터키어와 아제르바이잔어의 모음조화 비교*

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A Comparative Study of Vowel Harmony in Turkish and Azerbaijani

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In this paper, vowel harmony in modern Turkish and Azerbaijani which belong to the South-West or Oğuz branch of the Turkic language group is compared and contrasted. Vowel harmony in both modern Turkish and Azerbaijani is based on the spreading of [back] and [round] features from stem initial vowel to the other stem vowels and to the suffix vowels (left to right). But a rounding harmony is superimposed over a backness harmony in both modern Turkish and Azerbaijani. Although vowel harmony may be generally formulated as that the vowels in a word agree with respect to a certain phonetic and acoustic feature category, the difficult task is to provide an explanation for the many types of irregular and exceptional behaviour of harmony systems. Since the acoustic feature [grave] is especially useful in the description of phonological processes in Turkic languages, it could be designated as a distinctive feature. It could be a common distinctive feature applied both for the vowels and for the consonants and could be used to explain the assimilations occurring between a consonant and a vowel.

* Key Words: Azerbaijani, [grave], Turkic languages, Turkish, Vowel harmony.