

UNIFORMITY AND DIVERSITY IN TURKIC INCEPTIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

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Constructions encoding ‘to begin to’ display a great formal diversity in the Turkic languages. The differences concern both the auxiliary segment and the linking segment. This diversity is counterbalanced by certain features that are shared either by the majority of the Turkic language family or by only some of its members. The present study will investigate the main similarities and differences between inceptive constructions in Turkic both from a synchronic and a diachronic perspective. A special focus will be placed on combinations that involve the auxiliary *başla-*, an item that is particularly widespread. The main types of constructions attested with this auxiliary will be identified, and possible factors involved in the development of these types will be determined. The aim of this paper is to shed light on the typology and diachronic development of inceptive constructions in the Turkic languages and to draw attention to a topic that has yet to be investigated in detail from a comparative perspective.

Key words: Turkic languages, typology, complementation, auxiliary constructions, ‘*begin*’, variation

1. Introduction

The linguistic varieties of the Turkic language family naturally share many fundamental linguistic features, but they also differ greatly in detail. Similarities

and differences concern various linguistic domains, such as phonology, morphology, syntax, lexicon etc., but also different levels of language, such as the language family as a whole, individual languages or dialects, idiolects etc. Factors in the evolution of differences can be specific language-internal developments (phonetic change, analogy, semantic shift etc.), contact-induced change and universal tendencies. However, the same factors may also lead to uniformity, i.e. to the convergence of formerly relatively distinct varieties.

In the present study, the similarities and differences between inceptive constructions (IC), i.e. expressions that designate the beginning of an action, will be shown. As will be seen, inceptive constructions typify the polarity between uniformity and diversity quite well. The reason is that, on the one hand, the semantic frame poses certain natural restrictions on the possible set of formal expressions, a fact that results in certain affinities between the expressions, and, on the other hand, there is still a stock of morphological and lexical material available, which may be combined in various ways or change in the course of time, a fact that results in formal variation. Thus, Turkic inceptive constructions are similar in some respects and yet display a relatively rich diversity.

In the Turkic languages, inceptive constructions typically comprise an auxiliary segment and a linking segment (a “complementizer”, “junctor” or “subjunctor”, according to other terminologies) which serves to connect the auxiliary to the main verb. In such auxiliary constructions, both the linking segment and the auxiliary segment constitute potential slots in which variation can occur. As a result, a main focus of the present paper will be on morphology and lexicon. The paper aims to display the variation in Turkic ICs and identify the types of morphosyntactic constructions that are shared by individual Turkic linguistic varieties. Moreover, an attempt will be made to explain the differences, but also the similarities, from a diachronic perspective.

This study focuses on constructions with a verbal complement, i.e. structures that correspond to the English expression *to begin to X*. The semantic notion encoded by these structures will be conventionally represented by the tag BEGIN.¹ While inception can be expressed with nominal complements as well (as in the English example *to begin the lesson*), such expressions will only be addressed to identify the original complementation properties of the auxiliary segment. Given that a clause minimally consists of a predicate in the Turkic languages and given that a verb alone can constitute a predicate in Turkic, constructions with a verbal complement can be said to form a subclass of

¹ Lexicalized cases of inchoativity, which are sometimes labelled “inceptive aspect” or “inchoative aspect” (such as Russian *zapet* ‘to start to sing’) will not be dealt with in this paper.

clausal complementation. While clausal complementation cannot be dealt with comprehensively in the present study, the contextualization of ICs in clausal complementation will have to be addressed in the paper, as individual languages may develop specific strategies of clausal complementation to which ICs potentially adapt (paradigmaticization).

The paper is organized as follows. In Section 2, examples from various Turkic languages will be presented that give a rough impression of the diversity of inceptive expressions in this language family. The aim is not to display the full variation — a task that would require much more comprehensive research — but to provide an inventory of items which allows a preliminary assessment of common underlying structural types and might serve as a point of departure for a future, more comprehensive investigation into inceptive constructions in Turkic. The rest of the study will concentrate on constructions involving a particular auxiliary segment, namely the Turkic verb *başla-*. As a preliminary step, the semantic and syntactic properties of the full verb *başla-* will be outlined in Section 3. In Section 4, examples of ICs involving *başla-* from about 20 modern Turkic varieties will be provided and their structure discussed.² In this section, the focus will shift to the linking segment. The inventory of items will be classified, and the underlying structural types, their geographic distribution and their dissemination throughout the different branches of Turkic will be identified. The diachronic dimension will be considered in Section 5, where examples of constructions involving *başla-* from selected pre-modern Turkic varieties will be presented and classified. In Section 6, I will discuss possible reasons for the variation. Internal Turkic developments, language contact influence and universal tendencies will be taken into account as possible factors in the development of the situation. In this section, other types of clausal complementation will come into play as possible models for analogous formations. Section 6 also summarizes the main findings of the paper.

2. Inceptive Constructions: A Glimpse of the Variation

In the present section, we will look at examples of inceptive constructions in seven Turkic varieties that provide a first impression of the diversity of options available to express the beginning of an action. The examples have been

² Part of the data is taken from Bible translations into Turkic languages as that corpus provides easily accessible data for inceptive constructions. Needless to say, translation language — and particularly the language of Bible translations — is not free from problems (lexical and idiomatic problems, restricted morphological inventories, atypical frequency properties etc.), but for the purposes of this study, the data is useful and sufficiently reliable.

deliberately selected in order to show the possible differences rather than the similarities. Nevertheless, we will see that in terms of structure, the examples represent a rather restricted set of types. Let us first look at an example from Shor, a small language from the Northeastern (Siberian) branch of Turkic closely related to Khakas (from which examples will also be presented in the course of this paper):

Shor:

- (1) *Paya* *ayrŷ* *kŷi* *pol-ŷan*, *oloq* *čazil-par-tŷr*,
 just ill person be.come-ASP that.very recover-PVB-ASP
 töžeg-in *al-kelip*, *čör-e-ber-di*.
 bed-POSS.3.ACC take-PVB walk-CVB-give-ASP.3.sg
 ‘The same person that had been ill a moment ago recovered, took his bed
 and started to walk.’ (Jn 5, 9)

This example features the expression *čöre-berdi* ‘he started to walk’, where *čör-* ‘to walk’ (related to Old Turkic *yorŷ-*³) is the main verb and *ber-* is an auxiliary verb. The auxiliary developed from the Turkic verb *bēr-* ‘to give’,⁴ which surfaces as *per-* as a full verb in Shor.⁵ The main verb and auxiliary verb are linked by the converb *-A-*, which originates in the Old Turkic imperfective (intraterminal) converb *-(y)V* (with the variants *-A-*, *-I-*, *-U-* and *-yU*⁶).⁷ Thus, the complex item *-A-ber-* (written with a hyphen in Shor orthography) is the grammaticalized marker in Shor to indicate the beginning of an action. The same marker (just written separately in the standard orthography) is also found in Altay, another language in the Northeastern branch, where the parallel text features *baza berdi* ‘he started to walk’.

Khakas, another Northeastern Turkic language which together with Shor constitutes Yenisey Turkic, expresses BEGIN differently. Consider the following example:

³ Cf. CLAUSON, G. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, p. 957.

⁴ CLAUSON, G. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, p. 354.

⁵ *Tadar-Qazaq Söstiti* [Shor-Russian Dictionary], p. 181.

⁶ ERDAL, M. *A Grammar of Old Turkic*, p. 311.

⁷ This converb and its later successors will be conventionally represented by <A> throughout this paper.

Khakas:

- (2) *Ölig* *ool,* *tiril* *kil-ıp,* *odir-ibis-xan*
 dead young.man return.to.life-[CVB] PVB-CVB sit-PVB-ASP
paza *čooxta-n* *six-xan.*
 and say-REFL-[CVB] go.out-ASP
 ‘The dead man came to life again, sat up and began to speak.’
 (Lk 7, 15)⁸

In this sentence, the expression *čooxtan sixxan* means ‘he began to speak’. The auxiliary segment is *six-*, an element which means ‘to go out’ etc. in its full verb function⁹ (Old Turkic *čiq-*¹⁰). *Čooxtan-* is the reflexive and intransitive form of *čooxta-* ‘to speak’. What looks like a bare verb stem in the example is actually a reduced form of the converb in *-(I)p* (Old Turkic *-(X)p* and *-(X)pAn*¹¹),¹² which may surface in Khakas as zero after stems ending in consonants.¹³ Thus, the item that encodes BEGIN in the present example is **(I)p six-*. The notion BEGIN can also be expressed differently in Khakas (see below, ex. (25)).

