

TURKIC LANGUAGES

Course Description:

Designed for English-speaking students with little or no knowledge in either historical or modern Turkic languages, this course will cover some of the major issues surrounding Turkic languages including Modern Standard Turkish and its Ottoman predecessor. Among the many subjects that we will be studying are the speakers of Turkic languages, morphological, phonological, and syntactic structure of Turkic, history of Turkic and Turkology, classification attempts, Proto-Turkic, the Altaic Theory, Turkic languages and their interactions with other languages of Central Eurasia, the Semitic and Indo-European influences on Turkic, dialectology, some of the foundational manuscripts composed in Turkic languages, the geographical location and lexicon of modern Turkic languages, and the Turkish alphabet and language reform.

About the Professor

This course was developed by Kemal Silay, Ph.D., Chair of Ottoman and Modern Turkish Studies Department, Central Eurasian Studies, Indiana University.

Required Texts:

- Özcan Başkan, "Turkish Language Reform," in *The Transformation of Turkish Culture: The Atatürk Legacy*, edited by Günsel Renda and C. Max Kortepeter. Princeton, New Jersey: The Kinston Press, 1986, pp. 95-112.
- Peter B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1992.
- Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, Editors. *The Turkic Languages*. London and New York: Routledge, 2006.
- Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.
- Karl H. Menges, *The Turkic Languages and Peoples: An Introduction to Turkic Studies*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1968.
- Mecdut Mansuroğlu, "The Rise and Development of Written Turkish in Anatolia." *Oriens: Journal of the International Society for Oriental Research*, Vol. 7 (2), 1954, pp. 250-264.
- Nicholas Poppe, *An Introduction to Altaic Linguistics*. Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1965.
- Claus Schönig, "The Internal Division of Modern Turkic and Its Historical Implications." *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae*, Vol. 52 (1), 1999, pp. 63-95.

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The Turkish Alphabet and Language Reform

Preliminary Notes:

Modern Turkish and its predecessor Ottoman Turkish belong to the Turkic language family whose speakers were and are spread over a wide area of Europe and Asia (Eurasia). Those areas and the Turkic languages spoken in those areas are Turkish and Azeri (Azerbaijani) in the Middle East; Turkmen, Uzbek, Uygur, Kazakh and Kirghiz in Central Asia; Altay, Khakas, Tuvan and Yakut in Siberia; and Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash and various Turkic dialects like Gagauz in Eastern Europe. Some of these Turkic peoples are the dominant population in their own independent countries, including the Republic of Turkey and the Turkic republics in Central Asia, and others have their own autonomous regions within Russia and China. Other countries with substantial Turkic-speaking populations include Afghanistan, Iran, Iraq, Bulgaria, and Greece. The total number of speakers within this family may be estimated at between 150 to 170 million, with Turkish speakers by far the largest at about 70 million.

According to the renowned Turkologist Wilhelm Radloff, there is no other language family in the world with the same geographical magnitude as the Turkic languages. Despite the immense number of Turkic languages and dialects spread out all over the world—generally speaking—the linguistic differences between these languages are rather minimal with the exception of Yakut and Chuvash, and all Turkic languages share common structural features. For a long time, scholars have been trying to classify the Turkic languages to no avail, since no single classification has yet been agreed upon. The difficulty comes from the fact that a tremendous amount of work still needs to be done in collecting and interpreting data from these languages, some of which have only recently been discovered. In addition, vastly different political concerns over the course of time have left their own mark on these efforts. For example, a great majority of Turkologists from Turkey still insist on a single Turkic language with numerous “dialects,” Turkish being the “Turkic of Turkey.” In reality, despite the linguistic proximity, speakers of the Turkic languages of the world enjoy a great diversity of history, cultures, and traditions, and rarely identify themselves as “Turks,” but rather as Tatars, Uzbeks, Kazaks, and the like.

Despite the difficulty of classifying Turkic languages and dialects, one may consider the following picture in future attempts of classification: Speakers of Turkish and the closely related Azeri (Azerbaijani) and Turkmen form the Oghuz group of Turkic languages. Their ancestors migrated from Central Asia into the Near East beginning in the first half of the eleventh century. By 1300 or so the Osman clan of the tribes had laid the foundation of what would become the Ottoman State (1299-1923). The other Turkic languages fall into several historical and linguistic groups.

