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TURKMEN GRAMMAR

A Short Descriptive Grammar of the Turkmen Language

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1 Introduction

Turkmen is a Turkic language, part of the South-Western or *Oguz* sub-group which includes Turkish, Azerbaijani, and Gagauz. It is an agglutinative language i.e. it has a highly developed system of noun and verb suffixes that can produce some very long words indeed, e.g. from the word *okuw* which means 'study' the following word/sentence can be derived:

Okuwçylaryňkymyka? – I wonder if it belongs to the school children?

There are over six million speakers of Turkmen world-wide, most of them located in Turkmenistan, Iran, and Afghanistan. Turkmen society is still fairly tribal, so that the Turkmen language is made up of several dialects. The literary language dates back to the 18th century, with poets such as Magtymguly writing highly stylised works including many Persian (Farsi) loan-words. Modern literary Turkmen is mainly based on the Teke and Yomut dialects spoken in and around Ashgabat, Mary, Dash Oguz (formally Dashhowuz) and Nebitdag. Although Turkmen residents of the larger cities tend to be strongly bilingual in Turkmen and Russian, any attempts to Russify the literary language have been resisted, although many technical words are Russian or have come via Russian. Dialects spoken in Iran tend to be influenced by Farsi and those in Afghanistan Dari and Uzbek. This grammar concentrates on Turkmen as spoken in Turkmenistan.



1.1 Map showing the location of several of the Turkmen tribes

2 Phonology

2.1 Phonetics

2.1.1 Consonant Chart

	Labial	Dental	Alveolar	Palatal	Velar	Glottal
Plosives	p, b	d, t			k, g	
Affricates			t͡ʃ, d͡ʒ			
Fricatives	β (f, v)[1]	θ, ð (s, z)[2]	ʃ, ʒ		x, ɣ	h
Nasals	m	n			ŋ	
Lateral approximants, Flaps & trills		l	ɾ, r			
Central Approximants	w			j		

Aspiration has not been shown. Neither has velarisation or palatalisation of [l].
NB utterance-final consonants are unreleased e.g. *Myrat!* [mɯˈɾɑtˀ].

2.1.2 Vowel Chart

	Front		Central		Back	
	UR	R	UR	R	UR	R
Close	i, iː	y, yː			ɯ, ɯː	u, uː
Close-mid						
Open-mid	ɛ	œ, œː				ɔ, ɔː
Open	æː				ɑ, ɑː	

See the Introduction for a description of vowel harmony.
From this point forward all phonemes will be written as per the orthography, rather than according to the IPA. Please see 2.4 The Turkmen Alphabet for a comparison of the two ways of writing Turkmen phonemes.

[1] Only used when a Russian load-word is pronounced with a Russian accent.
[2] Most dialects do not use these sounds unless for a Russian loan word pronounced with a Russian accent. The inhabitants of Chärjew, however, use them in place of the inter-dental fricatives θ, ð.

2.2 The Turkmen Orthography, with Pronunciation Guide

The Cyrillic orthography was based on its Russian counterpart. The latest orthography is based on a Roman script. The following shows the two alphabets, and then the International Phonetic Alphabet symbols used to represent the sounds produced.

Latin	*Cyrillic*	*IPA*	*Notes*
A a	А а	ɑ	As in "catch" (approximately)
B b	Б б	b, β	Becomes a fricative (softens) mid word or phrase
Ç ç	Ч ч	t͡ʃ	"ch" in English as in *chart* or *chin*
D d	Д д	d	
E e	Э э, Е е	ɛ	As in "**e**gg". See below for Cyrillic E, e
Ä ä	Ә ә	aː	As in "**ai**r" but with hump of tongue further forward
F f	Ф ф	f	
G g	Г г	ɡ, ɣ	Fricative mid-utterance. Front or back velar depending on vowels.
H h	Х х	x, h	Usually a central fricative as in "lo**ch**". Uvular - see "g"
I i	И и	i	As in "f**ee**t"
J j	Җ җ	d͡ʒ	"j" in "**j**oke"
Ž ž	Ж ж	ʒ	Used mostly in loan-words e.g. the Arabic *sežd*. Pronounced as in "vi**s**ion".
K k	К к	k^h, k	Front or back velar depending on surrounding vowels. See "p" for k vs. k^h.
L l	Л л	l^j, $l^ɣ$	Palatised with front vowels, velarised with back ones.
M m	М м	m	
N n	Н н	n	
Ň ň	Ң ң	ŋ	"ng" as in "si**ng**"
O o	О о	ɔ	As in "**o**ff"
Ö ö	Ө ө	œ	As in the French **oeu**f
P p	П п	p^h, p	At the beginning of a word it is "breathy", mid-word not.
R r	Р р	ɾ, r	When there are two "r"s the flap becomes a trill e.g. *garry*
S s	С с, Ц ц	θ, s	Teke, Chärjew versions respectively
Ş ş	Ш ш	ʃ	"sh" (assimilates to front and back vowels)
T t	Т т	t^h, t	
U u	У у	u	As in "r**u**le"
Ü ü	Ү ү	y	As in German "**ü**ber"
W w	В в	w	
Y y	Ы ы	ɯ	Further back than the Russian 61, but closer (tongue to palate)
Ý ý	Й й	j	The first sound in "**y**acht"
Z z	З з	ð, z	Teke, Chärdjew versions respectively
(Ýe, ýe)	Е е	je, e	Can also be [E, e] in Latin – when not word initial or following ъ. *Part of*
(Ýo, ýo)	Ё ё	jɔ	*Cyrillic but not Latin alphabet, these characters are*
(Ýu, ýu)	Ю ю	ju	*mostly represented by two letters in the Latin alphabet, and are*
(Ýa, ýa)	Я я	jɑ	*pronounced differently from the same characters in Russian.*
(Ş ş)	Щ щ	ʃː	Pronounced (in Russian) like a long, soft ш. Hardly ever [ʃtʃ] any more.
-	ь	ʲ	Soft sign (palatalises previous consonant) e.g. -ть is pronounced [tʲ]
-	ъ		Hard sign (treat next vowel separately) e.g. весъет [wesjet]

Notes: Any of the vowels can be either short or long. This difference usually gives the word a different meaning.
Both "b" and "g" change when in the middle of a word. They are pronounced as "w" and [ɣ] respectively. The latter is one of the sounds of Dutch, or like the "ch" in "loch" only with the voice box vibrating. The former is hardly rounded at all.
A "fricative" is made by forcing air through a restricted opening in the mouth e.g. f, v, s, z in English are all fricatives.
"Back velar" means further back in the throat. "Velar" is where k and g are often pronounced in English (e.g. "sack").
A "back" vowel is one where the hump of the tongue is in the back of the throat e.g. o in English.
A "flap" is one brief movement of the tongue up to the alveolar ridge (above teeth). A "trill" is a rolled r as in Scottish English.
The "Teke" tribe is split into two halves, based in Mari (Merv) and the Ahal Welayat respectively. The "Teke" sounds are like the English "th" in either "thin" or "this", or a lisped s or z respectively. Other tribes e.g. the Yomut and ärsary also 'lisp' these sounds, but not as strongly.

2.3 Vowel Harmony

Vowel harmony is very important in the Turkmen language. The sixteen vowels can be divided into eight front and eight back vowels, which can be further subdivided into rounded and unrounded vowels. See the chart below:

Vowel Harmony chart:

Position	Front		Back	
Rounding	UR	R	UR	R
Close	*i, iý*	*ü, üý*	*y, (y:)*	*u, (u:)*
Open-mid or Open	*e, ä*	*ö, (ö:)*	*a, (a:)*	*o, (o:)*

UR = Unrounded, R = Rounded

'iý' *is approximately twice as long as* 'i', *for example*
NB length is *not marked* in the Turkmen orthography, except in the case of e and ä, i and iý and ü and üý, which are always short and always long respectively. The alphabet has only nine vowels: i, e, ä, ü, ö, y, a, u, and o. Consonants are affected by their surrounding vowels, so *kaka* is pronounced using back velars, wheras *köke* has front velars.

