

## A book written in the 19th century to teach Turkish to German speakers: *Praktisches Handbuch der osmanisch-tuerkischen Sprache*

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### Abstract

This study aims to analyse the book *Praktisches Handbuch der osmanisch-tuerkischen Sprache* written by Adolf Wahrmund to teach Turkish to German speakers in terms of teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The first edition of the work was published in Giessen, Germany in 1869 by J. Ricker'sche Buchhandlung publishing house. The themes were created by analysing the data obtained from the study through content analysis. The work was examined under the theme headings, such as target audience, phonetics, grammar teaching, reading passages, speaking teaching, vocabulary teaching, exercises and cultural transfer. The themes first were defined and then they were exemplified and interpreted. The results of the study indicate that many skills (reading, speaking, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation) were included, cultural transfer (formulaic expressions, idioms, proverbs, Nasreddin Hodja jokes, etc.) was emphasised and authentic materials (newspaper articles, letters of agreement, stories, etc.) were used in teaching Turkish as a foreign language in the work.

**Keywords:** Adolf Wahrmund, *Praktisches Handbuch der osmanisch-tuerkischen Sprache*, teaching Turkish as a foreign language, Turkish for Germans and German speakers.

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## 1. Introduction

Divanu Lugati't-Turk, which was written by Kasgarli Mahmut in the eleventh century to teach Turkish to Arabs, is considered to have been the first work written for teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Since this work, many works have been published for different nations. Among these works, works written for Germans also have an important place. The main reason for this situation can be explained by the cooperation between the two nations in many fields throughout history.

The first German works written about Turks and Turkish language was written by prisoners of war, travellers and missionaries. The oldest Turkish transcription text identified within this context was the *Codex Cumanicus*, written by Italian merchants and German missionaries at the beginning of the 14th century. According to Guzel and Barin (2013, p. 26), the work consists of two parts, the first of which has 55 pages and the second of which has 26 pages. The work was written in Latin-Gothic letters. Two thousand five hundred Turkish words related to commerce and daily life, translations of Bible and Catholic hymns, Kipchak grammar rules and proverbs are included in the work. The fact that the second notebook has a Kipchak-German dictionary shows that Germans' learning Turkish dates back to the beginning of the 14th century. The second work identified within this context belongs to a prisoner of war named Johann Schiltberger. According to Dilacar (1971a), Turcology in the context of language research was founded by German Johann Schiltberger. Schiltberger was captured in the Battle of Nicopolis between the Ottomans and the Crusader states in 1396 and he travelled around Anatolia and its surroundings for about 31 years. He returned to Germany in 1427 and wrote the book named *Travel Book*. According to Beydilli (2009), Schiltberger's memoir, which has four manuscripts, gained widespread attention and thus it was published many times in the early dates coinciding the first phase of the invention of the printing press. The first edition of the work is thought to have been made in Augsburg in 1460 or Ulm in 1473. The work was published several times including in 1476, 1477, 1478, 1549 (two editions), 1553, 1554, 1560 and 1565. The Turkish threat and fear that prevailed in Europe and the curiosity towards the Turkish world and Turkish language can be thought to be an important factor for showing that much attention to the work.

The third work belongs to a German prisoner of war named Georg from Muehlbach. The young German was taken prisoner in Muehlbach during Murad II's expedition to Poland in 1438 and he lived as a prisoner in Anatolian territories for about 20 years. When Muehlbach returned to Germany, he wrote a work called *An article on the morals, customs and conditions of Turks and various issues related to them* (Tractatus de moribus, conditionibus et nequitia Turcorum). This work, which was published in Germany in 1480, consists of 23 chapters and includes Turkish reading texts and some poems of Yunus Emre. The work is of great importance for Turcologists in terms of identifying the sounds of Turkish (Dilacar, 1971a; Ustuner, 2017). *The principles of Turkish language in four chapters* (Institutionum linguae turcicae IV), which belongs to a German from Stuttgart named Hieronymus Megiser can be regarded as the last work in the context of early works. The work includes some parts, such as introduction, orthography, grammar, text samples that are mostly composed of proverbs and a Latin-Turkish and Turkish-Latin dictionary (Dilacar, 1971b).