Beginning already in the 8th century, before Turks had migrated out of East Asia into Central Asia, several literary languages were formed. The first of these was written in the so-called Runic script and survives in a number of stone inscriptions from Mongolia and South Siberia, but also in manuscripts discovered in Western China (modern Xinjiang). In the same period a distinct literary language called Uygur took shape in the Turfan area of modern Xinjiang. That language was written in Runic, Uygur, Manichaeian, and Brahmi scripts. From this language survive texts dealing with the Manichaeian, Nestorian, and Buddhist religions as well as with civil and economic affairs, dating from the 8th century up to the 14th century, and in some areas in the 18th century. Meanwhile, to the west in Central Asia starting in the 11th century, a related literary language arose. Written in Arabic script, this language came to be called Chagatay and was used by Muslim Turks not only of Central Asia but in a variant form in the Crimea and Volga regions until the 20th century. After many of these

Turkic areas were incorporated into the Soviet Union their spoken languages became bases of national languages written first in Latin, then in Cyrillic, and today mostly in Latin alphabets again. In the case of the Uygurs of China, the literary language is written in a highly modified Arabic script.

The formation of the Turkish literary language in Anatolia (known as “Old Anatolian Turkish” or “Old Ottoman”) goes back approximately to the 13th century, though some so-called “mixed-language” manuscripts (those reflecting both the “Eastern” and “Western” Turkic morphological and phonological features) belong to even earlier centuries. The construction and development of written Turkish in Anatolia cannot possibly be identified and studied without dealing with perhaps the most significant cultural and political change in Turkish history, the acceptance and proliferation of Islam. Institutionalized Islam not only brought a brand new belief system and sedentary social norms to the Turkish-speaking authors but also greatly reshaped the lexical and philosophical vocabulary of their language. After converting to and/or embracing Islam (beginning approximately toward the end of the 9th century), an educated minority of the Turkish-speaking population began to develop a literary language enhanced with a significant amount of borrowings from the Arabic and Persian languages. The construction process of Old Anatolian Turkish (or “Old Ottoman”) literary language also necessitated the adaptation of the Arabic script. The infiltration of the Arabic script into the writing of Turkish was a religious, cultural, and ideological constraint. The place of the Arabic script in Turkish linguistic and literary history is undoubtedly most significant, given the fact that up until 1928, almost every single Turkish book was composed in it. Nonetheless, while the Arabic alphabet was only one among more than a dozen documented writing systems used in scripting Turkic languages throughout the centuries, it was perhaps the most unsuitable of all of them. The script was incapable of representing the phonetic needs of the Turkish and other Turkic languages. Though a similar argument later became the foundation for the modernist revolution in Turkey, which successfully replaced the Arabic script with a Latin-based alphabet, there is little or no doubt among linguists that the modern Turkish writing system is by far much easier to learn, more practical and democratic. One can argue that the use of the Arabic alphabet constituted one of the fundamental reasons for the mostly illiterate population of the Ottoman Empire. During its six hundred-year lifespan, the Ottoman Empire had a very low literacy rate, due in part to the “holy script” with which no more than 30,000 books were ever printed. It should be remembered that the literary products of the Ottoman elite were transmitted through manuscripts, and, generally speaking, only those who could afford to possess them had access to the classical works in writing.

By the end of the 15th century, Old Anatolian Turkish was already a refined literary language. Beginning in the 16th century, what is usually called Ottoman Turkish or classical Ottoman became the Latin of the Turks. Classical Ottoman was not only a peculiar combination of Arabic, Persian and Turkish literary lexicon, but of a particular grammatical system, as well. In some cases, it manifested itself as a mixture of Arabic and Persian words, constructed according to the Turkish language syntax. It was not used by the common (and, for the most part, illiterate) people, and survived for hundreds of years as the symbol of the cultivated, learned and literary members of the glorious Ottoman court. By the end of the 17th century, classical Ottoman authors began showing a conscious interest in the Turkification and localization of Ottoman Turkish for use in their otherwise courtly works. Especially in the 18th century developments in this regard were highly significant. The spoken language (and in some cases *written* language as manifested in thousands of surviving folk manuscripts) of the vast majority of the Turkish-speaking populations in Anatolia was vastly different.

