This article describes ‘word order’ in Turkish on the basis of twenty three word order criteria which have been utilized in Dryer (1992, 2014) to distinguish OV languages from VO languages. The study shows that given twenty relevant criteria in Turkish, this language behaves predominantly like a strong OV language, with a small number of strong VO languages’ characteristics typologizing Turkish as a VO language. Being predominantly a strong OV language, Turkish is a left-branching type of language, the behaviour that bears complete consistency with Dryer (1992)’s ‘Branching Direction Theory’.

Keywords: Word Order; Correlation Pairs; Typology; Turkish.

Introduction
‘Word order’1, or specifically speaking ‘constituent order’2, is a particularly important typological3 parameter (see Comrie, 1989: 42 & 86), hence ‘word order typology’ or ‘constituent order typology’. According to Comrie (ibid: 86), word order typology, mainly through Greenberg (1966b)’s seminal article, i.e. some universals of grammar with particular reference to the order of meaningful elements, has played a major role in the recent development of language typology. Typologizing languages in terms of their word order characteristics is conducted via some parameters which Comrie (ibid: 87-91) has sorted out into two sets:

I. major ones: (1) the relative order of subject, verb, and object, (2) word order within the noun phrase (the relative order of adjective (A) and noun (N); the order of head noun (N) and relative clause (Rel) in the relative clause construction; the relative order of possessive (genitive) (G) and head noun (N)), (3) type of adposition: preposition or posposition.

II. less central ones: (1) the order of auxiliary verbs and main verbs, (2) the order of the comparative and the standard of comparison, (3) the order of affix and stem: suffixing or prefixing.

As Comrie (ibid: 92) has noted, though most of the above-listed parameters are logically independent of one another, it turns out to be the case that there are many statistically significant correlations that can be drawn among the mentioned parameters, and it is one of Greenberg (ibid)’s more specific merits to have established so many of these correlations.4

Parallel with Comrie (ibid.)’s view on there being many statistically significant correlations among various word order parameters, Dryer (1992), in his paper entitled as the Greenbergian word order correlations, has substantiated the correlation between the order of certain pairs of grammatical elements and the order of verb and object. To refer to the certain pairs of grammatical elements, Dryer (ibid: 82) has coined the term ‘correlation pairs’ and defined it as follows: “If the order of a pair of elements X and Y exhibits a correlation with the order of verb and object respectively, then I will refer to the ordered pair <X,Y> as a CORRELATION PAIR, and I will call X a VERB PATTERNER and Y an OBJECT PATTERNER with respect to the correlation pair”.5 To illustrate the term, Dryer (ibid.) has stated that since OV [i.e. verb final]
languages tend to be postpositional and VO [i.e. verb medial] languages prepositional\(^1\), we can say that the ordered pair \(<\text{adposition},\text{NP}>\) is a correlation pair, and that, with respect to this pair, adpositions are verb patterners and the NPs that they combine with are object patterners. It is noteworthy that Dryer has put forth 23 correlation pairs in his paper and has assigned a separate table to each of them. In the following comes the first table in Dryer’s paper to exemplify the point.\(^2\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Order of adposition and noun phrase</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OV&amp;Postp</td>
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<tr>
<td>OV&amp;Prep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prop</td>
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<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>VO&amp;Postp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VO&amp;Prep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prop</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Key:** In this table, as in the other tables in Dryer’s paper, the world has been divided into six areas: Africa; Euras= Europe and Asia, except for Southeast Asia; SEAAsia&Oc= Southeast Asia (Sino-Tibetan, Thai, and Mon-Khmer) and Oceania (Austronesian); Aus-NewGui= Australia and, excluding Austronesian languages of New Guinea; NAmer= North America, including languages of Mexico, as well as Mayan and Aztecan languages in Central America; SAmer= South America, including languages in Central America except Mayan and Aztecan languages. In regard with the numbers, except for the last column which indicates number of languages, the other numbers represent numbers of genera, i.e. “groups of languages whose similarity is such that their genetic relatedness is uncontroversial” (Dryer, ibid: 84). The line labeled ‘Prop’ is the proportion of genera of the type of the first line as a proportion of the sum of the numbers of genera on the first two lines. For example, the .88 under Africa in the first table is the proportion of 22 as a proportion of 22+3=25 (Dryer, 2014).

The table above verifies Dryer’s aforementioned assertion as to the OV languages tending to be postpositional and VO languages prepositional. Specifically speaking, as the last column of the table shows, 523 OV languages are postpositional while only 17 OV languages are prepositional; on the other hand, while only 46 VO languages are postpositional, 498 VO languages are prepositional.

