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BASIC COGNITIVE FEATURES OF THE CONCEPT OF LIFE IN THE TURKISH LINGUISTIC PICTURE OF THE WORLD

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БАЗОВЫЕ КОГНИТИВНЫЕ ПРИЗНАКИ КОНЦЕПТА «ЖИЗНЬ» В ТУРЕЦКОЙ ЯЗЫКОВОЙ КАРТИНЕ МИРА

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Abstract. The study examines basic cognitive features represented in motivational structures and explores the conceptualization of 'life' within the Turkish linguistic world picture. Drawing on cognitive linguistics and dictionaries from various periods, it investigates how the origins—from the perspectives of different scholars—shape the semantic field of 'life' in the Turkish language. The research highlights the essential role this concept plays in shaping the perception of life within Turkish society, tracing its evolving meaning and importance from the past to the present. By analyzing dictionaries, the study examines how the concept maintained its core meaning while acquiring additional connotations over time. Through this analysis, the authors seek to clarify how the concept of 'life' was formed, represented, and interpreted throughout the history of the Turkish linguistic world view.

Аннотация. Рассматриваются базовые когнитивные признаки, которые выявляются в мотивирующих особенностях, подчеркивающих концептуализацию идеи жизни в турецкой языковой картине мира. Изучая когнитивную лингвистику и словари разных периодов, авторы исследовали, как истоки, с точки зрения разных ученых, формируют семантическое поле концепта «жизнь» в турецком языке. Основной целью этого исследования является выявление роли, которую концепт играет в формировании понимания концепции жизни в турецком обществе, передавая на протяжении времени — от прошлого к настоящему — его смысл и важность. Изучая словари, авторы выявили, как понятие «жизнь» сохраняло свое первоначальное значение и приобретало новые значения с течением времени. Посредством этого исследования авторы стремятся прояснить, как формировалась, репрезентировалась и оценивалась концепция «жизнь» на протяжении всей истории турецкого языкового мировоззрения.

Keywords: concept; the Turkish linguistic picture of the world; life; basic cognitive features; correction.

Ключевые слова: концепт; турецкая языковая картина мира; жизнь; базовые когнитивные признаки; исправление.

The present paper explores the basic cognitive features that shape the concept of life in the Turkish linguistic picture of the world, examining how language reflects values, beliefs, and experiences shared within one nation and related to human existence. The aim of this paper is to make necessary corrections and present more verified results based on a previous study. The concept of life holds a unique and multifaceted place in culture, shaping the worldview and the way individuals perceive their existence, purpose, and interactions. Within the framework of language, this concept reflects not only a collectivistic understanding of life but also affects how Turkish people navigate the world around them. In Turkish, a language deeply intertwined with history, traditions, and philosophy, the concept of hayat (life) encapsulates a rich array of meanings. This current study revisits and rectifies the analysis presented in the article titled “Motivating Features of the Concept of Life in the Turkish Linguistic Picture of the World” [9].

According to V. I. Karasik, “there are unique research methods for deciphering the meaning of the concept and nearby designations, which are focused on the linguocultures, people, and society” [1].

As noted by Y. S. Stepanov, “the complex structure of the concept includes every aspect of it, including its cultural component, original form, etymology, important historical aspects, associations, evaluations, and other elements.” These are isothemes [2].

Based on the conceptual methodology evolved by the Saint Petersburg and Kemerovo School of Conceptual Studies, initiated by Professor M. V. Pimenova, a strategy was used to approach the study of the concept of “life” from the angle of its origins. This permitted the determination of one of the most important key points of the concept: the structure and genesis of meaning. Important etymological and historical dictionaries of the Turkish language and works of Turkish literature form the foundation of this current study. The etymological dictionaries are the main source for studying and revealing the semantic evolution of meaning over time [4].

Additionally, literary works from various genres and historical eras of Turkish literature were analyzed and used as a secondary tool to reflect the setting of life in the language. The word “hayat” (life) was adopted into the Turkish language from Arabic, where it has retained its original meanings. It refers to life, existence, and energy. Over time, while the core meaning of the word in Turkish still indicates biological life, its significance has also expanded to encompass wider, more philosophical ideas, such as the nature of being or the experience of living. The study identified important features of the concept of life (hayat) using information from etymological definitions in the Turkish language. The first and most common feature provided in most resources is “yaşam”, meaning “living”. For Turkish people, life is equivalent to living, which is not just having life but feeling alive. The next feature is “varoluş”, which means “existence”. “Hayat” is its vital, conscious form, and it is the ontological basis. All organisms “exist” in the world [4-8].

