THE TURKISH LANGUAGE REFORM
The Turkish Language Reform

A Catastrophic Success

GEOFFREY LEWIS
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Abbreviations

[A] Arabic
ATD Atatürk ve Türk Dili (Ankara: TDK, 1963)
AKDTYK Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu
AÜDTC Ankara Üniversitesi Dil Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi
DLT Dîwân Luğat al-Turk
[F] French
[G] Greek
JRAS Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of London
[M] Mongolian
OT Old Turkic
[P] Persian
TBMM Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi
TDK Türk Dil Kurumu
TDTC Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti
TL Türk Lirası (Turkish lira)
TTK Türk Tarih Kurumu
Note on the Text

Turkish words under discussion are in italic unless there is no possibility of confusion with a similar English word. Words from other languages, as well as book titles, are also shown in italic, likewise words of Arabic or Persian origin in some of the quotations, words of native origin being in roman.

An [A], [P], [F], [G], or [M] after a word shows its origin as Arabic, Persian, French, Greek, or Mongolian respectively; [PA] after a two-word phrase means that the first word is of Persian origin, the second Arabic. Square brackets are also used (a) to enclose the author’s comments within translations of quotations, (b) to cite the original wording where the full text is not included (which happens rarely, only when there is nothing particularly noteworthy about the Turkish), and (c) round surnames later assumed by people who come into the story before the Surnames Law of 1934. Logic would demand that the founder of the Republic should be called Mustafa Kemal (or just Kemal, which he preferred) until the story comes down to the time of that law; nevertheless he is sometimes referred to anachronistically as Atatürk, the name by which he is best remembered.

In transliterations of Arabic and Persian words, ğ stands for the sound of English ch; đ for English th in this; ǧ for English j; ǧ for Arabic ghayn, the gargling sound of the Parisian and Northumbrian r, ǧ for kh as in Bukhara; j for French j; ʃ for English sh; ɛ for English th in think. (In the Chaghatay passage quoted in Chapter 2 I have followed Levend’s transliteration; he uses ç and ş, not ğ and ʃ.)

While most references to Türk Dili, the Türk Dil Kurumu’s monthly journal, are by volume number and page, some give the number or date of the individual monthly part, because volume numbers were not always shown and because the pagination was not always cumulative, so that a volume may contain, say, a dozen pages numbered 27. The aim has been to make the references clear, though not necessarily consistent.

A pair of forward strokes encloses a representation of pronunciation, for which ordinary characters, not the symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet, are used: /g?avur/.

An asterisk preceding a word shows it to be a hypothetical form.

OT stands for Old Turkic, Turkic (the current Turkish for which is Türkî [A]) being the unattractive but generally accepted term for the family of which Turkish, the language of Turkey, is a member. The term Old Turkic is properly applied to languages of the family from the eighth to the tenth century, while the period from the eleventh to the fifteenth century is Middle Turkic. I beg the reader’s indulgence if on occasion I have misapplied ‘OT’ to a Middle Turkic word.
Introduction

This book has two purposes. The first is to acquaint the general reader with the often bizarre, sometimes tragicomic, but never dull story of the Turkish language reform. The second is to provide students of Turkish at every level with some useful and stimulating reading matter. With both purposes in mind, no word, phrase, or sentence of Turkish has been left untranslated, apart from names of books and articles, as it is assumed that the reader who wishes to chase up bibliographical references will understand the meaning of the titles. The second purpose accounts for the references to the author’s *Turkish Grammar* and for the abundance of footnotes and digressions.

The language reform is not so well known abroad as other aspects of the Kemalist revolution because, having lasted for more than half a century, it is not the stuff of which headlines are made, but its effects are evident if we compare the Turkish of today with that of even thirty years ago.

Not a few nations have gone in for linguistic engineering. By this I mean tinkering with language with the express purpose of changing people's speech habits and the way they write. I am not referring to the introduction of new words for technical innovations such as vaccination, radar, or the modem, or to the creation of new non-technical words by individuals intending to amuse or to express ideas for which they find no words in the existing language. The names that come to mind in these last two categories are, on the one hand, Lewis Carroll, on the other hand, James Joyce, and, in the middle, the American Gelett Burgess, whom we have to thank for the word *blurb*. In his *Burgess Unabridged: A New Dictionary of Words You Have Always Needed* (1914), he defines it as ‘1. A flamboyant advertisement; an inspired testimonial. 2. Fulsome praise; a sound like a publisher.’ An earlier (1906) success of his had been to popularize *bromide*, previously meaning a sedative, in the sense of a boringly trite remark. He gives as an example: ‘It isn’t the money, it’s the principle of the thing’, and points out that what makes it a bromide is not just its triteness but its inevitability. He was by no means the first such benefactor of humanity; there was, for example, the unknown seventeenth-century genius who combined *dumbstruck* and *confounded* to make *dumbfounded*. Nor was he the last; the earliest recorded appearance in print of *guesstimate*, later *gustimate*, was in 1936, in the *New York Times*, and such inventions keep coming. During the Gulf War of 1991 we were reminded by an American general of the existence
of bodacious, apparently a combination of bold and audacious, first recorded in British English in 1845.

These, however, are not what I intend by linguistic engineering. I mean the sort of deliberate campaign that has been carried out at various times by Germans, Swedes, Hungarians, Finns, and Albanians, among others, for nationalistic reasons, to purge their languages of foreign words and substitute native words for them. In lands of German speech the encroachment of French began at the end of the sixteenth century. The first stirrings of protest came a century later, although clearly with no effect on King Friedrich Wilhelm I of Prussia (1713–40), to judge by his celebrated declaration to his nobles: ‘Ich stabiliere die Souveraineté wie einen Rocher de Bronze.’ The modern German vocabulary shows the results of another such campaign, with Fernsprecher and Kraftwagen replacing the international Telefon and Auto, though the latter two have staged a comeback. A movement to eliminate German and Latin words from Hungarian began in the second half of the eighteenth century and had considerable success. The French Academy has long been fighting a losing battle against the inroads of Franglais.

Attempts have been made to purge English too. Inwit was used for conscience in the Ancrene RWle, written about 1230. In 1340 Dan Michel wrote his Ayenbite of Inwit, ayenbite being a Middle English translation of the late Latin remorsus ‘remorse’; James Joyce partially modernized it into ajenbite in his Ulysses (1922). In the nineteenth century came the Saxonisms, native substitutes for words of Greek and Latin origin. Birdlore was invented in 1830 to replace ornithology, and folklore in 1846 to encapsulate ‘traditional beliefs, legends and customs of the common people’. Foreword for preface is first recorded in 1842. But nowhere has such a campaign been so long sustained and effective as in Turkey.

The aim of the Turkish language reform was to eliminate the Arabic and Persian grammatical features and the many thousands of Arabic and Persian borrowings that had long been part of the language. It comprised two different phases of activity: isolated attempts from the mid-nineteenth century on, undertaken mostly by private individuals and groups, and the government-inspired campaign that began around 1930. The latter could more accurately be termed a revolution than a reform, since ‘reform’ implies improvement. Dil devrimi (the language revolution) is what Turks call it, but Western writers have always called it the language reform, and the practice is followed in this book. Although it is less accurate to call the proponents of dil devrimi ‘language reformers’ rather than ‘linguistic revolutionaries’, it is also less cumbersome.

Why the subtitle ‘A Catastrophic Success’? The author recognizes that not every reader who knows the story will share his view, but some of them may do so by the time they have read to the end. There is no denying the success. An incontrovertible proof is that Nutuk, Mustafa Kemal’s thirty-six hour Speech on the end of the Ottoman Empire and the rise of the Turkish Republic, which he delivered over six days in 1927, became less and less comprehensible to the young until in
the early 1960s it had to be ‘translated into the present-day language’. A single paragraph is enough to show the extent of the changes that thirty odd years had wrought. First, Kemal’s own words:

Muhterem Efendiler, İnönü mubahere meydânım, ikinci defa olarak mağlûben terk ve Bursa istikametinde eski mevzilerine ricat eden düşmanın takibinde, piyade ve süvari farklılarımızın gösterdikleri şayany tezkâr kahramanlıklarını izah etmiyecem. Yalnız, umumi vaziyeti askeri yetişti ittam için müsaade buyurursanız Cenup Cephemize ait mintakada cereyan etmiş olan harekâtı hulâsa edeyim. (Kemal 1934: ii. 106)¹

Honoured gentlemen, I shall not give an account of the notable acts of heroism shown by our infantry and cavalry divisions in pursuit of the enemy, who, vanquished for the second time, was abandoning the İnönü battlefield and retreating in the direction of Bursa, to its old positions. With your permission, however, to complete the general military picture let me summarize the movements which had proceeded in the region of our southern front.

Here is the corresponding text in the 1963 version (Tuğrul et al.: ii. 427), with a translation using words of Anglo-Saxon rather than of Latin origin wherever possible, to try to convey the flavour of the neologisms:

Sayın baylar, İnönü Savaş alanımı ikinci kez yenilerek bırakmış ve Bursa doğrultusunda eski dayanımlarına çeken düşmanın kovalanmasında piyade ve süvari tümelerimizin göster-dikleri anılmaya değer yiğitlikleri anlatmayıacağım. Yalnız, askerî bakımdan genel durumun açıklanmasını tamamlamak için, izin verirseniz, Güney Cephemiz bölgesinde yapılan savaşları özetleyeyim.

Distinguished sirs, I shall not tell of the noteworthy deeds of bravery done by our infantry and cavalry divisions in chasing the enemy, who, beaten for the second time, was leaving the İnönü battlefield and withdrawing towards Bursa, to its old standings. With your leave, however, to fill out the sketch of the general situation from the military viewpoint, let me outline the struggles carried out in the section of our southern front.

The neologism dayanga (here rendered ‘standing’), manufactured from dayanmak ‘to be based, to hold out’, was intended to replace mevzi in the sense of a position held by troops. It did not gain acceptance, has not replaced mevzi, and does not appear in recent dictionaries. Nor has a substitute been found for harekât, an Arabic plural still current for ‘troop movements’; the savaşlar of the text, ‘struggles’ or ‘battles’, does not convey Kemal’s meaning. For ‘permission’ in the final sentence, his müsaade has been replaced by izin, which is equally Arabic but less obviously so.

The language did not remain static after the 1960s. Not twenty years later, the need was felt for an even more up-to-date version. Nutuk-Söylene (Arar et al. 1986) gives the 1934 and 1963 texts in parallel, with some amendments to the latter, although, in the paragraph quoted above (at ii., 777 in Nutuk-Söylene), there happens to be only one change from the 1963 version: Sayın, now no more of an honorific than Mr, Mrs, Miss, or Ms, has been replaced by Saygıdeğer ‘respectworthy’.

¹ The first publication was in the old alphabet (Ankara: Türk Tayyare Cemiyeti, 1927).
And consider this, from the introduction to the 1982 edition of a book first published in 1968 (Yücel 1982), explaining why the author thought a revised version was necessary: ‘Bir kez, şimdi olduğu gibi o günlerde de yazlarımızı oldukça arı bir Türkçe yazmama karşıım, on üç yıl önceki dilim bayağı eskişmiş görüdüğü bana’ (For one thing, although I wrote then as I do now, in quite a pure Turkish, my language of thirteen years ago seemed to me downright antiquated).

What gives the success its catastrophic aspect is not just the loss of Ottoman Turkish—its time had long passed and only a fast-disappearing company of elderly Turks and the few foreigners who love the language for its own sake are shedding any tears over it—but also the loss of its natural development, the Turkish of the 1920s and 1930s, the language of Halide Edip Adıvar, Sabahattin Ali, Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu, and Reşat Nuri Güntekin. The loss affects every Turk who now, in speaking or writing, gropes for the precise word to express the required meaning and does not find it, because it is as dead as Etruscan and has not been replaced. Moreover, many of the neologisms were constructed arbitrarily, with little or no regard for the rules and conventions of Turkish, with the result that any Turk with a feeling for language finds at least some of them excruciating and cannot bear to use or to hear them. Several of my friends cannot stand iletişim for ‘communications’, while many more cannot abide the use of neden ‘from what?’ as a noun meaning ‘cause’.

In 1984 I attended a lecture in Ankara by a social anthropologist. It was entitled ‘Differing Mentalities and Culture’ and it was a good lecture, but I confess to having been more interested in the medium than the message. The speaker began by drawing a distinction between local cultures and universal culture. For ‘universal’ he first used the Ottoman ‘külli’, and then, when a stirring in the audience showed that it was not intelligible or not acceptable to everyone, he tried ‘tümel’, the neologism for ‘universal’ as a philosophical term. A similar reaction from the audience, and he said ‘ünevi’. Later on he used ‘genel’ ‘general’. He did not try ‘evrensel’, the prescribed neologism for ‘universal, cosmic’, which was subsequently used by a questioner from the floor. After a while he took to rattling off three words for each concept: for example, when he wanted to express ‘causality’ he used the Ottoman borrowing from Arabic, the neologism which may be literally rendered ‘from whatishness’, and the French: ‘iliyet—nedenlilik—causalité’.

How the language got into that state is the subject of this book.

2 Turkish cynics say that the young do not read works written more than ten years ago anyway, but this is belied by the number of ‘translations into modern Turkish’ and ‘simplified versions’ of standard authors to be seen in the bookshops. See, however, the quotation from Fuat M. Andic on page 143.
Ottoman Turkish

By the beginning of the eleventh century, most of the ancestors of the present Turks of Turkey had become Muslim. It is evident that their introduction to Islam was due to peoples of Iranian speech, because the basic religious terms in Turkish come not from Arabic but from Persian or other Iranian languages: namaz ‘prayer’, oruç ‘fasting’, peygamber ‘prophet’. The apparent exceptions, the Arabic hac or ziyaret for ‘pilgrimage’, are no exception, because those are the words used in Persian too. Once settled within the civilization of Islam, the Turks took into their language as much of the Persian and Arabic vocabularies as they needed, and more. As the perception that they were Turks was supplanted by an awareness that they were members of the Ümmet-i Muhammed, the Community of Believers, so the tide of Arabic and Persian flowed. It was not just a matter of borrowing foreign words for foreign concepts. They had a perfectly good word for ‘city’, balık, as in Marco Polo’s name for Pekin, Cambaluc—i.e. Hânbalık ‘Emperor’s City’. By the fourteenth century they had abandoned it for şehir (Persian šahr), and kend (Sogdian knd), which forms the last element of the names Tashkent, Yarkand, and Samarkand. They had two words for ‘army’, çerig and sū, both of which were ousted from general use by asker, Arabic ‘askar (originally the Latin exercitus), though çerig was preserved in Yeniçeri ‘New Troops’, whence Janissary. Even the word for ‘fire’, öd, gradually fell out of use; it survived in poetry until the early twentieth century but had hardly been used in prose for four hundred years, its place having been taken by ates, Persian ātes. This process had begun in the empire of the Seljuk Turks (1040–1157). Mehmet Fuat Köprülüzade (1928: 10–11) wrote:¹

Anadolu’da ... klásik Acem şir’ini model itti haz eden ‘Saray şairleri’ni daha Selçukliler sarayında görmekçe başlıyoruz ... İran tesiratının mütemadi kuvvetle nemasına ve Acem modellerinin taklidinde daimi bir terakki gösterilmesine rağmen, Türkçe yazan şairler ve müllüfler, eserlerinde hemen umumiyetle: ‘Türkçe’nin Araçça ve Acemce’ye nispetle daha dar, daha kaba, ifadeye daha kabiliyetsiz olduğunu, ve binalan heykendi kendi kusurların bakılmamak lazım geldiğini’ söylüyorlar, hatta bazan zimni bir mazeret çekinde ‘Arabi ve Farsi bilmeyen halkın anlaması için Türkçe yazmağa mecbur olduklarını’ ilâve ediyorlardı.

Already at the Seljuk court in Anatolia we begin to see the ‘Palace poets’, who took classical Persian poetry as their model... But almost all those poets and prose-writers who

¹ This great historian of Turkish literature (1890–1966) changed his name to Mehmet Fuat Köprülu in compliance with the Surnames Law of 1934, which required every family to choose a Turkish surname; the zade (‘son’) in his time-honoured patronymic was Persian.
wrote in Turkish despite the continuing vigorous growth of Persian influences and a steady advance in the imitation of Persian models, used to say in their works that Turkish, in comparison with Arabic and Persian, was limited, crude, and inexpressive, and that their own shortcomings must therefore be overlooked. They would sometimes even add as an implicit excuse that they were obliged to write in Turkish in order to be understood by the common people, who were ignorant of Arabic and Persian.

Huge though the influx of Persian words was, a bigger invasion came from Arabic, and not only because as the language of the Koran it naturally became the language of religion and theology and because the Persian vocabulary was itself replete with Arabic borrowings, but also because when an Arabic word was borrowed it brought its whole family with it. This calls for a brief explanation, which Arabists may skip.

Arabic words generally are based on triliteral roots—that is, roots consisting of three consonants, for example, K–T–B and J–B–R expressing the concepts of writing and compulsion respectively. These consonants are fitted into patterns of short and long vowels, sometimes with a doubling of the second or third consonant, sometimes with prefixes or infixes. Each pattern has a specific grammatical function: KaTaBa ‘he wrote’, KāTīB ‘writer’, maKTūB ‘written’; JaBaRa ‘he compelled’, JaBīR ‘compelling’, maJBioR ‘compelled’. Once one knows the patterns, learning a new root can increase one’s vocabulary by as many as a dozen new words.

It was natural that the Turks should borrow so fundamental a word as ‘ilm: ‘knowledge’, more particularly ‘religious knowledge’. So along came ‘ālim ‘scholar’ with its plural ‘ulamā’, ma’lūm ‘known’, mu’allim ‘teacher’, tā’līm ‘instruction’, isti’lām ‘request for information’, and lots more. And every new importation of a foreign word meant that the corresponding Turkish word was forgotten or became restricted to the speech of the common people. A good example is sin ‘grave, tomb’, found in popular poetry from the thirteenth to the twentieth century and still widely used in Anatolia, but hardly ever found in elevated writing, having long ago been supplanted by mezār [A].

But there was more to the rise of Ottoman than the suppression of native words. With the Arabic and Persian words came Arabic and Persian grammatical conventions. Turkish was born free of that disease of language known as grammatical gender; Arabic was not. Further, whereas Turkish adjectives precede their nouns, Arabic and Persian adjectives follow them. Nor is that the whole story. When Persian took nouns over from Arabic, it usually took their plurals as well: with ‘ilm ‘knowledge, science’, came its plural ‘ulūm, which is grammatically

2 While students of Turkish may be cheered to find the occasional similarity with English, they should remember that Turkish adjectives invariably precede their nouns. In English, however, besides the locutions exemplified in ‘He is well versed in matters archaeological’ and ‘The boiler is in an outbuilding, not in the house proper’, we have such anomalies as ‘court martial’, ‘time immemorial’, ‘Princess Royal’, ‘Heir Apparent’, and ‘President Elect’, while ‘law merchant’ and ‘rhyme royal’ still figure in the vocabularies of experts in jurisprudence and literature respectively.
feminine. Moreover, in Persian an i (termed ‘Persian izaft’, from ʿidāfī [A] ‘attachment’) is interposed between a noun and its qualifier. Āb is ‘water’, sard ‘cold’, ḥayāt ‘life’; ‘cold water’ is āb-i-sard and ‘the water of life’ is āb-i-ḥayāt. The Arabic for ‘natural’ is ṭabīʿī, the feminine of which is ṭabīʿiya. So in Persian ‘the natural sciences’ was ʿulūm-i-ṭabīʿiya, and this became the Ottoman Turkish too (in modern spelling, ulûm-i tabiyye). The New Literature movement at the end of the nineteenth century was known as Edebiyat-ı Cedide; edebiyat ‘literature’ was feminine in Arabic, so cedid ‘new’, the Arabic jadid, was given the Arabic feminine termination, and noun and adjective were linked by the Persian izaft. One of the names of what we call the Ottoman Empire was ‘The Guarded Dominions’. ‘Dominion’ in Arabic is mamlaka, plural mamālik, which again is feminine. So mahrūş, the Arabic for ‘guarded’, was put into the feminine form, mahrūša. In Arabic, ‘guarded dominions’ was therefore mamālik mahrūsa, but in Ottoman Turkish it became memalik-i mahrusa, for that was how it was done in Persian.

Persianization continued unabated under the Ottomans. Although they did not go as far as their Seljuk predecessors in despising their mother tongue enough to make Persian their official language, the fifteenth century saw a huge increase in the Persian influence on Turkish writers of prose and poetry. They took Persian writers as their models and filled their works with Persian borrowings. Latifi (1491–1582) of Kastamonu relates that the poet and historian Leālī was sufficiently proficient in the Persian language to pass as a Persian. He moved from his native Tokat to the capital, where he became a literary lion and won the favour of Sultan Mehmed the Conqueror, but immediately lost it when it transpired that he was not a Persian but a Turk (Latifi 1314/1898: 289–90). True, Latifi was writing in 1546, almost a century after Leālī’s time, and there is no guarantee that his account was factual, but it shows how depreciated at least one Turkish literary man, Latifi, felt vis-à-vis the Persians.3

The situation is thus summed up by Gibb (1900–9: i. 8):

It is not too much to say that during the whole of the five and a half centuries [fourteenth to mid-nineteenth] covered by the Old School [of poetry], more especially the Third Period [the seventeenth century], every Persian and every Arabic word was a possible Ottoman word. In thus borrowing material from the two classical languages a writer was quite unrestricted save by his own taste and the limit of his knowledge; all that was required was that in case of need he should give the foreign words a Turkish grammatical form.

By this he meant that Turkish suffixes could be added to foreign words. As indeed they were, but not always in profusion; in classical Ottoman poetry one may see whole lines where the only indication that they are in Turkish and not Persian is

3 Of interest in this context is an observation on language in fourteenth-century England in the introduction (signed ‘H.M.’) to Maundeville (1886: 3): ‘In the days of Maundeville Latin, French and English were the three languages written in this country. Latin was then and long afterwards the common language of the educated, and it united them into a European Republic of Letters; French was the courtly language; English was the language of the people.’
a final -dir 'is' or -di 'was'. Sometimes even that much is wanting. The three following couplets, containing not one syllable of Turkish, form part of an ode in honour of Sultan Süleyman by Bakı (1526/7–1600), the most highly esteemed poet of the classical age:

Bâlânîşîn-i mesned-i şâhân-i tâcdâr
Vâlânîşân-i ma’reke-i ’arşâ-i keyân
Cemşîd-i ’ayş ü ’işret ü Dârâ-yî dâr ü gîr
Kîsrâ-yi ’adl ü re’fet ü İskender-i zaman
Sûlêân-i şarık ü garb şehinşâh-i bîhr ü berr
Dârâ-yi dehr Şâh Süleymân-î kâmrân.

Seated above the thrones of crowned monarchs,
High o'er the fray of battlefields of kings,
Jamshid of feasting and carousing, Darius of war,
Chosroes of justice and clemency, Alexander of the age,
Sultan of east and west, King of Kings of sea and land,
Darius of the time, King Süleyman, of fortune blessed.4

The mixture of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, which Turks call Osmanlica and we call Ottoman, was an administrative and literary language, and ordinary people must have been at a loss when they came into contact with officials. But while they must often have been baffled by Ottoman phraseology, they were capable of seeing the funny side of it. In the shadow theatre, the running joke is that Karagöz speaks Turkish while his sparring partner Hacivat speaks Ottoman. In the play Salınca, Karagöz keeps hitting Hacivat. Hacivat asks him why, but receives only nonsensical answers sounding vaguely like his—to Karagöz—unintelligible questions. Eventually he asks, 'Vurmanızdandan aksâ-yî murâdî?' (What is your ultimate object in hitting me?). To which Karagöz replies, 'Aksaray'da murtad babandır' (The turncoat at Aksaray is your father) (Kudret 1968–70: iii. 54.) A rough English parallel would be, 'Explain your bellicose attitude.'—'How do I know why he chewed my billy-goat's hat?'

Following in the footsteps of Karagöz are today's taxi-drivers who refer to their battery-chargers not as şarjör, the French chargeur, but as carcur 'chatter'.5 They are displaying not ignorance but a sense of fun, like those who in the days of the Democrat Party pronounced 'Demokrat' as 'Demirkurat' 'Iron-Grey Horse'.6 The British sailors who served on the ship taking Napoleon to St Helena knew very well that her name was not Billy Ruffian; in calling her that, they were just cutting the fancy foreign Bellerophon down to size, like those people in England who used to Anglicize asparagus as sparrow-grass and hysterics as high strikes. In fact the

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4 A translation of the whole ode will be found in Gibb (1900–9: iii. 147–51).
5 According to Erkilet (1952), soldiers were already saying carcur instead of şarjör in the 1920s, though this was another kind of şarjör, an ammunition-belt for machine-guns. (See p. 101 of the 1967 reprint.)
6 When the party was outlawed (see Chapter 12), its reincarnation, the Justice Party, chose as its logo the figure of a horse.
Turkish vocabulary still includes not a few originally foreign words that the tongue of the people has converted into more Turkish shapes: from Persian, for example, çamaşır ‘linen’ (jâmesüy), çerçeve ‘frame’ (çarçûba), gözde ‘favourite’ (guzide), köse ‘corner’ (güsä), çarşamba ‘Wednesday’ (çarşanbih), and merdiven ‘staircase’ (nardubân); and, from Arabic, rahat lokum ‘Turkish Delight’ (râhat al-şûlûkum ‘ease of the gullet’), now abbreviated to lokum, muşamba ‘oilskin’ (muşammâ), and maydanoz ‘parsley’ (makdûnis). Maydanoz was transformed by some into midenûvaz [AP] ‘stomach-caressing’, a Persian compound that cannot be called a popular etymology; one is reminded of the English people who turned ‘Welsh rabbit’ into the more genteel-seeming ‘Welsh rarebit’. The essayist and novelist Peyami Safa (1899–1961) must have taken midenûvaz to be the correct form, for he wrote:


A writer friend recently took me to task in his newspaper for spelling a Turkicized French word in the Turkish way. I am reluctant to join the ranks of those who pronounce çikolata as şokola and şimendifer as şömendöfer [chemin de fer]. What lies at the end of that road is pronouncing maydanoz as midenûvaz, a dead end which I have no wish to enter.

On the theme of the bewilderment of ordinary people when confronted by speakers of Ottoman, there is the tale of the sarıkli hoca (the turbanned cleric), who, wishing to buy some mutton, addresses a butcher’s boy with the words ‘Ey şâgird-i kaşşâb, lahm-i çanemden bir kıyye bilvezin bana ‘itâ eyler misin?’ (O apprentice of the butcher, wilt thou bestow on me one oke avoirdupois of ovine flesh?). The perplexed boy can only reply ‘Amîn!’ (Amen!). On the other hand, there is the story of one occasion when the uneducated were not baffled by someone who spoke differently from them. It is said to have happened in 1876, at a time of rioting by the softas (students at the medreses (religious schools) ), when the police were chasing a crowd of them. Despairing of outdistancing the pursuit, one softa had the bright idea of sitting down on the pavement. When the police asked him, ‘Which way did they go?’, he replied, giving full weight to the Arabic pronunciation of his words, as was second nature for a softa: ‘Ba’dîsi şu taraфа, ba’dîsi o taraфа’ (Some went this way, some that)—and was quite surprised to find himself in custody.

Tahsin Banguoğlu, having mentioned (1987: 325) that the poet and sociologist Ziya Gökalp (1876–1924) had wanted the new Turkish to be Istanbul Turkish as spoken by the intellectuals, adds a comment containing an interesting piece of information that the author has not seen recorded elsewhere:

7 Turkish for ‘in the eye’, an obvious popular etymology.

Yes, but the Turkish spoken by intellectuals at that time was a Turkish still very much under the influence of the old written language. And this the people did not understand very well. They called it ‘talking istillahi.’ For example: ‘The manager said something to the clerk, but I couldn’t understand it. They’re talking istillahi.’

İstillahi is another example of the phenomenon discussed above: giving a more familiar shape to high-flown words with which one does not feel at home, the word in this case being istilahi, the adjective of istilah. İstilah paralamak (to tear technical terms to pieces), once meant talking over the heads of one’s hearers. The meaningless but Arabic-looking istillahi is made up of familiar elements: the first two syllables are in imitation of words such as istiklal ‘independence’ and istikamet ‘direction’, while lah is from the Arabic name of God. As we might say, or might have said a generation or two ago, ‘They’re parleyvooing.’

Even before the rise of the Ottomans there had been expressions of dissatisfaction with the dominance of Arabic and Persian.⁸ In 1277 Şemsüddin Mehmed Karamanoğlu, the chief minister of the ruler of Konya, decreed that thenceforth no language other than Turkish would be spoken at court or in government offices or public places. Unfortunately he was killed in battle a few months later.

Few Turks who write about the history of their language can forbear to quote the two following couplets from the Garipnâme (‘Book of the Stranger’) of the Sufi poet Âşık Paşa (1272–1333).⁹ The purpose of the work is to illustrate Sufi doctrine through discourses on passages from the Koran, tradition, and the sayings of Sufi masters.

Türk diline kimesne bakmaz idi
Türklere hergiz gönül akmaz idi
Türk dahi bilmez idi bu dilleri
İnce yoli, ol ulu menzilleri.

None had regard for the Turkish tongue;
Turks won no hearts.
Nor did the Turk know these languages,
The narrow road, those great staging posts.

It is doubtful, however, whether every reader of these lines has a clear idea of their meaning. Of which languages was the Turk ignorant; what are the narrow road and those great staging posts? One scholar (Silay 1993) translates the fourth line as ‘these styles of elegant and elevated discourse’, which does no more than raise another question: what styles? The context makes it plain that Âşık Pasha is not talking about literary style. He has been discussing Koran 14. 4: ‘We have sent no messenger save with the language of his people.’ The Koran was revealed to the

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⁸ A valuable source on this topic is Yavuz (1983).
⁹ The relevant portion of the text is most readily accessible in İz (1967: i. 584–5).
Arabs, in Arabic; neither Persians not Turks have had a prophet bearing them the revelation in their own tongues.

Bu Garipnâme annin geldi dille
Ki bu dil ehli dahi mânâ bile.

Therefore has this Garipnâme been uttered
That those who speak this tongue may also know the hidden wisdom.

The identity of the languages in question is shown in a previous couplet:

Çûn bilesin cümle yol menzillerin
Yirmegil sen Türk ü Tacik dillerin.

To know all the staging posts of the road,
Do not despise the Turkish and Persian languages.

The languages of which the Turk was ignorant are Turkish and Persian, the implication being that so far the language of religion has been Arabic, but Arabic is not the only language through which spiritual knowledge can be attained. Persian is the language of the Mesnevi of the great Sufi poet Jalâl al-Dîn Rûmî; the Turk should learn to read that language and his own, so that he can make use of the Mesnevi and of the Garipnâme. The road is the progress towards enlightenment, the staging posts are the stages in that progress.

To Mîr 'Ali Şir Nevâî (1441–1501) of Herat in Afghanistan belongs the distinction of having raised the Chaghâtay dialect of Turkish to the status of literary language of Central Asia. In his Mu'âkamat al-Luğateyn (‘The Judgment between the Two Languages’) he sets out to demonstrate that Turkish is in no way inferior to Persian as a literary medium. At one point he says:

Ve hûnersiz Türkiîn sitem-zârif yiğitleri âsânîlîkka bula Fârsî elfâz bile nazm âyтуrğâ meşgûl bolupturlar. Ve fîl-‘âh😉îkîni kişi yâşi múlaha ve te’emûl kîlîsa, çûn bu lazînda munça vûş’at ve meydândîna munça fûşhât tapîlur, kirek kim munda her suhan-gûzârlîg ve faşiî-gûfîrlîg ve nazm-sâzîg ve fêsâne-perdâzîg âsânâraz bolgay, ve vâkî’ âsânîrazdur. (Levend 1965–8: iv. 203)

Among untalented Turks, would-be artistic young men have occupied themselves with verse composition using Persian vocabulary, as being the easy course. Truly, if one considers and reflects well, since such scope and range are found in our own language, it follows that all eloquence and expression, all versification and story-telling, are bound to be easier in it and are in fact easier.

Like seventeen others of the thirty-six Ottoman sultans, Selim I (1512–20) wrote poetry. Most of his was in Persian. On the other hand, his arch-enemy Shah Ismail of Persia (1501–24) wrote poems in Turkish, some of which, set to music, may still be heard today on Turkish radio. It has been suggested that his purpose was to endear himself to the Turcomans in his territories, but the simpler explanation is that he was a Turk by birth and that writing in his mother tongue came naturally to him.

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10 In modern Turkish, the -in at the end of this line and the next would be -ini. See Lewis (1988: 41) and, for the -gil of yirmegil, ibid. (137).
In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries came the school of Türki-i basit (‘plain Turkish’ poetry), associated with the names of Aydınlı Visâli, Tatavlaî Mahremî, and Edirneli Nazmî, whom it did not outlive. Readers of poetry expected it to be in Ottoman, not kaba Türkçe (crude Turkish), whereas those whose everyday language was indeed kaba Türkçe, while they might enjoy listening to poetry that they could understand, were not generally readers. Yet even such a dyed-in-the-wool Persianizing poet as Nâbi (c.1630–1712), whom Gibb (1900–9: iii. 325) speaks of as ‘writing verses which can by courtesy alone be described as Turkish’, was moved to write:

Ey şi’r miyanında satan lafz-1 garibi  
Divan-1 gazel nüsha-1 kamus değûldür.

(Levend 1972: 78; Korkmaz 1985: 388)

O you who sell outlandish words wrapped in poetry!  
A book of odes is not a copy of the dictionary!

It will be seen that only three— _ey, satan, değûldür_ —of the eleven words in which Nâbi expresses this laudable sentiment are Turkish. Indeed, long after Ottoman chroniclers had taken to writing in Ottoman instead of Persian, they persisted in using pure Persian for their chapter headings.

The political changes introduced by the Tanzimat-ı Hayriye, the ‘Propitious Regulations’ of 1839, and even more by the reform charter of 1856, gave hope that the manifold grievances of various sections of the Sultan’s subjects might be rectified. Some were, but by no means all. For our purposes it is enough to say that the spirit of the Tanzimat (the term applied to the period as well as to the reforms) gave rise to the first serious stirrings of Turkish nationalism and to a flowering of journalism, and from then on the tide of language reform flowed strongly. A newspaper proprietor or editor does not have to be as devoted to the ideal of a well-informed public as the pioneers of Turkish journalism were (most if not all of them were driven into exile at some time in their careers), or indeed devoted to any ideal at all, to see the necessity of making the language of his paper understandable by as many people as possible; if he fails to see it, he will soon be enlightened by his circulation manager.

The father of Turkish journalism was the writer and poet İbrahim Şinasi (?1824–71), co-founder in 1860 with Ağâh Efendi (1832–85), a civil servant and diplomat, of Tercemân-ı Ahvâl, founded in 1861, the second non-official newspaper to be published in the country (the first was the weekly Ceride-i Havâdis, started in 1840 by an Englishman, William Churchill). Şinasi declared the paper’s policy in his first editorial (Levend 1972: 83):

_11 For a concise history of the Turkish press, see The Encyclopaedia of Islam (1960), ii. 465–6, 473–6. As for Churchill, see Koloğlu (1986), an entertaining account of how, despite being miyop (short-sighted), he went out pigeon-shooting one Sunday afternoon in May 1836 and wounded a shepherd boy and a sheep. There were diplomatic repercussions. An earlier account was Alric (1892)._
There is no need to explain that, while speech is a divine gift for the expression of thought, writing is the finest invention of the human intelligence, consisting as it does in the science of depicting speech by means of the pen. Proceeding from a regard for this truth, editorial notice is hereby given that it is a bounden duty to write this newspaper in a way that will be easily understood by the public at large.

Among the other pioneers were Namık Kemal (1840–88), a selfless patriot and distinguished writer in many fields, and his friend the great statesman Ziya Pasha (1825–80). This is from Namık Kemal’s article ‘Observations on Literature in the Ottoman Language’:

Elfazda garabet o kadar mu’tebedir ki, meselâ Nergişi gibi milletimizin en meşhur bir te’lif-i edibanesinden istihrâc-i meal etmek, bize göre ecnebi bir lisanda yazılımsı olan Gulistan’ı anlamaktan müskûldir. Türkçenin eczâ-ı terkihi olan üç lisani ki, telâffûzda oldukça ittihad bulmuşken tahrirde hâlâ hey‘et-i asliyyelerini muhafaza ediyor. Akaanım-i selâse gibi sözde güya mûttehid ve hakikatte zidd-i kâmûldir.12

Even of literates in Istanbul, perhaps one in ten is incapable of getting as much as he would like from a normally phrased note or even from a State law, the guarantor of his rights. The reason is that our literature is swamped with locutions borrowed from several foreign tongues of east and west, which have damaged the flow of expression, while the style of composition has become totally detached from the particles and terms and forms of discourse and has fallen, to put it plainly, under the domination of another language.

So prevalent is foreignness in our vocabulary that it is harder, in my view, to extract the meaning from one of our nation’s best-known literary compositions, for example that of Nergisi, than to understand the Gulistân, which is written in a foreign language. While the three languages of which Turkish is compounded have attained a certain unity in speech, they still preserve their original forms in writing. Like the three persons of the Trinity, they are said to be united but are in fact the reverse of integrated.

The poems of Nergisi (d. 1635) are more intelligible than his prose works. Gibb (1900–9: iii. 208–9) refers to him when speaking of Veysi’s Life of the Prophet: ‘[It] is written in the most recherché Persian style, and shares with the prose Khamsa of Nergisê [sic] the distinction of having been gibbetted by Ebu-z-Ziyâ Tevfîq Bey, one of the most stalwart champions of the Modern School, as a composition the continued study of which will land the nation in disaster.’ The Gulistân of Sa’di

(?1213–92), in a mixture of verse and rhymed prose, is regarded as one of the masterpieces of Persian literature. One might think that Namık Kemal was exag-gerating, but in his day Arabic and Persian were a regular part of secondary ed-ucation (and remained so until 1 October 1929). Anyone who has learned Persian, which is not a challenging language, can understand the Gülistân, but Nergisi’s convoluted Ottoman prose presents much greater difficulty.

Ziya Pasha wrote the following in an article in Hürriyet, the newspaper he and Namık Kemal founded while exiles in London:

Elyevm resmen ilan olunan fermanlar ve emirnâmeler âhâd-i nas huzurunda okutuldukta bir şey istifade ediliyor mu? Ya bu muharrerat yalnız kitabette melekesi olanlara mı mah-sustur? Yoksa avâm-1 nas devletin emrini anlamak için müdur? Anadoluda ve Rumeli'de âhâd-1 nasta her şahsa, devletin bir ticaret nizami vardır ve a'sarın suret-i müzayede ve ihalesine ve tevzi-i vergiye ve şuna buna dair fermanları ve emirnâmeleri vardır deyür sorulsun, görülür ki biçimlerin birinden haberi yoktur. Bu sebebendlendi ki hålâ bizim memâlikte Tanzimat neder ve nizâmât-1 cedide ne turlu islâhât hâsıl etmiştir, ahali bilmediklerinden ekser mahallerde mütehâyyân-1 memleket ve zaleme-i vülât ve me-murun ellerinde ve âdeta kable't-Tanzimat cereyan eden usûl-i zulm ü i'tisaf altında ezilir ve kimseye derdini anlatamazlar. Amma Fransa ve İngiltere memâlikinden birinde me'murun birisi nizâmât-1 mevcude hilâfında câz'î bir hareket edecek olsa avâm-1 nas derhal da'vâcî olur.13

Today, when decrees and orders are read out in the hearing of the common people, can anything be made of them? Are such compositions meant exclusively for those with a mastery of the written word, or is it intended that ordinary people should understand what the State commands? Try talking to any commoner in Anatolia and Rumelia about a com-mercial regulation, or the decrees and orders relating to the auctioning and awarding of the right to collect tithes, or establishing the amount of tax due from each household, or any matter at all; you will find that none of the poor creatures knows anything about any one of them. This is why dwellers in our territories still do not know what the Tanzimat is and what kind of reforms the new regulations have given rise to, and in most places there-fore suffer oppression at the hands of local dignitaries, tyrannical governors and officials, under the same bullying system and with all the injustices that prevailed in pre-Tanzimat times. Nor is the population able to tell anyone its troubles, whereas if an official in any of the French or English realms were to infringe the current regulations in the slightest degree, the commoners would immediately have the law on him.

Two lines from Chesterton’s ‘The Secret People’ come irresistibly to mind:

We hear men speaking for us of new laws strong and sweet,
Yet is there no man speaketh as we speak in the street.

Ali Suavi (1837–78) was one of the first to take a nationalist stand in the matter of language: he urged the avoidance of non-Turkish words for which there were good Turkish equivalents and, like Süleyman Pasha and Şemsettin Sami after him,

13 Hürriyet (London), 20 Cemâdi'1-ülâ 1285/7 Sept. 1868; Levend (1972: 119).
spoke out against calling the language Ottoman. He went further than Şinasi, who did not explicitly advocate the use of Turkish in preference to non-Turkish words. This is how he ended the introductory editorial he wrote for his newspaper Muhbir (1 (1867); Levend 1972: 115): ‘Taşrîhi câiz olan herşey’i, Âsitâne’de kullanılan âdi lisân ile ya’ni herkesin anlâyabileceâi ifade ile yazacak Hướng [this journal] will write up in the ordinary language used in the capital; that is to say, in terms that everybody will be able to understand).

Although the new newspapers and magazines frequently carried articles urging the use of simple Turkish, they tended to urge it in very complicated language. The domestic news sections of the newspapers went on for many years under the heading Havâdis-i Dâhîlîye, because havâdis ‘news’ is an Arabic feminine, so dâhîli ‘internal’ had to be in the feminine too, not forgetting the Persian -i. As late as 1896, a contributor to the newspaper İzmir wrote an article appealing for the use of straightforward Turkish, one paragraph of which should suffice to prove this point (Levend 1972: 275). The Persian izafet compounds (which is what the writer meant by ‘unfamiliar and ponderous foreign locutions’) are identifiable in the modern transcription by the -i or -î. Words in italic are of non-Turkish origin. ‘Saîvet-i ifademizi ihlâl eden efaz-i gayr-î me’na ve sakîle-i ecnebiyyeye mukabil servet-i mevcude-i lisaniyyemizden istifade etmiş olsak, daîre-i saîvet-i ifadeyi, binaenalyh daîre-i terakkiyi tevisi’ etmiş oluruz’ (Had we made use of our existing linguistic wealth instead of the unfamiliar and ponderous foreign locutions that corrupt our purity of expression, we would have broadened the compass of purity of expression and consequently the compass of progress).

Ahmet Midhat (1844–1912), most prolific of Turkish journalists,14 wrote this in 1871, with not a single Persian izafet:


Amma denilecek ki, bizim lisânımız her halde bunlardan haric olamıyor. Haric olamadıği gibi dahilinde de saylamiyorum. Türkistan’dan bir Türk ve Necid’den bir Arap ve Şiraz’dan bir Acem getirsek, edebiyatımızdan en güzel bir parça bunlara karış okusak hangisi anlar? Şübhe yok ki hiç birisi anlayamaz.

Tamam, işte bunlardan hiç birisinin anlâyamadıği lisân bizim lisânımızdır diyelim. Hayır, anı da diyemeyiz. Çünkü o parça bize okudukları zaman biz de anlayamayız . . .

Pek a’la, ne yapalım? Lisansız mı kalalım? Hayır, halkımızin kullandığı bir lisân yok mu? İşte anı millet lisânı yapalım . . .

14 Ahmet Midhat’s work was more remarkable for its extent than for its originality. His output, of close on 200 books and countless articles, won him the appellation ‘kirk beygir kuvvetinde bir makina’ (a forty-horsepower engine). Nevertheless he was an effective and widely read popularizer of new ideas. Over half of Türk Dili, 521 (May 1995) was devoted to him.
Arabça ve Farsçanın ne kadar izafetleri ve ne kadar sıfatları varsa kaldırınversek, yazdığımız şeyler bugün yediyüz kişi anlayabilmekte ise yarın mutlaka yedi kişi anlar. (Basiret, 4 Apr. 1871; Levend 1972: 123)

The first thing I should like to ask our writers is, don’t we have a language of our own? They will point to the Turkish spoken in Turkestan, won’t they? No, that is not our language. It was, six or seven centuries ago, but not now. That Turkish is not our language, nor are Arabic and Persian our language. But some will say, surely our language cannot lie outside these? It cannot lie outside them and it cannot be considered as inside them. If we were to bring a Turk from Turkestan, an Arab from Nejd, and a Persian from Shiraz, and read in their presence some exquisite passage from our literature, which of them would understand it? There is no doubt that none of them would. All right, let us say that this language which none of them can understand is our language. No, we cannot say that either, because when they read that passage to us we cannot understand it...

Very well, what are we to do? Are we to be left without a language? No! There is a language that our people speak, isn’t there? Let us make that the national language... If we were to sweep away all the izafets and all the adjectives there are in Arabic and Persian, if seven hundred people today understand what we write, tomorrow it will surely be seven thousand.

Ahmet Midhat lived to see his wish well on the road to fulfilment. People who had been used to calling the natural sciences ulûm-i tabiîye came to see that there was no harm in using the Turkish plural instead of the Arabic, dropping the Persian i and the Arabic feminine ending of the adjective, and putting the adjective first: tabii ilimler. Even so, M. A. Hagopian found it necessary to devote over 40 per cent of his Ottoman-Turkish Conversation-Grammar (1907) to the grammar of Arabic and Persian.

Süleyman Pasha (1838–92) deserves the palm for being the first Turk to publish a grammar of Turkish and to name it accordingly: İlm-i Sarf-i Türki (1874). Credit is also due to Abdullah Ramiz Pasha, whose Lisân-ı Osmânînin Kavâ’idini Hâvi Emsile-i Türki (‘Paradigms of Turkish, Containing the Rules of the Ottoman Language’) had appeared in 1868. In 1851, Ahmed Ceved Pasha (1825–95) and Fuad Efendî, later Pasha (1815–68), had published Kavâ’îd-i Osmânîye (‘Ottoman Rules’), a grammar that went through a number of editions. The 1875 edition was named Kavâ’îd-i Türkiye (‘Turkish Rules’).

Article 18 of the Constitution of 1876 named the official language as Turkish, not Ottoman: ‘Tebâ’a-i Osmâniyênin hidemât-ı devlette istihdam olunmak için devletin lisân-ı resmisi olan Türçeyi bilmeleri şarttır’ (A prerequisite for Ottoman subjects’ employment in State service is that they know Turkish, which is the official language of the State).

Şemsettin Sami (1850–1904), famous for his excellent dictionary Kamus-i Türki (1316/1901) (though it is not as comprehensive as Redhouse (1890)), was of Süleyman Pasha’s way of thinking. The following extracts are from his article ‘Lisân-ı Türkî (Osmâni),’ published in an Istanbul weekly in 1881.

Bana kalırsa, o aktâr-ı ba'ideki Türklerin lisânıyle bizim lisânımız bir olduğundan, ikisine de 'lisân-ı Türkî' ism-i müşterek ve beyinlerdeki farka da riyayet olunmak istenildiği halde, onların 'Türkî-i şarîkî' ve bizimkine 'Türkî-i garbî' unvanı pek münasibdir... 15

I do not think the term the 'Ottoman language' is quite correct... The name of the people who speak this language is really 'Turks' and their language is Turkish. This name, which is regarded as a reproach by the ignorant masses and which some would like to see applied only to the peasants of Anatolia, is the name of a great community which ought to take pride in being so termed. The relationship between 'Ottoman' and 'Turk' is just like that between 'Austrian' and 'German'. 'Austrian' is applied to the totality of peoples who are subjects of the Austrian State, among them the Germans of Austria, the dominant community. 'German' is applied to all members of this great community, both in Austria and in Prussia and Germany, as well as in Switzerland, Russia and elsewhere. So, too, members of all the peoples subject to the Ottoman dynasty are called Ottomans, while 'Turk' is the title of a great community extending from the shores of the Adriatic to the borders of China and the interior of Siberia. This title, therefore... should be a reason for pride and joy.

Though it may be permissible to give the name 'the Ottoman languages' to the totality of languages spoken in the Ottoman dominions, it is quite inconsistent with history and the relationships of languages to apply the name 'the Ottoman language' to one of them, particularly one whose boundaries for the most part lie beyond those dominions and which antedates by far the foundation of this State...

As I see it, since the language of the Turks in those distant regions is one with ours, it is perfectly proper to give them the common name of Turkish and, in cases where it is desirable for the difference between them to be observed, to call theirs Eastern Turkish and ours Western Turkish...

Part of the reaction to the repressive regime of Sultan Abdülhamid (1876-1909) was manifested in the imitation of Western, particularly French, literary works, their content as much as their form, notably by the Servet-i Fünun school. Despite its modernist pretensions, this famous journal ('The Riches of Science')

15 Hafta, 12, 10 Zilhicce 1298/4 Nov. 1881. Full text in Levend (1972: 130–4).
represents a blind alley, even a U-turn, on the road to making the written language more accessible to the general public. It began its career in 1891 as the weekly magazine of the Istanbul evening newspaper Servet. Between 1895 and 1901, when the government closed it down, it was the hub of a circle of young French-oriented writers who became known as the Edebiyat-ı Cedideçiler, the exponents of the new literature. The precious style adopted by many of them repelled the common reader. Persuaded as they were that Turkish was incapable of being a literary medium without the aid of Arabic and Persian, they were wedded to the Persian ızafet compounds and, not content with those current in the literary language, created new ones. Among their favourites were: şəbnem-i zevk u tesliyet 'the dew of pleasure and consolation', hadika-i sükün 'garden of tranquillity', and melâl-i mesâ 'evening melancholy' (Levend 1972: 349). At the same time they liked to show how Westernized they were by using calques, literal translations of French expressions, such as ilâç almak 'to take medicine' instead of the normal ilâç yemek. One of their number, the novelist Halit Ziya Uşaklıgil (1866–1945), wrote this in his memoirs forty years on:

Bu maraz hâdisesi, refiklerimin affedeceklerine, hattâ benimle beraber i'tiraf elîyecelikelîne sölyeyeceğim, zînet ve san'at ibtîhâsîdî . . . öyle ki o tarihten uzaklaştưkça hele bugün ben bizzat bunları tekrar okurken sınırlenumekten håli kalmıyorum. (Uşaklıgil 1936: iv. 141; Levend 1972: 238)

This disease—and I shall say this in the conviction that my old colleagues will forgive me and may even join in my confession—was an addiction to ornateness and artifice . . . so much so that the further I am removed from that time, and especially at the present day, the more irritated I become on re-reading what I wrote then.

During the 1897 war with Greece, the poet Mehmet Emin [Yurdakul] (1869–1944) published his Türkçe Şiirleri. The title is significant: these were Turkish poems, not Ottoman poems. The first, ‘Anadoludan bir ses yahut Cenge giderken’ (‘A Voice from Anatolia, or Going to War’), began:

Ben bir Türküm: dinim, cinsim uludur:
Sinem, özüm ateş ile doludur:
İnsan olan vatanının kuludur:
Türk evlâdi evde durmaz; giderim!
I am a Turk, my faith and my race are great;
My breast and soul are full of fire.
He who serves his native land—he is a man;
The sons of Turks will not stay at home; I go!

It won him the appellation Türk Şairi, meaning not just ‘the Turkish poet’ but ‘the “Turk” poet’. The language of the poem, for the most part simple Turkish, the words ‘Ben bir Türküm’, and above all his use of the syllabic metres of popular verse rather than the Arabo-Persian quantitative metres of classical poetry, were a slap in the face for the intellectuals who saw themselves as Ottomans, in
particular for the elitist Edebiyat-ı Cedideciler. They retorted that he was no poet but a mere versifier and that not all the words he used would be intelligible to the common people. There was some justice in these criticisms: ceng [P], for example, was a distinctly high-flown way of saying ‘war’. But the common people admired him as a literary man who was not too proud to declare himself a Turk like them.

Türk Derneği, the Turkish Association, was the first nationalist cultural organization to be formed, in January 1908, one of its founders being Ahmet Midhat (Tunaya 1984: i. 414–15; Levend 1972: 301). Its sixty-three members were far from having a shared view about the future of the language. Some of them were Simplifiers (Sadexeştirmeciler), who favoured eliminating non-Turkish elements and replacing them with native words current in speech. Some were Turkicizers (Türkçeciler), who believed that new words should be created by means of the regular Turkish suffixes and that Arabic and Persian words current in popular speech should be counted as Turkish. Then there were the Purifiers (Tasfiyeciler), who did not object to the Turkicizers’ view on the latter point but advocated borrowing words and suffixes from other dialects. Their leader Fuat Köseraif was not averse to inventing where necessary; according to Ziya Gökalp, he favoured taking suffixes over from Kirghiz, Uzbek, or Tatar, or even creating them from whole cloth (‘büs bütün yeniden yaratılacak’): the adjective suffix -i could be replaced by -ki/ke/gi, so that hayattı ‘vital’ would become hayakt, and edebi ‘literary’ would become edebgi. Unfortunately for anyone trying to sort out the various groups, their contemporaries outside the Derneki tended to call them all Purifiers, which Gökalp (1339/1923: 114–15) found confusing.¹⁶

Others could not stomach the idea of abandoning even the Persian ızafet, and came out strongly against those who would turn Ottomans into Buharalı (people of Bukhara). Two prominent members, Mehmet Emin and Halit Ziya, held diametrically opposite views on the course the language ought to take. While the Association was being established, the latter contributed an article to Servet-i Fünun in which he poured scorn on those wishing to expel from the language words of non-Turkish ancestry for which Turkish synonyms existed. The first word or phrase in the first two pairs in the following quotation is Arabic, the second Persian; in the others the order is reversed:

Yök, maksud, zaten birde Türkçe olarak müradipleri mevcud olan kelimeleri atmaksa, mesela lisanda günüş var diye ızık-ı edebimizden şems ü hurşid’i silmek, yıldız var diye ‘nücum u ahter’i sündürmek, göz var diye ‘çeşm ü diše’ yi, ‘aşın u basar’ı kapamak, yol var diye ‘råh u tarık’i seddetmek, şu var diye ‘ab u ma’ yi kurutmak kabilinden ameliyati tahribe karar vermekse, buna bir israf-ı bihude nazari ile bakmak tabiidir.

Bu mütalaaya serdedilen ı’tıraz: lisanı sadeleştirir, onu seviye-i irfan-ı halka indirirme için bu fedakârîa lüzum var sözünden ibaretir. Fakat lisan seviye-i irfan-ı halka inmez, seviye-i irfan-ı halk lisanaya yükseltmeye çalışılır. (Levend 1972: 305)

¹⁶ He always spelled his second name as two words: Gök Alp (Sky Hero).
No, if the purpose is to discard the words we have with Turkish synonyms, and to decide on such destructive surgery as effacing şems and hurşid from our literary horizon because we have güneş 'sun', extinguishing nücum and ahter because we have yıldız 'star', closing çekm u dide and ayn İ basar because we have göz 'eye', blocking râh and tarîk because we have yol 'road', drying up âb and mà because we have su 'water', one cannot but regard it as wanton waste.

The sole objection raised to this observation consists in the assertion that this sacrifice is necessary in order to simplify the language, to lower it to the cultural level of the people. But the language does not descend to the cultural level of the people; one endeavours to elevate the cultural level of the people to the language.

The majority of the membership must have been of Halit Ziya's way of thinking, for this was how the Association's official attitude was set forth in its journal, which shared its name:

Osmanlı lisanının Arâbî ve Farsi lisanlarından ettiği iftâfade gayr-ı münker bulunduğundan ve Osmanlı Türkçesini bu muhterem lisanlardan tecrid etmek hiçbir Osmanlı'nın hayalinden bile geçmiyecığinden, Türk Derneği, Arâbî ve Farsi kelimelerini bütün Osmanlılar tarafından kemal-i sühuletle anlaşılacak ve hile şayı' olmuşlardır indiht edecek ve binaenalîyeh mezkür Derneği'nin yazacağı eserlerde kullanacağı lisan en sade Osmanlı Türkçesi olacaktır. (Levend 1972: 301)

Since the benefit that the Ottoman language has derived from the Arabic and Persian languages is undeniable, and since no Ottoman would even dream of dissociating Ottoman Turkish from these revered languages, the Turkish Association will select Arabic and Persian words from among those that have gained currency enough to be understood with total ease by all Ottomans. Consequently, the language that the Association will use in works it produces will be the simplest Ottoman Turkish.

All very fine for the Ottomans, but not much use to those inhabitants of Turkey who, not presuming to lay claim to that designation, humbly thought of themselves as Turks. Mehmet Emin for one could scarcely have approved. Clearly the disparity of opinions did not augur well for the prospects of the Association, which by 1913 had indeed ceased to exist.

The exponents of simple Turkish still had far to go, not having yet grasped the principle expressed in St Luke's 'Physician, heal thyself.' At this range it is impossible to say whether or not the drafter of the following 'Decision on the Purification of the Language', quoted in the press in November 1909 (Levend 1972: 313), had his tongue in his cheek. Again, the words in italic are of non-Turkish origin:

Levazimat-ı umumiyye dairesi ta'yînat kısmî ma'rîfeâtyle terkim ve tevzi' edilmekte olan matbu' pusulalara envâ-ı muayyenati mübeyyin olmak üzere dercolunmakta olan 'nân-ı aziz', 'güşt', 'erz', 'şar' ve 'hatab' kelimelerinin yerlerine, ba'demâ 'ekmek', 'et', 'pirinç', 'arpa' ve 'odun' yazılması karargir olmuştu.

It has been decided that the words 'nân-ı aziz' [PA] 'precious bread';17 güşt [P] 'meat', 'erz' [A] 'rice', 'şar' [A] 'barley, and hatab' [A] 'firewood', which are included on the printed slips

17 The adjective 'precious' does not denote a particular type of loaf; it was a stock epithet of bread.
drawn up and distributed by the rationing section of the Department of the Commissariat-General to indicate the various kinds of rations, shall henceforth be replaced by ‘ekmek’, ‘et’, ‘pirinç’ [P], ‘arpa’, and ‘odun’.

But one doubts that members of the Ottoman Parliament had their tongues in their cheeks one month later, when stating their objection to the proposed wording of their response to the Speech from the Throne: ‘Arıza-i teşekküriyyenin üslub-ı tahriri pek edibane ve Meclis-i Milli’ye yakışmayacak derecede teşbihat ve elfaz-ı rengin ile mahmul’ (The style of composition of the Grateful Submission is very literary and laden with similes and ornate locations to an extent unbecoming the National Assembly) (Levend 1972: 313).