History of Turkic Languages and Turkology

Week 1

Readings

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 1-29.

Peter B. Golden, *An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, 15-37.

Essay Questions

Write descriptive essays on the following articles/chapters. Your essays should cover all the major points and arguments of the authors and should provide a précis of the essential data used.

"The Speakers of Turkic Languages" by Hendrik Boeschoten.

"The Turkic Peoples: A Historical Sketch" by Peter B. Golden.

"The Peoples and Languages of Eurasia" by Peter B. Golden.

Week 2

Reading

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 81-125.

Essay Question

Discuss how Lars Johanson attempts to write a history of Turkic (languages). What predominant discipline is behind his approach to the subject? Focus on the following: "unity and divergence," "classification of Turkic languages," "language contacts," "periodisation," "variation," "phonological developments in primary stems," "front and back dorsals," "secondary weak obstruents," "irregularity and coincidence of stems," "suffix phonology," "phonological adaptation of lexical copies," "accent and intonation," "declension," "postpositive markers," "versatility of thematic suffixes," "aspect formation," "aorist," "future markers," "converbs," "copying of word order," "decreasing use of non-finite clauses," and "lexicon."

Week 3

Readings

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 67-80.

Nicholas Poppe, *An Introduction to Altaic Linguistics*, 125-156.

Essay Question

Discuss how András Róna-Tas reconstructs "Proto-Turkic." How do more recent languages

function in establishing proto-languages and vice versa?

The Altaic theory is one of the most debated subjects in Altaistics and Turkology. Are Turkic, Mongolic, Manchu-Tungus, Korean, and Japanese languages related to each other? There is no simple answer to this complicated and to a certain extent peculiar question. But it has preoccupied many Turkologists throughout the world for a long time. The idea was based on the systematic similarities between these language families, such as typological similarities, grammatical similarities, and lexical similarities. Discuss how the famed Turkologist Nicholas Poppe approached this highly controversial theory in the 1960s.

Week 4

Reading

Karl H. Menges, *The Turkic Languages and Peoples*, 59-66.

Claus Schönig, "The Internal Division of Modern Turkic and Its Historical Implications," 63-95.

Essay Questions

Throughout the history of modern Turkology, there have been numerous attempts at a scientific classification of Turkic languages. However, a significant portion of these attempts have been tainted with geographical methods, and even political concerns and benefits. Aleksandr Nikolayevič Samoïlovič in his *Nekotorie dopolneniya k klassifikacii tureckix yazikov* (Petrograd, 1922) had come up with perhaps the most acclaimed classification of the Turkic languages. In this sound-based classification, the Turkic languages were divided into six major groups with six distinguishing features. **I) R Group** [Bulgar, Chuvash], Features: 1. tǎxxǎr 'nine', 2. ura 'foot', 3. pul- 'to be', 4. tǎv/tu 'mountain', 5. sarı 'yellow', 6. yulnǎ 'remained'; **II) D Group** [Köktürk, Uygur, Yakut], Features: 1. toquz 'nine', 2. adaq/azaq 'foot', 3. pol- 'to be', 4. tağ 'mountain', 5. sarıg 'yellow', 6. qalğan 'remained'; **III tǎv Group** [Kipchak, Altay, Kirgiz, Bashkurt], Features: 1. toğuz 'nine', 2. ayaq 'foot', 3. bol-/bul- 'to be', 4. tǎv 'mountain', 5. sarı 'yellow', 6. qalğan 'remained'; **IV) tağlıq Group** [Chaghatay, Samarkand, Bukhara Uzbek], Features: 1. toquz 'nine', 2. ayaq 'foot', 3. bol- 'to be', 4. tağ(lıq) 'mountain', 5. sarıq 'yellow', 6) qalğan 'remained'; **V) tağlı Group** [Khwarezm Uzbek], Features: 1. doquz 'nine', 2. ayaq 'foot', 3. bol- 'to be', 4. tağ(lı) 'mountain', 5. sarı 'yellow', 6. qalğan 'remained'; **VI) ol- Group** [Turkmen, Azeri (Azerbaijani), Turkish], Features: 1. doquz 'nine', 2. ayaq 'foot', 3. ol- 'to be', 4. dağ 'mountain', 5. sarı 'yellow', 6. qalan 'remained'. How does Menges' classification of Turkic languages differ from Samoïlovič's earlier attempt?

