

## Etymological Analysis of *Vakit* and *Cumhuriyet* Newspapers Published between 1932 and 1942

1932-1942 Yılları Arasında *Vakit* ve *Cumhuriyet* Gazetelerinde Yayımlanan Makalelerin Etimolojik Analizi

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### Abstract

Founded by the Turkish government in 1932, the Turkish Language Association had the aim of heading linguistic research concerning the Turkish language and its vocabulary. This research often led to campaigns –initiated by the Turkish Language Association itself– aimed at encouraging journalists, writers, and teachers to replace words of Arabic or Persian etymology with Turkish equivalents. The newspapers of the time represented one of the means through which the authorities promoted the language reform. In this regard, *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit* represented two of the most popular newspapers of the era. Through an etymological analysis of the words in news published in *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit* between 1932 and 1942, the aim of this article is to evaluate the results of the Turkish language reform in terms of the purification of the Turkish vocabulary during the first ten years of activity of the Turkish Language Association. Moreover, this study aims to show that in the texts examined the percentages of words originating from Arabic, Persian and Turkish remained constant throughout the period considered.

### Öz

1932 yılında Türk hükümeti tarafından kurulan Türk Dil Kurumu, Türk dilinin söz varlığı ile ilgili dilbilimsel arařtırmalara yön vermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Bu kurumda yürütölen arařtırmalar; gazetecilerin, yazarların ve öđretmenlerin etimolojisi Arapça veya Farsça olan kelimeler yerine Türkçe kelimeleri kullanmaya teřvik eden kampanyalara yol açmıştır. Bununla birlikte, bu dönemde çıkan gazeteler, Türk Dil Kurumu üyelerinin dil reformunu ilerletme yollarını temsil etmektedir. Bu bağlamda *Cumhuriyet* ve *Vakit*, dönemin en popüler gazetelerindedir. Bu makalenin amacı, 1932-1942 yılları arasında *Cumhuriyet* ve *Vakit* gazetelerinde yayınlanan haberlerde kullanılan kelimelerin etimolojik analizi yoluyla, Türk Dil Kurumu'nun kuruluşunu takip eden ilk on yılda Türkçenin söz varlığı üzerine etkisini deđerlendirmektir. Bunun yanı sıra, bu çalışma, dikkate alınan dönem boyunca incelenen metinlerde Arapça, Farsça ve Türkçeden gelen kelimelerin yüzdelerinin sabit kaldığını göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

### Keywords

Turkish language reform, early Turkish republican era, etymology, language debates

### Anahtar Kelimeler

Türk dil reformu, erken cumhuriyet dönemi, etimoloji, dil tartışmaları

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## Introduction

Beginning in 1928, the state-run reform of the Turkish language presents an interesting case of language planning, encompassing both the script and vocabulary of Turkish. This process consisted of two different phases. In the initial phase, known as *Harf Devrimi* or *Harf İnkılabı*, which started in 1928, the reform of the Turkish script involved replacing the Perso-Arabic script with the adoption of a Latin-based alphabet for writing the Turkish language. In the second phase, starting in 1932, the Turkish Language Association focused on the vocabulary of the Turkish language, promoting the use of words with Turkish etymology instead of those borrowed from Arabic and Persian, which had become part of the Turkish literary, artistic, scientific, and informal language after centuries of contacts and exchanges with the Persian and Arab cultures. Starting with the First Congress on the Turkish Language in 1932, these debates and research efforts led to the organization of two-year meetings, during which linguists debated different ideas and theories concerning languages, and discussed the etymology of words (Turkish, Persian, Arabic) frequently used in written and spoken Turkish.

To achieve this goal, the Turkish Language Association launched a campaign aiming at encouraging the use of words with Turkish etymology among writers, journalists, and intellectuals. In this regard, newspapers became one of the most important means through which to promote this campaign. For this purpose, influential newspapers of the era, such as *Cumhuriyet*, *Akşam*, *Milliyet*, and *Vakit*, regularly published lists of words containing Arabic or Persian words alongside their Turkish equivalents. As part of the language reform campaign, intellectuals began using the advised Turkish words in their written pieces, thereby contributing to the spread of words with Turkish etymology instead of those coming from Arabic and Persian.

Scholars such as Geoffrey Lewis,<sup>1</sup> Emmanuel Szurek,<sup>2</sup> and Tahsin Yücel<sup>3</sup> have written about the Turkish language reform, the debates leading up to it, as well as the attempts made by writers and journalists to write in pure Turkish. Tachau outlines the successful performance of the reform,<sup>4</sup> while Yücel states that in the mid-1930s “the mission of the language reform was largely completed.”<sup>5</sup> Özdoğan expresses similar ideas, stating that the reform proved to be particularly successful in written language by 1935.<sup>6</sup> İz claims that the Turkish Language Association achieved

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<sup>1</sup> Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

<sup>2</sup> Emmanuel Szurek, *Gouverner par les mots. Une histoire linguistique de la Turquie nationaliste* (PhD diss., École des hautes études en sciences sociales, 2013).

<sup>3</sup> Tahsin Yücel, *Dil Devrimi ve Sonuçları* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> Frank Tachau, “Language and Politics: Turkish Language Reform,” *The Review of Politics* 26, no.2 (1964): 198.

<sup>5</sup> Can B. Yüce, “Identity Construction Through Language: The Case of the Turkish Language Reform,” *OMNES: The Journal of Multicultural Society* 9, no. 2 (2019): 14.

<sup>6</sup> Mehmet Özdoğan, “Türkiye’de Ulus İnşası ve Dil Devrimi (1839-1936),” *Akademik Hassasiyetler* 2, no. 3 (2015).

a complete Turkification of the written language ten years after the beginning of the language reform.<sup>7</sup> According to the author, the effects of the Turkification process were particularly evident in the language of textbooks and newspapers already in 1942.

To verify these statements, we decided to analyze the etymology of words in a corpus of one hundred articles published in two influential newspapers published during the years of the language reform, *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit*. For our analysis we examined the lexical features of the texts and –more specifically– the percentage of Arabic, Persian, and Turkish words. An etymological analysis of these texts contributes to an objective evaluation of the effects and the impact of the language reform on written Turkish.