On the other hand, the poet Mehmet Akif was not happy with the results of purification as exhibited in the newspaper İkdam in 1910:

bir takım makaleler görülüyor ki Türkçe kelimelerin yanbaşlarında Arapçaları olmasa zavallı ummet-i merhum hiçbir şey anlamiyacak! Meclis yerine ‘kuriltay’,\(^\text{18}\) meb’us yerine ‘yalvaç’, a’yan yerine ‘aksakal’, hal yerine ‘idemük’, can yerine bilmem ne! ... Gazetelerde zaba vukuatu öyle ağır bir lisanla yazılıyör ki avam onu bir dua gibi dinliyor: ‘Mehmet Bey’in hanesine leylen fûrce-yâb-ı duhul olan sarık sezik adet kâlici-i giran-baha sirkat etmiştir’ deyip de ‘Mehmed Bey’in bu gece evine hırsız girmiş sezik halî çalmış’ dememek âdetâ maskaralıktır. Avâmın anliyabileceği meâni avâmın kullandığı lisan ile edâ edilmeli ... (Şırat-ı Müstakim, 4/92, 9 Apr. 1910; Levend 1972: 311–12)

One sees many articles of which the unfortunate public—God have mercy on them—would understand nothing were it not for the Arabic equivalents given alongside the Turkish words! Kuriltay for meclis ‘Parliament’, yalvaç for meb’us ‘Deputy’, aksakal ‘grey-beards’ for a’yan ‘notables’, idemük\(^\text{19}\) for hal ‘situation’, and I don’t know what for can ‘soul’! ... The police reports in the newspapers are couched in language so abstruse that ordinary people listen to them as if they were religious formulas. To say ‘Depredators who nocturnally effected an opportunist entry into Mehmêd Bey’s domicile purloined costly tapis eight in number’, and not to say ‘Last night burglars broke into Mehmêd Bey’s house and stole eight rugs’ is not far short of buffoonery. Concepts for ordinary people to be able to understand should be expressed in the language used by ordinary people ...

By the end of the nineteenth century some, and by the First World War most, Turkish writers were making a conscious effort to avoid Persian constructions except in stock phrases. They were also ceaseing to think of their language as Ottoman, and after 1918 few went on thinking of themselves as Ottomans. Article 7 of the 1908 political programme of the Society for Union and Progress (‘the Young Turks’) ran: ‘Devletin lisan-1 resmisi Türkçe kalacaktır. Her nevi mubaherat ve müzakeratî Türkçe icra olunacaktır’ (The official language of the State will remain Turkish. Its correspondence and deliberations of every kind will be conducted in Turkish) (Tunaya 1952: 209). In 1920, while the War of Independence was still raging and the Sultan’s government still ruled in

\(^{18}\) In Levend, kuriltay is misspelt kurultay.

\(^{19}\) The author has so far failed to track down this word, even in that wonderful ragbag Tarama Dergisi (1934).
Istanbul, schoolteachers had been instructed by the Ankara government's Ministry of Education to collect pure Turkish words in colloquial use that had so far eluded the lexicographers.

But the non-writing classes took a good deal longer to adjust to the new situation. The author was told by Fahir İz that, during his military service in the neighbourhood of Erzurum just before the Second World War, he had got into conversation with a shepherd, whom he shocked by using the words 'Biz Türkler' (We Turks). 'Estağfurullah!' was the reply, 'Ben Türküm, zat-ı âlîniz Osmanlısunuz' (Lord have mercy! I'm a Turk; Your Excellency is an Ottoman).

Somewhat more effective than Türk Derneği was the literary group that called itself and its journal Genç Kalemler (The Young Pens), formed in Salonica (Selânik) in April 1911 (Levend 1972: 313–30). Its members were also known as Yeni Lisançalar, the exponents of the new language. Most influential among them were Ziya Gökalp and the short-story writer Ömer Seyfettin (1884–1920).

The latter was the author of an article entitled 'Yeni Lisan' and signed only with a question mark, attacking the Edebiyat-i Cedide, the 'new literature' of the Servet-i Fünun group, and the even shorter-lived group known as Fecr-i Âti (the Coming Dawn), which formed round Servet-i Fünun on its reappearance after the Young Turk revolution of 1908. 'Bugünkülerin dinküleri taklid etmekten vazgeçtikleri dakika hakiki fecir olacak, onların sayesinde yeni bir lisanla terennüm olunan milli bir edebiyat doğacaktır . . . Milli bir edebiyat vucuda getirmeck için evelâ milli lisan ister' (The true dawn will break at the moment when today's people stop imitating yesterday's. Thanks to them a national literature will be born, hymned in a new language . . . To bring a national literature into being requires first a national language). He went on to give his recipe for that future national language. In something of a purple passage, he stated his objections to replacing current words of Arabic and Persian origin with native words or with borrowings from further east:


Lisanımızda yalnuz Türkce kaideler hükmedecek; yalnuz Türkçe, yalnuz Türkçe kaideleri. (Genç Kalemler (Apr. 1911); Levend 1972: 314–15)

Are we to tag along behind the Turk Dereği and head for a sterile reaction, joining our fellow members of the Turkish community who still lead a basic existence in 'Bukhara the
Noble, slumbering in the darkness of a dreadful ignorance and horrendous fanaticism, living the life of a dozen centuries ago? That would be an act of suicide. It would be like abandoning our quick-firing artillery and machine-guns and instead, when our enemies arrive, doing as the fellow-members of our people do and putting on the samovars expressly intended to boil the water we’re going to throw over them. No, it is impossible; we cannot forsake the Arabic and Persian words, the words we call familiar, that we have spoken for five centuries. Certainly no poet will renounce the classical prosody and accept Mehmet Emin Bey’s metres. Istanbul Turkish, the language we speak, is a most natural language. Stereotyped ızafet compounds aside, the unnecessary trimmings can never enter our speech. If we unify the language of writing and the language of speaking, we shall have revived our literature or produced a new literature...

In our language, only Turkish rules will hold sway; only the Turkish language and only the rules of Turkish.

The spectre of Türk Derneği’s failure must have been before his eyes as he wrote that equivocal statement, which in no way justified the term ‘new language’. Şemsettin Sami had been far more radical thirty years before.

Most of the literary establishment were less receptive than Ömer Seyfettin to suggestions that the language needed to be reformed; this may have been due to their love of Ottoman for its own sake or as a badge of rank distinguishing them form the commoners. Süleyman Nazif (1870–1927), editor of Yeni Tasvir-i Efkar, published an open letter by way of a rejection slip to a writer who had sent him an article on language. Having said that, if he were the proprietor of the newspaper, he would never open its pages to an article that advocated simplifying the language, he went on:

> Lisanını seven bir Osmanlı Türk’ü, hiçbir vakit ‘hatavat-ı terakki’ makamına ‘ilerleme adımları’ni ış’ad edemez, böyle yaparsak lisanın kabiliyeti ve letafetini elimizle mahvetmiş oluruz... Lisanı sadeleştirme, bizi yedi asır geriye ve dört beş bin kilometre uzaga atmaktır... Tekrar ederim ki biz bugün Buharali değiliz ve olamayız. O maziyi iadeye çalışmak mühlich bir irtica’dır. (Yeni Tasvir-i Efkar, 12 July 1909; Levend 1972: 305–6)

An Ottoman Turk who loves his language can never elevate *ilerleme adımları* [going-ahead steps] to the status of *hatavat-ı terakki* [progressive paces]. If we do that, we thereby destroy the capacity and subtlety of the language with our own hands... To simplify the language is to throw us seven centuries back and four or five thousand kilometres distant... I repeat: today we are not and cannot be Bukharans. Trying to bring back that past is a destructive piece of reaction.

Interestingly, the cudgels were taken up on behalf of simplification by an easterner; not a Bukharan but a man from Kazan, Kazanlı Ayaz.

Bizin mesleğimiz avam taraftarı bulunmak olduğundan, biz bütün efkar-ı siyasiye ve ictimaiye avâma anlatmak tarafındayız. Bizce bu meslek bir lisan için değil, bütün mesâıl-i hayatiye içündür... Memleketin ıslahı, milletin teceddüdü bütün efrad-ı millet efkarının teceddudu ile hasil olacağını bizim nokta-ı nazarmızdan milletini seven her Türk
yazdığı her makaleyi Anadolu Türklerinin anlayacağı bir lisanla yazması lazım gelir. (Servet-i Fünun, 9 July 1325/22 July 1909; Levend 1972: 307)

Given that our vocation is to take the side of the common people, we are for acquainting them with all political and social thinking. In my view this vocation does not relate to a language but to all vital problems . . . As the reformation of the country and the renewal of the nation will come about with the renewal of the thinking of every member of the nation, from our point of view every article written by any Turk who loves his nation must be in a language that will be understood by the Turks of Anatolia.

One of the few who joined him was Celâl Sahir [Erozan] (1883–1935), a poet of the Fecr-i Âti school, who followed Mehmet Emin in making the transition from Arabo-Persian prosody to Turkish syllabic metre, in which he produced some attractive love-poetry:

Şimdi lisanda teceddûd husulî için çalısmak isteyenlerin ilk adımı bu kavâid-i ecnebiyyeyi tard ve imhâ olmalıdır. Bizim kelimeye ihtiyacımız var. Peki, fakat yalnız kelimeye, müfred kelimelerle müfredlerinden ayrı, müstakil bir ma'nâ ifade eden cemi' kelimelerle, her kelimenin cem'îne, tesniyesine değil, hele terakibe hiç değil . . . Hele lisanı sadeleştirmenin bizi yedi asır geriye atmak olduğunu hiç kabul edemem. (Servet-i Fünun, 27 May 1326/9 June 1910; Levend 1972: 309)

The first step taken by those wishing to work for renewal in the language should be to cast out and eliminate these foreign rules. We need words. Very well; but only words: the singular forms of words and those plurals which express independent meanings, distinct from their singulars,20 but not the plural or the feminine of every word and above all not izafet compounds . . . In particular I cannot accept that simplifying the language means throwing us seven centuries back into the past.

To leave for a moment the views of established literary figures of the old days, here is a reminiscence of the economist Fuat Andic about his generation's view in the 1940s of what the language of the future ought to be. It centres on a verse by Kemalpaşazade Sait, alias Lâstik ('Galoshes') Sait, who held several senior posts in government service but was best known as a writer of articles on literature for the newspapers Tarik and Vakit, and as a minor poet. The reason for his nickname was that he was reputed never to take off his galoshes even in summer.21 He engaged in often vitriolic polemics on literature and language with Namik Kemal, Ahmet Midhat, and the poet Abdülhak Hâmid (1851–1937). The language of his writings was pure Ottoman; does the verse express his real opinion or was it meant sarcastically? Probably the former; he habitually wrote in Ottoman, because in those days it was the only way to write formally, but this time he was rebelling. At any rate, the boys of Fuat Andic's generation took it seriously. And here it is:

20 The reference is to words like the Arabic ajza', plural of juz' 'part'; its Turkish form ecza means not 'parts' but 'chemicals, drugs', whence eczaçî 'pharmacist'. See Lewis (1988: 27).
21 I am indebted to Professor Andic, both for drawing my attention to Lâstik Sait and for explaining the origin of his nickname.
Arapça isteyen urbana gitsin
Acemce isteyen İranca gitsin
Frengiler Frengistanca gitsin
Ki biz Türküz bize Türkü gerek.

Let the one who wants Arabic go to the Beduin;
Let the one who wants Persian go to Iran;
Let the Franks go to their own land.
For we are Turks; we must have Turkish.

The class used to add a fifth line: 'Bunu bilmeyen ahmak/eşşek demek' (Anyone who doesn't know this, it means he's a silly fool/donkey).22

To revert to the grown-ups: Ziya Gökalp believed that, if the Turks were to equip themselves with the vocabulary necessary for coping with the advances of science and technology, the natural way was to follow the example of the Western nations. Just as they had recourse to Greek and Latin, the classical languages of their culture, so the Turks should go back to Arabic and Persian. In practice, he based his creations on Arabic, less frequently Persian, while using the Persian izafet to make compounds. From rûh 'soul, spirit' he made ruhiyat23 for 'psychology'; from bâdi 'floweriness of style', bedii for 'aesthetic' (though in Arabic bâdi'i means 'rhetorical') and bediiyat for 'aesthetics'. From the Arabic şa'n, 'matter, affair', he made şe'ni 'pragmatic' and şe'niyet 'reality'. These two never won much currency, partly because 'pragmatic' does not figure in everyone's vocabulary, and mostly because Turks in general did not distinguish between Arabic ʿayn, the pharyngal gulp, and hamza, the glottal stop, or attempt to pronounce either of them, so that except to a few pedants Ziya Gökalp's şe'ni 'pragmatic' sounded exactly like şeni, the Turkish pronunciation of the Arabic şâni 'abominable'.

His most successful coinage was a word for 'ideal'. Until his time, the dictionary equivalent had been gaye-i emel 'goal of hope' or gaye-i hayal 'goal of imagination', though probably most people who talked about ideals used the French idéal. He invented mefkûre (together with mefkûreviyat for 'ideology'), based on the Arabic faḳara 'to think', which was enthusiastically adopted, surviving long after Tarama Dergisi (1934) came up with ülku; indeed, recent dictionaries still use it to define ülkü. It survives in another aspect too: in Turkish cities you will see apartment blocks named Mefkûre, as well as Ülkü and İdeal.

22 Andic writes, 'The fifth line may or may not belong to him. When I was in high school it was a pastime among us to add one or two lines to well-known poems. I do not know for sure whether the fifth line belongs to me or to Lâstik Sait' (Letter to the author, 13 Apr. 1997). The student should bear in mind that eşek is more offensive than 'donkey', and that eşşek is more offensive than eşek.
23 For the -iyat, sometimes transcribed as -iyat or -iyyat, see Lewis (1988: 27).
He tells how deeply impressed he was in 1897 at hearing how private soldiers coped with the Ottoman terms for first and second lieutenant. ‘Lieutenant’ in Arabic was *mulâzim*, ‘first’ was *awwal*, and ‘second’ was *tâni*. Put together in accordance with the rules of Persian and pronounced in accordance with the rules of Turkish, that made ‘mülâzim-i evvel’, ‘mülâzim-i sani’. The soldiers, however, put the adjectives first, saying ‘evvel mülâzim’, ‘sani mülâzim’. This led him to the following conclusion: ‘Türkçeyi ıslâh için bu lisandan bütün Arâbi ve Farsi kelimeleri değil, umum Arâbi ve Farsi kaideleri atmak, Arâbi ve Farsi kelimelerinden de Türkçesi olanları terkederek, Türkçesi bulunmayanları lisanda ibka etmek’ (The way to reform Turkish is not to throw all the Arabic and Persian words out of this language but to throw out all Arabic and Persian rules and abandon all the Arabic and Persian words which have Turkish equivalents, letting those with no Turkish equivalents survive in the language) (Gökalp 1339/1923: 12).

A line from his poem ‘Lisan’,24 ‘Türkçeleşmiş Türkçedir’ (What has become Turkish is Turkish), has often been quoted by those unwilling to see the loss of any Ottoman word. Later on in the same book he states his first principle of *Lisani Türkçülük* (Linguistic Turkism): ‘Milli lisanimizi vücude getirmek için, Osmanlı lisanını hiç yokmuş gibi bir tarafa atarak, halk edebiyatına temel vazifesini gören Türk dilini aynıyle kabul edip İstanbul halkının ve bilhassa İstanbul hanımlarının konuştukları gibi yazmak’ (For the purpose of creating our national language, to accept as it stands the Turkish tongue, which serves as the basis for popular literature, and to write as Istanbul people speak, especially Istanbul ladies, discarding the Ottoman language as if it had never been) (Gökalp 1339/1923: 121).

The word *halk* is ambiguous nowadays and no doubt was in Gökalp’s time too; whereas in political speeches it connotes the citizen body, the sovereign people, in common parlance it means the proletariat. Gökalp was certainly using it in the first sense, but the question is, what then did he mean by ‘hanımlar’? Female residents of Istanbul, or Istanbul ladies as distinct from Istanbul women? We must assume the latter; at all events, his first principle was never put into effect. Nor was another of his pronouncements: ‘İstanbul Türkçesinin savtıyati, şekliyati ve lûgaviyati’,25 yeni Türkçenin temeli olduğundan, başka Türk lehçelerinden ne kelime, ne siyga ne edat, ne de terkib kaideleri alınamaz’ (As the basis of the new Turkish is the phonology, morphology, and lexicon of Istanbul Turkish, neither words nor moods and tenses nor suffixes nor rules of syntax may be taken from other Turkish dialects) (Gökalp 1339/1923: 122). While later reformers did not adopt moods and tenses or rules of syntax from other dialects, they adopted words and suffixes in full measure, as we shall see.

24 Published in *Yeni Hayat* in 1918, reproduced in Levend (1972: 332–3).
25 The three preceding nouns were coined by Gökalp from Arabic roots.
The New Alphabet

Turkish writers on dil devrimi (language reform) do not usually deal with the change of alphabet, which for them is a separate topic, harf devrimi (letter reform). A brief account of it is given here for the sake of completeness, since the two reforms are obviously linked, arising as they did from the same frame of mind. The purpose of the change of alphabet was to break Turkey’s ties with the Islamic east and to facilitate communication domestically as well as with the Western world. One may imagine the difficulty of applying the Morse Code to telegraphing in Ottoman.

Its intrinsic beauty aside, there is nothing to be said in favour of the Arabo-Persian alphabet as a medium for writing Turkish. All of its letters, including alif, the glottal stop, are consonants, some representing sounds not existing in Turkish and one, k, which may represent Turkish g, k, n, or y. The sound of n indicated by the Arabo-Persian k was originally /ng/, pronounced as in English singer; in scholarly transcriptions of old texts it is usually shown by n. It occurs in such Ottoman spellings as kwl for glnul ‘soul’, and dzk or dkyz for deniz ‘sea’. It is still heard in some Turks’ pronunciation of sonra ‘after’. With the addition of diacritics above or below the letters, the three vowels a, i, and u can be indicated, whereas Turkish needs to distinguish eight. The Arabic letters alif, waw, and ya were employed in Arabic and Persian to show a, a, and i respectively. In Turkish they were used to indicate a/e, ol/ul/ü, and il/iley respectively. An initial a or e was indicated by alif (henceforth shown as ?), medial or final a also by alif, and e by h, which is similar to the function of English h in ‘Ah!’ and ‘Eh?’: kaynana ‘mother-in-law’ was written qyn?n?, yaparsa ‘if he does’ as y?p?rsh, ise ‘if it is’ as ?ysh, istenedig?n ‘which you do not want’ as ?sthmhdyyk.

Many equivocal readings were possible. Thus ?w? in an Ottoman text may be read as Turkish ulu ‘great’ or ulu [A] ‘possessors’, olu ‘dead’, evli ‘married’, avlu ‘courtyard’, avl ‘stocked with game’; dwl may represent dol ‘progeny’, dul ‘widowed’, or d?vel [A] ‘States’, while kl can be gel ‘come’, gül ‘smile’, kel ‘scabby’, kel [A] ‘lassitude’, kül ‘ashes’, kül [A] ‘all’, gil [P] ‘clay’, or gül [P] ‘rose’. Only the context and a sufficient grasp of the vocabularies of Turkish, Persian, and Arabic can make clear which of the possible readings is intended. Problems often arise in Ottoman texts because scribes and printers were not always careful about word

1 ‘Arabo-Persian’ rather than ‘Arabic’, because it includes three letters, p, ğ, and j, that were added to the Arabic alphabet in order to represent the three Persian sounds not occurring in Arabic.
divisions; the letters bwsnh, for example, could stand for bu sene ‘this year’ or Bosna ‘Bosnia’.

In the article ‘Turks’ in the thirteenth edition of Encyclopaedia Britannica (1926), Sir Charles Eliot, after mentioning the ambiguities of this alphabet, shrewdly observes: ‘The result is that pure Turkish words written in Arabic letters are often hardly intelligible even to Turks and it is usual to employ Arabic synonyms as much as possible because there is no doubt as to how they should be read.’ An example of what he had in mind is shown by the words mhmd p?55? ?wldy, which may be read as ‘Mehmed paşa öldü’ (Mehmed became a pasha) or ‘Mehmed Paşa öldü’ (Mehmed Pasha died). If you meant the former, you would resort to a circumlocution such as ‘Mehmed was elevated to the rank of Pasha’. If you meant the latter, you would write ‘Mehmed Pasha departed this world and journeyed to Paradise’, ‘Mehmed Pasha attained God’s mercy’, or at the very least ‘Mehmed Pasha expired’.

The case for modifying the Arabo-Persian alphabet had been put forward as early as 1851, by Ahmed Cevdet, and thereafter various others tried their hands at the problem. In May 1862, in an address to the Ottoman Scientific Society (Cemiyet-i İlimye-i Osmaniye), of which he was the founder, Antepli Münif Pasha blamed the paucity of literates on the deficiencies of the alphabet. He instanced the letters ?wn, which could be read as on ‘ten’, un ‘flour’, or ün ‘fame’. This last was properly written ?wk (the k representing ñ); he could, therefore, also have cited evin ‘of the house’, as well as ön ‘front’, similarly written ?wk but, like ün, popularly misspelt with n instead of k. He saw two possible solutions, the first being to write and print with full pointing, using the three diacritics inherited from Arabic and five newly devised as required by the phonology of Turkish. The second solution, which he favoured, was to stop joining the letters of words and to write or print them separately, with the necessary diacritics on the line rather than over or under it (Buluç 1981: 45–8, citing Münif Pasha 1974).

In 1863 the Azerbaijani dramatist and political scientist Feth-Ali Ahundzade came to Istanbul with a proposal for the addition of some new letters to indicate the vowels. He was well received and the Grand Vizier passed his proposal to the Ottoman Scientific Society for consideration. While they conceded its merits, their verdict was unfavourable, because of ‘müçerred ıcrasında derkâr olan müşkilât-ı azime’ (the great difficulties which are evident simply in its implementation) and ‘eski âsar-ı İslâmiyênin nisyanını da müeddî olacağını’ (because it would conduce to the oblivion of ancient Islamic works) (Ülkütâşir 1973: 18–19).

In the Constitutional period, the time between 1908 and 1918, those intellectuals who saw modification as essential were agreed that the letters must be written, or at least printed, separately, so that students and composers alike might be spared having to deal with three or four forms for each letter.² In the Kamus

² Most Arabo-Persian letters have three forms, depending on whether they are initial, medial, or final. Some have a fourth, used when the letter stands alone.
(1316/1901), Şemseddin Sami used three diacritics over the letter wāw to show the sounds of o, ü, and ő, while the bare letter denoted u.

The only scheme to be given a prolonged trial was the one sponsored by Enver Pasha from 1913 onwards, with the backing of his Ministry of War and, it is said, with strong-arm tactics to silence any critics. The principle was to use only the final forms of the letters, with no ligatures. The vowels were shown by variegated forms of alif, wāw, and ya', written on the line with the consonants. The result was far from pretty. The system was variously known as huruf-u munfasila (disjointed letters), hatt-i cedid (new writing), Enverpaşa yazısı (Enver Pasha writing), and ordu elifbası (Army alphabet). Originally intended to simplify the work of military telegraphists, its use was extended to official correspondence within the ministry. There is some evidence (TTK 1981: 56–7) that the experiment was abandoned before the end of hostilities, though Enver published Elifba, a reading book to teach his system, as late as 1917. Ruşen Eşref [Ünaydın] (1954: 28–9) recalled that Kemal had spoken to him about it in late 1918 as being still in use:

İyi bir niyet; fakat yarım iş; hem de zamanız! . . . Harp zamanı harf zamanı değildir. Harp olurken harfle oynamak sırayı mı? Ne yapmak için? Muhaverat ve muhaberat teshil için mi? Bu şimdiki şekil hem yazmayı, hem okumayı, hem de anlamayı ve binaanleyi anlaşımayı eskinsinden fazla geçiktirir ve güçleştirir! Hız istiyen bir zamanda, böyle yavaşlatıcı, zihinleri yok ortucu bir teşebbûse girmesinin maddi, ameli ve milli ne faydası var? . . . Sonra da mademki başladın, cesaret et; şunu tam yap; medeni bir şekil alıns, değil mi Efendim?

The intention is good, but it’s a half-baked job as well as untimely. Wartime isn’t letter time. When there’s a war on, is it the occasion to play about with letters? What for? To facilitate dialogue and communications? The present system makes writing and reading and comprehension and consequently mutual understanding slower and harder than the old system. At a time when speed is of the essence, what material, practical, or national advantage is there in embarking on an enterprise like this, which slows things down and wearies and befuddles people’s minds? Besides, once you’ve started, have courage; do the job properly so that it takes a civilized shape. Is that no so?

Atatürk’s right-hand man İsmet [İnönü] later bore witness to the trouble caused during the war by Enver’s experiment. It had fallen to him to talk the Deputy Chief of the General Staff out of insisting that documents presented for his approval must be in two copies, one in normal writing for him to read and one in Enver Pasha writing for him to sign (Arar 1981: 150–1).

Simultaneously with Enver’s efforts to propagate his alphabet, a number of journalists and literary figures were urging the adoption of the Latin letters. It was a topic of conversation among Ottoman officers during the Gallipoli campaign. This idea had a long past. Ahundzade had come round to it when his suggestion

¹ A sample will be found in Ülkutaş (1973: 27).
² Verbal communication to the author in 1972 from Mr Taufiq Wahby.
for improving the Arabic script had been turned down.\textsuperscript{5} The lexicographer Şemseddin Sami and his brother Abdül Bey devised an alphabet of thirty-six Latin and Greek letters for their native Albanian, a language to which the Arabic alphabet could do no more justice than it could to Turkish. It was called the A-be-ya after the names of its first three characters. On 29 January 1910 Hüseyin Cahit [Yalçın], a member of the Servet-i Fünun group and editor of the newspaper Tanin, published an article entitled ‘Arnavut Hurufâti’ (‘The Albanian Letters’), in which he commended their initiative and declared that the Turks would do well to follow it. A request from a group of Albanians for a fetva\textsuperscript{6} on the subject elicited the response that it would be contrary to the Sacred Law for the Koran to be written in separated Arabic letters and for the Latin letters to be taught in Muslim schools (Levend 1972: 363–4).

In the spring of 1914 a series of five unsigned articles appeared in a short-lived weekly published by Kılıçzade Hakkı and dedicated to free thought, variously entitled Hürriyet-i Fikriyye, Serbest Fikir, and Ulûvet-i Fikriyye. These articles urged the gradual adoption of the Latin alphabet and prophesied that the change was bound to come. The writer propounded a problem, and invited a reply from the Şeyhülislâm or the Fetva Emini:\textsuperscript{7}


The French, finding the principles of our religion very reasonable, wish to convert en masse to Islam! Before they can be accepted as Muslims, will it be obligatory for that very elegant language of theirs to be written in the Arabic letters? I do not expect the answer to be ‘Yes’, but if it is I shall make so bold as to reply, ‘With this mentality you cannot make the world Muslim.’ If I am given the answer ‘No, there is no harm in it’ I shall make this request: ‘Give a fetva permitting us Turks also to use the Latin letters.’ No, we are no more Arab than the French are.

Kılıçzade Hakkı subsequently revealed that it was because of these articles that the Minister of the Interior closed the weekly down (Ülkûtaşır 1973: 39–41.)

The subject had long interested Mustafa Kemal. Ruşen Eşref recalled his saying

\textsuperscript{5} Levend (1972: 156) states that Ahundzade produced a Slav-based alphabet, but gives no details. Nor does Algar (1988), though he mentions his proposals for the reform of the alphabet and cites Muhammedzade and Arasli, Alefbâ-yi Cedid ve Mektûbât (Baku, 1963), 3–39, 234–5, not available to the present writer.

\textsuperscript{6} Arabic fatwâ. In spite of the case of Salman Rushdie, which has familiarized the world with this word, it does not mean a sentence of death but a mufti’s opinion on a point of law, with no executive force.

\textsuperscript{7} These two officials were respectively the chief of the religious hierarchy and the head of the office that issued fetvâs.
in 1918 that it had been a preoccupation of his between 1905 and 1907, when he was in Syria (Ünyaydin 1954: 29.) Halide Edip Adıvar (1962: 264) remembered a conversation with him in June 1922 on the same theme, in which he spoke of the possibility of adopting the Latin letters, adding that it would require rigorous measures: ‘Hattâ o gün, látin harflerini kabul imkânından bahsediyor, bunu yapmak için sıkı tedbirler gerektiğini de ilâve ediyordu.’ Agop Dilâçar (1962: 41) tells of showing him, ‘sometime between 1916 and 1918,’ a copy of Németh’s (1917), Türkische Grammatik, which printed the Turkish in a Latin transcription with ç and ş for what are now written ç and ş, the Greek γ for the sounds now represented by ɡ, and χ for the Arabic and Persian ḥ. Kemal did not like it much.

While he was military attaché in Sofia just before the First World War, he corresponded with his friend Madame Corinne in Istanbul in Turkish, written phonetically with French spelling. Here is part of a letter dated 13 May 1914, followed by the same passage in modern orthography and the English of it:

Dunya insanlar idjin bir dari imthandir. İmtihan idilène inssanın häré çualé moultlaka pêke mouvafike djévabe vermessi mumqune olmaya bilire. Fêkate duchunnêlidir qui heuquume djévablarin hééli oumomiyéessindêne hassil olan mouhassalaya gueuré virilir.8 Dünya insanlar için bir dar-i imthandir. İmtihan edilen insanın her suale mutlaka pek muvafik cevap vermesi mümkün olmayabilir. Fakat düşünmelidir ki, hukûm, cevapların heyet-i umumiyesinden hassil olan muhassalaya göre verilir.

For human beings, the world is an examination hall. It may not be absolutely possible for the examinee to give a very appropriate answer to every question. But he must bear in mind that the verdict is given in accordance with the result deriving from the answers taken as a whole.

A comparison of the lengths of the first two paragraphs above reveals one reason for some people’s antagonism to the idea of switching to the Latin alphabet: the French spelling takes up more room than the old letters (and the new). In those days, French was the European language most widely known among Turks and it was generally assumed that a new Latin alphabet would involve applying French orthography to Turkish words: the six letters of gueuré for the four of kwrh (göre), the nine of tchdjouk for the four of ćwjwq (çoçuk), or the five of the alternative spelling ĉwjwq. The editor of Resimli Gazete, İbrahim Alâaddin [Gövsə], who was against change, generously published, on 22 September 1923, an article by Hüseyin Cahit, who was for it. İbrahim Alâaddin prefaced it with a response,9 headed ‘Latine houroufati ile Turkdje yazi yazmak mumkinmidir?’ (Is it possible to write Turkish with Latin letters!). That took forty-seven characters, whereas the Arabic-Persian alphabet would have needed only thirty-nine: lʔtyn

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8 The version given here is based on a collation of the texts in Özgu (1963: 25–6) and Korkmaz (1992: 6). Note the spellings idilène, fêkate, heuquume, virilir, which reflect Kemal’s own pronunciations: /idelîn/ for edîlen, /fêkät/ for fakat, /hûkûm/ for hûkûm, /virîlîr/ for verîlir.

9 For the texts of Huseyin Cahit’s article and İbrahim Alâaddin’s response, see Ulkutaşır (1973: 45–52).

A year before that, at a meeting with representatives of the Istanbul press in September 1922, Kemal had been asked by Hüseyin Cahit, 'Why don’t we adopt Latin writing?' He replied, 'It’s not yet time.' His answer is understandable if one remembers that this was the period of the first Grand National Assembly, some fifty members of which were hocas, professional men of religion, in addition to eight dervish sheikhs and five men who gave their occupation as 'tribal chief'.

At the Izmir Economic Congress in February–March 1923, three workers' delegates put forward a motion in favour of adopting the Latin letters. The chairman, General Kâzım [Karabekir], ruled it out of order as damaging to the unity of Islam, and went on to make a speech in which he said: 'derhal bütün Avrupa’nın eline güzel bir silâh vermiş olacağız, bunlar âlem-i İslâma karşı diyeciklerdir ki, Türklер eceâbi yazısını kabul etmişler ve Hıristiyan olmuşlardır. İşte düşmanlarımızın çalıstığı şeytanetkârane fikir budur' (we shall at once have placed a splendid weapon in the hands of all Europe; they will declare to the Islamic world that the Turks have accepted the foreign writing and turned Christian. The diabolical idea with which our enemies are working is precisely this). 10

In an article in the journal Hür Fıkir of 17 November 1926, Kılıçzade Hakkı made the point that the sacred nature of the Koran did not extend to the alphabet in which it is written. The title of the article sums up his argument very neatly: 'Arap Harflerini de Cebrail Getirmemişti ya' (Gabriel didn’t bring the Arabic letters too, you know) (Levend 1972: 397). This argument was, however, a little disingenuous, in that it ignored one of the main worries of the defenders of the Arabo-Persian alphabet: if it were replaced by a Latin-based alphabet, the numer of Turks able to read the Koran—whether or not they understood it—would inevitably diminish, because one alphabet is as much as most people can be expected to learn in a lifetime.

On 20 May 1928 the Grand National Assembly voted to accept the international numerals. 11 During the debate, a member asked whether the international letters might be accepted as well. The Minister of Education replied that the government had been giving the matter its attention and that the question would naturally be resolved within the principles accepted by the civilized world, but that time was needed. ‘Onun için bu işde biraz geç kalıyorsak, teşkil ettigimiz komisyonun, encümenin faaliyetinin neticesine muntazır olduğumuzdandır’ (So if we are a little late in this matter, it is because we are awaiting the result of the activity of the commission, the committee, we are forming). It is clear from the Minister’s imprecision about the designation of the body he was talking about that at the time he spoke it did not yet exist.

10 For the full text, collated from reports in three daily newspapers of 3 Mar. 1923, see Yorulmaz (1955: 90–3). See also Levend (1972: 392–3).
11 By this was meant what we call the Arabic numerals and the Arabs call the Indian numerals.
Three days later, however, it did, when the Council of Ministers set up the Dil Encümeni, 'to think about the manner and feasibility of applying the Latin letters to our language'. Its nine members included Faih Rıfki [Atay], Ruşen Eşref [Ünaydın], Yakup Kadri [Karaosmanoğlu], and Fazıl Ahmet [Aykaç]. The first act of the new body when it met on 26 June 1928 was to divide itself into two, one for the alphabet and one for grammar (Levend 1972: 400–1). Kemal attended the meetings of both whenever he had time.

The Alphabet Commission rejected in principle the idea of a transliteration alphabet, because they did not wish Arabic and Persian pronunciations (as in the story of the softa told in Chapter 2) to be perpetuated; they wanted them assimilated to Istanbul speech patterns. The longest discussions took place over the question of how to show the palatalized sounds of k, g, and l before back vowels. Before front vowels, as in iki 'two' and gelmek 'to come', this happens automatically. Before back vowels there is no palatalization in native words but there is in Arabic and Persian borrowings, as is seen in the English spelling Kiazim of the name appearing as Kâzım (/kâzım/) in modern Turkish spelling, and Byron’s Giaour for what is now written gävur (/gâvur/) ‘infidel’. The Commission’s proposal in its report, published early in August, was to write an h after the consonant, as in Portuguese (velho/vel’ul, Senhor/sen’or), so khatip for what is now written kâtip ‘clerk, secretary’. Another proposal was to use q to show the sound of palatalized k. Many people preferred the latter alternative. Atay’s (1969: 441) account of how it came to be quashed is so circumstantial that one feels it must be true:

Ben yeni yazı tasarımını getirdiğim günün akşamı Kâzım Paşa (Özalp) sofrada:
—Ben adım nasıl yazacağım? Kû’ harfi lazım, diye tutturdu.

Atatürk de:
—Bir harften ne çıkar? Kabul edelim, dedi.


At table on the evening of the day when I brought the draft proposals for the new writing, Kâzım [Özalp] Pasha grumbled, ‘How am I going to write my name? We must have a q.’

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12 See Lewis (1988: 3–4). In western Turkish the palatalization is audible though usually faint, the effect being the introduction of a y-sound after the k, g, or l; not so marked as in English cure, angular, and British, as distinct from American, lurid. The further east you go, the more distinct the palatalization. By the time you get to Erzurum you will hear iki sounding just like içi.

13 For the exceptional elâ, see Ch. 4 n. 24.

14 This may surprise Western orientalists, who regard q as the natural transliteration not of the Arabic letter kāf, pronounced like our k, but of qāf (sometimes transliterated as kāf), pronounced much like our c in cough. The explanation is to be sought in the name of the letter q, which Turks follow the French in calling kü, pronounced /k'ül/. This letter, whose name had the requisite palatalized initial sound, seemed the ideal device for indicating /k'ül/.
Atatürk said, 'What difference will one letter make? Let's have it.' Had we done so, we would have kept the Arabic word from being Turkicized. I didn't say anything at the table. When I went to see Atatürk next day I explained the problem to him again. He did not know the manuscript capitals; he simply wrote them like the small letters only bigger. He took a sheet of paper and wrote the initial letter of Kemal, first with an enlarged version of q, then with an enlarged version of k. He didn't like the first at all. So we were spared q. Thank goodness he didn't know the script capital Q, which was more flamboyant than K.

After Kemal's rejection of q, it was decided to use the Portuguese alternative, but it did not last long.

When Atay showed him the Commission's draft alphabet, Kemal asked whether they had thought about bringing it into use (Atay 1969: 440).

Bir on beş yıllık uzun, bir de beş yıllık kısa mubahletli iki teklif var, dedim. Teklif sahiplerine göre ilk devirleri iki yazı bir arada öğretilicektir. Gazeteler yarıı sütundan başlayarak yavaş yavaş yeni yazılı kısmını artıracaktırlar. Daireler ve yüksek mektepler için de tedarici bazı usuller düşünülmüştür.

Yüzüme baktı:—Bu ya üç ayda olur, ya hiç olmaz, dedi.

Hayli radikal bir inkılâpçı iken ben bile yüzüne bakakalımsın.


I told him there were two proposals, one long term, of fifteen years, the other short term, of five years. According to the proponents, in the first period of each the two systems of writing would be taught side by side. The newspapers would begin with half a column in the new letters, which would gradually be extended. He looked me full in the face and said, 'Either this will happen in three months or it won't happen at all.' I was a highly radical revolutionary but I found myself staring at him, open-mouthed. 'My boy,' he said, 'even when the newspapers are down to only half a column in the old writing, everyone will read that bit in the old writing. If anything goes wrong in the meantime, a war, a domestic crisis, our alphabet too will end up like Enver's; it will be dropped immediately.

As soon as the alphabet seemed satisfactory, Kemal introduced it to the vast crowds attending a Republican People's Party gala in Gülhane Park on the evening of 9 August 1928. Two days later lessons began in Dolmabahçe Palace, first for officials of the presidential staff and Deputies, then for university teachers and literary people. The latter session turned into a heated debate. At the end of five hours the following resolution was put to the meeting and adopted unanimously (Ülkütaşır 1973: 77):


To deliver the nation from ignorance, the only course open is to abandon the Arabic letters, which are not suited to the national language, and to accept the Turkish letters, based on the Latin. The alphabet proposed by the Commission is in truth the Turkish alphabet; that
is definite ... The laws of grammar and spelling will evolve in step with the improvement and development of the language and with the national taste.

That last sentence was soon proved true, as the ever-cautious İsmet, who framed the resolution, had foreseen. Equipped with a blackboard and easel, Kemal went on tour to teach huge crowds of villagers the new letters, which they called 'Gazi elifbaşi' (The Gazi alphabet).\(^{15}\) Some weeks of this practical experience persuaded him that the use of a hyphen before the interrogative particle as laid down by the Alphabet Commission was unnecessary. From Sinop he telegraphed the Ministry of Education to say that the rule was abrogated. On his return to Ankara he addressed a directive to the Prime Minister's office (Ülkütaşır 1973: 122–3):

Encümen esasen yeni harfler ile yazıya başlanırken uzun kelimelerinhecelenmesini, seçilmesini kolaylaştıracak bir çare olmak üzere bağlamayı düşünmüş ve bağlamının kaldırılmasını ileriye bırakmıştı.

Yeni harflerin kabulü ve taammümündeki sür’at, bu zamanın geldiğiğini gösteriyor ... Bu sebeple ve halk içindeki müsahedelerime güvendek Atatürk'ün ateşeri esasları kabul etmek faydali ve lazım görülmüşdür.


2. Rabıta edatı olan (ve, ki), dahi manasına olan (de, da) mümkündür kelime olarak ayrı ayrı yazılır.

3. Türk gramerinde bağlama işaretleri olan - (tire) kalkmıştır. Binaenaleyh fiillerin tasrîflerinden lâhikalçığı (-ı) ile ayrılmayarak beraber yazılır. Meselâ: Gelyorum, gideceksiniz, ... güzeldir, demirdir. Kezalik (ile, ise, için, iken) kelimelerinin muhaffefleri olan (le, se, şîn, ken) şekilleri kendinden evvelki kelimeye bitişik yazılır, çizgi ile ayrılmaz–Meselâ: Ahmette, buysa, seninçin, giderken gibi ...


When writing with the new letters began, the Commission originally thought of hyphenation as a means of facilitating the spelling and recognition of long words, proposing to eliminate it at some future date.

The speed with which the new letters have been accepted and become current shows that that time has come ... For this reason and on the basis of my observations among the people it is deemed advantageous and necessary to adopt the following principles:

1. The interrogative particle *mi* will generally be written separately, as in 'Geldi mi?' ['Has he come?'], but will be written together with any following suffix, as in 'Gelyyor musunuz?' 'Ben miydim?' ['Are you coming?' 'Was it me?']

2. The conjunctions *ve* and *ki* ['and,' 'that'], and *de/da* in the sense of *dahi* ['also'] will be written separately as independent words.

3. The hyphen marking a junction in Turkish grammar is abolished. In the conjugation of verbs the suffixes will therefore be written without being separated by hyphens:

\(^{15}\) The Grand National Assembly had conferred the title of Gazi, 'Warrior for the Faith', on Mustafa Kemal in September 1921, after which he was generally referred to as Gazi Paşa. The picture of him with his blackboard is well known to stamp-collectors.
’geliyorum, gideceksiniz . . . güzeldir, demirdir’ ['I am coming; you will go' . . . ‘it is beautiful; it is iron’]. Similarly the lightened forms of the words ile, ise, için, iken will be written contiguously with the preceding word and not separated by a hyphen: ‘Ahmetle’, ‘buysa’, ‘seniçin’, ‘giderken’ [‘with Ahmet’, ‘if it is this’, ‘for you’, ‘while going’]. So too in the case of ce/çe/ca/çə and ki; ‘mertçe’, ‘benimki’, ‘yarınık’ [‘manfully’, ‘mine’, ‘tomorrow’s’].

4. Nor is there a hyphen in such Persian compounds as still exist in Turkish; the vowels which show the izafet are suffixed to the first word, as in ‘hüsni nazâr’ [‘favourable consideration’, literally ‘goodness of view’].

Some years later the Language Society recommended the restoration of the hyphen in Persian izafet compounds, which certainly makes them easier to spot. From the fact that Kemal chose not to hyphenate them we may infer that he was not thinking at that time of speeding their demise by highlighting their alien nature; perhaps even that he was not then thinking of hastening the elimination of foreign borrowings except for technical terms. Hyphens tend not to be used in the few izafet compounds still surviving. Türkçe Sözlük shows suktu hayal, not sukt-u hayal, for ‘disappointment’, and sürç-i lisan, not sürç-ü lisan, for lapsus linguae (now usually replaced by dil sürçmesi ‘slip of the tongue’).

A few days after Kemal’s directive, an announcement was made ending the use of h to show palatalization; instead, a circumflex would be placed on the vowel following the palatalized consonant (Ertop 1963: 66). This device was not totally satisfactory, because the circumflex retained its function of showing a long vowel. The resulting possibility of confusion becomes apparent when one considers, say, mütalâa ‘observation’, in which the first a is long and the ä short: /mütal’il/a/. The 1977 edition of Yeni Yazım Kilavuzu, TDK’s guide to spelling, restricted the use of the circumflex; inter alia, it would no longer be used on adjectives ending in -i [A]: milli ‘national’, not millî. The decision was reversed in the 1988 edition (the title of which, İmlâ [A] Kilavuzu, reflects the change in the Society’s Council of Management in August 1983; see Chapter 12). By that time, however, the damage was done; fewer and fewer Turks were bothering to write or print the circumflex anyway. If kâtip is not totally supplanted by the neologism yazman or the French sekreter, it seems doomed to be pronounced /katip/ and not /kəätip/.

Two other elements of the new alphabet, ğ and ğ, are open to criticism. The raison d’être of ğ (‘yumuşak ge’) was to replace two characters in the old alphabet. The first was ghayn, the second was kâf where it had the sound of y, as in the words written dkl and ckr in the old letters, and değil, ciger (‘not’, ‘liver’) in the new. Yumuşak ge now serves to lengthen a preceding back vowel, as in kâğıt ‘paper’ (Persian kâğıd), pronounced /kəät/, and ağa ‘master’, pronounced /a/; while between front vowels, as in değil and ciger, it is pronounced like y. So ğ preserves some features of Ottoman spelling, but that was not the object of the exercise. At least two scholars in the 1930s felt uncomfortable with it. Ahmet Cevat Emre idiosyncratically used ğ for ‘ayn in his writings on grammar, thus fiğil for fiil ‘verb’,}

16 The suffixed—Ataturk would have said ‘lightened’—form -çin of için (for) is no longer in use.
Arabic ـ for ghayn he used ـ. It was doubtless the fact that ـ has two distinct functions that led him not to use it for ghayn. On the other hand, Ragip Özdem (1939: 15) employed ـ for ghayn to show the pronunciation of French programme as ـ and carte postale as ـ.

As for ـ, when the Alphabet Commission hit on the idea of manufacturing it by removing the dot from ـ, they never stopped to ask themselves what the dot was doing there in the first place. The answer became apparent as soon as people began using the new alphabet: its function was to distinguish its bearer from the up- and downstrokes of ـ, ـ, and ـ. To see this for oneself, one has only to compare ـ with ـ in joined-up writing. A little brochure on the new alphabet (Necmi 1928), 'consisting in the lessons published in the newspaper Milliyet, revised according to the latest amendments', showed the handwritten form of ـ as ـ or ـ. Atatürk always used the latter form in writing and also habitually wrote ـ as ـ. Despite these imperfections, the Latin alphabet is undeniably the best that has ever been used for Turkish, and has played a large part in the rise of literacy; according to the official figures, from 9 per cent in 1924 to 65 per cent in 1975 and 82.3 per cent in 1995.

Commendation of it is found in an unexpected source, a book by the Director of the Media Laboratory of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology:

A speech synthesizer takes a stream of text . . . and follows certain rules to enunciate each word, one by one. Each language is different and varies in its difficulty to synthesize.

English is one of the hardest, because we write (right and rite) it in such an odd and seemingly illogical way (weigh and whey). Other languages, such as Turkish, are much easier. In fact, Turkish is very simple to synthesize because Atatürk moved that language from Arabic to Latin letters in 1929 [sic] and, in so doing, made a one-for-one correspondence between the sounds and the letters. You pronounce each letter: no silent letters or confusing diphthongs. Therefore, at the word level, Turkish is a dream come true for a computer speech synthesizer. (Negroponte 1995: 145)

Provided that the synthesizer had been well programmed, the only word one can think of that it might fail to enunciate correctly is ağabey (elder brother), pronounced lâbê/, and a thorough programmer could take care of that.

Now briefly to complete the story of how the Latin alphabet was brought into use. Between 8 and 25 October 1928 all officials were examined for their competence in the new letters. It was only when Kemal had done all this that he sought the legal authority to do it. On 1 November the Grand National Assembly passed Law No. 1353, 'On the Adoption and Application of the New Turkish Letters', which came into effect two days later. It provided that documents in the new letters must be accepted and acted upon at once. The use of books printed in the old characters for instruction in schools was forbidden. No books were to be published in

\[17\] In some hands not only ـ, ـ, and ـ but ـ too can be a source of confusion. The author was gratified when he eventually deciphered, in a handwritten letter from Spain, what looked like La Couuía but turned out to be La Coruña.
the old letters after the end of the year. All correspondence between private citizens and government departments would have to be in the new letters from 1 June 1929. Those Deputies who were ignorant of the Latin alphabet suddenly found that Article 12 of the Constitution had taken on a sinister importance for them: among those it excluded from membership of the Grand National Assembly were ‘Türkçe okuyup yazmak bilmeyenler’ (those who do not know how to read and write Turkish). They hastened to emerge from the state of illiteracy into which they had thrown themselves. One small concession: the ‘old Arabic letters’ could be used in official and private records as shorthand—‘stenografi makamında’—until 1 June 1930.

Kemal was not given to procrastinating once his mind was made up. So why the delay of three months between the unveiling of the new alphabet in Gülhane Park and its legitimation? The obvious answer is that he did not want the details of the new letters to be the subject of endless wrangling in the Assembly; far better to present the Deputies with a fait accompli. There is also evidence that İsmet, mindful of how much of the General Staff’s time had been wasted by Enver’s new alphabet during the First World War, argued against the change because he was uneasy about the chaos that would surely set in while the old and new alphabets were in use side by side. He was no doubt placated and relieved by the speed with which the new letters were left in undisputed command of the field. And, despite his initial disapproval, once the reform had happened he never used the old letters again.

On 31 August 1928 The Times of London devoted a well-informed and sympathetic editorial to the new alphabet:

The advantages of the change can scarcely be appreciated by those who have not struggled with the difficulties presented to the student of Turkish by the Arabic letters . . . No alphabet is less fitted to express the melodious Turkish speech, which has relatively few consonants and an astonishing wealth of vowels and diphthongs . . . Conservatism, the religious associations of Arabic which gave a sanctity to the letters in which the Koran was written, and the oriental delusion that writing should not be made too intelligible in content or in form explain the long domination of the Arabic letters over the Turks . . .

By this step the Turks, who for centuries were regarded as a strange and isolated people by Europe, have drawn closer than ever to the West. It is a great reform, worthy of the remarkable chief to whom the Turkish people has entrusted its destinies.

Memories, however, can be short, even the corporate memory of a newspaper of record. Twenty-one years later, on 10 August 1949, The Times devoted a leading article to the proposed admission of Greece, Turkey, and Iceland to the Council of Europe:

To have any chance of success a federal union would have to start with nations either adjoining each other or separated by no barrier more formidable than the English Channel . . . They could not share a common language but at least it would be an advantage if the different languages were written in the same script . . . Muslim in tradition, with an Asiatic
language in an Arabic script, it is not easy to see how Turkey could take her place easily in a United States of Western Europe.

The author of that egregious howler could have mentioned that the Greeks have a different script from other Europeans, but he did not. Nor was there any evidence of remorse in his subsequent reference to it:

On another occasion I wrote a leader on Turkey’s claim to be a member of any united European federation. (This was before the days of the Treaty of Rome and the Common Market.) I ridiculed this proposal and pointed out that it would be difficult enough to form a European Federation without adding a country which was neither European nor Christian and which did not even use the Roman alphabet. Alas! I was wrong, Turkey had changed from arabic [sic] letters to Roman letters in 1928. Well, one should not make mistakes in The Times—or anywhere else for that matter—but the fuss! The Turkish Government sent for the British Ambassador and reprimanded him severely. The Foreign Office sent for the Foreign Editor and reprimanded him severely. And Iverach McDonald [the Foreign Editor] did his best to reprimand me severely (he was a very kind man). All this because of the absurd myth, which had not been true for many years, that The Times spoke for the British Foreign Office and always reflected British foreign policy. It was a disastrous burden for my newspaper to carry. (Pringle 1973: 81)

To quote Yunus Emre, Turkey’s greatest folk-poet, ‘Bilmeyen ne bilsin bizin? Bilenlere selâm olsun’ (What should the ignorant know of us? To those who know, greetings).

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18 Yunus’s bizin instead of bizi is for the sake of the rhyme (vowel plus n).
Atatürk and the Language Reform until 1936

The scattered local movements of resistance to the Allied armies that invaded Anatolia after the 1918 Armistice could never have liberated the country without the boundless energy and organizing genius of Mustafa Kemal. In the same way, it was he who gave effect to the desires of the many intellectuals who wanted to make their language more truly Turkish. I specify intellectuals because in those days four-fifths of the population were peasants, who would no more have thought of tampering with the language than of changing the alternation of the seasons. Above all he wanted to turn his people’s face westwards. He resented the dominance of the Arabic and Persian elements in the language and believed that the intelligent use of its native resources could make the use of foreign borrowings unnecessary.

An indication of how such a feeling could arise in a Turk of his generation is seen in a reminiscence of Hasan Reşit Tankut’s (1963: 113):


I received my secondary education in Damascus and was in my final year at the time of the proclamation of freedom [the restoration in 1908 of the 1876 Constitution]. The Arabs suddenly started on nationalism and took to making fun of Turkish. One day in the classroom we saw half a dozen or so lines written on the blackboard, headed ‘What is the Turkish language?’ We read the writing to ourselves; it contained not a single word of Turkish. Written in conformity with the style and rules of Ottoman, it ended with -dr. The Arabs had repeated this suffix several times, underlining this string of -drsr and writing in front of it ‘Turkish is this. That is to say, it’s dirdr [tedious babble]’. That day we four or five Turkish pupils very nearly came to blows with a whole class, and became devotees of Turkish from that day on.

As early as August 1923, a proposal was introduced into the Grand National Assembly by the writer Tunali Hilmi for a new law, the Türkçe Kanunu,

1 The text has ‘alanlandığı’, but alanlanmak is an obsolete neologism for ‘to give ground’. What Tankut intended must have been a Turkicization of ‘ilân [A] edildiği’.
providing for the creation in the Ministry of Education of a Commission for the Turkish Language. Technical terms would be Turkicized, school books, official documents, and new laws would be prepared in accordance with the rules of Turkish, and no newspaper or journal breaching these rules would be licensed. Opinion in and out of the Assembly was not yet ready for such a proposal and it was not accepted (İmer 1976: 87). The story of an early, perhaps the earliest, official attempt at simplifying the language was told by H. E. Erkilet (1952), who towards the end of 1924 was appointed to head Talim ve Terbiye, the Army’s Directorate of Training. Eleven years of almost incessant wars had allowed no time for revising the training manuals. ‘Sözün kısası, ordu kitapsızdı’ (To put it briefly, the Army had no books). With the backing of the Chief of the General Staff, Fevzi [Çakmak], and his deputy, Kâzım [Orbay], he ordered that the language of the new manuals should be intelligible to conscripts, with no Arabic or Persian constructions that could be avoided or words for which Turkish equivalents were available. Tarassut [A] ‘observation’ became gözetleme, pişdar [P] ‘vanguard’ became öncü, esliha-i hafife [A] ‘light weapons’ became hafif silâhlar. Şura-yi Âli-i Askerî [A] ‘Supreme Military Council’ became Yüksek Askerî Şura. Some changes were not as radical as they could have been: Erkân-i Harbiye-i Umumiye ‘General Staff’ became Büyük Erkân-i Harbiye; on the other hand, Erkân-i Harbiye Mektebi ‘Staff College’ was simplified to Harp Akademisi. A good effort, ahead of its time.

The first years of the Republic were not easy for the Turks. They were buoyed up by the pride of being the only people on the losing side in the First World War who had successfully resisted the victors’ territorial demands and won their independence. But the economic situation was parlous² and the ranks of the commercial and professional classes had been depleted by the departure, one way or another, of many members of the Christian minorities in the course of the First World War and the War of Independence. In addition, the exchange of populations arranged at Lausanne in January 1923 had brought about the displacement of 1.3 million ethnic Greeks from their native Turkey to the ‘homeland’ that few of them had ever seen, and the arrival from Greece of half a million ethnic Turks in a similar state. There was a pressing need to raise morale, to make the people see themselves as a nation with a great past and a great destiny, who would one day take their place among the civilized nations of the West. Turks must have no feeling of inferiority vis-à-vis Europe; they were not outsiders. For the moment they might be poor relations, but relations they were. To this end, history teaching in the country’s schools was based on the postulate that all the famous peoples

² Money was very short indeed. As Fâlih Rûfû Atay put it, there was never a limited company worth mentioning that was founded with so little capital as that state in Ankara. He tells a story he heard from Osmanzade Hamdi, co-editor of Yeni Gün, a newspaper that though nominally independent could not survive without its government subsidy. At the end of a frantic day spent in trying to placate the paper’s creditors, Hamdi rushed round to the tea garden where the Minister of Finance was accustomed to sit for a while after office hours, and caught him just as he was mounting his horse to go home. Hamdi said, ‘For heaven’s sake give me some money!’, to which the Minister of Finance replied, ‘I’ve left the safe open. If you can find anything in it you’re welcome’ (Atay 1969: 515).
of antiquity were either Turks themselves or had been civilized by Turks. In the same spirit, it was thought desirable to show that the Turkish language was not out on a limb but had affiliations with all the great languages of the world.

 Atatürk's first concern, as we have seen, was to change from the Arabo-Persian alphabet to the Latin. Already on 3 February 1928 it was ordered that the Friday sermon in the mosques must be delivered in Turkish. Two years later he contributed a short foreword to a book on the history and potentialities of the language (Arsal [1930]), in which he included these two sentences: 'Türk dili, dillerin en zenginlerindendir; yeter ki bu dil, şuurla işlensin. Ülkesini, yüksek istiklalini korumasını bilen Türk milleti, dilini de yabancı diller boyundurduğundan kurtar-malıdır' (Turkish is one of the richest of languages; it needs only to be used with discrimination. The Turkish nation, which is well able to protect its territory and its sublime independence, must also liberate its language from the yoke of foreign languages). The second sentence unleashed the language reform. If more people had heeded the first, the success of the reform could have been unqualified.

 Atatürk practised what he preached. In August 1930 he dictated a list of topics that he wanted historians to address. One of them was 'Beşeriyet menşe ve mebde'i' (The source and origin of humankind), all four words being of Arabic origin. When the typescript was brought to him he amended this to 'İnsanların nereden ve nasıl geldikleri' (Where humans came from and how they came), three of the five words being Turkish (Tarih Vesikalari [Jan. 1958], opposite p. 192). The key to understanding the course taken by the reform in its early years is that language was his hobby. In the draft bill creating the first faculty of Ankara University, which opened on 9 January 1936, its name was shown as Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi (Faculty of History and Geography), and it took a directive from Atatürk to add language to its name and its responsibilities—Dil Tarih-Coğrafya Fakültesi—before the bill became law.

