THE SOCIOLINGUISTIC ROLE OF OTTOMAN TURKISH
AND ARABIC IN TURKISH NATIONALISM

by

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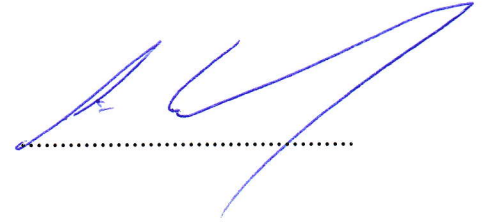Masters of Arts

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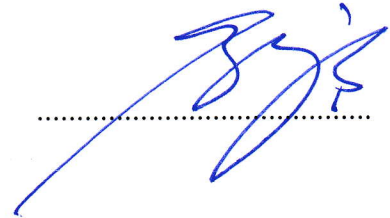AND ARABIC IN TURKISH NATIOANLISM

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ABSTRACT

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Turkey has always been characterized by a seeming tug-a-war between polarizing social theories, political ideologies and nationalisms. The notion of nationalism depends on a variety of factors: race, ethnicity, territory, shared cultural practices, shared historical experience etc, but language can also serve as an extremely important vessel for nationalist sentiment, and this is especially true in the Turkish context where the entire orthography of the Turkish language was changed in the 1920s to accommodate the founding republic's desire to shift its identity more westward.

For the majority of the twentieth century there was the social and political will to limit the influence of Arabic, not only because it wasn't simply Turkish, but also because the language carried the added weight of Islamic religious connotations, another aspect of Turkish identity that Atatürk wished to marginalize. However, within the twenty-first century there has been a shift in the Turkish government's nationalist agenda.

While there have been plenty of papers written about Turkey's recent shift towards religious conservatism in stark contrast to the secular image that the Turkish elites have traditionally tried to perpetuate, fewer have explored the sociolinguistic aspects of this shift in the form of the dialogues that have started about the place of the Arabic and the Ottoman language in modern Turkish society. In this thesis the author will argue how high-ranking AKP members' desire to reintroduce Arabic and Ottoman Turkish into Turkish education is emblematic of the lack of success of the language reform of the 1930s to remove all trace of Turkey's linguistic Islamic heritage. I will also argue that these linguistic symbols are being used strategically to instill in Turkey's youthful citizens a sense of religious piety that will make them more receptacle to political Islam, and thus loyal to the ruling Islamist party.

ÖZET

TÜRK MİLLİİZASYASINDAKİ OSMANLICA VE ARAPÇA'NIN SOSYOLOJİSTİK ROLÜ

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Türkiye, daima kutuplaşan toplumsal kuramlar, siyasi ideolojiler ve milliyetçilikler arasında karakterize olmuştur. Milliyetçilik kavramı birçok faktöre sahiptir: ırk, etnik köken, toprak, paylaşılan kültürel uygulamalar, ve ortak tarihi tecrübe. Faktörlere bağlıdır; ancak dil, milliyetçi düşünce için sönemli bir gemi olabilir. Özellikle Türk bağlamında Türk dilinin tüm yazım, batıya cumhuriyetin kimliğini kaydırma arzusunu barındırmak için 1920'lerde değiştirildi. yirminci yüzyılın çoğunluğunda, Arapçanın etkisini sınırlamak için toplumsal ve siyasi irade vardı. Aynı zamanda İslami dini çağrışımların ağırlık kazanmış olması nedeniyle Türk kimliğinde Atatürk Arapçayı marjinaline istedi. Bununla birlikte, yirmi birinci yüzyılda Türk hükümetinin milliyetçi gündeminde bir değişiklik oldu.

Türkiye'nin son zamanlarda dini muhafazakarlığa yönelmesi konusunda sürdürmeye çalıştığı, ama bu analizler değişen Osmanlıca ve Arapçanın sosyo-dilbilimsel yönlerini biçiminde araştırmamıştır. Ancak yirmi birinci yüzyılda Türk ulusal planı hakkında bir kayma oldu.

Arapça ve Osmanlıca hakkında çok diyalog Türkiye'de başladı çünkü Türk ulusal planı değişiyor. Bu tezde Türkiye'nin değişen milliyetçiliğinde Arapça v Osmanlıcanın rolünü açıklayacağım.

To my dearest love, Amin Sophiamehr,
the star in my moonless night,
the rose that blossoms even in the harshest winter

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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hayat - حياة – *life*   **mektup** - مكتوب - *letter*

bina - بناء – *building*   **takvim** - تقويم – *calendar*

beyaz - أبيض – *white*   **taam** - طعام – *food*

sabah - صباح – *morning*   **kahve** - قهوة – *coffee*

kalem - قلم – *pen*   **kitap** - كتاب – *book*

Figure 2. Figure Two: Call to Prayer in Arabic and Turkish with English translation, pages 37-38

Arabic Text	**Turkish Text**	**English Translation**
Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar	*Tanrı uludur, Tanrı uludur*	God is great, God is great.
Ashhadu an lā ilāha illā llāh	*Suphesiz bilirim, bildiririm: Tanrı'dan baska yoktur tapacak*	I testify that there is no god but God.
Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasūl Allah	*Suphesiz bilirim, bildiririm: Tanrı'nın elcisidir Mu-hammed*	I testify that Muhammed is the prophet of God.
Hayya 'alā 'l-salāt	*Haydin namaza*	Come to prayer.
Hayya 'alā 'l-falāh	*Haydin felaha*	Come to salvation.
al-Salāt khayrun min al-nawm	*Namaz uykudan hayırlıdır*	Prayer is better than sleep.
Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar	*Tanrı uludur, Tanrı uludur*	God is great, God is great.
Lā ilahā illā llāh	*Tanrı'dan baska yoktur tapacak*	There is no god but God.

Introduction: Language as a Tool of National Rhetoric in Turkey

The concept of associating language with national identity is a fairly new one. The Seljuk Turks during the Middle Ages adopted Persian as the language of the royal court without any crisis of thought that they were betraying who they were as a people or state. Likewise the Ottomans continued this tradition incorporating thousands of Arabic and Persian loanwords into their court language without any problem until the debate emerged in the 19th century. Only with the advent of Turkish nationalism in late 19th century did scholars and intellectuals begin to question the state of the Turkish language and deliberate what the best course of action should be.[1] From that debate came the decision in the 20th century by the Turkish Republic's founder, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, to change Turkish's writing system from the Arabic to Latin alphabet, marking Turkey as one of the most robust examples of using language as a tool of national rhetoric.

Atatürk intended to use this orthographical reform as a means to de-emphasize Turkey's Islamic identity and transform the country into a nation that would be more widely accepted by Europe and other Western powers.[2] While the language reform in itself was successful; the Turkish language is still written with the Latin script, the underlying goal to scale down the influence of Turkey's Islamic heritage has fallen flat. Not only has that goal of complete secularization of Turkish society fallen flat, but now Ottoman Turkish and Arabic are being used to promote a more Islamic identity in Turkey in a manner similar to how the Latin alphabet was used in the 1920s and 1930s to emphasize a westward-leaning identity.

