

Comparative Constructions in Turkish and Uzbek: History of the Suffix *-roq*

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1. Introduction

Comparative constructions that express similarities or differences between two or more objects / things have not been sufficiently studied in Turkic diachronically and synchronically. In this study, the comparative constructions in Modern Turkish and Uzbek will be analyzed based on both historical and contemporary data. The most striking feature of comparison constructions in Modern Turkish is that the standard of comparison is marked with the ablative suffix. In Modern Turkish constructions, there is no marker on comparee and predicate. But Uzbek differs partially from Turkish comparison structures having a comparative suffix on the predicate. In this study, especially these differences will be focused on in Modern Turkish and Uzbek and some issues such as how productive the comparative suffix is, in which situations and what kind of word classes the comparative suffix is, will be investigated. Moreover, the inflectional and derivational features of comparative constructions (the comparison of inequality) in Uzbek will be discussed.

This study will first start with the typological features of comparative constructions, then briefly continue with the development of comparative structures in Turkish. After this section, the similarities and differences of comparison constructions in Modern Turkish and Uzbek will be scrutinized with examples.

2. General Properties of Comparative Constructions

Much work has been done on comparative structures in linguistics. In semantic terms, comparison is complex phenomenon and defined as a mental act by which two objects are assigned a position on a predicative scale (Stassen 2001: 993). As seen in the definition there are three basic notions in comparative construction. These are a predicative scale which is encoded as a gradable predicate, and two objects. One of the objects is called 'comparee' which is the NP about which a comparative construction is being predicated. The other object is termed 'standard of comparison' or 'standard' which is the unit to which the comparee is compared (Crookston 1999:

78). In linguistic literature, the above terms are named differently (Treis (2018: ii). Dixon (2012: 344) adds the fourth component, index of comparison. The suffix *-er* is an index of comparison. In the following English example (comparison of inequality), *John* is comparee; *George* is standard/standard of comparison and the predicative adjective is marked with the *-er* suffix.

1.	John	is	tall-er
	COMPAREE		PREDICATIVE ADJECTIVE-INDEX
	than	George.	
	MARK	STANDARD OF COMPARISON	

The comparative constructions can be evaluated with two parameters. The first parameter is the case assignment of the standard NP, the second one is whether the predicate is marked or not.

Encoding of the standard NP can be done in two ways: a) In fixed-case comparatives, the standard of NP is always in the same case, there is no effect of comparee NP on the standard NP. Comparatives in this group can be subcategorized further as exceed comparatives and locational comparatives (from-comparatives, to-comparatives, at-comparatives). Comparative structures (the comparisons of inequality) in Modern Turkish are placed in a fixed-case comparatives and the standard NP is marked in an ablative case with adverbial function.

b) In the second case called ‘derived-case comparatives’, the standard NP derives its case assignment from the case of the comparee NP (Stassen 1985: 28; Stassen 2013).

The other parameter about the comparative structures is to be presence or absence of comparative marking on the predicate. In many languages, there is no overt marking and predicative adjectives in comparatives are unmarked/positive form as in Modern Turkish. On the other hand, some languages mark a predicative adjective in a comparative construction by means of a special affix (e.g., *-er* in English) (Stassen 2013).

3. Historical background

In Orkhon Turkic, the *-rAk* suffix is not seen on the predicate in comparison structures, and the standard of comparison is made with the locative-ablative (*-DA*) suffix. The following example is a comparative construction seen in Orkhon Turkish:

2.	<i>Ötükän yıřda</i>	<i>yig</i>	<i>idi</i>	<i>yok</i>	<i>ärmiř.</i>
	Ötükän mountain:LOC.ABL	better	never	not exist	be:R.PAST
	‘A land better than the Ötügen Mountains does not exist at all.’ (Tekin 1968: 134)				

We find similar structures in Karakhanid Turkic in Mahmūd al-Kaṣyārī's *Diwān luyati't-Turk* (Compendium of the Turkic Dialects).