The present paper aims to check Dryer (1992, 2014)’s word order typological criteria against Turkish language and thereby present a description of its typological characteristics in terms of the mentioned criteria.

**Word order typology of Turkish**

*Turkish language*

Genealogically, Turkish belongs to the Turkic language family, specifically South-West (or Oğuz) group, together with Gagauz, Azerbaijani (Azerbaijani) and Turkmenian (Kornfilt, 1997: xxi-xxii; Johanson, 1998: 82; Kornfilt, 2009: 519-520). Turkish is the largest language (in terms of number of speakers) in the Turkic family, and it accounts for some 40 per cent of the total number of speakers of Turkic languages (Kornfilt, 1997: xxi).

Geographically, Turkish is the official and dominant language of Turkey (Turkish Republic), where it is the native language of over 90 per cent of the population, i.e. some 50 million people (The largest linguistic minority in the Turkish Republic is formed by Kurdish speakers, mainly in southeastern Turkey.). Turkish is also a co-official language (together with Greek) in Cyprus, where it is spoken by about 19 per cent of the population. But the largest number of Turkish speakers outside Turkey, perhaps one million, is to be found in the Balkans, especially Bulgaria, but also in the former Yugoslavia (especially Macedonia) and in Greece, although in the last few years, the Turkish Republic has repatriated a number of these speakers, especially from Bulgaria (Kornfilt, 1997: xxi).

Finally, with respect to ‘the relative order of subject, verb, and object’ typological parameter, the basic word order in Turkish is SOV (Erguvanlı, 1984: 5; Comrie, ibid: 87; Kornfilt, 2009:534). The following examples respectively taken from Comrie (ibid.) and Kornfilt (ibid.) illustrate the basic SOV order in

\(^1\) It should be highly noted that classifying languages into two types, i.e. OV (verb final) and VO (verb medial), is based not on relative order of ‘verb’ and ‘object’, but on languages’ typological characteristics. As an illustration, Persian, an Iranian language which is the sole official language in Iran, is an (S) OV language in terms of the relative order of (subject), verb and object, but predominantly a VO one on account of its typological behavior (see Comrie,1989: 96; Dabir-Moghaddam, 2001: 17-19; 2013:17-129).

\(^2\) It is noteworthy that all the three tables in the present paper are based on Dryer (2014). It should be made clear that Dryer (ibid.) has updated his data utilized in Dryer (1992). It should also be noted that, upon my request, Professor Dryer kindly emailed me his updated data on July 8, 2014.
Turkish:

1. Hasan öküz + ü al + di
   Hasan ox + Acc. buy + Past
   “Hasan bought the ox.”

2. Hasan kitab + ı çocuğ + a oku + du
   Hasan book + Acc. child + Dat. read + Past
   “Hasan read the book to the child.”

Word order typological criteria

In the following, Dryer (1992, 2014)’s 23 word order typological criteria (C) will be checked against Turkish language. Each criterion will be followed by one or more examples.

C1: Adposition type (preposition or postposition?) or Order of adposition and noun phrase

Turkish is a postpositional language (and hence adposition follows noun phrase). As Kornfilt (1997: 100) has noted, most postpositions are independent morphemes that assign case to their nominal complement; some cliticized postpositions or, as Lewis (1967: 85) has put it, postpositions which can appear as suffixes also assign case. The following examples taken respectively from Lewis (ibid.) and Kornfilt (ibid: 424) represent both types of postpositions:

3. yol üzere
   road on
   “on the road”

4. Hasan konser + e Oya + yla git + ti
   Hasan concert + Dat. Oya + with go + Past
   “Hasan went to the concert with Oya.” [1475]

C2: Order of noun and relative clause

The relative clause immediately precedes the head noun.4 Preceding the head noun, the relative clause ends in a participial form with a choice between two suffixes of ‘-An’ and ‘-DIK’.5 In the following examples which have been taken from Kornfilt (ibid: 58), the relative clauses have been bracketed.