1.0 Origins of Linguistic Nationalism

Before elaborating specifically on the way linguistic nationalism developed in Turkey, one must first understand how language came to enter the nationalism equation. As I mentioned above

with the Seljuks and early Ottomans, neither were concerned with their native language obtaining a higher level of sociopolitical status. Instead, they both chose to acknowledge and utilize the Persian language, which was the dominant literary language of Central Asia at the time. Turkish rulers of these areas would patronize Persian literature and their territorial conquest made written Persian reached new lands, thus making its mark on Ottoman Turkish.[3] The use of Persian was not viewed as a detriment to the shaping of their empires. In fact, quite the opposite was true where Persian gave Ottoman Turkish a sense of legitimacy that the layman's Turkish would not have obtained otherwise. However, at the latter edges of the Early Modern period, language grew to become an important aspect of national identity as the world started to shift from empires to modern nation-states.

1.1 Linguistic Purism

The idea that a "pure language" was necessary in sculpting proper national identity did not come into being until the late 18th century, though notions of linguistic purism and linguistic protectionism predate linguistic nationalism. Language purism, as defined by Richard Nordquist,

> is a pejorative term in linguistics for a zealous conservatism in regard to the use and development of a language…A purist is someone who expresses a desire to eliminate certain undesirable features from a language, including grammatical errors, jargon, neologisms, colloquialisms and words of foreign origins.[4]

Language purism was a founding principle of many language academies that sought to control their respective languages. The first language academy to arise was the Accademia della Crusca in 1583.[5] This Accademia was highly characterized by their efforts to maintain the purest form of the Italian language possible. Accademia della Crusca set the model other language academies that emerged in Europe, including Académie Française in 1635.

While there will always remain debates within language about the prescriptive grammar vs. colloquialisms, the aspect of language purism that is of concern to us is the barring or attempted

barring of foreign words. Banning words from other languages implies that a language can only obtain a level of authenticity by resisting defilement from other tongues. A foreign word's infiltration into another language carries a grave implication to the purist, that the foreign language has achieved a certain level of influence, if not dominance, in the recipient language. "The loanword has always been perceived as a foreign object in the body of the language: a treacherous virus infecting the pure blood of the language."[6] Since those invading languages are so often of a people already perceived as an enemy, measures must be taken to minimize their influence. Thus, it is not a far stretch to the imagination how these purist mentalities towards language, which had already existed for centuries, came to provide an excellent breeding ground for nationalist fervor later on as nation-states started to define themselves in a more mono-ethnic and mono-linguistic manner.

1.2 Linguistic Nationalism

John Edwards attributes the modern sense of nationalism to the French, while attributing the link of language with nationalism to the Germans.

> If we accept that it was the rhetoric of surrounding the French Revolution in 1789 that nationalism...first found contemporary forceful expression, then it was in the German romanticism of the same period that the notion of a *Volk* and the almost mystical connection between nation and language were expounded so fervently.[7]

Using language as a means to promote national identity is traditionally accredited to German philosophers such as Herder and Fichte.[8] These thinkers started to pitch the idea that language was an integral aspect of constructing national identity along with ethnicity, territory and common culture. In 1772 Herder asserted that a nation cannot exist without its language. "Has a nation anything more precious than the language of its fathers?"[9] This placed language on a much higher level of the criteria for nationalism than what was seen before. In one of his most beloved essays, Herder goes on to say to describe in one of his most beloved essays that language is the cherished glue that holds their folkloric traditions together.

What a treasure language is when kinship groups grow into tribes and nations. Even the smallest of nations…cherishes in and through its language the history, the poetry and songs about the great deeds of its forefathers. The language is its collective treasure.[10]

One key component of nationalism is constructing a "Self" that is opposing or resisting an "Other."[11] Through this perception of emphasizing how a nation is different (usually superior) than another, language proves to be an effective tool. Language shrouds the "Other" in a mysterious tongue that cannot be understood.

2.0 Historical Linguistic Tensions in Turkey

As the 19th century was drawing to a close, the Ottoman Empire was suffering greatly from both internal challenges and external foes. The empire had suffered numerous military defeats and the hands of Russia and the empire's agricultural economy had not recovered since the world trade's focal point had long since shifted from the Mediterranean Sea to the Atlantic Ocean.[12] Desperate to avoid being partitioned by the Great Powers, who were opening discussing the Ottomans' impending doom that was known at the time the Eastern question, the empire underwent massive reforms, hoping to restructure the empire in a way that would keep it afloat in the new industrialized world. From those reforms naturally the Turkish language was placed under inspection as a means to bolster the image of the Ottoman Empire. Thousands of French words entered Turkish from these modernizing reforms. For an empire seeking validation from Europe, the most pressing matter for the empire's top intellectuals was Ottoman Turkish's deep orthographical and grammatical dependence on Arabic and Persian.

2.1 The Turkyfying of Turkish

As stated earlier, debates around the state of the Turkish language started to breach the surface in the 19th century. There were a handful of thinkers such as İbrahim Şinasi, Ali Suavi, and Necip Asım who advocated for in the democratization of written Ottoman Turkish. Şinasi, for

example, believed in a purer form of Turkish that was devoid of Arabic and Persian vocabulary and synax.[13]

One of the most famous Turkish social theorist to write about this issue was Ziya Gökalp, who will be discussed at length in Chapter Two. Gökalp was a nationalist and a firm believer in Turkish linguistic reform as well as overall Turkification of the empire. He even wrote a poem where he described a utopian version of his homeland where he specifically refers to the call to prayer in Turkish. Gökalp wanted this Turkification to go even further and conduct all worship in Turkish, but "his suggestion that worship be in the vernacular and not Classical Arabic would have been deeply disturbing to many adherents and religious leaders"[6] Questioning Turkish's use of Arabic and even considering a change in orthography was marred by controversy, not only for the sheer logistical challenges, but for religious conservatives who viewed the writing system as sacred and thus any attempt to change it as sacrilegious.[14]

2.2 The Turkish Orthographical Reform

For those who lack a linguistic background, it is sometimes assumed that a language's written system is indicative of the language's genetics, when in reality the writing system has little to do with the innate syntactical or phonetic structure and has much more to do with the language's social-religious context. Language has been used in countless instances all over the world to promote a country's national identity. Hindi and Urdu and essential dialects of the same language that differ in some vocabulary and writing system. Urdu uses the Arabic alphabet to emphasize its Islamic identity in contrast to Hindi India.[15]

A similar tension arose regarding Ottoman Turkish's use of the Arabic alphabet. There were linguistic and logistical arguments that were put forth as to why Ottoman Turkish should change its writing system. For example, in Arabic there is only one letter that symbolized a round vowel and that is و. This one Arabic letter in Ottoman Turkish was used for four different Turkish round vowels: *o, u, ö* and *ü*, so that one had to rely purely on context to gauge the true Turkish vowel.[16] Pro-

Latin scholars argued that the Arabic alphabet was not sufficient to truly express Turkish phonology. Sir Charles Elliot in the 1926 *Encyclopedia Britannica* once remarked that "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."[17]

Despite these arguments, most scholars agree that the prime motivation for switching from the Arabic script to the Latin alphabet was due to Ataturk's desire to completely redefine and redirect Turkish nationalist identity, as will be discussed in Chapter Three. For the young Turkish Republic in the 20th century that was seeking to participate in the Western civilization, Ottoman Turkish screamed orient by its use of the same writing system as the Qu'ran, the holy book of a religion that had been historically hailed as the antithesis of Western thought and ideology. Thus on 1 November 1928 the Latin alphabet was officially adopted.