Tuvan, a Sayan Turkic language (in the Northeastern branch of Turkic), employs a loanword to express inception:

Tuvan:

- (3) *Ölüg* *čit-qaš,* *diril-ip* *kel-gen* *kiži*
 dead lie-CVB return.to.life-CVB PVB-PTCP person
qovay-gaš, *čuyaalan-ıp* *egele-er-ge...*
 sit.up-CVB speak-CVB begin-VN-DAT

⁸ In the present study, Lk 7, 15 (English: “The dead man sat up and began to speak”; see NRSV) was taken as a source for the examples wherever the passage was available and contained the phenomenon that should be exemplified. Thus, examples to which the source is not specified are always taken from Lk 7, 15. For details, see the list of sources at the end of the paper.

⁹ BASKAKOV N. A., INKIŽEKOVA-GREKUL, A. I. *Xakassko-russkij slovar'* [Khakas-Russian Dictionary], p. 210.

¹⁰ CLAUSON, G. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, pp. 405–406.

¹¹ ERDAL, M. *A Grammar of Old Turkic*, p. 308.

¹² Symbolized by in this paper. The symbols <A> and are simplified archimorphemic representations with purely morphological relevance. This writing convention was introduced by JOHANSON, L. Mehrdeutigkeit in der türkischen Verbalkomposition. In: ERDAL, M., TEZCAN, S. (eds.). *Beläk bitig. Sprachstudien für Gerhard Doerfer zum 75. Geburtstag*, pp. 81–101.

¹³ BASKAKOV N. A., INKIŽEKOVA-GREKUL, A. I. *Xakassko-russkij slovar'* [Khakas-Russian Dictionary], p. 433.

‘The person that came to life again after he had lain dead, sat up and began to speak.’

The verb *egele-* ‘to begin’ has been borrowed from Mongolian *ekile-* ‘to begin’,¹⁴ itself a denominal verb from *eki(n)* ‘beginning’. The Mongolic variety from which Tuvan borrowed this lexeme obviously featured **ekele-*. (The /g/ in Tuvan results from an internal Tuvan sound law.) The linking segment between main verb and auxiliary is the converb .

Yakut, another Turkic language in the Northeastern branch, forms inceptive constructions with the verb *bar-*, which carries the meaning ‘to go’ as a full verb.

Yakut:

- (4) *Öl-büt* *kihi* *öndöy-ön* *olor-o* *tüs-püte*
 die-PTCP person rise-CVB sit-CVB PVB-ASP
 uonna *sañar-an* *bar-biä.*
 and speak-CVB go-ASP
 ‘The dead person sat up and began to speak.’

The linking segment is the converb *-An*, an item derived from Old Turkic *-(X)pan* and thus belonging to the archimorpheme . Yakut also has a full verb that means ‘to begin’, *sayalaa-*,¹⁵ which, however, does not seem to take verbal complements.

A language closely related to Yakut, Dolgan uses a very different expression for BEGIN:

Dolgan:

- (5) *Öl-büt-tere,* *olor-on,* *kepset-er* *buol-but.*
 die-PTCP-POSS.3.PL sit-CVB speak-PTCP be.come-ASP
 ‘The dead ones sat up and began to speak.’

Here, the auxiliary verb is *buol-* ‘to become, to begin’¹⁶ from Old Turkic *bol-* ‘to become’.¹⁷ The linking segment is not a converb, but the Aorist

¹⁴ LESSING, F. D. *Mongolian-English Dictionary*, p. 306.

¹⁵ AFANAS'EV, P. S., XARITONOV, L. N. *Russko-jakutskij slovar'* [Russian-Yakut Dictionary], p. 312.

¹⁶ STACHOWSKI, M. *Dolganischer Wortschatz*, p. 66.

¹⁷ Cf. CLAUDON, G. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, pp. 331–332.

(present) participle in *-Ar* (which occurs in Old Turkic in the variants *-Ar*, *-Ir*, *-Ur*, *-yUr* and *-r*¹⁸).¹⁹

In the Khotan dialect of Uyghur, a Turkic language in the Southeastern branch, we find the following inceptive expression:

Uyghur (Khotan dialect):

- (6) *O:* *bala-lär-ï* *bu* *gép-ni* *išit-ïp*
 DEM child-PL-POSS.3 DEM talk-ACC hear-CVB
yïyla-may *kül-geli* *tur-dï.*
 cry-NEG.CVB laugh-CVB stand-ASP
 ‘When those children of his heard this, they did not cry but began to laugh.’²⁰

Külgeli turdï ‘they began to laugh’ consists of the purposive converb *-Gall* (also attested in Old Uyghur²¹) and the auxiliary *tur-*, originally ‘to stand up, to stand’. Consequently, the meaning ‘to begin’ can be reconstructed as a development from a non-grammaticalized construction that denoted ‘to stand up in order to X’. The same combination also exists in Standard Uyghur (*-Gili tur-*²²). The construction *-Gall tur-* is already attested in Old Uyghur, where it seems to have had an imminent meaning (‘to be about to’).²³

Modern Standard Uyghur features another, similar construction with an inceptive meaning. In this construction, the verb *başla-* ‘to begin’ appears in place of *tur-*:

Standard Uyghur:

- (7) *Ëriq-ti-ki* *su* *aq-qili* *başli-di.*
 ditch-LOC-REL water flow-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘The water in the ditch began to flow.’²⁴

Başla- is extremely widespread as an auxiliary in inceptive constructions throughout the Turkic languages. Therefore, the rest of this study will be dedicated to ICs involving the auxiliary *başla-*. Before we proceed, let us have a

¹⁸ ERDAL, M. *A Grammar of Old Turkic*, pp. 240, 284–285.

¹⁹ This archimorpheme will be represented by <R> below.

²⁰ JARRING, G. *Materials to the Knowledge of Eastern Turki. Vol. I: Texts from Khotan and Yarkand*, p. 38.

²¹ ERDAL, M. *A Grammar of Old Turkic*, p. 317.

²² FRIEDERICH, M. Uyghurisch Lehrbuch. In *Zusammenarbeit mit Abdurishid YAKUP*, p. 208.

²³ GABAIN, A. von. *Altürkische Grammatik*, p. 132.

²⁴ FRIEDERICH, M. *Uyghurisch Lehrbuch*, p. 208.

look at the constructions seen so far in context. Table 1 displays the ICs occurring in examples (1)–(7) above, together with the origin of the auxiliary segment.

Table 1: Examples of inceptive constructions in selected Turkic languages

Language	Construction	Origin of auxiliary segment
Shor	<i>-A ber-</i>	Tu. <i>ber-</i> ‘to give’
Khakas	<i>-[P] sïx-</i>	Tu. <i>čiq-</i> ‘to go out’
Tuvan	<i>-(X)p egele-</i>	Mo. <i>ekile-</i> ‘to begin’
Yakut	<i>-An bar-</i>	Tu. <i>bar-</i> ‘to go’
Dolgan	<i>-(A)r buol-</i>	Tu. <i>bol-</i> ‘to become, to be’
Khotan Uyghur	<i>-GAll tur-</i>	Tu. <i>tur-</i> ‘to stand up, to stand’
Standard Uyghur	<i>-Gili bašla-</i>	Tu. <i>bašla-</i> ‘to lead, to begin’

All the constructions feature an auxiliary verb. Nominal auxiliaries — items that exist in other Turkic auxiliary constructions — do not occur in inceptive constructions. The linking segments which we have seen in the sample constructions are the converbs <A>, and *-GAll* as well as the participle <R>. As will become clear below, some of these linking segments are of eminent importance for the formation of Turkic inceptive constructions. The constructions with a converbial linking segment typify the underlying structure <CVB+AUX>, while the Dolgan variant with a participle exemplifies the structure <PTCP+AUX>.