This article will first give an overview on the social dimension of language and then will focus on the concept of language reform. Concerning the latter, the article will resume the debates –conducted among Ottoman intellectuals between the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century– concerning the Turkish language and its standardization as the national vernacular of the Ottoman Empire and later the Republic of Turkey. As the article aims to show, these debates focused on the necessity to individuate a speech pattern that would be accessible and understandable to a wider audience. With the foundation of the Republic of Turkey, these debates merged into the process of reforming the Turkish language. The article will then show how the reform process encouraged the research and the usage of Turkish words instead of their Arabic and Persian equivalents in written language. Concerning this aspect, the research section of the article will investigate how many words from Arabic, Persian and Turkish were used in a corpus consisting of one- hundred newspaper articles published between 1932 and 1942, during the first ten years following the language reform. The concluding paragraphs of the article will discuss the results of the corpus analysis.

### **The social dimension of language**

Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure defines language as a social product of the speech faculty and a collection of conventions adopted by a social body to permit individuals to exercise that faculty.<sup>8</sup> This definition outlines that language exists within a social context where a community actively uses it in either written or spoken communicative interactions. Concerning these aspects, Oskay defines communication as a process occurring between individuals, during which “sending, receiving, processing, re-transmitting, re-receiving, and reprocessing of concepts happens.”<sup>9</sup> In this sense, language and communication represent an opportunity for humans, since they allow

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<sup>7</sup> Fahir İz, “Atatürk and the Turkish Language Reform,” *Erdem*, no. 12 (1988): 1007.

<sup>8</sup> Ferdinand De Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Roy Harris (Chicago: Open Court Publishing Company, 1998), 51-61.

<sup>9</sup> Ünsal Oskay, *XIX Yüzyıldan Günümüze Kitle İletişimin Kültürel İşlevleri: Kuramsal bir Yaklaşım* (İstanbul: Der Yayınları, 2000), 310.

individuals to interact, cooperate, create, and lead historical and social development processes, such as culture and civilization. In this sense, language not only provides a linear communication opportunity between the sender and the receiver, but also carries the feature of a system that provides the transfer of culture, traditions, identity, and emotions. Since communication and language contribute to the formation of unity, continuity, and the acculturation process in social life, they can be considered as the most effective and important tools in the development of societies.

Analyzing language from an overall perspective means taking into account several aspects related to culture, identity, and society. Language is, indeed, a system of communication standing between a speaker producing a speech act and the social sphere in which this speech act occurs. In this sense, the notions of language and speaking community are intertwined. Every individual connects words to conventionally established significances (those codified in vocabularies), feelings, personal taste, memories, and cultural background. Moreover, as part of the same linguistic community, we share a linguistic universe that spans from the sounds associated with the letters of the alphabet to the same writing system, from cultural symbols conveyed through words to the wide range of meanings that every word can have. It is not possible to disregard this complexity when we analyze the relation between speakers and language. Furthermore, it is important to consider the relationship between culture and the linguistic and social habits of speakers, since this aspect helps us understand why languages change slowly over time. Regarding this aspect, the words we use to communicate have a shared meaning in the social context in which we pronounce them. At the same time, the meaning of these words is handed down from a generation of speakers to another through books, songs, movies, and other cultural products. Given these premises, language changes slowly over time and- as we will see in the following paragraphs of this article- the linguistic habits of speakers are resistant to changes such as language reforms.

### **The multi-faceted relation between language and speakers: the concepts of linguistic sensation and linguistic sentiment**

In the pages of *Dil Devrimi ve Sonuçları* (Language Reform and its Outcomes), the writer Yücel asks his readers which words or verbal expressions can be considered as *rude* or *harsh* sounding. Based on what criterion can we decide whether musicality is more important than the richness of the vocabulary in language? The author observes that such questions do not have a universally valid answer. Who can decide whether the word *drum* sounds more elegant and beautiful than the word *tambour*? Yücel states that it is impossible to answer these questions or –to be able to do so– “it is necessary to leave the field of reason.”<sup>10</sup> These questions pertain to the emotional and subjective dimension of language. Whether a word sounds elegant or rude might differ depending

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<sup>10</sup> Tahsin Yücel, *Dil Devrimi ve Sonuçları* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2016), 98.

on the speaker. As Yücel states, different factors ranging from personal preferences to cultural and educational background play a decisive role when choosing which words to use when we speak. According to the dictionary of the Turkish Language Association, both the words *kalp* and *yürek* mean “love,” “heart,” and “emotion” (the latter in a metaphorical sense). However, according to Yücel’s personal taste, only the word *kalp* can be used in the physiological sense of the term.

Moreover, the example tells us something more about semantics. Every word has a conventional meaning accepted within a linguistic community. At the same time, we associate our emotions and feelings to words. In the first edition of the *Writings on General Linguistics*, Ferdinand de Saussure focused on this aspect and introduced the concept of the “sentiment of language” (*sentiment de la langue*). The linguist gives two different meanings to this concept. In the first stance, he refers to the subjective and emotional dimension of language, which stands between individual and social sphere, between the feelings and sensations we ascribe to words and the conventionally accepted meanings they have in society. Additionally, Saussure assigns a second meaning to the concept of the “sentiment of language,” which is related to the cognitive and syntactical aspects of words and sentence construction. When speaking, how can we choose the right words and know that we are implementing the grammar rules correctly? According to Ferdinand de Saussure, speakers are characterized by what he defines as *unconscious linguistic awareness*. The latter is a cognitive ability allowing us to understand whether we are using the appropriate words and implementing grammar structures correctly during a speech act. How does *unconscious linguistic awareness* work? In the *Writings on General Linguistics*, Saussure explains that every speech act consists of two different steps, identified as *linguistic sensation* and *linguistic sentiment*.<sup>11</sup> The *linguistic sensation* represents the first step of the process. Thanks to *linguistic sensation*, the speaker realizes that phonemes constituting the word are placed correctly in the sound chain. For instance, the word *table* consists of the phonemes /t/+a/+b/+l/+e/. If the phonemes /l/ and /b/ are swapped in the sound chain, the word will be pronounced in a way that would scratch the ears of English speakers. In other words, it is obvious that the pronunciation of the word is not correct.