3.0 Ottoman Turkish and Arabic in Turkey Today

How successful was Atatürk and his nationalist cadres in the eradication of Arabic from Turkish? He wasn't very successful when it came to switching Turkish for Arabic in the religious life of Turkey, but what of general life and the more general use of the Turkish language? There he was able to make more headway. While the Arabic language still claims ownership over most loanwords in Turkish, their numbers today are nothing like there were before.[18] Many Arabic words once in common use are now archaic and have been replaced by Turkic equivalents.

Nonetheless, many Arabic loanwords survived the linguistic reforms of the twentieth century and are used with the same frequency as their Turkish counterparts. One example are the words *gerek* and *lazım.* Their meanings are the same in Turkish, expressing need, but *lazım* is an Arabic loanword whereas *gerek* is of Turkic origin. The same can be said for *fakir* and *yoksul.* Both mean poor, with *fakir* being the Arabic loanword and *yoksul* being the Turkish one deriving from the Turkish word *yok,* which in itself is a negation word meaning 'there is not.' In addition to that,

there are some Arabic loanwords that continue to be used more frequently than their Turkish contemporaries.[19] Arabic loanwords such as *asker,* meaning soldier, continues to be used at a much higher frequency than the Turkish word *sü.* The same can be said for *aile,* meaning family. Most Turks opt for this loanword as opposed to the Turkish *ocak.* In modern Turkish one can find Arabic loanwords all over the spectrum; those completely obsolete, those used simultaneously with Turkish synonyms, and those that still dominate their Turkish brothers.[20]

There are many secularists in Turkey that carry a heavy disdain for any emphasis on Islam or the Middle East and are not very pleased with the government's refocusing toward the Islamic world, and that disdain plays out in the recent debates that are rocking through Turkey regarding the status of Arabic and Ottoman Turkish in Turkish education and mainstream Turkish society.

3.1 Grappling with Arabic

It was announced last year by the Turkish Ministry of National Education that for the 2016-17 academic year the Arabic language would be offered as an elective in Turkish elementary schools alongside the preexisting English, German and French language electives.[21] Since Arabic claims official status in over 20 countries and is the native language of millions of Syrian refugees now in Turkey, the emergence of Arabic in schools may seem a natural occurrence on the surface. However, certain sectors of Turkish society are wary that the reintroduction of Arabic is but another example of the state pushing religious education and marginalizing modern biology and other natural science instruction. Some Turkish secularists are even paranoid that this push to incorporate Arabic into mainstream education is a precursor for the eventual reversal of Turkish's orthographical reform. Veli Demir, head of the education union, gave this quote to Al-Monitor.

> "They will compel people to select this course. Since they see Arabic and something holy they may eventually want to teach all courses in Arabic. We know this government will not stop here, but scrap the alphabet revolution of the republic. They increased the number of religious high school students from 70,000 to 1,200,000. They want to train voters to

guarantee AKP's future. We, on the other hand, want a generation that pursues civilization, peace, and brotherhood."[22]

According to Demir, introducing Arabic into the curriculum is nothing short of an entire conspiracy to completely undo the steps towards modernization that Turkey has taken for the last century. This speaks volumes of how much a language can come to symbolize the desired or undesired ideals of a specific nationalism.

3.2 Grappling with Ottoman Turkish

Because Arabic is the language of the Holy Qur'an, it is extremely difficult to disassociate the language from Islam. Likewise, because Ottoman Turkish used the Arabic script, it also suffers from that dogmatic stigma. Back in December 2014 there was public outcry in Turkey as President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan made several statements regarding his desire to make Ottoman Turkish a mandatory subject in secondary education.

Turkey's scholars and intellectuals are fortunately standing tall despite 200-year-long pressures trying to cut us from our roots. Teaching Ottoman is debated for five days in the Council. Yet there are those who are troubled by this country's students learning Ottoman. Whether they like it or not, Ottoman will be learned and taught in this country.[23]

The former Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu tried to downplay the president's strong words. "Those students who wish to study it may take it as an elective course, and those who don't want to study it, don't! That is what is being proposed at the National Education Council. It is not possibly to understand this allergy towards our history and culture."[24]

For those in the AKP, Ottoman Turkish seen as beneficial since most Turks of the younger generations are cut off from the majority of their own history, not only because of the different al-

phabet, but also because of the Arabic-Persian vocabulary that is no longer in use in modern Turkish. For others, however, this is once again the President pushing for a return to Turkey's glorified Islamic past, which is a key component in neo-Ottomanism rhetoric. Remaining in touch with one's historical roots can be a valid argument, but because the Arabic alphabet is weighed down so heavily by religious connotations, the Ottoman language cannot be reintroduced without secularists immediately becoming defensive. There are other sociopolitical and sociolinguistic connotations at play where Arabic and Ottoman Turkish are perceived as being less critical than English or other European languages, which is why some Turks take issue with the push towards these two particular languages.

Many were highly critical of the President's speech, including a deputy of the Republican People's Party (CHP), Huseyin Aygun. "No one can teach my kids Ottoman-era Turkish by force."[25] Selahattin Demirtas, co-chairman of the pro-Kurdish HDP commented that, "It is nothing but nonsense to make Ottoman-era Turkish compulsory at schools. They also forced us to read the pledge for years, but it is not longer."[26] Critics believe Erdoğan is wasting precious time and energy on an language planning agenda that has little relevance to the country's currents needs, but it is worth nothing how strong of a reaction that the mere mention of bringing back Ottoman Turkish could provoke, representing the deep-seeded perception of Turkish using the Arabic alphabet as something archaic.

3.3 Linguistic Symbolism as Turkey's Re-Prioritizes Elements of its National Identity

Turkey has always struggled with its own identity crisis of what social/political/religious beliefs it wanted to exemplify, and language policy is yet another arena where differing ideologies can do battle with one another. These debates over Arabic and Ottoman's role in modern Turkish society demonstrate the sudden rift that has arisen within the last five years in terms of nationalist rhetoric. Where secular Kemalism once reigned supreme, at least at the superficial level of the country international persona, a new Islamic oriented nationalism has taken its place, at the very least with

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the ruling party AKP. In the beginning when AKP first rose to power in 2002, both Turkey and international onlookers were hopeful of Turkey realizing its full democratic potential. However, that hope has eroded into disillusionment as secular Turks watch the dream of their country taking its place in the European Union slowly fade away. Just one day after the forcible resignation of Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu, Erdoğan stated in a speech that, "we'll go our way, you'll go yours,"[27] referring to his refusal to lessen Turkey's anti-terror legislation in exchange to visa-free travel to Europe for Turkish citizens. Unlike all Turkish leaders before him, Erdoğan is not interested in Europe's validation, and now he no longer needs it since he hold a great deal of leverage over Europe by means of the Syrian refugee crisis and the threat of ISIS.

How far will AKP's Islamic conservative agenda take? Will they realize their ambitions of pushing Arabic and Ottoman Turkish onto the population? How far can AKP go in other religiously driven projects without inducing country-wide protests? It appears as though AKP is trying to do what the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt did, win the majority democratically and once in power shift the national agenda to as conservative as it wished, believing that no one would protest. Certainly language planning is not an issue that would trigger an uprising, but the attempt to push Arabic and Ottoman Turkish when a vocal minority is not quite receptive to them could be interpreted as a sign of other harsher policies that are to come in the Turkish government's desire to reclaim the absolute power that the sultans of the past once enjoyed.