3. Notes on the Full Verb *Bašla-*

This section will contain some basic information about the origin of the verb *bašla-*, its semantic profile and its syntactic properties.

Bašla- is a denominal verb derived from the Turkic noun *baş*, which basically means ‘head’ but displays semantic extensions such as ‘beginning’, ‘leader’ and so on since the earliest documented times.²⁵ The verb *bašla-* thus encodes meanings such as ‘to begin’ and ‘to lead’. According to Clauson, it was

²⁵ CLAUSON, G. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, pp. 375–376.

“properly transitive” but also had intransitive usages.²⁶ The actual intransitive of this verb was formed with the reflexive suffix, thus rendering *başlan*-.²⁷

The division into a transitive verb *başla*- and an intransitive verb *başlan*- survives in many Turkic languages to this day. In some Turkic languages, however, *başla*- displays both transitive and intransitive usages, while *başlan*- is used for the passive only (e.g. Turkish *derse* [DAT] *başladı* ‘s/he started the lesson’ vs. *ders* [NOM] *başladı* ‘the lesson started’).

In the Orkhon Inscriptions, the oldest documented Turkic texts, *başla*- appears only as a full verb. It occurs four times in the Kül Tëgin inscription (E16, E25, N8, N11) and three times in the Bilge Qaghan inscription (S13, S14 [2 occurrences]). All the occurrences display the word form *başlayu* (the <A> converb), resulting in the meaning ‘first of all’ or ‘led by’. In the latter case, the person or tribe that leads is mentioned in the unmarked case before *başlayu*.

In Old Uyghur, similar usages of *başla*- (partly with other converb forms) continue to exist, but there are also occurrences of this verb with the meaning ‘to begin’ and a direct object in the accusative case: *Özüñe öñ iş-in* [POSS.3.ACC] *başlayıl* ‘Begin with the work which confronts you.’²⁸ For occurrences of *başla*- with verbal complements in Old Uyghur, see Section 5.

In the Qutadgu Bilig, a Karakhanid text from 1069, we find, besides scarce usages as an auxiliary with a verbal complement (Section 5), several occurrences of *başla*- with a direct object, which appears in the accusative case if it is specific (*Söz-üg* [ACC] *başladım* ‘I rose to speak’ [literally: ‘I started the word’, QB 1²⁹]) or in the unmarked (nominative) case if it is unspecific (*Bitig* [NOM] *başladı* ‘He started to write’ [literally: ‘He started [the] writ’, QB 3714]).

Several modern languages preserve these government properties, e.g. Kazakh *qurılıs-ti* [acc] *bastaw* ‘to start the construction’,³⁰ others have shifted to the dative as the object marker (like Turkish), and still others vacillate between the accusative and the dative, e.g. Turkmen *gurluşyg-y* [ACC] *başlamak* ‘to start the construction’³¹ vs. *iş-e* [DAT] *başlamak* ‘to commence work’³² and

²⁶ Ibid., p. 381.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 382.

²⁸ TT I 150; cited in CLAUSON, G. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, p. 382.

²⁹ ARAT, R. R. *Kutadgu Bilig. I: Metin* [Kutadgu Bilig. I: Text].

³⁰ SAURANBAEV, N. T. *Russko-kazaxskij slovar’* [Russian-Kazakh Dictionary], p. 390.

³¹ BASKAKOV N. A., XAMZAEV, M. J. *Russko-turkmenskij slovar’* [Russian-Turkmen Dictionary], p. 362.

³² BASKAKOV, N. A., KARRYEV, B. A., XAMZAEV, M. J. *Turkmensko-russkij slovar’* [Turkmen-Russian Dictionary], p. 81.

Modern Uyghur *Bügünla opëratsiyi-ni* [ACC] *başlaymiz* ‘We start the operation today’³³ vs. *U iş-ke* [DAT] *başlıdimu?* ‘Did he start the work?’³⁴

It is important to note that the full verb *başla-* originally took direct objects in the accusative or the unmarked case, while the appearance of the object in the dative is a later development.

With this background information on the full verb *başla-* in mind, we can now turn to auxiliary constructions that involve this verb.

4. ICs Involving *Başla-* in Modern Turkic Varieties

Let us begin with Oghuz Turkic, the southwestern branch of Turkic. Given that *başla-* was originally a transitive verb that took direct objects in the accusative (or unmarked) case, it is remarkable that modern Oghuz inceptive constructions quite consistently feature a verbal noun in the dative as a linking segment between main verb and auxiliary. All Oghuz literary languages — Turkish, Azerbaijani, Turkmen and Gagauz — share this behaviour (ex. (8)–(11)). The dominant variant consists of the verbal noun *-mA*K, to which the dative suffix *-(y)A* is added (resulting in *-mAG*A). Azerbaijani, Turkmen and a number of Turkish dialects use this combination. Gagauz *-mAA* is a reduced variant of this item. Modern Standard Turkish uses another verbal noun nowadays, *-mA* (which, however, enters a close paradigmatic relationship with *-mA*K in Turkish) with the post-vocalic variant of the dative suffix (resulting in *-mAyA*). Throughout the Ottoman era and until the 1940s, *-mAG*A was common in Turkish as well, and some authors use it even today as an individual quirk.

Turkish:

- (8) *Ölü doğrul-up otur-du ve konuş-ma-ya başla-dı.*
 dead straighten.up-CVB sit-ASP and talk-VN-DAT begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man rose, sat down and began to speak.’

³³ *Uyghur tiliniñ izahliq lugyiti* [Explanatory Dictionary of the Uyghur Language], Vol. I, p. 378.

³⁴ NADŽIP, Ė. N. *Ujgursko-russkij slovar'* [Uyghur-Russian Dictionary], p. 193; Some of these attested variants are not necessarily accepted by all speakers. For example, the Turkmen variant cited in SAURANBAEV 1954 is questioned by some Turkmen speakers.

Azerbaijani:

- (9) *Ölü dur-ub otur-du və danış-mağ-a başla-dı.*
 dead stand.up-CVB sit-ASP and talk-VN-DAT begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man sat up and began to speak.’

Turkmen:

- (10) *Öli ýer-in-den gal-yp otur-dy-da, geple-mäg-e başla-dy.*
 dead place-POSS.3-ABL rise-CVB sit-ASP-and speak-VN-DAT
 begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man rose from his place, sat down and began to speak.’

Gagauz:

- (11) *Ölü otur-du da başla-di lafet-mä-ä.*
 dead sit-ASP and begin-ASP speak-VN-DAT
 ‘The dead man sat up and began to speak.’

In many Rumelian Turkish (Balkan Turkish) dialects, especially in Western Rumelian Turkish, constructions with *-mAGA* either compete with or are replaced by constructions in which the main verb appears in a finite mood form (Voluntative or Optative). The modal meaning of the mood form is bleached in these constructions; it merely functions as a subjunctive. Main verb and auxiliary agree in person. This structure is in line with corresponding constructions in Balkan Slavic, Albanian, Romanian and Greek. The following example from the Turkish dialect of Vrapçište in western Macedonia typifies this phenomenon.

Western Rumelian Turkish (Macedonia):

- (12) *Küpek-ler başla-r amla-sın.*
 dog-PL begin-ASP howl-VOL. 3
 ‘The dogs begin to howl.’³⁵

Note that in Gagauz and in Rumelian Turkish dialects it is very common for the auxiliary to precede the main verb. This word order feature stems from centuries of close contact with Indo-European languages in the area. The Kipchak languages (northwestern branch of Turkic) display several types of inceptive constructions. The Volga Kipchak languages Tatar (13) and Bashkir (14) construct *başla-* with the <A> converb:

³⁵ İBRAHİM, N. *Vrapçište ve Çevresi Türk Ağzı (Makedonya)* [The Turkish Dialect of Vrapçište and Surroundings], p. 120.