3. *Bu at anda yeg.*
 this horse that:LOC.ABL better
 'This horse is better than that' (Dankoff 1986: 324)

However, although it is not seen in Orkhon Turkic, the suffix *-rAk* forms elatives and comparatives in Old Turkic. Erdal (2004: 150) says that this suffix is not a formative suffix but a particle. There are good evidences behind Erdal's claim. One of these reasons is that the relevant particle cannot create new lexical content. In Old Turkic, while the suffix *-rAk* can be added to adjectives and adverbs it is not added to color terms, *-rAk* forms govern the case form in *-dA* (Erdal 2004: 150).

In the early works emerging in Anatolia, which are called 'Mixed Language Works', the suffix *-rAk* is frequently encountered. *Savugırak* 'colder', *yegrek* 'preferable', *yumşagırak* 'softer', *tatlurak* 'sweeter' (Erdem 1992: 78), *azrak* 'less', *yaşlurak* 'older' (Mansuroğlu 1960), *agrak* 'whiter', *dathurak* 'sweeter', *sovugırak* 'colder', *acabrak* 'more weird', *hoşrak* 'more pleasant', *sevgülürek* 'dearer' (Buluç 2007) etc. forms were seen in this period.

In Old Anatolian Turkish, which is the ancestor of Modern Turkish, the comparative (sometimes meaning superlative degree) suffix *-rAk* (*-IrAk*) is still used extensively by adding to adjectives and adverbs: *şakkardan tatlurak* 'sweeter than sugar', *sevdiüm yahşırak* 'I loved (it/him/her) very much' (Mansuroğlu 1998: 257). The most important question to be answered here is whether or not the *-rak* particle was widely used in this period. Many adjectives and adverbs made with *-rAk* (*alçağrak* 'low, lower', *añarurak* 'further', *añlarurak* 'more understanding', *artugırak* 'more', *aşağarak* 'lower', *azırak / azrak* 'less', *hoşırak* 'better', *koyurak* 'darkish', *ortarak* 'more middle', *soñrarak* 'later', *sovugırak* 'coldly', *uvakrak/uvagırak* 'smaller', *yukarurak* 'higher', *yumşagırak* 'softer', *eyürek* 'better', *gejezrek* 'easier', *gögrek* 'bluish', *göklürek* 'more beautiful', *kiçirek* 'smaller', *yeynirek* 'lighter') were taken into *Yeni Tarama Sözlüğü* (*New Dictionary of Surveying Turkish Texts*), considering that they have become lexical item.

In Ottoman Turkish, examples made with the suffix *-rAk* in previous period somehow disappeared and very few lexicalized words with this suffix appeared in texts (dictionaries) of Ottoman Turkish. A few words that are mentioned in the works are as follows: *ulurak* 'greater', *yegrek* 'preferable', *yahşırak* 'more beautiful, better'. It should be noted that the frequency of these words is also very low. The information that the suffix *-rAk* is archaic is mentioned in *Kamus-ı Türki* written by lexicographer Şemseddin Sami. Şemseddin Sami gave this information in his dictionary (entry on *en*) that the use of *-rAk* suffix belongs to an old dialect while explaining the comparative structure (Şemseddin Sami 2010: 303).

Let us turn to Chagatay Turkic (15th century to 19th century) to follow Uzbek comparative structures. In Chagatay period the standard of comparison is marked in ablative case and the predicate is marked in comparative suffix *-rAq*. Sometimes the comparative suffix may be omitted. Both examples with and without *-rAq* are:

4. *Süçügräkdur sözüñ şahd u şäkärdin.*
Sweet:COMP-COP word:2POSS honey and sugar:ABL
Your words are sweeter than honey and sugar.
5. *hamrdin yaḡşi yoq cahānda na'im*
Wine:ABL good non-existent world:LOG delight
There is no greater delight in the world than wine. (Eckmann 1966: 98)

In this period, the comparative suffix is added to both adjectives and adverbs to change (increase or decrease) a little the quality it indicates. The examples are: *asaḡhraq* 'the most correct', *aşaḡraq* 'a little below', *azraq* 'a little', *azīrāk* 'more precious', *ādīzrāk* 'higher', *başqaraq* 'aside, apart', *qavīraq* 'more important', *qisqaraq* 'a short summary', *yaḡşīraq* 'better', *yägrāk* 'best' (Bodrogligeti 2001: 66)