The Arabic and Ottoman Turkish languages in the modern Turkish context seem to evoke a "slippery slope" mentality where the issue is not directly the languages, but the negative educational and political consequences that could potentially arise if this type of language policy could gain more momentum. Eugene Volk argues for this line of thinking.

> We can all identify situations where one group's support of a first step A eventually made it
>
> easier for others to implement a later step B that might not have happened without A
>
> (though we may disagree about exactly which situations exhibit this quality). Such an A

may not have logically required the corresponding B, yet for political and psychological reasons, it helped bring B about.[28]

In the aftermath of the coup, the issue of these two languages' status has not fallen completely to the sidelines, but has emerged in other ways. On 2 September, 2016 a new political party was founded, branding itself as the Ottoman Party (*Osmanlı Partisi*).[29] Their emblem contains two Arabic vowels, *elif* and *wow*, situated between the ends of the crescent moon where the Islamic star is traditionally supposed to sit. The use of Arabic letters in their insignia is clearly a throwback to when the Turkish language was written with the Arabic alphabet. This new political party, which proclaims itself as the voice of Turkish Muslims, did not only use the pictographic symbol of Islam in the form of the crescent moon, but also sought to further emphasize its Islamic persona with use of the Arabic alphabet, showing that Ottoman Turkish and Arabic is still being used to this day as means to symbolize a more conservative streak of Turkish nationalism.

In this thesis I will be exploring the question of how the Ottoman, Arabic and modern Turksih languages relate to one another and how have they been used to promote specific type of nationalism. This will be done by an exploration of the historical relationship between these two langauges from the Turks conversion to Islam to the debates on linguistic reform of the 19th century and the change in writing system in 1928. Then I will discuss the language policy regarding Arabic and Ottoman since the change in orthography and how the use of Arabic and Ottoman in AKP and other conservatives' rhetoric is enblematic of their desire to instill a deeper sense of piety into the younger generations to create a popuolation that is loyal to Islam and the poltical parties claiming to act in the name of Islam. Beyond the ideological, I will also discuss the pramtaic issues at hand with Turkish secularists' real and perceived concerns with the the emphasis of Arabic and Ottoman Turkish at the expense of other subjects in the educational system.

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The Historical Presence of Arabic in Turkish

There is no language in the modern world that has a higher religious connotation than Arabic has in Islam. Even those who possess no expertise in Islamic studies can sense the weight the language holds in religious matters. Jean-Benoit Nadeau, a French-Canadian author, comments briefly upon this in his book that narrates the historical rise of French as a lingua franca. "Francophones are not the only ones who cherish their language, but among international languages, their attitude is unique (except maybe for the case of classical Arabic, to which many Muslims attribute a sacred value)."[1] For Nadeau's purposes, he cites Arabic as the only other language that can possibly compete with French in the way that its language resonates with its speakers. For French speakers, their attachment derives from an abstract combination of culture and sense of higher sociopolitical status, whereas the value of Arabic is much more concrete. Its importance lies within the religion of those who speak it, more specifically it is the language that was used to send the word of God down to humankind, thus creating the Holy Qur'an. Although Nadeau does not specialize in the languages of the Middle East, he can appreciate the role of Arabic and how its status can rival that of French.

1.0 The Arabic Language

Before we delve into the role of Arabic within Turkish, we must first discuss the Arabic language itself. What is this language that carries such weight with Muslims? Kamarudin Salleh of the University Kebangsaan in Malaysia provides an excellent summary of Arabic and its relations to other languages of the region.

Arabic belongs to the Semitic language family, which is part of a wider Hamito-

Semitic family including, interalia also ancient Egyptian, within that family, it belongs

To the South Semitic or South-West Semitic branch, which includes two further subgroup;

South Arabian (comprising) ancient Sabaen, Mina'en, Katabanian, Hadramatia Ethiopia

(comprising) ancient Ethiopic or Ge'ez, Modern Tigne, Tigriyya, Amharic, Harari etc. On the

other hand, Arabic shares with North-West Semitic, Hebrew, Ugaritia and Aramaic. Arabic,

as the whole, stands between South (Proto-Semitic) and North-West Semitic which has

contact with both.[2]

Technically speaking, the Arabic language does not have an alphabet at all. Its writing system is more astutely referred to as an *abjad,* roughly translated as "consonantal alphabet."[3] An alphabet is a writing system where there is one symbol for each sound, whereas an *abjad* is a writing system that is distinguished predominantly by consonants where short vowels are not necessarily marked.[4] However, for the sake of clarity, I will still refer to the Arabic writing system for the purpose of this thesis as an alphabet.

Arabic is a language of morphological roots. Within the Arabic language is a complex system where each word has a three, sometimes four-consonantal root. Each root has a basic meaning. For example, the root ك-ت-ب has the basic meaning of writing. The root is then fixed within a certain pattern to create a more specified meaning. If one conforms the root ك-ت-ب to the اسم مكان pattern, we then create مكتب the word for desk, where one writes. This system of etymology is viewed by many Muslims as proof of Arabic's divine origin since no language practices this template-root system to same extent that Arabic does.

There were two forms of written Arabic that took form after the emergence of Islam: Kufic and Naskhi. The Kufic script, on the one hand, was sharp and angular, akin to the type of orthographies that were used to write on slabs of stone.[5] The Naskhi script, on the other hand, was more curvilinear and grew to dominate Arabic writings on paper. Modern Standard Arabic as we know it today is based off of the Naskhi tradition. Other calligraphic fonts of the Arabic alphabet developed

such as Nasta'liq, the most popular font of Persian calligraphy as well as Thuluth, which grew to dominate Ottoman calligraphy later.

1.1 Origins of the Arabic Writing System.

While the genetics of Arabic language seem fairly certain in their relation to other languages in the region, what has been more divisive among scholars has been the origins of the script.[3] There were disputes amongst Muslim scholars for centuries about which of the Arab tribes has used the script first, but the real academic cataclysm came when an Aramaic Nabataean link was proposed.[6] By the early 10th century BC, two well-formed, similar-looking alphabets were in existence, the Phoenician alphabet on the eastern Mediterranean and the Arabic Musnad alphabet of the Arabian Peninsula.[7] Some scholars would make the argument that the Phoenician alphabet had its origins in the Arabic Musnad alphabet, while others would argue the opposite, though the former seems more likely since the Minaean kingdom in Yemen was in control of areas in the eastern Mediterranean during the 9th century BC.

By the 3rd to 4th centuries BC the Aramaic script grew to dominate the Mesopotamian world. Also during that time emerged a shift to more cursive styles of writing. Some languages ignored this trend altogether, such as Hebrew, but others followed it. Some languages' scripts after their letters drastically for the sake of efficient connectivity such as Musnad in Yemen, while others such as the Nabataean script embraced full connectivity while keeping the majority of letter forms unchanged.[8] The earliest form of what we know as the modern Arabic script is known as al-Jazm, from which the Kufic and Naskhi fonts derive from.

1.2 Arabic as the Language of the Holy Qur'an

Since Arabic and Islam are so intricately intertwined, one must marvel at how the status of the Arabic language has not wavered, even amongst non-Arab Muslims. It is astounding how far

Islam has spread throughout the world without undergoing any major linguistic reform to accommodate non-Arab believers. Islamic madrasas from Kenya to Pakistan will teach recitation of the Qur'an in Arabic without incorporating any sort of substantial translation into the curriculum. The recitation of the Qur'an is not viewed as lacking or incomplete if the reciter does not understand Arabic because most believe that reciting back what God has given will grant you the greatest of blessings. This resilience speaks volumes of Arabic's strength and mystic appeal.