If *linguistic sensation* is related to phonemes and sound chain, then *linguistic sentiment* is related to morphemes and semantics. In the example above, swapping the phonemes /l/ and /b/ in the sound chain, the word *table* would not be pronounced correctly. At the same time, the word would sound meaningless since in English the word *talbe* does not exist. Moreover, a proficient English speaker hearing the word *talbe* would immediately realize that there is a mistake and that probably the word that we are trying to pronounce is *table*. According to Saussure, this is possible thanks to *linguistic sentiment*, an unconscious awareness that enables every speaker to understand whether what they are saying or hearing is correct or not. Moreover, this cognitive ability is connected to the vocabulary knowledge that the speaker has. The latter recognizes that the word

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<sup>11</sup> Ferdinand de Saussure, *Ecrits de linguistique générale* (Paris: Gallimard, 2002), 85.

*talbe* does not exist, but at the same time he is able to identify a similarity with a word that exists in the vocabulary of the English language, which is –in this specific context– the word *table*.

Speaking in Saussurean terms, *linguistic sensation* and *linguistic sentiment* represent two decisive factors determining language proficiency. Rather than being limited to knowledge of vocabulary and grammar rules, language proficiency implies a full command of the language, consisting in the correct application of grammar rules, the ability to choose within a wide range of words and use them in the right context to accomplish communicative tasks.

In light of these considerations, to predict how the speakers will react to and eventually implement the proposed language changes, the planification and evaluation of linguistic reforms cannot disregard the complex relation between language and speakers.

### **The different dimensions of language reforms**

Language reform is a form of language planning aimed at making changes to a language. These changes may concern script, spelling, or vocabulary. Changes to script may lead to the adoption of a different writing system, as in the case of the replacement of the Cyrillic script with the Latin one in 19<sup>th</sup>-century Romania. In other cases, suggested changes may address a simplification of the existing script, as it happened with the reform of the Chinese script in the 1950s, a language reform leading to the simplification of 2000 Chinese ideograms.

The simplification of orthographic rules of Irish in the 1940s, as well as the reform of written German in 1996 represent two recent cases of spelling reforms. The reform of the Hungarian language (18<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century) -resulting in the creation of more than 10,000 words- and the reform of Estonian proposed by Johannes Aavik and Johannes Veski at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century represent two significant examples of language planning addressing the vocabulary of the language.

There are other reasons that may justify a language reform. Among these, ideological and political reasons often play a decisive role. Countries such as Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan, which declared their independence after the collapse of the Soviet Union, extensively discussed changing their writing systems to distance themselves from Russian culture and politics. Concerning the European context, even though Serbian and Croatian languages can both be written with Latin and Cyrillic scripts, people may choose to use an alphabet instead of another according to their cultural and religious orientation. More specifically, although the current Serbian legislation accepts the Latin script, the Cyrillic alphabet is the official alphabet in Serbia. However, Serbian speakers prefer to use the Cyrillic alphabet since they recognize it as a symbol of Orthodox Christianity and identity.

Ideological, political, and cultural reasons may have an impact also on the reform of the vocabulary. Since the 1970s, Japanese feminist movements have proposed several changes to the

vocabulary of Japanese, aiming to eliminate sexist differences among words. For identity and culture-related reasons, between 1935 and 1940, the Iranian Language Council proposed 1600 new Persian terms to reduce the number of Arabic and European words actively used in the Persian language.

In the existing literature concerning language planning strategies, the Turkish language reform represents one of the most cited examples. This reform addressed both the script and vocabulary of the Turkish language. Initially, it led to the adoption of a Latin-based alphabet for writing in Turkish. Later it encouraged the use of Turkish words instead of those borrowed from Arabic and Persian.

### The Turkish Language Reform

Officially initiated in 1928, the Turkish language reform was a process whose principles and ideas were already being debated among intellectuals and writers since the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. These debates took place in the pages of newspapers and magazines such as *Tasvir-i Efkâr*, *Muhbir*, *Servet-i Funûn*, *Basiret*, and *Genç Kalemler*. Discussions focused both on the presence of words from Arabic and Persian in Turkish texts, and on the necessity to search a speech pattern that could be understood by a wider audience. In an article written for *Tasvir-i Efkâr* in 1866, Namık Kemal stated that understanding written Turkish had become problematic due to the existence of foreign words (including words from Arabic, Persian, and Western languages) in literary language.<sup>12</sup> Ali Suavi seemed to agree with this statement and -in a piece written for the newspaper *Muhbir*- the writer summarized his ideas concerning the future of the Turkish language in these lines: it will be written according to a speech pattern that everyone can understand.<sup>13</sup> Ahmet Mithat joined the debate with an article published in *Basiret*, where he wrote:

Well, what should we do? Should we live without language? Isn't there a language spoken by our people? Let us use the language of the people. [...] If we remove the influences and the adjectives of Arabic and Persian, today seven hundred people will be able to understand the things we write, tomorrow for sure seven thousand people will be able to understand them.<sup>14</sup>

Similar preoccupations concerning the gap between readers and texts written in Turkish were shared by Şemseddin Sami (1804-1894) and Muallim Naci (1849- 1893), both supporting the idea

<sup>12</sup> Namık Kemal, "Lîsan-ı Osmanî'nin Edebiyatı Hakkında Bazı Mülâhazâtı Şâmilidir," in *Yeni Türk Edebiyatı Antolojisi II 1865- 1876*, ed. Mehmet Kaplan, İnci Enginün, Birol Emil (İstanbul: Marmara Üniversitesi Yayınevi, 1993), 185.

<sup>13</sup> *Muhbir*, January 2, 1867, 1.