Tatar:

- (13) *Ül-gän keşe tor-ïp utir-dï häm söyläş-ä başla-dï.*
 die-PTCP person stand.up-CVB sit-ASP and talk-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man sat up and began to speak.’

Bashkir:

- (14) *Ül-gän keşe tor-op ultir-yan da höyläş-ä başla-yan.*
 die-PTCP person stand.up-CVB sit-ASP and speak-CVB
 begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man sat up and began to speak.’

Crimean Tatar displays a variation between (at least) two competing linking segments which are exemplified in the two translations of the same Bible passage:

- (15) *Ölü qalq-ïp oturdï ve lafet-me-ge başla-dï.*
 dead rise-CVB sit-ASP and speak-VN-DAT begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man rose, sat down and began to speak.’
 (Lk 7, 15)³⁶

- (16) *Ölü köteril-ip otur-dï da lafet-ip başla-dï.*
 dead stand.up-CVB sit-ASP and speak-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man sat up and began to speak.’
 (Lk 7, 15)³⁷

Example (15) features *-mAGA başla-*, an item formally identical to the widespread Oghuz type *-mAGA başla-*, but formed from the verbal noun *-mA* (compare Turkish example (8)) and the dative in *-GA*, which is etymologically identical to the Oghuz dative in *-(y)A* but preserves a more conservative form. In example (16), the auxiliary is connected to the main verb by the converb.

Karaim is a Kipchak language which is spoken today in Lithuania and Ukraine by a very small number of speakers. In the following example from the city of Lutsk (Polish Łuck), we see the construction *başlady titreme* ‘began to tremble’, in which the linking segment is *-mA*, a reduced variant of the unit *-mAGA* already seen in Oghuz and Crimean Tatar (above). Note also the inverted order between main verb and auxiliary (as in Gagauz and WRT).

³⁶ *Xoš Xaber* [The Good News], 1996.

³⁷ *Injil* [The Gospels], 2008.

Karaim (Lutsk):

- (17) *Necik* *ana-sy* *kabulet-ti* *ol* *achca-ny*,
 when mother-POSS.3 accept-ASP DEM money-ACC
başla-dy *kol-lar-y* *anyn* *titre-me* –
 begin-ASP hand-PL-POSS.3 DEM.GEN tremble-VN.DAT
diwił *bijenc-ten* *ancak* *korkuw-dan*.
 not gladness-ABL but fear-ABL
 ‘When his mother accepted the money, his hands started to tremble —
 not from gladness but from fear.’³⁸

The northern Caucasus is the habitat of three standardized Turkic languages: Kumyk, Karachay-Balkar and Noghay. The linking segment in BEGIN constructions is *-mAGA* in Kumyk, i.e. the <VN-DAT> combination already seen in several other languages (ex. (18)), while Karachay-Balkar (ex. (19)) and Noghay (ex. (20)) feature the converb.

Kumyk:

- (18) *Ölü* *tur-up* *oltur-a* *va* *söyle-me-ge* *başla-y*.
 dead stand.up-CVB sit-ASP and speak-VN-DAT begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man sat up and began to speak.’

Karachay-Balkar:

- (19) *Öl-gen* *tur-ub*, *oltur-du* *em* *söleş-ib* *başla-dİ*.
 die-PTCP stand.up-CVB sit-ASP and speak-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man rose, sat down and began to speak.’

Noghay:

- (20) *Ölik* *köteril-di*, *oltır-di* *em* *söyle-p* *başla-dİ*.
 dead rise-ASP sit-ASP and speak-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man rose, sat down and began to speak.’

Karakalpak (21) and Kazakh (22), languages closely related to Noghay, use *-y başla-* and *-y basta-*, respectively, i.e. constructions that feature the <A> converb (represented in the example by the post-vocalic variant *-y*) as a linking segment. The same type is also found in Kirghiz (*-y başta-*, ex. (23)).

³⁸ MARDKOWICZ, A. (ed.). *Elijahunun ucuru (jomak)* [Elijahu’s Adventure (Tale)], p. 7.

Karakalpak:

- (21) *Öli tikey-ip otür-dī da, söyle-y*
 dead straighten.up-CVB sit-ASP and speak-CVB
başla-dī.
 begin-ASP
 'The dead man sat up and began to speak.'

Kazakh:

- (22) *Öl-gen žigit orn-ınan tur-ıp*
 die-PTCP young.man place-POSS.3.ABL stand.up-CVB
otür-dī da, söyle-y basta-dī.
 sit-ASP and speak-CVB begin-ASP
 'The dead man rose from his place, sat down and began to speak.'

Kirghiz:

- (23) *Ölök ord-unan tur-up, otur-du ĵana*
 dead place-POSS.3.ABL stand.up-CVB sit-ASP and
süylö-y başta-dī.
 speak-CVB begin-ASP
 'The dead man rose from his place, sat down and began to speak.'

Most languages in the northeastern (Siberian) branch of Turkic do not feature **başla-* as an auxiliary in inceptive constructions (cf. Section 2). In Altay and Khakas, however, such constructions do exist besides the alternative constructions already noted (see Khakas example (2) and the remarks on Altay below the Shor example (1)). Altay has *-(I)p başta-*, i.e. the same type attested in Karachay-Balkar, Noghay and Crimean Tatar:

Altay:

- (24) *O-lor-dī üred-ip başta-p, ayt-tī.*
 DEM-PL-ACC teach-CVB begin-CVB say-ASP
 'He began to teach them, and said...'
 (Mt 5, 2)

Khakas basically has the same type, in which the converb, as previously noted, is often invisible if the verb stem ends in a consonant. The auxiliary segment in example (25) below is *pastabīs-*, in which *pasta-*, the Khakas phonetic equivalent to *başla-*, is combined with the actional marker *-(I)bIS-*, which originates in a combination of the converb with the

auxiliary verb **id-* ‘to send’.³⁹ According to BASKAKOV and INKIZHEKOVA-GREKUL,⁴⁰ *-(I)bIS-* expresses “resolution” and “vigour”. Actually, the fused form *pastabīs-* seems to be a strongly conventionalized (lexicalized) expression for the notion BEGIN.⁴¹

Khakas:

- (25) *Min pikte-d-ibīs-ken-īm-ŋeŋ-er*
 I imprison-CAUS-PVB-VN-POSS.1.SG-ABL-due.to
Xan-pig-ibīs-te pol-čatxan xarīndas-tar-ibīs-tiŋ
 king-lord-POSS.1.PL-LOC be.come-PTCP sibling-PL-POSS.1.PL-GEN
kōb-ī-zī Xuday sōz-īn
 many-POSS.3-POSS.3 God word-POSS.3.ACC
tarad-ar-īn-da xorix-pin, kite-n-min
 spread-VN-POSS.3-LOC be.afraid-NEG.CVB lurk-REFL-NEG.CVB
tud-īn pasta-b-īs-ti.
 seize-REFL-[CVB] begin-CVB-PVB-ASP
 ‘Due to my imprisonment, many of our brothers and sisters in the Lord
 have started to engage in the spread of God’s word without fear and
 stealthiness.’
 (Phil 1, 14)

In the southeastern subgroup, Standard Uzbek uses the <A> converb also seen in several Kipchak varieties (ex. (26)). In Standard Uyghur we also find, besides the variants noted in Section 2, the linking segment *-(X)šKA*, which consists of the verbal noun in *-(I)š* and the dative case marker *-KA* (ex. (27)).

Uzbek:

- (26) *O‘shanda o‘lik rostlan-ib o‘tir-di-da,*
 at.that.moment dead staighen.up-CVB sit-ASP-and
gapir-a boshla-di.
 speak-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘At that moment, the dead man sat up and began to speak.’

³⁹ Cf. CLAUSON, G. *An Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish*, p. 37.

⁴⁰ BASKAKOV N. A., INKIŽEKOVA-GREKUL, A. I. *Xakassko-russkij slovar’* [Khakas-Russian Dictionary], p. 427.