For Muslims, the Holy Qur'an is the literal word of Allah (God). It was recited to Mohammad by the archangel Gabriel and Mohammad in turn dictated his revelations to his followers on whatever materials were present at the time, be they papyrus or camel bones.[9] After the death of the Prophet, Caliph Abu Bakr began to realize the importance of having a cohesive, written version of the Qur'an, especially after many of the original reciters had died in battle. Thus Abu Bakr designated a scribe to collect the scattered, written revelations and the text was officially canonized under Uthman ibn Affan (644-656 CE). Ever since then the Qur'an has remained pretty much the same, with only ever so slight differentiation of the vocalization of certain words.

The steadfastness of the Qur'an and how its original language has been maintained and used in religious practices, despite the fact that spoken Arabic has undergone great change in the last 1400 years, is a stark contrast to the linguistic development of the Bible throughout the ages. The Bible was first written in Hebrew and Aramaic, then it was translated to Greek and later to Latin. In the Protestant tradition, the translation of the Bible into the vernaculars of Europe was seen as a positive step in the reform because now dissidents could bypass what they saw as a corrupt Catholic Church who controlled the word of God through the inaccessible language of Latin.[10] Differing languages were not seen as a great hindrance in Christianity in the same manner that they were in Islam.

2.0 Arabic and Islam in Regards to the Turks

In more recent times there has been a general agreement among historians that the conversion of the Turks to Islam was a gradual process that extended over several generations rather than the massive conversion that was originally surmised.[6] Scholars look to not only eastern Christian and Islamic authors during the Seljuk dynasty between the 11th and 14th centuries which openly discussed the question of the Seljuks' and their subjects' conversion to Islam, but also to western Christians' accounts of the Turkic peoples during the First Crusade.[11] Morton provides an example of how Western Crusaders were not directly concerned with the religion status of their foes, but their observations provide suggestive insight into the evolution of the Turkic cultural practices that were changing to accommodate Islam.

> Guibert (1055–1124), abbot of Nogent-sous-Coucy, described how, during the crusaders' siege of Antioch the papal legate, Adhemar of Le Puy (d. 1098), became concerned that the crusaders were finding it difficult in battle to differentiate friend from foe. The reason for this confusion was that many of the crusaders had stopped shaving and consequently were beginning to resemble their Turkish enemies…The suggestion here is that the Turkish warriors encountered by the crusaders could consistently be relied upon to be bearded. It might be added that Albert of Aachen (writing in the first decades of the twelfth century) similarly describes the Turks as bearded. This in itself is suggestive. Visitors to the steppe country in earlier decades...generally remarked that the Turks grew their moustaches but plucked out their beards.[12]

This anecdotal evidence demonstrates how it was original practice to not let their breads grow out, but by the time that Guibert had dealings with the Turkic peoples, they were growing their breads, as it is customary for men in Islamic culture.

2.1 Arabic in Turkish

Due to this sacred belief of maintaining the exact language of the Holy Qur'an, when Islam finally reached the Turks it wasn't Arabic making concessions for the new Turkish-speaking Muslims, rather it was the Turkish-speaking Muslims who had to conform to the language of their new religion. This is because within Islamic theology there is a notion that is often referred to as the inimitability of the Qur'an. It is the belief that the Qur'an cannot be copied or imitated, which has had a significant impact on how many Muslims view the Qur'an in translation. Many take the stance that the Qur'an in any language other than Arabic is not a true Qur'an, only a commentary.[13] Tafsir can be translated, but the Qur'an itself cannot.

However, Arabic's unwavering status did come at a price for Turkish. Its influence over Turkish was immense. Thousands of loanwords came into the language, creating a diglossic situation where the *H* variety used a substantial amount of Arabic vocabulary, while the *L* variety used the original Turkic words. It was nearly impossible to be literate in Ottoman Turkish unless one also had a strong familiarity with Arabic and Persian. Sarah G. Thomson from the University of Michigan cited a source that stated more than 80% of the vocabulary in written Ottoman Turkish was from Arabic and Persian.[7] Here are some example of Arabic loanwords.

hayat - حياة – *life*	**mektup** - مكتوب - *letter*
bina - بناء – *building*	**takvim** - تقويم – *calendar*
beyaz - أبيض – *white*	**taam** - طعام – *food*
sabah - صباح – *morning*	**kahve** - قهوة - *coffee*
kalem - قلم – *pen*	**kitap** - كتاب – *book*

Figure 1. Examples of Arabic lexicon with their Turkish counterparts.

In Turkish there is no [w], therefore Arabic loanwords that contained the و consonant changed to a [v]. Also loanwords that contained voiced bilabial [b] became the voiceless bilabial [p] upon entering Turkish.

2.2 Persian in Turkish

Persian plays an important role in this historical linguistic tale thanks to its role as the median language that transferred the Arabic alphabet to the Turks. "Since the Turks had received the Arabic alphabet through the Persians, it was necessary to take the letters "p, ç, j, and-g" which the Persian had added to the Arabic alphabet. Thus *"g"* and "ke" were written with the same Arabic symbol but were pronounced as either "ke, g, n, or y" in Turkish."[14]

For centuries Central Asia has been a sea of both Turkic and Persian languages, but because Persian remained the dominant literary language, the region was known as the Persianite world or *Iranshahr*.[15] Persian has influenced a variety of Turkic languages, not just Turkish. Tajik Persian had a strong influence on Uzbek and to a lesser extent on Oghuz-Uzbek, Kazakh and Kirghiz.[10] Turkmen and Khorasani Turkish, on the other hand, received most of their loanwords from standard literary Persian (Farsi).[16]

The firsts Turks to adopt Persian as the language of the royal court were the Ghaznavids and then Seljuks in the 11th century. Persian poetry and other forms of literature became the primary source of inspiration for Turkish literary tradition. This trend started with Baha'uddin, an Iranian poet who wrote a piece in Persian that consisted of 156 Turkish verses. Others such as Mir Ali Shir Nawai fostered literary circles that composed new Turkish literature based on the Persian template.[17] These efforts helped to solidify the role and prestige of Ottoman Turkish in Anatolia. The use of Perisan in Ottoman provided Turkish with strong sociopolitical status that indigenous Turkic languages were unable to achieve.

3.0 Stirrings of Doubt

As the Ottoman Empire hobbled from the late 19th century into the early 20th century, the empire's notion of nationalism underwent significant change. Because of the various internal and external struggles the state was facing (reforms, wars etc.), Turkish nationalists experimented with a several nationalisms from Ottomanism (Osmanlıcılık) to Turkism.