<sup>14</sup> "Pek a'lâ ne yapalım. Lisansız mı kalalım? Hayır, halkımızın kullandığı bir lisan yok mu? İşte anı millet lisani yapalım. [...] Arapça ve Farsça'nın ne kadar izafetleri ve ne kadar sıfatları varsa kaldırıversek, yazdığımız şeyleri bugün yediyüz kişi anlayabilmekte ise yarın mutlaka yedi bin kişi anlar" *Basiret*, May 19, 1971, 639.

that the language of literature and culture should be accessible to a wider audience. Over time, the debate shifted toward categorizing words of Arabic, Turkish, or Persian origin. Mahmut Kemal and Veled elebi were among the intellectuals who participated in discussions concerning language during this period. In the pages of the newspaper *İkdam*, both writers argued that Turkish contained more Arabic words than Persian. In the same period, Veled elebi and Huseyin Cahit debated concerning the influence of the Arabic language on Turkish literature and the necessity of incorporating Arabic words and linguistic conventions into literary texts. Veled elebi opened the floor for discussion in an article published in the newspaper *Tarik* entitled “We would benefit a lot from Arabic knowledge” (*Arab’dan pek ok istifade edeceđimiz ulum*), where he outlines that the Turkish language would benefit a lot from the influence of the Arabic vocabulary and literary tradition. Huseyin Cahit opposed to this idea stating that it is necessary to work on a literary language specific for Turkish.<sup>15</sup> Discussions about the Turkish language continued in the first decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, a period during which intellectuals such as mer Seyfettin, Mehmet Fuat Koprl, and Ziya Gkalp shifted the focus to the necessity of writing that adopts a speech pattern that could be accessible to a wider audience. Therefore, at this stage, the debate focused on the individuation of the most widespread words rather than on their etymology.

It is only in 1932, with the beginning of the process of reforming the Turkish language, that language debates shifted to the possibility of replacing words of Arabic and Persian derivation with words of Turkish etymology. Founded in 1932, since the first days of its activity, the Turkish Language Association conducted linguistic research on the Turkish language. In this framework, organized by the Turkish Language Association in 1932, the first three Language Congresses (*Trk Dil Kurultayı*) laid the groundwork for the process of reforming Turkish language vocabulary.

Concerning these aspects, one of the tasks of the Association was to research words with Turkish etymologies that are part of the dialects spoken in Anatolia. As written by Geoffrey Lewis in *Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*, at this stage members of the Academy studied 150 works containing words that were part of the Turkish vocabulary but rarely used, since their Arabic and Persian equivalents were preferred in spoken and written Turkish. The results of this study were published in a dictionary (*tarama szliđ*) comprising 90,000 words. To give some examples of the work done by the Turkish Language Association, the linguists proposed several words coming from local dialects (*guř, yazga, line, kavrı, yuvuř...*) as synonyms for the word *kalem* (pen), an Arabic loanword. In an analogous way, the Turkish Language Association individuated 77 alternative Turkish words for the Arabic loanword *hediye* (gift). In the end, the choice fell on the word *armađan*.<sup>16</sup>

Concerning this language planning process, Tachau in *Language and Politics: Turkish Language Reform* states that “this change was accomplished without the slightest diminution of

<sup>15</sup> Agah Sırrı Levend, *Trk Dilinde Geliřme ve Sadeleřme Evreleri* (Ankara: Trk Tarihi Kurumu Basımevi, 1970), 207-208.

<sup>16</sup> Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*, 40-57



nationalist ardour or enthusiasm,”<sup>17</sup> thus suggesting that the vocabulary changes had been accepted and implemented by the audience writing and speaking in Turkish. Özdoğan states that the reform proved to be particularly successful in written language by 1935.<sup>18</sup> İz shares similar ideas, writing that the Turkish Language Association –only ten years after its foundation– had achieved “a systematic Turkification of the terminology of all the fields of knowledge, of the official style of government departments, the language of daily papers, and -in particular- of school textbooks.”<sup>19</sup>

### *Cumhuriyet and Vakit*

To verify these factual claims and draw a conclusion about their accuracy, we analyzed a corpus of articles from the newspapers *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit*, published between 1932 and 1942, during the decade following the linguistic reform promoted by the Turkish Language Association. Through the analysis of these examples, we looked at the percentage of words from the Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages. The purpose of this comparison was to verify whether the percentage of words deriving from Arabic and Persian had significantly decreased during the first ten years following the language reform promoted by the Turkish Language Association. For the sake of clarity, we divided our analysis in two phases. In the first phase, our aim was to identify the percentage of words of Arabic, Persian and Turkish etymologies used in the texts six years following the reform of the Turkish language (1932-1937). For the second phase, we focused on the etymology of the words in the articles written between 1938 and 1942 to see whether it is possible to speak of a completion of the process of Turkification for the language of Turkish newspapers.

We chose these two newspapers since they approach the debate concerning the language according to two different points of view. On the one hand, *Cumhuriyet* supported the idea of language reform as a means by which to purify the Turkish language of Arabic and Persian words. On the other, the pages of *Vakit* gave space to different opinions concerning the language reform. Concerning this aspect, in an article published for *Vakit* on 10 April 1931, the writer Sadri Etem Ertem drew attention to the fact that the words frequently used in everyday communicative interactions should be accepted as part of the written and spoken language, regardless of their Turkish, Persian, or Arabic etymology.

The corpus analyzed within this research consisted of 100 articles from both *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit*, published between 1932 and 1942. Texts included in this etymological analysis were taken from the politics, current affairs, and news sections of the newspapers.

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<sup>17</sup> Tachau, “Language and Politics: Turkish Language Reform,” 198.

<sup>18</sup> Özdoğan, “Türkiye’de Ulus İnşası ve Dil Devrimi (1839-1936),” 257.