When it comes to the 19th century, it is seen that several grammar books (August & Gies, 1889; Piquere, 1870; Von der Berswordt I, 1839), phrasebooks (Georg, 1891; Hindioglu, 1840; Wilhelm, 1898) and course books (Goldenthal, 1865; Hindioglu, 1829; Manissadjian, 1893) were published in parallel with increasing commercial and military relations between the Ottoman Empire and Prussia. One of the works prepared for Germans and German speakers in this century is the *Practical Handbook of Ottoman Turkish* written by Adolf Wahrmund. Wahrmund (1827–1913), who was born in Wiesbaden, studied theology and philosophy in Goettingen, classical and oriental philology in Vienna. He worked for a short period as a private tutor and an assistant at the Vienna Imperial Library from 1853 to 1861. In 1862, he was appointed as a lecturer in Arabic, Persian and Turkish languages at the University of Vienna. He was the head of the Academy and a full professor from 1885 to 1897 (Killy & Vierhaus, 2006). He taught Turkish at the University of Vienna between 1869–1873 and 1876–1901 (Rochazka-Eisl, 2011). His other important works in foreign language teaching are *Praktisches*

*Handbuch der neu-arabischen Sprache* (4 pts. 1861), *Praktisches Handbuch der neu-persischen Sprache* (1875) and *Handwoerterbuch der deutschen und neuarabischen Sprache* (2 Vols. 1874–77).

The work has been a source of reference for Turkish teaching since its publication. For example, in the foreword of the book called *Lehrbuch der modernen osmanischen Sprache*, written by Johannes Jobab Manissadjian, the author states that he benefited from this book (Manissadjian, 1893). In the ‘summary of Ottoman-Turkish grammar’ section (pp. 276–308) of the German-Turkish dictionary written by Loebel (1888), the author strongly recommends the ones who would like more information the work of Prof. Doc. Wahrmund from Vienna, which is the only source (as cited in Kreiser, 2014). The fact that the work contains sections such as grammar, speaking, reading and phonetics make it different from many works in the period it was published (Fu’ad, Gaevdaet, & Kellgren, 1855; Loeschekohl, 1879; Wied, 1884).

According to many researchers, teaching Turkish as a foreign language is an area that is recently developing and gaining importance (Akpınar, 2010; Barin, 2003; Bayat, 2018). For this reason, it is important to analyse the works prepared in the past by foreigners in languages, such as German, English and French for teaching Turkish in terms of method, technique and content, to benefit from the experiences in the works and to transfer them to the field of Turkish as a foreign language. In order to provide and produce approaches, methods and knowledge required for the development of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, there is a need for simultaneous studies as well as diachronic studies. Therefore, in this study, it is aimed to examine the book named *Praktisches Handbuch der osmanisch-tuerkischen Sprache* written by Adolf Wahrmund in the 19th century to teach Turkish to German speakers from perspective of teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

## **2. Method**

### **2.1. Research model**

This research is a qualitative study. In qualitative research, the researcher organises, classifies and synthesises the data and identifies patterns and then as a result of these processes, he reaches the concepts and reports the findings (Gurbuz & Sahin, 2017). One of the forms of qualitative research is document analysis. In this context, document analysis is the review of written and visual materials that contain information about the phenomenon or phenomena to be investigated (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). For this reason, it can be said that document analysis is a data collection method suitable for the nature of this study.

### **2.2. Data source**

The data source of the research is the work written by Adolf Wahrmund, whose original title is *Praktisches Handbuch der osmanisch-turkischen Sprache*. The work was prepared in three volumes. The first edition of the work was published in 1869 in Giessen, Germany by J. Ricker’sche Buchhandlung. The expanded and improved second edition of the work was published in the same city and by the same publishing house in 1884. The first edition of the work can be accessed from the open digital archive of the Bavarian State Library, while the second edition of the work can be accessed from the open digital archive of the Martin-Luther University Library. Because the second edition of the work was expanded and improved, this edition was taken as a data source.

### **2.3. Data collection and analysis**

In this study, a content analysis approach, which is one of the qualitative data analysis methods, was taken as a basis. The content analysis aims to subject the data collected in the study to a deep process in order to reach the concepts and relationships that can explain the data. The data collected for this purpose are first defined/conceptualised and then similar data are combined and interpreted

under certain concepts and themes (Yildirim & Simsek, 2016). Within this context, the work was examined from the specific to the general with an inductive approach in terms of themes such as target audience, phonetics, grammar teaching, reading passages, speaking teaching, vocabulary teaching, exercises and culture transfer. First, the themes were explained, and if it was necessary, they were exemplified with sections from the work and then they were evaluated.