 The usual setting for his discussions on language, as on everything, was his table, sofra, in the special sense of a raki sofrası, a dining-table laden with raki and meze (hors d'œuvre), theoretically a prelude to dinner but commonly a substitute for it. This institution is well described by Atay:

 For anyone who knew him, the name Atatürk conjures up memories of sessions round his table. His custom was to bring his friends together of an evening and talk into the small hours. We never knew in advance whether we would be there just for fun, for a command conference to prepare an attack, or for a meeting that would decide the most involved affairs of State, though we might hazard a guess when we saw who the guests were.

 The sessions that were just for fun were very rare, and when they did occur it was like having a free period at school. Generally we would debate, read, or write on the most serious topics. Atatürk seemed never to tire. He would talk and listen. His prime concern

 3 In this connection we may mention Vecihe Hatiboğlu's statement (1986: 97): 'Türkçe dünyanın en eski yazılı dilidir' (Turkish is the world's oldest written language). Someone in the language business should have heard of Ancient Egyptian, if not Linear A; perhaps she was subsuming those languages in Turkish.
was not to tell us what he was thinking but to learn what we thought, to hear the country’s various voices. He had a genius for synthesizing. After hours of rambling conversation which darted from one topic to another, he would bring together and arrange what had been said, and produce a logical, clear, and well organized work of cogitation.

His guests were always a varied bunch, and he had a perfect tolerance of criticism from those he liked and whom he knew to share his beliefs. I estimate that the problems of Turkish language and history took up as much time round his table as they would have done at a university seminar. Facing him was a blackboard and chalk. All of us, ministers, professors, deputys, were expected to take up the chalk and perform. All of us except him would grow weary and, to be honest with you, a little bored.

 Atatürk’s personal library, part of which is on display at his mausoleum, the Anıt-Kabir in Ankara, included many works on language, among them Jespersen’s Essentials of English Grammar and The Philosophy of Language, Fowler’s The King’s English, and some less common items such as Chambers and Daunt’s London English 1384–1425. Ernest Weekley’s etymological writings are well represented on the shelves. Nevertheless, in indulging his passion for etymology Atatürk was more enthusiastic than scientific. He saw asker [A] ‘soldier’ (originally the Latin exercitus) as a conflation of the Turkish words ask ‘profit’ and er ‘man’, and explained it as meaning ‘a man useful to the country, the State, the nation’ (Korkmaz 1992; Özgü 1963: 31–2). He equated the first two syllables of merinos ‘merino’ with the Yakut ibrı ‘fine’, and merino wool is indeed fine. He wondered whether the word might have travelled to Spain with the Iber Turks,5 in which case the names not only of the merino sheep and its wool but of the Iberian peninsula too would be of Turkish origin. He is reputed also to have proposed Turkish etymologies for Niagara and Amazon: Ne yaygara ‘What tumult!’ and Ama uzun ‘But it’s long!’

Admiral Nectet Uran describes in his memoirs an occasion during a cruise in the Mediterranean in 1937, when Atatürk came into the chart-room and, having studied the chart for a moment, pointed to the rota, the line indicating the ship’s course. ‘What’s this?’ he asked and, without waiting for an answer, went on, ‘You’re going to tell me it’s English, Italian, French, that sort of thing, but what I was asking was the origin of the word.’ The Admiral hesitated. Atatürk took a scrap of paper and wrote on it the word yürütmek (‘to cause to walk, to set in motion’). Below it he wrote the same word divided into syllables: yü-rüüt-mek. ‘The origin of the word is that rüt,’ he said, ‘and its origin is Turkish. The Italians took it and called it rota. The Germans have said it another way. So have the French. But that’s its origin’ (Özgü 1963: 31).

The trouble was that, although Atatürk liked nothing better than a good argument, none of his intimates had the guts to say ‘Very amusing as an after-dinner game, Pasha, but we mustn’t take it too seriously, must we?’ On the contrary, they

4 Collated from various passages in Atay (1969), principally on p. 507.
5 According to E. Blochet (1915: 305–8), the Iber were a Tunguz people, whom he equates with the Juan-juan of the Chinese chronicles. The relationship of the Tunguz with the Turks, however, is far from certain.
played the same game. This being long before the age of political correctness, Samih Rifat, the president of TDK, found the origin of the Western word *academy* in the Turkish *ak* ‘white’ and *adam* [A] ‘man’. He also thought that the French *demeure, domicile, and domestique* were derived from the Turkish *dam* ‘roof’ and was not ashamed to say so in a public lecture (‘Relations between Turkish and Other Languages’) at the Turkish Historical Society’s first Congress, which took place on 2–11 July 1932. The tone was thereby set for many a subsequent lecture and article. *Tarama Dergisi* marks with an asterisk ‘words in use in our language which, although shown in ancient dictionaries as foreign, have emerged in the latest studies as Turkish or are firmly held to be Turkish’. Among the words so marked are *köşe* ‘corner’ and *tac* ‘crown’, both of them borrowings from the Persian (*güše, tāj*), and *kral* ‘king’, ultimately from Carl, the given name of the Emperor Charlemagne. Another was *kültür*, with the comment ‘Keltirmek mastarının kökünden kurulmuş olduğundan ana kaynağı türkçe görünür’ (As it is based on the root of the verb *keltirmek*, its original source seems to be Turkish).

It is not clear why *kültür* ‘culture’ should come from an ancient verb meaning ‘to bring’, but it should be noted that this wild etymology could have been made to look a fraction less wild if *keltür*-, the proper ancient form, had been cited.

Here a general observation must be made, in view of the several allusions in this book to the unscholarliness of some of those who shaped the new Turkish. One should not be shocked at the apparent disingenuousness or self-deception that still allows some Turks to look one in the eye and insist that all the neologisms are entirely home-grown and uninfluenced by the foreign words that have manifestly inspired them; to swear, for example, that the resemblance between *okul* ‘school’ and the French *école* is fortuitous. One’s first thought is, who do you think you’re fooling? But when anyone except the most unregenerate of reformers says such a thing, it means no more than ‘But it *could* have a Turkish etymology, couldn’t it?’

In the several neologisms whose consonants resemble those of the Arabic words they were intended to replace, there is a reflection of their inventors’ belief that they were restoring the original Turkish forms of these Arabic words: *ilgi* for *alâka* ‘interest’, *varsay-* for *farz* ‘to suppose’, *sömürme* for *istismar* ‘exploitation’, *kutsal* for *kudşı* ‘holy’, *sapta-* for *tespit* ‘to establish’. All these are current.

Had the reformers happened to know the English *ashlar*, ‘dressed stone for building or paving’ (ultimately the Latin *axillaris*), they would surely have claimed it as derived from their *taşlar* ‘stones’. Similarly they would have claimed the suffix of our *kingdom* and *Christendom* as borrowed from the suffix of Turkish *erdem* ‘manly virtue’ (compare *er* ‘man’). Nor can they have come across Clauson’s (1972: p. xliii) mention of *tanıdma* as meaning ‘riddle’, or they would have hailed it as the etymon of *enigma*. The disappearance of the initial *ts* of *taşlar* and *tanıdma*

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6 Clauson, p. xliii. One assumes that by ‘riddle’ Clauson meant ‘enigma’ rather than ‘sieve’. He seldom made mistakes, but neither meaning is right for *tanıdma*, which in the body of the dictionary he shows as meaning ‘denial’. His subconscious must have been brooding on the resemblance between *tanıdma* and *enigma*. 
would not have bothered them, for they would certainly have agreed with Müller’s (1910: 30) dictum ‘The change of a consonant is a mere trifle, for in etymology vowels are worth but little, and consonants almost nothing.’ And can it be that nobody noticed the resemblance between illet [A] and its English equivalent illness? Or the suffix -ebil- and English able? Had they come across the nineteenth-century attempt to establish a Polynesian etymology for taboo as from ta ‘to mark’ and pu, an adverb of intensity; they would have been delighted by this proof that the influence of Turkish had reached the other side of the world. For tapu is Turkish for ‘title deed’, and what is a title deed if not an intensive marking, a legally cogent proof of ownership? The reader may think that what I am trying to say is that etymology is not a game for amateurs, but that is exactly what it is, whereas for others it is a science. 

To come back to the Dil Encümeni, which we met in Chapter 3: it had not been idle; in 1929 it had resumed the word-collecting begun by the Ministry of Education in 1920. By mid-1932, however, it was judged to be dormant, for on 25 June the Minister of Education told the Grand National Assembly that an allocation of just one lira had been made to it in the budget (Korkmaz 1992: 252–3). He explained, ‘Dil Heyeti, Dil Encümeni, Dil Cemiyeti vesaiar namlarıla her halde böyle bir heyetin ... lüzumunu Hükümet kabul etmiştir ... Bunun için bir lira koyduk. (Kâfi sesleri)’ (The Government has accepted the necessity for some such body ... whether under the name of Language Committee, Language Council, Language Society or some other name ... That is why we have put down one lira. (Cries of ‘Enough!’)). It is not apparent whether members’ lack of enthusiasm at the prospect of perpetuating the existence of the moribund body was just because it was moribund or because they did not favour the language reform; in view of the general fervour for reform at that time, the former reason is the more likely.

Having founded Türk Tarih Tetkik Cemiyeti (the Turkish Society for the Study of History, later Türk Tarih Kurumu), on 15 April 1931, on 12 July 1932 Mustafa Kemal established the Turkish Society for the Study of Language, Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti, the name of which was changed four years later to Türk Dil Kurumu, after a brief period when tetkik [A] was replaced by araştırmá. The Society’s creation is said to have been at the suggestion of four men: Samih Rifat, Ruşen

7 Not the great nineteenth-century Oxford philologist Max Müller but his cousin, George A. Müller.
8 ‘The compound word tapu, therefore, means no more than “marked thoroughly” . . . because sacred things and places were commonly marked in a peculiar manner in order that everyone might know that they were sacred’ (Shortland 1851: 81, quoted in Steiner 1967: 32).
9 The author vividly recalls learning this fact in his youth from listening to one of the regulars at Speakers’ Corner in London, a woman who preached the necessity of atheism and tried to prove it by explaining away the pagan deities as personifications of natural forces. The god Thor, for example, was the force that ended the winter, his name being identical with the English thaw. See also Lewis (1991).
10 Already in September 1934 Atatürk was referring to the Society as Türk Dili Araştırmá Kurumu. Two numbers of the Society’s journal Türk Dili appeared in June 1935. In the first, no. 11, as in its predecessors, the subtitle was Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti Bülteni; in the second, no. 12, it had become Türk Dili Araştırmá Kurumu Bülteni.
Eşref, Celâl Sahir, and Yakup Kadri, who became its first board of management, with Samih Rifat as its first president (Doğan 1984: 25). In the forefront of this new organization were the purifiers (*tasfyeciler*, a term soon replaced by *özleştirmeciler*). One of its first tasks was to draw up a list of philosophical and scientific terms, of which the Ottoman and French ones were sent to the universities and various private scholars, with a request that they produce Turkish replacements for them. The replies, after scrutiny by the Society, were sent to the Ministry of Education, which authorized their use in school textbooks. Not all of them were new; some were long-established Arabic borrowings or coinages from Arabic, some were of Greek or Latin origin.

On 21 November 1932 the Directorate of Religious Affairs instructed all ‘camı ve mescid hademeleri’ (servants of congregational and other mosques) to prepare themselves to recite the *ezan*, the call to prayer, not in Arabic but in Turkish, though this did not happen all over the country at once, because it took time for all muezzins to master the new version. A gramophone record made by Hafiz Sadettin, the chief muezzin of the Sultan Ahmed mosque, was distributed to muezzins as the model to follow. This was the prescribed text:

Tanrı¹¹ uludur!
Şübhesiz bilirim bildirim
Tanридan başka yoktur tapacak.
Şübhesiz bilirim bildirim
Tanrının elçisidir Muhammed.
Haydın namaza!
Haydın felâha!
(Namaz uyku'dan hayırlıdır.)
Tanrı uludur!
Tanридan başka yoktur tapacak.

(Jäschke 1951: 75)

God is great!
I know without doubt and I declare:
There is none to be worshipped but God;
I know without doubt and I declare:
Muhammad is the envoy of God.
Come to prayer!
Come to felicity!
(Prayer is better than sleep.)
God is great!
There is none to be worshipped but God.

The line in parentheses is recited only for the dawn prayer.

On 9 July 1933, when it had become obvious that it was not going to be easy to

¹¹ *Tanrı*, ancienctly *tehri*, originally meant 'sky' and then 'God'; Clauson (1972: 523–4) describes it as 'a very old word, prob. pre-Turkish, which can be traced back to the language of the Hsiung-nu, III B.C., if not earlier'.
find native equivalents for all the doomed Arabic and Persian words, \textit{Hakimiyet-i Milliye} announced that words current among the people, whatever their origin, were to be regarded as Turkish. This sensible provision could have made little impression on the reformers, or they would not have wasted so much time trying to devise Turkish etymologies for Arabic words. Everyone had a go at the etymology game.

Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı (the First Turkish Language Congress)\textsuperscript{12} was held between 26 September and 5 October 1932, in the great ceremonial hall of Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul. Of some thirty papers read to the Kurultay, nine dealt with relationships between Turkish and other languages, one speaker going so far as to entitle his contribution ‘Turkish Philology: Turkish is an Indo-European Language’ (Dilemre 1933). A Philology and Linguistics Division was created, with responsibility for making comparisons between Turkish ‘and the most ancient Turkish languages, such as Sumerian and Hittite, and the languages called Indo-European and Semitic’.

Many people threw themselves enthusiastically into this task. In 1934, if we may get a little ahead of the chronological account, Saim Ali (Dilemre 1935) presented to the Second Kurultay a paper in which he sought to establish a connection between Turkish and the West European languages. He equated the \textit{bi}- of \textit{bicarbonate} and \textit{bilingual} with the \textit{bi} of \textit{bile} ‘together’ and \textit{binmek} ‘to mount’, and the prefix \textit{ex}- with the \textit{eks} of \textit{eksik} ‘lacking’ and \textit{eksitmek} ‘to reduce’. Even more bizarre was his identification of Latin \textit{ab} ‘as in \textit{abjure} and \textit{abandon}’ (although the \textit{ab} in the latter word is not in fact the Latin \textit{ab}) with the first syllable of \textit{abaki} ‘scarecrow’ and \textit{abaci}, which he explained as ‘kaşkarlıların ummacısı’ (the Kashghars’ boyman),\textsuperscript{13} the connection being that scarecrows and boymen are frightening and turn birds and people \textit{ab}, ‘away’.

Other products of the same frame of mind were displayed at that Second Kurultay.\textsuperscript{14} Naim Hâzım delivered himself of a paper (Onat 1935) on the relationship between Turkish and the Semitic languages, having previously published an article entitled ‘Türk kökleri Arap dilini nasıl doğurmuş’ (‘How Turkish Roots Gave Birth to Arabic’ (\textit{Hakimiyet-i Milliye}, 4 Mar. 1933; Levend 1972: 430)). At the

\textsuperscript{12} The title of the third and subsequent congresses was Türk Dil Kurultayları—i.e. not Turkish-Language Congress but Turkish Language-Congress, indicating a greater breadth of interest. The title on bound volumes of the proceedings of the second congress is Türk Dil Kurultayı, but the term used throughout the text is Türk Dili Kurultayı.

\textsuperscript{13} The normal spelling of the word translated ‘boyman’ is \textit{umaci} with a single \textit{m}. \textit{Abaki} does not seem to be recorded elsewhere. The common Anatolian word for scarecrow is \textit{abak} see Kösşay and Işitman (1932: 1). As for the kaşkarlılar (sic): ‘The Kashgharians are a people living in Kulja and the western part of Chinese Turkestan’ (Czaplicka 1918: 58). ‘Kashgarty, Kashgarlyki: local designation of an Uyghur population of the Kashgar oasis (Western China). The Kashgars in Central Asia are a group of Uyghurs who resettled from the Kashgar oasis to the Ferghana valley in the 1840s; at the present time they are fused with the Uzbekks’ (Krueger 1963: 197-19). So far as one can tell in the absence of an index, they are not mentioned in Bainbridge (1993).

\textsuperscript{14} And after it: an article by Dilemre, entitled ‘Türk–Kelt dil karşılaştırma\l aralarını’ (‘Linguistic Comparisons between Turkish and Celtic’), appeared in \textit{Türk Dili}, 15 (1936), 1–97. The proceedings of the Second Kurultay were published in numbers 9–14 (Sept. 1934 to Dec. 1935) of the journal.
Third Kurultay, in 1936, he returned specifically to the relationship with Arabic, this time in the light of the Sun-Language Theory (Onat 1937). Years later he published a two-volume work on the same theme (Onat 1944–9), though the second volume did not go beyond one fascicle. The kindest comment one can make is that he could scarcely be blamed for failing to prove his thesis.

Yusuf Ziya Özer, a lawyer, not a language man, found the origin of Aphrodite in avrat ‘woman’ (‘awrāt [A]). He spoke at the Second Kurultay on the relationship between Turkish and the Ural-Altaic languages, including Finnish:

Fin dili son zamanlarda indo-avrupayi [sic] sayılmak için bir meyelan vardır. Bu bir fali hayırıdır, çünkü fin dininin indo-avrupai zümresine girmesi uralo-altay lehçeleri üzerinde yapılacak lisani tetkikati genişletecek ve sonunda bu lehçelerin de aynı membadan geldiği anlaşılacak türkçenin ana dil olduğu hakikatini meydana koymaya vesile olacaktır. (Türk Dili, 12 (1935), 55)

There has been a tendency recently for Finnish to be counted as Indo-European. This bodes well, since the entry of Finnish among the Indo-European languages will broaden linguistic studies on the Ural-Altaic dialects, and eventually the realization that these dialects also come from the same origin will be the occasion to bring to light the truth that Turkish is the mother language.

This same Yusuf Ziya figures in a reminiscence of the constitutional lawyer Ali Fuad Başgil:


I shall never forget; on the Islands steamer one day in the summer of 1935, I met the late Professor Yusuf Ziya, the Deputy for Eskişehir. He told me he had come from Ankara and was preparing a work of five hundred pages. I asked what it was about. It emerged that it was on the Turkish origins of Arabic. And he gave an example: for instance the word Firavan ‘Pharaoh’ is thought to be Arabic, whereas it is Turkish, being derived from burun ‘nose’, an organ protruding in front of a person. As the sovereign is a personage going in front of the society, in Egypt he was called The Nose. In the course of time, this word burun became altered to Firavan ... The Professor in fact attained God’s mercy without managing to escape from the disease of fakery.

To revert to 1932: the Society’s by-laws, accepted by the First Kurultay, set out two aims (Kurultay 1932: 437): ‘Türk dilinin öz güzelliğini ve zenginliğini meydana çıkarmak; Türk dilini dünya dilleri arasında değerine yaraşır yükseklüğine

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15 This looks like a moonbeam from the larger lunacy, but one cannot confidently assert that there never was such a tendency.
eriştirmek’ (To bring to light the particular beauty and richness of the Turkish language and to raise it to the level it merits among the languages of the world). The Central General Committee elected by the Kurultay issued the following directive on the tasks to be given priority:

(1) Halk dilinde ve eski kitaplarda bulunan Türk dili hazinelerini toplayıp ortaya koyma; (2) Türkçe'de söz yaratma yollarını belli etmek ve bunları işletek Türk köklerinden türlü sözler çıkarmak; (3) Türkçe'de, hele yazı dilinde, çok kullanılan yabancı kökten sözler yerine konabilecek öz Türkçe sözleri ortaya koymak ve bunları yapmak. (Söz Derleme Dergisi (1939–52): i. 7–8)

(1) Collecting and publishing the treasures of the Turkish language existing in the popular language and old books; (2) clarifying the methods of word-creation in Turkish and employing them to extract various words from Turkish roots; (3) uncovering and publicizing pure Turkish words which may be substituted for words of foreign roots widely used in Turkish, especially in the written language.

On the evening after the close of that First Kurultay there was great euphoria round Atatürk's table. He himself was saying, 'We are going to defeat Ottoman. Turkish is going to be a language as free and as independent as the Turkish nation, and with it we shall enter the world of civilization at one go' (Tankut 1963: 116–17). Then there began söz derleme seferberliği (the word-collection mobilization).

‘Mobilization’ was not an empty metaphor; those called upon included army officers, teachers, tax, agriculture, and forestry officials, and government doctors, whose duties brought them into regular contact with the people. The central committee of the Language Society distributed to every part of the country a booklet explaining how the work was to be carried out, together with slips on which to enter the words collected. In the capital of every province (vilayet) a ‘collection committee’ of mayors, military commanders, and head teachers was set up, chaired by the provincial governor (Vali), with a branch committee chaired by the sub-governor (Kaymakam) in the chief town of every sub-province (kaza); the duty of these committees was to organize the collection of words in use among the people. Within a year, a total of 125,988 slips had been returned, from which, after checking and the elimination of repetitions, 35,357 words were left. To these were added 765 words collected by private individuals and gleaned from folk-poetry and various books, including the first ever Turkish dialect dictionary: Hamit Zübeyr [Koşay] and İshak Refet [İşitman], Anadilden Derlemeler (1932), a scholarly work containing the results not only of its authors’ own investigations but also of the 1920 inquiry mentioned in Chapter 2. In addition, there was a number of words from Türkmençe (Turcoman), and Azerice, the dialect of Azerbaijan (Kurultay 1934 (= Türk Dili, 8 (1934), 12)).

16 Tankut does not quote Atatürk’s actual words. His version of them runs ‘Osmanlıca’yı yeneceğiz. Türk dili Türk ulusu gibi özgürg ve başına büyük bir dil olacak ve biz onunla uygurlık acununa birden ve toptan gireceğiz.’ But özgürg, for example, was not invented until twenty years after the First Kurultay.

17 Twenty years later a second volume appeared: Koşay and Aydın 1952.
A Commission of Inquiry was created and from March to July 1933 Hakimiyet-i Millîye published daily lists of a dozen or so Arabic and Persian words under the heading ‘Türk okur yazarları! Büyük dil anketi seferberliği başladı. İş başına!’ (Literate Turks! Mobilization for the great language inquiry has begun. To work!). Other newspapers and radio stations were invited to cooperate and readers’ suggestions for Turkish replacements were published as they came in. (There is anecdotal evidence that suggestions were paid for at the rate of TL6 a word.) When it became apparent that different contributors had different ideas about what sort of replacements were acceptable, belatedly on 9 July Hakimiyet-i Millîye stated two principles: (a) words current among the people, whatever their origin, were to be counted as Turkish, and (b) replacements must be Öztürkçe (see note 25, p. 56): while kalem [A] ‘pen’, for example, would not be discarded, yazak would also be used and whichever proved the more popular would survive. This exercise was not very productive: the number of words in the daily lists totalled 1,382. Of the replacements suggested, 640 were accepted.

Meanwhile, scholars had been combing through dictionaries of Turkic languages and more than 150 old texts in search of words that had fallen out of use or had never been in use in Turkey; these totalled close on 90,000. After a very brief process of checking, mostly by middle-school teachers, the results of both researches were embodied in Tarama Dergisi (1934). Although the compilers had conscientiously put question marks against some words of which they were not sure, and warned that this huge mass of material was undigested, enthusiasts did not feel inhibited from using any word found in it, and for a while Babel set in. If you wanted to express ‘pen’ without using the normal kalem, you looked up kalem and made your choice from among yağış or yazgaç, shown as recorded at Bandırma and İzmir respectively, or the Karaim çizgiç or sizgiç, or the Tatar kavri, or kamış from the Kamus18 or yuvuş from Pavet de Courteille (1870). For hikaye ‘story’ there were twenty-two possibilities, including erteği, höçek, ötkünç, and sürçek, but not öykü, which eventually supplanted it. For hediye ‘gift’ you could pick your favourite from a list of seventy-seven words ranging from açı through ertiit and tanşu to yarlıgaş and zim.

Agop Dilaçar notes (Korkmaz 1992: 363) that for akil ‘intelligence’ there were twenty-six equivalents, from an to zerey. He describes a visit he paid some time in 1934 to Necmettin Sadak, editor-in-chief of the newspaper Akszam:


18 What the Kamus (1316/1901: ii. 1039) actually gives under kamış ‘reed’ is ‘kalem kamışı: yontularak yazı yazılğa yarayan kamış cinsi . . . ’ (pen-reed: a type of reed which on being trimmed serves for writing . . . ). ‘Reed pen’ is kamış kalem; the two words are not synonymous.
Osmanlıca sözcüklerle başka karşılıkları seçmiş olabilirli. İşte Atatürk'ün ilk bunalımı bu kargaşadan doğdu.

Sadak had written the editorial, in Ottoman. He rang the bell, gave the text to the messenger who arrived, and said ‘Take this to the substitutor.’ The substitutor, in the room across the corridor, opened Tarama Dergisi and, paying no regard to the structure of the passage, ‘substituted’ for the Ottoman words the Turkish equivalents he liked from that book. In another newspaper office another ‘substitutor’ might have chosen other equivalents for the same Ottoman words.

The author had some first-hand experience of the rite of ‘substitution’ in 1984, when he spent a memorable evening in Istanbul with a group of members of the Faculty of Political Science who were organizing a symposium on the Tanzimat, the nineteenth-century reforms. Their chairman, a venerable retired professor, was composing his opening address, which, for the sake of the many young students who were expected, he wanted to couch in the most up-to-date language. So in his own archaic and courtly Turkish he told the company what he wanted to say and we suggested the appropriate neologisms. There was much discussion about how to say ‘modern’. He knew asrî was too old-fashioned but he did not know the new word. One or two people suggested çağdaş, but we agreed that that was the neologism for muasrî ‘contemporary’. The eventual consensus was that he should use modern, which he did.

It was around 1934 that a Turkish writer, when asked how many languages he knew, is said to have replied that it was as much as he could do to keep up with Turkish. The situation is well summed up by Heyd (1954: 31):

Now any Turkish word found in the vernacular of a remote Anatolian village, in the speech of an even more remote Turkish tribe in Siberia or in the manuscript of an eleventh century Turkish–Arabic dictionary was regarded as a possible addition to the modern Turkish vocabulary. On the other hand, practically every word of Arabic or Persian origin was considered outlawed and condemned to suppression as soon as a Turkish equivalent was found.

An undated leaflet, published by TDK and distributed to the participants at one of the early Kurultays, deserves to be rescued from oblivion. It is entitled Kurultay Marşı (‘Congress March’), words by Dr Hilmi Oytac, Deputy for Malatya, music by Maestro Karlo d’Alpino Kapoçelli. The presence of the surnames Atatürk and Oytac shows it could not have been before 1934, as does Dr Oytac’s manifest indebtedness to Tarama Dergisi of 1934: bısgut, tolnay, cankti [M], and so on. The translation offered here is in parts tentative; the rendering ‘respect’ for okkay, for example, which is not found in Tarama Dergisi, is based on the possibly far-fetched assumption that it is a back-formation from okkali (from okka ‘oke’, a measure of weight), first meaning ‘weighty’ and then ‘worthy of respect’, with the y added for the sake of the rhyme.

19 This book is immensely useful for details of the Society’s history, as is Brendemoen (1990: 454–93).
Gözün ayağın Türk oğlu açıldı benlik yolu
Ey bu yolun yolcusu artık sana ne mutlu
Atatürk çocukları diline el bastırmaz
Kurultay buğwantları diline dil kattırmaz
Selâm sana Kurultay yeni doğan tolnay
Selâm sana Atatürk, bizden sana bin okKay
Bil ki tarih ile il benliğin damgasıdır
İçi dişi gösteren bir kılk aynasıdır
Bu canlıdan doğacak öz Türklüğe yom olcay
Özge dilden öz dili kurtaracak Kurultay
Selâm sana Kurultay yeni doğan tolnay
Selâm sana Atatürk, bizden sana bin okKay

Joy to you, son of Turks, the road to identity has been opened
O traveller on this road, how happy you are at last.
The children of Atatürk let no stranger encroach on their language
The disciples of the Kurultay let no language adulterate their language
Salutations to you, Kurultay, full moon newly rising
Salutations to you, Atatürk, a thousand respects from us to you
Know that history and language are the mark of identity
A full-length mirror showing the inside and the outside
From this council blessings and felicity will be born for pure Turkdom
The Kurultay will save the pure language from other languages.

İbrahim Necmi displayed some cheerful ignorance in his speech on the occasion
of the second Dil Bayramı (Language Festival), in which he spoke of Tarama Dergisi:

Dergideki sözler, öz dilimizin hem zenginliğini, hem de başka dillere kaynaklığını gösterecek degerdirdir. Bir örnek verelim. Bugün herkesin söylediği 'psikoloji' sözünün kökü aranacak olursa bunun 'psikoz' dan çıktığı görülür. Etimoloji kitapları bunu da 'nefes' diye anlatırlar. Yaşamanın nefes almakla bir olduğunu düşünen eskilerin 'nefes'le 'ruh'u bir tutmaları kolay anlaşılır bir iştir. Şimdi Dergide 'nefes' sözüne bakarsanız 'Pis' diye bir söz görürsünüz ki 'psikoz' sözünün de, 'nefes' lakurdisinin da heph bu ana kaynakta kaynamış olduğunu anlamak pek kolay olur. . . . (Turk Dili, 10 (1934), 23–4)

The words in the Dergi are capable of showing both the richness of our language and the fact that it is the source for other languages. Let me give an example. If one looks for the root of the word psikoloji, which today is on everyone’s lips, it will be seen that it comes from psikoz. The etymology books explain this as nefes [A] ‘breath’. It is easily understandable that the ancients, reflecting that living was one with breathing, took ‘breath’ and ‘soul’ as one and the same. Now if you look up the word nefes in the Dergi you will see a word pis, and it will be very easy to understand that psikoz and nefes have both welled up from this ultimate source.

He then gave another example, tünel (familiar to Istanbul people as the name of the underground railway going down from the lower end of İstiklal Caddesi to the Golden Horn), ‘which everyone knows we borrowed from the French’. Having said that a recent French etymological dictionary explained the word as a French borrowing from the English tunnel (sic), of obscure origin, he continues: Şimdi
Dergiyi açınız: “Tün” sözünün “gece, karanhık” demeye geldiğini görürsünüz. Buna “Kural, kaval, çakal, sakal, güzel . . .” sözlerinin sonunda görulen “al-el” ekini katarsanız “Tünel” in “karanhık yer” demeye gelen öz Türkçe bir söz olduğu ortaya çıkar’ (Now open the Dergi and you will see that tün means ‘night, darkness’. If you add to this word the suffix appearing at the end of words such as kural ['rule'], kaval ['shepherd's pipe'], çakal ['jackal'], sakal ['beard'], güzel ['beautiful'], and so on, it becomes apparent that tünel is a pure Turkish word meaning ‘dark place’). That last paragraph, together with his confusion of psikoz ‘psychosis’ and psyché, and his equating the second syllable of the Arabic nefes with pis (according to Tarama Dergisi (1934), a Kirghiz word for ‘weak breath’), may be thought to show a deficiency of philological competence. Although he taught literature and from 1935 was a member of the Grand National Assembly, by training he was a lawyer, but that did not harm his career in the Language Society, of which he was Secretary-General from 1934 to 1945.

It was during the period of linguistic chaos following the publication of Tarama Dergisi (1934) that Atatürk said to Atay something on these lines: ‘Çocuğum beni dinle, dedi. Türkçenin hiçbir yabancı kelimeye ihtiyacı olmadığını söyleyenlerin iddiasını tecrübe ettik. Bir çıkmaza girmişizdir. Dili bu çıkmazda bırakılar mı? Birakmazlar. Biz de çıkmazdan kurtarma şerefini bırakmaklarına bırakamayız’ (‘Listen to me, my boy,’ he said. ‘We have put to the test the claim of those who say that Turkish has no need of any foreign word. We really have got into a dead end. Will they leave the language in this dead end? They won’t. But we can’t leave to others the honour of saving it from the dead end’). Atay’s next words are of greater significance: ‘Fakat bir noktada ısrar etti. Türkçede kalacak kelimelerin aslında Türkçe olduğu izah edilmeli idi’ (But on one point he was insistent: it had to be explained that the words which were to remain in Turkish were Turkish in origin).

Atay gives us an insight into the method used to avoid branding as foreign any essential word for which no native equivalent could be found. He tells of a discussion on the Dictionary Commission about possible replacements for hüküm [A] ‘judgement’:

Naim Hâzim Hoca was sitting on my right, Yusuf Ziya on my left. I said, ‘There’s no equivalent for it. Let’s keep it.’ They both said, ‘Impossible!’ I turned to my right and said, ‘Professor, you say that the origin of Arabic is Turkish. You claim as originally Turkish any word we cite from the Koran.’ I turned to my left. ‘And you, Professor, maintain that all languages derive from Turkish. You resort to all kinds of dodges to show that the French chambre is

20 Kural ‘rule’ is a neologism of dubious ancestry. In the real world it occurs in the sense of ‘instrument, tool’ in most Central Asian dialects.

21 Pis, which looks onomatopoetic, is not to be found in Taymas (1945–8), the Turkish translation of Yudakhin, Kirgizsko-Russkiy Slovar (1940).

22 The reason for the Russkiy Slovar uncertainty is that this version, from Atay (1951), is one of his three versions of the same reminiscence. It has been selected as being the oldest and, one therefore hopes, the nearest to what Atatürk actually said. There is yet another version in Akbal (1984), obviously quoted from memory: ‘Atatürk “öz Türkçe işi çıkmaza girdi, vazgeçelim bundan” diy esi imiş!’ (Lewis 1988: 115) (A. is supposed to have said, ‘The pure Turkish business has got into a dead end; let’s drop it.’)
derived from oda. And now, when it comes to a word like hüküm which has become part of village speech, the two of you dig your toes in.' We had quite an argument. After the meeting, my friend Abdulkadir came up to me in the upper corridor of Dolmabahçe Palace. He it was who had once said to me, 'I know most of the dialects of the Asian Turks. I also understand the dialect spoken by you and people like Yakup Kadri. If there's one dialect I can't make head or tail of, it's the dialect of the Turkish Language Society.' On this occasion he said, 'You look worried. Tell me what words are bothering you and I'll find Turkish origins for them.' 'Well,' I replied, 'there's this word hüküm. 'Don't worry,' he said, 'tomorrow we'll make hüküm Turkish.' Next day he quietly put into my hand a slip of paper on which he had noted that some dialects had a word ök meaning 'intellect', which in several of them took the form ük. I had myself discovered that in Yakut there was a word-building suffix -üm. The rest was easy: ük plus üm had in the course of time become hüküm. When the meeting began, I said, 'The word hüküm is Turkish,' and gave a full account of what I had learned, which reduced the two professors to silence. We had laid the foundations of the science of—I shan't say fakery, but flim-flam. ['Uydurma' demiyeyim de 'yakıtırmaclılık' ilminin temelini atmıştı.] That evening I reported to Atatürk on the Commission's proceedings and he was very pleased that we had won so important a word by this fabrication. What he wanted us to do was to leave as many words in the language as possible, so long as we could demonstrate that they were Turkish.23

Atay of course knew that hüküm was borrowed from the Arabic hukm but he offers no justification for his conduct; if taxed with dishonesty he would no doubt have pleaded that what he had told the Commission and Atatürk was a white lie intended to save the life of a word that had served the Turks well for centuries. Atatürk, who was no doubt equally aware of the origin of hüküm, was satisfied that it could be reprieved now that it had been provided with a Turkish pedigree.

A remarkable revelation of the Language Society's way with words is to be seen in an unsigned article entitled 'Cep Kılavuzları ne kadar Sözu Karşılamıştır?':

Şimdiye kadar lügatlerde araçça farsça ... gibi Türkçeden başka sanılan dilere mensup diye gösterilmiş olan, fakat Kılavuz araştırmaları arasında gerek kıkının Türkçe olduğu anlaşılmazı ve gerek yayılımı ve dilin ihtiyacını olması bakımından Türk kökünden geldiği tesbit edilen sözlerin sayısı (583) tür. (Türk Dili, 16 (1936), 22–3)

Up to now, 583 words have been shown in the dictionaries as belonging to languages thought to be different from Turkish, such as Arabic, Persian etc., but their derivation from Turkish roots has been established, in view of the facts that it has become clear in the course of researching the Guide that their roots are Turkish, that they are widely used, and that the language needs them.

One may wonder why, once it had become clear that the roots of the words in question were Turkish, further evidence was required that their derivation from Turkish roots had been established. In so far as it betokens an uneasy conscience on the anonymous writer's part, let us not condemn him.

Atatürk was far too intelligent to be deluded by those who maintained that all languages derived from Turkish. The logical consequence of such a belief would

23 Atay's story is here pieced together from his two divergent accounts, one in Atay (1969: 478), the other in Atay (1965).
have been to retain all the Arabic and Persian elements in the language, which at that time was the exact opposite of his intention. So, for a limited period, he seized on the "Öztürkçe" words produced by the reformers and used them in his speeches and letters.

In February 1935 he dropped his given names, Mustafa and Kemal, both being irremediably Arabic, and for a little while took to signing himself as Kamal. The origin of this novel name was explained in a communiqué from Anadolu Ajansı, the official news agency:

İstihbaratımızca nazaran Atatürk’ün taşıdığı ‘Kamal’ adı Arapça bir kelime olmadığı gibi Arapça ‘Kemal’ (olgunluk) kelimesinin delâlet ettiği mànâda değildir.


In the light of our information, the name ‘Kamal’ that Atatürk bears is not an Arabic word, nor does it have the meaning indicated by the Arabic word kemal [‘maturity’, ‘perfection’]. Atatürk’s personal name, which is being retained, is ‘Kamal’, the Turkish meaning of which is army and fortification. As the circumflex accent on the final a softens the l, the pronunciation closely approximates that of the Arabic ‘Kemal’. That is the full extent of the resemblance.

_Tarama Dergisi_ (1934) gives kamal as meaning fortification, castle, army, shield. That, however, is of no relevance, because kamal (/kamal/) is not kamal (Lewis 1988: 6–7). Apart from the improbable final syllable, the substitution of a for the e of Kemal would alter the sound of the initial consonant, from /k/ to /k/. But clearly the purpose of the change was not to affect the pronunciation of the name but only to make its written form look less Arabic. In fact he did not persist with ‘Kamal’ but habitually signed himself K. Atatürk.

In the spring of 1935 the newspapers began to publish lists of proposed replacements for Arabic and Persian words, on which readers were invited to comment. Later that year the results were presented to the public in a little ‘Pocket Guide from Ottoman to Turkish’ (Cep Kilavuzu (1935)), as planned at the Second Kurultay in August 1934. The speed with which the plan had been implemented was due to the active interest of Atatürk himself, but it is a pity the editors did not have more time to spend on it. Two examples: the new word they offered for ‘education’ was eğiitim, which was supposed to be a noun derived from an ancient verb eğimek ‘to educate’. But there never was a verb eğimek; it was a misreading of igidmek ‘to feed (people or animals)’. For millet ‘nation’ Tarama Dergisi had come up with eight possibilities, among them ulüş and ulus. The compilers of Cep Kilavuzu backed the wrong horse and chose the latter, which represented the Mongolian pronunciation of Turkish uluş ‘country’, an early borrowing by the

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24 There is a Turkish word containing a back vowel and a clear l, the somewhat mysterious elâ (/elâ/) ‘hazel’ (of eyes). Agop Dilçar’s new surname ‘language-opener’ (he was born Martayan) was given to him by Atatürk; the circumflex shows that the l is clear.
Mongols, used by them for 'a confederation of peoples' (Clauson 1972: 152). By the fourteenth century the Turks had borrowed it back, and it was in its Mongolian form ulus that they used it until the seventeenth century and use it again now.

The end product was to be Öz Türkçesi25 (Pure Turkish), a term said to derive from a favourite expression of Atatürk's, 'öz Türk dilimiz' (our own Turkish language), öz meaning 'pure' as well as 'own'. The new words were circulated to schools by the Ministry of Education, and publicized and used in the newspapers.

Atatürk had already gone a long way in the use of Öztürkçe; he took it to the limit in the speech he made on 3 October 1934, at a banquet in honour of the Swedish Crown Prince and Princess. Turks refer to it as 'baysal utku nutuk' (the speech characterized by 'baysal utkusu'), this expression standing out as the oddest of all. It contains three French words, Altes, Ruvaylı, and Prenses, and only two words of Arabic origin, tarih 'history' and tüm 'all'.26 It also contains some startling neologisms. Here is a sample (full text and glossary in Levend 1972: 424–6): 'Avrupanın iki bitim ucunda yerlerini berkiten uluslarımız, atasözüklерinin tümIssileri olarak baysak, önumre, uyguluk kıldacılı bu résultulunuyorlar; onlar, bugün, en güzel utkuyu kazanımıya anklanyorlar: baysal utkusu' (Our nations, which hold firm their places at the two extremities of Europe, in full possession of their ancestral qualities have become the agents of tranquility, progress and harmony; today they are preparing to win the most beautiful victory of all: the victory of peace). Tankut (1963: 125) says that the speech was composed in Ottoman and the Arabic words were then replaced by neologisms. He says too that Mustafa Kemal delivered it 'okumaya yeni başlanmış öğrencilerin acemiliğiyle' (with the awkwardness of schoolchildren who have just begun to read).

This self-inflicted injury must have caused him great irritation, for he was a proud man and a master of his own language. He had the rare gift of being able to extemporize, in Ottoman, lengthy periods of the kind that others might struggle for hours to compose, while he was equally at home with the straightforward and often racy colloquial he used in conversation and when addressing informal meetings. His address opening the new session of the Grand National Assembly on 1 November 1934 contained a fair number of Öztürkçe words,27 though they were nothing like so numerous or so outlandish as those that must have tried the skill of the Swedish Crown Prince's interpreter a month earlier unless he had been given a sight of the original Ottoman text.

Towards the end of 1935, Atatürk seems to have decided that he would no longer deny himself the full use of the instrument he wielded so well; this is evident from the language of his subsequent public utterances, as we shall see. One can only imagine his mortification after all the effort he had invested in the language reform. And then, in what must have been a time of great chagrin and heartssearching for him, there appeared a deus ex machina: along came Kvergic.

25 Now generally written as one word, a practice which henceforth is followed in this book.
26 It is not totally certain that tüm is originally Arabic, but there is no evidence that it is not.
27 Text in Atatürk'ün Söylev ve Demeçleri (1945: i. 362–4).
The Sun-Language Theory and After

Sometime in 1935 Atatürk received a forty-seven-page typescript in French, entitled ‘La Psychologie de quelques éléments des langues turques’, by a Dr Hermann F. Kvergić of Vienna. The theme was that man first realized his own identity when he conceived the idea of establishing what the external objects surrounding him were. Language first consisted of gestures, to which some significant sounds were then added. Kvergić saw evidence for his view in the Turkish pronouns. $M$ indicates oneself, as in $men$, the ancient form of $ben$ ‘I’, and $elim$ ‘my hand’. $N$ indicates what is near oneself, as in $sen$ ‘you’ and $elin$ ‘your hand’. $Z$ indicates a broader area, as in $biz$ ‘we’ and $siz$ ‘you’. Further, Kvergić considered that Turkish was the first human language to take shape. Nothing could have been more timely.

Two months before, a copy of the paper had been sent to Ahmet Cevat Emre, the chairman of the grammar section of the Language Society, who after a cursory examination dismissed it as unsubstantiated and worthless. Atatürk was more impressed, partly because, having discussed it with Emre, he suspected that the latter’s rejection of it was due to his seeing in Kvergić a potential rival. ‘To me,’ he said, ‘the psychological analyses look important.’ He thought that primitive man might well have given vent to exclamations such as ‘Aa!’ and ‘Oo!’ and that language could have emerged from utterances of this kind. He passed the paper on to İbrahim Necmi Dilmén, the secretary-general of the Language Society, and said, ‘It looks important; let it be examined carefully.’ Dilmén talked it over with Hasan Reşit Tankut, Naim Hâzım Onat, and Abdülkadir İnân, who saw merit in the psychological analyses (Emre 1960: 342–6).

The result of Atatürk’s subsequent lucubrations, aided by these and others of the staff of the Society, was Güneş-Dil Teorisi (the Sun-Language Theory), which saw the beginning of language as the moment when primitive man looked up at the sun and said ‘Aa!’ As it was concerned only with the beginning and not the development of language, it cannot be reproached for omitting to explain how mankind progressed from that primeval ‘Aa!’ to the sublimity of ‘Faith, hope and charity, these three things; or Virgil’s ‘sunt lacrimae rerum’ or even to so commonplace an utterance as ‘Let’s go for a walk in the park.’

Here is a brief summary of the theory, which came equipped with a battery of rules for its application. That ‘Aa’, ağ in Turkish spelling, was the first-degree radical of the Turkish language. Its original meaning was sun, then sunlight, warmth, fire, height, bigness, power, God, master, motion, time, distance, life,
colour, water, earth, voice. As man’s vocal mechanisms developed, other vowels and consonants became available, each with its own shade of meaning. Because the primeval exclamation was shouted, and it is obviously easier to begin a shout with a vowel than with a consonant, any word now beginning with a consonant originally began with a vowel, since abraded. The words yağmur ‘rain’, çamur ‘mud’, and hamur ‘dough’, for example, are compounded of ağmur ‘flowing water’ preceded by ay ‘high’, aç ‘earth’, and ah ‘food’ respectively. The reader is urged not to waste time looking for the last four ‘Turkish’ words in the dictionary.

There is a cryptic foreshadowing of the theory in Dilmen’s preface to Türkçeden Osmanlıcaya Cep Kilavuzu. After asserting that it was becoming daily more certain that ‘the languages termed non-Turkish are equally of Turkish origin’, he says, ‘There can be no doubt that the great truth we are referring to will soon reveal itself with the brightness of the sun.’ The authorship of the theory is archly hinted at by the anonymous writer of ‘Güneş-Dil Teorisinin Esaslarına Kısa bir Bakış’, which speaks of it as a product of ‘Türk jenisi’ (the Turkish genius).

The Third Kurultay, in 1936, was dominated by what Heyd (1954: 34), with admirable restraint, refers to as ‘this amazing theory’. So does Brendemoen (1990: 456), who with less restraint also calls it ‘infamous’. Atatürk’s responsibility for the theory is not disputed, though clearly he did not do all the donkey work. Dilaçar (1963: 50) says in so many words that the paper on the application of the analytical method of the theory, described in the agenda as the work of İsmail Müştak Mayakon, who read it to the Congress on 27 August 1936, was wholly due to Atatürk. So was the anonymous and undated little brochure Etimoloji Morfoloji ve Fonetik Bakımından Türk Dili (‘The Turkish Language Etymologically, Morphologically and Phonetically Considered’), a condensed version of which was given away with the issue of Ulus, 14 November 1935. Between 2 and 21 November of that year, half of the front page of the newspaper was devoted to a series of unsigned ‘Dil Yazıları’, articles purporting to demonstrate the Turkish origin of some sixty words, mostly Arabic borrowings, on the basis of the Sun-Language Theory. The fact that Ulus gave up half its front page day after day to these articles is a pointer to the identity of their writer, but Atatürk’s authorship of them was not known for sure until the publication in 1994 of an article that established with documentary evidence (Ercilasun 1994: 89) what had long been generally assumed.

This is how the first section of the brochure began:

Etimoloji, morfoloji ve fonetik bakımdan Türk dili’ hakkındaki şu notların ifade ettiği fikirler... Birinci Dil Kurultayından beri geçen üç sene içinde, Türk Dil üzerinde ve bu münasebetle diğer dillerde yapılan tetkik ve araştırmalardan ve dille alakadar olan filozofi,

1 Originally serialized in Ulus from the beginning of November 1935 onwards, reprinted in Türk Dili, 16 (1936), 33–123.

The ideas set out in these notes on 'The Turkish Language Etymologically, Morphologically and Phonetically Considered' have emerged in the three years since the First Language Congress ... They grew from studies and research conducted during that time on Turkish and other languages and from a review of topics in philosophy, psychology, and sociology that have a bearing on language. This outcome may be seen as a new philological theory, based on the concept that what made man aware of his identity was the sun.

Having cited several works in which he had found confirmation for his theory—by Carra de Vaux on Etruscan, and Hilaire de Barenton on the derivation of languages from Sumerian—Atatürk continues:

Dil bu buluşla, tamamen câmî olmaktan kurtulamamıştır. Ona can ve hareket vermek lazımdır. İşte bu nokta üzerinde düşünmeye ve tettike başladık ... Türk diline ait lûgât kitaplarını önüne alındık. Bu kitaplardaki tam ve belli anımlar ifade eden sözleri ve bu sözlerde ek olarak köke yapışmış konsonları birer birer gözönünde tutarak, bunların köte yaptıkları mana nüanslarını etüt ettik ... Bu sırada Dr. Phil. Orient. H. F. Kvergitch'in 'Psychologie de quelques éléments des langues turques' adlı basılmıştı kıymetli bir eserini okuduk. Türk dilindeki süfükslerin gösterici manalarını bulmak için Dr. Kvergitch'in bu nazariyesini Türk Dil Kurumunun ekler hakkındaki geniş ve çok misallı çalışmalarını sayesinde anlâyabilir ik ve istifade ettik.

This discovery could do nothing to save the language from being totally lifeless. It had to be given soul and activity. It was on this point that I began to concentrate my thinking and investigation ... I sat down with the Turkish dictionaries in front of me. Scrutinizing one by one the words in them that expressed complete and clear meanings, and the consonants suffixed to the root of each word, I studied the shades of meaning these made in the root ... About this time I read a valuable unpublished work, Dr. Phil. Orient. H. F. Kvergiç's 'Psychologie de quelques éléments des langues turques'. To find out the demonstrative senses of the Turkish suffixes, thanks to TDK's extensive labours on the suffixes, with abundant examples, I was able to understand this theory of Dr Kvergiç's and I made use of it.

The first hint of what was coming was in a paper entitled 'The Sun, from the Point of View of Religion and Civilization', presented on the first day of the Congress by Yusuf Ziya Özor. The theory was mentioned only at the very end:

Beşeri kültür üzerinde bu kadar mühim rol yapan Güneşin ... dil üzerinde de aynı tesiri ve aynı rolü yapmış olması gayet tabii görülmek lazım gelir. Binaenaleyh Güneş-Dil Teorisi'nin de Güneş bu kadar ezeli surette merbut olan Türk ilmi telâkkıyatının bir eseri olarak meydana konmuş olması iftihara lâyktır. (Kurultay 1936: 48)

It must be seen as quite natural that the Sun, which plays so important a part in human culture, has ... exercised the same influence on, and played the same part in, language too. We should therefore take pride in the fact that the Sun-Language Theory has been pronounced as a product of the outlook of Turkish science, which has been linked to the Sun since time immemorial.
Dilmen began the next day with a lengthy outline of the theory, in which he proved, among other things, the identity of English *god*, German *Gott*, and Turkish *kut* ‘luck’. The proof was simple enough: *Gott* is oğ + ot, *god* is oğ + od, *kut* is uk + ut. By spelling *Gott* with only one *t*, he spared himself the necessity of explaining its second *t*. Similar moonshine was delivered on that second day and the three following days, the sixth day being given over to the foreign scholars. Dilmen used the theory to show the identity of the Uyghur *yaltrak* ‘gleam, shining’, and *electric* (*Türk Dili*, 19 (1936), 47–9). An article in the *Wall Street Journal* of 16 March 1985 on the language reform states that a headline in *Cumhuriyet* of 31 January 1936 ran: ‘Electric is a Turkish word!’.

Space does not permit a full examination of the material presented to the Congress, much as one would like to go into the content of papers with such intriguing titles as Tankut’s ‘Palaeosociological Language Studies with Panchronic Methods according to the Sun-Language Theory’ and Dilâçar’s ‘Sun-Language Anthropology’. Emre’s contribution, however, deserves a word, because Zürcher (1985: 85) describes him as ‘l’un des rares linguistes un peu sérieux de la Société’. Emre, who had expressed his contempt for Kvergic’s paper, which was not devoid of sense, went overboard on the Sun-Language Theory.

Here is a summary of his lengthy presentation (Kurultay 1936: 190–201) on the origin of the French borrowings *filozofi* ‘philosophy’, *filozof* ‘philosopher’, and *filozofik* ‘philosophic(al)’, commonly supposed to be from the Greek *phil*– ‘to love’ and *sophia* ‘wisdom’. Having learned that the etymology of Greek *phil*– was doubtful, he decided that the word was his to do with as he would, to the following effect. As the Sun-Language Theory shows, no word originally began with a consonant, so the first syllable of *filozof* was *if* or *ef* and in its original form *ip* or *ep*. Now *ip* or *ep* in Turkish meant ‘reasoning power’ (this was no better founded than his preceding assertions). Further, the Greek *phil*– is generally supposed to mean ‘to love’ or ‘to kiss’, but he rejected the first sense on the grounds that Aristotle used *sophia* alone for ‘philosophy’, so the *philo*– could only be an intensifying prefix, having nothing to do with love. On the other hand, he accepted the second sense, because *ip*, besides meaning ‘reasoning power’, was clearly the same as the Turkish *öp*– ‘to kiss’. Next, the original form of *philo*– was *ipil–*, the function of the *il* being ‘to broaden the basic meaning of the *ip*’, and this was obviously the same word as the Turkish *bil*– ‘to know’. As for *sophia*, that did indeed mean wisdom; compare *sag* ‘sound, intelligent’ and *sav* ‘word, saying’. In short, *filozofi*, *filozof*, and *filozofik* were Turkish, so there was no need to create replacements for them.² Emre concluded his contribution with a verse ‘from one of our poets’, the second line of which indicates that Atatürk’s proprietorial interest in the theory, if not common knowledge, was at least an open secret:

² Clement of Alexandria would have put this differently. He is quoted by Peter Berresford Ellis (1994: 67) as saying, ‘It was from the Greeks that philosophy took its rise: its very name refuses to be translated into foreign speech.’
Atatürk, Atatürk antlıyz sana
Güneşinden içtik hep kana kana.
Atatürk, Ataturk, we are pledged to you,
We have all drunk deep of your sun.

The impact of the theory on books and articles published during its brief reign is easily recognized. Turning the pages of Abdulkadir İnan's (1936) Türkoloji Ders Hülalari for example, you see it to be a compendium of notes on the history of the language and on its dialects, particularly that of the Kirghiz (Kırız). Then, after a discussion of various views on the etymology of the name, you come across Fig. 5.1 and know you have left the realm of scholarship for the land of the Sun-Language Theory.

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{kırğıy} & \quad (1k + 1r + 1g + 1y) \\
\text{Kırız} & \quad (1k + 1r + 1g + 1z)
\end{align*}
\]

Fig. 5.1. A typical 'etymological analysis' according to the Sun-Language Theory
Source: İnan (1936: 52).

This figure purports to show the components of the words kırğıy and Kırız, the former being the Kazakh-Kirghiz word for falcon, a bird which may have been the Kirghiz tribal totem. Then comes the analysis. \(1k\) is the first-degree principal root, representing abrupt motion, \(1r\) expresses the confirmation of the root meaning, \(1g\) is the object or subject over which the abrupt motion recurs, while \(1y\) is the expression and nominalization of this. The first three elements of kırğıy and Kırız are identical in form and meaning, but one of the final elements ends in \(y\), the other in \(z\). The explanation is that the function of \(1y\) was to turn the word into a noun. In the totemistic period all surrounding subjects and objects were the same, but once the concepts of distance and the individual had emerged, all such subjects and objects, starting from the centre, the ego, were expressed by the element \(z\). Here İnan, to his credit, loses interest in the Sun-Language Theory and goes on to talk about his experiences among the Kirghiz.

Another sample of the application of the theory will be found in the first volume (1937) of Belleten, the journal of Türk Tarih Kurumu (the Turkish Historical Society). Its name looks like the present participle of belletmek and its apparent meaning is 'causing to learn by heart', which is perhaps just possible as the title of a learned journal.\(^3\) The earlier and later word for 'bulletin' is bültten, correctly shown in Türkçe Sözlük (1988) and other dictionaries as from the French bulletin. On pages

\(^3\) Belleten is indeed a learned journal, with a high international reputation; the accident that it was given its name during the heyday of the Sun-Language Theory must not be held against it.
311–16 of the first volume of the journal, however, will be found an analysis in French of belleten and bulletin, from which we learn that the two are phonetically identical and that, Turkish being the oldest of languages, the French word is derived from the Turkish, and not, as some may have supposed, vice versa.

In defence of belleten, Doğan Aksan (1976: 25) writes:


This word has been derived under the influence of bülten (French bulletin), which comes into our language from French; to be more precise, with the purpose of Turkicizing it. But the derivation is in accordance with the rules of Turkish . . . Moreover, a new word covering a new concept has thereby been won for the language. Belleten must be regarded not as a corrupted form of bülten but as a new word.

Atatürk’s faith in his theory must have been shaken by the reactions of the foreign guests at the 1936 Congress, a group of distinguished scholars including Alessio Bombaci, Jean Deny, Friedrich Giese, Julius Németh, Sir Denison Ross, and Ananias Zayaczkowski. One, variously referred to as Bartalini, Baltarini, and Balter, and variously described as Lector and Professor in Latin and Italian at Istanbul University, mentioned it tactfully in the course of a graceful tribute to Atatürk and the new Turkey: ‘La théorie de la langue-Soleil, par son caractère universel, est une preuve nouvelle de la volonté de la Turquie de s’identifier toujours davantage avec la grande famille humaine.’ Four of them did not mention it at all in their addresses to the Congress or subsequent discussion. Two thought it ‘interesting’. Hilaire de Barenton agreed that all human speech had a common origin, but saw that origin in Sumerian rather than Turkish. Two wanted more time to think about it. The only foreign guest to swallow it whole was Kvergić, who volunteered the following etymology of unutmak ‘to forget’:

Its earliest form was uğ + un + ut + um + ak. Uğ, ‘discriminating spirit, intelligence’, is the mother-root. The n of un shows that the significance of the mother-root emerges into exterior space. The t/d of ut is always a dynamic factor; its role here is to shift the discriminating spirit into exterior space. The m of um is the element which manifests and embodies in itself the concept of the preceding uğ-un-ut, while ak completes the meaning of the word it follows and gives it its full formulation. After phonetic coalescence, the word takes its final morphological shape, unutmak, which expresses the transference of the discriminating spirit out of the head into the exterior field surrounding the head; this is indeed the meaning the word conveys. (Kurultay 1936: 333)

Yet Atatürk did not immediately drop the theory; for this we have, inter alia, the testimony of Âkil Muhtar Özden, a highly respected medical man who served in 1937 on the Language Commission (Dil Komisyonu), over which Atatürk
presided, and who attended sessions on the technical terms of geometry, physics, chemistry, mechanics, and geology. He kept notes, mostly on individual words and tantalizingly brief. After listing the names of those present at a session on 8 March 1937, he recorded:


The blackboard arrived. Atatürk at once began to deal with the question of technical terms. He asked me what I had been doing, and I told him I was working on the lines he had indicated. I told him I was having difficulty in applying Sun-Language to abstract words. He asked for an example. The word *muvazi* ['parallel'] came to mind. The analysis started immediately. It was proved that *parallel* was Turkish.