Most Turkmen words have either only front or only back vowels, and suffixes always have two forms so that they too are in "harmony" with the stem (compare "hammer" and "bird" in the table below). Also any rounding in the stem tends to carry over into the suffixes in most dialects of Turkmen. Therefore there are really four forms of each suffix in spoken Turkmen, and in some cases in written Turkmen. Lack of space precludes the inclusion of rules describing the orthography and corresponding spoken forms, which vary from dialect to dialect[3]. We will largely ignore the rounding/unrounding vowel harmony except when it affects written Turkmen e.g. see the genitive case marker for the word *guş* below.
Loan words, such as *kitap* (Arabic), and word combinations do not always follow the vowel harmony rules, but any suffixes following the root follow the form of the last vowel as far as front-back vowel harmony is concerned e.g. *kitabyndan* – from his book. Notice that although *i* is a front vowel all the suffixes follow *a* in having back vowels. Other examples:

Turkmen word	Gloss	Example
magazin	shop	*magaziniňden* – from your shop
dükan	shop	*dükana* – to the shop
betbagt	unlucky	*betbagtçylyk* – disaster
ok-däri	ammunition	*olaryň ok-därisi* – their ammunition

Vowel length
Any vowel except e/ä can be pronounced in either its short or long form, and it is important distinguish between them as there are many minimal pairs eg. *ot* [ot] means "grass", but *ot* [o:t] means "fire". A Turkmen mother-tongue speaker usually has little problem in guessing a word according to its context, but the lack of differentiation between long and short vowels in the orthography is very confusing to someone attempting to learn the language. It is vital, therefore, that the language learner find a good language resource person who is able to pronounce the words correctly according to one of the main dialects, and it is equally important that the language learner focus on listening and speaking before reading and writing skills.

2.4 Stress

Stress is usually on the last syllable of the root, when pronounced in isolation. It is easy for mother-tongue English speakers to confuse stress and length e.g. bägül [bä:'gül] – *rose* – has an unstressed lengthened first syllable and a short, but stressed, second syllable. Avoid saying ['bä:gül], which might be misunderstood. With the addition of affixes of any kind, the stress is on the last syllable, except in the case of words with the question particle *–mi*, the plural imperative marker *–yň/iň* and one or two other affixes. e.g:

garawul	gara'wul	*garawuldan*	garawul'dan
garaňky	garaň'ky	*garaňkylyk*	garaňkylyg'yň
abadanlaşdyrmak	abadanlaşdyr'mak	*abadanlaşdyrdyk*	abadanlaşdyr'dyk
tamamlamak	tamamla'mak	*tamamladyňmy?*	tamamla'dyňmy
barmak	bar'mak	*baryň!*	'baryň

[3] For futher information see Clark:98:79f who describes how this works out in practice for the largest tribe, the *Teke.*

3 Grammar - The Noun Phrase

3.1 Plurals

These are marked by the suffixes -lar, -ler e.g. *kitaplar* – books. See also The Verb Phrase, Verb paradigms.

3.2 Noun Declension

[pronunciation]	Hammer	Duck	Bird	Linguist	**Case Marker**	Following a vowel
Nominative	çekiç	ördek [ö:rdök]	guş [guş]	dilçi		
Accusative	çekij**i**	ördeg**i** [ö:rdögü]	guş**y** [guşy]	dilçi**ni**	**-y/-i**	-ny/-ni
Genitive	çekij**iň**	ördeg**iň** [ö:rdögün]	guş**uň** [guşuň]	dilçi**niň**	**-yň/-iň** **-uň/-üň**	-nyň/-niň -nuň/-nüň
Dative	çekij**e**	ördeg**e** [ö:rdögö]	guş**a** [guşo]	dilç**ä**	**-a/-e**	-a/-ä (after i) -na/-ne (
Locative/Time	çekiç**de** [çekişde]	ördek**de** [ö:rdökdö]	guş**da** [guşdo]	dilçi**de**	**-da/-de**	-da/-de -nda/-nde[4]
Ablative (separation *fr.*)	çekiç**den** [çekişden]	ördek**den** [ö:rdökdön]	guş**dan** [guşdon]	dilçi**den**	**-dan/-den**	-dan/-den -ndan/-nden[5]

Note: the accusative suffix after a noun suffix in a vowel is **–ny/-ni** rather than **–y/-i**

e.g. dilçi + i => dilçi**ni**
Men bedre**ni** goýdum - I put down the bucket

although it is permissable to leave the object unmarked if the *object* would not normally take the *definite* article in English e.g:

Sen mesge aldyňmy?

Have you bought some butter?

3.3 Question Words

	"who"	"what"	"how much"	"which"	"where"
Nominative	*kim* – who	*näme*	*näçe*	*haýsy*	*nire*
Accusative	*kimi* – who	*nämäni*	*näçeni*	*haýsyny*	*nireni*
Genitive	*kimiň* – whose	*nämeniň*	*näçeniň*	*haýsynyň*	*niräniň*
Dative	*kime* – to whom	*nämä*	*näçä*	*haýsyna*	*nirä*
Locative/Time	*kimde* – who (has)	*nämede*	*näçede*	*haýsynda*	*nirede*
Ablative	*kimden* – from whom	*nämeden*	*näçeden*	*haýsyndan*	*nireden*

Other question words: haçan (when). NB none of these words can be used as complementizers (*see* 4.18 Participles and Gerunds), they are used only as question words.

Kimiň telpegi geýýärsiň? – Whose hat are you wearing?

Nirä barýarsyň? – Where are you heading?

Sen nämeni aldyňmy? - Did you buy that thing (what was it?).

Sen nirede? – Where are you?

Kimde çörek bar? – Who has some bread?

[4] See the section on Possession
[5] See the section on Possession

Gawunuň kilesi näçeden? – How much per kilo are melons? *Lit:* Melon's kilo is from what [price]?

Sen haçan geljek? – When will you be here?

For the question particle *–my/mi* see 4.2 below.

3.4 The Personal Pronouns

	1s	*2s*	*3s*	*1pl*	*2pl*	*3pl*
NOM	men	sen	ol	biz	siz	olar
ACC	meni	seni	ony	bizi	sizi	olary
GEN	meniň	seniň	onuň	biziň	siziň	olaryň
DAT	maňa	saňa	oňa	bize	size	olara
LOC/TIM	mende	sende	onda	bizde	sizde	olarda
ABL	menden	senden	ondan	bizden	sizden	olardan

NB In speech when *d* follows *n* it assimilates to *n* e.g. *mende* [menne] i.e. [men:e].
Note the lack of gender marking in the personal pronouns. Neither is there any noun agreement showing gender. The Turkmen language marks gender in other ways.

3.5 Possession

One of the hardest things to master is the agreement on nouns when possessed. Compare the following tables:

maşyn - car	*s*	*pl*
1	(meniň) maşyn**ym**	(biziň) maşyn**ymyz**
2	(seniň) maşyn**yň**	(siziň) maşyn**yňyz**
3	(onuň) maşyn**y**	olaryň maşyn**y**

eje - mother	*s*	*pl*
1	(meniň) ej**äm**	(biziň) ej**ämiz**
2	(seniň) ej**äň**	(siziň) ej**äňiz**
3	(onuň) eje**si**	olaryň eje**si**

söz - word	*s*	*pl*
1	(meniň) söz**üm**	(biziň) söz**ümiz**
2	(seniň) söz**üň**	(siziň) söz**üňiz**
3	(onuň) söz**i**	olaryň söz**i**

Maşynyň barmy? - Have you got a car?

The locative and ablative cases take the forms *–nda/-nde, -ndan/-nden* following the 3rd person possessive:
Ejesinde täze köýnek bar – His mother has a new dress.
Men Hudaýberdi köçesinde ýaşaýaryn – I live in Hudayberdi street.
Ejesinden aldym – I got it from his mother.