⁴¹ Cf. ČANKOV, D. I. 1961. *Russko-xakasskij slovar’* [Russian-Khakas Dictionary], p. 424, entry *načat’*.

Uyghur:

- (27) *Ėriq-ti-ki* *su* *ėq-iš-qa* *bašli-di.*
 ditch-LOC-REL water flow-VN-DAT begin-ASP
 ‘The water in the ditch began to flow.’⁴²

Chuvash, a language which constitutes its own branch of Turkic with highly specific features that separate it sharply from all other Turkic languages, displays *-mA pušla-*, with some sound changes in the auxiliary segment and the item *-mA* as a linking segment. *-mA* is, without doubt, etymologically identical to the unit *-mAGA* seen above, but it is synchronically unanalysable in Chuvash and labelled “infinitive” in the grammars of the language.⁴³

Chuvash:

- (28) *Vil-ně-sker* *šavăntax* *tăr-sa* *lar-nă* *ta*
 die-PTCP-DNN at.that.moment rise-CVB sit-ASP and
 kalaś-ma *pušla-nă.*
 speak-VN.DAT begin-ASP
 ‘The dead man sat up and began to speak.’

We have already seen intra-linguistic variation within Crimean Tatar (*-mAGA bašla-* vs. *-(I)p bašla-*, ex. (15) and (16)) and Standard Uyghur (*-GAll bašla-* and *-(I)šKA bašla-*, ex. (7) and (27)). Interestingly, variation in complementizer use is possible even on the intra-idiolectal level. One of the classics of Modern Uzbek literature, Abdulla QODIRIY’s novel *O’tgan Kunlar* (Past Days), was first published in 1926, a time when the modern Uzbek standard language was still under development and the grammatical rules were handled more flexibly than today. In this novel, we find no fewer than four variants of inceptive construction with *bašla-*:

Uzbek (early 20th c.):

- (29) *Xat-ni* *och-a* *boshla-di.*
 letter-ACC open-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘She began to open the letter.’⁴⁴

⁴² FRIEDERICH, M. *Uyghurisch Lehrbuch*, p. 208.

⁴³ PAVLOV, I. P. *Xal’xi čävaš literatură čělxi. Morfologi* [Modern Chuvash Literary Language. Morphology], pp. 260–263.

⁴⁴ QODIRIY, A. *O’tkan kunlar* [Days Gone By], p. 263.

- (30) *Bir-ikki kun-dan beri manim ham ahvol-im*
 one-two day-ABL since my too situation-POSS.1.SG
o'zgar-ib boshla-di.
 change-CVB begin-ASP
 'For one or two days, my health has begun to change as well.'⁴⁵
- (31) *Yurag-i o'yna-moq-qa boshla-di.*
 heart-POSS.3 dance-VN-DAT begin-ASP
 'Her heart started to beat.'⁴⁶
- (32) *Un-dan-bun-dan so'zla-sh-ib choy ich-ish-ka*
boshla-di-lar.
 DEM-ABL-DEM-ABL speak-COOP-CVB tea drink-VN-DAT
 begin-ASP-PL
 'Talking about this and that, they began to drink tea.'⁴⁷

Example (29) contains *-A boshla-*, the combination preferred in Modern Standard Uzbek and (apart from phonetic peculiarities) identical to those found in Tatar, Bashkir, Kazakh, Kirghiz etc. *-(I)b boshla-* in example (30) corresponds to similar items in Karachay-Balkar, Noghay, Altay and Khakas. *-moqqa boshla-* in example (31) is very close to *-mAGA bašla-* and similar forms in Oghuz Turkic, Kumyk, Crimean Tatar, Karaim and Chuvash. Finally, *-(I)shka boshla-* in example (32) is typologically identical to *-(I)šKa bašla-* in Standard Uyghur.

How is such variation possible in one single text? One reason in this specific case is certainly the absence of a consolidated standard language, at a time when prominent literary works in prestige languages (Chaghatay and Tatar, in Abdulla QODIRIY's case) would have influenced the writing of every individuum. Another reason is that in an environment without a consolidated literary standard, forms of the colloquial language with its internal variation would have made themselves felt in the writing. Thirdly, there is the additional complication that the Karluk-Uyghur (Southeastern Turkic), Kipchak (Northwestern Turkic) and Oghuz (Southwestern Turkic) dialects are spoken in overlapping areas in Uzbekistan, with a great deal of mutual influence and intermixture.

The particular background of this specific source notwithstanding, the vacillation between competing expressions in this Uzbek text suggests that even

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 25.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 263.

⁴⁷ Ibid., p. 224.

greater diversity and variation lie under the surface of the standard languages and that an investigation of standard languages does not provide a full picture. In other words, we will always have to take into account sub-surface dynamics in the generation of surface forms and the evolution of conventionalized expressions.

Table 2 surveys the inceptive constructions based on the auxiliary *bašla-* identified in examples (8)–(32). A typological survey of the linking segments is provided in Table 3, with the Uzbek non-standard forms marked with a distinct symbol (*).

Table 2: ICs involving **bašla-* in modern Turkic varieties

Branch	Language	Construction
SW	Turkish	<i>-mAyA bašla-</i>
	Azerbaijani	<i>-mAGA bašla-</i>
	Turkmen	<i>-mĀGA bašla-</i>
	Gagauz	<i>-mAA bašla-</i>
	WRT (Macedonia)	SBJV <i>bašla-</i>
NW	Tatar	<i>-A bašla-</i>
	Bashkir	<i>-A bašla-</i>
	Crimean Tatar	<i>-(I)p bašla-; -mAGA bašla-</i>
	Karaim (Lutsk)	<i>-mA basla-</i>
	Kumyk	<i>-mAGA bašla-</i>
	Karachay-Balkar	<i>-(I)b bašla-</i>
	Noghay	<i>-(I)p basla-</i>
	Karakalpak	<i>-A basla-</i>
	Kazakh	<i>-A basta-</i>
	Kirghiz	<i>-A bašta-</i>
NE	Altay	<i>-(I)p bašta-</i>
	Khakas	<i>-(P) pasta(-bīs)-</i>
SE	Uzbek	<i>-A bāšla-; -(I)b bāšla-; -mAKKA bāšla-; -(I)šKA bāšla-</i>
	Uyghur	<i>-Gili bašla-; -(I)šKA bašla-</i>
R	Chuvash	<i>-mA pušla-</i>

Table 3: Linking segments in modern Turkic varieties

		SW					NW										NE		SE		R
		Turkish	Azerbaijani	Turkmen	Gagauz	WRT (Macedonia)	Tatar	Bashkir	Crimean Tatar	Karaim (Lutsk)	Kumyk	Karachay-Balkar	Noghay	Karakalpak	Kazakh	Kirghiz	Altay	Khakas	Uzbek	Uyghur	
VN-DAT	*-mAGA	x	x	x	x				x	x	x										x
	-mAKKA																		*		
	-(I)šKA																		*	x	
CVB									x			x	x				x	x	*		
	<A>						x	x						x	x	x			x		
	*-GAll																			x	
SBJV						x															

5. The Diachronic Situation

In considering the pre-standard Uzbek text from 1926 and a Karaim text from 1930, we have, strictly speaking, already brought a diachronic dimension into play. In the present section, we shall investigate the historical Turkic varieties more closely. From the vast corpus of pre-modern Turkic texts that are available, only a very restricted set of texts (a total of nine) could be considered for this study. In light of the findings on the synchronic data, we may assume that the more detailed our investigation of the pre-modern varieties is, the more complex the picture that emerges. What can be done in this paper is merely to present some limited data from different centuries and different locations, which, however, will provide us with some clues on the evolution of some of the modern variants identified above.