The feature “vitality or being alive” is objectified by the word “canlılık.” It is among the most fundamental and essential aspects of life. Without vitality, life would become meaningless and passive. Vitality is the source of life's energy and movement; it symbolizes the dynamism and activity that all living things exhibit [8].

The next feature is “sürekli bir yaşam biçimi,” which means “continuous way of living.” It highlights that life is a continuous, fluid process that develops over time, rather than a permanent or unchanging object. Understanding the essence of time itself, as well as the ideas of growth, aging, and change, depends on this continuous movement [6].

The feature “change” is actualized by the word “değişim.” Life is dynamic, ever-changing, and ever-evolving. It is this continuous movement that brings about change and fresh experiences in our lives. Life would lose its vitality and dynamism in the absence of change, resulting in a condition of

stasis where development and advancement are impossible. Essentially, life's constant motion is what keeps our path engaging, significant, and full of growth opportunities [7, 8].

The next feature is “yolculuk,” meaning “journey.” For Turkish society, life has always been considered a journey full of ups and downs [8].

The feature “yaşam anlamı,” which means “morality or meaning of life,” is the next feature. For Turkish people, hayat (life) is about more than just being alive; it also has a specific meaning or purpose. For them, life is related to the things that matter, what people believe in, and their emotions about the world. Life might seem empty or perplexing if it lacks meaning. The next important feature of the concept is “değer,” meaning “value.” Within the Turkish linguistic world, life (hayat) carries both intrinsic meaning and importance that is assigned from the outside. The perception and understanding of its value differ significantly among various cultures, communities, and personal viewpoints, with each one interpreting and assigning value in its own distinct manner.

The feature “liveliness” is objectified by the word “dirilik.” Since a significant portion of the Turkish population adheres to Islam, there is a strong relationship among the culture, religion, and concepts. Within Islamic teachings and Turkish customs, “hayat” reflects more than the passage of time or bodily functions. It represents something precious and vital, bestowed upon us as a treasure. Life becomes genuinely significant when we embrace “dirilik,” which represents a vibrant, dynamic sensation within us. Another feature, “the activity of life,” is verbalized by the words “yaşam hareketi.” The activity or energy maintains and gives life. It is seen as an unseen force that fuels joy, conflict, and creativity in living things. All the situations that people face and their behavior are connected to this activity, which means that life is always in progress. The feature “avlu” means “courtyard.” The word “hayat” evolved linguistically and culturally in Ottoman Turkish and other Anatolian languages, progressively taking on a meaning that went beyond merely expressing the idea of life or existence. It eventually came to refer to a specific architectural feature seen in traditional residential buildings. In particular, “hayat” started to refer to a semi-open space that was an essential component of the home's design. This area was frequently planned as a veranda, a front hall, or a courtyard-like addition that was only partially covered but still accessible from the outside. The next feature is “gündelik yaşam,” which means “daily life.” All these daily activities together form a complete group that represents life itself. Another feature, “yaşam süresi,” is objectified by the word “müddet,” which means “period of time.” The fact that it evolved over time from meaning physical freshness to referring to the temporal duration of life illustrates the intimate connection between human perceptions of time, aging, and the environment. This linguistic shift reflects a perspective on life that views its progression through the lens of natural cycles, highlighting the connection between vitality, aging, and the passage of time in the Turkish language and culture [6, 7].

The next feature is “ölüm ile yaşam arasındaki zaman,” which denotes the “time and lifespan between life and death.” These words, which reflect on human existence, fate, and the passage of time, are often used with deep philosophical and poetic significance in both Ottoman and contemporary Turkish literature. “Fakat bu ayrı meziyette, ayrı zihniyette insanlar bütün zaman ayrılıklarının üstünden hayatımda bir daha ayrılmamak şartıyla birleştiler.” The feature “social value” is verbalized by the words “toplumsal değer.” As a social value, life (hayat) places the greatest emphasis on the collective, common features of existence. Turkish literature and culture often depict life as being fundamentally connected to community, shared experiences, and traditions. In contrast to strictly individualistic notions, this perspective highlights the significance of social interactions, cooperation, and shared memory in shaping human existence.

The table shows 16 motivating features found through a deep analysis of etymological dictionaries. As proven by the findings, the concept of life (hayat) has a wider meaning than just “life” in the Turkish linguistic picture of the world. Through the stable information from these sources, the

basic cognitive features depicted on the left of the table were found. The resources show that some features of the concept, such as “life,” “living,” “vitality,” and “existence,” are found in all dictionaries, but some features, such as “continuous flow,” “development,” “change,” “journey,” “morality,” “courtyard,” “time,” “social value,” and others, are found in certain dictionaries as set out in the table.