The genitive personal pronouns *meniň, seniň,* etc. (with the exception of *olaryň*) are redundant and therefore optional. When used they emphasise personal possession e.g. *Meniň maşynym uly!* – My car is large! [Wheras yours is small…]

Predicative Possession [-ky/ki]

e.g. *Şu kitap meniňki* - This book is mine.
Bu kimiňki, seniňkimi? Howa, meniňki.
Whose is this, yours? Yes, it's mine.

The possessive pronoun is used in a predicative sense, rather than attributive as in the table above. In English we always have the verb "to be" between the subject and predicate (e.g. "The book is mine"), whereas the attribute acts like an adjective ("red book"can be substituted for "my book").

3.6 Going to see someone

Beware of putting a person's name in the dative case when referring to visiting a person; it means something rather different!

Contrast:	*Meniň ýanyma gelip biljekmi?*	Can you come and see me?
With:	*Sen maňa geljekmi?*	Will you marry me? (Literally: Will you come to me?)

ýan	side	*stem on its own*
ýan**y**	his/her/its side	*with possessive suffix*
ýany**na**	to his/her/its side	*possessive suffix + dative case*

to s.o.'s side	s	pl
1	meniň ýan**yma**	biziň ýan**ymyza**
2	seniň ýan**yňa**	siziň ýan**yňyza**
3	onuň ýan**yna**	olaryň ýan**yna**

e.g. *Men Baýramyň ýanyna gitjek* - I'm going to see Bayram

Notice too that Turkmen rarely go and see one person, even if that person is alone in the house:

Men Oraz**lar**a gitjek - I'm going to Oraz's (including family, friends).

Men häzir Dawud**lar**da otyryn - I'm at David's at the moment

Myrat**dagy** häzir geler – Murad and his family will arrive soon

You can also use the predicative possessive suffix:

Men dostymyň**ky**da boldym, şonuň üçin giç geldim - I was at a friend's [place], that's why I arrived late.

3.7 The Reflexive mood

Reflexive pronouns	s	pl
1	(meniň) özüm	(biziň) özümiz
2	(seniň) özüň	(siziň) özüňiz
3	(onuň) özi	(olaryň) özleri

Declension of reflexive pronouns (3 are shown as an example):

	1s	3s	1pl
NOM	öz**üm**	öz**i**	öz**ümiz**
ACC	öz**ümi**	öz**üni**	öz**ümizi**
GEN	öz**ümiň**	öz**üniň**	öz**ümiziň**
DAT	öz**üme**	öz**üne**	öz**ümize**
LOC/TIM	öz**ümde**	öz**ünde**	öz**ümizde**
ABL	öz**ümden**	öz**ünden**	öz**ümizden**

For the 3rd person (s. and pl.) note that ACC, LOC and ABL become *–ni –nde* and *–nden* respectively i.e. following a possessive marker ending in a vowel an n is inserted before the noun declension marker. NB the rounding vowel harmony causes the 3 person possessive *i* to become a *ü* so we have *–üni –ünde* and *–ünden*.

e.g:

Özüň nähili? – How are **you**? (When you have already been asked how you are and replied)
Ol özi aýtdy – He said so himself.
Men özüme işleýärin – I work for myself.
Öz maşynyň sürýärsiňmi? – Are you driving your own car? (Or someone else's)
Ol öz maşyn süreýär – He drives <u>his</u> car.

3.8 Demonstrative Pronouns

There are two forms for each English word “this” and “that”:

“This”

NOM	bu	şu
ACC	muny	şuny
GEN	munuň	şunuň
DAT	muňa	şuňa
LOC/TIM	munda	şunda
ABL	mundan	şundan

“That”

NOM	ol	şol
ACC	ony	şony
GEN	onuň	şonuň
DAT	oňa	şoňa
LOC/TIM	onda	şonda
ABL	ondan	şondan

Bu gowy komputermi? – Is this a good computer?
Seniň jaýyň muňa berjekmi? – Do you want to give your house to this person?
Muny aljakmy? – Do want to buy this one?
Şonda men öýe gaýtdym – Then [when that happened] I returned home.
Onda men gitjek däl – Then [for that reason] I won’t go.
Şonuň üçin – therefore.

4 Grammar - The Verb Phrase

4.1 The infinitive

The infinitive is formed with verb stem followed by the suffix -mak/-mek:

al**mak** (to buy/take)	gel**mek** (to come)
al**mazlyk** (not to buy)	gel**mezlik** (not to come)

The verb stem is the second person singular form of the imperative (see "Imperative Mood").
The infinitive, however, declines as follows:

NOM	almak (to buy/take)
ACC	almag**y**
GEN	almag**yň**
DAT	almag**a** (in order to buy/take)
LOC/TIM	almag**da**
ABL	almag**dan**

Apart from the nominative and dative cases it is almost impossible to translate these without a context, as English simply doesn't have anything remotely like this. The following examples will help a little:

Un almak kyn boldy - it was difficult to get flour
[U:n almak ky:n boldy]

Un almagyň kyndygyny sen bileňokmy? - don't you know how hard it is to buy flour?

Men un almaga geldim - I came (in order) to buy flour [purpose: to by flour]

Şu gün un almagy ýatdan çykarma - don't forget to buy flour today!

Un almakda kynçylyk bar - [in general] it is difficult to buy flour

Un almakdan başga işler hem bar - (I've) got better things to do than buying flour!

The infinitive acts in the same way as an English participle: the last example would be "flour buying-(apart) from other work also exists".

The infinitive can also be possessed as follows:

my studying etc.	s	pl
1	meniň okamagym	biziň okamagymyz
2	seniň okamagyň	siziň okamagyňyz
3	onuň okamagy	olaryň okamaklary

(notice the *k* in the 3rd person plural)

It seems that whereas in the English language participles can be possessed, in Turkmen only infinitives can, so again the gloss of a Turkmen infinitive is an English participle.

Kartoçka	*(boýunça)*	*berilýän*	*zatlary*	*şu*	*gün*	*seniň*	*almagyň*	*gerek*
ration-card	(by)	being-given	things	this	day	your	buying	is-necessary

you need to buy the food we get on ration cards today

Seniň okamazlygyň saňa zyýan etdi, sen ekzamenden ikilik aldyň
- your lack of study was your downfall, you got two [out of five] in the exam

Uniwersitetde studentleriň okamaklary üçin şertler döredildi
- The University created conditions under which students could study

4.2 Question particle *–my/mi*

This forms part of the conjugated verb or predicate in order to turn a statement into a question:

Bazara gitjekmi?	Do you want to go to the market?
Süýji-püýji ýokmy?	Aren't there any sweets?
Ony tapmadyňmy?	Didn't you find him/her/it?
Dükanda doňdurma barmyka?	I wonder if there is any ice cream in the shop?
Ejeňe hat yazypmysyň?	Did you write a letter to your mother?

4.3 The Imperative and Optative Moods (commands and requests)

The imperative, which is used for commands and requests, is simply the root of the verb (or the infinitive minus *–mak/mek*), with the addition of the plural marker *–yň/iň* if addressing more than one person. Here is the paradigm for the verb *garaşmak* – to wait:

person – mood	s	pl
2 – imperative "wait!"	garaş	garaş**yň**
3 – optative "let him/them wait"	garaş**syn**	garaş**synlar**

Note that the plural form suffix in -yň is used for addressing people of importance such as *ýaşuly* or başlyk, whereas for simple polite **requests** the suffix –aý/-äý can be inserted to all these forms.

e.g. *Çörek beräý(iň)* - please pass the bread (iň = plural form also used in formal speech to show respect for those older than oneself)

Alaý! – Help yourself! [Lit: Please take!]