4. Comparative Constructions in Turkish and Uzbek

4.1 Turkic Languages

When the comparison structures in Turkic languages are examined by considering the terms given above, it is seen that many Turkic languages resemble one another. That is, the standard of comparison is marked with the ablative suffix, the predicate is usually marked with the comparative suffix *-rAk* (Uzbek *-roq*, Chuvash *-raχ* (*-tArAχ*), *-(I)raK*, Gagauz *-(a)rAk*). Some Turkic languages such as Karaim show great variation in comparative constructions and although it has preserved Turkic type of comparison it partly introduced new types as a result of contact with non-Turkic languages (Csató & Abish 2015).

4.2 Modern Turkish

Comparative constructions in Modern Turkish are structured by adding the ablative suffix to the standard of comparison as in the following example:

6. *Ali Veli'den (daha) akıllıdır.*
Ali Veli:ABL more smart:COP.3
Ali is smarter than Veli.

As seen from the example above, there is no comparative suffix on the predicate.

In some cases, for emphasis the word *daha* 'more' is inserted. This insertion is not essential except in the absence of a second member (Lewis 2000). The well-known fact about the comparatives is that *daha* can be modified by the degree adverbs like *çok* 'much', *biraz* 'a little' (for examples and details Göksel & Kerslake 2005).

4.3 Uzbek

Although comparative structures in Uzbek resemble Modern Turkish comparatives, there are some significant differences between these two Turkic languages. As in Modern Turkish, in comparative constructions in Uzbek, the standard of comparison is generally marked with the ablative case (*-dan*) and the predicate is coded with/without the comparative suffix *-roq*. According to Bodrogligeti (2002: 181) if the difference between the qualities of the two objects compared is not significant, the adjective can be in the comparative suffix. The following example is like Modern Turkish comparative constructions, the predicate does not take a comparative suffix *-roq*.

7. *Atirguldan lola yaxshi.*
 Rose:ABL tulip better
 ‘A tulip is better than a rose.’ (Bodrogligeti 2002: 181)

However, in the following constructions the adjective predicate is bearing the comparative suffix.

8. a) *Rayhon Ziyodadan balandroq.*
 Rayhon Ziyada:ABL tall:COMP
 ‘Rayhon is taller than Ziyoda.’
 b) *Rayhon Ziyodadan yashroq.*
 Rayhon Ziyoda:ABL young:COMP
 ‘Rayhon is younger than Ziyoda.’

The word *qaraganda* can be used when comparing things.

9. *Nodirga qaraganda Azim yoshroq.*
 Nadir:DAT compared to Azim young:COMP
 ‘Compared to Nodir, Azim is younger.’ (Azimova 2010: 158)

However, in some cases the suffix *-roq* is not used: *Boldan şirin* ‘sweeter than honey’ (Boeschoten 1998: 361).

Sometimes in utterances lacking two nouns or pronouns that might be compared, an adjective with final */-roq ~ -rox/* indicates ‘rather’: *u ton kattaroq* ‘this (Uzbek) coat is rather large’ (Sjoberg 1963: 72).

Apart from adding the *-roq* suffix to adjectives and adverbs, the comparative suffix is also added to converbs and affects the meaning of the converbs as in the following examples:

10. *Külibroq gäpirdi.*
 laugh:CONV-COMP speak:PAST.3SG
 ‘S/he spoke, laughing a little’ (Wurm 1959: 512)

This function expands to the structures of the negation of *-(i)p*, namely *-mäs-tän* and *-mäy* forms as in *tüşün-mäs-tän-roq* ‘not entirely understanding’ (Wurm 1959: 512). However, such gerundive structures are rarely used in today’s Uzbek.

It must be noted that in Uzbek dialect of Qizil Qujaş, the comparative constructions are formed like Modern Turkish. That is, the ablative suffix is added to the standard of comparison, e.g. *âtem bu âdemden jaxşı* 'my father is better than this man'. Very seldom *-rek* (*-râq*) is added to the adjective to indicate the comparative (Wurm 1947: 93).