Table

THE BASIC COGNITIVE FEATURES OF THE CONCEPT OF LIFE (HAYAT)
IN THE TURKISH LINGUISTIC PICTURE OF THE WORLD

<i>Basic cognitive features</i>	<i>Nişanyan, S. (2018). Sözlerin soygacı: Çağdaş Türkçenin etimolojik sözlüğü: İstanbul: Everest Yayınları</i>	<i>Eren, H. (1999). Türk dilinin etimolojik sözlüğü. Ankara: Türk Dil Kurumu Yayınları.</i>	<i>Çağbayır, Yaşar. (2017). Arap Asıllı Türk Alfabeyle Yazılmış Türkçenin Söz Varlığı: Ötiken Sözlük</i>	<i>Ayverdi, İlhan. (2011). Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük. İstanbul: Kubbealtı Neşriyat</i>	<i>Devellioglu, Ferit. (1982). Osmanlıca-Türkçe Ansiklopedik Lügat. Ankara: Aydın Kitabevi Yayınları,</i>
1. Hayat	+	+	+	+	+
2. Yaşam	+		+	+	
3. Canlılık	+		+	+	+
4. Varoluş			+		
5. Sürekli bir yaşam biçimi			+		
6. Değişim			+		
7. Yolculuk			+		
8. Değer			+		
9. Dirilik			+	+	+
10. Yaşam hareketi			+	+	
11. Yaşam anlamı			+		
12. Gündelik yaşam			+		
13. Evlerin ortak yaşam alanı/Avlu	+	+	+	+	+
14. Ölüm ile yaşam arasındaki süre			+	+	
15. Zaman			+	+	
16. Toplumsal değer			+	+	

The diagram illustrates the motivating features of the Turkish understanding of the word hayat (life) as reconstructed from etymological dictionaries of the Turkish language. At the top of the diagram, the source of the research—dictionaries of the Turkish language—is indicated, underlining that the meaning was derived from a deep analysis of historical, etymological, and important dictionaries. From this source, a directional arrow leads to the concept hayat (life), representing the flow from the data to the semantic field.

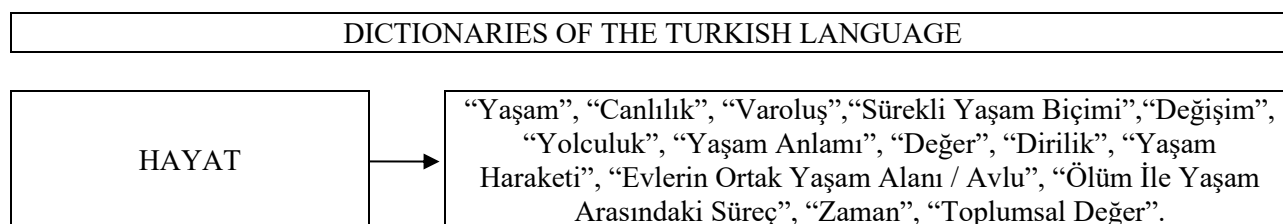


Figure. The concept of “Hayat” and its basic cognitive features were collected from the Turkish Dictionaries

Expanding values are indicated by the curved arrow. The highlighted area on the right lists the main semantic elements associated with “Hayat,” including “life,” “living,” “vitality,” “existence,” “continuous lifestyle,” “change,” “journey,” “meaning,” “value,” etc. Furthermore, social and cultural aspects are covered, such as “shared living space/courtyard,” “time,” and “social value,” etc. The color “orange” was chosen for the purpose of indicating the historical essence of the etymology.

The analysis of the concept hayat demonstrates that life in the Turkish linguistic picture of the world is understood not as a single fixed concept but as a complex of multidimensional phenomena shaped by the language. The data reveal that hayat extends beyond its biological aspect to encompass existence. The richness of its semantic structure reflects a worldview in which life is perceived as a continuous flow, a meaningful journey, and a dynamic process.

Additionally, the results indicate that the Turkish perspective on life is highly collectivistic and values-driven. Concepts such as anlam (meaning), değer (value), and toplumsal değer (social value) emphasize the strong relationship between individual existence and society, tradition, and shared moral values. At the same time, characteristics like dirilik (liveliness) and yaşam hareketi (life activity) highlight the spiritual and emotional aspects of life, demonstrating the impact of Islamic philosophy, mysticism, and folk culture.

Furthermore, the changing meaning of hayat, including its architectural interpretation as avlu and its links to time, age, and space, demonstrates how language reflects common experiences and collective memory within a culture. Therefore, the idea of life in Turkish acts as a linguistic representation of the country’s historical journey, philosophical perspective, and cultural principles. In summary, this research verifies that hayat holds a significant role in the Turkish linguistic perspective, serving as an essential cultural idea through which Turkish speakers understand existence, identity, and their position in the world.

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