Another commonly used polite form is *-sene/seňizläň* (2nd person singular/plural) for polite **commands**

e.g. *Gazly suwdan bir çüýşe bersene* – Would you (please) give me a bottle of carbonated water

Çaý içseňizläň! - go on, please, have a cup of tea! (Extremely formal, rarely used form)

Occasionally you may here the use of the jussive the emphatic particle *–da/dä* on the verb:

Ol çaý içsin-dä - go on, let him have a cup of tea (before he goes)!
[ol çaý iç'sindä:]

4.4 The Voluntative-hortative Mood (let me, shall I)?

The Turkmen language also includes a way of stating that you would like to do something, or asking whether you might be able to do something (asking for permission) i.e. a 1st person equivalent of the imperative:

"let me/us wait!"	s	pl
1	garaş**aýyn**	garaş**aly(ň)**

The suffix -ň is added to the plural form when there are three or more people involved

eg. *Garaşaýynmy?* - Shall I wait?
[garaşaý'ynmy?]

Häzir, jaň edaýyn - Just a minute, let me make a telephone call!

Biz gaýdalyň! – Please let us go home now!

Gidelimi? - Shall we (two) go?

Ýör, öýde çaý içäýeli-dä - come on, let's (the two of us) go home and have a cup of tea!

Ýörüň, çaýhanada çaý içäýeliň-(le) - come, let's (all) go to the cafe for a cup of tea!

4.5 To have

Uses *bar bolmak* – "to exist", but the *bolmak* usually drops out. Lack of existence is denoted by *ýok*.

e.g. *Mende çörek bar* - I've got some bread (to me bread exists).

Çaga entek ýok – (We) haven't yet got any children (children still don't exist).

Meniň bir gyzym bar - I've got one daughter (my one daughter-POSS exists).

Armaň! – Don't get tired! (Greeting in workplace)
Bar bol! – We're fine! (Appropriate reply)

Un barmy? – Is there any flour? (i.e. in the shop/house)

Süýji-püýji ýokmy? – Aren't there any sweets?

4.6 Verb Paradigms

The most useful tenses when first learning to speak Turkmen are the following:

with *negative* stem		Definite Past *I did, I came, I took…*		Present (Literary form) *I do, I come, I take…*		**Shortened** Present (spoken form)[6]	
		s	*pl*	*s*	*pl*	*s*	*pl*
	1	etdim	etdik	edýärin	edýäris	edýä:n	edýä:s
etmek	2	etdiň	etdiňiz	edýärsiň	edýärsiňiz	edýä:ň	edýä:ňiz
(to do)	3	etdi	etdi(ler)	edýär	edýär(ler)	edýä:	edýä:ler
	negative	*etme-*		*etme-*			
	1	sürdüm	sürdük	sürýärin	sürýäris	sürýä:n	sürýä:s
sürmek	2	sürdüň	sürdüňiz	sürýärsiň	sürýärsiňiz	sürýä:ň	sürýä:ňiz
(to drive)	3	sürdi	sürdi(ler)	sürýär	sürýär(ler)	sürýä:	sürýä:ler
		sürme-		*sürme-*			
	1	aldym	aldymyz	alýaryn	alýarys	alýa:n	alýa:s
almak	2	aldyň	aldyňyz	alýarsyň	alýarsyňyz	alýa:ň	alýa:ňyz
(to take)	3	aldy	aldy(lar)	alyar	alýar(lar)	alýa:	alýa:(lar)
		alma-		*alma-*			
	1	boldum	bolduk	bolýaryn	bolýarys	bolýa:n	bolýa:s
bolmak	2	bolduň	bolduňyz	bolýarsyň	bolýarsyňyz	bolýa:ň	bolýa:ňyz
(to be)	3	boldy	boldy	bolýar	bolýar(lar)	bolýa:	bolýa:lar
		bolma-		*bolma-*			

[6] This is mainly used by the Teke tribe, the two halves of which live in Ahal welayat and the Mary area. Some dialects only use the long form, or a variant of it (such as the Ärsary *edýörin, bolýoryn* etc.)

(negative)	Present Perfect ***negative***[7] (spoken form) *I haven't done…*		Indefinite Future *NB see note below*		Definite Future (does not decline)
	s	*pl*	*s*	*pl*	
1			ederin	ederis	etjek
etmek 2			edersiň	edersiňiz	
(to do) 3			eder	eder(ler)	
neg. 1	*edemo:k*	*edemzo:k*	*etmerin*	*etmersiň*	*etjek däl*
2	*edeňo:k*	*edeňzo:k*	*etmersiň*	*etmersiňiz*	
3	*edeno:k*	*edeno:klar*	*etmez*	*etmez*	
1			sürerin	süreris	sürjek
sürmek 2			sürersiň	sürersiňiz	[sür'jök]
(drive) 3			sürer	sürer(ler)	
neg. 1	*süremo:k*	*süremzo:k*	*sürmerin…*		
2	*süreňo:k*	*süreňzo:k*			*sürjek*
3	*süreno:k*	*süreno:klar*			*däl*
1			alaryn	alarys	aljak
almak 2			alarsyň	alarsyňyz	
(take) 3			alar	alar(lar)	
neg. 1	*alamo:k*	*alamzo:k*	*almaryn*	*almarys*	*aljak däl*
2	*alaňo:k*	*alaňzo:k*	*almarsyň*	*almarsyňyz*	
3	*alano:k*	*alano:klar*	*almaz*	*almaz*	
	bolamo:k	*bolamzo:k*	bolaryn	bolarys	boljak
bolmak	*bolaňo:k*	*bolaňzo:k*	bolarsyň	bolarsyňyz	[bol'jok]
(to be)	*bolano:k*[8]	*bolano:klar*	bolar	bolar(lar)	
			bolmaryn…		*boljak däl*

[7] This is actually a shortened form of e.g. *edenim ýok* but is used very frequently in place of the present negative e.g. *men bilamok* – I don't know

[8] In Ärsary these are *sürem ýok, bolam ýok* etc.

Personal markers for past tense (you have seen some of these before – they are similar to the possessive markers):

-m	*-k*
-ň	*-ňiz*
-	*-ler*

Personal markers for present & future tenses, literary form:

-in	*-is*
-siň	*-siňiz*
-	*-ler*[9]

Indefinite future declension following a vowel e.g. for *aýlamak*:

aýlaryn	aýlarys
aýlarsyň	aýlarsyňyz
aýlar	aýlar

The third person future (negative) suffix is not simply a combination of the negative marker *-ma/me* and the future declension *–ar/er*, but has the form *–maz/mez*
e.g. ol gitme**z** - he won't be going (see large table above)

[9] Since plurality can be marked in many other ways using, for example, noun declension (see above), the plural marker is often omitted as being redundant e.g. *olar hemmesi gitdi* or *hemmesi gitdi* – they've all left.