5. [Ø okul + a gid + en ] adam1
   Ø school + Dat. go + SbjP
   “the man who goes/went to school.” [246]

6. [ adam+ in Ø git + tiğ + ı ] okul1
   man + Gen.Ø go + ObjP + 3.sg.Ø school
   “the school that the man goes/went to.” [247]

The relative clause can also follow the head noun, which is a marked order (see Göksel and Kerslake, 2005:396-397). Following the head noun, the relative clause is fully finite and is introduced by the complementizer ‘ki’. According to Kornfilt (ibid: 60), the mentioned pattern, i.e. head noun + relative clause, in Turkish is a borrowed one from Persian language.10 Kornfilt (ibid.)’s illustrative example represents the borrowed pattern:

7. bir adam [ ki çocuk + lar + in+ı sev + mez ] yalnız yaşa + malı + dirı

---

1 accusative
2 dative
3 The numbers within the brackets all over this article indicate the numbers of the relevant examples in their original references.
4 In Turkish noun phrases, any modifier precedes the head noun (see Kornfilt, 1997: 108; Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 145; Kornfilt, 2009: 535).
5 For further information about relative (adjective) clauses in general and the two relevant suffixes in particular, see Kornfilt (1997: 57-60).
6 subject participle
7 genitive
8 object participle
9 third person singular
10 It should be noted that the borrowed, left-headed pattern with the finite clause and the complementizer is used somewhat more often as a nonrestrictive relative clause, compared to its lack of use as a restrictive relative clause (Kornfilt, ibid: 61).
A man who does not love his children must live alone." [258]

C₈: Order of noun and genitive
Genitive precedes noun (for more details, see Lewis, ibid: 41-44; Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 162-164).

8) hfta + nın gün+ ler+ i
week + Gen. day + Pl. + 3sg.Poss.
"the days of the week" (Lewis, ibid: 42)

9) Ali + nin oğl + u
Ali + Gen. son + 3sg.Poss.
"Ali’s son” (Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 162)

C₉: Order of adjective and standard in comparative construction
Adjective follows standard in comparative construction.

(10) ipek + ten hafif
silk +Abl. light
"lighter than silk” (Kornfilt, ibid: 95) [376]

It is noteworthy that the standard in Turkish comparative constructions is always in ablative case
(see Lewis, ibid: 54; Kornfilt, ibid: 95,107).

C₁₀: Order of verb and adpositional phrase
Adpositional or, specifically speaking, postpositional phrases precede verb.

(11) Hasan konser + e Oya + yla git + ti
Hasan concert + Dat. Oya + with go + Past
"Hasan went to the concert with Oya.” (example (4) repeated)

C₁₁: Order of verb and manner adverb
Manner adverb precedes verb.

(12) Hasan yavaş + çə yür + ər
Hasan slow +ly walk +Aor.⁷
"Hasan walks slowly.” (Kornfilt, ibid: 211) [749]

(13) lütfen biraz daha yavaş yürü!
please a little more slow walk
"Please walk a little more slowly!” (Kornfilt, ibid: 98) [391]

C₁2: Order of copula and predicate
Copula follows predicate.

(14) Hasan + in konuş + uş + u yavaş + ça + dür
Hasan + Gen. talk + DerNom⁸ + 3sg. slow + ly + Ep.Cop.
"Hasan's (manner) of speaking is slow.” (Kornfilt, ibid: 85) [342]

C₁₃: Order of ‘want’+ verb
The verb of the embedded sentence⁹ precedes the verb ‘want’.

¹ plural
² possessive
³ negative aorist
⁴ necessitative
⁵ epistemic copula
⁶ ablative
⁷ aorist
⁸ derived nominal
⁹ For more details about embedded sentences in Turkish, see Kornfilt (2009: 538-540).
It is noteworthy that the verb ‘want’ can markedly precede the verb of the embedded sentence. This marked pattern came into being in Turkish via the importation of Persian conjunction ‘ki’ (see Lewis, ibid: 211-214; Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 355).

\[
\text{(17) } \text{istedi + yor + um } \quad \text{ki } \text{bekle + sin} \\
\text{want + Pr. Prog. + 1.sg. } \text{that wait + 3.sg.Opt.}^5 \\
\text{“I want him to wait.” (Lewis, ibid: 212)}
\]

\[C_9\] Order of noun and adjective
Adjectives precede nouns.

\[
\text{(18) } \text{uzun yol} \\
\text{long road} \\
\text{“the long road” (Lewis, ibid: 53)}
\]

\[C_{10}\] Order of demonstrative and noun
Demonstratives precede nouns. It is noteworthy that there is a three-way distinction in the demonstrative system in Turkish (Kornfilt, 1997:106):

a. bu ‘this’ (close to the speaker)
b. şu ‘that’ (further away from the speaker)
c. o ‘that’, ‘yonder’ (furthest from the speaker)

\[
\text{(19) } \text{bu kitab + i } \text{Ahmet için al + di + m} \\
\text{this book+ Acc. Ahmet for buy+Past+1.sg.} \\
\text{“I bought this book for Ahmet”. (Kornfilt, ibid: 67) [278]}
\]

\[C_{11}\] Order of intensifier (degree word) and adjective
Intensifier precedes adjective.

