issues of the study of Turkey in general.

It is said that the first access to the (Ottoman) Turkish language in Japan was in the beginning of the 20th century when K. Shiratori (Tokyo University), T. Haneda (Kyoto University) and others used Turkish references in the field of Oriental History(1). In the field of linguistics, K. Fujioka of Tokyo University gave lectures using Németh’s Türkische Gramatik as an essential part of his course on Altaic Linguistics in 1930(2). The linguist S. Hattori was one of his pupils.

As for non-governmental organizations, the Japan-Turkey Society was established in Tokyo in 1926. Through this society, C. Naito, an interpreter working for the Japanese Embassy in Istanbul at that time, successively published A Turkish Manual (1934) and Japanese-Turkish, Turkish-Japanese Comprehensive Dictionary (1936). The fact that this dictionary prints the Japanese-Turkish section before the Turkish-Japanese section suggests that editors paid more attention to sending rather than receiving messages in Turkish. In 1936, K. Okubo (Komazawa University) was dispatched from the Society and made a lofty speech in Turkish as a guest speaker at the Third Turkish Language Conference held at Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul. Kemal Atatürk was one of those in attendance(3).

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After World War II, a lecture on Ottoman Turkish was given by the historian A. Haneda at Kyoto University, and this knowledge was passed on to historians like J. Oda and M. Hamada. In addition, the Turkish language was also taught by the historian M. Mori at Tokyo University after 1961. His teaching was merged with the instruction in linguistics by the linguist T. Shibata around 1970. During this period, K. Takeuchi, who was later to compile a full-scale Turkish-Japanese dictionary, was teaching the Turkish language at the National Diet Library and Tokyo University of Foreign Studies.

Since the 1970's, other universities and institutions also have begun to give lectures on the Turkish language. This resulted from the Turkish Government Academic Sponsorship Organization, which started in 1965. Furthermore, several years later, the Japanese Study Abroad Program established by the Japanese Ministry of Education allowed some Japanese students to study in Turkey. These two initiatives promoted an elite group who were capable of teaching Turkish in Japan. Among them were J. Oda, K. Koyama, Y. Nagata, M.M. Yamanlar, S. Katsuda, T. Hayashi, M. Arai and others. In addition to the scholars of Turkish studies in this generation, academics of a new generation in the field evolved from the students who attended the intensive Turkish summer program taught under the auspices of Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asian and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. This course commenced in 1978 and was held for four times in a cycle of every four to six years. Moreover, programs with a concentration in Turkish studies that were set up at both Tokyo University of Foreign Studies and Osaka University of Foreign Studies in 1992 provided many more opportunities for understanding Turkey from a broad range of perspectives, as well as contributing to the study of the Turkish language.

**Language Education and Linguistics**

The development of Turkish language education was mentioned in the previous section. As for the studies on Turkic languages during the period of 1945-1974, I have no need to describe it in this section, since S. Hattori (1974) already concisely discussed it in his research. It is worth mentioning, however, that Turkic linguistic studies in this period focused on the comparative study of Turkish and Turkic languages with Altaic languages, Japanese and Korean, rather than on the study of Turkic languages per se. S. Hattori, S. Murayama, T. Shibata and K. Takeuchi contributed to the field as the first generation, and some
of them are still actively pursuing their intellectual inquiries. Therefore, in this section, I will discuss only Turkish language education and Turkish linguistic studies in Japan since 1970 which are based on the Turkish used in the Republic of Turkey.


In the field of Turkish linguistics targeting the Turkish language used in the Republic of Turkey, T. Hayashi (1984, 1991) presented impressive studies in Turkish dialectic research. He also presented a valuable linguistic discussion on the Turkish language (1988-89, 1989). On the other hand, Y. Kuribayashi (1989, 1990) made a significant analysis of the usage of the accusative, involving syntactic as well as semantic conditions. Furthermore, Y. Kuribayashi (1994, 1996, 1997) carried out a series of grammatical research projects, which were highly evaluated internationally. Finally, the novice T. Fukumori (2000, 2001) has produced unique research in the field of empirical phonetics.

**Turkish Literature**

It is fair to say that the history of the study of Turkish literature and the translation of Turkish literary works is extremely short. The pioneer in the field was M. Mori (1965), who translated the representative work of Turkish folk literature, *Nasreddin Hoca’s Stories*. This book was edited and translated from the Turkish original and became a valuable source for understanding the life
styles and values of the Turkish people. Unfortunately, it was not until fifteen years later, at the end of the 1970's and the beginning of the 1980's, that work translated directly from the Turkish language appeared again. During this era, the poet N. Nakamoto and his friend S. Hattori published *The Poetic Works of Nazım Hikmet* (1969), which was translated into Japanese by way of a Russian version. Hikmet, who had sought refuge in the Soviet Union, wrote powerful messages on themes such as human love and world peace from the position of people who were suppressed. From the 1970’s to the 1980’s, K. Koyama (1972, 1977, 1983), T. Suzuki (1978) and S. Katsuda (1981) presented significant research on the general outline of the stream of modern Turkish literature, which established the infrastructure for the study of the history of that literature.

As for other books on individual writers and writings, they are basically limited to the following 10 pieces. H. Odaka and S. Katsuda (1981) translated *From a Turkish Village* (original title: *Bizim Köy*), the representative work of M. Makal, a young teacher who revealed the reality of Turkish agrarian society. K. Koyama (1977, 1983) introduced and analyzed Yaşar Kemal’s *Ince Memed*, the masterpiece of the contemporary Turkish novel. K. Koyama (1994, 1997) also examined and explored Istanbul, a city with an honorable history in the world, through the filter of literary works. S. Katsuda (1999, 2001) showed how Anatolia and the Turkish identity were dealt with in literary works in the new Republic of Turkey. By translating original works written in Turkish, K. Kihara (1995) uncovered the harsh reality of a humble village in Hakkari, which is located in a moutainous region in southeast Anatolia. K. Hayashi gave students majoring in Turkish the challenge of translating Turkish literature for academic purposes and published some of the results (1996). It is expected that some of these inspired students will ultimately become successful translators of Turkish Literature. Since 1970, female Turkish writers such as Füruzan and Ağaöglü have received attention for inquiring about the themes of family and society from the position of women. One of them, Füruzan, was introduced by K. Yamanaka (2000). Finally, with the completion of the section on Writers and Writings of Turkish Literature in *The Shueisha Dictionary of World Literature*, whose Turkish part was edited by K. Koyama (1996-98), Turkish Literature was recognized as an essential component of the realm of World Literature in Japan. As one of those who are engaged in the field of Turkish Literature, I am deeply impressed by this current trend.
Notes


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