Ottomanism was the ideology of equality among the peoples of the empire regardless of which *millet* (religious community) to which they belonged. It was a type of nationalism that emphasized territory more so than ethnicity. It challenged the second-class status traditionally assigned to the Jewish and Christian subjects of the Ottoman Empire. "Ottomanism first emerged as a 19th century elitist multicultural project designed to avoid the break up the Empire."[18] The Ottomans hoped to used Ottomanism to appease the Balkan populations that were receiving (to varying degrees) support for their separatist goals from Europe and Russia.[19]

Turkism was an ideology that shifted national focus away from territory and placed more emphasis on a shared Turkish experience by the people. In the words of Ziya Gökalp, a nation was defined as "one composed of by individual who share a common language, religion, morality and aesthetics."[20] For Gökalp language was an especially large role in bolstering nationalism. "A Turk can only have only one language, only a single culture."[21] He differentiated culture (which he described as national) from civilization (which he deemed international or even global).[22] This, he explained, is why it was unrealistic to expect the Greeks, Armenians, Arabs, and other communities, each possessing their own distinct cultures, to unite under the single flag of Ottomanism.

3.1 Discourse about Linguistic Reform

There were ample linguistic reasons to question Arabic's efficiency in writing Turkish. Ottoman Turkish, as a hybrid of Arabic, Persian and Turkish, was contending with phonology, grammar, and etymology from the three different language families: Afro-Asiatic, Indo-European, and Altaic.[23] As such, the Semitic alphabet of Arabic has been argued to not fit the linguistic needs of Turkish.

> The Turks, attempting to preserve the Arabic form in writing, could not decide **on** a uniform spelling of Turkish words. Later they reduced the number of minor vowels, and started using more major vowels. But in **such** a situation every writer had his own system of spelling. This anomalous situation continued, giving rise to no complaints or discussions as long as

writing and reading remained a privilege of the educated class, and the government

disregarded its obligation to educate the people.[24]

When Ottoman Turkish was a language restricted to the elites of society, the ambiguities of adapting the Arabic alphabet to Turkish were not seen as a major problem. However, during the Tanzimat reforms between 1839-76, when the illiteracy of the population grew to be a sense of public concern, many scholars realized that Ottoman Turkish was not in a position to be readily learned and /or mastered by the illiterate masses.[25]

From this standpoint Turkish intellectuals agreed that at the very least their needed to be some sort of standardization of spelling. The first linguistic reformer to breach the subject was Munif Paşa, who in 1861 stated that "According to the present custom of placing minor vowels in writing, there are at least five ways to read every word. Even if we use the signs already existing in the Arabic alphabet it is not enough to attain the aim of overcoming the disadvantages."[26] Other attempts were made various intellectuals over the years. In 1863 the Azeri Turk Ahondzade Mirza Fethali presented a proposal to the Ottoman Scientific Society, but nothing became of it. The Iranian ambassador Melkon Han in 1869 had printed and sent to the newspapers a letter containing his reformed style. In 1895, Zehtvlzade Cemil of Baghdad submitted a plan to the Ministry of Education, but he too was unsuccessful. All of the scholars mentioned here were interested in reform, but their proposals were still at a level that focused on reform while still using the Arabic writing system.[27]

Ziya Gökalp described the dilemma of Ottoman Turkish as a language possessing irreconcilable differences between the spoken and written forms of the language. Gökalp stated in his writings that there were only two options in tackling this linguistic issue: either start speaking the written language or start writing the spoken language. He compared Ottoman Turkish with its grammatical and lexical uses of Arabic and Persian as a sort of artificial languages such as Esperanto that was impossible to speak since it utilized three different language structures.[20] Thus he asserted that the only solution could be the latter, to create a written form for the spoken language, the spoken

language that he romanticized as the folkloric language that had existed alongside Ottoman for centuries.

While the folkloric Turkish language had also been heavily influenced by Arabic and Persian, Gökalp argued that the use of Arabic and Persian here was far more systematic, where if a loanword came into the language and stuck, the previous Turkish word dropped fully, which he found more appealing than the jumble of Arabic, Persian and Turkish words that carried all the same meaning in Ottoman Turkish.[28]

Gökalp, despite him often being oversimplified as the father of rejecting all Persian and Arabic influence, was not a language purist that was obsessed with ridding every single piece of Arabic and Persian vocabulary. He understood that to be unrealistic. Rather his primary goal was to create a systematic Turkish that had already infused the Arabic and Persian items instinctively and naturally into the language, which he believed spoken Turkish had already achieved.

3.2 Setting the Stage

As the 20th century dawned, the issue of Ottoman Turkish went from linguistic to more political.[29] Turkism had taken root even before the demise of the empire, but now the Ottoman Sultan was gone and now Turkey needed to completely redefine itself from its predecessor. I mentioned Ottomanism and Turkism earlier, now another facet of nationalism that had entered the scene was Kemalism, which is traditionally hailed as the founding ideology of the modern Republic of Turkey, established by the republic's first leader, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. It is an extension of Turkism that emphasizes secularism, modernization, and Westernization.

> The particular phase of 'modernist nationalism, initiated by a group of military elites and led by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk during the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923, 'imagined' a new Turkish identity along Republican ideals of nationalism, positivism, secularism and the bourgeoisie.[30]

It would be Mustafa Kemal Atatürk who would tackle the issue of Ottoman Turkish head on and do what policy makers and linguists thought to be impossible, completely replaced the alphabet in a matter of months. This is the orthographical reform that will be discussed in the following chapter.

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The Change in Writing System and the De-emphasis of Arabic

1.0 Sociological Reasons to De-emphasize Arabic

The decaying Ottoman Empire was often referred to by many as the "sick man of Europe." Those in power understood that to keep up in this ever-changing world, they would have to adopt certain practices of their European neighbors. The Tanzimat reforms did not save the empire itself, since it collapsed with the onslaught of World War I, but it set the stage for modernizers such as Atatürk, who firmly believed that the only way to move forward was by looking west, not east. "In many ways, Atatürk and his followers, the Kemalists, were simply continuing an agenda that started during the Tanzimat Period.[1] Reformers not only sought out to purge Turkish of its Arabic influence, but to also link Turkish genetically to Western Indo-European languages, thus creating another linguistic dynamic of their Westernizing agenda.[2]

1.1 Fighting against Orientalist sentiments

Turkey, by nature of its geographical location, is situated where Europe ends and the Islamic world begins. Some view it as a part of Europe; some view it as a part of the Middle East. The question of specific linguistic influences in the Turkish language represents the larger, age-old identity crisis that Turkey has suffered from for the last few centuries. The question of which identity to promote, the Eastern one or the Western, has plagued Turkish policymakers from the Tanzimat period onwards.[3] This dichotomy between East and West has its roots in Orientalism and the negative images of the East that have resulted, a negative image that Atatürk was determined to prove wrong.

The contrast between the East and the West has enthralled sociologists and other scholars for hundreds of years.[4] By the 18th century this fascination with the world beyond Christendom grew into a recognized field of academia in both in Britain and France. Orientalism refers to the study of Eastern societies and cultures by Western writers. The Orient were illustrated as being everything the Occident were not: superstitious, backward and savage.

Numerous stereotypes about Turks and Islam emerged from Orientalism because of the supposed observations of European scholars. One of the personas that Western thinkers have perpetuated is the Muslim as the feral barbarian. Edward Said in his book *Orientalism* addresses the issue of underlying Western perceptions of the Middle East. In colonial times, the Europeans compared their own highly industrialized society with the seemingly primitive ways of the Orient and interpreted this technological gap as a reflection upon the individual Turk/Muslim's intelligence. "Orientals or Arabs are therefore shown to be gullible…their disordered minds fail to understand what the clever European grasps immediately."[5] The Orientals were the children and the Occidentals were the adults, and as adults, the Westerners had no moral dilemma, if not felt an obligation, in disrupting the lives of the Orient through colonialism.