\[
\text{(20) } \text{çok güzel bir kitap} \\
\text{very nice a book} \\
\text{“a very nice book” (Kornfilt, ibid:96) [382]}
\]

\[C_{12}\] Order of verb and negative particle
Following Dryer (1992: 97), negative morphemes in the languages of the world can be classified into three types: (a) negative affix, (b) negative particle such as ‘not’ in English, and (c) negative verb. In Turkish, ‘negation’ is expressed by the suffix ‘-mA’, the negative copula verb ‘değil’, and the negative existential verb ‘yok’ (for more details on negation in Turkish, see Kornfilt, ibid: 123-128; Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 271-276). Accordingly, there is no negative particle in Turkish. The following examples illustrate ‘negation’ in Turkish.

\[
\text{(21) } \text{Hasan kitab + i } \text{oku + ma + di} \\
\text{Hasan book +Acc. read + Neg. +Past} \\
\text{“Hasan didn't read the book.” (Kornfilt, ibid: 123) [490]}
\]
(22) (ben) hasta değil + im
I sick Neg.Cop.\(^1\) + l.sg.
“I am not sick.” (Kornfilt, ibid: 124) [491a]

(23) (ben) ev + de yok + um
I home + Loc.\(^2\) Neg.Exist.\(^3\) + l.sg.
“I am not at home.” (“I don’t exist at home.”) (Kornfilt, ibid: 124) [491c]

C\(_{18}\): Order of verb and tense-aspect particle
Parallel to the above-mentioned three types of negative morphemes, languages employ three kinds of tense-aspect morphemes, i.e. affix, particle, and verb (see Dryer, ibid: 98). In Turkish, tense-aspect is expressed only by affix, specifically speaking by suffix, which has been exemplified in (33) in the following. Hence there is neither tense-aspect particle nor verb in Turkish.

C\(_{16}\): Order of content (main) verb and auxiliary verb
Auxiliary verbs follow main verbs.

(24) Gelecek yıl sonunda Berlin + e git + mis ol + acağ + ız
next year end Berlin + Dat. go + Perf.\(^4\) Aux.\(^5\) + Fut.\(^6\) + 1.pl.\(^7\)
“We will have gone to Berlin by the end of next year.” (Göksel, 2001:157) [16b]

C\(_{15}\): Order of content (main) verb and negative auxiliary verb
As noted above in C\(_{12}\), the words ‘değil’ and ‘yok’ are negative verbs in Turkish. Of these two, the negative copula verb, i.e. ‘değil’, can also negate its preceding main verb (see Kornfilt, ibid: 125; Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 274-275) and, thus, it can be argued that ‘değil’ can also function as the sole negative auxiliary verb in Turkish, exemplified in (25).

(25) (ben) iş + im + i bırak + acak değil + im
I work + l.sg.+ Acc. leave + Fut. Neg.Cop.+ l.sg.
“I shall not leave my job.” (“It is not (the case) that I shall leave my job.”) (Kornfilt, ibid: 125) [5]

C\(_{16}\): Order of (polar) question particle and sentence
Turkish attaches the question particle ‘mI’ to the end of a sentence (for further details on mI, see Kornfilt, ibid: 5-9; Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 103-104).

(26) Ahmet sinema + ya git + ti + mi?
Ahmet cinema + Dat. Go + Past + Q\(^8\)
“Did Ahmet go to the movies?” (Kornfilt, ibid: 5) [11]

C\(_{17}\): Order of adverbial subordinator and clause
Adverbial subordinators follow their clauses (for detailed information on adverb clauses, see Kornfilt, ibid: 66-76).

(27) [ [ müdür tatil + e çık + tiğ + ı ] zaman] ofis kappa+ n+ ir
director vacation + Dat. go + FNom\(^9\) + 3.sg. time office close + Refl.\(^{10}\) + Aor.
“When the director goes on vacation, the office closes.” (Kornfilt, ibid: 69) [282]

(28) [ [ müdür tatil + e çık + tik] + tan sonra] ofis yan + di
director vacation + Dat. go + FNom + Abl. after office burn + Past
“After the director went on vacation, the office burned down.” (Kornfilt, ibid) [284]

\(^1\) negative copula  
\(^2\) locative  
\(^3\) negative existential  
\(^4\) perfective  
\(^5\) auxiliary  
\(^6\) future  
\(^7\) first person plural  
\(^8\) interrogative particle  
\(^9\) factive nominal  
\(^{10}\) reflexive
C₁₈: Order of article and noun
Noun follows the Turkish sole indefinite article ‘bir’ (for the difference between the indefinite article ‘bir’ and the numeral ‘bir’ meaning ‘one’, see Kornfilt, ibid: 106).