### 3. Findings and discussion

In the foreword of his work, Wahrmund states that ‘the book will readily provide students with the knowledge of living daily spoken language and the learners can read daily literature as well’. He also suggests the work of another author for the ones who would like to develop themselves more in the field of reading skills. Therefore, it can be said that the work was prepared by taking the basic level of learners who learn Turkish as a foreign language as the target audience. This finding is supported by the author’s explanation of how the work should be used. The author states that ‘beginners should do morphology teaching and practical lessons after learning the reading rules of the work’ (Wahrmund, 1884, pp. 3–27). In order to better understand the structure of the work, the general structure of the work is presented by taking the contents in the three volumes into consideration (Table 1).

**Table 1. General structure of the work**

Volumes/Parts	Page number/Page range
I. Volume	455
Foreword	(I–XX)
Introduction	(1–32)
Morphology	(32–197)
Practical lessons	(198–306)
Reading passages	(1–32)
II. Volume	90
I. Part: Speaking	(1–56)
II. Part: Collection of the most essential words for speaking	(57–90)
III. Volume	120
I. Part: Turkish translations of German exercises in transcription	(1–42)
II. Part: Transcriptions, interlinear-version and translation of the reading texts	(43–90)

As can be seen in Table 1, the Introduction part has an important place in the work. In this part, the author first includes information about the etymology of Turkish. Then, he introduces Ottoman letters and makes explanations about Arabic and Persian elements in the alphabet. The author uses a Latin-letter transcription system in the work for students who may have difficulty reading and understanding Ottoman letters (see Volume I, p. 5) and explains them with examples (For more detailed information on this topic, see Bekar, 2017).

In the work, *phonetics* is discussed in detail. The author explains Turkish phonetics under different topics, such as vowels, vowel harmony, diphthong, consonants, pronunciation, accent, syllables and orthography in the introduction part of the work. In this part, he primarily gives information about the Ottoman letters. Then, he gives information about the rules of Turkish phonetics and exemplifies them. He makes these explanations by comparing them with German. For example, the letter ر is our letter r ; ر , (flehs) smiseG si far , ويرمك , wermek is geben (give), قار qar is Schnee (snow) (Volume I, p. 23). To give another example, he explains the rule given under the heading of vocal harmony as follows: the vowel system is the same in Turkish words with more than one syllable. If the first syllable of the word is a back vowel, a back vowel must follow in the next syllable. If the vowel in the first syllable is a front vowel, the vowel in the other syllable must be front too (Volume I, p. 14–15).

schwer	leicht	schwer	leicht
dam	ev	jazmaq	gelmek
dam-lar	ev-ler	jazmadym	gelmedim
dam-lar-a	ev-ler e	jazmajagaq	gelmejegek

The author also includes information about the exception of the rule, stating that the words transferred to Turkish from Arabic and Persian do not match with this sound harmony. The pronunciations of Turkish words are also included. At the end of the pronunciation part, the author presents the consonants according to their manner, vibration and place of articulation and vowels and diphthongs according to their backness-frontness and place of articulation in tables (see Volume I, p. 28).

In the work, *grammar teaching* is done systematically. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, genus, cases, numerals, pronouns, tenses, paradigms and particles are discussed in the work under the heading of morphology. Sentence construction, sentence parts, complex sentence and compound sentence are explained under the heading of Syntax. When the headings of topics are analysed, it is seen that the work covers most of the grammar topics. It is also aimed to reinforce the topics covered under these headings with the *Practical Lessons* part consisting of twenty-six lessons. In other words, the grammar rules are first explained and exemplified, and then exercises are presented for students to apply these rules concerning the sample sentences. For this reason, it can be said that the grammar-translation method, which was adopted in foreign language teaching in the 19th century, is used in the work and that the grammar rules are taught with the deductive approach.

*Reading passages* are included as an additional part at the end of the first volume of the work. The reading passages are discussed in three stages in the work. In the first stage, the reading texts are given in Ottoman language. In the second stage, Latin letter transcriptions and interlinear German translations are included in the third volume of the work. The words and grammatical structures in the reading texts that are thought to be difficult for students to understand are explained by giving footnotes. In this respect, it can be said that teaching vocabulary and grammar in context is emphasised in the work. In the third stage, there are German translations of the texts in the third volume of the work as well. These stages are gathered in Figure 1.