Others of his notes read: ‘atom (Türkçe)’, with no explanation, and ‘Geometri (Türkçe)’, followed by a terse ‘ge = gen = geniş’; i.e. the *ge of geometri* is not the Greek *gē* ‘earth’ but the Turkish *gen* ‘wide’. On *polygon* be made two notes: ‘Poligon Türkçe/Pol = bol/gen = en’ and ‘gen = geniş/poligon (genişliği çok)’. These can be expanded as follows: *Poligon* is Turkish. *Pol is bol* ‘abundant’, *gen* is *en* ‘width’, and *geniş* ‘wide’; *poligon* means ‘of much width’. Later on comes an analysis of *likid* ‘liquid’ according to the Sun-Language Theory: ‘Likid (Türkçe) Yg-il-ik-id-êy Yg = Kati İl = Bunu namütenahîye kadar uzaklaştıran, yani yok eden ek. (İlik Türkçe katı olayan bir şey demektir.)’ In other words, *liquid* is Turkish, its original form being *ygilikidêy*. Yg means ‘hard’. İl is the suffix removing it to infinity, i.e. annihilating it. (İlik (‘marrow’) is Turkish, meaning a thing which is not hard.)

These instances of the application of the theory are not cited just for their inherent fun. They also demonstrate the unscholarliness of the officers of the Language Society (as well as of Dr Kverğiç), who unblushingly delivered themselves of such drivel in public. And these people and others like them were largely responsible for the creation of Öztürkçe, a fact which helps to explain why so much of it violates the rules of the language.

About Atatürk’s motive in launching the theory, opinions differ. Did he deliberately take up Kverğiç’s idea of the antiquity of Turkish and enlarge on it in order to justify ending the purge of words of Arabic and Persian origin? A footnote to the article on *Cep Kilavuzları* (1935) cited in Chapter 4, while not suggesting that this was Atatürk’s purpose, indicates that it was the result of the theory:

Kilavuzun neşrinden sonra Türk dehasından fişkaran ‘Güneş-Dil Teorisi’ yalnız bu Kilavuzu alınan sözlerin değil, daha pek çocuklarının Türkçeden üremleri sözlerin ortaya çıkarmıştır. Kilavuz araştırmaları arasında yalnız benzerliklere ve klâsik etimoloji bilgilerine göre elde edilebilen neticeler, ‘Güneş-Dil Teorisi’nin yüksek ışığı altında çok daha esaslı ve muayyen bir şekilde genišlemiştir. Bu genišleme bir derecededir ki dilimizin ihtiyacı olan
ve halk arasında manası bilinen kelimelerden hiç birini atağa ve yerini yeniden bilinmeyen bir kelime koymaغا ihtiyac kalmamıştır. (Türk Dili, 16 (1936), 22-3)

The Sun-Language Theory, which welled up from the Turkish genius after the publication of Cep Kilavuzu, has revealed that not only the words included in Cep Kilavuzu but a great many more are of Turkish derivation. The results that could be obtained in the course of the research for Cep Kilavuzu, going by resemblances and the findings of classical etymology alone, have broadened far more fundamentally and definitely under the sublime light of the Sun-Language Theory. Such is the extent of this broadening that there is no longer any necessity to discard a single one of the words that our language needs and whose meanings are known among the people, and to start from scratch to replace them with words that are not known.

Karaosmanoğlu (1963: 110) saw in the theory ‘dil konusundaki tutumuna yeni bir biçim, bir orta yol arama endişi’ (a concern with seeking a new shape, a middle way, for his attitude to language). Hatiboğlu (1963: 20) is more explicit: Atatürk put the theory forward to end the impossible situation in which satisfactory replacements could not be found for words that were being expelled from the language. Nihad Sâmi Banarlı (1972: 317), an inveterate opponent of the reform, is of the same opinion:


[Atatürk] tried Öztürkçe and took a personal part in the efforts in this direction. As the experiment advanced, however, this same Atatürk saw instantly and clearly what sort of impasse the Turkish language and Turkish culture had been dragged into by people vying with each other to bastardize the whole thing. Eventually he took upon himself the duty of rectifying this situation too and, again by a stroke of tactical genius, availed himself of the Sun-Language Theory to drop the Öztürkçe experiment.

So is Ercillasun (1994: 89):

Atatürk’ün kaleme aldığı bütün bu broşür ve dil yazılardan çıkan sonuç şu durur: Güneş-Dil Teorisini ortaya atarken Atatürk’ün amaçlarından biri de aşırı özleştirmecilikten vazeçmek, ‘millet, devir, hâdise, mühim, hâtira, ümit, kuvvet’ vb. [ve başkaları ‘and others’] kelimelerin dilde kalmasını sağlamakta.

The conclusion emerging from all these brochures and articles on language penned by Atatürk is this: one of his aims when launching the Sun-Language Theory was to give up excessive purification and to ensure the survival in the language of the words millet [‘nation’], devir [‘period’], hâdise [‘event’], mühim [‘important’], hâtira [‘memory’], ümit [‘hope’], kuvvet [‘strength’], and others.

Ertop’s (1963: 89) view is quite different:

Atatürk tarafından dildeki özleştirmeciliği sürülmemek amacıyla kullanıldığı ileri sürülen, Atatürk’ün kişiliğini de gözden uzak tutmaktadır. Atatürk ulusun iyiliğine
Those who assert that the Sun-Language Theory was used by Atatürk in order to limit the purification are overlooking Atatürk's personality. He never refrained from acting decisively and radically in any matter which he believed would affect the good of the nation... He did not use the theory as a means of turning the clock back; had he believed in the necessity for such a move, he would have made his thinking plain, candidly, positively, and directly.

The argument has some force, but it is harder to accept Ertop's subsequent remarks, which reflect the views of the many adherents of the pre-1983 Language Society who refuse to believe that Atatürk abandoned the campaign to 'purify' everyday speech. He goes on to offer what he calls clear proof that the theory was not advanced with the aim of slowing the pace of language reform: work on the reform went on after the theory was propounded, technical terminology continued to be put into pure Turkish, and Atatürk busied himself with linguistic concerns almost until his death. While all three statements are accurate, they are irrelevant to the question of whether or not Atatürk, having tired of the campaign to purge the general vocabulary, concocted the Sun-Language Theory to justify abandoning it. The basis of all three items of 'proof' is the fact that, while at one time he had tried his hand at finding Öztürkçe equivalents for items of general vocabulary, his enduring concern was with technical terms.

However much lovers of the old language may regret some of the consequences of the language reform, they cannot deny that something had to be done about scientific terminology. This was almost entirely Arabic; what was not Arabic was Persian. English technical terms, though mostly of Greek or Latin origin, have long been Anglicized; we say ecology not oikologia, hygiene not hygiene. In Turkish, however, there had been no naturalization of Arabic and Persian terms; they remained in their original forms. Atatürk decided to tackle the problem in person.

In the winter of 1936–7 he wrote Geometri, a little book on the elements of geometry, which was published anonymously. The title-page bears the legend 'Geometri öğretnelerle, bu konuda kitap yazacaklara külavuz olarak Kültür Bakanlığında neşredilmştir' (Published by the Ministry of Education as a guide to those teaching geometry and those who will write books on this subject).

In it he employed many words now in regular use, though not all were of his own invention; some are discussed in later chapters. They included açı 'angle', alan 'area', boyut 'dimension', dikey 'perpendicular', dişey 'vertical', düzey 'level', gerekçe 'corollary', kesit 'section', köşegen 'diagonal', oranti 'proportion', teğet 'tangent', türev 'derivative', uzay 'space', yanal 'lateral', yatay 'horizontal', yöndes 'corresponding', yüzey 'surface'. He created the terms artı, eksi, çarpı, bölü, for 'plus', 'minus', 'multiplied by', and 'divided by', and ızdıüşümü ('trace-fall') 'projection.'
Of these, eksi is an example of uydurma; the others are made from the appropriate verb-stems, whereas eksi is formed analogously with them but solecistically, from the adjective eksik 'deficient'. He also devised new names for the plane figures, which until then had been called by their Arabic names, his method being to add an invariable -gen to the appropriate numeral. Müselles 'triangle' became üçgen, while müseddes 'hexagon' became altigen, and kesirüladılā 'polygon' became çokgen.  

In Sinekli Bakkal (1936), Halide Edib describes Sabit Beyağabey, the local bully, as standing with his arms at his sides like jug-handles, each making a right angle. And for 'right angle' she says zaviye-i kaime, two Arabic words joined by the Persian iza. That is because until 1937 Turkish children were still being taught geometry with the Ottoman technical terms. When Halide Edib learned geometry, this is how she was taught that the area of a triangle is equal to the base times half the height: Bir müsellesin mesaha-i sathiyesi, kaidesinin irtifaina hasil-1 zarbinin nisfına müsavdir. Largely through the personal effort of Atatürk, this has now become: Bir üçgenin yüzölçümü, tabanının yüksekliğine çarpımının yarısına eşittir, which contains no Arabic or Persian. This achievement may be said to justify much of what has been done in the name of language reform. It is true that the pedigree of -gen is attained, owing more to the -gon [G] of pentagon than to the ancient and provincial Turkish gen 'wide'. But the new terms of geometry must be numbered among Atatürk's greatest gifts to his people. A Turk would have to be a pretty rabid enemy of change to persist in calling interior opposite angles zaviyetan-1 mütekâbiletan-1 dâhiletân' rather than 'iclers açlar'.

A related topic that may conveniently be discussed here is the much debated question of whether Atatürk, while adhering to the new technical terms, many of which he himself devised, gave up the use of neologisms for everyday concepts. There is no shortage of misrepresentations of his attitude; here is one specimen, by Gültekin (1983: 72):


After 1936, [Atatürk] saw the extremist aspects of the purification campaign and he corrected them. But can one deduce from this that he turned away from the language movement which he initiated in 1932? To make such a claim is to stand the facts on their head, to show as fact that which we want to be fact. Atatürk did not return to pre-1932 Turkish.

Not to be confused with the variable -gen seen in unutkan 'forgetful' and döğüşken 'quarrelsome' (see Lewis 1988: 223). -gen/gan was once the suffix of the present participle, as it still is in many Central Asian dialects: Kazakh kelgen = gelen 'coming', Tatar bilməğən = bilmeyen 'not knowing', Uyghur ałğan = alan 'taking'.
It is well known that in 1937 he himself worked especially on the purification of scientific language. Again, his bequest of a share in his estate to TDK shows that he wanted the work on language, which he initiated in 1932, to continue.

And another, by Yücel (1982: 36):

Burada raslanıltan söz edilebilirse, ilginç bir raslantıyla, 'Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti' adının 'Türk Dil Kurumu'na dönüştürüldüğü yıl, kimilerinin sık sık sürdükleri bir görüşe göre, Atatürk’ün böyle bir girişimin çıkar yol olmadığını, yani yanlışımı anlayarak özletsirme etkinliklerini durdurduğu vüldir. Atatürk’ün Türk Dil Kurumu çalışmalarıyla yaşamının sonuna de gén çok yakından ilgilendiği, daha da önemlisi, bu çalışmaları kendi görüşleri dovrultusunda yönlendirdiği göz önüne alınacak olursa, kesinlikle özletsirme dovrultusunda olan bu ad değişirmenin onun bilgisi dışında yapılmış olması olayan bulunmadığını, onun bilgisi dışında yapılmış olması olayan bulunmadığı için de, böyle bir değişikliğe izin vermekle Atatürk’ün çelişkiye düştüğünü kesinlemek gerekir.

If one may speak here of coincidence, it is by an interesting coincidence that the year [1936] in which the name Türk Dili Tetkik Cemiyeti was changed to Türk Dil Kurumu was, according to a view frequently advanced by some, the year in which Atatürk realized that this kind of undertaking was a dead end, i.e. that he had made a mistake, and put a stop to the purification exercise. If one keeps before one's eyes that until the end of his life Atatürk was very closely involved in TDK’s endeavours and, more important, that he directed these endeavours along the lines of his own views, one is bound to state categorically that this change of name, which was definitely on the lines of purification, could not possibly have been made without his knowledge and that, because this change of name could not possibly have been made without his knowledge, in allowing such a change Atatürk fell into an inconsistency.

The italics, which are Yücel's, must be intended to point to the enormity of the implication. Atatürk was in fact never afraid to admit that he was fallible, but idolatry, by definition, denies the humanity of its object. In italicizing these words, Yücel seems to be rejecting the possibility not only of Atatürk’s making a mistake but of his realizing that he had done so.

A dispassionate examination of the evidence leads to the following conclusion. When Atatürk launched the theory, it was not with the express intention of justifying a change of course. He had decided that a change of course was due, because he had appreciated the futility of trying to make the mass of the people give up their ancestral vocabulary. On the other hand, he could not abandon his declared purpose of freeing Turkish from the yoke of foreign languages. He loved playing at etymology and had persuaded himself that Turkish origins could be found for the ostensibly non-Turkish elements in the language. He had already been toying with the notion that what made man aware of his identity was the sun before he read Kvergic’s paper, which asserted the antiquity of Turkish (but did not mention the sun). The elements of the Sun-Language Theory all came together in his mind and he published it. It was not an excuse to justify a change of policy but a systematization of his ideas. He launched the theory because he genuinely believed in it; he started to abandon it when he saw that
foreign scholars thought it nonsensical. Intelligent as he was, he must have sensed that the best native opinion too, though scarcely outspoken, was on their side.

To disprove the common assertion that he never returned to pre-1932 Turkish, we need no more than examine the proof-texts, his own speeches and writings. While in general exhibiting a desire to avoid using words of Arabic origin if Turkish synonyms—or synonyms he believed to be Turkish—existed, they show that he was no longer going out of his way to give up the words he had used all his life in favour of unnecessary neologisms. From 1933 on, 26 September had been celebrated as Dil Bayramı (the Language Festival). The vocabulary of his telegrams to the Language Society on this occasion is worthy of study. Those he had sent in 1934 and 1935 were couched in Öztürkçe throughout, including the words kuttubitikler ‘messages of congratulation’, orunlar ‘official bodies’, and genelözek ‘general headquarters’, none of which proved viable. The 1936 telegram contained four words of Arabic origin: mesai ‘endeavours’, teşekkürür ‘thanks’, tebrik ‘congratulations’, and muvaffakiyet ‘success’: ‘Dil Bayramı mesai arkadaşılarınızla birlikte kutuladığınızı bildiren teşekkürürle aldım. Ben de size tebrik eder ve Türk Dil Kurumuna bundan sonraki çalışmalarına da muvaffakiyetler dilerim’ (I have received with thanks the telegram telling me that you and your colleagues who share in your endeavours offer congratulations on the occasion of the Language Festival. For my part I congratulate you and wish the TDK success in its subsequent endeavours too).

The 1937 telegram contained six: münasebet ‘occasion’, the hakk of hakkındaki ‘about me’, mütehhasis ‘moved’, teşekkürür and muvaffakiyet again, and temâdi ‘continuation’: ‘Dil bayramı münasebetiyle, Türk Dil Kurumu’nun hakkındaki düyğularını bildiren telgraflarınızdan çok mütehhasis oldum. Teşekkür eder, değerli çalışmazda muvaffakiyetinizin temâdısını dilerim’ (I have been greatly moved by your telegrams conveying your feelings about me on the occasion of the Language Festival. I thank you and wish that your success in your valuable labours may continue).

But of no less significance than the old words he used are the new words that he also used; the inference is not that he had abandoned the language reform—birlıkte ‘together’, duygus ‘sentiment’, bildiren ‘conveying’, değerli ‘valuable’; had he been simply rejecting the reform he would have said beraber, his, tebliğeden, and kıyımetli or even zıkıymet. What he was doing was adhering to the wholly praiseworthy aspect of the reform: making full use of the existing resources of the language. His use of kutulamak ‘to congratulate’ as well as tebrik etmek ‘to felicitate’ in the 1936 telegram is a perfect example, reflecting the stylist’s desire to avoid repeating a word if a synonym could be found.

On 1 November 1936 he delivered his annual speech opening the new session of the Grand National Assembly. It too was peppered with words of Arabic origin, including sene not yıl for ‘year’, maarif not eğitim for ‘education’, tetikik

5 The text of the 1933 telegram does not seem to be available. The texts of the later telegrams were published in the September issues of Türk Dili (1934–7).
not araştırma for ‘research’, and millet and memleket rather than ulus and yurt for ‘nation’ and ‘country’. He did use Kamutay for ‘Assembly’, however, and not Meclis.

The language and content of his last message to the Language Society is highly significant. It consists of two sentences of the speech read for him by the Prime Minister, Celal Bayar, at the opening of the new session of the Assembly on 1 November 1938, nine days before he died. It is worth quoting, because it has often been used as evidence that the Society never ceased to enjoy Atatürk’s total support for its campaign to eliminate everyday pre-reform words from the language. The contents of the message (Özgü 1963: 37), however, no less than its language, give the lie to that claim (words of Arabic origin are italicized):

Dil Kurumu en güzel ve feyizi bir iş olarak türlü ilimlere ait Türkçe terimleri tespit etmiş ve bu suretle dilimiz yabancı dillerin əsirinden kurtulma yolunda esaslı adımı atmıştır. Bu yıl okullarımızda tedrisatın Türkçe terimlerle yazılışı kitaplarla başlanmış olmasını kültür hayatımız için mihiim bir hâdiselik olarak kaydetmek isterim.

The Language Society, in a most excellent and fruitful endeavour, has established Turkish technical terms pertaining to the various sciences, and our language has thus taken its essential step on the road to liberation from the influence of foreign languages. I should like to place it on record, as an important event for our cultural life, that teaching has begun this year in our schools from books written with Turkish technical terms.

The partisans of ‘purification’ will not give Atatürk credit for saying what he meant. Those words are regularly cited as praise for the Society’s südürülen özleştirmme çabaları’ (continued exertions towards purification) (e.g. Yücel 1982: 38). Aksoy, too honest a man not to concede that there was precious little Öztürke in that speech, could still write (1982: 146–7): ‘Büyük Millet Meclisi açılırken okunan söylevinde öz Türkçe sözcükler kullanmış olmakla birlikte, özleştirmeden duyuğu mutluluğu belirtemiyor mu?’ (Although he did not use pure Turkish words in his speech at the opening of the Grand National Assembly, does he not make clear the happiness he felt in the purification?). No, he does not. All he does is to praise the Society for its work on technical terms, and for nothing else. In fact those words reflect his disillusionment with the people who sat round his table night after night, drinking his raki and enthusiastically applauding his views without ever having the honesty—even if they had the knowledge—to tell him that some of the ideas he came out with could not be taken seriously.

Anyone who pictures him as a typical 1930s dictator may suppose that nobody could be blamed for pretending to agree with him. In fact one of the things he liked best in the world was a good argument. An observation by Falih Rifki Atay (1969: 474), who knew him better than most, is worth quoting in this context. Having described a heated discussion at Atatürk’s table, he says, ‘Sakın bu tartışmalarda bulunmağı cesarete vermeyiniz . . . Atatürk’ün sofrasında fikirlerini söylemek bir cesaret değildir. Söylememek, aksini söylemek lüzumsuz bir
“mudahane”, yahut çikar bekleyen bir dalkavukluktu’ (You must not think that it called for courage to take part in this kind of argument . . . To speak one’s mind at Atatürk’s table was not an act of courage. Not to say what one thought, or to say the opposite of what one thought, was an act of unnecessary sycophancy, or toadying in the expectation of personal gain).

Melahat Özgü (1963: 37) notes, ‘Atatürk bu söylevinde henüz pek aykırı gelmiyen: feyizli, tesir, tedrisat, mühim, ve hadise gibi yabancı sözcüleri kullanmıştır’ (In this speech [his last message to TDK], Atatürk used such foreign words as feyizli, tesir, tedrisat, mühim, and hadise, which did not yet sound incongruous). She sanctimoniously continues: ‘Yeni kuşak, bugün, Atatürk’ten aldığı esin ve buyruкла daha ileridedir’ (The new generation today is further advanced, thanks to the inspiration and the command it has received from Atatürk). Instead of singling out five of the fourteen ‘foreign words’ he used in those two sentences, she could have been better employed in noticing that he used only two of the new words, terim rather than istilah for ‘technical term’ and okul rather than mektep for ‘school’. His use of them is understandable: terim was the new technical term par excellence, which he himself had originated, while okul did not have the pre-Republican connotations of mektep and was partly his work.

In the face of Atatürk’s clear indication of his opinion, why did the Language Society continue to introduce not just technical terms, as he wanted it to do, but also replacements for normal items of standard Turkish? Many otherwise reasonable Turks will tell you it was all a communist plot to destabilize the country by impoverishing the language, widening the generation gap, and demoralizing the people by cutting them off from the records of their great past. Comparisons were drawn between the Society’s ceaseless undermining of the language and the Trotskyite doctrine of permanent revolution. Tekin Erer (1973: 61) said: ‘Türkiye’de solcuları tefrik etmek için basit bir usul vardı: Bir insanın ne derece solcu olduğunu anlamak için yazdığı ve konuşduğu kelimelere dikkat edeceksiniz. Eğer hiç anlayamayacagınız kadar uydurma kelimelerle konuşuyorsa, ona tereddutsüz Komünist diyebilirsiniz’ (There is a simple method of distinguishing the leftists in our country. To ascertain how far to the left a person is, look at the words he uses in writing and speech. If the fake words he employs when speaking are too numerous for you to be able to understand, you may unhesitatingly call him a communist).

Turkish communists, on the other hand, saw the language reform as a bourgeois movement aimed at widening the gulf between the official and literary language and the language of the people. It is worth remembering that the poet and playwright Nazım Hikmet (1902–63), the most distinguished of all Turkish communists, did not use Öztürkçe but followed Atay in making full use of the language as it stood.

The extremists of the right regarded the Language Society as a subversive organization whose mission was to decrease mutual understanding between the Turks of Turkey and the Turks of the then Soviet Union, whom they hoped some
day to liberate. In this they were overlooking the high degree of mutual unintel-
ligibility that existed even before the reform began, due only in part to the influx of Russian words into the Central Asian dialects, most of which use, for example, the Russian names of the months.\(^6\)

This point is worth a digression. A vivid illustration of how the meanings of words may vary from one dialect to another was given by Nermin Neftçi, a former Minister of Culture, at the 1992 meeting of the Standing Congress on the Turkish Language:


The word kış, if you will pardon the expression, means something else to us [backside], but in the Turkish of Kerkuk it’s ‘leg’. When I visited Kerkuk, my husband’s foster-mother was sobbing bitterly and saying, ‘My backside is broken and my mucus has gone up to the writing.’ ‘For goodness’ sake, what is she talking about?’ I asked. It emerged that she meant, ‘My leg is broken and my bone is sticking out.’

The national motto of Uzbekistan is ‘Müstakîlik, Tiﬂîçlik, Hämkārlik’ (Independence, Peace, Cooperation). The first and third words would be intelligible to anyone old enough to remember when müstakîl was the Turkish for ‘independent’ (now bağmsız), and kär was ‘work’. The second would convey only ‘vigour’.

To resume: it was neither left-wing nor right-wing ideology that motivated those who were not content to follow Ataturk’s lead and confine their creative urge to technical terms. They began with a genuine desire to close the gap between the official and the popular language, or at least to comply with his desire to do so. When he decided that things had gone too far, and reverted to his natural mode of expression, they allowed a decent interval for him to depart from the scene and then resumed their work, having developed a taste for inventing words, which for many of them had become a profession. So they continued to invent, for which one should not blame them too harshly; after all, Ataturk’s withdrawal from the wilder shores of Öztürkçe was based on a personal decision which he did not seek to impose on anyone else. But while continuing to invent, they persisted—and this was their unpardonable offence—in claiming to be following in the footsteps of Ataturk.

Their frequent line of argument is to adduce the fact that Ataturk wrote his little book on geometry with his own hand in the winter of 1936–7; would he

\(^6\) Kirghiz and Uyghur are partial exceptions. In Kirghiz both the Russian and the following names are used: Üçün ay, Birdin ay, Çağlan Kuran, Cin Kuran, Bugu, Kula, Teke, Baş өңә, Ayak өна, Toguzdun ayu, Çetinin ayı, Beşin ayı. In Uyghur, as well as the Russian names, the months are called ‘First Month’ etc., from Birinci Ay to Onikkinci Ay. The Kazakh months are: Kaïtar, Akpan, Navrız, Köke, Mamir, Mavsim, Şilde, Tamız, Kirkiiyek, Kazan, Kараşa, Caltoksan. None of the Kirghiz or Kazakh names would be understood in Turkey, where indeed Tamız ‘August’ would be mistaken for Temmüz ‘July’.
have done so if he had turned against the language reform? The answer, as we have seen, is that it was only the creation of technical terms that continued to interest him.

For a defence of their position, Ömer Asım Aksoy’s (1982: 144–5) would be hard to beat, depending as it does on his coolly equating the Language Society with the nation:


Let us suppose that we have been misinterpreting the Sun-Language Theory and that Atatürk, after practising purism for two or three years, used the theory as a way of reverting to the old language. If we accept this, what does it change? Has the current of purification which began in 1932 stopped? Has it not gradually broadened and gained strength? Is what is meant that since Atatürk abandoned purism, we must do so too? If that were the case, would people not have complied at the time of the ‘abandonment’? The fact that there was no such reversion and that the purification kept on going; what does that prove? Is it that the nation persisted in the purification activity in spite of Atatürk, or that the allegation that he abandoned purification is wrong? Certainly the latter, for never has the nation been at variance with Atatürk, nor did Atatürk ever take a course at variance with the principles of nationalism, popularism, and independence.

All that is proved by the fact that the purification went on is that the Language Society—not the nation, which was not consulted—persisted in the purification although Atatürk had abandoned it.

Whether that persistence was justified is another matter. Had the Society not persisted, Atatürk’s goal of liberating the language from the Arabic and Persian yoke would not have been achieved. But one may recognize this without insisting that he himself never gave up purification, because he indubitably did, and to deny it is to falsify history.

Heyd’s (1954: 36) statement that the Sun-Language Theory gradually faded out after Atatürk’s death needs to be modified; the theory had already begun to fade out during his lifetime, and interest in it evaporated the moment he died. Tankut (1963: 125) says the theory was carried to excess by people out to make a name for themselves, and Atatürk eventually abandoned it. There are several pieces of evidence that he was still interested in it in 1937 and perhaps even in the following year. One is Akil Muhtar’s testimony that the topic was still alive in March 1937, another is that Atatürk was still corresponding with Kvergić in September of that year. A third is that in the first week of that month the seventeenth session of the
Congrès International d’Anthropologie was to be held in Bucharest, and Atatürk decided that a Turkish delegation should be there to present the theory to the participants. A few days before the congress opened, he gave Tankut a pile of his own handwritten notes on the theory and said, ‘Produce a thesis out of these and go to Bucharest.’ Tankut produced his paper in two days and in another two days it was translated into French ‘again at Atatürk’s table and in his presence’. On their arrival in Bucharest they found that no one had been aware that they were coming, but an opening was made for Tankut on the last morning of the congress. According to the report subsequently presented to Atatürk by Dilmên, his paper was well received, but as the proceedings of the congress were never published this cannot be confirmed.

There is one scrap of evidence that Atatürk may have maintained his interest in the theory into 1938. On 1 June of that year, when he was very ill indeed, he was moved from the heat of Istanbul to his yacht, the Savarona, in the port of Istanbul. ‘Bununla ilgili haberi verirken, Cumhuriyet gazetes, yata Güneş-dil adı verilmesi olasıldığı bulunduğunu ekliyordu’ (In presenting the news of this, the newspaper Cumhuriyet added that there was a possibility that the yacht might be given the name Güneş-Dil) (Derin 1995: 130). Although the possibility never materialized, this at least suggests that somebody thought it would please him.

Dilmên, who had been giving a series of lectures on the Sun-Language Theory at Ankara University, cancelled the course when Atatürk died. When his students asked him why, he replied, ‘Güneş öldükten sonra, onun teorisini mi kalır?’ (After the sun has died, does its/his theory survive?) (Banarlî 1972: 317). It was not mentioned, for good or ill, at the 1942 Kurultay. Atatürk never publicly repudiated it; why did he not ‘make his ideas plain, openly and directly’, on this matter? A sophistic answer could be that as he had never put his name to it he could fairly have claimed that it was not his business to disown it. But the simple truth is that, although his belief in it had been shaken by the reception given to it by the foreign guests at the 1936 Kurultay, he still clung to it because he saw it as his contribution to scholarship.

One can well understand his reluctance to engage in a public debate that might have entailed a public retreat, and not just because it would have hurt his pride to do so. In those years there were more pressing calls than the Sun-Language Theory on the time and energy of a Head of State, particularly one in poor health. Five months before the theory was first aired, Hitler occupied the Rhineland. Three months before, Mussolini annexed Ethiopia. Two months before, the Spanish Civil War began. Three days before, Germany introduced compulsory military service. In addition, during 1937 and until a matter of months before his death on 10 November 1938, Atatürk was spending much of his waning strength—successfully—on coercing France into ceding Hatay, the former Sanjak of Alexandretta, to Turkey. The Sun-Language Theory must have recurred to haunt him while he was trying to concentrate on matters of high policy. What began as a harmless after-dinner game had ended up as an incubus.
On 27 September 1941, İsmet İnönü, who had succeeded Atatürk as President of the Republic, gave an address to mark the ninth Language Festival. It included these words: 'Büyük Atatürk'ün, Türk dili uğrunda harcadığı emekler boşa gitmemiştir ve asla boşa gitmeyecektir' (The efforts which the great Atatürk expended for the sake of the Turkish language have not gone to waste and never shall) (Türk Dili, 2nd ser., 11–12 (1941), 2). But who suggested that they had? Could there have been any reason for İnönü to say this other than his awareness of a general feeling that the Sun-Language Theory had been a fiasco?

It is recorded (Şehsuvaroğlu 1981: 260, cited in Tevfikoğlu 1994) that during the evening of 16 October 1938, when Atatürk lay on his deathbed, he said again and again in delirium 'Aman dil . . . Aman dil . . . Dil efendim.' Some interpret this as 'For pity's sake, the language'; and explain it, according to their point of view, either as 'Don't let them stop the language reform' or as 'Don't let them go on ruining the language'. Others cite the well-known fact that he habitually pronounced değil in the Rumelian fashion, as /dil/, and prefer 'For pity's sake . . . It isn't . . .' What he really meant is unknown, save only to God.
Atay, Ataç, Sayılı

Two people besides Atatürk made significant contributions to the vocabulary of modern Turkish: Falih Rifki Atay and Nurullah Ataç. The third subject of this chapter, Aydın Sayılı, did not, but his efforts to do so deserve to be commemorated.

Atay and Ataç both believed that the language had to be modernized and both saw the futility of merely producing lists of neologisms; the new words had to be used in the sort of newspaper and magazine that ordinary people read. As Atay was fond of saying, the neologisms were dead butterflies pinned into collections; what they needed was the life and colour they could be given by stylists. On how the new words were to be arrived at, however, the two men’s views could not have been more different.

Atay (1894–1971), having graduated from Istanbul University, spent most of his working life before and after the First World War as journalist, editor, and newspaper proprietor. From 1922 he was the friend and confidant of Atatürk, until the latter’s death in 1938. He had a fine feeling for language and shared Atatürk’s conviction that the intelligent use of the native resources of Turkish, with its enormous capacity for word building, could reduce dependence on foreign borrowings. The underground railway in Istanbul, on which work began in the 1980s, is called the Metro, as it was when planned at the beginning of the century. Atay would never have used this name for it; in 1946, when speaking of an underground train he had taken in the course of his travels abroad, he called it just that: ‘yeraltı treni’ (Atay 1946, cited in Özön 1961b: 42).

Here, in his own words (Atay 1969: 477) is how he set about ‘purifying’ the Turkish vocabulary:


At the Anatolia Club we began preparing Cep Kilavuzu, the dictionary from Ottoman into Turkish. Our method was very simple: we were purging the language of foreign words which had a Turkish equivalent. Words with no current Turkish equivalent we retained as being Turkish. Because by now we had entered the era of making Turkish words, we were producing new words from the suffixes and roots existing in our dialect.
His contribution is the subject of a lengthy article by M. Nihat Özön (1961b). On running an eye over the six hundred or so items in it and noticing, say, cinsdaş (1956)\(^1\) ‘member of the same race’ (the Ottoman hemcins), one wonders why credit should be given to Atay for this regularly constructed word. Surely somebody before Atay must have added that suffix to that noun? The answer is that somebody may well have done so in conversation; somebody indeed may have used it in writing and not been lucky enough for it to be noted by an Özön.

Özön includes among Atay’s words vurgunculuk ‘profiteering’ (1945), derived from the expression vurgun vurmak ‘to pull off a shrewd stroke of business’. It does not occur in the Kamus or Redhouse (1890). Redhouse (1968), on the other hand, by showing it in the old letters as well as the new, indicates that it was used in Ottoman, so what we have here may be that rarity, an error in a work bearing the name of Redhouse, in which case the word is post-Ottoman and may well be due to Atay.

One of his successes was to popularize içtenlik, literally ‘from-within-ness’, for ‘sincerity’, now well on the way to supplanting samimiyet.\(^2\) From the expression mırrın kırın etmek ‘to shilly-shally, to find excuses not to do something’, he made mırrın kırcınlı to describe the sort of person who does that sort of thing (1950). He refers to the chart at the bed-end of a patient suffering from fever as ‘indili çöktü grafik’ (1951), using -li to make adjectives from indi ‘it went down’ and çöktü ‘it went up’: ‘the graph with its ups and downs’. He contrasts yapılamazlık with olurculuk (1956), the first being the quality (-lık) of the defeatist who says yapılamaz ‘it can’t be done’, the second that of the sanguine person who says olur ‘it will happen’.

In 1946 he suggested a new use for an old word, ufantsı ‘fragment’, as a replacement for teferruat [A] ‘details’: ‘Ufantsı kelimesi dilimizde vardır ve pek güzel ‘teferruat’ yerine kullanabilir’ (We have the word ufantsı in our language and it may very well be used in place of teferruat). But ayrıntı, from Cep Kilavuzu (1935), has carried the day, except with those who prefer the French detay.

In 1951 he wrote, ‘Bursa benim için bile bir dinlenti yeri’ (Bursa, even for me, is a place of repose). This dinlenti ‘rest, repose’ has an Öztürkçe look about it, but is a respectable formation, from dinlenmek ‘to rest’ with the same deverbal noun-suffix -ti as in ufantsı, only no one seems to have used it before or since; dinlenme is the usual word.

Others of his are: operetleştirmek ‘to make into a light opera’ (1932), i.e. to turn something serious into something frivolous; yazı kalfaları ‘hacks’ (lit. ‘writing-journeymen’, 1945); yapım ‘manufacture’ (1946); yıkıcılık ‘destructiveness’ (1951); kesik for ‘newspaper cutting/clipping’ (1951), previously kürür [F] or gazete maktuasi [A]; oycu ‘vote-catcher’ (1951); politikasızlaştırma ‘must be

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1 In what follows, dates in parentheses after individual words indicate the first recorded use of these words.

2 It is not known whether Atay was the first to use içtenlik. Tarama Dergisi (1934), in the production of which he was closely involved, gives içten for samimi ‘sincere’, attributing it to the Kamus, in which work the present writer has failed to find it.
depoliticized' (1952); yaranıcı ‘smarmy, ingratiating’, from yaranmak ‘to curry favour’ (1954); yasaksızlık ‘policy of laissez-faire’ (1954); nutukçu ‘speechifier’ (1956); oydaş ‘holding the same opinion’ (1956).

His dönüştülük (1961) for ‘consultancy’ is at first sight surprising, as one would have expected him to know better than to use a verb-stem (dönüş ‘to consult’) as a noun. But in the Ottoman Turkish that was his mother tongue dönüş was a noun, the Persian borrowing düş ‘knowledge, learning’. Its connection with the verb düşmek, in use since the fourteenth century, is unclear; there may have been a confusion with tanışmak ‘to become acquainted’. Atay’s düşçi was not taken up; the neologism for ‘consultant, counsellor’ is düşman, ostensibly derived from düş- and the spurious suffix -mi/n/man making nouns of agent, but in fact a corruption of the Persian düşman ‘learned’.

His uçum for ‘flight’ (1946), as in ‘Bir uçum ötede kita’ (the continent which is a flight away), fell by the wayside; uçmuş is the current word. Using uçum in this sense was an uncharacteristic oversight on his part, as it existed already for what in English is termed the fly—i.e. the end of a flag furthest from the flagstaff.

In 1951 he created eyim from eyi ‘good’, and kötüm from kötü ‘bad’, for ‘approval’ and ‘disapproval’ respectively, which one might think a heavy load to impose on the unassuming suffix -m. From these two words, someone manufactured the verbs iyimsemek and kötümsemek, ‘to be optimistic’ and ‘to be pessimistic’, neither much used except for their aorist participles iyimser and kötümsor, ‘optimistic’ and ‘pessimistic’, which have totally replaced the Persian nikbin and bedbin.

To judge by a passage from his study of Atatürk (Atay 1969: 476), Atay deserves credit for assuring the survival of şey ‘thing’. The resurrected nesne has won limited currency but will never replace şey, a word without which many Turks would find difficulty in conversing, for it is what comes automatically to their lips when groping for a word or a name, or thinking what to say next. It is used much like the English ‘what-d’you-call-it’ or the French chose and, as a sentence opening, like ‘Well now’ or I’ll tell you what’, or ‘Il-y-a une autre chose qui est celle-ci’. Atatürk wanted it abandoned, as it was a borrowing from Arabic. (Had that happened, an English analogy would be the inhibiting effect of a ban on ‘y’know’ or ‘basically’.)

beni her toplantıda bulundurup tenkidlerimi dinlemeğe tahammül göstermekte idi:

—Yapmayıınız Paşam, diyordum, bir mucize olsa da Anadolu’da ne kadar ölmüş Türk varsa hepsinin aynı anda dirilmesi mümkün olsa, hepsinin beraber ilk ağızlarından çıkacak kelime ‘şey’dir. ‘Şey’ o kadar Türkçedir.

Hiç unutmam. Atatürk, dil meselesine zarında beri kendi dairesinin işleri ile uğraşmamasına pek sevinen vekil ile aynı arabaya binmiştir. Bana dönerek:

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1 Only a handful of pre-reform nouns are also verb-stems, such as göc ‘migration’, göc- ‘to migrate’, boyası ‘paint’, boyası- ‘to paint’. See Lewis (1988: 227).

2 Uçum is so defined in Kurtoğlu (1938), the definitive work on Turkish flags, which is not mentioned in Eren (1990). Okyanus (Tuğlaç 1971–4), a comprehensive dictionary marred by many misprints, gives the correct definition of uçum but under the headword uçun. So did Türkçe Sözlük before the 1988 edition, but has since got it right.
—Falih’ciğim, sen de ‘şey’ gibi koyu Arapçaların Türkçe olduğunu iddia edecek kadar ileri varma! demesin mi?

Bu vekilin dili de zevki de eskinin eskisi idi.

he had me present at every meeting and was indulgent enough to listen to my criticisms. 'Don't do it, Pasha!' I was saying, 'If a miracle were to occur and all the dead Turks in Anatolia could suddenly be resurrected, the first word to come out of their mouths in unison would be şey. That's how Turkish şey is.'

I shall never forget; I had got into the same car as the Minister, who was delighted that Atatürk had not been concerning himself with the business of his Ministry since he had become engrossed in the language problem. He turned to me and, would you believe it, he said, 'My dear Falih, don't go so far as to claim that genuine Arabic words like şey are Turkish.'

This Minister's language and his taste were the oldest of the old.

Özön does not distinguish between words Atay originated and words he merely used. He credits him with several neologisms proposed in Cep Klavuzu (1935), such as kurtarıcı 'saviour' and uyanık 'wide-awake', as well as several words in use in the nineteenth century and earlier—for example, bulanti 'feeling of nausea', ölüm-kalm (savası) 'life-and-death (struggle)', and yapıcı 'builder, constructive'. But the credit is deserved, if not for creating these and other words, then for giving them new leases of life and inspiring others to explore the existing resources of the language before resorting to invention.

Nurullah Ataç (1898–1957) was a late convert to the cause of Öztürkçe, which he had long opposed. The autobiographical note on the jacket of his Karalama Defteri (1952) reads:


Born 1898 in Istanbul.⁵ Left three-year primary school 1909. Subsequently attended a school or two but failed to finish any of them. Went in for an exam and became a teacher of French and also taught literature. Worked as a translator in some government departments. Longed to be a story-teller and poet but could not make it. Turned to criticism. In recent years has been trying to purify—as he sees it—Turkish. Has translated several books into our language . . .⁶

He was a prolific essayist, whose work appeared regularly in a number of newspapers and journals. For some twenty years his interests were literary, but in the early 1940s his attention was increasingly directed towards language reform. He explained this change of heart as due to a realization that, in a country

⁵ His father was Mehmet Ata, who translated von Hammer's Geschichte des osmanischen Reiches into Turkish.

⁶ They number over sixty, the authors ranging from Balzac to Simenon.
where Latin and Greek were not taught (earlier he had advocated their inclusion in the school syllabus and he continued to stress, rather wistfully, the desirability of knowing them), the only rational course was 'to go to the pure language' (Ataç 1954: 11). In other words, he rejected Ziya Gökalp's view that Turks should go back to Arabic and Persian when creating new words for new concepts, in the way that West Europeans resorted to Greek and Latin. As he saw it, the Turks had to exploit the resources of their own language. Incidentally, by Ataç's time Ziya Gökalp's view could never have prevailed anyway, the Ministry of Education having removed Arabic and Persian from the school syllabus on 1 September 1929.

Ataç's place in the language reform is that he was the great inventor of words. He was no language expert, nor did he profess to be; indeed he is said to have remarked, 'My ignorance is boundless and at my age it cannot be eradicated.' He had, however, a passionate love of language. He detested the habit some intellectuals had of using Western words as clichés without understanding their origins. He came out strongly against those who maintained that language can only develop naturally and that no individual or group of individuals can bring about linguistic change. He took to task a writer, whom he does not name, for saying in a newspaper article: 'bir milletin dilini heyetler düzenleyemez. O kendi kendine gelişir. Ve en doğru tabirler halkın sağduyusundan doğar' (A nation's language cannot be regulated by committees. It develops by itself, and the most authentic forms of expression are born of the common sense of the people). He points out that the words used by the writer for 'regulate', 'develop', and 'common sense'—
düzenlemek, gelişmek, sağduyu—were not words he had grown up with but were products of the language reform: 'Sorun kendisine: Bunlar halkın sağduyusundan mı doğmuş? Bir kurul, bir kurum yaptığı sözleri kullanıyor, sonra da kurulların dil yapamayacağını söylüyor' (Ask him: were they born of the common sense of the people? Weren't they the work of a committee, a society? He speaks without knowing what he is doing: he uses words produced by a committee, then he says that committees could never create language!).

As has been said, he shared Atay's belief that it was futile to produce new words unless they were brought to public attention by being used, preferably in newspaper articles that would be widely read. He declared his philosophy in an article in Ulus of 8 March 1948 in which he spoke of his last conversation with Kemalettin Kamu, a recently deceased member of TDK's central committee: "Sizin Dil Kurumu'nda yaptığı doğru değildir, birtakım yabancı sözlere karşılık anıyorsunuz; ancak onları birer yazida kullanacağınızda sözlük yapmağa kalkıyorsunuz. Tilcikler sözlüklerde öldüür, yazılarla dirilir" gibi sözler söylediğim (I said something on these lines: 'What you're doing in the Dil Kurumu isn't right. You're looking for equivalents for a lot of foreign words but instead of using each

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7 Cep Kılavuzu (1935) gives gelişmek as the replacement for inkişaf etmek 'to develop'. The word existed long before, but in pre-reform days it meant 'to grow, improve'.

of them in a piece of writing you set about making dictionaries. Words are dead in dictionaries; they come to life in writing’).

The popularity he enjoyed with his readers enabled him to familiarize them with existing Öztürkçe and to make known his own neologisms, adding in parentheses the words they were intended to replace, usually with no explanation of how he had derived them. Here is a typical example: ‘Dörüt yapittalinda (sanat eserlerinde) ancak biçime bakılır, konunun bir önemi yoktur derler. Bu söz, ezgiciler (bestekârlar), bedizciler (ressamlar) için kesin olarak doğrudur belki; öykücüler (hikâyeciler), oyun-yazanlar için de bilmem öyle midir?’ (They say that in works of art one looks only at the form; the subject has no importance. This may be absolutely true for composers and painters; I wonder if it is so for storytellers and playwrights) (Ataç 1964: 187).

His many opponents called him an extremist. One of his friends said in his defence that you cannot adopt a balanced position until you have been to the far end, a not unreasonable remark but hardly applicable to Ataç who, when it came to Öztürkçe, never aspired to being anything but extreme.

I met him in Ankara in 1953 and found him to be not the irascible Antichrist my linguistically conservative friends had told me to expect but an amiable and enthusiastic man of high intelligence. As we strolled up and down the Atatürk Boulevard, stopping every now and then for coffee, his good humour and his doggedness were amply displayed. He spoke of the problem that was currently exercising him: finding a Turkish replacement for rağmen [A] ‘in spite of’. He had invented and had for some years been using tapa, but was not satisfied with it. He said, ‘I don’t feel at all proprietorial about my ideas for new words. If people like them and use them, of course I’m pleased; if they don’t, I tell them to have a go themselves and I think of some more.’ At one point he shyly mentioned that he had tried his hand at writing poetry in English, but had got no further than a single couplet. He wrote it down on a scrap of paper, treasured by the author to this day:

O Lord! give me the power of a song-creator,
For the joyful love I would sing!

He devised a game, described by Aksoy at a memorial meeting held on the tenth anniversary of Ataç’s death. The idea was to find meanings for Ottoman words of Arabic origin on the assumption that their consonants were not those of Arabic triliteral roots but those of a more familiar Turkish or Western word.

Birgûn odama gelmiş, ‘meşruta’ ne demek, diye sormuştu. Ben ‘hükûmet-i meşruta’, ‘evkaf-ı meşruta’ gibi örneklerde göre açıklama yaparken o kıs kıs güldüyor;
—Yorulmayın, bilemezsiniz, diyordu.
Bu sözlerini ciddiye aldığımı görünce hemen açıklamıştı:

8 Where he got tapa from is not evident; tap- means ‘to worship’. The modern replacement for rağmen is karşın, another of his inventions, based on karşı ‘against’, though he used it not for rağmen ‘in spite of’ but for muhalif [A] ‘opposed to’.
—Mesrutə ‘şort giymiş kadın’ demek.
Bu kez geldi sırası bana gelmişti.


He came to my room one day and asked me the meaning of mesruta. While I was trying to explain it on the basis of examples such as hükümet-i mesruta [‘constitutional government’] and evkaf-i mesruta [‘pious foundations subject to conditions’], he was chuckling and saying, ‘Don’t wear yourself out, you’ll never guess.’ Seeing that I was taking what he said seriously, he explained. ‘Mesruta means a woman wearing shorts.’ This time it was my turn to laugh. Thereafter we sat down together and invented this kind of meaning for a number of words. Tereddi meant ‘listening to the radio’, tebenni ‘to take a bath’, terakkı ‘to drink rakı. Mezun was an habitué of Özен’s patisserie.9 Tekellüm had several meanings: ‘to buy kilims’, ‘to eat the sort of cabbage known as “kelem”’, ‘to fly KLM’.

Readers who have seen the point need not bother with the rest of this paragraph. Mesruta is the feminine of meşrut ‘bound by conditions’, Arabic maşrūt, the trilliteral root of which is Š–R–T (whence şart ‘condition’). Ataca was pretending that the root was Š–R–T, the consonants of Turkish şort, English shorts. The Arabic root of tereddi ‘degeneration’ is R–D–Y ‘fall’, not R–D–Y as in Turkish radyo, English radio. Tebenni ‘adoption’ is from Arabic B–N–Y, not from the three consonants of Turkish banyo (Italian bagnio) ‘bath’. Terakkı ‘progress’ is from Arabic R–K–Y ‘ascent’, not from raki ‘arrack’. Mezun ‘authorized, graduate’ is from Arabic D–N ‘permission’, not from the name of a Turkish pastry-cook. The root of tekellüm ‘speaking’ is Arabic K–L–M, not Turkish kilim ‘woven rug’ (Persian gelim) or the Turkish dialect word kelem ‘cabbage’ or the Dutch abbreviation KLM.

In 1947 he was using keleci [M] (Mongolian kele- ‘to speak’) for kelime [A] ‘word’. Keleci is found in written Turkish of the fourteenth to eighteenth centuries in the sense not of ‘word’ but of ‘words, discourse’,10 just like Turkish söz. Even if it had been of impeccably Turkish parentage, it would have stood little chance of general acceptance, because the final -ci makes it look like a noun of agent, specifically kelenci, ‘dealer in sheeps’ heads’. Yet that fact did not seem to bother him, as is evident from the explanation he gave in Ulus (9 February 1948) for dropping keleci: ‘Şimdiye dek kelime yerine keleci diyordum, pek de beğenmiyordum; çünkü keleci, kelime değil, söz demektir; bundan böyle tilcik, belki tilce diyecşim. Til, dil lüğat demektir, tilcik, tilce de “küçük til” demek olur’ (Until now I’ve been saying keleci instead of kelime but I didn’t like it much, because keleci doesn’t mean kelime but söz. From now on I shall say tilcik, perhaps tilce. Til, dil means speech, so tilcik or tilce would mean ‘speechlet’). What he was doing was adding a diminutive suffix to a word he alleged to mean ‘speech’, as if speechlet meant ‘unit of

9 Özен Pastahanesi on the Ataturk Boulevard, a favourite haunt of Ankara intellectuals.
10 It is recorded for ‘agreement’ in the spoken language of the vilayet of Tokat (Derleme Sözlüğü 1963–82: viii. 2726).
speech’ and so ‘word’; a good example of the cavalier attitude that shocked the language specialists. And why 

tilı Because dil ‘tongue’ already had a diminutive, dilcik, a botanical term for ‘ligule’ and a physiological term for ‘clitoris’. It was not, however, as his wording suggests, an alternative to dil, but an older form of it that had been obsolete for centuries, its initial t having followed the normal course and become d. Tilcik was used by hardly anyone but its inventor. The neologism that carried the day was sözcük, invented by Melih Cevdet Anday in 1958 on the same lines as Ataç’s tilcik but based on söz, which really did mean ‘speech’. Here is Anday’s note on it: ‘Dağlarca, “kelime” karşısında olarak “sözcük” ü değil, “tilcik”i benimsemiş. Ben, “tilcik”e karşı “sözcük” ü önerirken, bunun, yeni sözcük yapma kurallarına daha uygun olduğunu düşünmüştüm: elden geldiğince canlı köklerden, canlı ekerden yararlanarak . . . ’ (As the replacement for kelime, [the poet Fazıl Hüsnü] Dağlarca has adopted not sözcük but tilcik. When I proposed sözcük instead of tilcik, I had reflected that it was more consistent with the rules for building new words: making use as far as possible of living roots and living suffixes . . . ) (Anday 1960, cited in Kudret 1966: 61).

There is a critical study of Ataç’s contribution to the new Turkish in Talat Tekin’s (1958) paper ‘Ataç’ın Dilciliği ve Tilcikleri’ (‘Ataç as Language Expert, and his Speechlets’, the use of Ataç’s own tilcik being ironic.

Tekin lists the tilciks in three groups, though the first and second sometimes overlap: (1) Anatolian dialect words found in Tarama Dergisi (1934) and Söz Derleme Dergisi (1939–52); (2) OT words, most of them from Dîwân Luğât al-Turk (DLT),11 the rest from Tarama Sözülgü (1963–77) or Tarama Dergisi; (3) words of Ataç’s own coinage. Some examples of each group are now discussed; all the words Ataç hoped his proposals might replace are Arabic unless otherwise indicated.


Tekin remarks that, in spite of all Ataç’s efforts, a large number of the words in Group 1 had not become part of the written language and never would, because the words they were meant to replace were so widely known. Time has proved him wrong; the majority of them—all but küşüm, öğseyin, yazak, and yımzik—are in everyday use. While ayak has not superseded kafiye for ‘rhythm’, it has always been a technical term of folk-poetry, applied to the rhyming refrain between verses. For rhyme in general, from 1949 onwards Ataç himself used uyak,

11 Mahmud Kaşgâri’s dictionary of Turkish, written in Arabic and completed probably in 1079. See References under DLT. A Turkish translation of the unique manuscript and a facsimile of it were available to Ataç (Atalay 1939–41).
obviously based on ayak but having as its first syllable the stem uy- ‘to fit, to conform’, and uyak is well on its way to ousting kafiye among the younger generation of poets. For sin, see pages 6 and 82.

As for şüphe, which Tekin thought assured of survival, though still common in speech it is rarely seen in writing, being rapidly edged out not by Ataç’s küşüm but by kuskus, proposed in Cep Kelavuzu (1935) as a replacement for vehim ‘groundless fear’ and vesvese ‘Satanic prompting, morbid suspicion’. Ataç rightly objected to it, as he said in an article in Ulus of 21 February 1957: ‘ Çünkü kuskus, doute demek değil, olsa olsa soupon demektir. Kuskus bir türlü güvensizlik gösterir. Ben bu sözden kuskulandım demek, bunun altında bir kötülük, başka bir dilek sezdim demektir’ (For kuskus does not mean doute but, if anything, soupon. Kuskus indicates a kind of lack of confidence. To say ‘I felt kuskus about this remark’ means that behind it I sensed some evil, some arrière pensée). He was not wedded to his own suggestion, küşüm:


That’s how they’re reported to say it in Konya, that’s why [I proposed it]. Later I learned it was used elsewhere in other senses. I don’t know its root. It seems that sometimes in Konya they also say süküm. That will be a corruption of the Arabic şek. So now I use sizin. As I don’t like that much either, I’m looking for a better word for it.

Tarama Dergisi records küşüm as being in colloquial use for ‘doubt’ or ‘worry’ in nine vilayets besides Konya, but it has not achieved literary status. Süküm, not in Derleme Sözlüğü (1963–82) or Tarama Dergisi, may well have been a metathesis of küşüm under the influence of şek (the Arabic šakk), to which Ataç refers. As for sizin, which he first used for ‘doubt’ in 1956, it sank without trace; given that sizin is the Turkish for ‘of you’, it was clearly a non-starter.12

Ürün, an Anatolian word for ‘produce’ that has now almost totally supplanted mahsul, is probably a Turkicization of üren [M] ‘seed, fruit, progeny’ (Clauson 1972: 233). If so, while Ataç may not have been aware of its non-Turkish origin, he would not have cared anyway, considering as he did that anything was preferable to an Arabic word.

Group 2: betik for kitap ‘book’; köğ for vezin ‘metre’ (of verse); tin for ruh ‘soul, spirit’; netek for nasîl ‘how’; ozan for şair ‘poet’; tamu for cehennem ‘hell’; tükeli for tamamiyle ‘wholly’; tıp for asîl ‘origin, original’; uçmak for cennet ‘paradise’; yanıt for cevap ‘answer’; yavuz for köttü ‘bad’.

Teke includes çevre ‘surroundings’, now ‘environment’, in this group, which is

12 Ataç may have come across and misread sezik, which in the old alphabet was written identically with sizin. Tarama Sözlüğü (1963–77) gives two citations, from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, with the meanings sezei, zan, tahmin: ‘perception, supposition, estimation.’
an error, as the word has never totally lost currency since the thirteenth century. He may have confused it with çevren, manufactured by Ataç from çevre to replace ufuk [A] ‘horizon’ but scarcely known nowadays even to intellectuals. Tamu and uçmak for ‘hell’ and ‘paradise’ did not catch on; they would scarcely have helped the ethnic cleansing, as they were not Turkish but Sogdian. Some items in this group were taken in a form consistent with the phonetic development of modern Turkish—for example, yant, anciently yanut. The changes Ataç made in others were contrary to the laws of phonology. Tekin tells how in 1949, while still an undergraduate, he wrote to Ataç to point out that netek (properly neteg) was the ancient form of a word that, had it survived into modern Turkish, would have become nite. Ataç accepted the correction and used nite thereafter. Betik has won some currency but it was a mistake for bitig, the natural development of which, biti, was in use as late as the eighteenth century for ‘letter, document’. Tin too is flawed; its ancient form was tin ‘breath, spirit’. Tekin, comparing its derived verb dinlenmek ‘to rest’, originally ‘to draw breath’, notes that its modern form would have been din. Even if Ataç had known that, however, he would have been unwise to choose the latter form, since a homograph and so near a homophone of din [A] ‘religion’ (in which the i is long) would have been unlikely to gain favour, whereas tin and its adjective tinsel ‘spiritual’ are nowadays not without their devotees. Tükeli (in the older language not ‘wholly’ but ‘perfect’) would have become dükel if it had survived into the modern language. Tüp did in fact survive, as dip ‘bottom, base’.

He took yavuz for ‘bad’, the opposite of its most usual modern sense. Tekin notes that, although ‘bad’ was its ancient meaning, it is used in dialect for ‘good, beautiful’. He could have added that it is also used in dialect for ‘generous, manly, capable’. And for ‘bad’. In view of its ambiguity, in a country where Yavuz is a common male name it could never have won acceptance as a replacement for fena [A] ‘bad’, much less for kötü, which being pure Turkish stood in no need of a replacement. As the appellation of Sultan Selim II, Yavuz is rendered ‘Grim’ by English-speaking historians but ‘Steadfast’ is closer to what it meant to those who applied it to the ruler who added Egypt and Syria to the Ottoman dominions.

It is a pity that many modern writers have followed Ataç in using ozan in place of şair for ‘poet’, because its old meaning was ‘bard, minstrel’. Those who know—a large category, including as it does every Turk with an interest in folk-poetry—preserve the distinction.