4.7 Tenses, Aspects and Moods

Turkmen exhibits a type of aspect known as *evidentuality* – a measure of how definitely something has taken place. It is used frequently in both oral and literary forms of Turkmen. There are four levels:

1. Direct experience – 'he fixed the car (and I was there when he did it)'
2. Subjective i.e. using second-hand information – 'I was told that he fixed the car'
3. Rumoured – 'I've heard that cars sometimes get fixed'
4. Objective i.e. apparent – 'it seems that the car is fixed'

ol… (men) ***Evidentuality[10]:*** 3rd singular (1st singular) ***Tenses and moods:***	**1. Direct (experienced)** *I was there when...*	**2. Subjective ("definite" unwitnessed)** *probably, definitely, depend on me that...*	**3. Rumoured (indefinite)** *rumoured that, it is said that, I heard that, etc.*	**4. Objective (apparent)** *it seems that, it turns out that (3rd person s.)*
Simple Past *took*	aldy(m)			
Completed Past *have/had taken* **(Past Perfect)**	alypdy(m) *had taken – past in the past (pluperfect)*	alypdyr(yn) *he took (unwitnessed)* alandyr(yn) *he probably took*	alypmyş(ym) *people say he took)* alanmyş(ym) *people say he took*	alan eken *has taken it seems*
Incomplete - pres. *take* **(Imperfect)** - past *used to take*	alýar(yn) alýardy(m)	alýandyr(yn) *he is probably buying, (you know that I am buying)*	alýarmyş(ym) *it is said that he is taking*	alýar eken *he is apparently taking*
In principle - future *will take* - past *would take, would have taken*	alar(yn) alardy(m)		alarmyş *it is said that he used to take (3rd person - stories)*	alar eken *used to take (every day) - story use*
Volitional - future *will definitely take, want to take* - past *was going to take*	aljak aljakdy(m)	aljakdyr(yn) *he'll probably buy, (let me assure you that I'll buy)*	aljakmyş *it is said that he'll buy*	aljak eken *apparently going to take (getting ready to take)*
Moods:				
Desire - present *intends to t.* - past *intended to take*	almakçy almakçydy(m)	almakçydyr(yn) *he probably intends to buy (let me assure that I intend to buy)*	almakçymyş-(ym) *it is rumoured that he intends to take*	almakçy eken *intends to take it seems*
Obligation - present *have to, should* - "past" *should have.*	almaly *he should/ought to take, he needs to take* almalydy(m) *he ought to have taken...*	almalydyr *must definitely take*	almalymyş(ym) *rumour has it that he has to take*	almaly eken(im) *should take it seems, he should have taken* almalydy(m) eken *turns out that he should have taken*

NB The -dyr/dir- suffix drops out in the second person forms of column 3
eg. sen bilýäňsiň (bilýär*si*ň-*dir*-siň) - you probably know
Türkmen dilini öwrenipsiň – you've (already) learnt the Turkmen language
(See below for paradigm)

Hint: when language learning learn the first column, then the second, then the fourth, then the third (which is rarely used). Note especially column two row two ***-ypdyr*** *is frequently used.*

[10] *Evidentuality* is a kind of aspect. There is no equivalent in European languages. See 4.8

4.8 Subjective past perfect

Since this aspect is used so frequently, declines so differently, yet seems not to correlate with aspects in European languages, it seemed good to have a separate section on it.

	s		*pl*	
1	alypdyryn	*I must have taken (smth.)*	alypdyrys	*We must have taken (smth.)*
2	alypsyň	*You have taken (smth.)*	alypsyňyz	*You have taken (smth.)*
3	alypdyr	*He took (smth.)*	alypdyr(lar)	*They took (smth.)*

e.g. *Men uklapdyryn!* I must have fallen asleep!

Men ters geýinipdirin! I put my clothes on back-to-front!

Biz onuň öýüne aýlandyk. Ol işe gidipdir. We went round to his house but it turned out that he had gone to work.

When is this aspect used? Whenever the action was unwitnessed by the speaker. For instance if someone is sick, and you haven't yet visited them, you can say *ol kesellepdir*, but you cannot say *ol keselledi.* Certain bodily functions are almost always referred to using this aspect e.g. *ol gaýtarypdyr* – s/he has vomitted. There are some things that it is too polite to mention using the witnessed aspect!

Another case where this aspect is used is when a process has reached some stage of completion e.g. learning a language:

Sen Türkmen dilini öwrenipsiň! You have learnt Turkmen!

Perhaps only the Turkmen language student's teacher would be qualified to say, *"Sen Türkmen dilini öwrendiň"*, and even then, they might not use it, as they were not there when the student did all his/her homework. The process of language acquisition was mainly unwitnessed, yet it has somehow or other reached a stage of completion.

The negative declines as follows:

	s		*pl*	
1	almandyryn	*It looks as if I didn't take*	almandyrys	*It looks as if we didn't take*
2	almandyrsyň	*You haven't taken*	almandyrsyňyz	*You haven't taken*
3	almandyr	*He didn't take*	almandyr(lar)	*They didn't take*

e.g. *Ol meni işe almandyr* – He didn't give me a job.

Siz Türkmen dilini entek öwrenmändirsiňiz – You haven't yet learnt Turkmen properly it seems[11].

Nahar örän süýji bolupdyr! – The meal was delicious! (Literally: The food became very sweet)

Questions have another form (notice positioning of the negative particle for 2nd person):

	s		*pl*	
1	alypdyrynmy?	*Did it turn out that I took?*	alypdyrysmy?	*Did it turn out that we took?*
2	alypmysyň?	*Did you take (in the end)?*	alypmysyňyz?	*Did you take (in the end)?*
3	alypdyrmy?	*Did he take (in the end)?*	alypdyr(lar)my?	*Did they take (in the end)?*

e.g. *Otyrmysyňyz?* Are you having a meal? (Literally: Are you sitting?)

Sag-gurgun otyrmysyňyz? Are you all well? (Literally: Are you sitting well and healthy?)

Negative questions:

	s		*pl*	
1	almandyrynmy?	*Didn't I take (in the end)?*	almandyrysmy?	*Didn't we take (in the end)?*
2	almanmysyň?	*Didn't you take (in the end)?*	almanmysyňyz?	*Didn't you take (in the end)?*
3	almandyrmy?	*Didn't he take (in the end)?*	almandyr(lar)my?	*Didn't they take (in the end)?*

e.g. *Yanyňda çörek almanmysyň?* Didn't you bring bread after all?

[11] Notice the overlap with the **Objective (apparent)** aspect. Turkmen sometimes use these aspects almost interchangeably.

4.9 Past in the past (pluperfect)

This is formed by taking the gerund form *–yp/ip* and adding the simple past tense suffix *–dy/di*. It is used when referring to something that happened previous to the time frame being talked about e.g. *alypdym* in:

Men onuň ýanyna aýlandym. Men maşyn alypdym, şonuň üçin men ol ýere çalt baryp ýetdim.
I went to see him. I had bought a car, so I got there quite quickly.

The negative is formed by taking the negative past participle *–man/män* and adding the simple past tense suffix *–dy/di* e.g.

Men entek maşyn almandym, şol sebäpli men giç galdym.

I hadn't yet bought a car, so I was late.

4.10 Modal and Auxiliary Verbs

Some of these decline, some do not. Notice that not all take the infinitive of the main verb.

"is necessary, need":
Maňa ýaşamaga jaý ***gerek*** - I need somewhere to live.
(the verb *gerek* does not decline since it is a modal verb)

"like" type 1:

Men arak içmegi halamok, men suw içmegi halaýa(ry)n - I don't like do drink alcohol, I like to drink water.

Men ol gyz halaýaryn – I'm in love with that girl.

"like" type 2:

Men şu köýnegi gowy göreyärin - I like this dress.

"want to, would like to"

Men şu kitap aljak - I want to buy this book.
Men şol kitap almak isleýärin - I really want to buy that book.
Men kitap aljak bolýaryn - I'm going to buy a book, I want to buy a book.

"very much want, desire"

Format: Verb-as/es/äs-possessive + gelmek (3s past, present or future)

	s	pl
1	gör**esim**	gör**esimiz**
2	gör**esiň**	gör**esiňiz**
3	gör**esi**	gör**esleri**

NB the 3rd plural suffix is not quite the sames as normal possessives (it retains [ler])

(Meniň) Türkmenistany göresim geldi - I wanted to see Turkmenistan
(Meniň) turkmen dilini öwrenesim gelýär - I want to learn Turkmen
(Seniň) çaý içesiň gelýärmi? - do you want to drink tea?
(Meniň) Çülä gidesim geler - I shall want to go to Chulee.

There is another form which has: verb + *-sa/se* (possessive) *-dy/di* (past):

Türkmen dilini tiz öwrensemdim (öwren-sem-dim) - I would like to learn Turkmen quickly

And it is also possible to say something like this in an impersonal way:

Aftobus wagtynda geläýedi - oh please let the bus come now!