Orientalists have depicted the Middle East as timeless, unmoving, backward, retrogressive, religious and superstitious, while the West was/is considered to be progressive, scientific and logical. Mainstream Europe thought the Orient were beast-like due to the writings and images shown to them by Westerner scholars who observed Turks and Muslims through a lens fogged with bias and prejudice.[6] Mozart's opera, *The Abduction from the Seraglio,* is a perfect example of the stereotypes associated with the Ottomans and Turks.

Although Turkey was not a direct victim of European colonization, they nevertheless felt the consequences of these predominant views against them. As the dominant dynasty in the Islamic world, for centuries the Ottoman empire had been the greatest "bogeyman" to Christian Europe.[7] This negative connotations led to Atatürk and many Turkish officials to believe that preserving their

Islamic identity, however precious to them, was not worth the heavy political and economic price, so they made steps to westernize themselves. Such opinions about Islam and the Orient continue to this very day, which is why EU has always been more adverse to accepting Turkey as one of its members meanwhile accepting various Balkan countries who are faring no better than Turkey in terms of their status as legitimate democracies or protection of human rights.

1.2 Arabic As a Stark Visual of Islam in Calligraphy

The previous chapter discussed how Arabic's role as the language of the Qu'ran made the language and alphabet inseparable from religion, an aspect of society that Atatürk wished to de-emphasize or at the very least redefine in a more mono-ethnic, mono-linguistic manner. Perhaps Arabic and its alphabet would not have been such a sociopolitical threat if it wasn't such a visual symbol of Islam through the art of calligraphy.

In Islam the maintenance of the language was vital, as was beautifying it. So much so that there came a point where the calligraphic letters soared off the pages of parchment and were also being carved onto marble, stone, and into gold. Islamic calligraphy reached nearly every corner of the Islamic world, from Muslim Spain to India. Unlike Chinese calligraphy, which allows personal interpretation and stylistic variation of the individual calligrapher, Arabic calligraphy is completely focused on measurement and precision. Each style is different, using spaces and forms that are based on a system of points. The relationship between these dots depended on which type of pen the calligrapher was using.[8]

There is a lot of debate over how much one should attribute the development of the calligraphic arts in the Islamic world with the religion's lack of tolerance for iconography. The coming of Islam was sensational because it was able to convert a population whose religion was primarily pagan in nature to this new, monotheistic religion. Given this sociocultural context, worshipping idols was seen as reverting back to heretical customs of the past and thus they were abolished. In

the same manner that idols were forbidden, so was creating any sort of picture-like image. Providing the believers with life-like images in the religious context was viewed as distracting from the worship of the one true God, a vestige from policies seen in the Byzantine territories that carried over when Islam took hold of the region.[9] Dr. Khawaja Muhammad Saeed is of this opinion, equating the use of the calligraphic arts in the Islamic context with the use saints' and martyrs' portraits in the Western, Christian context.

> Another branch of Moslem decorative art is that of ornamental writing, which is so often utilized with remarkable effect in the adornment of mosques, mausolea, and palaces, where whole chapters of the Koran are carved or inlaid round domes and minarets, doors and arches, testifying to the same religious earnestness, yet in a purely monotheistic spirit, as the pictures of saints and martyrs which decorate Christian churches.[10]

Islamic calligraphy is an art form that holds true to the monotheistic nature of Islam. In the absence of pictures and paintings the Muslims took an indirect, abstract approach that is nonetheless exquisite and awe-inspiring.

Then there are others who doubt the role of icon phobia in the mass use of Islamic calligraphy. İrvin Cemil Schick does not like to overemphasize icon phobia, and in many ways, he dismisses the notion all together.

> It is often said that calligraphy is the most quintessential Islamic of all Islamic arts, and this not because of some supposed Islamic icon phobia, but rather because of the intimate relationship between the Muslim faith and the written text.[11]

Schick takes the position that since there was already an undeniable relationship between Islam and the Arabic script, the development and successful prominence of the calligraphic arts was only a natural byproduct of that intimate relationship and it would have occurred even if iconic imagery wasn't discouraged. Schick finds the argument of icon phobia particularly weak since, at least in

the Turkish context, Islamic calligraphy has often been used not only to write simply messages, but also to create iconic images of animals and various other objects.

Gharipour is of a similar mindset to Schick. In his book he touches upon icon phobia in the Islamic context.

> This popularity of calligraphy is often attributed to the supposed icon phobia of Islam. Yet, while representations of animate objects have indeed been shunned in religious architecture, there is evidence that similar concerns were often raised about calligraphy as well. A treatise entitled Thimar al-maqasid fi dhikr al-masajid, written in the second half of the 15th century by Yusuf ibn Hasan ibn al-Mibrad, contains a chapter detailing the abhorrence of any decoration on a mosque that distracts one from prayer…[12]

Ibn Mibrad had two main arguments against the decoration of mosques. Firstly, that it would indeed disturb the faithful from praying, and secondly because the money used for such elaborate ornamentation could have gone to more worthy causes.   He was hardly alone in this respect. The fatwa office at the Ottoman Shaykh al-Islamate during the 19th century decreed that "any writing inscriptions upon places of worship was not licit."[13]

While Islamic calligraphy has been at the forefront of Islamic artistic innovation, it has not gone without its critics. This conflict arise from the debate of what does it truly mean to be an "icon." The common interpretation is that only life-like images are prohibited and thus calligraphy (and likewise images created out of calligraphy) have escaped this definition, but some take the position that not just images, but any ostentatious display has the power to distract the believers from praying. It is a delicate balance that Islam and many other religions have had to strike, creating a place of worship that rightly honors the deity in its splendor, yet remain true to the values of humility that most these religious endorse. In the end, however, whatever objections there was, they are overshadowed by the majority's wish to recreate the revelations in new and inventive ways,

whether, on parchment, walls, coins, or vases. "As calligraphy, it ranks highest among the arts and elicits the greatest emotional attention."[14]

This emotion attention derives from the beauty and elegance calligraphers have found in using writing for the highest spiritual purpose, to perpetuate the word on God. Islamic calligraphy provided the decorative themes for a variety of Islamic structures, and despite the fact that many Muslims were illiterate at the time, they were still able to appreciate its allure and mystic. "It act as reminders of the word of God, an affirmation of faith, allowing the memory and imagination of the person who sees it to supply the rest."[15]

Regardless of whether Islamic calligraphy truly developed because of or irrespective of the prohibition of depicting icons, it grew to be the more revered of the Islamic arts, a status that did nothing to help its case when Turkish officials were seeking to separate Islamic sentiment from their notion of nationalism and language.

2.0 The Letter Revolution and its Aftermath

With Arabic's irreconcilable link to Islam and the new Turkish Republic's sociopolitical desire to embrace what it perceived to be a modern civilization, the decision was finally made to change the Turkish language's writing system from the Perso-Arabic script to the Latin alphabet. The change was known in Turkish at the time as the *Harf Inkılabı* and later on as *Harf Devrimi.* Both translate in English to "the Letter Revolution."[16]

Atatürk announced his plans in July 1928 and went on to form *Dil Encümeni* (the Langauge Commission), the organization responsible for creating a Latin script that suited the true phonetic needs of the Turkish language. It was not enough to simply transcribe the preexisting Ottoman Turkish letters. The Language Commission originally sought to implement a five-year-plan that

would oversee a gradual linguistic transition. That did not bode well with Atatürk who instead revised the plan to be executed within three months. On 28 November 1928 the law was passed on under law number 1353, *the Law on the Adoption and Implementation of the Turkish Alphabet*.