13 In the light of his toying with sızın for ‘doubt’, that consideration might not have deterred him.
14 Not that that is much to go on, as the impeccably Turkish bütün for ‘all, whole’ has for years been fighting for life against tüm, of whose Arabic origin there is little doubt. The two words, however, are not synonymous. While the sophisticated may use tüm elmalar for ‘all the apples’, to the people who grow them it means whole apples, as distinct from sliced apples. Even istemek ‘to want’ is looked on with disfavour, the in-word being dilemek ‘to wish for’.
15 Some old Turkey hands refer to him affectionately as Grim Slim.
16 The use of wicked as a term of approbation by English and American schoolchildren is worth mentioning in this context but, as with yavuz, should not be cited as evidence of moral decline.
Group 3: (a) words made from OT roots with various suffixes: **assıylanmak** for **faydalanmak** ‘to utilize’; **kopuzsulluk** for **lyrisme** [F] ‘lyricism’; **kögük** for **misra** ‘line of poetry’; **tansıklamak** for **-e hayran olmak** ‘to admire’; **yanıtlamak** for **cevaplamak** ‘to answer’.

**Assıylanmak** was Ataç’s first attempt at a replacement for **faydalanmak**, in which the **fayda** represents the Arabic **fāʾida** ‘use’, ‘profit’, the OT for which was **asığ**. Why he decided to double the **s** is unknown. He then came up with **asıylanmak**, no doubt having learned that **ası** was the form **asığ** would have taken had it survived into the modern language. Neither form has endured. He coined **kopuzsulluk** by first adding **-sul** to **kopuz** ‘lyre’, to make **kopuzsul** ‘lyric’, and then the abstract-noun suffix **-lik**. **-sul** was not a living suffix, occurring only in **yoksul** ‘destitute’, described by Clauson (1972: 907) as ‘clearly a corruption of **yoksu**’. **kopuzsulluk** did not survive its creator.

No more did **kögük**, which he manufactured from **kög** with the long-obsolete diminutive suffix **-ik**. In so doing he was using the method he later used to create **tilık**: loading on to a diminutive form of his word for ‘metre’ the meaning of ‘line of poetry’. (The accepted new term for this is **dize**, a deliberate variation of **dizi** ‘line’.) **Kög** for ‘metre’ is the form he would have found in Atalay’s translation of **DLT**. Clauson transcribes it as **küg**—i.e. with long **ü**—which is how Dankoff and Kelly (1982–5) also read it. **Küg** survives, though not in Ataç’s sense of ‘metre’ but rather for ‘music’—its first sense was indeed ‘tune’. Neither **kög** nor **küg** appears in **Tarama Sözlüğü**, but **küg** is used for ‘music’ by some musicologists, particularly those at the University of the Aegean (see Chapter 9). **Tansıklamak** was made from **tansık**, which is how the old **tansük** ‘marvellous, marvel’ would have appeared had it survived. **Tarama Sözlüğü** does not include the verb but gives **tansık** for **mucize** [A] ‘miracle’. Both **yanıtlamak** and the noun **yanıt** ‘answer’ from which Ataç formed it are commonly used in modern writing.

Group 3: (b) words coined by Ataç from Anatolian dialect words: **devinme** for **hareket** ‘movement’; **öykününlmek** for **taklit edilmek** ‘to be imitated’; **perkitlemek** for **tekit etmek** ‘to corroborate’; **yeğinlemek** for **tercih etmek** ‘to prefer’; **yöresellik** for **mahallilik** ‘regionalism’. Tekin points out that, as **yeğinlemek** is based on **yeg** ‘good’, the **-in-** is superfluous, as is the **-le-** of **perkitlemek**, **perkit-** being a verb-stem anyway. As **perkitmek** is given in **Derleme Sözlüğü** (1963–82) with the required meaning, it is problematic why Ataç did not leave well alone. The **yöre** of **yöresellik** (the only word in this group, apart from **devinmek**, to have won any currency) is shown in **Derleme Sözlüğü** as meaning **çevre** ‘surroundings’. The same work shows **devinmek** for ‘to move’; on the other hand, it gives **öykününmek** only in the senses of ‘to relate, tell’ and ‘to compete’, though the meaning ‘to imitate’ is given in **Tarama Dergisi**, as is the meaning ‘to be sorry’. It was presumably **öykününmek** that inspired Ataç’s invention of **öykü** for ‘story’, which has largely replaced **hikâye**, though some say that **öykü** is no more than a vulgar mispronunciation of **hikâye**. If so, it is as if we were to discard **nuclear** in favour of the Pentagon’s **nucular**.
In view of the rash of -sels and -sals by which the face of written Turkish is blemished, Tekin’s comment on yöresellik is of historical interest: ‘Bunlardan yöresellik işlemek olmuyan -sel ekileyle kurulmuştur. Kumsal, uysal gibi pek az birkaç kelimeyi görülen bu ek bir vakiller nisbet -i si yerine teklif edilmiş fakat tutulmamıştı’ (Of these, yöresellik is formed with the unproductive suffix -sel. This suffix, which appears in a very few words such as kumsal and uysal, had at one time been proposed as a replacement for the [Arabic and Persian] adjectival suffix -i, but had never caught on). It is fair to add that in 1958, when he wrote this, he was not alone in his judgement.

Group 3: (c) coinages produced by dismembering (‘ayırma yolu ile’) ancient and dialect words—i.e. by taking them apart and putting the pieces together as he fancied: betke for makale ‘(newspaper) article’; dörüüt for sanat ‘art’; ep for sebep ‘cause’; söydesi for yani ‘that is to say’; tükelmek for tamamlanak ‘to complete’; usul for aklı ‘intellectual’. None of these won favour. As Tekin says, this method of word-making calls for profound grammatical knowledge. He explains betke as derived by Ataç from biti, earlier bittiğ, in the mistaken belief that bit- was the stem of a verb bitmek ‘to write’ (the old word, of Chinese origin, for ‘to write’ was bitimek not bitmek); he then added the -ke to make a noun of it. It is more likely that he manufactured it from betik, his invention for ‘book’, or from bete, his mis-reading of biti, which he went on using for ‘letter’ until his death. The second syllable, -ke, is not an all-purpose noun-suffix but an extremely rare diminutive suffix (Clauson 1972: p. xi); what he thought he was creating was a word meaning ‘little writing’. Dörüüt is the stem of dörüutmek or törütmek, an old word for ‘to create’, from which he also made dörütmen for ‘artist’.

With all due respect to Tekin, ep ‘cause’ does not belong in this group but in the first. Ataç would have found it among the equivalents for sebep in Tarama Dergisi, where it was due to a misreading of ip ‘rope’ in one of the Ottoman sources used by the compilers of that dictionary. There, however, it was given as the Turkish for sabab [A] in the sense not of ‘cause’ but of ‘tent rope’, the original meaning of the Arabic word.

Söydesi for ‘it means, that is to say’, is another oddity that did not take. Tekin supposes that Ataç extracted the first syllable from söylemek ‘to say’ on the correct assumption that the latter was compounded with the denominative verb-suffix -lemek, but there was no such noun as söy; the söy of söylemek started life as söz. The -des is for the invariable -daş ‘-fellow’, which Ataç helped deprive of its invariability.17 The literal meaning he must have been aiming at was ‘its saying-fellow’—i.e. ‘which amounts to saying’.

Over tanmali ‘wonderful, surprising’ one must again take issue with Tekin. His

17 In pre-reform days, the only word in which it appeared as -deş seems to have been kardeş ‘sibling’, an Istanbul pronunciation of kardas (earlier karindaş ‘womb-fellow’), a form used until well into the seventeenth century. Cep Kilavuzu (1935) gives gönüldeş not -daş for yekdil ‘sympathizer’, possibly through a misreading of the phonetic spelling used by Redhouse (1890).
view is that Ataç made it by adding the deverbal suffix -mah to tan, the noun seen in tansık and tana kalmak (‘to be left to wonderment’), which he took to be a verb-stem meaning ‘to wonder’. But there is also a verb tanmak ‘to be astonished’, found in the form daлимak in texts of the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries and still used in parts of Anatolia. Ataç presumably made tanmah from the -me verbal noun of that word, in which case it belongs in Tekin’s list 3(b).

As for usul for ‘intelligent’: although us originally meant ‘intelligence, discrimination’, uslu, once ‘intelligent’, nowadays means only ‘well behaved’. This attempt by Ataç to base a new adjective for ‘intelligent’ on us is rightly criticized by Tekin on the grounds that ‘research to date into the Turkish language has failed to come up with a denominal adjective-suffix -i1/i1. Moreover, there was another usul [A] ‘method, system’ in everyday use in Ataç’s day and still not extinct. True, it differs from Ataç’s usul in that, because of its Arabic origin, its final l is clear, so that its plural is usuller, while ‘methodical’ is usullülü and ‘unmethodical’ usulsüz (Lewis 1988: 19), but that would not—indeed did not—make its proposed homograph acceptable.

Group 3: (d) words taken from other Turkic dialects or based on such words: komuğ for musiki ‘music’; üçük for harf ‘letter of the alphabet’; şüyünçü for müjdeci ‘bearer of good news’; tilcik for kelime ‘word’; üycük for beyit ‘line of poetry’.

These need not detain us long, since tilcik, the only one of them to win any currency at all, has been adequately discussed. The correct form of Ataç’s üçük is üjak, probably of Chinese origin. Üy is the form taken by ev ‘house’ in Kirghiz, Uzbek, and those other Eastern dialects in which it does not appear as öy. Ataç’s reason for making a diminutive of it to replace beyit [A] is that ‘line of poetry’ is a secondary sense of Arabic bayt, the primary sense being ‘tent’ or ‘house’.

Group 3: (e) compounds made with words from OT and Anatolian or other dialects: aktöre or sağtöre for ahlak ‘ethics’; bile-duyuş for sympathie [F] ‘sympathy’; budunbuyrumcu for demokrat ‘democrat’; düzeýit for nesir ‘prose’; gökçe-yazin for edebiyat ‘literature, belles-lettres’; uza-bilik for tarih ‘history’.

To prefix ak ‘white or sağ ‘right’ to töre, the OT for ‘customary law’, does not seem a particularly felicitous way of expressing the concept of ethics, but some writers do use aktöre. Bile-duyuş, compounded of bile, OT for ‘with’, and duyuş, ‘feeling’, did not prevail; the new word for ‘sympathy’ is duygudaşlık ‘feeling-fellowship’, which has not supplanted sempati, as may be judged from the fact that the equivalent given in Türkçe Sözlük (1988) for duygudaş is sempatizan.

Tekin passes over the second element of budunbuyrumcu in silence, saying only

18 From this noun tan comes the verb tanlamak ‘to be astonished’, in literary use between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries and still alive in one or two local dialects, including that of the vilayet of Ankara.
19 Some use the neologism yöntem, others still prefer metot [F]. In the 1950s Istanbul University had a pair of professors known to their colleagues as Metotlu Cahil (‘The Methodical Ignoramus’) and Metotsuz Cahil respectively.
that *budun*, an ancient word for ‘people’, would have become *buyun* had it survived. The ancient word for ‘people’ was in fact *budun*, which by the eleventh century had become *boyun* though, given the existence of *boyun* ‘neck’, *boyun* ‘people’ would have stood little chance of acceptance in modern Turkish. As early as 1912, Yakup Kadri [Karaosmanoğlu] made fun of an attempt to replace *millet* ‘nation’ by *budun* (Levend 1972: 321). But now it has happened, in that *budun* is used to some extent, notably in *budunbilim* for ‘ethnography’. The *buyrum* of *buyrumcu* is pure invention, a noun made from the stem of *buyurmak* ‘to command’. The *buyruk* of *budunbuyrukçu*, Ataç’s offering for ‘dictator’, was an old Ottoman word for ‘command’.

Tekin explains *düzeïit* for ‘prose’ as illegitimately formed by adding to *düz* ‘level’ the stem of the old verb *eyitmek* ‘to say’: ‘level-speak’. The somewhat more logical *düzyazı* ‘level writing’ is used instead. *Göçek-yazm* was intended to mean ‘belles-lettres’, *gökçe* being a provincialism for ‘beautiful’, while *yazm* was Ataç’s arbitrary modification of *yazı* ‘writing’. The whole expression did not catch on, but *yazm* is current in the sense of ‘literature’, without having supplanted the time-honoured *edebiyat*.

Categories (d) and (e) both contain words not in the spirit of the guideline adopted by the Sixth Kurultay, but then no one could have expected it to restrain Ataç’s creative urge: ‘Türk dili, Türk Milletinin kullandığı dildir. Terimler yapılrken eski tarihlerden beri yaşayıp gelen unsurlar zaman ve mekân itibariyle yakınlık ve uzaklık bakımından dikkate alınmalı vebugünkü Türkiye Türkçesinin fonetik ve estetiqine uygun olmalıdır’ (Turkish is the language used by the Turkish nation. When terms are being made, elements which have survived from ancient times should be considered from the point of view of their proximity and remoteness in time and place and be in conformity with the phonetics and aesthetics of the present-day Turkish of Turkey) (Kurultay 1949: 146).

No one has yet succeeded in finding an acceptable *Öztürkçe* word for ‘history’; *tarih* [A] still holds its ground and will continue to do so. Ataç’s *uza-bilik* won no following, any more than his *usaha* or *usaha-bilik*, or his *usaha-liblikci* for ‘historian’. *Cep Kilavuzu* (1935) gives *usaha* as replacement for *mesafe* [A] ‘distance’, while *bilik* is OT for ‘knowledge’, appearing in Ottoman from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century as *bili* or *bili*. As for *bilig*, which has acquired general currency for ‘science’ because of its fortuitous resemblance to *ilm* [A] ‘knowledge’), Ataç’s first recorded use of it was in 1956, but it had already appeared in 1935, in *Cep Kilavuzu*.

Group 3: (f) words made by Ataç from living roots and more-or-less active suffixes: *bağlanç* for *din* ‘religion’; *dokunca* for *zarar* ‘harm’; *örnegin* for *meselâ* ‘for example’; *sorun* for *mesele* ‘problem’; *yapit* for *eser* ‘work’ (artistic or literary); *yazm* for *metin* ‘text’; *yazm* for *edebiyat* ‘literature’.

Tekin’s conclusion:
Ataç, yaman bir tenkitçi, titiz bir çevirici, kısaça, usta bir edebiyatçı idi; ancak bir dilci değildi. Gereksiligiine inanıldığı dünyayı yüretemek için dilimizdeki yabancı kaynaklı kelimelere Türkçe karşılıklar araması, bulamadığı zaman kendi kurmuştur. Fakat, kelimeye yapırdığı bir noktaya dikkat etmemiştir: Yaşayan koşlerden işlek eklerle söz tutürmek. Böyle yapsayıdi tilciks'le yadırınmaz, kolayca tutunurdu.

Ataç was a remarkable critic and a sensitive translator; in short, a consummate literary man, but he was no language man. To advance the cause in whose necessity he believed, he looked for Turkish equivalents of words of foreign origin in our language and when he could not find them he made them up himself. But in his word-making there was one point he disregarded: the need to derive words from living roots and active suffixes. Had he done so, his tilciks would not have struck people as odd and would have easily gained acceptance.

The criticism sounds reasonable but in its implication that the tilciks did not gain acceptance it is dead wrong. All the words in the last list, with the exception of bağlanç, are in everyday use, and all but one with the meanings he assigned to them: yazım nowadays means not ‘text’ but ‘spelling’. It is a pity that bağlanç, from bağlan- ‘to be attached’, has not had more success, seeing that it was one of Ataç’s few correct formations.

Yılmaz Çolpan (1963) does not claim that the thousand-odd neologisms in his glossary of Ataç’s words were all originated or resurrected by Ataç, nor were they. He shows içtenlik ‘sincerity’, for example, as having been used by Ataç in 1950, whereas Atay’s first recorded use of it is dated 1946. It appears in Cep Kilavuzu (1935), for which Atay was largely responsible. Çolpan shows yır ‘poetry’, a respectable old word listed in Tarama Dergisi, as first used by Ataç in 1949, but Sadri Maksudi (Arsal 1930: 116) had used it nineteen years before. Nevertheless, even if we halve Çopan’s figure, Ataç’s contribution to the vocabulary of present-day Turkish unquestionably exceeds that of any other individual.

Aydın Sayılı (1913–93) was born in Istanbul and completed his secondary education at the Atatürk Lycée in Ankara. Atatürk attended the viva voce examination for the baccalaureate and was so greatly impressed by Sayılı’s performance that he recommended him to the Minister of Education, who sent him to Harvard, where he studied under George Sarton, obtaining his doctorate in 1942. In 1952 he was appointed Professor of the History of Science at Dil ve Tarih-Coğrafya Fakultesi and in 1974 became Chairman of the Philosophy Department of the same faculty. His reputation was worldwide. His best-known work in English (Sayılı 1988) is The Observatory in Islam and its Place in the General History of the Observatory.

Unlike many scholars of his age group, he took to Öztürkçe enthusiastically, but he did not believe in letting the old words die. He wanted to keep them alive because they might be useful, now or in the future, to express subtle distinctions. Thus he advocates (Sayılı 1978: 400) the retention of tabii alongside the increasingly popular doğal for ‘natural’, because tabii is used ‘yadırganmayan bir şey için’
(of something not regarded as strange)—i.e. in the sense of ‘naturally, of course’. *Tabii* does in fact survive in this sense, but I fear the credit goes not to Sayılı but to the linguistic conservatism of the people.

His language is eclectic; he uses whatever word best expresses his meaning, whether it belongs to the older or the newer vocabulary. He did not condemn *sel⁄sal* but his remarks on it (see Chapter 7) include such Ottoman survivals as *tereddüt, hissedenler, mevcut, çare, vakua, taraf, iltifat*, and even the antiquated *selika*. Although he used *Özteürkçe*, he was ready to speak out against its worst features, as we see in the following passage (Sayılı 1978: 399). The word *yanırsız*, which he uses in it for ‘unbiased’, is the final theme in the present chapter.

Birhaylı fena bir başka misal de *kuşku* sözcüğünün *şüphe* yerine kullanılamasındır. Çünkü *kuşku* sözcüğünde bir itimatsızlık, bir kötü niyet, yahut da hoşlanılmayacak bir sezınele anlam vardır. *Şüphe* ise bu bakımından tarafsız veya yanırsız bir kelimedir. *Kuşku* gibi güzel bir kelimeyi *şüphe* yerine kullanmak onu özel anlamından ayırmak ve aynı zamanda dilimizi *şüphe* ve *kuşku* gibi yakın anlamlı iki kelimeye sahip olmaktan zorla yoksun kılmak demektir.

Another extremely bad example is the use of *kuşku* instead of *şüphe*. For in *şüphe* there is a sense of a lack of confidence, or an evil intent, or a perception of a situation that is going to be unpleasant, whereas *şüphe* in this respect is neutral or unbiased. To use a beautiful word like *kuşku* in place of *şüphe* is to divest it of its proper sense and at the same time to dispossess our language forcibly of a pair of words of related meaning.

His intelligence and erudition marked him off from those responsible for much of the vocabulary of current Turkish. Every page of his book-length article reveals that he thought more deeply about the language than did most of those who shaped its future. The reason he had so little effect on the course of the reform is that, unlike Atay and Ataç, he was not a popular writer but a scholar who wrote for scholars. Discussing *neden*, for example, he mentions that Ottoman had the words *sebep* ‘cause and *ilet’reason’. *Neden*, which could have replaced *ilet*, is now used for both *ilet* and *sebep*. But these two words represented two distinct concepts, and two such words exist in all developed languages. ‘Cause’ is used in relation to nature, and for situations outside one’s volition, whereas ‘reason’ is used for matters coming within one’s volition: ‘yağmur yağmasının nedeni’ (the cause of the rainfall), but ‘konuşmak istemesinin sebebi’ (the reason for his wishing to speak).

No one seems to have paid any attention to that or his other criticisms and suggestions. He thought it was wrong (Sayılı 1978: 442), for example, that, although *ceviri* was in common use for translation, for the verb ‘to translate’ there was only the old *tercüme etmek* or the non-specific *cevirmek* ‘to turn’. He made a verb from *ceviri—ceviremek*—and used it throughout the article, but it is doubtful if anyone else ever adopted it. Probably not, as it would have been too easily confused with the existing neologism *ceviremek* ‘to explain away, to interpret allegorically’.

He pointed out a flaw in *yüzyıl*, the prevalent replacement for *asır* [A] ‘century’—namely, that when you hear ‘yedi yüzyıl/yüz yıl’ you cannot tell
whether what is meant is ‘seven centuries’ or ‘seven hundred years’. And this distinction may sometimes be important. If someone says ‘yedi asır kadar önce’ (some seven centuries ago), you understand that there may be a margin of error of, say, sixty or seventy years, whereas ‘yedi yüzyl/yüz yıl kadar önce’ may imply an error to be measured not in years but in centuries. A valid criticism, but he did not offer an unambiguous alternative to yüzyl; obviously he was hoping that asır could be rescued from oblivion.

The trouble was that he was working on too high a plane. One need only open his article at any page to see why his proposals passed over the heads of the wordsmiths. This passage, for example:

Bugün örtük ve açık sözcüklerini birbirinin karşıtı iki terim olarak kullanlarımız vardır. Bunların da terim olarak pek doyundurucu olmadığı söylenebilir. Çünkü açık sözcüğü çokanlamlı olduğu gibi, örtük de yakın akrama terim tüketilmesine pek elverişli değildir. Ayrıca, örtük sözcüğü anlaman örtülü olduğunu ifade ediyor. Oysa, burada önemli olan husus anlaman örtülmesi değil, örtük biçimde ifade edilmiş, dile getirilmesidir... Bu terimlerin İngilizcedeki karşılıkları implicit ve explicit'tir... Fakat örtük ve açık yerine, yukarıda de ği ne nilen yetersizlikleri dolayışıyla, altgm ve üstgün gibi iki terimin getirilmesi daha isabetli olur. Çünkü bunlardan her ikisi de özel terim vasıfını taşımın edici bir şekilde karşıyabileceğini gibi, altgm sözcüğü anlaman bakımından, örtük sözcüğune kıyasl, maksada daha uygun düşer. (Sayılı 1978: 443-4)

There are some amongst us today who use the words örtük and açık as two antonymous technical terms. One may say that as technical terms they are not very satisfactory. For aside from the fact that açık has many meanings, örtük is not particularly suited to deriving closely related terms. Moreover, the word örtük implies that the meaning is veiled, whereas the important fact here is not that the meaning is veiled but that it is expressed, conveyed, in a veiled way... The English equivalents of these terms are implicit and explicit... But because of the inadequacies of örtük and açık touched on above, it would be more appropriate to introduce two terms to replace them, such as altgm and üstgün. Not only would they both meet the definition of a special technical term more satisfactorily; if we consider the word altgm from the point of view of meaning, in comparison with örtük it is more to the purpose.

Or this, from a discussion of possible equivalents for ‘determinism’ and ‘indeterminism’:


Ottoman really had no settled and established terms in this subject. It is manifest that muayyeniyet [definiteness] and gayr-i muayyeniyet [non-definiteness] could be used for the purpose of representing the meaning of these terms in the field of physics. But since these
meanings were very general and broad, these words are not to be regarded as technical terms in the true sense. Moreover, these words cannot meet the philosophical meanings we are talking about. To meet the philosophical meaning of these terms, we also had the words *icâbiyye* [determinism] and *lâicâbiyye* [indeterminism]. These, however, were not known outside a very narrow circle.

Sayılı goes on to say that no agreement has been reached on new equivalents for ‘determinism’ and ‘indeterminism’, though various terms are in use: *gerektilir*, *gerekircilik*, and *belirlenimcilik* for the first and *belirilenmezcilik* for the second. But obviously these are no more widely used or known than were *icâbiyye* and *lâicâbiyye* in the Ottoman period.

Nevertheless, though his theme is the language of science and teaching, he has time for some less technical terms: ‘to translate’ and ‘century’, as we have seen. He considers (Sayılı 1978: 441–2) that insufficient thought was given to the consequences of replacing *kütüphane* by *kitaplık*: what happens to ‘librarianship’? In fact the *kitaplıkçılık* he feared has not won the day over *kütüphanecilik*, though *kitaplık bilimi* is used for ‘library science’. Another problem he could have added was how to say ‘a library of twenty thousand books’; clearly ‘yirmibir kitaplık bir kitaplık’ won’t do, and to say ‘volumes’ instead of ‘books’—‘yirmibir ciltlik bir kitaplık’—does not mean the same.

One curious coinage of his which had no success was *yanır*. Speaking of *taraf* [A] ‘side’ and its derivatives *taraflı* ‘partisan’ and *tarafsız* ‘impartial’, he remarks (Sayılı 1978: 402) that some people use the pure Turkish *yan* and *yanlı*, and *yansız* instead. He continues:


Kanımcı, *yanlı* ve *yansız* yerine *yanırlı* ve *yansırsız* sözcüklerini kullanmak daha yerinde olur. Böylece *yanır* telifüz şekline asla yakın özel bir anlam verilmiş olur ve dili bir yerde fakirleşirmek yerine tam tersi yapılmış olur... *Tarafış* veya *yanırsız* karşılığı olarak İngilizcede *neutral* ve bir de gramer terimi olarak *neuter* sözcükleriyle karşılaştırır.

From this point of view, one may resort to utilizing the words *kocunmak* and *yağır*, which we have in our language. Although both are originally used of horses, *kocunmak* is frequently used in a more general and metaphorical sense. Moreover, they are also pronounced *yanir* and *gocunmar*. *Yağır or yanır* means the horse’s withers and the sore made there by saddling. Since the horse with a saddle-sore is scared of this wound he has, there is an

20 The first of these is an Arabic abstract noun of Turkish manufacture, derived from *iğâb* ‘making obligatory, making unavoidable’; the *lâ* of the second is the Arabic for ‘not’.

21 *Gocunmak* is an Anatolian pronunciation of *kocunmak*. See Lewis (1988: 4, end of §9).
unforgettable association of ideas between these two words. With this specific meaning, *yağır* or *yanır* calls to mind such words in the European languages as *bias* or *biais* [F].

In my opinion, it will be more appropriate to use *yanırlı* and *yanırsız* instead of *yanlı* and *yansız*. In this way, the pronunciation *yanır* will have been given a special meaning close to its origin and instead of impoverishing the language at one point the exact opposite will have been achieved . . . The sense of *tarafsız* or *yanırsız* is conveyed in English by *neutral* or, as a grammatical term, *neuter*.

It is not surprising that this suggestion did not catch on. The progression from a saddle-sore that makes a horse shy away from a curry-comb, to a bias that makes a person shy away from a course of action, is more than a little far-fetched. But Sayılı did explain the thinking behind his suggestion, which is more than Ataç was in the habit of doing.

\[22\] The reference is to the proverb ‘Al kaşağınyı, gir ahıra, yağıırı olan góçunur’ (Take the curry-comb, go into the stable, and the one with saddle-sores will be scared), much like our ‘If the cap fits, wear it.’
Ingredients

As we have seen, the reformers’ overriding desire was to get rid of Arabic and Persian borrowings, even if the proposed replacements were equally non-Turkish: hudut [A] ‘frontier’ was dislodged by sınır [G] (sýnuron), millet [A] ‘nation’ by ulus [M], şehir [P] ‘city’ by the Sogdian kent ‘small town, village’, istilah [A] ‘technical term’ by terim [F]. But at least these were natural-born words. This chapter discusses the more noteworthy suffixes used, even invented, in the creation of Öztürkçe. The squeamish reader may find some of what follows disturbing.

Before we come on to suffixes, a word about prefixes. At the time when TDK was doing its best to prove that Turkish and the Indo-European languages were akin, efforts were made to create words by using prefixes, against the genius of Turkish. For ‘sub-’, ast was imported from one or other of the Central Asian dialects in which it means ‘underside’, like Turkish alt. It was soon shortened to as-, which survives in asteğmen ‘second lieutenant’ and assubay ‘non-commissioned officer’. In the late 1930s astüzük was used for ‘supplementary by-laws’, asbaşkan for ‘vice-president’, and askurlu for ‘subcommittee’. The first syllable of yaridim ‘help’ was prefixed to direktör to make yaridirektör ‘assistant director’, to başkan to make yarbaşkan ‘vice-president’, and to kurul to make yarkurul ‘subcommittee’; this and asbaşkan may still be met with occasionally. One other yar-survives, in yarbay ‘lieutenant-colonel’, bay being the Öztürkçe replacement for bey ‘commander’. The first syllable of albay ‘colenel’ is also an abbreviation, of alay ‘regiment’. The gen of genel ‘general’ was similarly pressed into service as a prefix, a use that survives in gensoru ‘parliamentary question’. The tüm of tümgeneral ‘major-general’ is the first syllable of tümne ‘division’, while the or of orgeneral ‘general’ is from ordu ‘army’. What inspired these truncations was Russian abbreviations like Sovnarkom for ‘Sovyet Narodnykh Komissarov’ ‘Council of People’s Commissars’. It should be remembered that in those days Turco-Soviet relations were, at least outwardly, cordial.

Another attempt at creating a prefix was arsi- ‘inter-’, an arbitrary corruption of the postposition arasi, but its use did not go beyond arsülsal, which gave rise to one of the successive designations of the İzmir International Fair: İzmir Beynemilel Fuarı, İzmir Arsülsal Fuarı, İzmir Enternasyonal Fuarı, İzmir Uluslararası Fuarı. There is some dispute about the legitimacy of the widely used öngörmek ‘to foresee’, there being no precedent for incorporating an adverb into a verb. There is no such dispute about prefixing ön to nouns, as in önsezi
‘premonition’, the ön here being an adjective, as in many respectable old words like önkapi ‘front door’ and önoda ‘antechamber’. So too with alt, as in altgeçit or alt geçit ‘underpass’. Now for some suffixes.

-çe/ça. Three old borrowings from Serbo-Croat—kirlaçe ‘queen’, çariçe ‘tsarina’, imparatoraće ‘empress’—supplied a feminine suffix, which Turkish lacked. Added to tanrı ‘god’, it made tanrıça, the Öztürkçe for ilâhe [A] ‘goddess’. That was its sole contribution to the language reform.

There is another -çe/ça that, unlike the -ce of düşünce ‘thought’ and eğlence ‘amusement’, is added to nouns. It is a Persian diminutive suffix, seen in paça (pâça [P]) ‘trotter’ from pâ [P] ‘foot’, and lûgaće ‘glossary’ from lûgat [A] ‘dictionary’. It provided the reform with one or two hybrids like tarihte ‘short history’, and dilekçe ‘petition’ from dilek ‘wish’.

-enek. Once occurring in very few words—for example, görenek ‘usage’ and the archaic değenek ‘stick, wand’ (now değnek, from değ- ‘to touch, reach’)—it was given new life by İsmet İnönü. On the pattern of görenek, he created geleneğ for ‘tradition’, which has totally replaced an’ane [A], while its adjective gelenekeşsel has done the same for an’anevi [A] ‘traditional’. Other neologisms made with this suffix are olanak ‘possibility’, seçeneğ ‘alternative’, yazanak ‘report’, and tutanak ‘minutes of a meeting’.

Apropos minutes, those of the first three Language Congresses (1932, 1934, 1936) were called Müzakere Zabıtları; the fourth (1942) Toplanti Tutulgaları (tutulga is the equivalent given for zabtname in Cep Kilavuzu (1935)); the fifth and subsequent ones (1945—); Tutanaklar. Those of the Congresses of the Republican People’s Party: 1934 Tutulga, 1938 Zabit, 1939 Zabitlar, 1947 Tutanak.

-ev/-v. The origins of this suffix lie far from Turkey. In Bashkurt and Kazakh the infinitive ends not in -mek/mak but in -v (preceded by the appropriate vowel after consonant-stems), and in Kirghiz and Tatar -u or -ü. The respective equivalents in these languages of almak ‘to take’ are alûv, aluv, alû, alû, and of görmek ‘to see’ küriv, körüv, körü, kürü. Hence several neologisms: görev ‘duty’, söylev ‘speech’, işlev ‘function’, ödev ‘obligation’, sınav ‘examination’, türev ‘derivative, by-product’. Another was saylav, Kazakh and Kazan for ‘to choose’, used in the early years of the reform instead of milletvekili or mebus ‘deputy’. Ödev is from ödemek ‘to pay’, and for a glimpse of how it struck sensitive Turks we only have to imagine how we would feel if told we should abandon the foreign obligation and adopt a new word constructed from an English root and a German suffix, say paykeir. Nor can one overlook the possibility that ödev owes something to the French devoir. As for görev, this is how it is explained in Eyuboğlu’s (1988) etymological dictionary, a work remarkable for its shiftiness: ‘Sözçüğun sonuna getirilen v sesiyle ad türeteme, seyrek de olsa, Turk dilinde vardır. Edilce-v/edilcev (yapılması, edilmesi gereken), Anadolu halk ağında ar. sünnet karşıliği söyleirin... Gece-v/gecev (gerçekte gece evi, tarlalarda yazılıp, geceleyin ekinleri kollamak için kurulan kulübe)’
(Noun-derivation by adding a -ν, though rare, does exist in the Turkish language. Edilce ν/edilcev (‘what must be done’) is said in popular Anatolian dialect for the Arabic sünnet⁴... gece-ν/gecev (in fact gece evi, a hut made in the fields and erected for watching the crops by night).) Edilcev appears in Derleme Sözlüğü (1963–88) (misplaced at v. 1665) as being recorded for sünnet at Ünye in the vilayet of Ordu, which makes ‘Anadolu halk ağında’ seem a bit of an exaggeration. No explanation is offered for the peculiar-looking edilce. Nor does Eyuboğu strengthen his case by citing another -ν, in gecev, which he himself recognizes as an abraded form of ev ‘house’. To revert to görev: one can see a connection between the notions of obligation and payment, but why should a noun derived from görmek ‘to see’ mean ‘duty’? The answer requires a digression.

One of Ataç’s neologisms, invented in 1947, is koşul, now widely used in writing instead of şart [A] for ‘condition’. Ataç extracted it from the expression şart koşmak ‘to impose a condition’. (Koşmak, besides meaning ‘to run’, is also used transitively in the sense of ‘to attach’, as in ‘ati arabaya koştuk’ (we hitched the horse to the cart).) The once unproductive noun-suffix -ul occurs in a few words such as çökül ‘sediment’ and kumul ‘sandhill’. Tack it on to koş- and you have koşul, which should mean, if anything, ‘attachment’. But it does not; it means ‘condition’, though it has not replaced şart in the sense of ‘prerequisite’. This gives us the clue to görev. It will be remembered that görmek, besides ‘to see’, means ‘to perform’ (compare the English ‘to see to’). In the old days when ‘duty’ was vazife [A], ‘he has done his duty’ was vazifesini görmüşür. Just as koşul owes its existence to koşmak, which in şart koşmak is no more than an auxiliary verb, so görev owes its existence to the auxiliary verb görmek. I don’t think that a Turk of any sensibility could bear to say ‘görevini görmüşür’; it has to be ‘görevini yapmıştı’ or ‘görevini yerine getirmiş’. The lexicographer D. Mehmet Doğan, however, in his volume of essays (1984: 135), perversely combines the Ottoman for ‘to perform’ with this ill-conceived item of Öztürkçe, writing ‘görevini ifa etmiş’. 

-e/y is a zombie, like -it and -meç, raised from its long sleep and put back to work by the reformers. Before they got hold of it, it occurred in a handful of words, notably kolay ‘easy’, güney, common in Anatolian dialects for ‘sunny place’; and kuzay, kozay or kuzey, anciently and in dialect ‘sunless place’. These forms were explained as follows in an illuminating paper by Jean Deny (1937).² Kol, besides ‘arm’, anciently meant ‘hand’, as it still does in much of Central Asia. Gün means ‘sun’ as well as ‘day’: ‘Gün doğdu/battu’ (The sun rose/set). Kuz is the side of a mountain out of reach of the sun. The -e/y adds the notion of being in the domain of what is denoted by the noun to which it is suffixed. As Deny puts it, ‘Les détails que nous venons de donner permettent donc, à notre avis, de rattacher en toute sécurité le mot kol-ay à la formation de dérivés en ey et d’en restituer le sens

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¹ The Arabic sunna means ‘practice of the Prophet’. Its Turkish form sünnet has the special sense of ‘circumcision’.
² I am indebted to Professor Şukrü Elçin for a copy of this article.
primitif dans ces termes: “qui est exposé à l’emprise de la main, qui est sous la main, bien en main, maniable”’. Tarama Dergisi (1934) gives kuze as one of ten possible replacements for şimal ‘north’, with a note: ‘Gölgede kalan yer man. [= manasına]. “Güney” ziddi’ (In the sense of place staying in shadow. Opposite of güney). Kuze (the non-harmonic form being due to analogy with güney) and güney are now usual, even in speech, for ‘north’ and ‘south’ respectively.

The reformers, who were unlikely to have seen Deny’s paper (and if they had?), added -ey/ay/y indiscriminately to verb-stems, nouns, and adjectives. From ol- ‘to be, happen’, uza- ‘to extend’, and dene- ‘to try’, they made nouns: olay ‘incident’, uzay ‘space’, and deney ‘experiment’; from yap- ‘to make’, the adjective yapay ‘artificial’; from yön ‘direction’ and yüz ‘face’, the nouns yönay ‘vector’ and yüzey ‘surface’; from the adjective düz ‘flat’, the noun düzye ‘level’. In 1938, when the Turkish Navy required names for its new ‘Ay’ class of submarine, the same hard-working suffix was added to the verbs atıl- ‘to assail’, batır- ‘to sink’, saldıır- ‘to attack’, and yıldr- ‘to daunt’: Atılay, Batıray, Saldıray, Yıldrıray. It is hard to deduce from these examples what the function of -ay was supposed to be.

Yüzey, düzey, and birey ‘individual’ all appear in Cep Kilavuzu (1935). Birey, which had already appeared in Tarama Dergisi (1934), is of more respectable ancestry than the rest of what we might, taking a leaf from the Turkish Navy’s book, call the Ay class of neologism. Birey is the form that bireğü ‘individual’, used in Ottoman between the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries, would have taken if it had survived.

-ge. Turkish has an abundance of word-building suffixes but not all of them seem to have a specific meaning. Take -ge/ga, for instance. In OT it was used mostly as an ending of names of birds, animals, and insects, many still extant: karga ‘crow’, çekirge ‘locust’, ‘grasshopper’. It also appears in a few other nouns, such as süpürge ‘broom’, dalga ‘wave’, yonga ‘wood chippings’. The reformers used it to make a number of neologisms, including dizge ‘system’ (diz- ‘to arrange in order’), genelge ‘circular, notice’ (genel ‘general’), gösterge ‘indicator’ (göster- ‘to show’), and the question-begging sömürge ‘colony’ (sömür- ‘to exploit’). -gi/ki is a respectable old suffix, forming numerous nouns from verb-stems: from duy- ‘to feel’, duygu ‘feeling’, from as- ‘to hang’, askı ‘hanger’, from sar- ‘to wrap’, sargı ‘bandage’. A number of successful neologisms have been made with it, such as bitki ‘plant’ from bit- ‘to grow’, and tepki ‘reaction’ from tep- ‘to kick’. One neologism formed with it, however, has a bad name among conservatives: from et- ‘to do’, etki ‘influence’, ‘effect’, which has largely supplanted tesir [A]. The word exists in the speech of several regions of Western Anatolia, but not in that sense; its meanings are ‘ill treatment, distress, excessive difficulty’, less commonly

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3 Saldıray was commissioned in July 1938, the other three in 1939, Batıray in March, Atılay in May, Yıldrıray in August.

4 One is reminded of the Esperanto suffix -um: ‘suffixe peu employé, et qui reçoit différents sens aisément suggérés par le contexte et la signification de la racine à laquelle il est joint’ (Zamenhof 1931: 177).
'witchcraft'. But the conservative scholar Faruk Timurtaş (1979: 47–8) sees more in it to object to than that:


In principle, new words cannot be derived from auxiliary verbs . . . The word etmek is sometimes used in popular dialects to replace words that it is unseemly or considered shameful to mention. For example, answering either call of nature is conveyed by the word etmek. Such a use is seen both in the spoken language of Istanbul and in the written language . . . In no dialect has etki been given the sense of tesir. This sense has been concocted ex post facto by the Language Society.

-im/m. The flood of new words incorporating this suffix seems to have started with anlam, which has now virtually displaced mànâ ‘meaning’. Anlam was one of fourteen alternatives offered in Tarama Dergisi (1954), which noted it as used instead of mànâ in the vilayet of Konya. Derleme Sözlüğü (1963–82), however, shows ânlam as used in just two villages, not for mànâ but for anlayış ‘sagacity’ or duygu ‘feeling’. Those who recorded it must have either misread their notes or doctorved them. -m originally indicated a single action, as in ölüm ‘death’, doğum ‘birth’. Long before the language reform got into its stride, this limitation had begun to weaken, Yarım ‘a single act of splitting’, a verbal noun of yar- ‘to split’, became a concrete noun, ‘half’. The meaning of alım, from al- ‘to buy’, was extended from a single act of purchase to purchasing in general, and the same happened with satım from sat- ‘to sell’, so that alım satım came to mean not a single transaction but buying and selling, business. Similarly dikim from dik- ‘to sew’ means not just one stitch but sewing. The suffix has been enormously productive: basım ‘printing’, dağıtım ‘distribution’, anlatım ‘narration’, oturum ‘session’, seçim ‘election’, üretim ‘production’, and countless more. Kalıtım ‘heredity’ was not made from a verb but from Ataç’s kalıt ‘inheritance’. Ortam ‘environment, ambiance’ and toplum ‘community, society’, which one sees and hears all the time, are equally illegitimate, ortam being from the noun orta ‘middle’, and toplum from the adjective toplu ‘collective’.

-it/t. An ancient addition to verb-stems: geçit ‘mountain-pass’ or ‘parade’ from geç- ‘to pass’, içit (archaic) ‘drink’ from iç- ‘to drink’, binit (provincial) ‘animal for riding’ from bin- ‘to mount’. It has produced many serviceable neologisms: konut ‘abode’ from kon- ‘to settle’, taşit ‘vehicle’ from taşı- ‘to carry’, dikit ‘stalagmite’ from dik- ‘to plant’, sarkit ‘stalacite’ from sakr- ‘to hang down’, yakit ‘fuel’ from yak- ‘to burn’. The ingenious soyut ‘abstract’ from soy- ‘to strip’, which has replaced mürçeret, was due to Ataç, but to replace its antonym müşahhas ‘concrete’ he added the suffix to the adjective som ‘solid’, not to a verb-stem. Nobody seems to mind; soyut and somut make a neat pair. Örgüt for ‘organization’, however, has its critics.
It is the result of cross-breeding between örgü 'plait' and organ, a late nineteenth-century borrowing from the French organe. Örgen, a face-saving Turkicization of organ, will be found in dictionaries but is unlikely to be encountered in real life. A postage stamp issued around 1988 featured Organ Bağışı 'Organ Donation,' and Organ Nakli 'Organ Transplant.' This followed in the tradition of an earlier stamp dedicated to Sitma Eradikasyonu 'the eradication of malaria.' Örgüt has acquired a sinister connotation, being used mostly of terrorist organizations, except by some newspapers, notably Cumhuriyet, that are committed to Öztürkçe. The remainder of the press and most individuals prefer the Ottoman teşkilât or the French organizasyon.

Other current malformations using -i/t are karşı 'contrary,' one of Atač's, from the postposition karşı 'opposite'; and eşit 'equal' from the noun eş 'mate.' Tarama Dergisi (1934) gave eşit as used in Istanbul for 'equal,' but the absence of the word from the twelve-volume Derleme Sözlüğü (1963–82) makes one wonder.

-mec/mac. A vice to which the reformers were prone was the use of suffixes that had ceased to be productive—that is, that had anciently been used in word formation but were no longer. How would English-speakers receive some Big Brother's decree outlawing the Latin 'corporation' and replacing it with 'bodydom'? Kâmile İmer (1976: 57) has a pertinent observation:

Türetme yoluya yeni sözcükler yapılrken dilin işlek eklerinin kullanılması dil devrimin bir an once, uzun süre istemeden başarılı olmasını sağlayabilir. İşleklik yitirmiş eklere bu özelliklerini yeniden kazandırmak güç olmakta, belki uzun süre gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle işlek olmayan eklere türetilen sözcükler, kökü bilinse bile, dili kullanında kavramla ilgili çagrışma yol açamamaktadır. Örneğin, -mac/-meç ekine (sarmac 'bigudi', dilmac 'tercümman', v.b. [ve başaklar]) Türk Dil Devriminden sonra işlerlik kazandırmalıya çalışılmaktaysa da, şimdilik bu ekleyip sözcüklerin dilin işlek ekleriyle yapılan sözcükler oranında tutunmadiği gözə çarpımaktadır.

When new words are being made by derivation, the use of the productive suffixes of the language can ensure that the language reform is successful very soon and will not take a long time. It becomes difficult, and may take long, to restore this quality to suffixes that have lost their productivity. That is why words derived with the help of unproductive suffixes, even if their roots be known, are incapable of arousing in the user of the language any relevant association of ideas with the concept. For example, since the start of the language reform there have been attempts to put the suffix -mac/meç (as in sarmac 'hair-curler', dilmac 'interpreter', etc.) back to work. At the moment, however, it is obvious that words constructed with this suffix have not caught on to the same extent as words constructed with the productive suffixes of the language.

She does not make it clear that sarmac and dilmac are not on the same level. While dilmac is an old word (though its Turkish origin is far from certain), sarmac, from sar- 'to wrap,' was a failed attempt to replace bigudi, a French word still current among Turkish coiffeurs and their clients. If dilmac really is Turkish, it is the only example of -mac attached to a noun and one of the very few examples until
modern times of its forming anything other than names of foodstuffs (Clauson 1972: pp. xliii, 500; Doerfer 1963–75: ii, §1010.) Among these names are tutmaç, bulamaç, and uğmaç. Redhouse (1890) defines tutmaç as a dish made of stewed mutton in gobbets, with chickpeas. In Redhouse (1968) it is fresh-made pastry cut in strips and cooked with meat and yoghurt. Redhouse (1890) ingeniously but unconviningly explains it as tutma aş, ‘holding-food’, and either recipe would clearly hold one till the next meal. Doerfer (1963–75: ii, §876) records another popular etymology, no less ingenious but even less plausible: Alexander the Great and his comrades had lost their way and were wandering about with nothing to eat. They said to him, ‘Bizni tutma aç’ (Don’t keep us hungry). Whereupon Alexander, having been supplied with the name, invented the dish. The other two names of dishes are formed from the verbs bulamak ‘to bedaub’ and uğmak ‘to rub and crumble in the palm of the hand’, both being thick soups. Other pre-modern appearances of -maç are in dönemec ‘bend in a road’ (dön- ‘to turn’), kanırtmaç ‘lever’ (kanırt- ‘to bend’) and yırtmaç ‘vent in a garment’ (yırt- ‘to tear’).

Except in demeç ‘official statement’ (de- ‘to say’), which may owe something to démarche, it has been little used by the reformers. Günlemeç, which was Tarama Dergisi’s (1934) offering for tarih ‘date’, was spasmodically used during 1934 in draft legislation, notably in the clause ‘Bu kanun neşri günlemecinden muteberdir’ (This law is in force from its date of publication), but every günlemecinden was replaced by tarihinden before reaching the statute book.

-men/man. One word that had to go was mütehasss ‘expert’, not just because its initial m and its lack of vowel harmony branded it as Arabic but also because it was too easily confused with another Arabic borrowing, mütehasss ‘sensitive’. Its replacement was uzman, said to have been invented by Köprülü, although he never used it himself. The first syllable was an old word for ‘skilled craftsman’ and the second might have been the intensive suffix seen in şişman ‘fat’ and kocaman ‘huge’. But it was not; it was another -man, long familiar to Turks in the word vatman ‘tram-driver’ (sometimes used in place of asansörülçü for the operator of a lift or elevator). For the benefit of readers born since the heyday of the tram or streetcar, it should be explained that vatman is the Turkish spelling of the French wattman, compounded of the two English words watt, the unit of electric power, and man.

Fired by the success of uzman, the reformers went around adding the suffix to verb-stems, producing such misbegotten words as öğretnen ‘teacher’, yazmen ‘secretary’, okutman ‘lector’, and seçmen ‘voter’. Koruman ‘trustee’ is found in legal language. Less successful was the attempt to replace cerrah [A] ‘surgeon’ by yarmän, from yarmak ‘to split’. Its failure was due to the good sense of Turks at large and of Turkish surgeons in particular, who prefer to call themselves operatör anyway.

5 For bizni, see von Gabain (1950: 92). Alexander the Great’s men of course spoke Old Turkic, not modern Turkish.
This suffix also helped to inspire the creation of *teğmen* ‘first lieutenant’. After the promulgation of the Surnames Law in 1934, İbrahim Necmi, for many years Secretary-General (‘Genel Yazman’) of the Language Society, chose ‘Dilmen’ for his surname, compounded of Turkish *dil* ‘language’ and non-Turkish *man*.

The suffix appears also in *barmen* ‘barman’ (which by the mid-1990s had acquired a feminine form, *barmeyd*, replacing the earlier *kadin barmen*), *formen* ‘foreman’, *sportmen* ‘sportsman’, and *rekortmen* ‘record holder’. It is not clear why the last syllable of all these words except *uzman* (the inspiration for the *man* of which is plausibly reputed to be the second syllable of German *Fachmann* ‘expert’) is *-men* rather than *-man* as the laws of vowel harmony and the analogy of *vatman* would have led one to expect. It may be significant that Russian uses *rekordmen*, whereas *recordman* is a French invention (1889). In the early 1950s the façade of the İnönü Stadium in Istanbul bore the slogan ‘Sportmen, Centilmen İnsandır’ (The sportsman is a gentlemanly person), but *sporcu* is more usual nowadays.

Other proposed *-men* words, which fell by the wayside, were *savaşman* ‘warrior’, *öçmen* ‘vengeful’, *bakman* ‘inspector’, *uçman* ‘aviator’, and *ökmen* ‘judge’.

*-*sel/sal* is the most controversial of all the products of the language reform. In brief, its origin is the suffix of the French *culturel* and *principale*. The purifiers wanted a native substitute for the Arabic and Persian adjectival suffix *-i* as in *tarihi* ‘historical’ and *siyastı* ‘political’. They failed to find one, because Turkish, thanks to its use of nouns as qualifiers, has no need of an all-purpose adjectival ending. *-li* does not fit the bill; *tarihi* means ‘having a history’, as in ‘şanlı tarihi bir şehir’ (a city with a glorious history), or ‘bearing a date’ as in ‘4 Haziran tarihi mektubunuz’ (your letter dated 4 June), but it does not translate ‘historical’ as in ‘historical research’, the Turkish for which is ‘tarih araştırmaları’. As Ziya Gökalp (1923: 112–13) pointed out, the use of *-i* ought to be and easily can be avoided; there is no need to say ‘Edebi Hafta’ for ‘Literary Week’, the Turkish for which is *Edebiyat Haftası* ‘Literature Week’. For ‘vital problem’ we don’t have to say ‘hayatı mesele’ when we can say ‘hayat meselesi’. Gökalp was not calling for the total abandonment of *-i*; he would never have given up *akli*, for example, the meaning of which—‘pertaining to the mind, intellectual’—was quite different from that of *akilli* ‘possessed of mind, intelligent’.

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*6 Müladim, the Ottoman term for ‘lieutenant’, also meant ‘adherent’, so the *teğ-* must be from *teğmek* (a variation on *değmek* ‘to touch’), given in *Tarama Dergisi* (1934) for *temas etmek* ‘to make contact’ and presumably the source of Atatürk’s *teğet* ‘tangent’. *Teğmen* may well be an echo of *şegmen* (from the Persian *sagban* ‘dog-keeper’), originally the keepers of the Sultan’s hounds, later incorporated in the Janissaries. *Şegmen* or *seymen* survives as the name for the armed and mounted young men in regional costume who feature in processions at weddings and on festal days.

*7 Gökalp made two exceptions: when it was added to Turkish names to make musical terms, such as *varsağı* (now written and pronounced *varsağı*), a ballad-metre of the Varsaks, a Tatar tribe of southern Anatolia, and when it was added to Turkish nouns to make adjectives of colour, such as *kürsuni* ‘leaden’ and *gümüş* ‘silvery’, for it then became a Turkish suffix, words thus formed being exclusive to Turkish.*
Unaware or heedless of Gökalp’s advice, the reformers took the ending of the French *culture* and used that. It was not until 1983 that *Türkçe Sözlük* came clean and showed both kültür and kültürel as borrowed from French; previous editions had shown the noun but not the adjective as a French borrowing, the implication being that the latter was derived from the former by adding a Turkish suffix. In 1934 Ahmet Çevat Emre put a French -el on to ses ‘voice’ to make sesel for ‘vowel’, to which for good measure he added -ik for the French -ique, making seselik for ‘vocalic’. He also manufactured a word for ‘euphonic’, yeğçavlık, from OT yeğ ‘good’ and çav ‘voice’, plus -lik for the French -lique as in vocalique. Let no kind-hearted reader mistake the lik of yeğçavlık for the Turkish abstract-noun suffix; the lack of vowel harmony—lik not lik—shows that it is not. From the obsolete sü ‘army’, Ibrahim Necmi Dilmén manufactured süel for ‘military’ in 1935 (*Ulus*, 1 July 1935; Levend 1972: 423).

Until then, Turkish had had no denominial suffix in l, but that did not deter the reformers. The Arabic siyāsa ‘politics, policy’ being, as they claimed, obviously derived from the Turkish (actually Mongolian) yasa ‘law’, they saw no need to discard its Turkish form siyaset. But siyası ‘political’ was another matter, because for some inescrutable reason they never claimed that the Arabic suffix -i, whence Turkish -i, was originally Turkish. They therefore replaced siyası with siyasal.

Next for the high jump was millî ‘national’. The Arabic millet having been dislodged by the Mongolian ulus, millî became ulusal—that is to say, the ‘pure Turkish’ replacement for the Arabic millî is half Mongolian and half French, a curiously outlandish way for a Turk to express ‘national’.

Then there was kudși ‘holy’, the Arabic kudsī. Kuds plus -al should have added up to kudsal, but, as the first syllable happened to resemble the Turkish kut ‘good luck’, the d of kudși was replaced by the t of kut, while its s was retained, and ‘holy’ became kutsal. As the excuse for this word’s existence was that it derived from kut, if one subtracted kut the remaining sal had to be a suffix. Coupled with the fact that the -al of siyasal and ulusal as well chanced to be preceded by an s, that seems to have been what


10 OT had a deverbal adjective-suffix: -l after vowels and -il/il after consonants, as in kizil ‘red’ from kiz- ‘to be hot’.

11 Gallagher (1971: 169) says that siyasal was ‘actually an innovation of the nineteenth century Tanzimat period for the Arabic-Turkish siyası’, a dubious assertion for which he gives no evidence.

12 The National Library has retained its name of Milli Kitüphanı. Some years ago the author asked the Librarian how it had escaped becoming Ulusal Kitaplı. With evident glee she replied that its name was enshrined in its charter, which no one had got round to amending and, since the state takeover of TDK in 1983, with luck no one ever would. It is fair to add that a reputable youngish Turkish scholar with whom I discussed the alternative words for ‘library’ did not find Milli Kitüphanı more impressive than Ulusal Kitaplı, but generously told me that kütüphane not kitaplı is still regularly used of one’s personal library.
launched -sel/sal on its merry way: elektriksel and fiziksel, kimyasal ‘chemical’, tarihsel ‘historical’, and so on ad infinitum.

The lusty infant was not slow to extend its sway; having started life as a denominal suffix, it soon became deverbal too: görsel ‘visual’ from gör- ‘to see’, with a matching iştelsel ‘auditory’ from işit- ‘to hear’. For ‘educational’, eğitimsel has an even less legitimate rival: eğitsel. And now, to change the metaphor, in the written language -sel sweeps all before it. It has even produced a noun, sorunsal from sorun ‘problem’, to translate the French la problématique, English ‘problematic(s)’.

Those who claim -sel/sal as an authentic Turkish suffix adduce two words in justification: uysal ‘compliant’ and kumsal ‘sandy tract’. Uysal must be connected with uy- ‘to conform’ (OT ād- ‘to follow’), but no one knows quite how. One suggestion is that the ancient deverbal suffix -l was added to uy-sa- ‘to want to conform’; compare susa- ‘to thirst’ and mühimsel- ‘to regard as important’ and its Öztürkçe replacement önemse- (Lewis 1988: 230). The trouble is that -se- was never added to verb-stems but only to nouns and adjectives. As for kumsal, while Redhouse (1890) and the Kamus give it only as a noun, all recent dictionaries, including Redhouse (1968), give it also as an adjective, ‘sandy’. One does not have to be a conspiracy theorist to believe that it was not an adjective until the reformers set out to justify their new adjective-suffix -sel/sal.

Time was, to express ‘psychological illness’ you would say ‘ruh hastalığı’ (illness of the psyche). Now you say ‘ruhsal hastalık’ (psychish illness), unless you prefer ‘psikolojik hastalık’. The use of -sel/sal may speed the task of translation from works in West European languages, but it goes against the grain of Turkish and has markedly affected the style of much modern writing, particularly on technical matters. ‘Literary criticism’, once ‘edebiyat tenkidi’, became ‘edebiyat eleştirisi’, then ‘yazın eleştirisi’. Some writers talk about ‘yazinsal eleştirii’, which is a direct translation of ‘literary criticism’ but to a literate Turk does not convey criticism of literature but criticism which is literary.

Kâmile İmer (1976: 57) strikes a warning note:

Dil devrimi sırasında herhangi bir kavramın anlatımında, onu karşılayacak sözçük dilde bulunamıyor ve türetilmiyorsa yabancı dildeki anlamanın etkisi altında yerli dil öğeleriyle çevirme işi yapılabilir. Bu yöntem her ne kadar yerli dil öğelerinin kullanımını sağlamaktaysa da çok başvurulduğunda dilin kendi anlatım özelliklerinden uzaklaşmasına yol açabileceği düşünülmeli ve zorda kalmadığa başvurulmamalıdır. Çünkü her ulusal kavramları adlandırışındaki tutum—kimi benzerlikler olmasına karşın—genel olarak değişiktir.

In the course of language reform, if, in expressing any concept, no word corresponding to it can be found in the language or can be derived, it is possible to do a job of translation with elements of the native language under the influence of its meaning in the foreign language. One must bear in mind that, while this method ensures the use of elements of the native language, if it is resorted to overmuch it can open the way to the language’s becom-

13 The author’s excuse for changing the metaphor is that, although Turks do not go in much for puns, he imagines that some lovers of the older language must have reflected that sel [A] means ‘torrent’.
ing distanced from its own characteristic modes of expression, and it should not be resorted to unless one is forced to it. For every nation’s attitude in its way of finding names for concepts—despite the existence of some resemblances—is generally different.