2. Perhaps the most innovative and yet highly complex classification attempt was made in 1999 by Claus Schönig. Schönig's method was based on synchronic data and its integration to the historical data through a diachronic approach. Explain what Schönig means by "Common Turkic," "Norm Turkic," "Non-norm Turkic," "Central Turkic," and "Border Turkic."

Week 5

Reading

Nicholas Poppe, *An Introduction to Altaic Linguistics*, 100-124. 157-217

Essay Questions

Discuss and briefly summarize the major contributions of the following classical Turkologists: Otto Böhtlingk, Wilhelm Radloff, Nikolaï Ivanovič Íminskiï, Nikolaï Fedorovič Katanov, Edward Piekarski, Nikolaï Ivanovič Ašmarin, Platon Mixaiłovič Melioranskiï, Sergeï Efimovič Malov, Aleksandr Nikolayevič Samoïlovič, Nikolaï Konstantinovič Dmitriew, Nadežda Petrovna Dïrenkova, Aleksandr Konstantinovič Borovkov, Andrei Nikolayevič Kononov, Vilhelm Thomsen, Kaare Grønbech, Friedrich Wilhelm Karl Müller, Willy Bang-Kaup, Carl Brockelmann, Annemarie von Gabain, Karl Heinrich Menges, Omelian Pritsak, Gunnar Jarring, Jean Deny, Tadeusz Kowalski, Gyula Németh, Ignácz Kúnos, and Hasan Eren.

Discuss the following topics: "Altaic Borrowings in Mongolian," "Altaic Borrowings in Manchu-Tungus," "Altaic Borrowings in Chuvash-Turkic Languages," "Altaic Borrowings in Korean," "Chinese Elements in Altaic Languages," "Tibetan Elements in Altaic Languages," "Ancient Indo-European Elements in Altaic Languages," "Altaic Elements in Indo-European Languages," "Altaic Elements in Georgian," and "Altaic Elements in Uralic."

Week 6

Readings

Karl H. Menges, *The Turkic Languages and Peoples*, 67-71, 165-179.

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 126-137.

Essay Questions

Discuss how Menges indulged in a study of the lexical composition of Turkic languages without the existence of fundamental etymological dictionaries?

Discuss the scientific, historical, cultural, and religious aspects of the writing systems used for Turkic languages.

Week 7

Readings

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 138-178.

Essay Questions

How does Marcel Erdal divide "Old Turkic"? Focus on periodisation and the major thematic characteristics of the Old Turkic documents.

What scripts were used in the writing of Middle Kipchak dialects? What was the underlying reason behind the composition of *Codex Cumanicus*?

Discuss the formation and periods of Chaghatay, and name three manuscripts that fully exhibit the linguistic characteristics of the language.

The Structure of Turkic Languages

Readings

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 30-66.

Karl H. Menges, *The Turkic Languages and Peoples*, 73-163.

Essay Questions

Despite the immense number of Turkic languages and dialects spread out all over the word—generally speaking—the linguistic difference between these languages is somehow minimal with the exception of Yakut and Chuvash, and all Turkic languages share common structural features. That should not, however, give a false message that the speakers of these languages can communicate with each other without significant difficulties. Indeed, in some cases they cannot communicate at all and a sudden linguistic breakdown would occur spontaneously. The difficulties not only come from linguistic differences but also cultural and historical ones. That said, what makes the Turkic languages so close to each other is the exceptional structural unity that they share. How does Lars Johanson treat the structure of Turkic languages? Focus on the “vowels and consonants,” “syllable structure,” “morphophonological variation in suffixes,” “prosodic phenomena,” “word structure,” “stem formation,” “word classes,” “participles,” “converbs,” “indeclinable word classes,” “nominal phrases,” “predications,” “finite clauses,” and “non-finite clauses.”

Compare Johanson’s treatment with that of Menges.

Modern Turkic Languages

Readings

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 248-452.