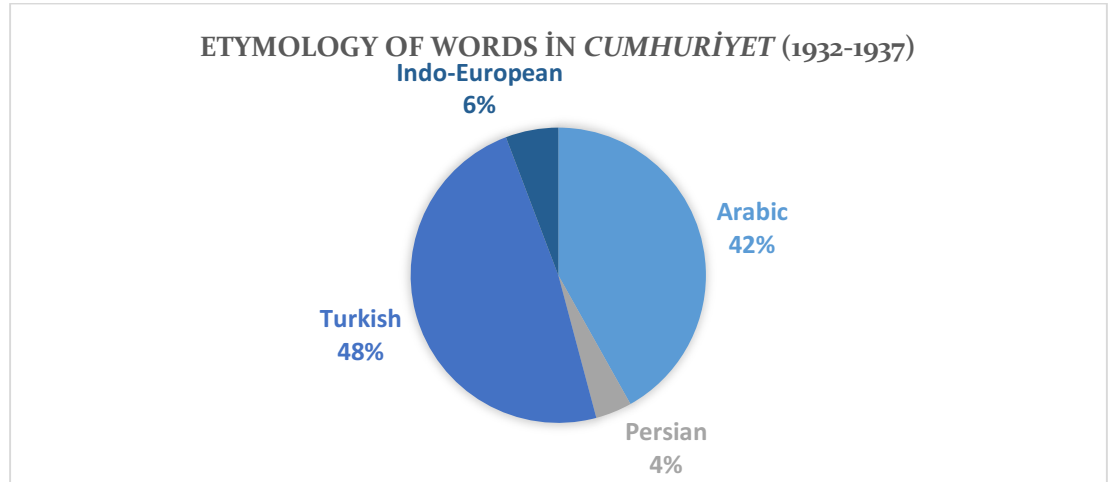
<sup>19</sup> İz, “Atatürk and the Turkish Language Reform,” 1007.

### Analysis of texts published in *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit* newspapers between 1932 and 1937

For the first part of our research, we focused on articles published in *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit* between 1932 and 1937. These six years include the first three Turkish Language Congresses (1932, 1934 and 1936), whose decisions influenced the character of written Turkish in books, textbooks, and newspapers.

The analysis of these articles centered on the etymologies of the words used in the texts. We checked the percentage of words originating from Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Indo-European languages used in the articles. The results of our analysis is summarized in Table 1 and Table 2.

From the analysis of the etymology of words in the articles published in the *Cumhuriyet* journal between 1932 and 1937, we obtained the following data:



**Figure 1:** Etymology of words in *Cumhuriyet* between 1932 and 1937

The analysis of the articles published in *Cumhuriyet* between 1932 and 1937 showed that 42% of the words used in the texts are of Arabic etymology, while the percentage of words of Turkish etymology stood at 48%. As regards the lexicon of Persian origin, the percentage of words stood at 4%. Moreover, 6% of words used in the texts had an Indo-European etymology, specifically of French, Italian, Greek, and English origin.

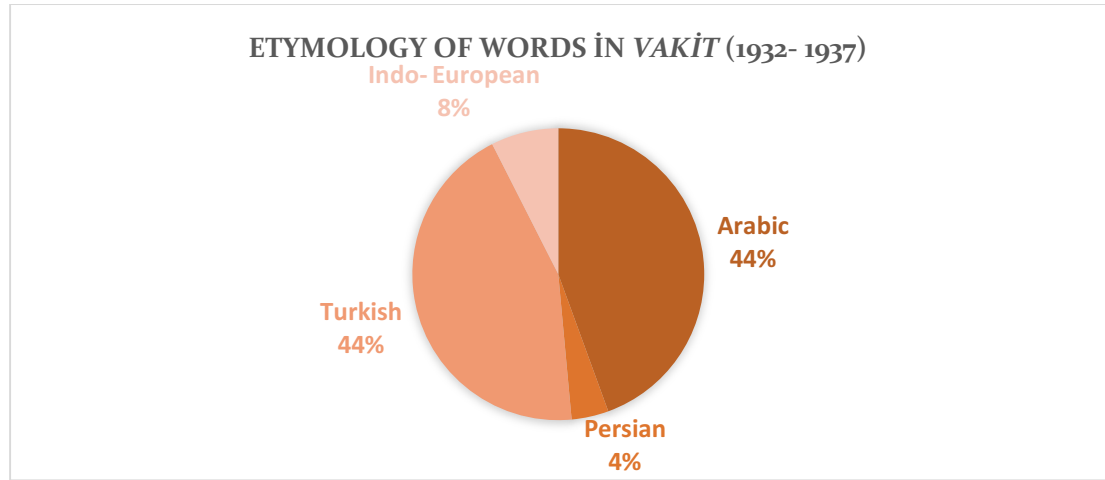
As can be observed from the data presented above, most of the words used in the texts come from Arabic or Turkish. Regarding the latter, in most of the examples analyzed, the words of Arabic and Turkish etymology were distributed homogeneously and at an equal rate in the texts:

1. **Haydarpařa limanı** (gr.) İstanbul limanının (gr.) inkiřafı (ar.) için (tr.) limana (gr.) verilmesi (tr.) takarrür eden (ar. + tr.) Haydarpařa limanı (gr.) bazı (ar.) tadilata (ar.) uğrıyacaktır (tr.). Haydarpařa,

Anadolunun en (tr.) mühim (ar.) ve (ar.) en (tr.) asri (ar.) addolunabilecek (ar.\_tr.) ithal (ar.) ve (ar.) ihraç (ar.) limanıdır (gr.). Buna (tr.) rağmen (ar.), Anadolu'nun bütün (tr.) ihtiyaçlarını (ar.) karşılayabilecek (tr.) bir (tr.) mahiyette (ar.\_tr.) görülmemektedir (tr.). Bilhassa (ar.) hergün (pers.\_tr.) artan (tr.) demiryolu (tr.) inşaatı (ar.) ve (ar.) buraya (tr.) bağlanan (tr.) şehir (pers.) ve (ar.) kasabaların (ar.\_tr.) iktisadi (ar.) mevkilerinin (ar.\_tr.) aldığı (tr.) ehemmiyetin (ar.) büyümesi (tr.) Haydarpaşa limanı (gr.) ve (ar.) garını (fr.) gayrıkafî (ar.) bir (tr.) mevkiye (ar.) indirmiştir (tr.). Esasen (ar.) bunun (tr.) neticesi (ar.) olarak (tr.) Derince'de bir (tr.) ihraç (ar.) ve ithal (ar.) limanı (gr.) kendiliğinden (tr.) meydana çıkmıştır (ar.+ tr.). Yapılan (tr.) tekikat (ar.) neticesinde (ar.) Haydarpaşa limanının (gr.) bundan (tr.) fazla (ar.) genişlemesine (tr.) imkân olmadığı (ar.+ tr.) görülmüştür (tr.). Bu (tr.) vaziyette (ar.\_tr.) Haydarpaşaya en (tr.) yakın (tr.), muavin (ar.) bir (tr.) liman (gr.), vücuda getirilmesi (ar.+ tr.) düşünülmektedir (tr.).<sup>20</sup>