Many Turks dislike -sel intensely. Nurullah Ataç, the great neologizer, used it and defended it, but he did not like it. Perhaps significantly, it was not mentioned in a TDK brochure on word construction published in 1962 (Dizdaroglu 1962). Yet its defenders include many writers and scholars whose opinions cannot be brushed aside. This is what Fahri Iz, lexicographer and historian of literature, has to say about it:


Fransızca ya da İngilizce değil de Türkçe düşünüsekte tarımsal ilaç yerine tarm ilaç, ştiirsel sanat yerine şiir sanatı, parasal sorun yerine para sorunu der de yazarız. Bununla birlikte, kimi durumlarında dilde bu eke gerekseme vardır: sinirsel nefes darlığı, tanrısalc komedi v.b. gibi. (Iz 1984: 13)

There is also the suffix -sel, which could of itself be the subject of an article. Here let me briefly say this: our need for this suffix is limited. The adjective-groups of European languages appear with us as noun-groups. We do not say ‘Egyptian Market’ and ‘maritime commerce’, as in the European languages, but ‘Egypt Market’ and ‘sea commerce’.

If we think not in French or English but in Turkish, in place of ‘agricultural chemical’, ‘the poetic art’, ‘monetary problem’, we say and write ‘agriculture chemical’, ‘the poetry art’, ‘money problem’. Nevertheless, in some situations the language does have a need for this suffix, as in ‘nervous shortage of breath’, ‘The Divine Comedy’, and so on.

So erudite a man as Aydin Sayli (1978: 468) found -sel useful and necessary:

Özel terimler kullanma ihtiyacının baskını kendilerinde hissedeler ve mevcut terimlerin yetersizliğinin yarattığı sıkıntı duymak durumunda bulunanlar için sel ve sal eklerinin bir cankurtaran gibi birçok güçlere göre getirdiği de bir vaka olarak ortadadır. Bu ekliler büyük bir çoğunluk yadırgamamaktadır. Ilkin sel ile sal’ı tereddütle karşılışlanmış son-radan bunlara aşılmış, yararlı olduklarını görmüş ve bunlarda Türkçenin selikasına ve estetiğine uymayan bir taraf bulunduğu düşüncesine iltifat etmemeye karar vermiş kimselerin sayısı da az değildir.

It is a manifest fact that for those who feel a pressing need to use special terminology and who find themselves constrained by the inadequacy of existing terms, the suffixes sel and sal are a lifeline remedying a good many difficulties. A large majority do not find these suffixes strange. There are also not a few people who were at first hesitant about sel and sal but have subsequently grown accustomed to them, seen that they were useful, and decided to disregard the notion that there was something about them that did not conform to correct Turkish usage and the aesthetics of the language.

Nor is it mentioned in Korkmaz (1969). In view of Korkmaz’s exposure of its illegitimacy during the controversy referred to in note 8 of this chapter, that is hardly surprising.

Iz (1984) is a privately printed brochure summarizing the author’s previous writings and lectures on Öztürkçe.
Peyami Safa, no great admirer of Öztürkçe, regarded -sel as incorrectly formed and never used it unless he had to, but his taste was offended by having to add the Arabic -i to French words. Reproached by a conservative critic for using fiziksel instead of fiziki for ‘physical,’ he replied that he found words such as fiziki, lojiki, matematiki, and muziki irritating, and preferred the forms in -sel/sal (Safa 1970: 189–90). He went on, ‘‘Dudaksal’’ demeyelim de ‘‘Dudaki’’ mi diyelim? Yahut yine buyurun Arapçaya: ‘Şefvi!’ Bu gidişle oyle olacak gibi’ (Are we not to say dudaksal [‘labial’, from dudak ‘lip’] but dudak? Or by all means revert to the Arabic: şefvi! At this rate, it looks as though that’s how it’s going to be).

So, like it or not, Turkish is stuck with it, and the language of the intellectuals moves further and further away from that of the people. Social anthropologists and writers in glossy magazines may talk of country life as kirsal yaşanti; villagers prefer kir hayatı.

-tay. This new suffix was extracted from kurultay, originally kuriltay, the form taken in Turkish by the Mongolian kurilta ‘assembly of the nobles,’16 borrowed in the thirteenth or fourteenth century. Like the modern reformers who resuscitated it, their forebears must have felt it to be derived from Turkish kurulmak ‘to be set up’ because, in three of the first four citations of the word in Tarama Sözlüğü (1963–77), it is used in conjunction with that verb, one example being ‘Kuriltay kuralim, meşverete oturalım’ (Let us convene an assembly and sit down to take counsel together). Tarama Sözlüğü misspells it kurultay, although the correct vocalization is shown in the Kamus.17 The last citation in Tarama Sözlüğü, from a Turkish translation of an eleventh-century Persian–Persian dictionary, deserves quoting in full, not least because it shows that kuriltay was not in use in Turkey in 1789, when the translation was completed:

Gavgə [Fa.]: Çığlıtı ve ses ve şamata ve arbede ve karkása manasındar ve encümen ve meclis ve cemaat manasındar, Çağatayca kuriltay derler.

Gavgə [P]: Confused animal noises, sounds, hubbub, tumult, dispute; also meeting, assembly, gathering; in Chaghatay they say kuriltay.

One supposes that the last three words of the Turkish apply only to the second set of meanings.

Once kurultay was established, its last syllable was added to the originally Middle Persian kamu ‘all’, the Öztürkçe for ‘public’, making Kamutay, intended to replace Büyük Millet Meclisi ‘Grand National Assembly’. The new suffix was also added to the noun yargı ‘decision’ and to two verb-stems, damış ‘to consult’ and sayış- ‘to settle accounts’, making Yargıtay ‘Supreme Court of Appeal’, Damıştat

16 From kuri ‘to gather’ and the suffix -ita. See Poppe (1954: §163) and Doerfer (1963–75): i, §305). The latter discusses the suggested origins of the final y, one being that the Turks equated the last syllable of kurilta with toy ‘festa! occasion, banquet’.
17 I have corrected the spelling in quoting from Tarama Sözlüğü.
‘Council of State’, and Sayıştay ‘Exchequer and Audit’. These three survived (though by 1983 Danıştay had become Danışma Meclisi), but Kamutay did not; it never stood much of a chance, because everyone knew Meclis, whereas few had ever heard of the other three institutions or cared what those who did know about them might choose to call them. One oddity should be recorded: kamutay, with a small k, appears in Article 24 of the 1945 Constitution, the Anayasa, where the 1924 Constitution had ‘heyet-i umumiye’ (plenary body):

1924: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi heyet-i umumiyesi her teşrin-i sani iptidasında bir sene için kendisine bir reis ve üç reis vekili intihab eder.

1945: Türkiye Büyük Millet Meclisi kamutayı her kasım ayı başında kendine bir yıl için bir Başkan, üç Başkanvekili seçer.

The Grand National Assembly of Turkey in plenary session shall, at the beginning of every November, elect for itself a chairman and three deputy chairmen.

Ataç made an Öztürkçe word for ‘academy’ by adding -tay to the neologism for ‘science’: bilimtay. This won no currency, doubtless because there is no internationally recognized Turkish Academy: when scholars wistfully talk about one, as they periodically do, the word they use is Akademi.

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18 The former names were respectively Temyiz Mahkemesi, Şura-ı Devlet or Devlet Şurası, and Divan-ı Muhasebat or Muhasebat Divani.
Concoctions

In the Introduction I mentioned three nineteenth-century English neologisms: *birdlore*, *foreword*, and *folklore*. What happened to them? While *birdlore* sank without trace, so completely have *foreword* and *folklore* been accepted into the language that few are aware that they were deliberate inventions. There are parallels in Turkish. Many neologisms have passed away, such as *ução* for ‘victory’, *tün* for ‘night’, *yazgaç* for ‘pen’. On the other hand, a great many neologisms have become so much a part of the Turkish vocabulary that they are used even by the most vehement opponents of the reform, either because they do not recognize that they are inventions or because they know that the older words will not be understood by a mass audience or mass readership. People nowadays say *genel* because it is the only word they have for ‘general’; *umumi* being close to obsolescence, though *umumiyette* is still used for ‘generally’ alongside *genellikle*. Some neologisms survive but with meanings other than their inventors intended. *Folklor* is current in Turkey for ‘folklore’, though young people use it for ‘folk dancing’. The invention proposed in *Cep Kilavuzu* (1935) for *tayyare* ‘aeroplane’ was *uçku*, which did not win popular favour, perhaps because it was too reminiscent of *uçkur* ‘trouser-belt, pyjama-cord’. *Uçak*, now the only word for ‘aeroplane’, was originally offered in *Cep Kilavuzu* as a replacement for *tayyare meydani* ‘airfield’.

One would have expected the Language Society to keep records of who invented which neologism and when, but it does not. The result is that, while information about the origin of this or that word may occasionally be gleaned from scholarly works, one is mostly thrown back on anecdotal evidence, either oral or in popular books and articles with no scholarly pretensions. Nor has the Society yet got round to producing the dictionary on historical principles that has been high on its list of priorities since its inception. At the head of the title-page of the first *Tarama Sözluğu* (1943–57) are the words ‘Türkiye Türkçesinin Tarihi Sözluğu Hazırlıklarından’ (Part of the Preparations for the Historical Dictionary of the Turkish of Turkey), but they do not appear in the second (1963–77). Two non-Turkish scholars have gone a long way towards filling the gap, Sir Gerard Clauson with his *Etymological Dictionary of Pre-Thirteenth-Century Turkish* (1972), and Gerhard Doerfer with his *Türkische und Mongolische Elemente im Neupersischen* (1963–75); why has the Society done nothing? Certainly one reason is that the scholars who should have got on with the task in the middle 1930s were reluctant to follow the ethos of the time by ascribing Turkish origins to words that they well
knew to be Arabic or Persian. Happily, the Society announced in 1995 that the preparation of a historical dictionary was once more on the agenda. İnşallah, we shall see.

It will be remembered that three methods were prescribed for producing the words required to make Turkish independent of foreign vocabulary: drawing on the resources of the spoken language (why say ‘commence’ when you can say ‘begin’?), and of old texts (why say ‘Parliament’ when you can resurrect ‘Witenagemot’?), and compounding existing words and suffixes (why use ‘ornithology’ when you can manufacture¹ ‘birdlore’?). But in addition—though the Society seems never to have sanctioned, much less prescribed, this fourth method officially—the reformers felt free to use their imagination to invent replacements for the doomed Arabic and Persian words. To enlist the help of Lewis Carrol for this final example, why say ‘a white badger with long hind legs and stag-like horns, living chiefly on cheese’ when you can fabricate ‘tove’?

The Society published a number of works offering guidance on how to create neologisms.² Few of the reformers seem to have paid much attention to them, or to Sayılı’s (1978) brilliant study. The sad truth is that a great many of the new words were the work of people with no qualifications for the job, a category that included a number of the Society’s salaried experts.

Nihad Sâmi Banarlı, who was a consultant to TDK’s Technical Terms Commission, tells of an incident at the Sixth Kurultay, in 1949, which did not find its way into the published proceedings (Banarlı 1967). A question was asked from the floor about the principle governing the formation of new technical terms. The ensuing embarrassed silence was eventually broken by Saim Ali Dilemre, the chairman of the Linguistics and Etymology Commission. An amiable doctor of medicine, not of language, he could stand it no longer: ‘Arkadaşlar, kemküm etmiyelim. Bizim prensipimiz miresipimiz yoktu, uyduruyorduk!’ (Friends! Let’s not beat about the bush. We had no principle or anything of that sort. We’ve been making them up as we went along!).

Incidentally, one of TDK’s two stock responses when accused of uyurma, ‘faking’ (the other being to deny it) was to claim to be continuing a long-established Ottoman practice. Many Ottoman words were in fact manufactured by Turks. Nezaket ‘politeness’ looks Arabic but was made in Turkey from the Persian nāzuk, which Turks spell nazik and pronounce /nâzik/, as if it were an Arabic present participle like kâtip ‘writer’. Another such Turkish creation was felâket ‘catastrophe’, on the same Arabic pattern as nezaket, from maflûk, which, although it appears in dictionaries of modern Arabic as well as of Persian, is not classical Arabic but a Persian invention, quasi-Arabic for ‘afflicted’, made from the

¹ The Language Society did not talk about ‘manufacturing’ but ‘derivation’, tıretme. The Society’s opponents prefer uyurma‘making up, faking’ and some of them call Öztürkçe ‘Uydurukça’ (Fakeish), or ‘Kurumca’ (Turk Dil Kurumu-ish).
Arabic *falak* ‘celestial sphere’ and so ‘destiny’.3 In the main, Ottoman creations were made from Arabic roots in accordance with the rules of Arabic. It was not an Arab but a Turk who was responsible for *tahtelbahir* ‘submarine’ (‘under the sea’, whereas the Arabs use *gavwāsa* ‘diver’). The identity of one such inventor is known: *tayyare* ‘aeroplane’ was derived from the Arabic *tāra* ‘to fly’ by Fazıl Ahmet Aykaç, an educationalist and minor poet (1884–1967).4

Critics of the Society called it *Alaylilar Derneği* (The Regimentals’ Association). *Alaylilar* was an old-fashioned term for army officers risen from the ranks, as distinct from *Mektepliler*, officers who had been through military school. Gültekin (1983: 73–4) defends the former, not very persuasively:


Atatürk did not see working on language just as the business of the experts. It was not possible for the experts to make a success of this on their own. Since the aim was to eliminate the difference between the spoken and the written language and to enhance the language spoken by the people, it was essential that all who laboured in the fields of scholarship and culture, and even the people as well, should participate. The purging of Ottoman and the advancement of Turkish was a democratic advance. The people’s participation in the work on language is the consequence of this democratic advance.

There are two flaws in the argument. The first is that most people’s participation in the language reform was limited to answering the village schoolmaster’s questions, and can rarely have gone beyond ‘Round here we don’t say spades, we call ’em shovels.’5 The second is that there was no excuse for denying the *mektepliler* a voice in vetting the contributions of all the people, including those who laboured in fields of scholarship other than language—in this context, the *alaylilar*. The trouble with the *alaylilar* was that they tended to resort to inventing words unnecessarily, because they gave up too soon on trying to make words from Turkish roots and Turkish suffixes, not having thought deeply enough about either.

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3 The adverbial use of the Arabic accusative ending (*tanwīn*), as in *resmen* ‘officially’ and *şeklen* ‘in form’, gave rise to some solecisms: from Persian *pišīn* ‘in advance’ came *peşinen* with the same meaning, as well as an Arabic feminine plural *pešīnāt* ‘down payment’; from Turkish *ayrı* ‘separate’ came *ayrıyeten* ‘separately’. More recently, from the Western *culture* and *normal* came *kültüren* (culturally) and *normalen* (normally), both still heard. Then there is *yakinen*, good Ottoman for ‘certainly’, often used nowadays to mean ‘closely’, as if it were not from Arabic *yaqīn* (certain) but Turkish *yukun* (near).

4 Some of these Turkish inventions were adopted into Arabic. *Tayyara*, for example, is the usual word for aeroplane in spoken Arabic, though in the written language *f'dira* is preferred.

5 One recent contribution made to the language by the people is the growing use of ‘Alo’—the ‘Hallo’ one says when answering the telephone—to mean ‘telephone number’; it can be seen preceding the number on shop fronts and even on police cars. An older contribution was *cankurtaran*, literally ‘life-saver’, for ‘ambulance’.
In the early days of the reform, however, someone must have thought to good effect about the suffix -i which, added to verb-stems, had made nouns or adjectives such as yazı ‘writing’, dizi ‘line, row’, dolu ‘full’, ölü ‘dead’. That someone—who, to be fair, may for all we know have been an alaylı—had the idea of adding it to more verb-stems. Already in 1934 Tarama Dergisi gave kazı (from kaz- ‘to dig’) for hafriyat [A] ‘excavation’, and ani (from an- ‘to call to mind’) for hatıra [A] ‘memoire, reminiscence’. The Kamus gives ‘tercüme etmek’ (to translate) as one of the senses of çevirmek ‘to turn’, but çeviri ‘translation’ is not in Tarama Dergisi—i.e. it was created after 1934. So were başarlı ‘success’, from başarmak ‘to succeed’, and many other benign neologisms. Cep Kilavuzu (1935) gave konu, from kon- ‘to be placed’, as ‘= 1. Saded, mevzu; 2. Husus, bab’ (‘scope’, ‘subject’, ‘matter’, ‘chapter’). Felsefe ve Gramer Terimleri (1942) came down in favour of it as the equivalent for mevzu ‘subject’, which by now it has largely replaced. 

It must be emphasized that the neologisms singled out here for criticism are in a minority, though a large one; most of those made by compounding existing words and suffixes are blameless. For ‘computer’, bilgisayar ‘bit-of-information counter’ is neater than the earlier elektronik beyin ‘electronic brain’ or kümputer, altyapı, literally ‘under-structure’, is surely preferable to the French borrowing enfrastrüktür and, if netice [A] ‘end, result’ had to go, its replacement sonuç ‘latter end’ is not at all bad. Nor is çağrılm ‘association of ideas’, a calque on tedai [A], both meaning ‘mutual calling’. Tekel ‘single-hand’, one of Aksoy’s coinages, has replaced inhisar ‘monopoly’. And there are many more, ingeniously and regularly formed and not intrinsically unattractive.

English, unlike Turkish, is an unreformed language; if proof of this statement were needed one has only to consider the two words ‘osteopath’ and ‘psychopath’ and decide how one would explain to a foreign student the meaning of their final syllable. Or why, given the noun ‘destruction’ and the verb ‘to destroy’, the verb belonging to ‘construction’ is not ‘to constro’? English-speakers take that sort of anomaly for granted, but one cannot help thinking that while the Turks were reforming their language they could have been more logical and systematic. In their words for ‘geography’, ‘geology’, and ‘geometry’—coğrafya, jeoloji, geometri—they still keep three different versions of the Greek geb ‘earth’: ç, je, ge. They do have a neologism for ‘geology’—yerbilimi—but not for the other two.

Taken as a whole, the neologisms exhibit very little trace of direction or planning. Nothing in yazım ‘spelling’, yazın ‘literature’, and yazıt ‘inscription’ gives any hint of what they are intended to mean except that they have something to do with writing. Soru was an old word for ‘question’, rarely used since the seventeenth century until it was resurrected to replace sual [A], but there is no intrinsic reason

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6. ‘The secularization of Turkish life finds expression in the replacement of Arabic muvaﬄak “successful” and mansur or muzaﬀer “victorious”, originally denoting that God has given success or victory, with Turkish başarlı and yener, which indicate man’s own achievement.’ (Heyd 1954: 94.)

7. Konu is a calque on a calque: mawdû [A], literally ‘placed, put down’, whence Turkish mevzu, is a calque on the Latin subiectum.
why the neologisms sorun and sorum, both derived from sor- ‘to ask’, should mean respectively ‘problem’ and ‘responsibility’ (for which the derivative sorumluluk is more usual). Sorun, incidentally, can be a bit of a nuisance, since it may mean either ‘the problem’ or ‘your question’ (soru-n), and as their genitives look and sound identical (sorun-un, soru-nun) it is a toss-up whether sorunun çözümü means ‘the solution of the problem’, the solution of the question’, or ‘the solution of your question’; similarly, yazının can be the genitive of yazı ‘writing, article’, or yazın ‘your article’, or yazın ‘literature’, though perhaps this is of no great moment.

Another cluster, of words seemingly derived from kur- ‘to set up’, is kurum ‘society, corporation’, kural ‘rule, norm’, kuram ‘theory’, and kurul ‘committee’. Both kuram and kurum are old words. Kurum occurs in DLT with the meaning ‘in order of rank’ (Dankoff and Kelly 1982–5: iii. 147; Clauson 1972: 660). Cep Kilavuzu (1935) gives it as a Turkish equivalent for bünye [A] ‘physical structure’. There is no apparent justification for that, any more than for its now meaning ‘theory’, except that somebody or some body said it should. Kurum is recorded in Tarama Sözlüğü (1963–77) as occurring in two dictionaries, one of the fourteenth century, the other of the eighteenth and nineteenth, in the sense not of ‘society, corporation’ but of ‘form, shape’. Since that was the original meaning of heyet [A], used in Ottoman for ‘committee’, kurum may have been resurrected as a calque on heyet. As for kurul, it looks like an arbitrary truncation of kurultay. Kur, given in Cep Kilavuzu as = Heyet = Corps’, could be another such, but the resemblance between it and corps is suspicious. Another and more likely source is suggested by the entry in Cep Kilavuzu under ‘Genel Başkanlık Kuru’: = Umumi Riyaset Divanı ‘General Presidential Board’. Kur for divan could be the French cour, meaning ‘court’, just like divan.

The assumption behind the change of vocabulary was that the meaning of neologisms constructed from Turkish roots and suffixes would be readily intelligible to everybody, unlike Ottoman words; while a Turk might not know mefhum [A] ‘concept’, he could at once understand kavram, manufactured from kavra- ‘to grasp’ plus -m. Well, he might, unless he was from one of the many regions of Anatolia where it means ‘handful’. And when the suffix was itself a neologism he would be even worse off, especially if it coincided in form with a familiar word. Theoretically, while an unschooled Turk could make nothing of müselles [A], he would immediately understand üçgen to be a triangle, or could at least guess the meaning from the context. He might if he were a townie, but if he were a villager he would recognize it only as meaning ‘three fallow fields’. A villager from the neighbourhood of Isparta would have no difficulty with özek, the regular word in those parts for ‘centre’. To most other Anatolians, however, it would mean only the pole of an ox-cart. A townie, knowing öz ‘own’ and ek ‘patch, addition’, would never guess that it was the official replacement for merkez ‘centre’.

The old word for ‘conscience’ was vicdan, Arabic wijdan, from the root of wajada ‘to find’. The new word is a calque on that, bulunç from bulun- ‘to be found’ plus the suffix seen in utanç ‘shame’ and sevinç ‘joy’. The snag is that, if
you were not an Arabic scholar, the most you could make of *bulunç* was that it had something to do with being found; ‘foundling’?

To replace *kültür* for ‘culture’, Ziya Gökalp produced *hars*, the Arabic *hart* ‘tillage, agriculture’, which never achieved wide currency. Among possible alternatives for it, *Tarama Dergisi* (1934) offered *ekin* from *ek-* ‘to sow.’ This second-degree calque is used by some writers but has not superseded *kültür*, while *kültürel* is probably more usual for ‘cultural’ than *ekinsel*. To country folk *ekin* means what it has always meant, ‘crop, sowing’.

Plenty of peculiar creations are to be found in *Felsefe ve Gramer Terimleri*, the little book of philosophical and grammatical terminology published in 1942. They include *alması* ‘alternation’, *değişim* ‘mutation’, *koram* ‘hierarchy’, *sonurgu* ‘result’, *uran* ‘industry’, *simge* ‘symbol’, *imge* ‘image’, and *yöntem* ‘system’, ‘method’. An odd collection; without spending too much time on it, one may say offhand that the first syllable of *alması* is more likely to derive from the French *alternation* than from *al-* ‘to take’, that *değişim* results from a deliberate maiming of *değiş* ‘to change’, and that there is no discernible reason why *uran* should mean ‘industry’. As for *koram*, it is shown in *Tarama Dergisi* (1934) as meaning *muahharen* ‘subsequently’ in three Siberian dialects. How it came to be offered as an equivalent of ‘hierarchy’ is anybody’s guess. The suffixes of *alması* and *sonurgu* confound the imagination. More worth spending a little time on are the last three words in the above selection, *simge, imge, yöntem*, not only because they are all current today but because they have been trawled from the lowest depths to which the language reformers ever sank.

The headwords (in bold italic) of the following notes on the more controversial or otherwise interesting neologisms are in alphabetical order, except for two pairs that are closely connected: *çoğun* comes after *zor*, and *imge* after *simge*.

*Araç* ‘means’ and *gereç* ‘material’ both appear in *Cep Kilavuzu* (1935), *araç* being glossed as ‘= Vasita = Moyen’, *gereç* as ‘= Levazim, malzeme = Matériel’, and both are current. Like *vasta* before it, *araç* is used for ‘vehicle’ as well as for ‘means’, and is the fashionable new term for ‘car’. Timurtaş (1979: 26) does not approve of either *araç* or *gereç*; *araç* was made from *ara* ‘space between’, but -ç, he says, is no longer productive as a denominal suffix. He should have known, however, that the average Öztürkçeci had a mind above that sort of consideration. As for *gereç*, he assumes that it was arbitrarily made by adding -ç to *gerek* ‘necessary’ minus the final *k*, a change for which there is no justification. There is, however, another possibility: that its basis was not *gerek* but the verb *germek* ‘to stretch’, and that it was intended as a calque on *madde* [A] ‘material’, which is from the Arabic root *M–D–D* ‘to stretch, extend’. Whatever its origin, it could serve as an example of a word apparently made from a non-existent root and a dubious suffix.

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6 TDK published two books on the theme of language and culture. The first, Baydur (1964), was entitled *Dil ve Kültür*; the second, Köksal (1980), *Dil ile Ekin*. 
Bağımsızlık is the established replacement for istiklâl [A] ‘independence’. Cep Kılavuzu (1935), in the second part, from Turkish to Ottoman, has bağünsz for ‘independent’, while Felsefe ve Gramer Terimleri (1942) has bağınlaşma for ‘interdependence’. It is not clear who changed the n into m, and when, but it had happened by 1955. -ım is a deverbal suffix, but there is no verb bağ-, so the root has to be the noun bağ ‘tie, bond, impediment’. That is not its only fault, as Timurtas (1979: 41) notes: ‘Bağımsız kelimesi, sadece, bakımsız kelimesinin fonetik değişikliğe uğrayan şekli olabilir. (Türkçede iki sesli arasındaki k’lar yumuşayıp g olmaktadır: toprak-ı topraği, ak’tan ağarmak gibi) (The word bağimsız can only be the form taken by the word bakımsız [‘uncared-for’] when it undergoes phonetic change. (In Turkish, intervocalic ks are softened, becoming g: toprak-ı becomes topraği, and ağarmak is from ak). All one can say for bağimszlk is that its meaning is not so unguessable as that of its partner özgürlük (see below).

Bay, Bayan. ‘Mr’, ‘Mrs, Miss, Ms’. The purpose of this innovation was to replace the old titles Bey and Hanım, which followed the name, by titles preceding it, as in the Western languages. In OT, bay meant ‘rich, a rich man’, and ‘nobleman’. It was so used in Turkish, and the phrase ‘bay u geda’ [P] (rich man and beggar) occurs in Ottoman poetry into the nineteenth century.

Both bay and bayan are found in Tarama Dergisi (1934), but not as replacements for Bey and Hanım. Nor do they appear in Cep Kılavuzu (1935), which must have been in the press on 26 November 1934, when the Grand National Assembly was debating Law No. 2590: ‘Efendi, bey, paşa, gibi läkab ve unvanların kaldırıldığına dair kanun’ (Law on the abolition of such appellations and titles as efendi, bey, and pasha). Several Deputies suggested that Bay and Bayan could be used in place of Bey and Hanım, and Dahiliye Encümeni, the Assembly’s Committee on Home Affairs, took the same view:

Türkler hususı muhabere ve muhavercelerde bir kimseye ve cemaate hitap ederken adını önünde gelmek şartı ile erkeğe, ere yani erkişiye bay, kadın da bayan diye hitap edebilirler. Bu tâbirler öz türkcédir ve Türklerin ilk devirlerinde kullanılmıştır. Teveffük ve imtiyaz ifade etmez. 9

When addressing somebody or a group of people in correspondence and conversation, Turks may address a male, a man, that is to say, a male person, as ‘bay’, and a woman as ‘bayan’, on condition that it precedes the name. These terms are pure Turkish and have been used in the first era of the Turks. They do not express superiority or privilege.

There is no clear reason why bayan, a Mongolian word for ‘rich’, was chosen to be the feminine counterpart of bay. Eyuboğlu’s etymological dictionary ignores it. Örnekleriyle Türkçe Sözlük (1995–6), the Ministry of Education’s new four-volume dictionary, does not give etymologies, but the compilers’ feelings about

9 TBMM Zabit Ceridesi (1934), Devre iv, Cilt 25: 40–52, at 52 (Minutes of the Grand National Assembly, session 4, vol. 25). The odd ‘erkeğe, ere yani erkişiye’ (a male, a man, that is to say, a male person) must be due to inadequate editing, understandable in view of the speed with which this law was rushed through.
Öztürkçe in general and bay in particular are evident from the sole example they give of its use, a couplet by Necip Fazıl Kıskakürek, who was, to put it mildly, a rabid reactionary:

Bir şey koptu benden, her şeyi tutan bir şey;
Benim adıım Bay Necip, babamınki Fazıl Bey.

Something has been wrested from me, something embracing everything;
My name is Bay Necip, my father's was Fazıl Bey.

Bey has in fact never fallen out of use. Men named, say, Hasan Öztürk have generally been called Hasan Bey in speech and in private correspondence, though the envelope of the letter would be addressed to Bay Hasan Öztürk or, more recently, Sayın Hasan Öztürk. Similarly, letters for his wife Ayşе, though addressed to Bayan or Sayın Ayşе Öztürk, will begin 'Sevgili Ayşе Hanım'. The use of 'Bey' has indeed extended lately: taxi-drivers used to be addressed as Şoför Efendi, but in the late 1990s the usual form is Şoför Bey.

Boyut 'dimension' might have been derived from Turkish boy 'length' by suffixing -it, but in fact it was one of Atatürk's ingenious essays at providing native etymologies for Ottoman words, in this case bu'ut, Arabic bu'd. Aksan (1976: 25–6) defends it in a footnote of which the first sentence is mendacious, while the second tries moral suasion to make the first acceptable:

Sözcük Ar. buu't'un Türkçeleştirilmişsi değil, boy'dan türetilmiş yeni bir öğedir. Onu Atatürk'ün türetilğini de burada ekmeliyiz.

The word is not the Turkicized form of Arabic buut; it is a new item derived from boy ['length']. Here we should add that it was Atatürk who derived it.

Budun. Erer (1973: 187–8) has a tale to tell (from Ali Fuad Bağış) about Cemil [Bilsel], who taught Devletler Hukuku, International Law, at the School of Law in Ankara. On his way to class one day in 1932, he ran into Sadri Maksudi and asked him how to translate the name of his subject into Öztürkçe, and was immediately told, 'Budunların ara yargısı'. Budun is given in Tarama Dergisi (1934) as an OT word for 'people'; the true form, as we have seen, was bodun. Yargı is shown in the same work as meaning adalet 'justice' or hüküm 'judgement', but Sadri Maksudi was misusing it in the sense of hukuk 'law'. Cemil went into his class and, slightly misremembering what Maksudi had said, began his lecture with 'Budunun ara yargısı . . .'. The students, understanding the first two words in their normal meanings—of his/her/your thigh and 'space between'—and recognizing yargı as something to do with yar- 'to split', began to giggle. The unfortunate lecturer hastily began again, with 'Devletler Hukuku . . .', but it was too late; by that time the class was out of control.

Değin, dek. These old words for 'until' have never quite died, though they have long had difficulty in competing with kadar [A], and still do, in spite of the
encouragement given to their use by the language reform. ‘From Istanbul to Edirne it’s level ground all the way’ can be expressed as ‘İstanbul’dan Edirne’ye değin/dek/kadar hep düz yerlerdir’, but saying ‘değin’ or ‘dek’ in such a sentence sounds not so much Öztürkçe as provincial. In writing they are more frequent, but not as common as kadar.

Denli. This word, anciently teñlig ‘equal’, ‘as much as’, appeared in Ottoman as denli, but by the late seventeenth century it had been driven out of literary use by kadar. The reform resurrected it, but while ‘Ne denli?’ (How much?) and ‘bu denli’ (this much) are seen in writing, as in ‘Bu denli önemli mi?’ (Is it so important?), in conversation almost everybody sticks to ‘Ne kadar?’ and ‘bu kadar’.

Doğa has not totally ousted tabiat for ‘nature’, though its adjective doğal ‘natural’ is more common in writing than tabii. In speech, tabii remains in full use for ‘of course’, ‘naturally’, though in writing it is often replaced by ‘doğal olarak’.

Doğal appears in Tarama Dergisi (1934) as found in Konya for gubar [A] ‘dust’, though with a query. Cep Kilavuzu (1935) gives doğa for mizac ‘temperament’, and Felsefe ve Gramer Terimleri (1942) gives it for ‘nature’, together with doğal for ‘natural’. The compilers of the latter work may or may not have known that doğa already existed in various regions of Anatolia with such diverse meanings as ‘kid’, ‘turkeycock’, ‘small-eared lamb born with horns’, and ‘the flat upper surface of a knuckle-bone’. Timurtaş (Bozgeyik 1995: 76) makes an interesting non-grammatical point:


The Western languages have ‘nature’, which comes from a Latin word meaning birth. According to our belief, however, what is called ‘nature’ is not born but created, which means that this [word doğa] is wrong, conceptually and semantically. We cannot say ‘doğa’, for nature was not spontaneously born; it was divinely created.

Egemenlik. Cep Kilavuzu (1935) defines it as ‘= Hâkimiyet = Souveraineté’. Eyuboğlu (1988: 102) explains egemen as ege or iye ‘owner, master’ plus -men. Tarama Sözlüğü (1963–77) shows eye or iye as in use from the fourteenth to the sixteenth century, but Eyuboğlu spoils it by citing egemen as used ‘halk ağzında’ (in the popular language) for ‘master’, an assertion not borne out by Derleme Sözlüğü (1963–82). Nor does he explain how the intervocalic g of egemen escaped softening to ğ. As egemenlik is obviously derived from the Greek ħegemonia (which Ziya Gökbal had long ago borrowed as hegemonya), we need spend no more time on it. It should be noted, however, that it appears on the wall of the Grand National Assembly chamber in the slogan ‘Egemenlik Kayıtsız Şartsız Milletindir’ (Sovereignty belongs unrestrictedly and unconditionally to the Nation), with an attribution to Atatürk. But Atatürk never said that; the word he used for
sovereignty when he enunciated the formula was hâkimiyet, in keeping with the Ottoman nature of the rest. In his Öztürkçe period he said ‘Egemenlik kayıtsız şartsız Ulusundur’, leaving the two middle words in Ottoman. Koşul for ‘condition’ was not invented until nine years after Atatürk’s death, nor has any one-word substitute for kayıtsız yet been devised.

Eşgüdüm ‘coordination’ is a much criticized word, omitted by at least two dictionaries, Doğan (1988) and Örnekleriyle Türkçe Sözlük (1995–6). Eş is ‘mate’ and güdüm is ‘direction’, a noun derived from güt-, originally ‘to drive (animals) to pasture’, more recently ‘to manage, to direct’ (‘güdümlü mermi’ means ‘guided missile’). Eşgüdüm has its following, but most people involved in such matters prefer koordinasyon.

Evrensel ‘universal’. This looks as if it were deliberately fabricated to resemble its West European equivalent, and so it was, but the closeness of the resemblance was a stroke of luck for whoever first thought of attaching the bogus -sel to the ancient and respectable evren. Evren is a genuine old word for ‘universe’, explained by Clauson (1972: 13–14) as presumably a derived noun from evir- ‘to turn’: ‘if so, the general connotation is of something which revolves; hence “the firmament” which was regarded as a revolving dome . . .’. No doubt via the idea of ‘coil’, it also meant ‘large snake’, ‘dragon’, in which sense it was used in Ottoman from the fourteenth century to the nineteenth. Türkçe Sözlük (1988) defines evren as the totality of heavenly entities, creation, cosmos, with no mention of snakes or dragons, though it does include the charming old evren pulu, literally ‘dragon-scale’, for ‘mica’, now mika.

Genel is shown in Cep Kılavuzu (1935) as ‘= Umumî = Général’. Doğan Aksan’s defence (1976: 32) of genel—the conventional one that it was formed by suffixing -el to gen, OT keň ‘wide’—does not explain why an adjective needs reinforcing by an adjectival suffix. Aksan does his best, however, by casually throwing in the words ‘gen adımdan genel’ in türetilişi’ (the derivation of genel from the noun gen), doubtless hoping that the reader will have forgotten that he has made it perfectly clear in his previous paragraph that gen was an adjective. In the recent innovation genelde, genel is used as a noun. This looks like a calque on the English expression ‘in general’, which is what it means.

Gereksinme, Ataç’s neologism for ihtiyaç ‘need’, is a puzzle. Gerek means ‘necessary’ or ‘necessity’, but it is not easy to see what -sin- is supposed to mean, especially as this is the only instance of it. There was an OT suffix of the same shape; added to uluğ ‘great’ it made uluğsummak ‘to consider oneself great’, but, if that was what Ataç had in mind, how did he get from ‘consider oneself necessary’ to ‘need’? The word can only be regarded as an aberration, but it and, even more, gerekşinim are used (though good writers prefer gerekseme, unless they remember the old hacet), to an extent that shows Timurtaş’s (1979: 51) judgement
on it to have been over-optimistic: ‘Dilimizin ne gibi bir ihtiyacı vardı ki, “gereksinme” kelimesi uyduruldu? “İhtiyac” varken gereksinme’ye muhtaç olacağını hiç sanmayınım’ (What sort of need did our language have that led to the fabricating of gereksinme? While we have ihtiyac I don’t think we shall need gereksinme). The question he should have asked himself was how much longer will we have ihtiyac?

İlginc ‘interesting’. Cep Kılavuzu (1935) gives ilgi for the Arabic alâka ‘interest’ and münasebet ‘relationship’. It was not an invention; it is a legitimate derivative of il ‘to tie loosely’ and ‘to touch’. Its adjective ilginc, however, is far from legitimate, manufactured as it was from ilgi by adding -nç, a suffix previously attached only to verb-STEMs. Ataç cannot be blamed for this one; his offering for intéressant (in 1955) was ilinc, properly derived from il- on the analogy of numerous existing words such as sevinç ‘joy’ from sevin- ‘to be pleased’, and gülünç ‘ridiculous’ from gül- ‘to laugh’. It is a pity that, whereas ilinc, one of Ataç’s relatively few correctly formed inventions, never caught on, the linguistically monstrous ilginc did. The probable reason for its success is that people associated it with ilgi, which they knew with the meaning ‘interest’, while ilinc conveyed nothing much. The Ottoman for ‘interesting’ was alâkabahş [AP] ‘interest-giving’, modernized as alâka uyandırıcı ‘interest-waking’, but most preferred enteresan [F]. Some still stick to enteresan, but ilginc is regularly used even in conversation.

Okul ‘school’. Under mektep, Tarama Dergisi (1934) gives Okulağ as having been recorded at Urfa. The entry under medrese is fuller:

Okulağ (‘Oку’ köküne ‘lağ, lak’ yer eki getirilerek yapılmış. ‘Yayla’ ve ‘kışla’da olduğu gibi son sessiz düserek ‘okula’ şekilli de vardır.)

Okulağ (made by the addition of the suffix of place -lağ/lak to the root oku (‘to read’). With the dropping of the final consonant, there is also the form okula, as occurs in yayla and kışla.)

Yes, but never before had -lağ/lak/la been suffixed to a verb-stem. The received story of the origin of this most firmly entrenched of all Öztürkçe words is told by Besim Atalay (1940: 40–1):

Bu kelime Yunancaya benzetilerek yapılmamıştır. . . Ankarada Siyasal Bilgiler Okulu açıldığı zaman Atatürk’e bir tazim telgrafı çekilmiş, bundan pek hoşnut olan O Büyük Adam bir cevap verilmesini istemiş, fakat mektep kelimesi yerine türkçe bir kelime aramişlar, o sırarda (Urfa)dan Dil Kurumu'na okula kelimesi gelmiş, kendi sine bu söylendiği zaman çok beğenmiş ve mektep için en güzel karşılık olmak üzere kabul buyurmuş. Aradan bir kaç gün geçtiken sonra kelimenin sonundaki a sesi atılarak okul şeklinde kullanılmışını emretmişler.

10 Yayla, earlier yaylak, means ‘summer pasture’, from yaz ‘summer’, while kışla, from kış ‘winter’, means ‘winter quarters’ and then ‘barracks’.
This word was not made on the analogy of the Greek [scholë, whence ultimately French école]. Atatürk was sent a congratulatory telegram on the opening of the Ankara School of Political Sciences. Very pleased, he wanted a reply to be sent, but they lacked a Turkish replacement for mektep 'school'. Around this time the word okula, with that meaning, came to the Dil Kurumu from Urfa. When Atatürk was told this, he liked it a lot and it was accepted by him as the best equivalent of mektep. A few days later, he directed that the final a of the word should be dropped and the word used in the form okul.

And indeed Cep Kilavuzu (1935) gives ‘Okul = Mekteb = Ecole.’

Tahsin Banguoğlu (1987: 303), however, has a more circumstantial story, in no way inconsistent with Atalay’s (apart from the latter’s first sentence) but adding two pieces of information: the identity of the correspondent from Urfa who had claimed that okula was a real word currently used in his native city, and the fact that it was no such thing:


Mark this well: the thrust of the reform movement is specifically against Arabic. Arabic words have to be discarded come what may, for this is a generation that is fed up with the domination of Arabic. If the French equivalent were to replace it, that’s fine. Schola is Latin. Somebody says, ‘My dear sir, it is is from the stem of our okumak.’ Someone else, someone craftier, says, ‘My dear sir, in my native Urfa they call school okula.’ I was a lecturer at the time, in the Language Faculty, and I said, ‘If this word okula exists in Urfa in the sense of school, I shall hang myself from the Faculty gate.’... I was speaking on the basis of my knowledge of Turkish word formation. But subsequently someone else from the TDK whispered to me, ‘It was Refet, our Deputy for Urfa, who made it up.’... After that, they said okula. Later on, they said okul, chucking away the final a.

Some people’s refusal to face facts is well exemplified in Eyuboğlu (1988: 237):


OKUL, Turkish. From okumak, ok-ul/okul. Word production with the suffix ul coming to the root: oğ-ul/oğul, köş-ul/köşul (Kirghiz köşul-taşıl ‘mixed, confused’), yumul yumul (popular speech).

Was there ever such a farrago? The stem of okumak is not ok- but oku-. If the suffix is -ul, the addition sum is wrong; oku- plus ul makes not okul but *okuyul. If the root of okul is the verb-stem oku-, its suffix must be l. Nor is oğul ‘son'
divisible into oğ and ul.11 Enlisting the misbegotten koşul in support of okul can only be described as impudent. What yumul yumul means in popular speech is not immediately ascertainable, as the expression seems to be unknown to the lexicographers or any of the author’s Turkish friends. In short, the article can fairly be described as an attempt at blinding the reader with nescience.

Doğan Aksan (1976: 39) sees no fault in okul, which he explains as derived from oku- and the suffix -l; were it not for Banguoğlu’s account of the word’s origin one might almost have believed him.

Olanak is the Öztürkçe for imkân [A] ‘possibility’. Adile Ayda says of it and of olasilık:12

icat edilen yeni bir kelime Türk dilinin kurallarına göre yapılmış olsa bile çağrışım yolu ile hoş olmayan, hoşça gitmeyen bir şeyi veya kelimeyi hatırlatıyorsa, üç beş adaman başkasının bu kelimeyi benimsemesi mümkün değildir. OLANAK ile OLASI kelimeleri bu alanda en iyî örnekleridir.


even though a newly invented word has been constructed in accordance with the rules of Turkish, if, by an association of ideas, it is reminiscent of some unpleasant or distasteful thing or word, it is impossible that it should be adopted except by a handful of people. The best examples in this category are olanak and olası.

For a Turk who knows Turkish well and has taste, olanak is a word that looks ugly and offends the ear. Why? Because it reminds one, if not on the conscious then on the subconscious level, of words ending with the syllable nak: bunak [‘imbecile’] and avanak [‘gullible’].

Olasılık, one of Ataç’s inventions, has made great inroads on the domain of ihtimal [A]. Some Turkish–English dictionaries will tell you that olasılık, like ihtimal before it, means ‘probability’, but Turkish cannot express that concept in a single word; ihtimal in fact conveys a lesser likelihood of realization than imkân ‘possibility’. The proof-text is Hisar (1966: 199): ‘ihtimaleri imkânlar halinde duymağa başlayınca’ (when he began to feel that the maybes were possibilities). In standard Turkish -esi/asi is chiefly used for curses (Lewis 1988: 115); kör olası does not mean ‘it is possible/probable that he will go blind’, but ‘may he go blind!’ An accurate substitute for muhtemel [A], the adjective of ihtimal, is belkili (characterized by ‘perhaps’), though few use it. But all the West European languages have words for ‘probable’ (wahrscheinlich, sannsynlig, probabile), and one would not be surprised if the meaning of olası were gradually to shift towards that of ‘probable’ rather than of ‘maybe’.

11 For an effective demolition of the theory that it might be, see Doerfer (1963–75: ii. §82).
12 Quoted in Yaşayan Türkçemiz (1983: ii. 62–3). The second of the three volumes of this spirited, entertaining, and occasionally vituperative compilation on the language reform, published by the conservative newspaper Tercüman, is devoted to ‘Üydurma, yanlış yapılan, yanlış mânâlandırılan, yanlış kullanılan, Türkçeyi bozan, ne olduğu bilimseyen kelimeler’ (Words that are fake, wrongly constructed, given wrong meanings, wrongly used, ruining Turkish, of unknown pedigree).
Oran, oranti. Oran is an old word for ‘measure’, ‘proportion’, or ‘moderation’. The reform has fixed it in the meaning of ‘ratio’, in which use it receives unusual praise from the conservative Temel Türkçe Sözlük (Tulum 1985–6): ‘Kullanılmaması büyük üzüntü sebebi olacak kelimelerdendir’ (It is one of those words that it would be a great inconvenience not to use). Oranti, the new term for ‘proportion’, was derived from it by the illegitimate addition of the deverbal suffix -ti.

Örnek, örneğin. The first of these has been current for centuries with the meaning ‘pattern, example’. Nobody seems to have taken exception to it until Ataç, seeking a replacement for meselâ ‘for example’, thought of adding to örnek the old instrumental suffix -in. For some reason this evoked much criticism, partly because a good Turkish way of expressing that already existed: söz gelişi. It was during the ensuing controversy that örnek was charged with being a borrowing from Armenian, which it pretty certainly is not. The word is now part of the language, though there are people who, not feeling quite at home with it, use the old and the new together, saying ‘meselâ örneğin’, literally ‘e.g. for instance’.

Özgürlik, Ataç’s successful replacement for hürriyet ‘freedom’, is a mess, both in form and in meaning. Öz is ‘self’ and gür is ‘abundant’. It could be that the form he first thought of was özgür,13 which he then decided would be more euphonious without the first ü, but ‘abundant of self’ is hardly ‘free’. Aksan (1976: 47–8) puts up his usual spirited defence of the indefensible. He finds reason to believe that özgürlik was invented before özgür, in which case öz is an adjective qualifying gürlik and the word is therefore ‘kurallara uygun bir birleştirmе’ (a combination in accordance with the rules). Maybe so, but what can it mean other than ‘pure abundance’? Certainly not ‘freedom’. Emin Özdemir (1969: 23), another zealous partisan of Öztürke, puts up an ingenious apologia for özgür(lük) in which he implicitly acknowledges that no one could guess what it means. He begins by saying that the trouble lies with the writers and language experts who oppose the reform and have not dwelt sufficiently on the structure of Öztürke words. He goes on: ‘Bilindiği gibi bileşik sözcüklerin bir bölügenden... bileşirilen sözcükler sözüklük anlamlardan uzaklaşır. Akbaba, demirbaş örneklerinde olduğu gibi, Özgür sözçüğündeki durum da böyledir’ (As is well known, in one category of compound words... the words compounded become remote from their dictionary meanings. Just as in the examples akbaba and demirbaş,14 so is it with özgür). That is to say, a knowledge of the meanings of their components is no help in determining what the compounds mean. This may be expected with natural words that have a history of their own, but not with a word that one man deliberately invented.

13 A başbozuk construction (see Lewis 1988: 259–60).
14 Akbaba, literally ‘white father’, means ‘vulture’. Demirbaş, ‘iron-head’ and so ‘stubborn’, was the epithet applied by the Ottoman chroniclers to Charles XII of Sweden. After his crushing defeat at Poltava by Peter the Great of Russia in 1709, he took refuge in Turkey, where he remained till 1714. It was presumably because he outstayed his welcome that demirbaş came to mean fixtures and fittings, the contents of an inventory.
Saptamak. This verb is Cep Kilavuzu’s (1935) replacement for tespit etmek ‘to establish, confirm’. Whoever devised it was playing the 1930s game of finding what might have been the Turkish etyron of the Arabic word for which a replacement was being sought. There was a suffix -ta-, appearing in the archaic yastamak ‘to lean’ and yâstamak ‘to grow old’, superseded since the fifteenth century by yaslamak and yaşlanmak respectively. So, if saptamak had ever existed, its modern equivalent would probably have been saplamak. That, however, exists in present-day Turkish with the meaning ‘to thrust, pierce’. But your true Öztürkçeci has no difficulty in disposing of that kind of objection. Aksan (1976: 48) notes that there is a Kirghiz word saptamak, meaning, among other things, ‘to wish, claim’. ‘Türkiye Türkçesinde saptamak’a yeni bir anlam yüklenmiş, bu da yazdırıganmamış, tutunmuştur’ (In the Turkish of Turkey, saptamak has been given a new meaning, and this has not been considered odd but has caught on).

Sayın. An old derivative of saymak ‘to count, to esteem’, meaning ‘highly regarded’, obsolete by the end of the nineteenth century. Cep Kilavuzu (1935) dug it up as an alternative to mubeccel and muhterem ‘revered’, ‘honoured’, and it is regularly used before the surname in addressing men or women, having steadily gained ground from Bay and Bayan. Fewer and fewer bus-conductors have addressed their passengers as ‘Baylar’ since the late 1970s, the preference being for the old-fashioned ‘Beyler’. It is a pity that Sayın is not used as a noun, otherwise its plural could have made a neat expression for ‘Ladies and Gentlemen’.

There is a modern folk-tale about a Minister of Education’s visit to Sivas. Among the welcoming committee were all the local mayors, whom he addressed as ‘Sayın Muhtarlar!’ The first muhtar, taking sayın to be the imperative of saymak ‘to count’ (in military parlance, ‘to number off’), said ‘Bir!’ ‘İki!’ said the second, ‘Üç!’ said the third, and so on.

Simge and image. For timsal [A] ‘symbol’, Cep Kilavuzu (1935) proposed sim. This is recorded as used for ‘sign’ in the vilayet of Adana, though, in view of the number of Arabs living in that region, the resemblance to the Arabic simā in the same sense is more than a little suspicious. It never caught on, perhaps because the sort of people who talked about symbols were the intellectuals, to whom sim was, if anything, the Persian for ‘silver’. So it was given a bit more individuality by the addition of the -ge seen in çekirge ‘grasshopper’ and sipurge ‘broom’, and as simGe it is in active use, being more popular among intellectuals than the French semblor. (There is even a Hotel Simge in Istanbul, down the road from the Pera Palas.) It has an adjective simgesel ‘symbolic’ and a derived verb simgelemek ‘to symbolize’. And image? It was put up as the Öztürkçe replacement for hayâl [A] ‘fancy, image’, its alleged origin being the OT im ‘password’, with the addition of the same -ge. The connection between ‘password’ and ‘image’ seems tenuous, but one only has to spell out image and the French or English image to see the true etymology.
Subay 'officer'. This word was a borrowing into Azeri\(^{15}\) from Mongolian, in which language it first meant 'sterile', then 'childless', then 'light cavalryman' (because he travels the fastest who travels alone), then '(cavalry) officer' (Doerfer 1963–75: iii, §1225). In Azeri it means 'bachelor'. It was brought to Turkey by immigrants from Azerbaijan and is used in several places in Anatolia with the same sense and also that of 'lone, childless'. Tarama Dergisi (1934) lists it among possible equivalents for münferit 'isolated'.

Terim 'technical term'. Onat, a respectable enough scholar apart from his obsession with the Turkish origin of Arabic, said (1952: 49–50) it was not a corruption of the French terme but was the Kirghiz form of the word appearing in the Turkish of Turkey as derim 'assembly, gathering'; the form with initial t was chosen, he said, because derim would have looked like part of demek 'to say'. And how do you get from 'gathering' to 'technical term'? İlim, belir bir konu ile ilgili bilgi topluluğu olduğu gibi, terim de ilim ve sanatların çeşitli bahislerini, meselelerini ayrı ayrı adlar altında derleyip toplayan bilim sözüdür; nitekim terim kelimesi de bütün bu sözleri birleşik bir adla anlatmaya yaradığı için bir bilim sözü olarak kabul edilmiştir.

As science is the totality of informing relating to a specific subject, so terim is the scientific expressions that collect and assemble the various topics and problems of science and the arts under separate names. So indeed terim has been accepted as a scientific word because it serves to express all these words by a common name.

Which is rather like saying 'library' when you mean 'book' or, to use a closer analogy, 'dustbin' when you mean 'rubbish'.

Uygarlık. Medeniyet 'civilization' was of Arabic derivation, though it was a nineteenth-century Turk who did the deriving. The Öztürkçe replacement found for it was uygarlık, an arbitrary coinage based on the name of the Uyghur, a Turkish people who established an advanced civilization in Eastern Turkestan in the tenth to twelfth centuries. So it has far less claim to being pure Turkish than medeniyet, which still holds its ground. The adjective medeni continues in use in the legal term 'medeni hal', a translation of the French état civil 'marital status', sometimes modernized into 'medeni durum'. On the northern approaches to Izmir one sees notices erected by the Karşıyaka municipality, reading 'Yayaya Saygı Uygarlıktr' (Respect for the Pedestrian is Civilization). Assuming an idiot-boy expression, the author asked two affable taxi-drivers the meaning of uygarlık, and after briefly conferring they agreed that uygar meant the same as modern or çağdaş (contemporary). It emerged that they did not associate uygarlık with medeniyet, which they both knew, though the author did not try their patience by asking them to define it.

\(^{15}\) Azeri is the name of the people (and, with the suffix -ce, the language) of Azerbaijan. One wishes that BBC newscasters would stop giving it the vowels of 'canary' instead of 'mastery'.

Yaşam, yaşantı. The first of these neologisms was intended to replace hayat [A] ‘life’, which it has not totally done; in fact one sometimes hears a non-intellectual talking about his or her life as ‘yaşam-hayatım’. Yaşantı was intended to mean ‘way of life’, a sense already conveyed unambiguously by yaşaysın, or ‘experience of life, what one lives through’. It is far from being universally popular, because a number of words in -nti express unpleasant ideas: bulanthi ‘nausea’, boğuntu ‘suffocation’, çalkantı ‘agitation’, çarpıntı ‘palpitation’, kaşıntı ‘itching’, kusuntu ‘vomit’, sıkıntı ‘embarrassment’, süprünüş ‘sweepings’, tiksinti ‘disgust’, üzüntü ‘dejection’. Those who do not like yaşantı say that to them it conveys not ‘experience of life’ but ‘hayat bozması’ (an apology for a life). Not all words in -nti are distasteful—e.g. gezinti ‘stroll’—though pleasant examples are few and far between.

Yöntem, the neologism for ‘method, system’, has largely supplanted usul [A] and even metot, the French méthode. Whoever devised it took yön, still existing in popular speech in the sense of ‘direction’, and ostensibly added the suffix seen inerdem ‘manly virtue’. A word meaning directionness or directiondom may not seem a valid equivalent for ‘method’, and indeed it is not. In fact I am morally certain that its second syllable is really the second syllable of the French système. In case you think my moral certainty no better than an unworthy suspicion, let me tell you what somebody dreamed up to replace the Ottoman kıyas-ı mukassem ‘dilemma’. It was ikilem, compounded of iki ‘two’ and the lemme of French dilemme. High marks for ingenuity, few for linguistic purity. The same can probably be said of önder ‘leader’; Tarama Dergisi (1934) shows it as used at Polatlı, but Derleme Sözlüğü (1964–82) does not show it at all. It looks awfully like ön ‘front’ plus the second syllable of English leader.

Zor [P] ‘force’ and its Öztürkçe derivatives zorunlu, zorunluk, and zorunluluğ have unseated mecburi [A] ‘obligatory’ and mecburyet [A] ‘obligation’. All one can say for zor and its offspring is that, though their initial z brands them as non-Turkish, they are not so conspicuously non-Turkish as mecburi and mecburyet. The puzzle here is what the -un is supposed to be doing, and how the suffixes -lu and -luk came to be attached to a non-existent noun, for zorun will not be found in the dictionary. The -un is the old suffix of the instrumental case, as in Ataç’s neologism örneğin ‘for example’, and in gúcün ‘by force’, a genuine Turkish synonym of zorun, still in use in the late nineteenth century. The un of zorun is not to be confused with that of zorunda, in which the u(n) is the third-person suffix and which after an infinitive means ‘under an obligation to...’, like the earlier mecburiyetinde.

Çogun, unlike its sister zorun—they share the same suffix—is in the dictionary (though rarely appearing anywhere else), with the meaning ‘often’. Its abstract noun çogunluk is in full use, in the sense not of ‘frequency’ but of ‘majority’, replacing ekseriyet [A].
Technical Terms

The Language Society did not forget that Atatürk had wanted the work on technical terms to continue. In 1948 it began publishing glossaries for subjects as varied as statistics and cycling, metallurgy and volleyball; they are listed in Brendemoen (1990: 490–2). Special tribute must be paid to the compilers of Orta Öğretim Terimleri Kilavuzu (1963), which provided Öztürkçe equivalents of scientific terms for middle schools, with indexes in Ottoman, French, Latin, Greek, English, and German. No less impressive in Matematik Terimleri Sözlüğü (1983) ('Dictionary of Mathematical Terms'), a book of over 500 pages. Most of these glossaries, compiled as they were by large editorial bodies, bear no indication of authorship. This one was the work of just two people: Doğan Çoker and Timur Karaçay. But what came of it all? Two examples picked at random from the latter work: it proposed yöneyler işlencesi for 'calculus of vectors', and konaç for 'coordinate'; but these words do not appear in recent dictionaries, neither the Society's own Türkçe Sözlük (1988) nor the Ministry of Education's Örnekleriyle Türkçe Sözlük (1995–6). It is sad to leaf through these products of manifest ingenuity, industry, and devotion, and to see how little effect they have had; truly love's labour lost.