Essay Questions

Provide a description of the following Modern Turkic languages. Identify which branch of Turkic languages they belong to, give information about their geographic location, and discuss their basic lexicon:

- Azerbaijani
- Turkmen
- Khalaj
- Tatar
- Kumyk
- Karachay-Balkar
- Crimean Tatar
- Karaim
- Kazakh
- Karakalpak
- Noghay
- Kirghiz
- Uzbek
- Uyghur
- Yellow Uyghur
- Salar
- South Siberian Turkic
- Yakut
- Chuvash

Ottoman Turkish

Week 10

Readings

Mecdut Mansuroğlu, "The Rise and Development of Written Turkish in Anatolia," 250-264.
Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, 5-26.

Essay Questions

Name five manuscripts that reflect the morphological and phonetical features of 13th century Old Anatolian Turkish (Old Ottoman).

Explain how Mansuroğlu argues the influence of the Uyghur script on the Old Anatolian Turkish manuscripts which were written in Arabic script.

Discuss the Old Anatolian Turkish movement of *Türkî-i Basîl* (Simple Turkish).

What are the basic thoughts and conclusions of Geoffrey Lewis regarding the nature of Ottoman Turkish?

Week 11

Reading

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 179-202.

Essay Questions

1. Discuss the historical development of what is commonly referred to as "Ottoman Turkish," touch upon the terminological problems, and explain the diachronical periodisation of Ottoman.
2. Discuss the phonological, morphological, and syntactic features of Ottoman, give specific examples to demonstrate your arguments.

Turkish and Turkish Dialects

Readings

Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 203-241.

Essay Questions

Discuss the phonology, morphology, and syntax of Modern Standard Turkish.

How does Bernt Brendemoen explain the under-researched, under-studied nature of Anatolian dialectology?

The Turkish Alphabet and Language Reform

Introduction

As the Turkish-speaking people adopted Islam, they were not only opening themselves up to new beliefs and social norms, they were also preparing the necessary conditions for a fundamental change in their language. Although the majority of people continued to speak Turkish, a literate minority of the population began to develop a literary language enriched with an overwhelming number of borrowings from Arabic and Persian. Initially, they had adopted the Arabic script for sacred reasons. Using the alphabet of the Arabic language seemed essential for these new converts striving to be devout Muslims. Though relatively very few people throughout Turkish history have been able to read and understand the Qur'an in its original language, the Arabic script functioned as a sacred symbol of holiness, a calligraphic entry into the Islamic world. The Arabic alphabet is not an ideal writing system for the phonetic requirements of the Turkish language. Turkish is a language of vowels. In today's standard Turkish, there are eight vowels and all of them are well represented with the Latin-based alphabet adopted in 1928. The Ottoman authors had to indicate all these vowels (in addition to the closed /è/ that was present for centuries) with only three letters/signifiers. Although diacritical marks—for practical reasons, seldom used—improved the indication of vowels to a certain degree, the Arabic alphabet has always been inadequate to mark precisely the essential vowels of Turkish. Furthermore, its inability to represent some consonants in Turkish also created considerable problems. Despite the tremendous advances in Ottoman philology, the reading of Ottoman documents constitutes a great difficulty even for an Ottomanist. However odd it may sound, the transliteration or transcription of Ottoman manuscripts alone is considered a serious scholarly enterprise. It is such an arduous task that even scholars who have studied Ottoman for years can easily make grave mistakes during the reading process. The use of the Arabic alphabet was clearly one of the fundamental reasons for the mostly illiterate population of Ottoman Turkey. Ottoman Turkish had imported from the Islamic world not only its script, but many of its words and expressions, as well. In fact, this historical influx started shortly after the 10th century and Islamic religious vocabulary penetrated the Turkish literary language within a very short time. A rapid change in the lexical structure of Turkish is clearly seen in its earliest Islamic works. During the pre-Islamic period, the Turkic languages did have many interactions with other languages of Inner Asia—particularly those of the Altaic family. However, never in its long history was written Turkish dominated by Arabic and Persian lexicon as much as it was during the Ottoman era. Ottoman was not only the combination of Arabic, Persian and Turkish literary words and expressions, but of particular grammatical rules, as well. In some cases, it manifested itself as a collection of Arabic and Persian words, put together according to Turkish syntax. It was not used by the ordinary people and survived for hundreds of years as the symbol of the cultivated, learned and literary members of the Ottoman court.

Readings

Özcan Başkan, "Turkish Language Reform," 95-112; Lars Johanson and Éva Á. Csató, *The Turkic Languages*, 242-247.