2. **Haşmetmeab..** (ar.) Zayıfla (ar.\_tr.) kuvvetli (ar.\_tr.) için (tr.), insanların (ar.\_tr.) toprağa (tr.) tek (tr.) başına (tr.) sahip oldukları (ar.+ tr.) günden (tr.) beri (tr.) cari olan (ar.+ tr.) kanun (ar.) bilmiyor musun (tr.)? Kuvvetlinin (ar. tr.) zayıfı (ar.) ezmesi (tr.) Darvine göre (tr.), tabiatın (ar.) kanunudur (ar.). Koprankin tabiatte (ar. tr.) müteakabil (ar.) yardım (tr.) olduğunu (tr.) beyhude (pers.) ispata çalışır (ar.+ tr.). İnsan (ar.) cemiyeti (ar.) hayvan (ar.) cemiyeti (ar.) değildir (tr.). İnsan(ar.) cemiyetlerini (ar.\_tr.), benim (tr.) malım (ar.), benim (tr.) menfaatim (ar.\_tr.), seninle (tr.) benim (tr.) menfaatim (ar.\_tr.) arasındaki (tr.) çarpışmalar (tr.) idare eder (ar.+ tr.). Rekabet (ar.), içtimai (ar.) istifa (ar.), büyük (tr.) balığın (tr.) küçüğü (tr.) yutması (tr.) bugünkü (tr.) cemiyeti (ar.) mekanizmasıdır (fr.).<sup>21</sup>

As represented in Table 2, the analysis of the articles from *Vakit* show similar data:



**Figure 2:** Etymology of words in Vakit between 1932 and 1937

<sup>20</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, September 26, 1934, 4.

<sup>21</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, July 12, 1935, 5.

As regards the analysis of the examples taken from *Vakit* and published between 1932 and 1937, the words deriving from Arabic and those deriving from Turkish were used in equal proportions (44%). Words deriving from Persian accounted for 4%. The analysis of the texts also showed the presence of words from Italian, French, and Greek (8%).

Unlike the examples from *Cumhuriyet*, which showed a slightly higher presence of words of Turkish etymology than those deriving from Arabic, *Vakit* showed an equal percentage of words from Arabic and Turkish. Concerning the words of Persian etymology, both in the examples from *Cumhuriyet* and in those from *Vakit*, the percentage stood at 4%. Pertaining to the vocabulary of Indo-European etymology, *Vakit* had a higher percentage of words deriving from French, Italian and Greek compared to *Cumhuriyet* (8% in *Vakit*, 4% in *Cumhuriyet*).

As shown in the examples below, the rate of 44% of words from Arabic and Turkish was evenly distributed in the texts from *Vakit*:

1. **İran şahının (pers.) Ankara ziyareti (ar.).** Ankara, 19 (Hususi) (ar.)- İran şahının (pers.) Hazretlerinin (ar.\_tr.) memleketimizi (ar.\_tr.) ziyaret (ar.) tarihi (ar.) 10 (tr.) haziran (ar.) olarak (tr.) tesbit edilmiştir (ar. + tr.). Şah (pers.) hazretleri (ar.\_tr.) otomobille (fr.\_tr.) Karaköse (tr.\_pers.) yolundan (tr.) Trabzona varacaklar (tr.) ve (ar.) oradan (tr.) bir (tr.) harp (ar.) gemisi (tr.) ile (tr.) Samsuna (tr.) geleceklerdir (tr.). Samsunda (tr.) da (tr.) hususi (ar.) bir (tr.) trenle (fr.\_tr.) Sivas üzerinden (tr.) Ankarayı teşrif edeceklerdir (ar. + tr.).<sup>22</sup>
2. **Yüksek (tr.) mekteb (ar.) mezunu (ar.).** Ankara, 28 (tr.) (Kurun)- Kültür (fr.) müdürleri (ar.\_tr.) talimatnamesinin (ar.\_pers.) Bakanlar (tr.) heyetindeki (ar.\_tr.) projesinin (fr.) bugünlerde (tr.) çıkarılması (tr.) muhtemeldir (ar.\_tr.). Talimatnameye (tr.\_pers.) eklenen (tr.) bir (tr.) maddeye (ar.) göre (tr.), yüksek (tr.) mekteb (ar.) mezunu (ar.) olmıyan (tr.) Kültür (fr.) müdürleri (ar.\_tr.) orta (tr.) tedrisata (ar.) müdahale edemeyeceklerdir (ar. + tr.). Bu (tr.) işler (tr.) şimdi (tr.) olduğu (tr.) gibi (tr.), Bakanlıkça (tr.) idare edilecektir (ar. + tr.).<sup>23</sup>