This chapter discusses the terminology of medicine and law and, more briefly, computing, as being of the most general interest. There are also some remarks on the vocabulary of music, which is a special case.

In Ottoman times, the medical vocabulary was Arabic. Özön, in his dictionary of foreign words (1961a) says that after the sixteenth century, when the Jewish refugees from Spain had migrated to Turkey and taken over the medical profession, a number of hybrid Spanish–Italian ('İspanyol–İtalyan kırması') medical terms came into use. Unfortunately he gives no examples.

In 1838 the Tibhane, the School of Medicine founded in 1827, and the Cerrahhane, the School of Surgery founded in 1832, were amalgamated and moved to Galatasaray. In his speech (which began 'Çocuklar!' (Children!)) at the opening ceremony, Sultan Mahmud II said:

Having fashioned and arranged these fine buildings to be the medical school, I have named it the Imperial School of Forensic Medicine... Here you will study the science of medicine in French... My desire in having you taught in French is not to have you study French. It is just to teach you the science of medicine and to bring it gradually into our own language.

For many years the teaching went on in French, most of the teachers being non-Turks, but eventually the students began agitating for Turkish to become the medium of instruction. In 1861 they managed to have some articles on this theme published in the Turkish-language press, which their teachers countered with articles in the French-language press. After a long war of words, Salih Efendi, the Supervisor of the School, took the side of the students, and in 1866 the Ottoman Medical Society, Cemiyet-i Tibbiye-i Osmaniye, was founded, its first task being to produce a Turkish medical dictionary. From 1870 onwards, medical students had their wish and were taught in Turkish or, to be more accurate, in Ottoman (Uludağ 1940). That did not do them much good; they soon found that a knowledge of French was indispensable, particularly because many of them completed their studies in France.

As the Turkish saying goes, 'o gün bugündür' (it's just the same today). In medical parlance, alopecia is alopesi, whereas in common speech it is saçsızlık 'hairlessness'. Caesarian, a doctor's word, is sezaryen, whereas (umbilical) cord, a mother's and midwife's word, is göbekbağrı 'navel-tie', with göbek kordonu as a more genteel alternative (see Table 9.1).

TDK produced a glossary of medical terms, Hekimlik Terimleri Kilavuzu, in 1978, with a revised and enlarged edition in 1980. It was a well-meaning work, inspired by the wish to free medicine 'büyüden, gizemden' 'from spells and mystery'. It does not appear to have made a great difference, one reason being that much of it was Öztürkçe that was not intelligible to all. Thus for 'illness' it uses sayrılık throughout, a word that had been dropped centuries before in favour of hastalık and that, though resurrected in Cep Kilavuzu (1935), never caught on. Another reason is that not every practitioner of medicine wants to see it freed from the spells and the mystery; this the author realized some years ago, on reading the following in an Istanbul pathologist's report: 'Mikroskobik [sic] bulgular: Stroması ödemli endometrium dokusu görülmektedir. Guddeker sayıca artmış olup, psödistratififiyе silindrik epitelle döşelidir. Arada epiteloid histiositler, lenfositler ve Langhans tipi dev hücrelerden oluşmuş yuvarlakça alanlar mevcuttur'. (Microscopic findings: Endometrium tissue with oedematous stroma visible. The glands have increased in number and are covered with pseudo-stratified columnar epithelium. Also present are epitheloid histiocyes, lymphocytes, and roundish areas formed of Langhans-type giant cells).

But worse was to come. Yaman Örs (1989: 18) quotes a specimen of the use of foreign terms in what purports to be medical Turkish:

1 The first meaning of hasta [P] was 'tired'. Its use in Turkish for 'ill' is exactly paralleled by the French use of fatigue(e) as a euphemism for malade.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ailment</th>
<th>Doctor's term</th>
<th>Popular term</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>anaemia</td>
<td>anemi</td>
<td>kansızlık (‘bloodlessness’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>appendicitis</td>
<td>apandisit</td>
<td>apandis yangısı (‘appendix inflammation’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cancer</td>
<td>kanser</td>
<td>incitmebeni (‘don’t hurt me’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cataract</td>
<td>katarakt</td>
<td>erde [P] (‘curtain’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cholera</td>
<td>kolera</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diabetes</td>
<td>diyabet</td>
<td>şeker hastalığı (‘sugar disease’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dysentery</td>
<td>dizanteri</td>
<td>kanlı basur [A] (‘bloody haemorrhoids’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gallstones</td>
<td>safra (A)</td>
<td>taşları</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>glaucoma</td>
<td>glokom</td>
<td>karasu (‘black water’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>haemorrhoids</td>
<td>emeroit</td>
<td>basur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>leukaemia</td>
<td>lösemi</td>
<td>kan kanseri (‘blood cancer’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lockjaw</td>
<td>tetanos</td>
<td>kazıkh humma/ates (‘fever with stakes’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>malaria</td>
<td>malaria</td>
<td>sitma (‘heating’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pneumonia</td>
<td>pnömoni</td>
<td>akciğer yangısı (‘lung inflammation’), batar (‘piercing’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rabies</td>
<td>kuduz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rheumatism</td>
<td>romatizm</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scurvy</td>
<td>iskorbüt</td>
<td>tuzlubalgam (‘salty phlegm’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>stye</td>
<td>arpacık</td>
<td>itdirşi (‘dog elbow’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tuberculosis</td>
<td>tüberkülöz</td>
<td>verem [A] (‘swelling, tumour’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tumour</td>
<td>tümör</td>
<td>ur</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>typhoid</td>
<td>tifo</td>
<td>kara humma (‘black fever’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>womb</td>
<td>rahim [A]</td>
<td>döl yatağı (‘foetus-bed’)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yapıtında ‘(Antiepileptik ilaçların) yayılmasını bloke edilmesinde rol oynayan nöronal etkileri arasında eksitasyon eğilimi yükseltmeleri, refrakter periyodu uzatmaları, presinaptik ve postsinaptik inhibisyonu potansiyelize etmeleri sayılabilir. Ayrıca nörofiziolojide spontan repetitif deşarjlara eşlik eden bir durum olarak bilinen posttetanik potansiyalizasyon olayını inhibe ederler; bu olay üzerindeki inhibitor etkileri ile deşarjın yayılmasını önlemleri arasında ilişki bulunabilir’ diyen bir yazar, ‘epilepsi türlerinin uluslararası sınıflandırılmasını’ verirken, ‘psikoduyusal (!) semptomoloji gösterenlerden, ‘ikinci olarak jenerализe olan kısmi tutarlıklardan’ söz açıyor.2

‘Among the neuronal effects that play a part in blocking the spread of antiepileptic drugs, there may be counted: raising the excitation-threshold, extending the refractory period, and potentializing pre- and post-synaptic inhibition. Moreover, they inhibit the occurrence of post-tetanic potentialization, which is known in neurophysiology to be a situation accompanying spontaneous repetitive discharges; there may be a relationship between their inhibiting effects on this occurrence and their preventing the spread of the discharge.’

The writer of the above, in the course of giving 'the international classification of the varieties of epilepsy', speaks in his work of 'those exhibiting psychosensory (!) symptomatology', and 'secondarily generalized partial seizures'.

Örs then lists a number of individual words, mostly English, used by Turkish doctors, among them schedule, bowel movement, rounds, background, rule out, fracture, arterial tension, fever, handle etmek, history almak ('to record a patient's medical history'), and idantifte etmek. The list reflects the general advance of English in recent years, and the growing number of Turkish doctors doing postgraduate studies in Britain and America. Örs's source was a three-page communication published in 1968 by the Hacettepe Committee for the Collection of Medical Terms, which commented:

Türkçe karşılığı bulunabilen ve gerçekten uluslararası bilimsel terimlerle de ilgisi olmayan sözcükler ve terimler sık sık kullanılmakta ve yayılmaktadır ... Yeni yetiştiren öğrencilerde önce bu terimler karşında bocalamakla birlikte, sonları du duurma katılmakta ve yadırıgamın yeni bir dil ortaya çıkmaktadır. Öğrenciler böylece, hekimlikte ancak yabancı terimler kullanırlarsa bilgilerinin bilimsel değer kazanacağıını sanmaktadır ... Bu yüzden Türkçe bilim dili olarak gelişmemeekte ve bir dil kargaşalığı eğitiminiz etkilemektedir.

Words and terms for which Turkish equivalents can be found and which really have nothing to do with international technical terms are frequently employed and are spreading ... Newly trained students, while at first floundering when they meet these terms, then become part of the situation, and an incongruous new language is emerging. Students think that in this way, if they use only foreign terms in their profession, their knowledge will gain scientific value ... For this reason, Turkish is not developing as a language of science, and a linguistic chaos is affecting our education.

Örs's comment:

Bu tür örnekleri çoğaltmak, ne yazık ki kolay olacaktır; gerçekten daha nice, nicelerini ekleyebiliriz ... 'Critère' yerine ölçüt, 'diagnose' yerine tanı kullanmak çok büyük bir çabaı mı gerektirmektedir? Üretilmiş ya da ortaya çıkarılmış birçok Türkçe tip terimi, yabancı terimlerin anlamını genellikle tümüyle çarşıyorlar. 'Hormon', 'konjenital', 'diffüz', sırasıyla içsalgı, doğustan, yaygın demektirler, başka da şey demek değildirler.

Unfortunately it would be easy to multiply these examples; we really could add very many more ... Does it call for a great effort to use ölçüt instead of critère, tam instead of diagnose? Quite a number of Turkish medical terms, derived or brought to light, as a rule completely express the sense of the foreign terms. Hormone, congenital, and diffuse mean içsalgı ['inner secretion'], doğustan ['from birth'], and yaygın ['widespread'] respectively, and that is all they mean.

Alluding to the old argument about whether Turks should derive their technical terms from Arabic and Persian, as the Western world does from Greek and Latin, Örs goes on to make a fair point: where, he asks, did the Greeks and Romans get their technical terms from?

Tanın anlamlındaki diagnosis Yunanca bilgi anlamına gelen bir kokten çıkmıştır. Demek oluyor ki, batı dillerindeki terimler de Türkçe karşılıkları gibi temelde genel dilden, halk
dilinden türemiştir. İngilizce tip dilinde ortaya çıkan scanning. Türkçedeki karşılığı olan ‘tarama’dan daha mı çok ‘bilimseldir’? Fransızca donneur’un ‘verici’ den daha ileri bir ‘bilimsellik’ taşıdığı söylenebilir mi?

Diagnosis, meaning recognition, came from a Greek root meaning knowledge. This amounts to saying that terms in the Western languages, like their Turkish equivalents, derived originally from the general language, the popular language. Is scanning, which has emerged in English medical language, more ‘scientific’ than tarama, its Turkish equivalent? Can the French donneur ['donor'] be said to possess a more advanced scientific quality than verici?

Apropos diagnosis, the old term for it was teşhis [A]. The new term is tanı, the stem of tanımak ‘to know’. Both terms occur in one and the same document, the pathologist’s report referred to above, together with a third, diagnos. Such a wealth of synonyms, though appropriate to a literary text, is surely superfluous in a document of this nature; it calls to mind the ‘illiyet–nedenlilik–causalité’ mentioned at the end of Chapter 1.

There was no mention of the technical terms of medicine in any of the papers presented in 1988 to the first Turkish Medical History Congress (TTK 1992), which suggests that the participants were happy with the status quo. But it was surprising to hear a medical man using in a broadcast talk on curative springs (Ankara Radio, 23 Jan. 1991) the sort of language that might have been immediately intelligible to a professional audience but could have conveyed little to the general public. He mentioned that some springs were beneficial for ‘nurolojik ve müsküler komplikasyonlar’. Any lay listener who knew müsküler only as the plural of müskü ‘amulet’ and failed to recognize in it the French musculaire, could be excused for supposing komplikasyon to be the latest Öztürkçe for büyü ‘magic spell’.

After the change to the Latin alphabet in 1928, the Republic’s legal codes, promulgated in 1926, had to be rewritten. The new version of the Civil Code appeared in 1934, when the move to ‘purify’ Turkish was just getting under way, and the drafters made a conscious effort to keep the language simple. But the passage of more than sixty years has made it virtually incomprehensible except to septuagenarians, since few young lawyers have the time to gain proficiency in Ottoman. For most of them the practice of their profession would be hard indeed were it not for the existence of what may fairly be termed a bilingual edition, in which the 1934 text is given on the left-hand page and a translation into the Turkish of the 1970s on the right. A short sample, Article 414, is enough to demonstrate that we really are talking about two languages, or at least two dialects:

(1934) Kuçuk üzerindeki vesayet, rüşt veya hâkimin rüşt karari ile nihayet bulur. Mahkemei asliye, rüde karar verir iken vesayetin hitami günüünü tesbit ve kararını resmen ilan eder.

(1979) Küçükler üzerindeki korumanlık, erginlikle veya yargıcın erginlik kararıyla sona erer. Asliye mahkemesi erginlige karar verirken korumanlıgin sona erme gününü saptar ve kararını kamusal yoldan duyurur. (Velidedeoğlu 1979: i. 220–1)
Trusteeship of minors terminates with maturity or the judge’s decision of maturity. The court of first instance, when giving its decision of maturity, shall fix the day on which the trusteeship terminates and announce its decision officially.

For the 1934 version’s ‘resmen’ (officially), Velidedeoğlu regularly uses ‘kamusal yoldan’ (publicly), literally ‘through the public way’. He wanted to avoid the Arabic adverb, but ‘kamusal yoldan’ was not a good substitute. For ‘resmen’, Türkçe Sözlük (1988) offers the half-Turkicized ‘resmi olarak’, which is current, and ‘devletçe’, which can serve for ‘officially’ only when the official body concerned is the state.

Even though the sense of the right-hand pages may not always be crystal clear now, the lawyer can extract the gist from them, while quoting the original text from the left-hand page to impress his client or the court.

There is a similar treatment of the Criminal Code. Here is the text of Article 361 in both versions (Güner 1981: 274–5):

(1926) Her kim iltizam ettiği taahhüdü icra etmeyerek resmi bir daireye veya bir hizmeti âmme ifasına yahut bir musibeti âmmenin önünü almağa elzem olan erzak ve eşyanın fikdanına sebep yet verirse bir seneden üç seneye kadar hapse ve yirmi beş liradan aşarı olmamak üzere iki yüz liraya kadar ağır cezayı nakdiye mahküm olur.

Taahhüdün icra olunmaması failin yalnız ihmal ve teseyyübünden ileri gelmiş ise bir seneye kadar hapse ve yüz liraya kadar ağır cezayı nakdiye mahküm olur.

(1981) Her kim kabullendiği yüklenmeyi yerine getirmeyerek kamusal bir daireye ya da bir kamu hizmeti yapılmasına yahut bir genel musibetin önünü almaya pek gerekli olan yiyecek ve nesnelerin yokluğuına yol açarsa bir yılda üç yila deşin hapse ve iki yüz liraya deşin ağır para cezasına çarpırlar.

Yüklmenin yerine getirilmemesin suçu işlemeyin yalnız savasma ve özenizlüğinden ileri gelmişse bir yıla deşin hapse ve yüz liraya deşin ağır para cezasına çarpırlar.

Anyone who, by not carrying out the commitment he has undertaken, causes the absence of food and goods essential to an official department or to the performance of a public service or to prevent a general disaster, will be condemned to imprisonment for one to three years and a heavy fine of up to TL200.

If the non-performance of the commitment is due only to carelessness and oversight on the part of the culprit, he will be condemned to imprisonment for up to one year and a heavy fine of up to TL100.

The field in which new words constantly arise is computing, and in this the Turks, like other nations, have been tempted to take the easy course of using the international—i.e. the Anglo-American—terms. Computer people have not succumbed totally to the temptation. For the computer itself, bilgisayar is the only name. There are words for the printer (yazıcı), the hardware (donanım ‘rigging’), the software (yazılım), and the print-out (çıkış), but for the most part the international terms prevail. The purpose of Yalçın and Şahin’s (1993) excellent dictionary is to explain the meaning of computer terms, not to advance the language reform. So its entry

under OCR is ‘optik karakter tanımı’. Bkz. [Bakanız ‘see’] optical character recognition’. Under that heading you find: ‘Fotoelektrik dönüştürücüler veya ışıkla kağıt üzerine yazılış ya da basılmış olan karakterlerin bulunması, tanıması ve makine diline çevrilmesinde kullanılan bir teknik’ (A technique used in the finding, recognizing, and translating into machine language of characters written or printed on paper by photoelectric transformers or by light).

The enter or return key is explained as enter tuşu or return tuşu, tuş being touche [F]. Where a Turkish or Öztürkçe term exists, it is shown, as in the entry for graphic mode: grafik mod, çizgesel mod. The explanation of ‘boot’ is bilgisayar açmak, ‘to switch the computer on’. The dictionary does not note the new transitive use of girmek ‘to enter’ in the sense of ‘to input’, but provides an example in ‘girilecek’ in the following:

garbage in garbage out (GIGO); çöp girerse çöp çıkar
Bir bilgisayar sistemine girilecek veri ile ilgili olarak, verinin hatalı olması halinde üretilecek, çıktının da hatalı olması durumu.

Garbage in, garbage out (GIGO): if garbage goes in, garbage comes out.
In connection with data to be entered in a computer system, the state of affairs where if the datum is wrong the output that will be produced will also be wrong.4

The text of an advertisement in the magazine Nokta of 31 January 1993 shows why a Turkish computer-user might need such a dictionary: ‘MACWORLD TÜRKİYE ses yazı grafik animasyon film multimıdia demo disketi hypercard [sic] üzerinde QuickTime ile hazırlananmış multimıdia uygulaması MACWORLD/TÜRKİYE Şubat sayısı ile birlikte tüm okurlarımızı bayilerde’ (MACWORLD TÜRKİYE sound, writing, graphics, animation, film, multimedia demo disket, multimedia application prepared with QuickTime on hypercard, for all our readers, with the Febru
ary number of MACWORLD/TÜRKİYE at the newsvendors). The non-harmonic bayı (ba’ı [A]) ‘(news)vendor’ looks incongruous among all those ultramodern terms, but the word retains its popularity against gazete satıcısı.

To give an idea of ordinary people’s computer-speak, here are the texts of two letters in Okur Postası (Readers’ Mail) in the magazine PC! of 15 July 1997:

SATILIK 486 PC. 486 DX 2-66, 8 MB RAM, 14” 0.28 SVG 3V renkli monitor, 3.5” 1.44 FDD, 420 MB HDD, 1 MB ekran kartı, Windows 95 Türkçe klavye + mouse özellikleri olan bilgisayarım 480 $’a satıyorum.

486 PC FOR SALE. I am selling for $480 my computer with these features: 486 DX 2-66, 8 MB RAM, 14” 0.28 SVG colour monitor, 3.5” 1.44 FDD, 420 MB HDD, 1 MB screen card, Windows 95, Turkish keyboard + mouse.

PC TAKASI. 14 inç Monokrom ekran çok temiz hard diskli PC bilgisayarımı satmak istiyorum. Yanında yazıcısıyla birlikte 30.000.000 TL. Amiga veya Sega ile takas yapılır.

PC EXCHANGE. I want to sell my hard-disk PC computer, in very good condition, 14-inch monochrome screen. Along with its printer, TL30,000,000. Will exchange for Amiga or Sega.

TDK has not produced a glossary of musical terms, though in 1954 it published a twenty-seven-page brochure entitled Terim Anketleri: Müzik, the work of Turkey's greatest composer, Adnan Saygun (1907–87). With no introductory material, this consisted simply of a list in three columns, headed 'Fransızca' (French), 'Eski Terimler' (Old Terms), and 'Kullanılan veya teklif edilen terimler' (Terms in use or proposed). There was little change from column to column; the terms for 'sharp' and 'flat', for example: 'Dièse–Dyeyez–Diyez' and Bémol–Bemol–Bemol.' Sometimes a Turkish word was added: 'Allegretto–Allegretto–Allegretto; çabukça'; 'Allegro–Allegro–Allegro; çabuk'; 'Appassionato–Appassionato–Appassionato; heyecanlı'; 'Rallentando–Rallentando–Rallentando (yavaşlıyarak). Rarely does a Turkish word stand alone in the third column: 'Réponse–Repons; cevap–Cevap.' Rarer yet, an Öztürkçe word: 'Transcription–Transkripsiyon–Çevriyazi'; 'Altération–Tağyir, tefnin–Değişim.' This is what one would expect of Turkish musicians and musicologists, who adopted Western music complete with its technical terms. In her 252 pages on problems of music, Filiz Ali (1987) mentions no problem of terminology, nor does Sözer (1986) give any hint in his encyclopaedia that an alternative terminology exists. He defines BEMOL: 'Bir notanın doğal sesinden yarımda perde (aralık) daha pesteşec eşğini (kalinlaşacağı) belirten işaret' (The sign indicating that a note is to be lowered a semitone below its natural pitch). The definition of DİYEZ is on similar lines.

Yet there is an alternative terminology, taught and used in the Department of Music at the University of the Aegean, but consistently disregarded not only by most musicians and musicologists elsewhere but also by Turkish lexicographers, including those of TDK, whom one would have expected to take an interest in an academic haven of Öztürkçe. The existence of this terminology is due to Gültekin Oransay, the gifted and influential musicologist who founded the Department, and to Adnan Saygun. Turkish musicians in general use the French terminology, with do diyez majör for C sharp major, and mi bemol majör for E flat major. The school of Oransay calls these büyük dikdo and büyük yonni respectively, using dik for sharp and yon for flat. For 'composer' it uses not bestekâr [P] but bağdar, while for 'music' it uses not mützi [F] or mützi [A] but Ataç's kığ, with kğsel for 'musical'. Its word for 'singer' is not şarkıcı but ırlagan, which differs from dik, yon, and bağdar in having an obvious etymology: ırlamak is a provincial word for 'to sing'.

Some time before 1986, Bilgi Yayinevi, an Ankara publisher, produced a Müzik Kilavuzu, which I have not seen.

Some information about Saygun may be found in Gedikli (1987: 11) and in İlhan (1987). The second of these two articles, however, is not as informative about musical terms as one could have wished.
While we are on the subject of music, here is a perhaps gratuitous note for the benefit of any reader who may have formed the impression that saz [P] is the name of the long-necked stringed instrument that holds so important a place in folk-music. The name for this, however, is bağlama; saz means just 'instrument', be it piano, drum, flute, or anything else. Some musicians use the French enstrü-man, some the Turkish çalgı, but saz is the usual term. Stringed instruments are telli saz, percussion instruments are vurma saz, wind instruments nefesli saz.
The New Yoke

The Franglais which so exasperates the Académie Française is as nothing compared with Türkлизе, some examples of which we have already met. This development was foreseen in 1954 at the Seventh Kurultay, in a contribution from a schoolmaster named Abdi Tevfik Yegül (Kurultay 1954: 82). He spoke of the questions his pupils were constantly asking him about the new technical terms; why was this one or that one adopted, and would he please explain it?


They said, ‘Teacher, what does this word “trafik” mean?’ One of the children went on: ‘My father and I looked at Şemseddin Bey’s dictionary [Kamus]; it means doing things like commerce, profiteering, and transporting goods and passengers on railways.’ The child continued: ‘My father and I looked at Larousse as well. There too it meant commerce and traffic.’

That means that our language, which till now has been under French mandate, from now on will come in part under British mandate. Let’s not do this.

The same point had been made over seventy years before, by Ahmet Midhat in Terceman-ı Hakikat (no. 112 (1881)):

‘Vâ esefâ ki, biz şimdiki halde bir lisan dilencisiyiz. Gâh Arabların gâh Acemlerin ve hele âsimî de Frenklerin kapârîn çalarak lâfîzca kâvaidce sadaka-i ma’rifetini dileniyoruz’ (Alas! At present we are mendicants in quest of a language. We knock at doors, sometimes the Arabs’ doors, sometimes the Persians’, and now particularly the Europeans’, begging for a charitable gift of knowledge in the shape of words and rules) (Levend 1972: 129).

The time when TDK’s principal business was seeking Öztürkçe replacements for Arabic and Persian words has long passed; much of the post-1983 TDK’s effort goes into devising and disseminating Turkish equivalents for English words in common use. It sets an example in its journal Türk Dili by giving its fax number

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1 The earliest use I have spotted of this splendid conflation of Türkçe and İngilizce is in Başkan (1975).

2 The speaker’s choice of metaphor was due to memories of the years immediately after 1918, when some Turks favoured an American or British mandate over their country.
under the heading ‘Belgegeçer (Faks)’. Whether everyone in TDK’s offices says ‘belgegeçer’ (document-passes) rather than ‘faks’ is another matter; just as one wonders whether all French civil servants really call this useful device by its prescribed name, ‘télecopie’. When TDK’s campaign was being waged only in the pages of its journal, it did not seem likely to be very effective, preaching as it was to the converted. In 1997, however, the Society began to spread the message wider, by bringing out and circulating to schools a striking poster headed ‘Burası Türkiye mi?’ (Is this Turkey?). It showed a city street with an abundance of signs such as ‘Happy New Year’, ‘Hotel’, ‘Real Estate Center’, ‘Photo Colour’, and ‘Chicken House’. The French contribution was limited to ‘La Famme [sic] Boutique’.

It is not hard to see the reason for the present torrent of English. Just as the Turks’ acceptance of Islamic civilization led to their adoption of large numbers of Arabic and Persian terms, so, though to a lesser extent, did the increasing exposure of Turkish intellectuals to Western civilization in the nineteenth century bring Italian and, even more, French words surging into their vocabulary. Cevdet Kudret (1966) remarks on the substitution of French words for Arabic, when *hekim* began to be supplanted by *doktor*, *baytar* by *veteriner*, *kâtip* by *sekreter*. He mentions the replacement of the Italian *locanda* ‘inn’ and *agente* ‘agent’ (in Turkish used more often for ‘agency’), and the Greek *panêgûri* ‘festival, fair’ by the French *restaurant*, *agence*, and *foire*.


Nor did it stop there; we have changed European words that had entered earlier also, taking other European words to replace them. Now we say *müzik* instead of *musiki*, *restoran* instead of *lokanta*, *ajans* instead of *acente*, *fuar* instead of *panayır*... If you look into it you will see that the Turkish word *aşevi* is used of the commonest and cheapest eating houses. As *lokanta* began to spread gradually among the populace too, the top stratum sought for themselves yet another way of saying it and found *restoran*. *Aşevi* is the eating place of the populace, *lokanta* of the middle class, *restoran* of the upper class. Thus the further we distance ourselves from the populace, the further our language departs from Turkish. The more we adopt European language, the more refined we think we are becoming. In that connection: the populace goes to the *ayakyolu* and the *aptesane*, and the middle

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3 Fashions in words do change, without any intervention by a Language Society. Until the Second World War, the colloquial English for ‘Are you trying to make fun of me?’ was ‘Are you taking the mite out of me?’ Warriors returning from overseas in or after 1945 were surprised to find that the current expression was—as it still is—‘Are you taking the micky?’
class go to the helâ, whereas we educated folk go to the tuvalet; moreover the WC has recently turned up, and now and again we go there as well.\footnote{He omits to mention another term used by the halk: ‘yuz numara’ (number one hundred), the door being marked with two zeros. Popular etymology ascribes this to an early Turkish visitor to Paris who mistook the French ‘sans numéro’ for ‘cent numéro’, but the French term is ‘le numéro cent’.

\footnote{It still is in popular speech, which also preserves another old Italian borrowing, familiya, in the sense not so much of ‘family’ as of ‘wife’. Aile [A] ‘family’ is the word used to avoid explicitly saying kari ‘wife’. To put it bluntly, familiya is a euphemism for aile, once a euphemism for kari but now, to the unsophisticated, virtually synonymous with it.

\footnote{This useful word is borrowed from the Italian alla turca. Its antonym is alafranga, Italian alla franca ‘European style’.

\footnote{Compare the final es of kilometre kare, one standing for the French mute e, the other for é. The Turkish form of neutre [F] is nôtr ‘neutral’, with no final e, so môble does not need its final e to represent meuble, except that, if you want to say ‘furnished’ but scorn both mobilyalı and döşemmiş as being outmoded, móbleli is the word for you, whereas *mobilî would have been unpronounceable.

\footnote{English had in fact been the main source of maritime terms since the early 1800s, according to the erudite though sometimes erratic Bedros Effendi Kerestedjian (1912: 143): ‘Disons, une fois pour toutes, que les termes de marine et d’instruments de fabrique que [sic] étaient empruntés, autrefois, à l’italien, sont aujourd’hui pris généralement de la langue anglaise: les officiers instructeurs de la marine et des fabriques impériales, en Turquie, étant depuis près d’un siècle recrutés en Angleterre.’}

For over a century the usual Turkish for ‘furniture’ was mobilya.\footnote{He omits to mention another term used by the halk: ‘yuz numara’ (number one hundred), the door being marked with two zeros. Popular etymology ascribes this to an early Turkish visitor to Paris who mistook the French ‘sans numéro’ for ‘cent numéro’, but the French term is ‘le numéro cent’.

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\footnote{Compare the final es of kilometre kare, one standing for the French mute e, the other for é. The Turkish form of neutre [F] is nôtr ‘neutral’, with no final e, so môble does not need its final e to represent meuble, except that, if you want to say ‘furnished’ but scorn both mobilyalı and döşemmiş as being outmoded, móbleli is the word for you, whereas *mobilî would have been unpronounceable.

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After the irritation of Italian and then French, now, in the American century, it is the turn of English.\footnote{He omits to mention another term used by the halk: ‘yuz numara’ (number one hundred), the door being marked with two zeros. Popular etymology ascribes this to an early Turkish visitor to Paris who mistook the French ‘sans numéro’ for ‘cent numéro’, but the French term is ‘le numéro cent’.

\footnote{It still is in popular speech, which also preserves another old Italian borrowing, familiya, in the sense not so much of ‘family’ as of ‘wife’. Aile [A] ‘family’ is the word used to avoid explicitly saying kari ‘wife’. To put it bluntly, familiya is a euphemism for aile, once a euphemism for kari but now, to the unsophisticated, virtually synonymous with it.

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The following, from an article by Müm茨az Soysal (1990) is cited not only for its manifest good sense but also for the vigour of its style.9 The Head of State referred to was President Turgut Özal:


The Head of State of the Turkish Republic speaks morning, noon, and night of transformation. Ministers talk of enterprises that are not even subventionné but subverson . . . According to information supplied by a reader in revolt, the İzmir Municipality’s glass bus-shelters are described as being ‘both “indoor” and “outdoor”, both “visible” and “invisible”.’

And what about the public telephones? What can one say of the words they bear: ‘Token Return Hole’? All right, let us concede that we understand jeton [F] and iade [A]; what is hole? Until we find the dim-witted oaf who, it being open to him to say the Turkish delik, enlists the aid of the English hole, and he is given a sound thrashing in the presence of all the members of the Language Congress, I suppose there will be no end to daftnesses of this kind.10

The use of hol for ‘hole’ was particularly ill conceived, because hol had long been known to Turks in a different sense; it was another English borrowing, from ‘hall’ in the sense of a large public room or the entrance hall of a house. But perhaps they may get used to having hol with two disparate meanings, as they already have kot with five: it means a type of cotton material, the jeans made from it, altitude, and code,11 and also appears in kötüşi pazar ‘marché de valeurs non-cotisées’, ‘unlisted securities market’; this from the French ‘cote’ ‘Stock Exchange quotation’.

Süpermarket now figures in the dictionaries, and so does süper, defined in such terms as ‘Nitelik, nicelik ve derece bakımından üstün olan’ (Superior from the point of view of quality, quantity and degree). Süperdevlet is in regular use for ‘superpower’ but has not yet got into the dictionaries. Sports writers call the player who scores the most goals ‘en skorer oyuncu’. The normal word for a bodyguard, or bouncer or chucker-out at a night-club, is koruma ‘protection’, but the with-it word is ‘bodyguard’, spelled like that. There is, however, no shortage of French.

9 For the writer’s distinction too. Professor Soysal, while Dean of the Faculty of Political Sciences at Ankara, suffered greatly for upholding freedom of thought in the bad days of the early 1970s.

10 The daftnesses continue, and not only in Turkey. I have in front of me a leaflet entitled ‘The Patient’s Charter’, published by HM Stationery Office in 1991 for the Department of Health. It promises that in due course there will be, inter alia, a Turkish version, ‘Peyşin Kartı’.

11 This makes a verb kotlamak. If, when using the telephone, you are asked ‘Adınızı kotlar misiniz?’ (Will you spell out your name in code?), you should reply, if your name is Mehmet or Meredith, ‘Muğla’daki M, Edirne’deki E’ (M as in Muğla, E as in Edirne) and so on.
The slip of paper your waiter gives you when, dinner over, you ask for ‘hesap’, will probably have the printed heading ‘Adisyon’. The Turkish for ‘ambulance’ is cankurtaran ‘life-saver’, but the legend you will see on the front of most ambulances in Turkey is Ambülans. Mümtaz Soysal (1993) has an ingenious explanation of how this may have come about:


Oysa, ‘ambülans’ öyle mi? Adının ne anlam geliğini bilen yok ki, geç gelince kızılsın. ‘Can kurtamayan ambülans da olabilir’ diye düşünmeye başıyor insanlar ve bu sözde alafrangalı birlikte müthiş bir şarkılık, adamsendecilik, olmaması gereken bir hoşgörü yerlesiyor.

It is always interesting to trace how words are born, how they live, and how they die.

Take the word ambilans. Why was it born? More to the point, how did it kill off cankurtaran, one of the most attractive words in contemporary Turkish? It may well be that this change took place just when the life-savers began not saving lives. Who knows, urban order deteriorated, the roads became clogged, and, when the life-savers that were summoned did not arrive in time, the sick and injured died before being removed to hospital. The life-saver that arrives late is a vehicle that belies its name. It was surely because of this that the name changed.

But is that so with ambülans? There is no one who knows what the name means, so why should anyone feel angry when it arrives late? People start to think, ‘A non-saver of life may just as well be an ambülans [as anything else],‘ and in those words, despite the occidental flavour, there nestsles a terrible oriental quality, a ‘So what?’ attitude, a tolerance which ought not to exist.

In an earlier article Soysal (1986) said:

Kendi dilini geliştirmek yerine başkalarının dilini böylesine yalan yanlış benimseyen bir başka toplum da yoktur . . . Radyolarında harfleri bile gâverca okuyup ‘er-aş pozitif’ diye kan isteyen ve ‘Oşinografi Dairesi’nin bildirilini okuyan bir toplum bu tarzancayla mı kendi düşünsesini üretcek?

Nor is there any other society that, instead of developing its own language, adopts in so cockeyed a fashion the language of other people . . . A society which even pronounces on its radio the names of the letters of the alphabet in the manner of the heathen, asking for ‘er-aş pozitif’ [Rh positive] blood, and which reads notices from ‘the Department of Oceanography’—is it going to produce its own ideas in this monkey-talk [Tarzanish]?

The pronunciation of ‘Rh’ as /er-aş/ reflects the French training of many Turkish doctors, while the English-language domination of the field of electronics is

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12 The article in entitled ‘Atmasyon’ (Showing off), from atma ‘bragging’ plus the French suffix of such words as telekomünikasyon. See Lewis (1988: 172).
shown by the pronunciation of the abbreviation TV for television; some do say /te-vel/, but /ti-vi/ is at least as common. FM for frequency modulation is universally pronounced /ef-em/, not /fe-me/.

On Fridays, some newspapers’ front pages carry a promise that tomorrow’s issue will bring next week’s television programmes: ‘Yarın TV Guide’. Friends I have consulted cannot guess how that last word is pronounced by readers ignorant of English. Even when one knows that okeylemek means ‘to OK’, that fizibilite raporu has long been the Turkish for ‘feasibility report’, and kalite kontrolü for ‘quality control’, one can still be startled by new developments in Türkilikze. The programme of the 1998 International Conference on Turkish Linguistics included a paper entitled: ‘Türkçe’de Kompleks Predikasyonlar içindeki Gerundium Grubu Öğerlerinin Relativizasyonu’ (‘Relativization of Elements of the Gerund-Group within Complex Predications in Turkish’). If that does not startle you, how about this? The notice outside the places where they measure your vehicle’s emission of exhaust-gas reads: ‘Egzos Gazi Emisyonu Ölçüm İstasyonu’. Beyond saying that ölçüm means ‘measurement’, just this once I shall break my rule about leaving no Turkish quotation untranslated.

Another new borrowing is -kolik, from the suffix of alcoholic and its offspring chocoholic and workaholic, the Türkilikze for the last-named being çalışma kolik or işkolik. Tea addicts are called çaykolik. An older such suffix is -matik as in bankamatik, a cash-dispensing machine. Lately its use has spread in unlikely directions:

Devlet Bakanı İslay Saygun, ilk kez tapu işlemlerinin bankamatik kartların gibi manyetik kartlara yürütülmesini sağlayan ‘Tapumatik’ sisteminin açılışını yaptı. (‘Tapular artık tapumatik’e. Hürriyet, 12 Ağustos 1997, haber) . . .


Minister of State İslay Saygun has performed the opening of the Tapumatik system, which for the first time makes it possible for land-registration operations to be conducted by means of magnetic cards resembling cash-cards (‘Title-Deeds at Last Automated’, Hürriyet, 12 Aug. 1997, news item) [tapumatike is a quasi-French past participle from tapu ‘title-deed’ plus -matik ] . . .

This brings me to14 the names of three magazines: Paramatik, the Weekly Journal of Economics, Politics, Finance, and the Stock Market, and the riddle and puzzle magazines Zekamatik and Çözmatik [para ‘money’, zeka ‘intelligence’, çöz- ‘to solve’].

A less obvious example of the influence of English is a new phenomenon: the current greeting Selâm in place of Merhaba. This is not evidence of increasing religiosity, but is due to the prevalence of English-language films on television, which results in what is called dublaj Türkçesi ‘dubbing-Turkish’. The aim when dubbing is to use Turkish words requiring lip movements similar to those of the original,

13 There are two correctly derived words for ‘feasibility’, olurluk and yapılırlılık, only nobody much uses them. For ‘report’ there exists the neologism yazanak, but it is nowhere near as common as rapor.
14 Literally, ‘At this point, now that its place has come, I must also mention’.
and the lip movements for ‘Selâm’ are closer to those for ‘Hello’ than to those for ‘Merhaba’. Other such phenomena may be on the way. Another instance of television’s effect on speech: according to Hasan Pulur, writing in Milliyet of 4 February 1995, Vay anasini! is no longer the normal way of expressing surprise, its replacement being Vavvuvv! ‘Wow!’

What Atatürk would have made of all this is an interesting topic for speculation. It is clearly not what he had in mind when he spoke of liberating Turkish from the yoke of foreign languages. Maybe he would have welcomed all the Anglicisms and Gallicisms as evidence of his country’s Westernization, preferring them to Arabisms and Persianisms. But what he wanted his countrymen to speak and write was Turkish.
The New Turkish

There are two questions we have to address: has the reform eliminated the gap between the language of the intellectuals and the language of the people, and has it impoverished the language? The answer to the first question is that the gap, though not so huge as it once was, is still there. But that is natural, because some people need and use more words than others. No one ever expected the intellectuals to stop talking about bacteriology or astronomy or political science or whatever their particular interests might be. The hope was simply that they would give up the use of Ottoman words for everyday concepts; they would not, so to speak, say ‘domicile’ when they meant ‘house’, or ‘animadvert on’ when they meant ‘find fault with’, or ‘I shall exercise cogitation on this topic’ when they meant ‘I’ll think about it’. And they don’t. To that extent the reform has been a success. On the other hand, the spread of Öztürkçe and the influx of English have hardly changed the speech habits of non-intellectuals; the language spoken today by the agricultural labourer, the shopkeeper, and the small craftsman is not markedly different from that spoken by their grandparents. These people keep much of the old language alive. To this extent the gap has widened and the reform has failed.

Certainly most of the disposessed Arabic and Persian words are gone for ever, and many Turks feel that their language has already been damaged beyond repair. Since 1983, however, it has begun to settle down and enjoy a new period of convalescence, although, given the endless deluge of English borrowings, it is too early to say ‘of natural development’. In the new TDK’s suggested replacements for those borrowings, Öztürkçe is far from predominating; some of them are what we may call proper Turkish and what the old TDK would have called Ottoman. The list in Türk Dili for November 1997 included sıhhi for hijyenik, and fizik tedavi uzmanı ‘physical treatment expert’ for fizyoterapist. For kemoterapi ‘chemotherapy’ we are even given a choice of adjective: kimyasal/kimyevi tedavi. For enformel ‘informal’, resmi olmiyan. The best they could do for klonlamak ‘to clone’ was kopyalamak, the Italian kopya having long since supplanted the Arabic istinsah ‘copy’.

Aksoy (1982: 115–16) says:


I am not a purifier: I do not believe that all foreign words can be expelled from the language. Yet it never crosses my mind to find fault with the purifiers. They are endeavouring to find Turkish equivalents for all foreign words, an attitude to be applauded. I know they will not be able to achieve one hundred per cent success, but their endeavours may win a number of valuable items for the language. The ‘purifier’ is more useful than the ‘conservative’ who makes no effort to enrich the language. One must not forget that the language won’t go off the rails just because of the existence of purifiers. A good many purifiers have come and gone before now. To what extent have their proposals materialized? Society filters all the results of their work and takes what suits its purposes.

It does indeed. That is why yükle-ici, for example, though correctly formed from a Turkish root and Turkish suffixes (yükle- ‘to take on a burden’, and -ici denoting regular activity), has not caught on. It was intended to replace müteahhit ‘contractor’, but builders who have spent their working lives with contractors do not know the new word and continue to refer to them as mutahit. Cep Kılavuzu gave tecim for ticaret [A] ‘commerce’, and tecimer for tüccar [A] ‘businessman’. Any businessmen who ever seriously called themselves tecimer have left no mark; tüccar is still the word. There may be some writers who talk about tecim, but if so they are living in the past: Türkçe Sözlük (1983) did not include tecim though it still gave tecimsel for ticari ‘commercial’. The 1988 edition includes neither, and marks tecim evi for ticarethane [AP] ‘place of business’ as obsolete.

Fahir İz, doyen of scholars of Ottoman and modern literature, does not doubt that the reform has been a success (İz 1984): ‘Bügünkü Türkçe dilin yapısına uymayan kirk elli söz vardır. Terimlerde bu sayısı yüzden dolayıdır. Bunlar yazı diline kazandırılan binlerce söz yanında devede kulaktır’ (Present-day Turkish has forty or fifty words incompatible with the structure of the language. In the case of technical terms the figure is around a hundred. Beside the thousands of words won for the written language by the reform, this is insignificant [‘the ear on a camel’]. He rather skates over the fact that the reform has had little effect on the way ordinary people talk; in his text he mentions just one neologism that has entered the spoken language, the malformed ilging ‘interesting’. In his summing-up he says: ‘Bügün artık Dil Devrimi’nden geri dönülemezce kişi kesindir. Halkın konuşturduğu dili bırakıp tekrar Arapçaya ve Farsçaya dönmek hiçbir zaman söz konusu olamaz’ (By now there can definitely be no turning-back from the Language Reform. There can be no question of the people’s ever abandoning the language they speak and turning once more to Arabic and Persian). He spoils the effect, however, in the next paragraph:

Artık kimseye seçim yerine intiharbat, seçmen yerine müntahip, basın yerine matbuat, yayın yerine neşriyat, başyazar yerine ser-muharrir, yazı kurulu yerine heyet-i tahririye, takma ad yerine nam-i müstear, Akdeniz Adaları yerine Cezayir-i Bahr-i Sefid, Oniki Ada yerine
Cezayir-i İsnaaşer, Kuzey Buz Denizi yerine Bahr-i Muhit-i Muncemid-i Şimalı yazdirmının ve söylemenin yolu yoktur.

There is no way of making anyone write and say the Ottoman instead of the Öztürkçe for 'election', 'voter', 'the Press', 'publication', 'editor-in-chief', 'editorial committee', 'pseudonym', 'Islands of the Mediterranean', 'Dodecanese', and 'Arctic Ocean'.

The title of his brochure is 'The Turkish of Us All', but who are the 'us'? I cannot believe that any of those words, new or old, with the exception around election time of seçim and possibly seçmen, are often on the lips of the habitués of the tea houses of Kırklareli or Bayburt. Are these the 'people' who are not going to turn once more to Arabic and Persian? How are they to turn or not to turn 'once more' to two languages they never knew?

The standpoint of Faruk Kadri Timurtaş (1979) is very different, as the title of his book reveals: 'Dictionary of New Words, Fake and Otherwise'. He himself uses kelimé not sözcük for 'word', but sözlik for 'dictionary' rather than lügat, which now sounds highly archaic; he thus avoids the cacophonous sözcükler sözliği. Though not so tolerant of illegitimate creations as Fahir İz, he is no diehard;1 witness his comment on içerek, the new word for muhtevâ 'contents' (1979: 54–5).

Son yıllarda uydurmacıların çokça kullandıkları kelimelerden biri de içerek'tir, 'muhtevâ' mânasına geliyormuş. Dilimizde içeri kelimesi bulunmaksal birlikte, içerek diye bir kelime yoktur . . . Muhtevâ kelimesinin artık eskidiği ve herkes tarafından bilinmediği doğrudur ama, bunun karşılığı içerek değildir. Muhtevâ yerine 'iç, öz' kullanılabilir. Another word much used by the fakers in recent years is içerek, purporting to mean muhtevâ 'contents'. Although içeri exists in our language, there is no such word as içerek . . . It is true that muhtevâ is antiquated and not known to everyone, but the replacement for it is not içerek. İç or öz may be used instead.

Where he would not agree with Fahir İz is on the number of illegitimate formations in Öztürkçe. He lists more than three thousand neologisms, which he places in three categories: words correctly formed, incorrectly formed 'fakes', and words that, though semantically or morphologically incorrect, have become so widely used that they qualify as galat-1 meşhur, the Ottoman term for 'error legitimized by usage'. Averaging the results of a spot check of one-fifth of the list shows 40 per cent in the first category, 37 per cent in the second, and 23 per cent in the third, making a total of just under two thousand incorrect forms; a far cry from İz's 'forty to fifty'.

Gültekin devotes a chapter—'Yeni bir Seçkin Dili Tehlikesi var mıdır? (1983: 97–101)—to a discussion of whether there is a danger of the emergence of a new elite language. He decides that there is not:

Türk yazı dili son elli yılda çok büyük değişiklikler geçirdi. Elli yıl önce yazılan birçok yazı bugün anlaşılımıyor, bu normaldir. Ama bundan sonra da aynı ölçüde bir değişiklik süreci

1 He was responsible for a neat linguistic term: kendileştirmek literally 'to make one's own' for 'to assimilate', previously temsil etmek (Aksoy 1982: 114).
beklememek gerekir. Elli yıl sonra, bugün yazılan yazılarnın anlamaması gibi bir durum olmamalıdır ve olmayacaktır.

Written Turkish has undergone very great changes in the last fifty years. A good many writings of fifty years ago are unintelligible today; this is normal. But from now on, a process of change of the same order must not be expected. Fifty years ahead there should not and will not be a situation in which what is being written today is unintelligible.

The calm 'bu normaldır' that ends the second sentence gave me a cold grue. Thinking that I might have misunderstood, I searched the dictionaries to see whether normal had recently acquired some new significance, but found none. There was no getting round it; when Gültekin says it is normal for something written fifty years ago to be unintelligible, he means exactly that; a shocking tribute to the success of the language reform.

In Chapter 1 I mentioned the 'translations into modern Turkish' and 'simplified versions' of standard authors to be seen in the bookshops. Here is a pertinent comment by Fuat M. Andic, quoted in Cumhuriyet of 7 May 1995:


It must have been last year that I was looking in Babiiali for one of Yakup Kadri's books, Erenlerin Bağıdani. It was nowhere to be found. I asked a publishing firm which had printed a number of his books why they had not printed that one. They replied, 'We haven't been able to find anyone to put it into Turkish.' Apparently a book printed in the Thirties, which I read at middle school, today has to be put into Turkish! Did Yakup Kadri write it in Chinese, I wonder? And, to crown it all, no one can be found to understand that Turkish and turn it into fakeish!

Those who condemn the old TDK and all its works usually round off their argument by saying that parents and children no longer understand one another: 'Baba ile evlat birbirini anlamaz hale gelmiştir.' This is an exaggeration. If the children, busy with their homework, grumble about how much ev ödevi their teacher has assigned for this evening, it should not take the parents long to work out that ev ödevi is what they used to call ev vazifesı. Children will understand what their parents mean by hakkında 'about', though they themselves will use ile ilgili or -e ilişkin. Some of them may even use hakkında in school just to show off, and this could be the salvation of some older words. I recall my grandson, at the age of 7, coming home with an involved tale about something that had happened that day at school. It ended with, 'So you see it was the other way round. Or, as you big people would say, vice versa.' One's recognition vocabulary is always larger than one's working vocabulary.

2 The street of bookshops, stationers, and newspaper offices, below the Babiiali, the old Sublime Porte.
The reform left the Turks with virtually no choice of levels of discourse. To write as one spoke seemed a laudable aim at a time when 90 per cent of the population could not read much of what was being written, nor fully understand it even if it were read out to them. A minister invited to open a new bridge or conference or exhibition in the old days would never use açmak for 'to open'; the only permissible verb was küşad [P] etmek. But in present-day Turkish it is not easy to rise to a solemn occasion unless one risks baffling most of one's audience by resorting to Ottomanisms. When Turks try to express themselves by employing an Ottoman word, not surprisingly they sometimes get it wrong—for example, Müstesekkiriz’ (for ‘Müsteşekkiriz”), which was an Istanbul waiter's response to being over-tipped. An English approximation might be 'I am gratificated!' Even well-educated Turks are just as liable to be unclear about the meanings of some neologisms as about the meanings of Ottoman words. There is, for example, a confusing cluster of neologisms beginning with öz, in addition to the old words özen ‘care, attention’, özge ‘other’, and özenti ‘counterfeit': özle and özgü ‘peculiar (to); özgür ‘free’, özek ‘centre’, özel ‘private’, özerk ‘autonomous’, özet ‘summary’, özgül ‘specific’, and özgün, which was intended to replace aslı ‘original’ but is used by many for ‘authentic’. But in the latter sense özgün does not have the field to itself; in Turkey you can buy audio-cassettes labelled ‘Otanik Halk Oyunlarımız’ (Our Authentic Folk-Dances). One wonders how much that first word conveys to most people who see it, though it may be no less meaningful to the young than the posters one sees nowadays in Britain advertising ‘An Evening of Acoustic Songs’.

It cannot be too often remarked that many of the creators of new words were salaried employees of TDK, the others being enthusiastic amateurs. Very few in either group were experts on the language. Consequently, many of the neologisms were not based on Turkish roots and Turkish suffixes. This fact did not bother the man in the street. He learned the new words first at school, as the steady stream of new coinages from the Language Society was channelled through the Ministry of Education. He then saw them constantly in newspapers and on public notices. Although people with a feeling for language may not have liked the new words, they soon found themselves obliged to use at any rate some of them if they wished to communicate. But in Turkey as elsewhere few knew or cared anything about the origins of the words they used, which is why one hears bölgevi for 'regional' and önemiyyet for 'importance', both being Öztürkçe words with Arabic suffixes.

Despite that sweeping generalization, one must own to being taken aback by a speech made by the Minister of Culture in May 1992. Having publicly expressed

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3 For a way in which plain açmak can be elevated for a ceremonial occasion, however, see açılışını yapmak on page 138.
4 Of course it is not only Turks who get words wrong. Not every British journalist distinguishes between mitigate and militate, and one longs to see some public figure sue a newspaper for accusing him of prevarication when all he has been guilty of is procrastination.
his heartfelt thanks to all the new words it had given the nation, he continued: 'Örneğin, Türk Dil Kurumu tarafından üretilen Kurul, Kurultay, Yurt, Ulke, Tanrı, Töre, Tüzük, Yargıç, Savcı, Giysi, Ezgi, Işı, Evren ve Amaç gibi sözcükler, Orta Asya'nın değişik bölgelerinde olduğu gibi, bugün Türkiye'de de yaygın bir şekilde kullanılmaktadır' (For example, words produced by TDK, such as kurul . . . amaç, are widely used today in Turkey as in various regions of Central Asia) (Sürekli Türk Dili Kurultayı 1992: 7). Well, not quite. Of those fourteen words, TDK produced just three, none of them used in Central Asia: kurul 'committee', yargıç 'judge', and savcı 'prosecutor'. The rest are centuries older than TDK, except that the old TDK could have claimed any credit there might be for reducing the double s of ısst 'warmth' to a single s. Amaç is a Persian borrowing (ämâj).

Here is another part of Mümdez Soysal's (1986) article 'Türkçenin Düşmanları', already cited in Chapter 10:


The only expedient open to us is to create a sound language of thought and science by starting from Turkish roots, without yielding to the impulse to Turkicize what is intelligible and familiar, not impoverishing the language but, on the contrary, enriching it; by knowing that tebliğ and beyanneme represent two different concepts ['communication' and 'declaration'] and creating the distinctions bildiri, bildirge, bildirim ['communication', 'declaration', 'notification'] instead of cutting the Gordian knot and saying bildiri. But also, since no society can exist severed from its past, by teaching the new generations some Ottoman, even if it be only a tiny bit. Surely no society but ours has brought its children up to speak foreign languages fluently but not to understand the language of their forebears.

One of the many significant passages in that article is where Soysal speaks of the need for bildiri, bildirge, and bildirim, to obviate using bildiri in all three senses. Much the same point was made by Ali Püsküllüoğlu in Cumhuriyet of 6–7 August 1996, in two articles devoted to the word söylem. This neologism was intended to mean söyleyüş 'manner of speaking', or söyleniş 'pronunciation'; but it was per- verse to create it when the language already possessed those two regularly formed and unambiguous words. Püsküllüoğlu's thirty-odd citations show that different writers use it in different senses. The days when neologisms were regularly circulated to schools are past; when hearing—or, more often, reading—a new word such as söylem for the first time, one knows only that it has something to do with saying. Few will bother to look it up in a dictionary but, like Humpty Dumpty,

5 So Türkçe Sözlük (1988). It is not given in Örnekleriyle Türkçe Sözlük (1995–6), presumably because the compilers saw no reason for its existence.
will use it to mean just what they choose it to mean. And why shouldn’t they? Isn’t that what its inventor did? One of Püsküllüoğlu’s many examples: ‘Tutamayanlar’i diğer Türk romanlarından ayıran . . . türlü biçimlere ve özüyüşamöyküsü, anısklopedi, günlük, şir, tiyatro, mektup gibi çeşitli söylemlere yer vermesidir’ (What sets Tutamayanlar [Atay 1986] apart from other Turkish novels is that it finds room for sundry styles and various söylemlar such as autobiography, encyclopaedia, diary, poetry, theatre, letters). Here söylem must mean ‘genre’. In others of Püsküllüoğlu’s citations it seems to be used for ‘style’, ‘communication’, ‘manner’, ‘contents’, ‘tone’, and ‘language’. One also sees it used for ‘expression’ and for ‘rhetoric’.

In Ömer Asım Aksoy’s spirited defence of the reform (1982: 115) he gives (with no specific reference) a moving quotation from Falih Rıfkı Atay:


Because we were confident that the place of vaziyet in Turkish was secure, we had put two equivalents for it in the dictionary [Cep Kilavuzu]. In the sense of ‘position’, vaziyet would remain. For ‘situation’ we would use durum. Just consider this: vaziyet, which we had supposed would never disappear from Turkish, has in all its senses been chased out of the language by durum, which in the beginning people used in writing and speech as a joke. Genel, which we had supposed would never catch on, is now all the rage. I must say that my taste rebelled against the adjectival suffixes -sel/sal, but what effect did that have?—I mean, what effect did I have? That is the language of all the new generation. I, who for some twenty or twenty-five years marched in the vanguard of Turkish, now find the new generation ahead of me. Should I be angry that Turkish is not imprisoned within the dimensions of my taste? No.

Aksoy misses something that can be read between the lines of Atay’s generous confession: the disappointment felt by him and his colleagues, who thought they had enriched the language by finding two separate words for the two separate senses of vaziyet, only to see it impoverished when durum usurped both senses. Nor could they have been best pleased when the new word eventually found for ‘position’ turned out to be konum, which they had offered in Cep Kilavuzu as a replacement for tevdiat and mevduat ‘bank deposits’ (now yatırım).

Agâh Sirri Levend, Secretary-General of TDK 1951–60 and President 1963–6, said in reply to a question at a meeting of its administrative committee in September 1951: ‘Bir anlamda türlü kelimeler bulunması, o dilin zenginliğine delâlet etmez. Meselâ Arapçada “Ayn” kelimesinin 40 anlamı vardır: “deve”nin 50 adı
vardır. Bu bir zenginlik değildir (The existence of various words in one meaning is no indication of the richness of that language. In Arabic, for example, the word 'ayn has forty meanings, the camel has fifty names. This is not richness) (Türk Dili, 1 (1951), 54–5).

One does not like to contradict Levend, but it is indeed richness if you are a desert Arab whose whole way of life depends on camels. One might as well say that English is not a rich language because it has a multitude of names for structures: house, office building, mansion, hut, factory, school, warehouse, block of flats... The camel has in fact only one generic name in Arabic, ba‘ir, and a collective noun ibil 'camels'. The other names making up Levend’s 'fifty' are specific to the age, sex, and use of the individual creature in question: jamal is a he-camel, nāqa a she-camel, rāhila a she-camel fit to be saddled, huwār a baby camel from the time of birth until weaned, and so on and so on.6

Never mind about Arabian cameleers; what about Turkish writers who like to have a choice of words? Levend should have remembered that once upon a time Turkish was probably the only language that came anywhere near English in the richness of its vocabulary. It had individual words expressing the senses of to state, to affirm, to declare, to assert, to impart, to communicate, to report, to convey, to comment, to hint, to remark, to narrate, and more. To express all these senses, the Turks for the most part now have to make do with anlatmak 'to tell', söylemek 'to say', and bildirmek 'to inform', with adverbs to supply the nuances. So, for 'to hint', if they wish to avoid or do not know the old ima etmek, they have to say 'üstü kapalı söylemek' (to say covertly) or 'dolaylı anlatmak' (to tell indirectly). This is what we might call Basic Turkish. Those who deplore Öztürkçe and call it 'Türk Esperanto' overlook the extreme regularity of Esperanto. Basic English affords a closer analogy, having all the idiosyncrasies of English but none of the subtleties.7 Various words for seeking knowledge were once available to the Turks. There was istisfar 'to ask someone to explain a text', istiknah, 'to seek to plumb the depths of a problem', istilâm, 'to make an official request for information', istizah 'to seek clarification', istimzaç, 'to make polite enquiries about someone's well-being or to enquire whether someone is persona grata to a foreign government'. Only the last two find a place in Türkçe Sözlük, the dictionary most widely used in Turkey, which marks both of them as antiquated.