In Uzbek, the suffix *-roq* can combine with different lexical classes and this property shows that this suffix is very productive process in Uzbek morphology unlike Modern Turkish. Let's first look at what words the suffix can come to, then emphasize why it can come to so many different words.

The similarity of adjectives and adverbs results in the use of many words as both adjectives and adverbs, sometimes without taking any suffixes. In some cases, different derivational suffixes are used for adjectives and adverbs. However, the *-roq* suffix, which is used in Uzbek comparative structures, is also used for adverbs. It comes to almost all adverbial words, little affecting their meanings as in the following examples:

Directional adverbials: *yuqoriroq* 'higher', *ichkariroq* 'more inside, inner', *ilgariroq* 'further', etc.

Quantity or degree adverbials: *azroq* 'lesser', *kamroq* 'lesser', *tezroq* 'faster, quicker', *ko'proq* 'more, quite a lot', etc.

Time adverbials: *keyinroq* 'a little later, afterwards', *avvalroq* 'earlier', *beriroq* 'nearer', *ertaroq* 'earlier', etc.

The suffix *-roq* can be added to loanwords in Uzbek. Examples are: *foydaliroq* 'more useful', *muhimroq*, 'more important', *muloyimroq*, 'milder', *parishonroq* 'more miserable', *samimiyroq* 'more sincere', *baxtliroq* 'happier', etc.

The suffix in question sometimes comes to the derivational suffixes such as *azobliroq* 'more tormented', *kuchliroq* 'stronger', *qiziqarliroq* 'more interesting', *chiroyliroq* 'more beautiful', *muvaqqiyatliroq* 'more successful', etc.

Now we can look at what kind of adjectives the *-roq* suffix is attached to. As it is known, adjectives are divided into several groups according to their semantic types: 1. Dimension ('big', 'small', etc.), 2. Age ('new', 'young', 'old', etc.), 3. Value ('good', 'bad', etc.), 4. Colour ('black', 'white', etc.), 5. Physical property ('hard', 'soft', 'heavy', etc.), 6. Human propensity ('happy', 'clever', 'jealous', etc.), 7. Speed ('fast', 'slow', etc.) (Dixon 2004: 4).

It is quite easy to find comparative examples of the semantic classification of adjectives mentioned above with *-roq* in Uzbek. It should be noted here that many of the examples given below are used as adverbs. Moreover, it should be kept in mind that there are dozens of words derived with the suffix *-roq* that can be added to the list below. Some examples are:

1. Dimension: *kattaroq* 'bigger' (*katta* 'big'), *kichikroq* 'less' (*kichik* 'small, little'), *balandroq* 'taller' (*baland* 'tall, high'), *pastroq* 'shorter' (*past* 'short'), *kengroq* 'wider' (*keng* 'wide, widely').

2. Age: *yoshroq* 'younger' (*yosh* 'young'), *yangiroq* 'newer' (*yangi* 'new'), *keksaroq* 'older' (*keksa* 'old').

3. Value: *yaxshiroq* ‘better’ (*yaxshi* ‘good’), *yomonroq* ‘worse’ (*yomon* ‘bad’), *mukammalroq* ‘more perfect’ (*mukammal* ‘perfect, complete’), *g’alatiroq* ‘stranger’ (*g’alati* ‘strange’), *muhimroq* ‘more important’ (*muhim* ‘important’).

4. Colour: *qoraroq* ‘darker’ (*qora* ‘black’), *oqroq* ‘whiter’ (*oq* ‘white’).

5. Physical property: *qiyinroq* ‘more difficult, harder’ (*qiyin* ‘hard, difficult’), *yaxshiroq* ‘better’ (*yaxshi* ‘well’), *tozaroq* ‘cleaner’ (*toza* ‘clean’), *issiqroq* ‘warmer, hotter’ (*issiq* ‘hot’), *nordonroq* ‘sourer’ (*nordon* ‘sour’), *charchaganroq* ‘more tired’ (*charchagan* ‘tired’), *baquvvatroq* ‘stronger’ (*baquvvat* ‘strong’).