"am able to, can"

Men çörek alyp bilýärin
Men çörek al -yp bil -ýärin
I bread buy -GER know -1sPst
I am able to buy bread, I can buy bread, I know how to...

"may I, is it possible to?"

(Sizi) surat almak mümkinmi? - Is it possible to take (your)/a photo?
(the suffix *-my/-mi* changes a statement to a question)

"prepare oneself to, just about to"

Ol suwa bökjek bolyar - she's just about to jump in the water

"it turns out that, it seems..."

Ol her guýn süýt alýa:n eken - it turns out that she buys milk each day
Sen bilýä:ň eken! - you know it after all! (to a student who has been tested)

NB *eken* is also used with the present and past participles in the context of stories. Here it simply adds a mythical flavour to the narrative (eg. *Bir bar eken, bir ýo:k eken, gurwaga bar eken* - Once upon a time there was a frog.). The present participle with *eken* denotes a repeated action, the past participle a completed action. The future indefinite participle (eg. geler) is also used in stories in this sense (eg. " ..." *diýip gezer eken* - saying as he walked). See above table for other uses.

"I suppose"

Use verb + öýtmek

Ol ma:mladyr öýdýän - he's right, I suppose

Siz uniwersitetde öýlän bolmazsyňyz öýtdym - You won't be at the University this afternoon I suppose

"Might be..."

Onuň geläýmegi mümkin - he might come

4.11 Mood

4.11.1 The Conditional Mood –sa/-se

This is used with *eger* (if), and for some events that are hoped for like the birth of a baby.

-sa	s	pl
1	alsa**m**	alsa**k**
2	alsa**ň**	alsa**ňyz**
3	alsa	alsa**lar**

e.g. *Eger sen gitseň, men hem gidärin* - If you go, I will go too.
Men maşyn alaryn, nesip bolsa - I'm going to buy a car, God willing (if destined)

Compare the two following examples:

Ol häzir geler. ***Gelse*** *biz bazara gideli.* – He will arrive soon. **When** he gets here let's go to the market.
Ol ***gelse*** *biz belki bazara gideris.* – **If** he comes we might go to the market.

Notice that the word *gelse* can be translated as 'when he comes' or 'if he comes' depending on the context.

Negative: *almasa(m).*

4.11.2 The Subjunctive Mood

This is formed by the use of the future indefinite tense, and the past tense combined.
e.g.
Sen gideň bolsa gowy bolardy! – It would have been good if you had come too!
Men maşyn alardym, ýöne pulum ýetmedi. – I would have bought a car, but I didn't have enough money.

4.11.3 Some Continous Moods

Adding *-ber-* after the verb stem and before any suffixes gives the sense of "go on doing"

e.g. *Oturberäý* - please go on sitting!

also the verbs *ýörmek, otyrmak, durmak,* and *ýatmak* are used to add a continous sense. Use them with perfect participles:

e.g. *Olar gezip ýörler* - they're going for a walk.

Ol ukläp ýatyr – He is sleeping.

Myrat dynç alyp ýatyr – Murad is resting.

Ýagyş ýagyp dur – It is raining.

Biz garaşyp otyrys – We are waiting.

Ol heniz hem okap ýör – He is still studying.

The verbs decline like so:

	s	pl
1	ýör**ün**	ýör**üs**
2	ýörs**üň**	ýörs**üňiz**
3	ýör	ýör**ler**

contrast 'işläp ýör', 'garaşyp otyr', 'garaşyp dur' and 'dyňç alyp ýatyr'

4.12 Voice

Voice is usually part of the verb formation.

4.12.1 Verb formation - Passive

Passive is formed by the addition of the suffix *–yl/-il/-ul/-ül* following a consonant and *–l* following a vowel e.g.

aýtmak	*aýdylmak*	(to be said)
okamak	*okalmak*	(to be read)

4.12.2 Verb formation - Middle/Reflexive

The middle voice is formed by the addition of *–an/-en/-un/-ün* following a consonant and *–n* following a vowel e.g.

geýmek	*geýinmek*	(to get dressed)
görmek	*görünmek*	(to appear)

Semantically this form can give passive, middle or reflexive senses, though true reflexives would use the reflexive pronoun *öz* e.g. *ol özi geýinip bilýär* – he can get dressed himself

4.12.3 Verb formation - Causative

The causative is formed by the addition of suffixes *–dyr/dir, –t, –yr/ir, or –yz/iz* to the verb stem.
e.g.
okamak – to study
okatmak – to teach
okatdyrmak – to arrange tuition (for)

turmak	to stand	*turuzmak*	to get someone up
gorkmak	to be afraid	*gorkuzmak*	to frighten someone
ýatmak	to lie down	*ýatyrmak*	to put someone down to sleep
düşünmek	to understand	*düşündürmek*	to explain
öwrenmek	to learn	*öwretmek*	to teach

4.12.4 Verb formation - Reciprocal/Cooperative

This is formed by the addition of –yş/iş to the stem. It denotes some kind of reciprocal action, or something that takes time.
e.g.

ýetmek	to be enough, sufficient	*ýetişmek*	to be on time; to succeed
öwrenmek	to learn	*öwrenişmek*	to get used to
gelmek	to come	*gelişmek*	to suit someone
almak	to buy	*alyşmak*	to barter

4.12.5 Verb formation - Gradual increase (Reciprocal-Causative)

The combination of the reciprocal and the causative suffixes give rise to a new form denoting either a gradual increase in something, a prolonged action, or getting someone to do something with you:

iýmek	to eat	*iýişdirmek*	to taste (all or a quantity of)
gelmek	to come	*gelişdirmek*	to attribute beauty to someone
satmak	to sell	*satyşdyrmak*	to have a sale
-		*planlaşdyrmak*	to plan, draw up a plan

4.12.6 Verb formation - Causative-Passive

Formed by addition of first causative then passive suffixes which combine to form *–dyryl/-diril* or similar (see 4.12.3 and 4.12.1 respectively) e.g. *atlandyrylmak* – to be named; *sadalaşdyrylmak* – to be simplified.

4.12.7 Benefactive

This takes the form *–yp/ip –aý/äý* e.g.

Maňa ýazyp beräý-da! - Please write it down for me!

See below for a description of the Gerund form *–yp/ip*.

4.13 Participles and Gerunds

4.13.1 Participles

	Present	**"Past"**	**"Future"**
Type 1 (negative)	al**ýa:n** *taking* (almaýan)	al**an** *took, having taken* (almadyk)	al**ar** *taking (contemp. & story use)* (almaz)
Type 2		(al**dyk** *that taking.../my taking)*	al**jak** *will be taking* (almajak)

Note: the participle *aljak* is used more frequently in contemporary Turkmen. The *aldyk* type of participle is only found in old literary Turkmen, wheras *alan* occurs regularly in both spoken and written Turkmen. The negative suffix *-madyk* is, however, regularly used in spoken Turkmen.

Adjectival Participle (Gerund) suffixes *yp, -a*

e.g. *Alyp* taking (negative – *alman [alma:n], almazdan*)

Biz Oraz bilen eleşip görüşdik - Oraz and I greeted each other

Men şu kitabi bir gi:jede okap çykdym - I read the whole book in one night

Men dura dura ýadadym - I'm tired of waiting

4.13.2 Gerunds

Gerunds[12] are often used for the first verbs in a sequence of actions:

Ol bazara gidip, goýun satyn alypdyr – He went to the market and bought a sheep.

[12] Verbs used as nouns.