Orhan Okay (1981: 274) made a shrewd observation about the titles of the Turkish translations of four French philosophical works, the Pensées of Pascal, the Méditations of Lamartine, the Réflexions of La Rochefoucauld, and the Idées of Alain. He notes that the 'Thoughts', the 'Meditations', the 'Reflections', and the

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6 As to 'ayn, 'forty meanings' is an exaggeration, unless kirk is being used in its metaphorical sense of 'umpteen', but there may be over twenty, though to get the figure that high you have to count hole, small aperture, eye of a needle, and eyelet as four distinct meanings.

7 Basic English, with a vocabulary of 850 words, was invented in the late 1920s by Charles Kay Ogden, as a vehicle for international communication. It attracted considerable attention in the 1930s, but nothing has been heard of it since the Second World War and the subsequent emergence of non-basic English as the international language.
‘Ideas’ all come out in the new Turkish as ‘Düşünceler’ (Thoughts), whereas the older language offered a choice among düşünceler, murakabat, tefekkürat, tefelsuf, teemmüll, and mülahazat. The same writer also remarks that takdim etmek ‘to offer humbly’, arzetmek ‘to offer respectfully’, ihsan etmek ‘to bestow’, bahşetmek ‘to confer’, lütfetmek ‘to offer graciously’, and ita etmek ‘to grant’ have all been replaced by vermek ‘to give’ and summak ‘to present’.

Aksoy (1982: 23) positively advocates impoverishment. He comes out strongly against the view that maintaining Ottoman synonyms is a way of enriching the vocabulary and avoiding repetition: ‘Yinelemeden kurtulmanın yolu da yabancı sözcüğe başvurmak değil, yazı yazması öğrenmekdir. Yinelemek zorunlu olan yerlerde ise bundan kaçınmanın gerekir. Arapça ya da Fransızca yazan kişi, bir sözcüğü ikinci, üçüncü kez yinelememek için onun Türkçesini, Almancasını mı kullanır?’ (The way to escape repeating oneself is not to have recourse to foreign words; it is learning to write. In places where repetition is unavoidable, one must not abstain from it. Does someone writing in Arabic or French use a Turkish or German equivalent to avoid repeating a word for a second or third time?). He gives short shrift to the objection that ilişki ‘relation’ cannot replace münasebet in everyday expressions such as ‘ne münasebet?’ (what’s the relevance of that?),8 ‘münasebetsiz etmeyiniz’ (don’t behave in an unseenly fashion), and ‘münasebet almaz’ (it is not seemly). He explains (pp. 57–8) that münasebet in these expressions does not mean ilişki but is an inseparable part of the whole expression. The question he does not address is whether anyone can be expected to drop these and a host of other expressions which contain non-ÖzTÜRKÇE words.

An effective voice on the other side is Fatma Özkan (1995: 974–81):

Bir dilde, bir kavram, nesne veya varlılık karşılayan birden fazla kelime varsa, zamanla bu kelimelerin arasında ince anlam farkları doğar. Aralarında böyle nüanslar bulunan kelimelerden birini dile dolaşıp diğerlerini unutturmak, dilimizin ifade imkanlarını daraltır. Mesela, son zamanlarda, ‘beğenme, takdir etme, hoşlanma, hazzetme, zevk alma’ kelimelerinin hepsini birden karşılamak üzere, keyf alma sözü dillere pelesenek9 olduğu . . . Aynı şekilde, affederseniz, kusura bakmayınız, özür dilerim ibarelerinin yerine, bağışla demek, dilimizin ifade gücümüzü azaltmaz mı? Hatta, hepsini bir kenara itip, İngilizce I am sorry’nin tercumesi olan özgünüm sözüyle meram anlatmak hangi mantıka açıklanabilir? Şeref, haysiyet, gurur, kibir, izzetinefi kelime kelimelerinin yerine sadece onur’u koymak; şüphe, endişe, merak kelimelerinin yerine yalnızca kuşku’yu getirmek, dilimizin kaybi mı, kazancı midir?

If a language possesses a plurality of words to express a concept, a thing, or an entity, fine distinctions of meaning eventually arise among them. To let one of them be on everybody’s

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8 I am reminded that over forty years ago, in the days when Istanbul men about town were still addressing each other as ‘Mon cher’, I ran into a friend who was in a state of fury at what had just happened to him in a smart shop on İstiklal Caddesi, where he had gone to buy a tie. It seems that the shop assistant had greeted him with ‘Monsieur désir?’ Sputtering, he had replied, ‘Monsieur mi? Monsieur mi? Quelle münasebet?’

9 This misuse of pelesenek ‘balsam’ for persenek ‘buzzword’ is not uncommon. ‘Buzzword’ seems to be our closest equivalent, though one is a little put off by a remark in Time Magazine for January 1980: ‘The air is thick with devalued buzz words, including “buzz words”.’
lips and let the others be forgotten means reducing our language's capacity for expression. For example, keyf alma ['relishing'] has recently become the buzzword standing for beğenme ['approval'], takdir etme ['appreciation'], hoşlanma ['liking'], hazzetme ['rejoicing'], and zevk alma ['taking pleasure']. Similarly, does it not diminish our language's power of expression to say bağışla ['spare (me)'] instead of affedersiniz ['forgive (me)'], kusura bakmayın ['excuse me'], and özür dilerim ['I beg pardon']? Even more, what logic can help to explain pushing all of these to one side and expressing your meaning with izgünüm, a translation of the English 'I'm sorry'? Is it a gain or a loss for our language to replace şeref ['honour'], haysyet ['self-respect'], gurur ['pride'], kibir ['self-esteem'], and izzetinefis ['dignity'] just by orur, to introduce kışku ['suspicion'] alone as a substitute for şüphe ['doubt'], endişe ['anxiety'], and merak ['worry']?

Onur, originally the French honneur, is not a creation of the language reform, though its Öztürkçe status seems to be due to its being plugged by TRT, the state broadcasting service. It is shown in Tarama Sözlüğü (1963–77) as used in several places in the vilayets of Bilecik, Bolu, Ankara, Kayseri, and Hatay, for kibir ['self-esteem'] and çalm 'swagger'. For 'personal honour', ordinary people's speech retains namus, originally the Greek nómos. (Oddly enough, orur appears in the Oxford English Dictionary as an obsolete form of honour.)

An idea of the dimensions of the impoverishment can be gathered by browsing in a modern Turkish–Turkish dictionary, particularly in the pages containing many words of Arabic origin: those beginning with m and, to a lesser extent, t and i. Look for words that have only a definition, as distinct from those for which a one-word equivalent is given. Every word in the former category represents a failure on the part of the reformers. English has no exact equivalent of the lovely Ottoman word selika [A] 'the ability to speak well and write well'. Nor has modern Turkish. Türkçe Sözlük (1988) marks it as antiquated. But why did TDK permit it to become antiquated without devising an Öztürkçe substitute? Perhaps the cynics' answer is the right one: why bother to create a word for an obsolete concept?

But there are everday concepts that used to be succinctly expressed and no longer are. Müddet 'period', mühlet and mehil 'respite', 'permitted delay', and vâde 'term' have all fallen before sûre, a Frankenstein's monster whose progenitors were the Turkish sûr- 'to continue' and the French durée 'duration'.

For that useful verb tevil etmek 'to explain away', 'to interpret allegorically', Türkçe Sözlük (1988) gives söz veya davranışa başka bir anlam vermek 'to give another meaning to a statement or an action'. Türkçe Sözlük does not, however, mention here the Öztürkçe equivalent, çevrilemek, although that word is defined in the same dictionary as 'Çevriye uğratmak ['to subject to translation'], tevil

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10 I have had occasion to refer in uncomplimentary terms to Eyuboğlu's etymological dictionary (1988); nevertheless I note his explanation of how this French word entered Anatolian rural dialect, just in case some fact is lurking in it. His story is that it came through the speech of Greek-speaking Anatolian intellectuals who studied French in the foreign schools. That does not begin to explain how the French honneur appears in the dialects of a swath of provinces across Central Anatolia but not in the cities where there are or were foreign schools, notably Istanbul, İzmir, and Tarsus. Its use in Hatay is understandable in view of the French influence that for many years was strong in that region.
etmek'. Anyway, it never caught on, probably because it was too easily confused with another neologism, çevrelmek 'to surround', and it does not occur in Örnekleriyle Türkçe Sözlük (1995–6). So tevıl may survive.

Consider the nuances of the many words expressing the concept of change. In English, besides change, we have alteration, alternation, mutation, variation, permutation, vicissitudes, deviation, modification, transformation, metamorphosis. Many of these can be paralleled in Ottoman, i.e. early Republican Turkish: istihale, tahavvül, tebedoıl, tebedoılät, tagayür, takallüp, and so forth, whereas the modern Turk's choice is pretty much restricted to değişimek 'to change' and başkalasmak 'to become different'. True, biologists if they wish may call on the neologism değişke (not in Örnekleriyle Türkçe Sözlük (1995–6)), for which Türkçe Sözlük (1988) gives: 'Her canlıda dış etkilerle ortaya çıkabilen, kalıtmala ilgili olmayan değişiklikler, modifikasyon' (Change unrelated to heredity, which may emerge under external influences in every living thing; modification).

The vast resources of Ottoman Turkish were at the disposal of the reformers. They did not have to perpetuate the whole exuberant vocabulary; they were free to pick and choose, but they deliberately elected to dissipate their heritage. They should have been aware of the danger that their work would lead to a depletion of the vocabulary if they failed to find or devise replacements for the words they were striving to eliminate. Had Sayılı (1978) been written earlier, and had the reformers read it and taken it to heart, they could have done better, but the damage had been done forty years before.

Yet all is not lost. Language is a set of conventions, which ordinarily just grow. What the reformers did was to create conventions; to say that henceforth the tradition will be thus and thus. Once a convention has been established, it makes no difference if it has slowly matured over the centuries or was manufactured last week in an office in Ankara or a study in Istanbul or a café in Urfa. But learning a new word does not automatically banish the old word from one's memory. I had a fascinating conversation in Istanbul with an elderly taxi-driver, who wanted to know what I was doing in Turkey. I told him that I was particularly interested in the language reform. He replied that he had never heard of it; the language was one and unchanging. For 'language', incidentally, he used the old lisan [A] and not dil. So I asked him, 'What about önemli ['important'], which some people now use instead of mühim?' 'Oh no,' he answered, 'they're quite different. Suppose the Municipality says that that building over there isn't safe and it's önemli to repair it, that means it may be done five or ten years from now. But if they say it's mühim, that means work will start tomorrow.' To him the old Arabic word was the more impressive of the two, and he was not aware that önemli was totally artificial.

This incident lends support to the view of a Turkish friend, that nuances of meaning are emerging and will continue to emerge between old words and their Öztürkçe replacements; he himself did not feel medeniyet and uygarlık to be synonymous. If he was talking about a particular civilization or the history of civilization, he would use the former, and for 'civilized' he would say 'medeni'. Uygar,
on the other hand, conveyed to him something more dynamic: civilized and vigorous and progressive. The story in Chapter 8 of the two Izmir taxi-drivers who did not feel that uygarlık had anything to do with medeniyet is relevant in this context, as is the last sentence of Chapter 7 n. 12.

Fatma Özkan’s words quoted above appear to be borne out: ‘If a language possesses a plurality of words to express a concept, a thing, or an entity, fine distinctions of meaning eventually arise among them.’

Now that the creation of Öztürkçe has been at a virtual standstill since 1983, there are signs that the process of impoverishment has begun to go into reverse. Not that discerning writers waited for 1983 before feeling free to choose whatever words they pleased, though it must be remembered that it took courage to do so when your choice of words could brand you as a communist or a reactionary. One who had such courage was Zeki Kuneralp, and this is what he wrote in the introduction to his memoirs of a long and brilliant career in diplomacy. Unlike him, I shall not apologize for the length of what follows (though I have abbreviated it somewhat), because, like him, I think the matter is important.


I should like to say something, even at some length, about the language I use in this book. For this I ask my readers’ pardon, but to my mind the subject is important. It will be seen that I have shown the same regard for the old as for the new; I have not shied away from writing either Ottoman or pure Turkish. I have not even refrained from using both forms of language in the same sentence. Nor, where we have been unable to find the right Turkish
word, have I seen any harm in resorting to a Turkicized Western word. I have chosen whichever word best expresses my thought, no matter what its origin... In order to conform to the political climate prevailing at the time or to gratify our ideological preferences, we use only one of the two languages available to us, the old or the new, rejecting the other entirely. To see that this is so, it is sufficient to recall the various names borne in our recent past by that well-known bus stop in Ankara. This stop has changed its name according to the political party in power, becoming now ‘Vekâletler’, now ‘Bakanlıklar’ [both meaning ‘Ministries’]. Towards the end of the Democrat Party regime, we had even begun to refer to the office of the Chief of the General Staff by its Ottoman name of ‘Erkân-ı Harbiye-yi Umumiye Riyaseti’. After 27 May [the day of the 1960 coup d’état] we reverted to the modern ‘Genelkurmay Başkanlığı’. This is somewhat ludicrous, because a language has no party or religion. Revolutionaries and conservatives may use the same language. A sacred book can be written in any given language, and so can a love story. Language is a means, not an end; it does not take sides.

We generally fail to realize this. For example, if we are fanatical partisans of pure Turkish, when we cannot find a pure Turkish word to express the meaning we want, we load that meaning on to some other word and, for the sake of our socio-political beliefs, cast aside the Arabic, Persian or Western word that perfectly meets our needs. In this way we impoverish our language, obliterate its nuances, we deprive it of clarity and thrust it into a tasteless form. Whereas, the more numerous the sources a language can draw on for words, the more explicit, the more colourful, the more copious it becomes... The world we live on is steadily diminishing in size, the nations are growing closer together, their languages are influencing one another and are thereby becoming jointly enriched. (Lewis 1992: 2–3)

Since Kuneralp wrote that, more and more writers have been doing as he did and using whatever words they prefer. In the pages of any magazine, ‘Ottomanisms’ may now be seen that twenty years ago one would have thought obsolete: meçhulüm düür ‘it is unknown to me’, -e tâbi ‘subject to’, -e sahip ‘possessing’.

Pleasant though it is for lovers of the old language to see and hear more and more elements of it coming back into use, they should not deceive themselves into assuming that the language reform is over and done with. The effects of fifty years of indoctrination are not so easily eradicated. The neologisms özgürlük and bağımsızlık have been discussed in Chapter 8. The objection most critics raise to these two words, however, is on grounds not of malformation but of lack of emotional content. Untold thousands of Turks, they say, fought and died for hürriyet and istiklal; how many would be ready to fight and die for özgürlük and bağımsızlık?

There is an answer to this rhetorical question: you do not miss what you have never known. To those who have grown up since the 1950s, Hürriyet is the name of a daily newspaper and a square in Beyazıt, while İstiklal is the name of a street in Beyoğlu. To the majority of them, özgürlük and bağımsızlık mean what hürriyet and istiklal meant to older generations and what ‘freedom’ and ‘independence’ mean to English-speakers, and yes, they are ready to fight and die for them if need be. If they think about the language reform at all, they see nothing catastrophic in it; the language they have spoken since infancy is their language.
What Happened to the Language Society

The years from 1932 to 1950 were TDK’s high noon. It had the support of Atatürk’s Republican People’s Party, which after his death was led by his faithful İsmet İnönü. The Society, however, had no shortage of opponents. Those who disapproved of Atatürk’s secularist policies took exception to the change of alphabet and to the language reform, rightly judging that at least part of the purpose behind both was to make the language of the Koran less accessible. There were other opponents, including many who were broadly in favour of the reform but did not approve of eliminating Arabic and Persian words in general use.

The strength of feeling on this matter may be judged from the conciliatory tone of the speech of Ibrahim Necmi Dilmen, Secretary-General of TDK, on 26 September 1940 at the eighth Language Festival:

Yabancı dillerden gelme sozlere gelince, bunlar da iki turlüdür: Bir takımı, kullanıla halkın diline kadar girmiş olanlardır. Bunları, dilimizin kendi ses ve turetim kanunlarına göre, benimsemekte diyecik bir şey yoktur. Ancak türkçenin kendi dil kanunlarına uymayan, halkın anlamadığı, benimsemediği sozleri elden geldiği kadar çabuklukla yazı dilimizin de dışına çıkarmak borçumuzdur. (Türk Dili, 2nd ser. (1940), 20)

As for words from foreign languages, they are of two kinds. One category is words that with constant use have entered all the way into the language of the people. There is nothing to be said against adopting these in accordance with our language’s own laws of phonetics and derivation. But when it comes to words which do not obey the linguistic laws of Turkish and are not understood and not adopted by the people, it is incumbent on us to expel these from our written language too, as quickly as we can.

In those days TDK was set on Turkicizing technical terms. The report on scientific terminology submitted to the Fourth Kurultay (Kurultay 1942: 20) included this:

Gerçekten inanınız odur ki bilim terimleri ne kadar öz dilden kurulursa bilim o kadar özalmız olur. Terimler yabancı kaldıkça, bilim de bizde başkalarının eğreti bir mali olmaktan kurtulamaz.

Türkçeden yaraçılın bir terim, anlamı ne kadar çaprazık ve karalıklı olursa olsun, ne demeye geldiğiini Türk, çocuğuna, Türk gencine az çok sezdirir.

Indeed it is our belief that scientific terms become our own in so far as they are based on the pure language. So long as they remain foreign, science in Turkey cannot escape being on loan from other people.
A term created from Turkish, however involved and obscure its meaning may be, will give the Turkish child and young person more or less of a perception of what it means.

The ‘az çok’ was a wise qualification. *Felsefe ve Gramer Terimleri* (1942) had been published in time for that Kurultay; we have seen some examples of its contents in Chapter 8. If children or young persons, in the course of their reading, came across books employing some of the terms prescribed in it, they might well find themselves lacking a perception of the meaning. A word like insanbiçimicilik ‘human-shape-ism’ for ‘anthropomorphism’ they might work out, but what would they make of almaş and koram? Or sanrı ‘hallucination’? Its first syllable could be the noun san ‘fame’ or the stem of sanmak ‘to suppose’. But might it not be the new san, the Öztürkçe for sifat ‘attribute’? Or could sanrı be a misprint for Tanrı ‘God’? Poor children and young people!

Over the next few years, however, the Society came to see that the steady influx of international terms was unstoppable, and in 1949 it officially changed its attitude: ‘Yabancı dillerdeki bilim ve teknik terimlerinin ileri milletlerce müşterek olarak kullanılanları, incelenip kabul edilecek belirli bir usule göre dilimize alınabilir’ (Foreign-language scientific and technical terms used in common by the advanced nations may be taken into our language in accordance with a specific method which will be studied and accepted) (Kurultay 1949: 146).

In 1942 a start had been made on modernizing the language of officialdom, hitherto untouched. The building tax, bina vergisi to ordinary people, was still müsakkafat resmi ‘duty on roofed premises’ to the tax authorities, while secret sessions of the Assembly, gizli oturum to the participants, were recorded in the minutes as celse-i hafsyeye. It was decided that the best way to begin would be to produce an Öztürkçe version of the 1924 Constitution, the Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu (Law of Fundamental Organization). The 1942 initiative did not get very far, but in November 1944 the Parliamentary Group of the governing Republican People’s Party set up a commission to prepare a draft, and the result of their labours was Law No. 4695, the Anayasa, ‘Mother-Law’, accepted by the Assembly on 10 January 1945. Article 104 read: ‘20 Nisan 1340 tarih ve 491 sayılı Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu yerine mânâ ve kavrına bir değişiklik yapmak sizin Türkçeleştirilmiş olan bu kanun konulmuştur’ (This law, which has been put into Turkish with no change in meaning and import, replaces the Law of Fundamental Organization no. 491 dated 20 April 1924). That was true, but it is not so much what you say as the way you say it; the new text was certainly intelligible to more people than the old had been, but the Anayasa aroused the ire not only of the habitual opponents of the language reform but also of lawyers and others who felt that the dignity of the Constitution was

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1 They might have raised their eyebrows at the form, seeing that in normal Turkish the third-person suffix is always omitted before -ci (Lewis 1988: 50).
diminished by the abandonment of the stately Ottoman phraseology.\(^2\) Here is the text of Article 33 in both versions:

(1924) Reisicumhur, hastalık ve memleket haricinde seyahat gibi bir sebebe vezaişini ifa edemez veya vefat, istifa ve sair sebeb dolaysile Cumhuriyet Riyaseti inhilal ederse Büyük Millet Meclisi Reisi vekâleten Reisicumhur vezaişini ifa eder.

(1945) Cumhurbaşkanı, hastalık ve memleket dışı yolculuk gibi bir sebeple görevini yapamaz veya ölüm, çekilme ve başka sebeplerle Cumhurbaşkanlığı açık kalırsa Büyük Millet Meclisi Başkanı vekil olarak Cumhurbaşkanlığı görevini yapar.

If the President of the Republic is unable to exercise his duties for any reason such as illness or travel abroad, or if the Presidency falls vacant through death, resignation, or other reason, the President of the Grand National Assembly shall provisionally exercise the duties of the President of the Republic.

The drafting of this Constitution was the occasion for modernizing the names of the four months Teşrin-i evvel, Teşrin-i sani, Kânun-u evvel, and Kânun-u sani (October–January), into Ekim, Kasım, Aralık, and Ocak, because the second and fourth occurred in the text. There had been previous partial modernizations: Birinci and İkinci Teşrin and Kânun, and İkteşrin and Sonteşrin, İlkkânun and Sonkânun. The new name for January preserves the meaning of kânun ‘hearth’. With the new name for December it became the subject of jokes on the theme that the transition from December to January—Aralıktan Ocağa—now meant passing through the gap into the fire.\(^3\)

Tahsin Banguoğlu fought and lost a long fight to save the language from the reformers’ worst excesses, a fight that began in 1949, when he was Minister of Education and President of TDK. Early in 1950 he set up an academic committee of the Society with the task of ensuring that work on devising technical terms should continue ‘in keeping with the phonetics, aesthetics and grammar of the language’. The Society did not take long to let it slip into oblivion. He was often reviled as an enemy of the reform, which he was not; he contributed at least one successful neologism, uygulamak for tatbik etmek ‘to apply, put into

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\(^2\) Half a century later, something of the sort began to happen in England. Under the heading ‘Legal Reform could Declare Latin Phrases ultra vires’, The Times reported (28 Oct. 1994): ‘Proposals to streamline procedures under which the public can challenge government and local authority decisions in court were unveiled by the Law Commission yesterday. They include replacing Latin terms with English. The report recommends that the names of remedies sought under judicial review should no longer be mandamus, prohibition or certiorari, but mandatory, restraining and quashing orders. It said that although it was recognised that there were limits on the extent to which legal terminology could be made accessible to lay people, it should be as understandable as possible.’ In April 1998 an English judge repeated the message. If it happens, we could revive the Dickensian Ozingilizce for habeas corpus: ‘have his carcass.’

\(^3\) According to Erer (1973: 136), TDK decided at one time (not specified) to update the remaining months, February–September, into Kısır, Ayaz, Yağmur, Kiraz, Kavun, Karpuz, Missır, Ayva, meaning respectively Barren, Frost, Rain, Cherry, Musk-melon, Water-melon, Maize, Quince. These too would have lent themselves to joking; Erer points out that for ‘In April the rains begin’ one would have to say ‘Yağmurdan yağmur ulaş.’ True, and what about ‘There were no water-melons in July?’ And indeed ‘There was no rain in April’—‘Yağmurdan yağmur yağmadi?’
practice'. What made him unpopular with the extremists was his competence as a specialist in the language.

In the May 1950 elections, the Republican People's Party, with 39.9 per cent of the vote, was defeated by the Democrat Party of Adnan Menderes, with 53.3 per cent. TDK's by-laws (tüzük) laid down that the Minister of Education was its President ex officio. The new Minister ordered the removal of this provision, and in the following February the Society held an Extraordinary Assembly and duly amended its tüzük. The Budget Commission recommended a reduction in the Society's annual Ministry of Education grant from TL50,000 (then equal to £2,000) to TL10,000. During the Assembly debate on the Commission's report in February 1951, one Deputy, having affirmed that the Society had 'lost its scientific personality and had become the tool of political aims' and that 'all it did was ruin the language', proposed that its grant be discontinued altogether, a motion which the Assembly voted to accept (Levend 1972: 486). This did not mean the end of the Society's activities, partly because of the receipts from its publications but more because under Atatürk's will it shared the residual income from his estate, after some personal bequests, with the less controversial Historical Society, Türk Tarih Kurumu. The fact that the Minister had severed his connection with it, however, meant that it could no longer channel its output directly into the schools.

One of Menderes's ministers, Ethem Menderes (no relation), believed in Öztürkçe, but there was nothing he could do to stem the tide. On 24 December 1952 the Assembly approved a law restoring 'the Law of Fundamental Organization no. 491 . . . together with such of its amendments as were in force up to the date of acceptance of Law no. 4695'. The voting was 341 for and 32 against, with nine abstentions.

The Öztürkçe names of ministries and other bodies were also replaced by their previous names, complete with Persian izafets: Bakanlık 'Ministry' once more became Vekâlet, Sağlık ve Sosyal Yardım 'Health and Social Aid' became Sihhat ve İhtimai Muavenet, Bayındırlık 'Public Works' became Nafia, Savunma 'Defence' became Müdafaası, Genel Kurmay Başkanı 'Chief of the General Staff' became Erkân-ı Harbiye-i Umumiye Reisi, and Savcı 'Public Prosecutor' was again Müdde-i Umumi. This was the worst blow so far suffered by the Language Society. Most newspapers went with the prevailing wind and moderated their use of neologisms, without abandoning them entirely. Yet the majority of the generation that had grown up since the beginning of the language reform did not share the Democrat Party's attitude.

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4 Particularly in demand was TDK's Türkçe Sözlük, which had become an essential work of reference not just for devotees of Öztürkçe but for anyone wanting to understand the newspapers and the radio.

5 The two Societies' share rose from TL40,000 in 1938 to TL118,000 in 1941, TL125,000 in 1952, TL269,000 in 1955, TL505,000 in 1960, TL901,000 in 1961, TL1,815,000 in 1964, and TL1,923,000 in 1966 (Kurultay 1966: 117). In 1946, 46% of TDK's income came from the government and 30% from Atatürk's legacy (Heyd 1954: 51).
It was at this time that Fâlih Rıfkı Atay wrote that the State Radio had been ordered to stop calling members of the Assembly Milletvekili and to revert to Meb’us, ‘giving due weight to the ‘ayn between the b and the u’. TDK was now on the defensive. Heyd (1954: 50) wrote:

During the last few years the Society has refrained from suggesting any further neologisms. This moderate attitude is reflected in a small dictionary of foreign (mostly Arabic and Persian) words with their Turkish equivalents, published by the Society in 1953. Its title, Sade Türkçe Kılavuzu, seems to indicate that in the present phase ‘simple’ (sade), and not ‘pure’ (özd), Turkish is the Society’s slogan.

On 27 May 1960 the Democrats were overthrown by a group of officers, the leading thirty-eight of whom constituted themselves as the National Unity Committee, and the tide turned. The language reform having from the first been attacked by those opposed to Atatürk’s other reforms, the officers saw the Democrat Party’s attitude to language, exemplified in its restoration of the 1924 Law of Fundamental Organization, as being all of a piece with its policy of undoing Atatürk’s work of making Turkey into a secular republic. Shortly after the military takeover, the Society’s subsidy was restored. In January 1961 a government circular was sent to all ministries, forbidding the use of any foreign word for which a Turkish equivalent existed. The new Constitution of July 1961 was in ‘the new Turkish’, though not completely, as is evident from the following sample, the text of Article 34 (the Persian veya and words of Arabic origin are shown in italic):

Kamu görev ve hizmetinde bulunulara karşı, bu görev ve hizmetin yerine getirilmesiyle ilgili olarak yapılan isnaflardan dolayı açılan hakaret davalarında, sanık, isnafın gerçekleştirğini ispat hakkına sahiptir. Bunun dışındaki hallerde ispat istememenin kabulü, ancak isnat olsun fiiğin doğru olup olmadığını anlaşılmasından kamu yararı bulunmasına veya şekildecinin ispatı razi olmasına bağlıdır.

In cases of libel arising from allegations made against those engaged in public duties and services in connection with the discharge of these duties and services, the defendant has the right to prove the truth of the allegations. In situations falling outside the above, the acceptance of the request to adduce proof depends on its being in the public interest for it to be determined whether or not the alleged action is true, or on the plaintiff’s consent to the adducing of proof.

On 10 September 1962 General Cemal Gürsel, the chairman of the National Unity Committee, who was elected President of the Republic in the following month, sent the Dil Kurumu a personal letter which, apart from one kadar, one resmi, and a few ves, really was in the new Turkish:

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6 This was in an article in Dün ya (11 Jan. 1953; repr. in Türk Dili, 2 (1941), 333–5), entitled ‘Şaka Yolu’ (By Way of a Joke), so it should not be taken as gospel, but even if his ‘b’ ile ‘u’ arasındaki ‘ayn’in hakkını vereceksin was part of the joke, the State Radio no doubt did receive some such order, since Meb’ us was the term used in the 1924 Constitution, restored in 1952, while the 1945 Constitution used the relatively Öztürkçe form Milletvekili. Meb’us is Arabic (mab’ut), as are millet and vekil.
İnançım şu ki, Dil Kurumu yıllardan beri sessizce ve inançla çalışmakta ve büyük işler de başarmaktadır. Bu uğraşmada yavaşlık ve elde edilen sonuçlarda yetersizlik varsa, kesin olarak inanıyorum ki, bunun sorumluluğu Dil Kurumu’nda değil, bizlerde ve aydınlardır. Aydınlar, yazarlar, kurumlar ve kurultaya kadar resmi kurullar, güçlerinin tümüyle değil birazıyla olsun Dil Kurumu’nun çalışmalara yardımcı olmak zorundadırlar. Bu kişiler ve kurullar, dilimizin özeştirilmesinde sorumluluğun yalnız Dil Kurumu’nda olduğunu sanıyorlarsa yanlışlıyorlar. (Levend 1972: 488)

It is my belief that the Language Society has for years now been working quietly and with faith and achieving great things. If there has been any remission in this effort and any inadequacy in the results, I am convinced that the responsibility for this rests not with the Society but with us and the intellectuals. Intellectuals, writers, societies and official bodies all the way up to the Grand National Assembly are under an obligation to assist the Language Society’s labours, if not with all their might then at least with a little of it. These individuals and bodies are wrong if they think that the responsibility for purifying our language belongs to the Language Society alone.

Statistical analyses have occasionally been undertaken to see how much of the current vocabulary of the press consisted of ‘native’ words—i.e. words known, presumed or declared to be of Turkish origin—and how much was ‘foreign’—i.e. Arabic or Persian. Unfortunately, no two of them agree. The most reliable is Kâmile İmer’s (1973) scholarly study, which goes down only to 1965. Table 12.1 is taken from her summary of word counts of the news sections in five newspapers: Ulus, Aksam, Cumhuriyet, Milliyet, and Hürriyet. ‘Ottoman’ at the head of the last column refers to words compounded of Arabic or Persian roots and Turkish suffixes, such as hatırlamak ‘to remember’, and endişeli ‘anxious’. It will be seen

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Turkish</th>
<th>Arabic</th>
<th>Persian</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Ottoman</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1931</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1933</td>
<td>44.0</td>
<td>45.0</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>39.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1941</td>
<td>48.0</td>
<td>40.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1946</td>
<td>57.0</td>
<td>28.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>7.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>35.0</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1956</td>
<td>51.0</td>
<td>35.5</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1961</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>30.5</td>
<td>3.0</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7 The meaning of kurultay here is unclear. It cannot be the Dil Kurultay (the Language Congress), which is not a committee or official body. The translation is based on the assumption that it is a slip for Kamutay, the replacement at one time proposed for ‘Buyuk Millet Meclisi’. If the assumption is correct, the fault probably lay with a careless proof-reader and a typist too young to remember Kamutay.
that the proportion of Turkish words declined soon after the Democrats’ coming to power and was not restored until their downfall.

İsmet İnönü had always been an enthusiast for language reform; it will be remembered that he was the author of geleneck for ‘tradition’. He was personally involved in drafting the 1945 Anayasa. As Prime Minister in a succession of coalition governments in 1962–5, he gave TDK every support; for example, writers of school textbooks were instructed by the Ministry of Education to use ‘a bir Türkçe’ (a pure Turkish). But general elections were due in October 1965. In the first few years after the coup, the solid block of four million voters who had always turned out for Menderes had kept their heads down, like the Democrat supporters among the newspaper-proprietors and journalists. With the return to civilian rule, however, they began to feel their oats. There was a clear prospect of victory for the Justice Party, whose vice-chairman had declared it to be the continuation of the proscribed Democrat Party. TDK had for some time been alarmed by a stream of press attacks on its ‘constant interference with the natural course of the language’. On 29 May 1965, ‘her türlü yanlış anlamayı önlemek için’ (to prevent any misunderstanding), it produced an uncompromising manifesto, of which these are some extracts:

 Atatürk’ün hükümet organları dışında özel bir dernek olarak kurduğu ve özel bir dernek olarak yaşamasını vasiyetiyle sağladığı Türk Dil Kurumu’nun amacı, dilimizin geliştirilmesi ve geliştirilmesidir . . .

 Dilin hızla arınaması ve gelişmesi için ona kendi yapısına uygun olarak ‘mubahale’ edilebilir ve edilmelidir. ‘Dile mubahale etmemeli; onu zaman içinde kendi kendine gelişmeye bırakmalar.’ İlkesi doğru değildir. Dil doğal ve toplumsal bütün olaylar gibi ‘mubahale’ ile biçim alır . . .

 Yabancı sözcükleri atmakla Türkçeyi yoksullaştırmadığımız kanısı da yanlıştır. Uygun karşılığı bulunmayan hiç bir yabancı sözcük dilden çıkarılmamıştır; çıkarılarmaz da.


 The Turkish Language Society was founded by Atatürk as a private society outside the organs of government, and in his will he ensured its survival as a private society. Its goal is the purification and development of our language . . .

 For its speedy purification and development, the language can and should be ‘interfered with’, in conformity with its own structure. The principle that there must be no interference with the language, but that it must be left to develop by itself with time, is mistaken. Language, like all natural and social events, is shaped by ‘interference’ . . .

 The belief that by discarding foreign words we will impoverish Turkish is also mistaken. No foreign word without an appropriate equivalent has been or can be discarded.
There is a rapidly developing current of purification among citizens outside the Society. A number of people are putting out ever new words. Some of these are successful and catch on; some are unsuccessful. People wishing to disparage the Language Society lay the unsuccessful ones at its door . . .

The Language Society does not make words up. It employs the following scientific ways of enriching the language: gleanings from popular speech, combing through old texts, and derivations.

Derivations are made from the roots and suffixes of our language, in conformity with the rules of language and feeling for language . . .

The manifesto had no perceptible success in mollifying the Society’s adversaries. For one thing, they did not have to be particularly well endowed with a feeling for language to know that TDK’s ‘derivations’ were not always from native roots and suffixes.

The Society sometimes found it necessary in the 1960s to disclaim certain ludicrous expressions put into circulation by its opponents to parody some of its coinages. Among the best known are goed konuksal avrat ‘sky guestish dame’ for uçak hostesi ‘air hostess’; öz ittirimi götärgeç ‘self-propulsional carry-thing’ for otomobil; ayakiter götärgeç ‘foot-pusher carry-thing’ for bisiklet; tütünsel duman-gaç ‘tobaccoish smoke-thing’ for sigara ‘cigarette’; içi geçmiş dinsel kişi ‘passed-out religious person’ for İmam bayıldı ‘the Imam swooned’ (the name of a highly esteemed aubergine dish); and ulusal dütürrü, very approximately ‘clannish ditty’, for milli marş ‘national anthem’. The reason why unsophisticated people thought these were genuine TDK products is that they found them no different in kind from some of the Society’s own creations; how can one tell that a grotesque parody is a parody when the original is itself grotesque?

In the years 1966–9 attacks on the Society intensified and attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to sequester its assets by legal means. In 1967 a sympathetic senator introduced a law compelling all public and private bodies and commercial firms to make their titles, stationery, notices, and trade marks conform to ‘the language of the Constitution’. Ingeniously bogged down in a series of committees, it got nowhere. Not that it would have had much effect, because there are an awful lot of words in common use that are not in the text of the Constitution.

On 7 March 1970 a group of conservatives led by Nihad Sâmi Banarlı founded the Kubbâlî Cemiyeti (Under-the-Dome Society). The Kubbâlî is the building in the Topkapı Palace where, in the Ottoman period, the Council of State used to meet, under the presidency of the Grand Vizier. Later the Society promoted itself to Academy: at the beginning of 1972 the first number of its quarterly journal appeared, under the title Kubbâlî Akademisi Mecmûası. Its other publications include a respectable series on Turkish calligraphers that

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8 The author is reminded of an Ottoman history seminar at an American university, where a participant remarked that the discussion ought to be about Ottoperson herstory. After the seminar, the others present agreed that they had thought she was joking, but none of them could be sure.
continues in the 1990s under the imprint of the Kubbealtı Akademisi Kültür ve San’at9 Vakfı (Culture and Art Foundation).

There have been other organizations committed to reversing the reform, among them Muallimler Cemiyeti (Society of Teachers), and Türk Dilini Koruma ve Geliştirme Cemiyeti (Society for the Protection and Development of the Turkish Language). In 1967 TDK published *Dil Devrimi üzerine*, a reprint of some newspaper articles on the language reform, at least three of which poured scorn on the latter body for, *inter alia*, calling itself not a *dernek* but a *cemiyet*, its president not *başkan* but *reis*, its secretary-general (Nihat Sâmi Banarlı) not *genel yazman* but *umumi kâtip*, its accountant not *sayman* but *muhâsip*, its members not *üye* but *ażâ*. That particular criticism was a bit unfair; what else could be expected from a society whose *raison d’être* was disapproval of the language reform? Somewhat fairer was the criticism that, if they felt that keenly about the old language, the title they should have chosen was Türk Lisanını Muhafaza ve İnkişaf Cemiyeti.10

Neither of these societies seems to have been very vocal since 1983, no doubt because the post-1983 TDK has done nothing much to offend anybody, except, by its very existence, the deposed top people of the pre-1983 TDK.

By the mid-1970s, the proportion of ‘Turkish’ words, real and invented, in the news columns of the press was regularly as high as 70 per cent, and in some places, notably the leading articles in *Cumhuriyet*, it rose to 90 per cent and more. At that point, many readers would either reach for a dictionary or turn to the sports pages, where the technical terms (e.g. *haf* ‘halfback’, *bek* ‘fullback’, *förvet* ‘forward’), though scarcely Öztürkçe, would be familiar to them. It was common knowledge that Nadir Nabi Abaloğlu, the editor of *Cumhuriyet*, wrote his editorials in the Turkish he had grown up with, then had them translated into Öztürkçe—compare Agop Dilaçar’s story of his visit to Necmettin Sadak in Chapter 4.

Bülent Ecevit, Prime Minister in 1973–4, 1978–9, and again in 1998, was an ardent Öztürkçeci, some of his utterances being fairly impenetrable, more so perhaps in his speeches than in his writings.11 He attracted huge crowds wherever he went and, although not every member of those crowds could have understood all he said, his charisma led to a popularization of Öztürkçe. When the Justice Party returned to office in 1979, however, the new ministers issued streams of circulars banning neologisms from official correspondence. What was instructive about these circulars was not so much the words they banned as the words they used,

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9 The antiquated spelling san’at for sanat is worth noting; the use of an apostrophe to mark an original Arabic *‘ayn* or *hamza* has long been dropped. Few now are aware that sanat is of Arab origin (*san‘d*), and it passes for Turkish, like *temel* ‘basis’, *‘baza*’, which lives on unchallenged despite its Greek origin (*teméliōn*).

10 As it stands, this can only mean ‘Society for Protecting the Turkish Language and for Development’; *Ettiirmе* should have been inserted after İnkişaf to make it transitive.

11 Mustafa Balbay, however, writing in *Cumhuriyet* (27 Sept. 1990), quotes Professor Şaban Karataş: ‘Bülent Bey, yeni kelimeleri kullanmaya sever . . . Ama dikkat edin biraz sinirlenince dili değiştiyor, Arapça kelimeler kullanmaya başlıyor’ (Bülent Bey loves using the new words, but notice that when he becomes a little irritated his language changes and he starts using Arabic words).
ignoring the fact that, for example, the sözcük ‘word’ they employed in the preambles to their blacklists was no less a product of linguistic engineering than the eşgülüm ‘coordination’ and olașılık ‘possibility’ which they proscribed.

In September 1980 the military again seized power, the politicians having failed to stop rightist and leftist students murdering each other, latterly at an average rate of twenty-two a day. Two years later a new Constitution was promulgated, with some Öztürkçe, but not enough to offend any but the most diehard. Much of it was the Öztürkçe of 1961: the language of the many passages and whole articles taken over from the 1961 Constitution, among them Article 34 quoted above (Article 39 in the new), was left unaltered. Nor was the language of the additional material as extreme as it might have been—for example, the second clause of Article 12 contains only three inventions, toplum, ödev, and sorumluluk, all of them generally accepted (the words in italic are of non-Turkish origin): ‘Temel hak ve hüriyetler, kişinin topluma, ailesine ve diğer kişilere karşı ödev ve sorumluluklarını da ihtiva eder’ (The fundamental rights and freedoms also include the duties and responsibilities of the individual towards society, his family, and other persons). One’s impression is that the drafters were trying to steer a more or less middle course between the old and the new, with some bias towards the old. For TDK, this was the writing on the wall.

The Society, as Atatürk’s heir and a private body, not an organ of the state but what we would call a quango, had assumed that its existence was guaranteed in perpetuity, that it could never be abolished. Nor was it; when the conservatives thought the time was ripe it was simply taken over. A law passed on 11 August 1983 reconstituted it as part of a new Atatürk Kültür, Dil ve Tarih Yüksek Kurumu (Atatürk Cultural, Linguistic, and Historical Institute), linked to the Prime Minister’s office, and gave it an almost entirely new Council of Management. The debates on the draft legislation in the Council of State revealed the intensity of the hatred the Society had aroused. A number of legal objections to the proposal were voiced, none of which seemed to be adequately dealt with, but that is not our present concern. Adnan Orel, the spokesman of the National Education Commission, denounced ‘Yillardır dilimizle karşı işlendığıne elemle şahit olduğum ihanet’ (The treason that, to my sorrow, I have for years seen committed against our language). He continued:

Bu Tasarının kanunlaşmasıyla Türk dili Aziz Atatürk’ümün hayata gözlerini yumduğu günden beri içine düşürüldüğü felaketten kurtarılacak, maruz bırakıldığı bir bakma yarın gibi, sel gibi, selze gibi tabi afetlere benzer; fakat onlar gibi tabi değil, hayfa ki, gayri tabii bir facianın kurbani olmaktan halas edilecektir. Artık milli varlığaımın en hayati, en kymetim temel unsurlarından, ana direklerden biri olan dilimiz, kurulduğu maksat ve gayeden tamamen ayrılar bir kurumun tasallutundan kurtarılıp devletin sahabetine kazıstırılacak ve işin ehli olan gerçek ilim otoritelerinin şurulu vicdanlarına, dirayetli ellerine emanet olunacaktır . . .

12 Danışma Meclisi Tutanak Dergisi, 19 (June–July 1983), passim. Adnan Orel’s speech quoted below came on 28 July.
When this Draft becomes law, the Turkish language will be delivered from the calamity into which it has been plunged since our dear Atatürk closed his eyes to life. What it has suffered resembles in a way such natural disasters as fire, flood, and earthquake, but unlike them is not natural; the language will be saved from being the victim of—an unnatural disaster. Our language, one of the most vital, most precious constituents and mainstays of our existence as a nation and a state, is about to be freed from the tyranny of an organization that has totally departed from the aim and purpose for which it was established; it will be brought into state ownership and entrusted to the judicious consciences and capable hands of truly scholarly authorities who know their jobs...

[TDK] has impoverished our beloved language, has made it sterile, feeble, shallow and ugly; in short, it has broken its legs and wings and turned it into—pardon the expression—a plucked chicken. The harmony and grace of that lovely language has been eliminated, as has its ability to match other languages in words, concepts, and shades of meaning; gone are its richness and effectiveness in expressing feelings, emotions and ideas; annihilated its connection with kindred languages and its relationship with other Turkish dialects. The words, technical terms, and elements for expressing oneself, which were won for it by its normal and natural development over the centuries and have become our own, have been cast away and their places filled by grotesque, ugly, and fake words, terms, and expressions that have been fabricated in no conformity with the rule of harmony of our language, its grammar, its structure, or anything else about it. The unhappy language has become an object of ridicule.

It would be hard to fault him, except in the matter of technical terms. Yet one only has to examine the words employed in his speech, which for the most part were more old-fashioned than those of other speakers in the debate (e.g. akıl selim not sağduyu ‘common sense’, vicdan not bulunç ‘conscience’, nesil not kuşak ‘generation’), to know that it is not going to be possible to put the clock back. Among his Öztürkçe words were toplum ‘society’, kesim ‘sector’, gözetim ‘supervision’, denetim ‘control’, terim, yönlendirmek ‘to guide’, etkili ‘effectiveness’, üretmek ‘to produce’, and ödül ‘prize’.

Another speaker described TDK as ‘a Society which calls an air hostess “a sky guestithe dame”’. This phrase—‘gök konuksal avrat’—was a reference to the old

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13 It is impolite to mention non-human creatures, cats excepted, without a word of apology. I have heard villagers apologize similarly when speaking of atheists: ‘Affedersiniz, dinsizler . . .’.  
14 Ödül ‘prize’, though brought into the standard language by the reform, is not an invention; it is widely used in Anatolia.
spoo1 mentione1d above, and his remark justly brought objec1ons from some of
colleagues: ‘That’s a lie!’ and ‘Someone made that up! It’s a lie!’ The speaker,
unnerved, went on to give some authen1c examples of TDK’s output: ‘I have in
my hand one of the Society’s publications, entitl1ed “Finding equivalents for words
of Western origin”15 It calls banket [“verge”] yol omzu [“road shoulder”] . . . Bul-
dozer it calls yol düzler [“road leveller”], and greyder [“grader”] yer düzler [“earth
leveller”].’ Other members did not seem to find these specimens of TDK’s crimes
as heinous as he did, so he gave some more: genörgütçü ‘gen[eral] -organiza-
ist’ for bürokrat, geçinge (from geçinmek ‘to get along, make a living’) for bütçe
‘budget’, düzüngü for ideoloji.16 His peroration was not at all bad. The Nasrettin
Hoca story to which it alludes tells how a passer-by sees the Hoca spooning some-
inghto a lake. He asks him what’s up to and the Hoca replies, ‘I’m putting
ferment in so that the whole lake turns into yoghurt.’ ‘Silly man!’ says the other,
‘It won’t work.’ ‘But just suppose it does!’

Millet hayatıyla, devlet hayatıyla dalga geçmektir bu, güvendi ciddi hareketlerdir. Efendi, biz
üretiriz, salarız, toplum tutarsa onu biz tamam deriz, koyarız. Tamam, tutunmuştur bu
kelime, bu ‘tılık’ tutunmuştur ve Türk diliin malı olmuştur. E . . . peki, siz seçip seçip
böyle ortaya atacakınız, bin tane kelime türeteceksiniz, içinden bir tanesi tutacak.
O zaman Nasrettin Hoca’nn gölge maya çalması gibi bir mesele oluyor. ‘Ya tutarsa . . .’ Tutmuyor.
This is monkeying with our life as a nation, as a state; this is frivolous behaviour. ‘My dear
sir, we produce them, we throw them around, and if the public takes to them we say, “Fine,”
and there we leave it. Very good, this word, this speechlet, has caught on and become part
of the Turkish language.’ Well, all right, you’ll keep picking them out and launching them
like this, you’ll call a thousand words into being and one of them will catch on. Then comes
a problem like Nasrettin Hoca’s dropping ferment into the lake. ‘But just suppose it works!’
It doesn’t.

In 1985 a group of disgruntled devotees of the former TDK established Dil
 Derneği, a new Language Society to carry on the work of the old. One does not
hear much of it; although lacking the financial resources of the old TDK, it con-
tinues to function but is not churning out Öztürkçe. It has produced some useful
and scholarly works, notably on applied linguistics (e.g. Dil Derneği 1991).

On 24–8 September 1990 came Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı (The First Turkish-
Language Congress), arranged by the Ministry of Culture. Right in the middle of
it, on the 26th, came the annual Dil Bayramı (the Language Festival), and the taste-
less choice of title, as if the real Birinci Türk Dili Kurultayı (of 1932) had never
been, was the target of much criticism. It was doubtless for that reason that its
next meeting was called not ‘İkinci’ (Second) but Sürekli (Continuing) Türk Dili
Kurultayı (4–8 May 1992), the proceedings of which were published under that
name by the Ministry of Culture. It was not a conspicuous success. Many of the
speeches were parochial, being taken up with the numerous defects of TDK’s

16 Düzüngü is a provincial word for ayna ‘mirror’. Here it might be the result of a clerical error for
düşünü, once proposed as a replacement for ideoloji.
spelling guide, İmlâ Kilavuzu, to the evident disappointment of the Central Asian delegates, who had hoped for a serious discussion of the possibility of achieving a common written language.

In 1970 the old TDK had begun suggesting ‘yabancı kelimelere karşılıklar’—equivalents for foreign words (no longer Arabic and Persian but English and French) that had entered or were in process of entering the language. It did little to stem the tide; the only examples that linger in the memory are uzugörüm for ‘television’ and uzungörc for ‘television receiver’, but they had no more success than the uzaduyum for ‘telepathy’ suggested in Felsefe ve Gramer Terimleri (1942).

The new TDK began a similar campaign in 1994 in Türk Dili, 507: 218–21;17 (why it felt a need for this has been demonstrated in Chapter 10). The Society had set up a komisyon that would meet once a month to discuss possible equivalents for a number of such words in a list previously circulated, and to agree on one or more equivalents for each. The language of the announcement was conservative; some would call it reactionary: siyasiler ‘politicians’, kelime ‘word’, sirayet eden ‘infecting’, tedbir ‘measure’, taraf ‘side’, and even the sentence ‘Gün geçmiyor ki batının yeni bir kelimesi ... arzıandam etmesin’ (A day does not pass without a new Western word’s ... putting in an appearance.’18 There was, however, a sprinkling of Öztürkçe (though not a single -sel): araç ‘medium’, kamu kurum ve kuruluşları ‘public associations and institutions’, -e yönelik ‘directed towards’. The first list of foreign words for which substitutes were offered included şov ‘show’ and several of its compounds. For şov itself, gösteri was proposed. Turkey being as yet little touched by political correctness, for şovmen ‘showman’ the suggestion was gösteri adami, and, for vanmen şov ‘one-man show’, tek adam gösterisi. For talk şov ‘chat-show’, söz gösterisi or çene yarıştırma ‘chin-wag’, literally ‘jaw-racing’, and for talk şovcu, çene yarıştırıcı. It will be seen that talk şov has been taken over directly from English with no attempt at Turkicizing it (i.e. not talk şovu), just as the French kilomètre carré was long ago taken over as kilometre kare. For şovrum ‘show-room’, the recommendation was sergi evi ‘display house’. Regrettably one must add that şov still reigns supreme and more often that not is spelled show; ‘talk-show’ is commoner than ‘talk şov’.

For sentr ‘centre’, which ‘despite the existence in our language of merkez [A], is tucked on to the names of various societies and institutions’, a return to merkez was proposed, so ticaret merkezi for trade centre and iletisim merkezi (iletisim ‘communications’) for media centre, in preference to medya sentrî. Neither appears in Örnekleriyle Türkçe Sözlük (1995–6), though it does give santra, a football term, as in santra çizgisi ‘centre line’.

Here we have an indication of how rapidly French is being overtaken as the source of new words: sentr is not shown in Türkçe Sözlük (1988), though santr is.

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17 The cover is dated March 1994, the first page February 1994.
18 The Ottoman arzıandam ‘putting in an appearance’, which is not to be found in the TDK’s own Türkçe Sözlük (1988), is made up of ‘ard [A] ‘presentation’, linked to endam (andâm [P]) ‘body’) by the Persian ızafet.
The replacements proposed for other items in the list displayed the same preference for Turkish words even of Arabic origin; thus for instant coffee or neskafe the suggestion was hazırl [A] ('ready') kahve and, for fest fud 'fast food' hazırl yemek, while for konsensüs 'consensus' a choice was offered between uzlaşma and mutabakat [A]. The suggested replacement for fundamentalist was köktenci ('from-the-root-ist') and for fundamentalizm, köktencilik. This accords with the view of Western scholars, that in the Islamic context 'radical' is a more appropriate term than 'fundamentalist'. In fact, the word generally used is köktendinci 'radical religionist'.

In 1995 the proposals so far made were published in book form,\(^9\) with an interesting introduction in which the aims of the Society are summarized: '1) Türk Dilini araştırmak, 2) Türk Dilini yabancı etkilerden korumak ve geliştirmek' (1) To research the Turkish language, (2) to protect the Turkish language from foreign influences and to develop it). Words that have entered the language over the centuries, from whatever source, are considered to be Turkish. These include such words as elektrik, atom, demokrasi. Even words formed irregularly are acceptable if they are thoroughly entrenched in the language of the people—for example, kural 'rule', önem 'importance', bağımsızlık 'independence', bilinç 'consciousness'.

Each month's Türk Dili brings its quota of borrowings, with recommendations for Turkish alternatives. In no. 555 (Mar. 1998) came gurme, sit-com, and stand-up, as in 'stand-up komedyenler'. The Society's proposal for the first was tatbilir, although those who see themselves as members of the international community of gourmets may not take kindly to the appellation of taste-knower. Nor is it likely that many people will abandon sit-com in favour of its literal translation durum güldürüşü, but the suggested abbreviation durgül may have more of a chance. The proposal for 'stand-up komedyen' was sözcatar 'tacking words together', which does not look very promising, though a pleasant example is given of its use: 'Sözcatarlar Türkiye'de konu sıkıntısı çekmiyorlar' (Stand-up comedians suffer from no dearth of topics in Turkey).

The Society is clearly determined to fight the use of English words for which Turkish equivalents exist or can be devised; bölüm should be used rather than seksiyon, bilgi şöleni ('knowledge-feast') rather than sempozyum.\(^20\) Sadly, there does not seem to be a widespread appreciation of the Society's genuine efforts to undo the worst of the reform while striving to keep new foreign imports at bay; many people seem to be quite unaware that the TDK is not what it used to be.

Even now, though years have passed since the fall of the old TDK, there are still hearts in which the fierce emotions it roused have not died. A book published in

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\(^20\) Şölen, of uncertain origin, was proposed in Tamara Dergisi (1934) for ziyafet 'feast', and in Felsefe ve Gramer Terimleri (1942) for 'potlatch'. The initial ş makes an OT origin unlikely.
1993 affords an example (Mısıroğlu 1993); here is one of its eleven introductory ‘Uyari’ (warnings): ‘Aziz Genç! Bugün memleketimizin bir numaralı meselesi, enflasyon veya güneydoğu Anadolu'daki anarşi değildir! Kıbrış'ın kaybedilmek üzere olması da değildir! Bütün bunların hepsinden daha ehemmiyetli olan, lisanımızdaki korkunç tahribattır!’ (Dear Youth! Today, our nation's number one problem is not inflation or the anarchy in south-eastern Anatolia! Nor is it the fact that Cyprus is on the point of being lost! What is more important than all of these is the terrible devastation of our language!). As usually happens, this sworn enemy of Öztürkçe uses some himself: dinsel, not dini or even diyini,\(^{21}\) for ‘religious’ all over the book and, in the above quotations, uyari not ikaz for ‘warning’, and güneydoğu not cenub-u şarkı for ‘south-eastern’. His theme is that the language reform is atheism and that the reformers are enemies of the Koran, Islam, and God. People who say önsezı rather than hiss-i kablevuku for ‘premonition’ are damned. Those who use such bastard words (‘piç kelimeler’) are either racist Turkists (‘ırkı-Türkçü’), or Kemalists or Communists (‘Komonist’). No fair-minded reader who wades through a few pages of this stuff can deny that there had to be a language reform, though not necessarily on the lines of the one that actually happened.

Well, we may put that example down to simple-minded fanaticism, but the same excuse will not do for this one. It is an extract from a letter to the author, written from Istanbul in September 1994 by an old friend, bilingual in Turkish and English. ‘Zabanvari Facialar Kurumu’ (The Linguistic Tragedies Society) is his quasi-Ottoman term for the Dil Kurumu. For his ‘Ulusaldüttürü Türkish’, see page 160.

Yesterday we celebrated Dil Bayramı, or some nonsense like that. (I say ‘celebrated’—I don’t think anyone actually knew.) The radio, however, said something interesting. It quoted somebody on the committee of Zabanvari Facialar Kurumu (or whatever they’re called) as saying ‘Turks have throughout history always had a written language understood by all. This should happen again.’ I hope this means someone has donated a brain to those boys. If they have any sense, they’ll abandon the excesses of Ulusaldüttürü Turkish and start talking like me.

The significant thing about that letter is that it was written eleven years after the old TDK had ceased to exist and some twenty years after it had abandoned the excesses. But the man who wrote it has clearly not forgotten, much less forgiven, what it did to the language, and he holds the new TDK (if he is aware of the change) responsible for the sins of the old. In retrospect one can see that it might have helped if the authorities had waited a year or so after the takeover and then quietly given the reborn Society a new name.

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\(^{21}\) Pietists wishing to preserve the correct pronunciation of Arabic terms use iy to indicate a long i, so iyman for iman /imán/ ‘faith’, though they do not usually indicate the length of the a, as they could by doubling it. Often they use iy to indicate a long i where none exists, spelling e.g. mühim ‘important’ as mühiyım.
Hasan Eren, Secretary-General of the new TDK, told the author some years ago, 'Türk Dil Kurumu’nun esas gayesi, dilde birliğin sağlanmasıdır' (TDK’s basic aim is to ensure unity in the language). Given that writers tend to be individualists, one may prophesy that it will be a long time before Turkey’s flourishing literary community allows that to happen. But if this prophecy comes true, on present showing the new TDK will not be to blame.
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