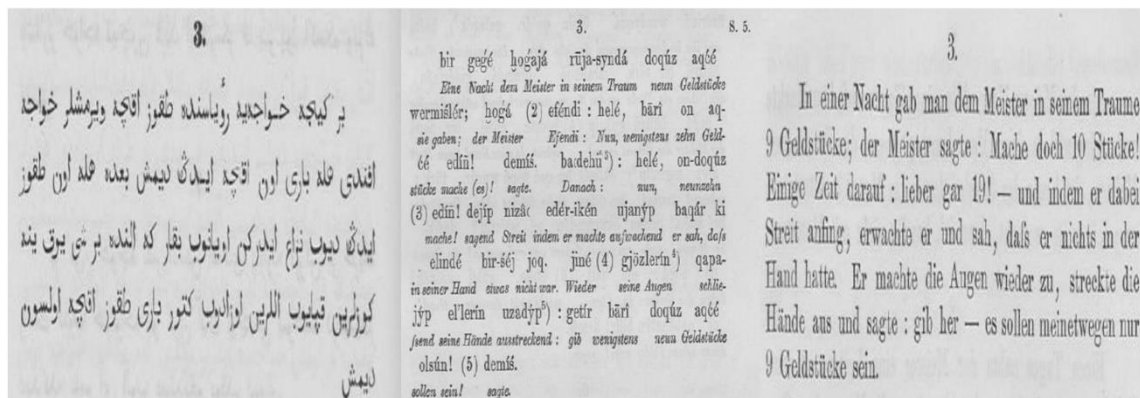


Figure 1. The way the reading passages are presented in the work

As can be seen in Figure 1, the Ottoman transcription of a Nasreddin Hodja's joke is included in the first stage (Volume I, p. 69), the Latin letter transcription and interlinear German translations of the joke are given in the second stage (Volume III, p. 53) and German version is included in the third stage (Volume III, p. 69). The first reading texts in the reading passages part of the work are the jokes given under the heading of *Nasreddin Hodja Jokes*. Twenty Nasreddin Hodja jokes are included in the work. The second text group included in the reading passages part of the work is composed of five stories given under the heading *Stories* (Volume I, p. 12–14). The author states in the forefront of the book

that he took these stories from Ahmet Mithat Efendi's book titled *Kissadan Hisse* (The moral of a story), published in 1878 (Volume I, p. X).

Another text group given in the reading passages part of the work is composed of six newspaper articles presented under the heading *Various News* (Volume I, p. 15–20). The author states in the preface of the work that the newspaper articles were taken from the newspapers *Vakit* and *Ceride-i Havadis*, which were published in Istanbul (Volume I, p. X). Under the heading of 'British-Turkish Trade-Maritime Agreement' at the end of the reading passages part, a letter of agreement made between the Ottoman Empire and the United Kingdom is included.

*Speaking teaching* is presented in the first part of the second volume of the work. Speaking part (Volume II, p. 1–56) is presented under 15 thematic main topics such as meeting and greeting, about the weather, time and hour, service, buying and selling, about eating and drinking, with the doctors, on the trip (railroad), voyage, at the hotel, in the coffee house, in the city (obtaining information), about the horses, conversation between friends in an oriental way and religious words (Arabic). When the themes selected in the work are considered, it is seen that the themes were prepared for daily life situations. A part of the third theme presented in the speaking part is exemplified in Figure 2.

3. Zeit und Uhr.		
ساعت قاچدهر	sâcât qač-đyr?	} Wieviel Uhr ist es?
ساعت قاچدهر	sâcât qačđá-đyr?	
بگسا ساعت قاچدهر	bağsâ sâcât qač-đá oldu.	können Sie mir sagen, wie-
اولديغنى ديه	ğunú deđe bilirmi-	viel Uhr es ist?
بيليرمستور	siñis?	
بيليمر ساعت قاچدهر	bilmeñ sâcât qač-đá	ich weiß nicht wieviel Uhr
اولديغنى	oldugunú	es ist.
ساعتكزه بگسا	sâcatyñyzá bağsâ!	schauen Sie auf Ihre Uhr!
طورموش	đurmás	sie steht.
قورلۇ دكل	qurulú deđil	sie ist nicht aufgezogen.
قور ساعتكنى	qur sâcatyñý	ziehe deine Uhr auf!
سوزك سعتكز ايو	sizñ sâcatyñýz eđi gi-	geht Ihre Uhr gut?
كيديورمى	diđor-mu?	
بتمكى عيار دكل	benmiki eajâr (ejár) deđil	die metrische geht nicht gut.
ايليريدر - ايليرى	iliri-dir od. ileri giđiđor	sie geht vor.
كيديوور		