> Häli aldym-da, şindi aldym bolyp barýarkalar, gapdallaryndan bir towşanjyk çykyp: "Tilki aga, nebeýle gaty gidýärsiň, örän ylgasyň gelipdir öýdýän?" - *Well they are chasing after him and just on the point of catching him up, when near them a bunny rabbit pops out: "Mr. Fox, what's the hurry? I suppose you really fancied a run," he says.*

In the second example *bolup barmak* is a compound verb, whereas *çykyp* is a sequential gerund.
Predicative suffix *-dik* (to translate this, you need to insert the verb "to be", and usually a relative conjunction like "that" in the sentence). This takes the place of a complementizer in the Turkmen language:

eg. *Sen onuň nirede işleýändigini bilýäňmi?*
you his where working -PRED-POSS-ACC know -Q?
*Do you know where he **is** working?Do you know where he works?*

Meniň mugallymdigimi bileňokmy?
my teacher -PRED-POSS-ACC don't-you-know- Q?
*Don't you know **that I am** a teacher?*

Note: *-digimi and -digini* are made up of *-dik-im-i* or *-dik-i-ni* (predicator, possessive suffix, accusative (after a vowel in case of -ni)).
the *k* in *-dik* becomes *g* before a vowel
NB see appendix A for a drill on the *-digini* suffix

Use of **üçin** with nouns made from verb stems:

üçin often needs a noun preceding it, so a participle is used with **-lik/-lyk** added to turn it into a noun, then the possesive suffix after that (eg. ýaşa-ýan-lyk-ym):

in order to live	*s.*	*pl.*
1	ýaşaýanlygym üçin	ýaşaýanlygymyz üçin
2	ýaşaýanlygyň üçin	ýaşaýanlygyňyz üçin
3	ýaşaýanlygy üçin	ýaşaýanlygygy üçin

eg. Men häzir şu jaýde ýaşaýanlygym üçin pul töleýarin (I'm paying money for my living in this flat/apartment at the moment i.e. I'm renting this flat/apartment)

but sometimes üçin is used with an infinitive as in this example:

Men pul töläp ýaşamak üçin jaý gözleýärin (I'm looking for a house to rent)

5 Other word classes

5.1 Postpositions

5.1.1 Introduction

Postpositions are just like prepositions in English, except that they occur after the noun they are related to rather than before it.

e.g. using the postposition *bäri* we have:

şäheriň bärisinde – this side of the city

Notice that the noun is in the genitive case, whereas the postposition is both possessed and in the locative case. This same postposition can, however, be used with the nominative case as well:

Ol ýedi aý bäri Türkmenistanda ýaşaýar eken – He has been living in Turkmenistan for 7 months.

The postposition *çenli*, on the other hand, takes the dative case on the preceding noun:

sagat sekizä çenli – by six o'clock

Aşgabada çenli – as far as Ashgabat

5.1.2 Common Postpositions

The following table shows some of the more common postpositions used in Turkmen, and which cases they usually take on the preceding noun:

Postposition	*Case on preceding noun*	*Associated meaning*
barada	Nominative	about
bilen		with
sebäpli		because
üçin		for, to, in order to
hökmünde		as
ýaly		like, as if; so that
garşy	Dative	opposed to, against
görä		according to, reason
derek		instead of, in its place
laýyk		similar to, in conformity with
meňzeş		like
çenli		up to, until; by (+ time clause)
ýakyn		close to
aňryk	Ablative	beyond
başga		other than, different
bäri		since, for
daşary		outside of
soň		after

5.1.3 Nominal Postpositions

Some postpositions are actually nouns/adjectives in their root form e.g. *yz* which means *track* or *ýüz* which means *face*. In fact most of the postpositions with the suffix *–ynda/-inde/-unda/-ünde* and take the genitive are in this category. These *nominal prepositions*, which are nouns/adjectives in their root form, have been noted in the table below.

Postposition in locative case	*Case on preceding noun*	*Associated meaning as postposition*	*From noun/adjective*	*Meaning of root noun/adjective*
aňyrsynda	Genitive	behind	*aňyr*	other
arkasynda		behind	*arka*	back
başynda		at the start of	*baş*	head
boýunda		on, along	*boýun*	neck; shore
gapdalynda		next to, by	*gapdal*	side
garşysynda		opposite	*garşy*	against, opposed
içinde		inside	*iç*	inside

ýüzünde		all over	*ýüz*	face
ortasynda		in the middle	*orta*	centre, middle
öňünde		in front of	*öň*	front
tarapynda		along the side of	*tarap*	side
ugurynda		along	*ugur*	side, verge
üstünde		on top of	*üst*	surface
yzynda		behind	*yz*	track
ýanynda		beside	*ýan*	side

5.2 Adjectives

Adjectives precede the noun they are desribing e.g.

adyl sud – a just judge

gök önümler – greens

uly baýramçylyk – an important festival

In order to use the adjective as a predicate (in place of a verb), the *–dyr/dir* suffix is often used:

Aşgabat ulydyr! – Ashgabat is large!

Biziň Hudaýymyz beýikdir! – Our God is great!

Note that there is no equivalent for the verb 'to be' in Turkmen. The verb *bolmak* is sometimes translated as a rough equivalent of 'to be', but never in the present tense.

Many nouns can be used as adjectives in Turkmen e.g. *jellat* which means 'hangman' or 'merciless' according to the context.

5.3 Adverbs

Many Turkmen adjectives can be used as adverbs e.g. *ömürboýy* 'everlasting, eternal' which can be used with to describe a verb, in which case it means 'eternally'. There are other adverbs which can only be used adverbally such as *entek, häli, köplenç, käwagt* e.g.

ol entek gelenok – she hasn't come yet

olar köplenç ir gelýär(ler) – they usually come early

5.4 Numerals

5.4.1 Cardinal Numbers

One to ten:

1	*bir*	*6*	*alty*
2	*iki*	*7*	*ýedi*
3	*üç*	*8*	*sekiz*
4	*dört*	*9*	*dokuz*
5	*bäş [bä:ş]*	*10*	*on [o:n]*

Eleven onwards:

11	*on bir [o:n'bir]*
12	*on iki*
	etc.

Twenty, thirty… ninety

20	*ýigrimi*	*21*	*ýigrimi bir*	*22*	*ýigrimi iki*	*etc.*	
30	*otuz*						

40 *kyrk*
50 *elli*
60 *altmyş*
70 *ýetmiş*
80 *segsen*
90 *togsan*

One hundred – nine hundred

100 *ýüz*
200 *iki ýüz*
300 *üç ýüz*
etc.

One thousand – a million

1000 *müň*
2000 *iki müň*
3000 *üç müň*
etc.

1000000 *bir million*

One thousand million (US billion) – *milliard*

E.g. 1,352,647 *bir million üç ýüz elli iki müň alty ýüz kyrk ýedi* – one million three hundred and fifty-two thousand six hundred and forty seven.

5.4.2 Ordinal Numbers

These are formed by use of the suffix *–ynjy/inji* following a consonant and *–njy/nji* following a vowel e.g.

sekizinji Mart – the eighth of March

ol ikinji gatda ýaşaýar – he lives on the first [US: second] floor

5.4.3 Count Nouns

When asking for a number of items the indeclinable word *sany* is usually used:

Gazly suwdan iki sany çüýşe bersene – Please give me two bottles of fizzy water.

6 Sentence-level analysis, syntax

6.1 Word order

The usual word order is:

	subject	(indirect object)	object	verb phrase (e.g. gerund + main verb.)
e.g.	*sen*	*çagalara*	*derman*	*aldyňmy?*

- have you bought medicine for the children?

6.2 Simultaneous and sequential actions ("when, after, while")

6.2.1 Sequential present/future actions (before, until) –ça/çä

The suffixes are added to the present participles like so:

"before I come back"	**s**	**pl**
1	men gelýän**çäm**	biz gelýän**çäk**
2	sen gelýän**çäň**	siz gelýän**çäňiz**
3	ol gelýän**çe**	olar gelýän**çe**(ler)

e.g. Sen şuny ýazýançaň, men daşary çykyp geleýin - while you're writing this down, let me pop outside briefly. (Literally "until you write this, let me go out and come back").

Men daşary çykyp gelýä(ri)nçäm, sen şuny ýaz - while I'm outside, you write this down! (lit: I'm going to pop outside, you write this down **before** I get back!)