6. Human propensity: *chiroyliroq* ‘more beautiful’ (*chiroyli* ‘beautiful, pretty’), *ahmoqroq* ‘more stupid’ (*ahmoq* ‘fool’), *go’zalroq* ‘more beautiful’ (*go’zal* ‘beautiful’), *baxtliroq* ‘happier’ (*baxtli* ‘happy’), *saxiyroq* ‘more generous’ (*saxiy* ‘generous’), *aqlliroq* ‘smarter’ (*aqlli* ‘smart’), *g’ururliroq* ‘more proud’ (*g’ururli* ‘proud’), *yumushoqroq* ‘softer’ (*yumushoq* ‘soft’).

7. Speed: *tezroq* ‘faster’ (*tez* ‘fast, quickly’), *sekinroq* ‘more slowly’ (*sekin* ‘slow’).

In some languages dual inflection of adjectives is characteristic not only German, but also of other Germanic languages (Scandinavian languages and Dutch) (Sahel 2009: 390). But the above examples raise the question of whether suffixes such as *-roq* should be considered within the inflectional morphology or within the derivational morphology. Traditional grammars written both synchronically and diachronically include the comparative suffix within the derivational morphology without giving any reasonable evidence. In reality, it is not easy task to include the above structures in one of the two groups.

As seen in many examples, morphological degree is morphologically regular and expressed by a specific suffix. Therefore, many lexicographers have not included *-roq* forms in their dictionaries. Because these forms are quite regular. It can expand to all the adjective class and many adverbs of the language. So, it can be easily predicted and produced in mental lexicon. In modern Turkish, there are some suffixes like *-roq* (for details see Erdem 2011).

In perspective of inflectional processes, the grammatical category of the word does not change, and semantic contribution tends to be compositional. It is obvious that an adjective in the comparative or superlative form still has the features of an adjective in its syntax and semantics. For example, the adjective *yoshroq* ‘younger’ can arise in the same phrase as *yosh* ‘young’ and indicates the same set of properties as *yosh*, only that in comparison with other entities (Fábregas 2014: 287). That is, the comparison suffix does not make a new meaningful word, it only slightly affects the meaning of the word to which it is added. However, derivational suffixes add completely new meanings to the lexicon.

Moreover, morphological degree might seem to alter the items/arguments with which the base combines. Comparative predicate like *yoshroq* chooses a standard of comparison in ablative case. Thus, comparative suffix has a syntactic effect requiring a noun phrase with ablative case.

5. Conclusion

Comparative constructions that have semantic, syntactic and morphological features express similarities or differences between two or more objects/things. There are three important concepts in these constructions: comparee, gradable predicate and standard of comparison. Typologically, the marking of these concepts/terms differs in world languages. In Turkic languages, comparee is not marked with any suffix, standard of comparison is marked with an ablative case. However, there are basic differences among Turkic languages whether the predicate is marked or not. This study focused on especially predicate marking in comparative constructions (especially the comparison of inequality constructions) in Modern Turkish and Uzbek.

Marking the predicate in comparative constructions differs in Turkic languages. Although the standard of comparison and comparee NP marking between the two Turkic languages do not differ, the marking of the predicate in both Turkic is different. In Modern Turkish the predicate is not coded with any comparative suffix, whereas in Uzbek the predicate is usually marked with the comparative suffix *-roq*. The basis of this difference between the two Turkic languages is related to their historical background.

In the historical periods of Turkic (Old Turkic, Old Anatolian Turkish, Chagatay Turkic) the predicate is usually marked with comparative suffix, just like in Uzbek. However, in the transition period from Old Anatolian Turkish to Ottoman Turkish, the suffix *-rAk* is somehow disappeared. It is found in a few lexicalized words in Modern Turkish. On the other hand, comparative structures with *-roq* in Chagatay Turkic increased and continued constantly in Uzbek (as in some other Turkic languages). In Uzbek, the comparative suffix can attach to all adjective and many adverbial classes. Moreover, this suffix can even be added to copied words, some derivational suffixes, and some converbs. Using this suffix regularly with such a large group of words, not changing the meaning of the words, and requiring an argument with an ablative case syntactically makes the comparison suffix closer to inflectional category. The use of this suffix in other Turkic languages will further clarify its place in the Turkic morphology.

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