Figure 2. A sample of speaking part (Volume II., p. 6)

As seen in Figure 2, the pages in the speaking part are designed in three columns. In the left column, Ottoman transcription is given, in the middle column Latin letter transcription is given and in the right column German translation is given. As can be seen in the theme given above as an example, the sentences that can be used in this context are included in the work. It is seen that the author also includes formulaic expressions in speaking themes, such as *Excuse me, Yes sir, God bless you, Halleluja, Good night, Have a good trip, Welcome, Thank God, Thank goodness, Goodbye, Glad to meet you and Thank you*. The fact that the author uses formulaic expressions that are appropriate for the themes can be regarded as a useful exercise in terms of his trying to make the learners gain the habit of knowing what, where and when to say. It is seen that idioms are also frequently used in the speaking part of the work. Some of the idioms that are included in the work can be listed as follows: *enjoy the advantage of, hear from, come across, set out, give out a sound* etc. Besides, some Arabic idioms used in daily life and *conversation between friends in an oriental way* are included under the heading *frequently used religious idioms* in the speaking part. Based on the formulaic expressions, idioms and themes given as examples above, the work can be said to aim to teach the living Turkish and to develop the communicative skills of the students.

*Vocabulary teaching* is given under the heading *Collection of the most essential words for speaking* in the second part of the second volume of the work. This section is also divided into three main headings as *nouns, adjectives and verbs*. Under the heading of nouns, related words are listed under 25 subheadings. The listing process is not done in alphabetical order. A part of the vocabulary part of the work is exemplified in Figure 3.

<b>I. Hauptwörter.</b>	
Unsichtbare Welt. Kirchliches.	
Gott الله alläh; تڤرى, تڤرى; تڤرى (tangri) tañri, tenri.	Paradies جننت gënnët.
Gott der Schöpfer الله خالق الموجودات alläh hâliqul-mew- güdât.	Fegefeuer اعراف acrâf. ✓
das höchste Wesen حق تعالى haqq tacâlâ.	Hölle جهنم gihennëm
Gott der Vater الله پدر pedër-ulläh; الله بابا alläh babâ.	Teufel شيطان şejtân.
	Dämon جن ginn
	Prophet رسول, resûl; پيغمبر pej- gambër.
	Apostel حواری hawârî. ✓

Figure 3. A sample of the vocabulary part

As seen in Figure 3, vocabulary lists are given as one-way (German-Turkish). In the vocabulary teaching part, the pages are divided into two columns. Unlike the speaking part, the words are transcribed in German, Ottoman and Latin letters, respectively. It is seen that the synonyms of some words are also included in some parts of the vocabulary parts. By giving synonymous words, it is aimed that students understand the meaning of words more easily and enrich their vocabulary. Vocabulary teaching is not done only through the lists mentioned above. Additionally, the words in the reading passages whose meanings are thought to be difficult for the students to comprehend are explained by giving footnotes.

The *exercises* are given under the heading of *practical lessons* in the second part of the first volume. At the end of the practical lessons, translation exercises from German to Turkish are included in order to apply grammar rules related to the lesson. In the reading passages part of the work, the texts given in Ottoman transcription are expected to be translated to German. It is seen that translation skills are expected to be developed from German to Turkish in the exercises given in the grammar part and from Turkish to German in the reading passages. In the work, only sentence and text level translation exercises are included, but no other type of exercise is used. The answers to the exercises are included in the third volume of the work. It can be said that preparing an answer key for the exercises is useful for the students who learn Turkish by themselves to review their learning processes.

When the work is considered in terms of *cultural transfer*, our proverbs are seen to be at the top of the cultural elements. One hundred proverbs are included in the work. Some of the proverbs included in the work can be exemplified according to the order in which they are given in the work.