It has already been pointed out that no instances of *bašla-* are found as an auxiliary verb in the Orkhon Inscriptions. The first occurrences of *bašla-* relevant to this study emerge in Old Uyghur. Here, we find both examples of *bašla-* with the purposive converb *-GAll* as a linking segment (ex. (33)) and examples with the <A> converb (*-u* in ex. (34)):

Old Uyghur (Buddhist, Xuanzang Biography):

- (33) *Yoog šastr nomla-γali bašla-[mīšin]*
 Yogashastra preach-CVB begin-VN-POSS.3.ACC
 ‘...that he has started to preach the Yogācārya-śāstra.’
 (Xuanzang III: 815)⁴⁸
- (34) *Ač-maq topul-maq-līy edrem öz-in*
 open-VN pierce-VN-DNN virtue self-INS
ač-īl-u bašla-n-ti.
 open-PASS-CVB begin-REFL-ASP
 ‘The virtue of opening and piercing began to reveal itself.’
 (Xuanzang VIII: 519–521)⁴⁹

Nomlaγali bašla[mīšin], in example (33), typifies the same structure as Modern Uyghur *aqqili bašlidi* in example (7). *Ačilu bašlantī*, in example (34), corresponds to structures found in Tatar, Bashkir, Kazakh, Standard Uzbek etc. In these two examples, we also see the contrast between transitive (*bašla-*) and intransitive (*bašlan-*) use, which was briefly addressed in Section 3.

One source that is approximately synchronic with the Uyghur text cited above, or perhaps slightly younger, is the Qutadgu Bilig, a voluminous poetic text from the Karakhanid dynasty completed in 1069. In this text, *bašla-* occurs twice in auxiliary constructions, and in both cases it combines with the converb as a linking segment (*oqīb bašlasa* ‘if they start to summon you’). We have seen similar constructions from Crimean Tatar, Karachay-Balkar, Noghay, Altay and Khakas.

Qutadgu Bilig (Karakhanid, 1069):

- (35) *Qali oldur-ur bol-sa öz qur bul-ub*
 if sit-ASP be.come-COND own rank find-CVB
oqī-b bašla-sa ötrü kir-gil tur-ub.
 read-CVB begin-COND then enter-IMP.SG stand.up-CVB
 ‘When you take your seat, find the proper row. Then, as soon as you are summoned (“if/when they start to summon”), stand up and go in.’
 (Mısır Nüshası 243, 7)⁵⁰

⁴⁸ ÖLMEZ, M., RÖHRBORN, K. *Die alttürkische Xuanzang-Biographie III*, p. 117.

⁴⁹ RÖHRBORN, K. *Die alttürkische Xuanzang-Biographie VIII*, p. 56.

⁵⁰ Cf. ARAT, R. R. *Kutadgu Bilig. I: Metin* [Kutadgu Bilig. I: Text], p. 416; DANKOFF, R. *Yūsuf Khāṣṣ Hājib, Wisdom of Royal Glory (Kutadgu Bilig). A Turko-Islamic Mirror for Princes*, p. 174.

The Codex Cumanicus, a Kipchak Turkic text the relevant parts of which were written in the 1340s, features the <A> converb as a linking segment between main verb and auxiliary (*vra bazladilar* ‘they started to beat him’, ex. (36)). The same type is found in the Pagan Oghuzname, a text of unclear provenance in Uyghur script from between the 13th and the 15th century (*kēle bašladi* ‘started to come’, ex. (37)), and in many varieties of Chaghatay, represented here by the Baburname, a text written before 1530 (*kēle bašladi* ‘started to come’, ex. (38)). This construction continues one of the types attested in Old Uyghur as well (ex. (34)).

Codex Cumanicus (1340s):

- (36) *Kaçan anayt-ti an-dan katti vr-a bazla-di-lar.*
 when say.so-ASP DEM-ABL hard beat-CVB begin-ASP-PL
 ‘When he spoke thus, they started to beat him even harder.’
 (Codex Cumanicus 61v18)⁵¹

Oghuzname (13th–15th c.):

- (37) *Til-i kēl-e bašla-di.*
 tongue-POSS.3 come-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘He started to speak (“His tongue started to come”).’
 (Oghuzname 2, 2)⁵²

Chaghatay (Baburname, 1530):

- (38) *Uš-bu kūn-din uluγ kičik yaxšī yaman*
 EMP-DEM day-ABL great small good bad
bēg ve bēg-nöker-ler-i xeyl xeyl
 chief and chief-companion-PL.POSS.3 cohort cohort
köč ve māl-lar-ī bile an-din
 possession and livestock-PL-POSS.3 with DEM-ABL
ayrıl-īb biz-ge kēl-e bašla-di.
 depart-CVB we-DAT come-CVB begin-ASP
 ‘From that very day, all his officers and liegemen, great and small alike, left him in droves with their families and possessions and began to join us.’
 (124r)⁵³

⁵¹ DRIMBA, V. *Codex Cumanicus. Édition diplomatique avec fac-similés*, p. 118.

⁵² DANKA, B. *The Pre-Islamic Oğuz-nāmā. A Philological and Linguistic Analysis*, pp. 42–43; ŠČERBAK, A. M. *Oğuz-Nāme/Muxabbat-Nāme. Pamjatniki drevneuygurskoj i starouzbekskoj pismennosti* [Oğuz-Nāme/Muxabbat-Nāme. Monuments of Old Uyghur and Old Uzbek Literature], p. 23; BANG, W., RAHMETI, G. R. *Oğuz Kağan destanı* [The Epos of Oghuz Kaghan], p. 10.

17th-century Ottoman Turkish normally makes use of the linking segment *-mAGA* in inceptive constructions, the type most widespread in modern Oghuz languages as well (ex. (39)). On the other hand, the Ta'riḥ-i Peçevî, a text composed by a Turk born and raised in Hungary, also features scarce instances of the <A> converb as a linking segment (*zuhūr êde başladî* 'began to appear', ex. (40)). This striking variant is identical to the type dominant in Old Uyghur, Chaghatay and Cuman.

Ottoman Turkish (Ta'riḥ-i Peçevî, before 1649):

- (39) *Qar* *yay-may-a* *başla-dî.*
 snow rain-VN-DAT begin-ASP
 'It began to snow.'⁵⁴

- (40) *Ol* *sebeb-den* *maĵar* *qavm-i* *içinde*
 DEM reason-ABL Hungarian tribe-POSS.3 within
çoq *fitne* *ve* *fesād* *zuhūr êd-e* *başla-dî.*
 much uproar and unrest appear-CVB begin-ASP
 'Therefore, much uproar and unrest began to arise among the Hungarians.'⁵⁵

A Volga Tatar Čingizname, composed in the 1680s, is in line with the widespread trend in non-Oghuz Middle Turkic varieties to construct *başla-* with the <A> converb:

Čingizname (Volga Tatar, 1680s):

- (41) *Türlüg* *fitne-ler* *ve* *muxtelif* *γavγa-lar*
 various uproar-PL and various quarrel-PL
peydā bol-a *başla-dî.*
 appear-CVB begin-ASP
 'All kinds of uproar and various quarrels began to appear.'
 (47v11)⁵⁶

⁵³ THACKSTON Jr., W. M. (ed.). *Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur Mirza, Bâburnâma. Chaghatay Turkish Text with Abdul-Rahim Khankhanabn's Persian Translation. Turkish Transcription, Persian Edition and English Translation*, Vol. II, pp. 254–255.

⁵⁴ Bağdat Köşkü 206: 337v3; see KAYAYURT, Z. *Peçevî Tarihi. 317b–351a. Metin, Dizin, Özel Adlar Sözlüğü* [The Peçevî Chronicle. 317b–351a. Text, Index, Dictionary of Proper Names].

⁵⁵ Bağdat Köşkü 206: 93r14–15; see ÖZBAL, M. *Peçevî Tarihi. 80b–114a. Metin, Edisyon Kritik, Dizin, Özel Adlar Sözlüğü* [The Peçevî Chronicle. 80b–114a. Text, Critical Edition, Index, Dictionary of Proper Names].

In contrast, 19th-century Halich Karaim (ex. (42)), which, like the respective languages of the Codex Cumanicus and the Čingizname, represents a Kipchak variety, already displays *-mA* like the more recent Lutsk Karaim text cited in example (17) above:

Karaim (Halich, 19th c.):

- (42) *Ol* *vaxt-ta* *basla-n-di* *cagir-ma*
 DEM time-LOC begin-PASS-ASP call-VN.DAT
šəm-i *biḷa* *han-in.*
 name-POSS.3 with king-GEN
 ‘At that time, it was begun to call upon the name of the Lord.’
 (Gen 4, 26)⁵⁷

As in the examples from Lutsk Karaim and Western Rumelian Turkish, the auxiliary precedes the main verb in this example. The suffix *-n-* in the word form *baslandi* here seems to represent the passive rather than the reflexive.