(29) güzel, olgun bir elma
nice ripe an apple
“a nice, ripe apple”  (Kornfilt, ibid: 106)  [416]

C₁₉: Order of plural word and noun
A small minority of world’s languages pluralize singular nouns by separate plural words which perform the same function as plural affixes in other languages (see Dryer, ibid: 104). Turkish expresses plurality mainly by the suffix ‘-lAr’. Hence there are no plural words in Turkish.

(30) bazı çocuk + lar
some child + pl.
“some children”  (Kornfilt, ibid: 266)  [987]

C₂₀: Order of verb and subject
Subject precede verb.

(31) terzi elbise + m + i bitir + miş.
dressmaker dress +1.sg.Poss. + Acc. finish + Ev.²/Perf.
“Apparently the dressmaker has finished my dress.”  (Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 337)  [1]

C₂₁: Order of numeral and noun
Numerals, when used as modifiers, precede the noun (see Kornfilt, ibid: 106).

(32) üç elma
three apple
“three apples”  (Kornfilt, ibid.)  [418]

However, when they are used as nouns, numerals follow the noun (for more details, see Kornfilt, ibid: 106-107).

C₂₂: Order of tense-aspect affix and verb stem
Since Turkish is a sufffixing language (see Kornfilt, 2009: 527; Göksel and Kerslake, ibid: 43), the tense-aspect affix is attached to the right of the verb stem.

(33) imtihan + im + a başla + mı + tı + m
“I had started my exam (when...)”  (Kornfilt, ibid: 529)

C₂₃: Order of possessive affix and noun
Being a sufffixing language, Turkish has possessive suffix.

(34) ev + im	house +1. sg. Poss.
“my house”  (Göksel and Kerslake, ibid:66)

(35) ev + imiz
house +3. pl. Poss.³
“our house”  (Göksel and Kerslake, ibid)

Word order typological characteristics of Turkish
Typological characteristics of Turkish word order have been displayed in the following two tables,

---

¹ first person singular possessive
² evidential
³ third person plural possessive
Table 2 shows that out of twenty criteria present in Turkish, in nineteen criteria this language behaves like a strong (S) verb final (OV) language in comparison with the languages in its own geographical area, i.e. EurAsia. Table 2, as well as table 3, also indicates that in almost one third of the relevant criteria Turkish behaves like a strong (S) verb medial (VO) language. However, it should be noted that in table 2 all the seven criteria marked for strong VO have been simultaneously marked for strong OV Turkish while in table 3 only four of the seven strong VO marked criteria have been simultaneously marked for strong OV Turkish. Another difference between tables 2 and 3 is that the number of strong OV marked criteria in table 3, i.e. fifteen ones, is less than that in table 2, i.e. nineteen criteria.

With regard to Dryer (1992)’s ‘Branching Direction Theory (BDT)’ (see footnote 5 on page 1) as an explanation for his developed word order correlations, Turkish tends towards left-branching languages. Specifically speaking, as illustrated above in section 2-2, in all the twenty relevant correlation pairs in Turkish phrasal categories precede non-phrasal categories. It is noteworthy that this finding further verifies Kornfilt (2009: 534)’s assertion as to Turkish’s being a perfect example of a left-branching type of language. As such, it can be argued that (at least in terms of the mentioned twenty correlation pairs) Turkish is completely consistent with BDT.

**Conclusion**

Typological description of Turkish word/constituent order on the basis of Dryer (1992, 2014)’s twenty typological criteria shows that Turkish, compared with both the languages of EurAsia and the six large geographical areas in the world postulated in Dryer (ibid.), behaves predominantly like a strong verb final (OV) language, with a small number of strong VO languages’ characteristics describing Turkish as a VO language. Being predominantly a strong OV language, Turkish is a left-branching type of language, the behavior that bears complete consistency with Branching Direction Theory.

**Acknowledgements**

1 I have followed Dabir-Moghaddam (2001: 18) in labeling the two general types of languages as strong OV/VO languages on the one hand and weak OV/VO ones on the other hand. Specifically speaking, for each of the twenty relevant correlations in tables 2 and 3, it has been shown whether Turkish matches with the dominant tendency established in Dryer (2014)’s statistical study or fits with the minority. In the case of the former, I have called Turkish strong OV/VO, if the latter, I have labeled it weak OV/VO.
Three eminent professors deserve a proper acknowledgement here. They will appear alphabetically in the following.

I express my deep gratitude to my PhD thesis supervisor, Professor Mohammad Dabir-Moghaddam, for his having inspired me to work in the interesting area of language typology as a whole and word order typology in the framework of Dryer (1992) in particular.

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