Men öýlän bazara gidip gelýänçäm, siz öýde maňa garaşyp otyrarsyňyz - This afternoon you wait at home **until** I get back from the bazaar.

Ol Moskvadan gelýänçe sen maşyny bejermeli - You've got to repair the car **before** he gets back from Moscow.

6.2.2 Simultaneous Past actions of long duration (while, during, when) –ka/kä

Formed by adding *-kä/-ka* to the verb stem, followed by personal suffixes *(-m, -ň* etc.). It is used when the action occurs over an extended time period i.e. during a continuous event.

e.g. *Men işden öýe gelýärkäm, Çynar magazinine sowuldym* – when (lit: while) I was coming home from work, I stopped off at Chinar magazine.

I wonder if... –myka/-mikä

Use the suffixes -myka -mikä -muka -mükä

eg. *Ol işleýärmikä* - I wonder if he's working?
Magazinde çörek ýokmuka? – I wonder if there might not be some bread in the shop?

6.2.3 Simultaneous Past actions - punctiliar (when) –da/-de

Formed by adding the possessive and locative (in time) suffixes to the past participle (*gelen-imiz-de* for example). It denotes an action of short or definite duration occuring in some kind of context (e.g. winter), whereas *-ka* is a longer action. See table below:

(spoken form in brackets)	s	pl
1	gelenimde (gelemde)	gelenimizde (gelemizde)
2	geleniňde (geleňde)	geleniňizde (geleňizde)
3	geleninde (gelende)	geleninde (gelende)

e.g. *Men Türkmenistana gelenimde, gyş aýydy* - when I came to Turkmenistan, it was winter

6.2.4 Sequential actions (after, when, before) –dan/-den

Formed by adding *-dan, -den* to the verb stem, followed by *soň* (*soň* means "after" – see section 5. Postpositions):

e.g. *Sapak gutarandan soň, men bazara gitjek* - when the lesson's finished, I'm going to the bazaar

For posteriority simply use *öň* instead of *soň*. e.g. *Sapakdan öň* - before the lesson

Contrast (but...) bolsa, -da/-de
There are many different types of contrast that would be translated "but" in English:

eg.

Sende	*gara*	*ruçka*	*bar,*	*mende*	*bolsa*	*gök*
to you	black	pen	exist,	to me	if it is (rather)	blue

- you've got a black pen, but I've got a blue one

6.3 Sub-clauses and reported speech

Reported speech has the following construction:

NP_{SU} NP_{DO} *diýip aytdy/sorady* etc.

Where NP_{SU} is the subject, NP_{DO} is the reported speech, and *diýip* means "said that" (literally "saying")

e.g. *Men Myrada "men gitjek däl" diýip aýtym* - I told Murad that I wouldn't be going.

or *Ol "men gitjek" diýdi.* - He said "I'm going."

Sen Marala aýdäý, Gözel "oňa ýaglyk aldym" diýdi – tell Maral that Gozel said that she had bought her a head scarf

For oral story-telling and longer discourses:

Ol şeýle gürrüň berdi: "men... " - he told this tale, "I... "

Plan-purpose clauses also have the same construction:

NP_{SU} NP_{DO} *diýip* VP

Where in this case the NP_{DO} is a subclause, VP is the verb phrase, and *diýip* is equivalent to "in order to" in English:

Men seni göreýin diýip geldim - I came in order to see you

Indirect speech uses the ***-dik*** suffix (predicative suffix):

Ol	*özüniň*		*gitjek**dig**ini*	*aýtdy*	- she said that she was going to leave
she	her	-own	going-to-go-PRED-POSS-ACC	said	

Or simply has a comma (pause) and uses the 3rd person singular:

> *Sen Marala aýdäý, Gözel oňa ýaglyk alypdyr* – tell Maral that Gozel has bought her a head scarf).

In literary Turkmen the following construction is often found:

> *Ol şeýle diýdi: “ ”* - he said, “ ”

Some more examples of indirect speech:

> *Ol Angliýa gitjekdigi barada aýtdy* - he talked about his going to England
>
> *Ol Angliýa gitjegini aýtdy* - he said that he's going to England
>
> *Ol meniň Angliýa gitjegimi aýtdy* - he said that I am going to England
>
> *Ol saňa meniň Angliýa gitjekdigimi barada aýtdymy?* - has he told you that I am going to England?
>
> *Ol saňa meniň Angliýa gitjegimi aýtdymy?* - has he told you that I’m going to England?

6.4 Conjunctions and Subordinators

Often sentences that would contain the word “because” in English would be two separate sentences without any conjunction in Turkmen:

Men gitjek däl. Men ýadadym.
I’m not going **because** I’m too tired.
.
There are however several words which are used as conjunctions or subordinators:

çünki	because	*Ol gyşgynç. Çünki ol garrapdyr.*	He’s miserly. It’s because he’s grown old.
-da/-de	and, but		
emma	but		
hem	also, and		
(sebäp	reason)	**sebäbi**	because, for this reason
soň	later		
şoňa görä	seeing that		
şeýlelikde	in this way		
şonuň üçin	therefore		
we	and		
welin	however		
ýöne	but		

7 Word Formation

7.1 Verbs to Nouns

Formed by adding the suffixes –ýyş/-ýiş, -lyk/-lik or -ma/-me to the verb stem:

Infinitive of Verb	*Derived Noun*
okamak	oka**ýyş**
ýaşamak	ýaşa**ýyş**
geplemek	geple**ýiş**

These nouns are often possessed as follows:

e.g. *Şu mesele seniň garaýşyň meni gyzyklandyrýar* - your opinion on this matter interests me

Notice that the *y* drops out when the possessive suffix is added i.e. *-ýyş* becomes *-ýş* when followed by *-y*.

7.2 Adjectives to Nouns and vica versa

Many nouns can simply be used as adjectives, and many adjectives as adverbs, without any changes at all. The suffix *–ly/-li* sometimes changes a noun to an adjective, and suffix *–lyk/-lik* sometimes changes an adjective to a noun:

Original word	*Gloss*		*Generated word*	*Gloss*
(azgyn	prostitute		azgyn	immoral)
(batgalyk	bog		batgalyk	boggy)
akyl	intellect	➔	akylly	wise
güýç	strength, power		güýçli	strong, powerful
akylly	wise		akyllylyk	wisdom
abat	whole		abatlyk	wholeness

8 Bibliography

Frank and Tachmouradova, *Turkmen-English Dictionary*, Dunwoody Press, 1999

Appendices

8.1 Appendix A - A drill to help master the "-digini" suffix

The model sentence uses the verb *bişirmek* – to cook, bake:

Maral	*Gözel*	*-iň*	*çörek*	*bişir*	*-en*	*-dik*	*-i*	*-ni*	*bil*	*-ýär*
Maral	Gözel	GEN	bread	bake	PPTC	EMB	POSS	ACC	know	PRES

Maral knows that Gozel has baked bread.

Substitution Item		Participle + suffix	
(Model sentence)	*Maral Gözeliň çörek*	*bişiren**digini***	*bilýär*
1. alan (having bought/taken)	″	*alan**dygyny***	″
2. iýen (having eaten)	″	*etc.*	″
3. satan (having sold)	″		″
4. beren (having given)	″		″
5. getiren (having brought)	″		″
6. soran (having asked)	″		″

How to drill:

1. Tape your language resource person going across each row, including the substitution item in the first column.
2. Then tape him/her just saying each sentence, with a pause afterwards long enough for you to mimic the sentence.

The best thing to do is to whisper each sentence after him/her while you are recording. Then you can listen to the first recording until it is familiar, and practice repeating the sentence with the second. If you do the repetition drill with your language resource person, instead of the tape recording, s/he should repeat the sentence after you only if you make a mistake.

Key:

ACC	Accusative
EMB	Embedded
POSS	Possessive
PPTC	Past Participle
PRES	Present tense (unmarked = 3rd person)
GEN	Genitive

Bibliography