Let us finally look at an older Kazan Tatar example from a Bible translation from 1910. The passage is the same as in Modern Tatar example (13), but, interestingly, the linking segment is not the <A> converb here but the verbal noun plus dative unit *-mAGA*, just like in Crimean Tatar example (15) and in several other modern Turkic varieties:

Kazan Tatar (1910: 167):

- (43) *Päs* *mäyet* *bul-γan* *rāst* *ultir-ib*
 then dead be.come-PTCP straight sit-CVB
söylä-mä-gä *bašla-dī.*
 speak-VN-DAT begin-ASP
 ‘After that, the dead man sat up and began to speak.’

Table 4 surveys the inceptive constructions identified in the nine pre-modern Turkic varieties, while Table 5 presents the linking segments that form part of these constructions.

⁵⁶ IVANICS, M., USMANOV, M. A. *Das Buch der Dschingis-Legende (Däftär-i Čingiz-nāmā.) I: Vorwort, Einführung, Transkription, Wörterbuch*, p. 92, p. 252.

⁵⁷ OLACH, Zs. *A Halich Karaim Translation of Hebrew Biblical Texts*, p. 265.

Table 4: ICs involving **bašla-* in historical Turkic varieties

Language/Text	Date	Construction
Old Uyghur (Xuanzang)	10th–11th c.	<i>-GAll bašla-</i> ; <i>-(y)U bašla-</i>
Karakhanid (Qutadgu Bilig)	1069	<i>-(X)b bašla-</i>
Cuman (Codex Cumanicus)	1340s	<i>-A bašla-</i>
Oghuzname	13th–15th c.	<i>-A bašla-</i>
Chaghatay (Baburname)	1530	<i>-A bašla-</i>
Ottoman Turkish (Ta'riḥ-i Pečevī)	before 1649	<i>-mAGA bašla-</i> ; <i>-(y)A bašla-</i>
Čingizname	1680s	<i>-A bašla-</i>
Karaim (Halich)	19th c.	<i>-mA bašla-</i>
Kazan Tatar	1910	<i>-mAGA bašla-</i>

Table 5: Linking segments in historical Turkic varieties

	Old Uyghur	Qutadgu Bilig	Codex Cumanicus	Oghuzname	Baburname	Ta'riḥ-i Pečevī	Čingizname	Halich Karaim	Kazan Tatar
<A>	x		x	x	x	x	x		
		x							
-GAll	x								
*-mAGA						x		x	x

6. Possible Reasons for the Variation

What are the developments and mechanisms that have led to the diversity we can observe in modern Turkic varieties? The rather limited data considered in the present study will certainly not enable us to answer this question conclusively. In the synchronic dimension, only a selection of languages has been investigated, the dialectal and idiolectal level is only represented by a few examples, and the text corpus is confined to only a few sentences; in the diachronic dimension, a wealth of sources which may yield valuable data remains unconsidered. Yet, certain conclusions are possible with the data at hand.

The problem of variation in the auxiliary segment — the data shown in Section 2 — shall not be investigated in detail in this study. The auxiliarization of every single item — **bér-*, **čiq-*, **bar-*, **bol-* and **tur-* — follows its individual path of grammaticalization, which in some cases (e.g. with *tur-* ‘to stand up’) is intuitively more transparent than in others (e.g. with *bér-* ‘to give’). In the case of Tuvan, we see a borrowed auxiliary (ex. (3) above).

The focus of this section will be on variation in the inceptive constructions with the auxiliary *bašla-*, i.e. constructions whose auxiliary segment originally encodes ‘to begin’. In other words, the focus here will be on the choice of linking segment.

As we have seen, the earliest attestations of *bašla-* do not stem from the oldest attested varieties of Turkic, the Old Turkic inscriptions, but from Old Uyghur.⁵⁸ A variation between the converbial linking segments <A> (i.e. *-(y)U* etc.) and *-Gall* can already be observed in Old Uyghur. The two variants instantiate both an internal Turkic pattern and a universal one: In Turkic, they conform to the strong tendency to interlink verbs — both combinations of two main verbs and combinations of main verb and auxiliary verb — by means of converbs. Selecting the linking segment from the converb inventory available in a given language is therefore consistent with the most fundamental syntactic principles for connecting verbs in Turkic. From a universal perspective, it is a widespread strategy to use non-finite elements with purposive semantics as linking segments in auxiliary constructions, including constructions with inceptive meaning. The converb *-Gall* with its purposive semantics resembles Indo-European infinitives in this respect, which, as Haspelmath has shown, originate in purposive action nouns and follow a universal path of grammaticalization from purposive to what is conventionally called infinitive, i.e. a non-finite verb form used in irrealis complement clauses.⁵⁹ The use of the <A> converb with its simultaneous (imperfective/intraterminal) value in inceptive constructions, on the other hand, also represents a type not uncommon in the languages of the world. Actually, the variation within Standard English between *to begin to do* and *to begin doing* is typologically very similar to the variation in Old Uyghur.

What should be noted, though, is that no examples could be found in Old Uyghur of constructions that conform to the government patterns of the full verb *bašla-*, i.e. a verbal noun in the accusative (or in the unmarked case). Thus,

⁵⁸ Needless to say, the spoken Turkic varieties underlying the Old Turkic inscriptions certainly contained expressions for ‘to begin to X’, but absent any data it is meaningless to speculate on their formal realization.

⁵⁹ HASPELMATH, M. From purposive to infinitive – a universal path of grammaticalization. In *Folia Linguistica Historica*, 1989, Vol. 10, No. 1–2, pp. 287–310.

auxiliary constructions that fulfil our expectations about corresponding arbitrary constructions are not attested.

The fact that *-Gali başla-* continues to exist in Modern Uyghur and that *-A başla-* is widespread throughout Middle Turkic and in modern Turkic languages as well requires no further explanation. These constructions simply did not disappear from these languages; their presence testifies to the absence of linguistic change with regard to these particular constructions. The question that remains is why these constructions were replaced in some languages by others with different linking segments, especially the converb and a verbal noun in the dative <VN-DAT> (represented by items such as *-mAGA*, *-mAKKA* and *-(I)šKA*).

In the case of , I am inclined to believe that its rise within inceptive constructions is tied to the loss of <A> as an independent converb in almost all Turkic languages. For unknown reasons, <A> has fallen into disuse as a converb able to build adverbial clauses and continues to exist only in lexicalized and grammaticalized items.⁶⁰ Virtually all Turkic languages do have remnants of the <A> converb, but it is either no longer productive or occurs only in specific conventionalized uses (such as in Turkish *-(y)A...-(y)A* doublets). The assumption is, thus, that while some languages preserved the old *-A başla-* pattern, others replaced the linking segment with a productive equivalent, viz. . Another possibility is that *-B başla-* existed in unattested Old Turkic varieties synchronic with *-A başla-* and *-Gali başla-* and surfaces only in later texts. Whatever the case may be, it is clear that *-B başla-* is attested in Turkic since the second half of the 11th century and continues to exist in several Turkic languages to this day.

As for possible reasons for the development of linking segments of the <VN-DAT> type, i.e. items surfacing as *-mAGA*, *-mAyA*, *-mAA*, *-mA*, *-moqqa* and *-(I)šKA* in our examples, several mechanisms may have been involved in the formation and dissemination of this type.

First of all, Turkic verbal nouns in the dative conform to the universal pattern of purposive verbal nouns potentially grammaticalizing into infinitives noted above. In Old Uyghur, we find the entity *-GUKA*, which consists of the non-factual verbal noun *-GU* combined with the dative *-KA*, both in purposive converb clauses ('in order to')⁶¹ and as a complement to matrix items, e.g. in

⁶⁰ It is not inconceivable that the loss of <A> is tied to the bleaching of the postterminality (perfectivity) of and its concurrent development into an aspectually unmarked converb (see JOHANSON, L. Zur Postterminalität türkischer syndetischer Gerundien, p. 139), a development which enabled to supplant <A> in many positions.