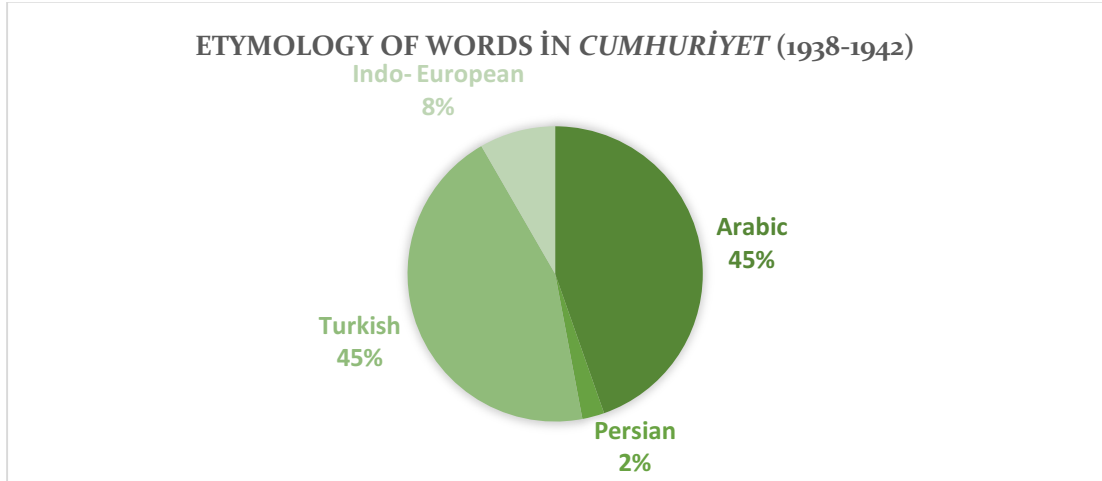
### Analysis of texts published in *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit* newspapers between 1938 and 1942

For the second part of our analysis, we focused on texts published in *Cumhuriyet* and *Vakit* between 1938 and 1942. We decided to consider this time frame since it included the years immediately following the first three Turkish language congresses, and therefore the years in which the effects of the language reform work would become more evident. As per the group of texts included in the first part of our analysis, we checked the percentage of words coming from Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Indo-European languages used in the articles. The results of the analysis are summarized in Table 3 and Table 4.

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<sup>22</sup> *Vakit*, April 20, 1934, 2.

<sup>23</sup> *Kurun*, March 1, 1935, 1.



**Figure 3:** Etymology of words in Cumhuriyet between 1938 and 1942

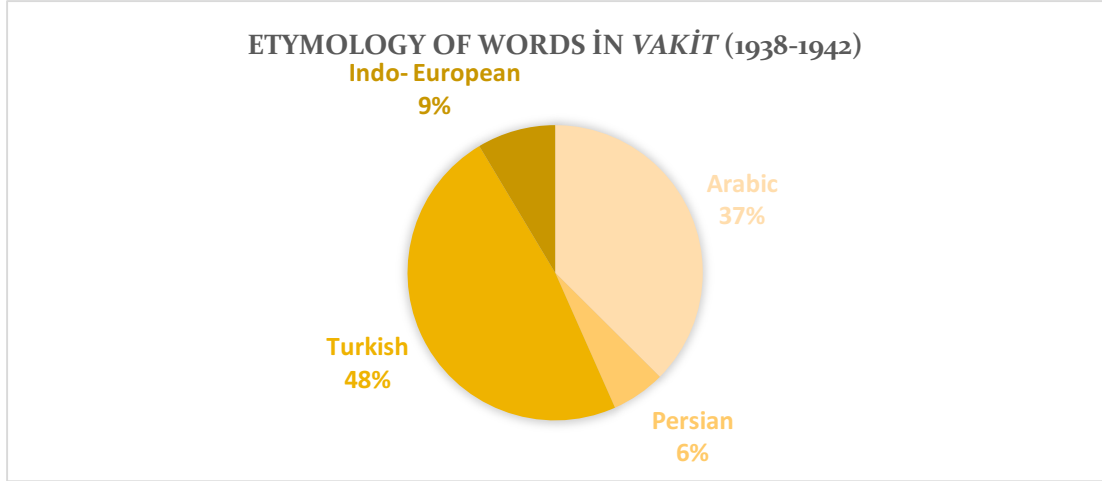
The analysis of the texts from *Cumhuriyet* published between 1938 and 1942 showed that words with Turkish and Arabic etymology were used at an equal rate (45%). Concerning the vocabulary of Turkish and Arabic origin, texts published in *Cumhuriyet* between 1938 and 1942 confirmed the trend observed in the analysis of the texts published between 1932 and 1937. In both cases, most of the words used came from Arabic and Turkish and were distributed in equal proportions in the examples. Here we have some examples of this aspect:

1. **Tamir (ar.) edilecek (tr.) olan (tr.) eski (tr.) eserler (ar.)** Üsküdar'da (tr.) Mimar Sinan'ın en (tr.) son (tr.) eserlerinden (ar\_ tr.) olanlar (tr.) Şemsi Ahmed Paşa camii (ar.) ve (ar.) bu (tr.) camiin (ar.) etrafındaki (ar\_ tr.) yedi (tr.) metre (fr.) kutruna (ar\_ tr.) geniş (tr.) bir (tr.) dersaneyi (ar\_ pers.) havi (ar.) medrese (ar.) binası (ar.), 13 (tr.) bin (tr.) liraya (ita.), gene (tr.) Mimar Sinan'ın yarım (tr.) bıraktığı (tr.) Nişancı Mahmudpaşa camii (ar.) 4 (tr.) bin (tr.) liraya (ita.), restorasyon (fr.) esaslarına (ar\_ tr.) göre (tr.) tamir edilecektir (ar. + tr.). Bu (tr.) kıymetli (ar.) eserlerin (ar\_ tr.) tamirine (ar.) pek (tr.) yakında (tr.) başlanacaktır (tr.).<sup>24</sup>
2. **Oslo grubu (fr.) devletlerinin (ar.) kararı (ar.). Kopenhag 7 (a.a.)-** Ritzau ajansının (fr.) bildirdiğine (tr.) göre (tr.), Oslo grubu (fr.) devletleri (ar\_ tr.) arasında (tr.) yakında (tr.) cereyan edecek (ar. + tr.) müzakereler (ar\_ tr.) esnasında (ar\_ tr.) bir (tr.) taraf (ar.) gemilerin (tr.) torpillenmesine (fr\_ tr.) karşı (tr.) Almanya nezdinde (pers.) müşterek (ar.) bir (tr.) teşebbüste bulunması (ar. + tr.) mevzuu (ar.) bahsolunacaktır (ar\_ tr.), sadece (pers.) fenni (ar.) ve (ar.) adli (tr.) mahiyette (ar.) bazı (ar.) meseleler (ar.) tetkik edilecektir (ar. + tr.). Bu (tr.) müzakereler (ar\_ tr.), sadece (pers.) geçen (tr.) ay (tr.) Brüksel'de başlayan (tr.) müzakerelerin (ar.) devamından (ar.) ibaret olacaktır (ar. + tr.).<sup>25</sup>

<sup>24</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, June 17, 1938, 2.