- The dogs bark, but the caravan goes on (1).
- An evil doer hides his weapon (9).
- If you run after two hares, you will catch neither (25).
- What you sow is what you reap (86).
- Truth will out (93).

Based on the proverbs exemplified above, it is seen that the proverbs that are not artificial and that are still used today are included in the work. This finding of the study is supported by Bekar's finding (2019) that only six of the proverbs included in the work are not included in today's dictionaries of proverbs.

Formulaic expressions, idioms and proverbs transmit the values, traditions and way of thinking and living of Turkish culture to the next generations through language. For this reason, they play an important role in both mastering language skills and transferring our cultural values in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Today the importance of teaching formulaic expressions, idioms and proverbs have been emphasised in many studies conducted in the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, their status has been determined in coursebooks used in this field and it has been stated

that they should be given more space in the course books (Akpınar, 2010; Gokdayi, 2016; Gun & Ikizcinar, 2019; Ozkan, 2017).

It is important to introduce Nasreddin Hodja and to include his jokes in the work in terms of transferring our cultural values. It has been stated in many studies conducted these days that Nasreddin Hodja's jokes are an important source in transferring the culture and developing language skills both in teaching Turkish and in teaching Turkish as a foreign language (Akkaya, 2013; Barin, 2008; Teksan, 2012). Besides, it has been determined that Nasreddin Hodja jokes are used in the teaching sets of 'Yedi İklim Türkçe', which is a publication of Yunus Emre Institute and 'İstanbul Yabancılar İçin Türkçe', which is a publication of Istanbul University TOMER, which are widely used today in teaching Turkish as a foreign language (Sallabas & Goktenturk, 2018). It is seen that the author makes comparisons between Turkish and German cultures in some parts of the work and thus he tries to create intercultural awareness among students. For example, when introducing Nasreddin Hodja, he likens him to a German historical figure Till Eulenspiegel. It is also important to include frequently used religious expressions and adhan in the work in terms of transmitting our religious values.

#### 4. Conclusion and recommendations

The following conclusions are reached in this study, in which the work *Praktisches Handbuch der osmanisch-tuerkischen Sprache*, which was prepared by Adolf Wahrmund to teach Turkish to native German speakers and the ones who speak German as a foreign language, is analysed.

- It is a remarkable effort for the period when the work was written to include the phonetics part in the introduction part of the work, to use the Latin transcription system for the correct pronunciation of Ottoman letters, to give information about Istanbul accent and to give importance to the correct pronunciation by comparing Turkish sounds with those of German language.
- The work aims to teach Turkish grammar with the deductive approach according to the grammar-translation method, which was commonly used in foreign language teaching at the time of its publication. Repetitions are used in teaching grammar. A rule which has been previously taught is reminded when necessary. The page number where the rule is explained is given so that the rule can be revised again.
- Reading passages are selected from authentic documents (newspaper articles, Nasreddin Hodja jokes, letters of agreement and stories).
- The use of Latin letters and their pronunciations in the words, sentences and texts in the work shows that speaking skill is emphasised as well as pronunciation in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. Besides, it is seen that the themes in the speaking part are prepared according to the daily life situations of the period [on the trip (railroad), voyage, about the horses]. In the work, it is also aimed to teach the words, idioms, formulaic expressions and proverbs commonly used in daily life.
- Vocabulary teaching is not done only with vocabulary lists. The synonyms or close meanings of the words and the information about the origin of the words are given in some places both in the texts and in the footnotes.
- Including Nasreddin Hodja jokes, newspaper articles, stories and a sample letter of agreement in the work shows that the work also gives importance to the written language.
- The translation exercises are included from the native language to the target language only at the sentence level and from the target language to the target language only at the text level.
- In the work, cultural transfer (formulaic expressions, idioms, proverbs, Nasreddin Hodja jokes and stories, etc.) is emphasised.

In conclusion, when the work examined in this study is evaluated in terms of today's teaching Turkish as a foreign language, it can be said that it lacks some features (listening skill, writing skill and use of visuals and variety of exercise types), but when the work is evaluated considering the period it was written, it appears to be an important study in terms of including many language skills (speaking,



pronunciation, vocabulary and grammar), giving importance to culture transfer and making use of authentic documents as compared with its contemporaries.

Therefore, analysing the historical works prepared by foreigners in different languages for teaching Turkish as a foreign language from different perspectives will contribute to the development of the field and shape future studies.

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