⁶¹ ERDAL, M. *A Grammar of Old Turkic*, p. 491.

-*GUKA kūsūs* ‘the intention of doing’ and -*GUKA yaray* ‘the suitability to do’.⁶² The entity -*GUKA* survives in some modern Kipchak languages, e.g. in Kazakh as -*UwGA*, which can also occur in auxiliary constructions, such as the expression of participant-external possibility -*UwGA bol*-.⁶³ The <VN-DAT> items presented in this paper can be considered variants of this pattern that employ another verbal noun, namely -*mA*K, -*mA* and -(*I*)š, respectively. Another item of the same type which is not in the data cited for this paper is -(*V*)*rGA*, which is found in Volga Kipchak and South Siberian Turkic as well as in other languages.⁶⁴ The verbal noun in this entity is -(*V*)*r*, the so-called Aorist, which can perform nominal, adjectival and finite functions in Turkic (cf. Dolgan example (5) above). All these Turkic <VN-DAT> items typify the same universal tendency manifest in Indo-European infinitives (such as English *to do*, German *zu tun*, Norwegian *å gjøre* etc.⁶⁵) and are apt to fill the same slots as the Turkic purposive converb -*GAlI*.

The fact that <VN-DAT> has experienced an enormous upsurge in many Turkic varieties may be tied to the fact that the converb -*GAlI*, which also encodes an abtemporal meaning (‘since’) since the Old Turkic era,⁶⁶ has downsized its purposive use or completely fallen into disuse in some languages. Another factor that has certainly contributed to the spread of <VN-DAT> within individual Turkic languages is analogy. Items used as a linking segment in one auxiliary construction may easily spread to similar slots in other auxiliary constructions as well.⁶⁷ For example, the Old Kipchak Codex Cumanicus features -*mAGA* in complements to the verb *tile-* ‘to wish’ and the noun *kerek* ‘necessity, necessary’. The spoken language underlying this text may or may not have contained further combinations with this linking segment. Constructions with -*mAGA* in some Kipchak languages in Eastern Europe, such as -*mAGA gerek* ‘necessary to’ in Kumyk,⁶⁸ -*mAGA bol-* ‘to be possible to’,

⁶² RENTZSCH, J. *Modality in the Turkic Languages. Form and Meaning from a Historical and Comparative Perspective*, p. 48, pp. 72–73.

⁶³ RENTZSCH, J. *Ibid.*, p. 99.

⁶⁴ RENTZSCH, J. *Ibid.*, pp. 147–150.

⁶⁵ HASPELMATH, M. From Purposive to Infinitive – A Universal Path of Grammaticalization. In *Folia Linguistica Historica*, 1989, Vol. 10, No. 1–2, pp. 287–310.

⁶⁶ ERDAL, M. *A Grammar of Old Turkic*, p. 479.

⁶⁷ This phenomenon has been described for Turkic in RENTZSCH, J. Issues of Grammaticalisation in Turkic Modal Constructions. In *Acta Orientalia Hungarica*, 2011, Vol. 64, No. 4, pp. 453–474 and RENTZSCH, J. The Evolution of Turkic Modal Verbs. *Acta Orientalia*, 2012, Vol. 73, pp. 105–150.

⁶⁸ RENTZSCH, J. *Modality in the Turkic Languages. Form and Meaning from a Historical and Comparative Perspective*, pp. 135–136.

-mAGA kerek ‘necessary to’ in Noghay⁶⁹ and *-mAGA iste-* ‘to want to’ in Crimean Tatar,⁷⁰ either continue this Old Kipchak tradition or have been formed by analogy to old forms. In Tatar, *-(V)rGA* also combines with several auxiliaries, as does *-(I)šKA* in Uzbek and Modern Uyghur. These analogies are signs of incipient paradigmaticizations. Analogous formations may be more or less pervasive in individual languages and include or exclude constructions with *başla-*. In some languages, such as Karaim,⁷¹ Chuvash⁷² and Khakas,⁷³ forms originating in <VN-DAT> (*-mA* in Karaim and Chuvash and *-(A)rGA* in Khakas) are so pervasive that they are labelled Infinitive in some grammatical descriptions. Here, the paradigmaticization has progressed very far.

A third factor in the rise and spread of auxiliary construction types is language contact. We may assume that constructions such as *-mAGA başla-* in Crimean Tatar and Kumyk are not purely a product of an internal development, which at the same time may conform to universal principles, but that they are reinforced by Ottoman Turkish influence, which was particularly strong in these languages. On the other hand, we cannot rule out the possibility that the development of Oghuz Turkic *-mAGA* itself was triggered or reinforced by Kipchak influence centuries before Ottoman Turkish affected Crimean Tatar and Kumyk.

A clearer example of language contact influence is the rise of subjunctive constructions in Rumelian Turkish, i.e. the use of finite mood forms in all kinds of clausal complementation, including auxiliary constructions. In some dialects, we observe an intra-dialectal variation between <SBJV+AUX> and <VN-DAT+AUX>; in others, preference for one or the other type can be discerned. In any case, there are two competing paradigms with a very wide language-internal dissemination.⁷⁴

⁶⁹ BASKAKOV, N. A. *Grammatika nogajskogo jazyka. 1: Fonetika i morfologija* [Grammar of the Nogai Language. Vol. 1: Phonetics and Morphology], pp. 260–261.

⁷⁰ PROKOSCH, E. *Handbuch des Krimtatarischen unter Einschluss des Dobrudschatatarischen. Diachronische Grammatik mit kultur- und realkundlichem Hintergrund*, p. 260.

⁷¹ MUSAIEV, K. M. *Grammatika karaimskogo jazyka. Fonetika i morfologija* [Grammar of the Karaim Language. Phonetics and Morphology], pp. 294–297.

⁷² PAVLOV, I. P. *Xal’xi čävaš literaturä čělxi. Morfologi* [Modern Chuvash Literary Language. Morphology], pp. 260–264.

⁷³ BASKAKOV, N. A. *Grammatika xakasskogo jazyka* [Grammar of the Khakas Language], pp. 173–175.

⁷⁴ Cf. RENTZSCH, J. *Batı Rumeli Türkçesinde Yardımcı Yapılar* [Auxiliary Constructions in Western Rumelian Turkish]. In BALABAN, A., ÇAĞLAYAN, B. (eds.). *2. Uluslararası Dil ve Edebiyat Konferansı: Balkanlarda Türkçe. Bildiri Kitabı I*, pp. 328–341 and RENTZSCH, J. *Zur Rolle der Analogie in der Grammatikalisierung türkischer Modalauxiliare*. In DEMİR, N., KARAKOÇ, B., MENZ, A. (eds.).

As a result, we can state that the rise and spread of particular types of inceptive constructions in Turkic linguistic varieties may be explained by three different factors — universal tendencies, internal linguistic change (including analogy, the growing disuse of certain morphemes and the extension of the functional domain of others) and language contact influence — which may have operated in tandem and reinforced one another. The result of these factors operating together becomes manifest in the synchronic distribution of similarities and differences in Turkic inceptive constructions.

Abbreviations

ABL	Ablative	LOC	Locative
ACC	Accusative	Mo.	Mongolic
ASP	Aspect	NEG	Negation
CAUS	Causative	PASS	Passive
COND	Conditional	PL	Plural
COOP	Cooperative	POSS	Possessive
CVB	Converb	PTCP	Participle
DAT	Dative	PVB	Postverb
DEM	Demonstrative	REFL	Reflexive
DNN	De-nominal noun	REL	Relative suffix
EMP	Emphatic	SG	Singular
GEN	Genitive	Tu.	Turkic
IC	Inceptive Construction	VN	Verbal noun
IMP	Imperative	VOL	Voluntative
INS	Instrumental	WRT	Western Rumelian Turkish

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