<sup>25</sup> *Cumhuriyet*, October 8, 1939, 3.

Regarding words from Persian and Indo-European languages, compared to the articles published in *Cumhuriyet*, the percentage of words from Persian decreased (from 4% to 2%), while the rate of words originating from an Indo-European language such as French, Italian, and Greek increased from 6% to 8%.



**Figure 4:** Etymology of words in Vakit between 1938 and 1942

The analysis of the texts published in *Vakit* between 1938 and 1942 showed that 37% of the words used in the texts had Arabic etymology, while the percentage of words with Turkish etymology accounted for 48%. When comparing this rate with the one resulting from the analysis of texts published in *Vakit* between 1932 and 1937, it is observed that the percentage of words from Turkish increased by 4% (from 44% to 48%), while the percentage of words from Arabic decreased by 8%. In most of the examples analyzed, the words of Arabic and Turkish etymology were distributed homogeneously in the texts:

1. **Bulgar (tr.) gazetelerin (fr.\_ tr.) sayfalarını (ar.\_ tr.) azalttılar (tr.).** Sofya (Hususi)- Bulgar (tr.) harbiye (ar.) nazırının (ar.) talebi (ar.) üzerine (tr.) nazırlar (ar.) meclisinin (ar.) kararile (ar.), Bulgar (tr.) gazetelerinin (fr.\_ tr.) sayfaları (ar.\_ tr.) bugünden (tr.) itibaren (ar.) azaltılacaktır (tr.). Sabah (ar.) gazeteleri (fr.\_ tr.) altışar (tr.), öğleyin (tr.) ve (ar.) akşam (tr.) üzeri (tr.) çıkan (tr.) gazeteler (fr.\_ tr.) dörder (tr.) sahife (ar.) basılacaktır (tr.).<sup>26</sup>
2. **Almanyada (tr.) teessür (ar.).** Mareşal (ita.) İtalo Balbonun ölümü (tr.) Berlinde bir (tr.) felaket (ar.) haberi (ar.) tesirini yapmış (ar. + tr.), vekâletlerde (ar. + tr.) büyük (tr.) bir (tr.) hüznün (ar.) uyandırmıştır (tr.). Mareşal (ita.) Goringin büyük (tr.) dostu (pers.) olan (tr.) İtalo Balbo, Alman (fr.) halkı (ar.) tarafından (ar.) çok (tr.) sevilmeekteydi (tr.). Büyük (tr.) İtalyan

<sup>26</sup> *Vakit*, September 11, 1939, 3.

(ita.) mareşalın (ita.) ziyamdan (ar.) dolayı (tr.) bütün (tr.) gazeteler (fr.\_tr.) İtalyan (ita.) milletine (ar.) taziyelerini (ar.\_tr.) bildirmektedir (tr.).<sup>27</sup>

Concerning the rate of words from Indo-European languages, the analysis of these texts confirmed the trend observed in the analysis of texts in *Cumhuriyet* between 1938 and 1942: the rate of words coming from French, Italian, and Greek increased from 8% to 9%. *Vakit* showed an increased rate of words from Persian. Moreover, the percentage of words from Persian increased compared to the percentage obtained from the analysis of texts published in *Vakit* between 1932 and 1937 (from 4% to 6%).

### Discussion

According to authors such as Özdoğan and Tachau, the aim of the linguistic reform begun in 1932 was fully achieved in 1935. Therefore, it would be possible to speak of a completion of the process of Turkification of the language. The data resulting from our analysis showed instead that, as far as the written language of Turkish newspapers is concerned, the percentage of words derived from Arabic and that of words derived from Turkish were instead close. A similar scenario emerged from the analysis of articles published between 1938 and 1942. As regards *Cumhuriyet*, the percentages of words derived from Arabic and Turkish were equal. In the case of *Vakit*, the analysis evidenced an increased percentage of Turkish words and a decrease in the rate of words derived from Arabic. Moreover, the percentage of words originating from Persian remained constant throughout the period analyzed.

Regarding this aspect, as shown in the first paragraphs of this article, there are several factors that make language –both written and spoken– resistant to change. These factors are culture, identity, the habit of using one word instead of another. Emotional factors and feelings also contribute to strengthening the link between language, culture, and identity. How do we determine whether one word is more correct than another? There are no objective criteria for answering such a question. Whether a word is nicer, more accurate, or more vulgar may differ depending on the speaker. In other words, words in languages are “perceived” differently according to each speaker, that is, the person attributes these feelings to the words according to their own perception. For all these reasons, it is very difficult to impose linguistic changes through language planning strategies. Language Academies can decide upon the rules for correct writing and speaking. However, only speakers can decide which words to use.

In the case of the Turkish language reform, the analysis of the corpus analyzed within the scope of this research shows that the work of the Turkish Language Academy contributed to an increase in the number of Turkish words used in written texts as early as the mid-1930s. However, the same data show that it is not possible to speak of a full accomplishment of the Turkification

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<sup>27</sup> *Vakit*, June 30, 1940, 1.

process in written language in the first decade of the language reform. From our point of view, rather than ten years after its beginning, it would be more correct to evaluate the effects of the language reform in the long run. Concerning this subject, in the chapter dedicated to the reform of the Turkish language of the book entitled *The Turkic languages*, the linguist Bernt Brendemoen evaluates the effects of the linguistic reform seventy years after its beginning.<sup>28</sup> Based on his analysis, the linguist judges the reform of the Turkish language as a success. In this regard, further studies on an etymological analysis of contemporary Turkish newspapers would shed light on the impact of the language reform several decades after its beginning.

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<sup>28</sup> Bernt Brendemoen, "The Turkish Language Reform," in *The Turkic Languages*, ed. Lars Johanson, and Éva Á. Csató (London: Routledge, 1998), 242- 248.



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