Essay Topic

E. Discuss the scientific and social aspects of Turkish alphabet and language reforms.

Introduction

No one paid attention to the language of the Turk

No one ever found the Turks attractive

Turks themselves did not know those languages

Their paths of delicacy, way-stations of sublimity

—‘Āşiq Paşa, *Ġarībnāme* (14th century)

“Ignorant and affected youths have tried to compose facile poems with Persian words. But if anyone truly ponders and reflects sufficiently, he will realize the plenitude and scope of the Turkish vocabulary which facilitate the arts of eloquence and narrative style and versification and telling of fables... Turkish poets and writers should have used their own tongue and not resorted to others. They erred in even attempting such a thing. If they were capable of composing in both tongues, they should have composed most in their own tongue and only rarely in another. When they indulged in hyperbole, they should have done so equally in both tongues.”

—‘Alī Şīr Nevā’ī, *Muhākemetu’l-luġateyn* (15th century)

“The vulgar Turk is very different from what is spoke at Court or amongst the people of figure, who always mix so much Arabic and Persian in their discourse that it may very well be call’d another Language; and ‘tis as ridiculous to make use of the expressions commonly us’d, in speaking to a Great Man or a Lady, as it would be to talk broad Yorkshire Sommerset shire in the drawing-room. Besides this distinction they have what they call the Sublime, that is, a stile proper for poetry, and which is the exact scripture stile.”

—Lady Montagu (18th century)

“We have accomplished many successes. Yet today we must undertake another very necessary task: it is indispensable that we learn the new Turkish alphabet in a rapid manner. Teach these letters to every citizen, to the women, men, porter, boatman, and others. In the meantime, never forget that if a nation has a literacy rate of 10 to 20 percent, it is nothing short of shameful.”

—Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (August 9, 1928)

“Before it came into [contact] with the Muslim world, Turkish contained few words of foreign origin. Incidental borrowings of cultural words from Chinese, Tibetan, Khotanese, Sakian, and Sogdian, and of religious terms from Sanskrit (Buddhistic), Pahlavi (Manichaeian) and Syriac (Nestorian) did not alter the language in its essence, nor did the early borrowings from Mongolian, itself an Altaic tongue. Such was the state of Turkish when the forefathers of the Seldjuk Turks began to [filter] into the western world. But with the coming of Islam, Arabic, as the language of the Qur’an and of Islamic studies, and Persian, as the cultivated literary language of the Middle East, were taken as standards, while Turkish proper was confined to popular literature and colloquial speech. Thus Turkish proper was left in the shade, its functional power weakened and many of its elements, both lexical and morphological, fell into disuse. In

the meantime, the Arabic and Persian elements which had crept into the language functioned freely and on a large scale... One would say a second language was living within Turkish... It [had] a rather heavy and encumbered style, full of affectations and [was built upon] foreign words and expressions. These mannerisms, sounding so [alien] and uncongenial to the Turkish mind, have always been ridiculed by the public at large through its mouthpiece, Karagöz."

—Agop Dilaçar, *Language Reform in Turkey* (1969)

"[Atatürk's] intention was to make Anatolia literate and he perceived that only alphabetization would do it."

—Eric A. Havelock, *The Literate Revolution in Greece and Its Cultural Consequences* (1982)

Although it was one of the most fundamental and significant revolutionary undertakings of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the Turkish alphabet and language reform has not been thoroughly researched or understood. The only major publication in English about this reform is Geoffrey Lewis' widely read *The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010). While Lewis's book presents some useful data about the Turkish language reform, he fails to understand and analyze the subject in a scholarly manner. Unfortunately a sarcastic voice rather than scholarly objectivity dominates this otherwise popular work. The book includes a chapter on the so-called "Sun-Language Theory," an outlandish European Orientalist fabrication that Lewis further utilizes to discredit the Turkish revolution, and indirectly blames Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for such a preposterous fascist "theory." During the rest of the semester, students will put this bombastic book under a microscope and discuss its claims, methodology, and conclusions from a Turkological perspective.

Reading

Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*, 27-168.

Analysis

"The New Alphabet"

"Atatürk and the Language Reform until 1936"

"The Sun-Language Theory and After"

"Atay, Ataç, Sayılı"

"Ingredients"

"Concoctions"

"Technical Terms"

"The New Yoke"

"The New Turkish"

"What Happened to the Language Society"