> *Şimdiye kadar Türkçeyi yazmak için kullanılan Arap harfleri yerine Latin esasından alınan ve merbut cetvelde şekilleri gösterilen harfler (Türk harfleri) unvan ve hukuku ile kabul edilmiştir.*[17]

Atatürk was convinced that the Latin alphabet was the key to increasing literacy and that literacy was to be the foundations on which to create an educated population necessary for the type of modern republic he envisioned.

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).[18]

2.1 The Sun-Language Theory

Atatürk was not satisfied with changing the writing system. His ambition to remove Arabic's influence from Turkish ran much deeper than that. It was not enough to have Turkish break away from Arabic's influence; it was also necessary to prove linguistically that the relationship between the two languages had actually been the opposite, where Turkish had been the dominant language that had influenced Arabic.

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' (**Hakimiyet-i Milliye**, 4 Mar. 1933; Levend 1972: 430).*[19]

In addition to placing Turkish in a position linguistically superior to Arabic, strides were made to connect Turkish with the Indo-European Language, a move intended to place Turkish and Turkey linguistically and culturally closer to its European brethren.

> 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 *hi-* of *bicarbonate* and *bilingual* with the *bi* of *bile* 'together' and *binmek* 'to mount', and the prefix *ex-* with the *eks* of *eksik* 'lacking' and *ekşitmek'* to reduce'. Even more bizarre was his identification of Latin *ab* 'as in *abjure* and *abandon* (although the *ab* in the latter word is not in fact the Latin *ab)* with the first syllable of *abaki* 'scarecrow' and *abaci*, which he explained as 'kaşkarlıların ummacısı' (the Kashghars' bogyman),[13] the connection being that scarecrows and bogymen are frightening and turn birds and people *ab*, 'away'.[20]

These efforts to place the Turkish in a position of linguistic superiority to all other languages came to be known as the Güneş Dili Teorisi "Sun-Language Theory" This theory was interested in only the origins of languages, not the further development of them.[21] With this theory Atatürk was able to deny Arabic's influence altogether. In 1936 he wrote a variety of articles claiming the Turkish roots of Arabic loanwords.

> 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...1994...[22]

The Sun-Language Theory was also beneficial for Ataturk because, while efforts were still made to decrease the number of Arabic loanwords, it made the presence of a smaller portion of Arabic words more tolerable since they could claim that they were of Turkic origin anyway.

3.0 Marginalization of Arabic From Religion Life

Certainly Atatürk's desire to purge Arabic from Turkish life did not stop at the national language itself, but he also sought to change the way Turks practiced Islam itself. One of the ways in which he attempted to do this was by changing the call to prayer from Arabic to Turkish.

3.1 Call to Prayer in Turkish

President Atatürk began a series of secularizing and modernizing campaigns that ranged from removing Islamic law from the constitution to the switch of the Turkish language from the Arabic script to the Latin alphabet. Atatürk turns his sights towards Islam in hopes of unifying his nation through religion, but in a way that emphasized national loyalty as opposed to a shared past with the Arabs. On 21 November 1932, an official mandate was announced by the Directorate of Religious Affairs to all the mosques in Turkey that the call to prayer was to be performed in Turkish as opposed to its original Arabic, though this could not happen at once all over the country since the muezzins needed some time to master the new Turkish version.[23]

The call to prayer was thusly conducted in Turkish for the next 17 years. Below is the call to prayer as it was in Arabic and Turkish with an English translation, provided by Eve McPherson.[24]

Arabic Text	Turkish Text	English Translation
Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar	*Tanrı uludur, Tanrı uludur*	God is great, God is great.
Ashhadu an lā ilāha illā llāh	*Suphesiz bilirim, bildiririm: Tanrı'dan baska yoktur tapacak*	I testify that there is no god but God.

Ashhadu anna Muhammadan rasūl Allah	*Suphesiz bilirim, bildiririm: Tanrı'nın elcisidir Muhammed*	I testify that Muhammed is the prophet of God.
Hayya 'alā 'l-salāt	*Haydin namaza*	Come to prayer.
Hayya 'alā 'l-falāh	*Haydin felaha*	Come to salvation.
al-Salāt khayrun min al-nawm	*Namaz uykudan hayırlıdır*	Prayer is better than sleep.
Allāhu akbar, Allāhu akbar	*Tanrı uludur, Tanrı uludur*	God is great, God is great.
Lā ilahā illā llāh	*Tanrı'dan baska yoktur tapacak*	There is no god but God.

Figure Two: Call to Prayer in Arabic and Turkish with English translation

Those who supported the translation from Arabic to Turkish justified it by saying that since the call to prayer did not originate directly from the Prophet Mohammad, it was therefore open to linguistic change.[25] However, the public's reaction to the Turkish call to prayer was not altogether a positive one. It was considered by many one of the worst of the secularizing campaigns; consequently, civil disobedience ensued, protesting the change not long after it was implemented.[26]

As early as 1933 Topal Halil performed the call to prayer in Arabic at the Bursa Ulu Mosque, only to climb back down the minaret with the police waiting for him.[27] In response to his arrest protesters marched into the streets of Bursa. Atatürk immediately traveled to Bursa upon hearing news about the rebellion. By the end of it all, Atatürk had fired the local religious administrative head, the attorney general, and the justice of the peace. Nearly twenty individuals involved in the ordeal received prison sentences.

By 1941 after this protest and many others like it, legislation was passed that completely banned the recitation of Arabic. "Those …who recite the call to prayer…in Arabic are to be punished with up to three months in prison without hard labor or with a fine between 10 and 200 lira"[28]

This anti-Turkish recitation sentiment only grew as time wore on. On February 4, 1949 numerous recitations of Arabic took place simultaneously all over Turkey, one at a soccer match, one at a cinema, etc., but by 1950 the original Arabic call to prayer was officially reinstated.   This coincided with Atatürk's party, *Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi,* losing power to the *Demokrat Parti,* putting an end to the program to Turkicize the call to prayer.[29]

Given Atatürk's encompassing agenda of secularism and marginalization of Islam, changing the call to prayer in Turkey from Arabic to Turkish was not quite a religious or linguistic reform in the sense one might imagine, but rather was an effort to secularize the religion. Atatürk tried in many ways to push Islam out of public life, and the change in the language was seen by many as not so much a reform, but rather a stripping of Islam's sacred core. A millennia of maintaining the value of Classical Arabic was not going to be swept away by one modernizer's ambition.

3.2 Conclusion

It is worth reiterating the fact that the majority of the Turkish population was illiterate and thus they were not heavily influenced by the change in orthography, '*Harf Devrimi*,' nearly as much as they were impacted by the language purification movement, the '*Dil Devrimi*,' The issue of orthography was a debate reserved for the elites who had a certain desired image to uphold in an international community.

Atatürk was undoubtedly successful in making his orthographical and lexical reforms on the Turkish language stick, but he was far less successful when he tried to touch the sacred religious practice of the call to prayer. Islam and thus Arabic by association were not going to be completely removed from Turkish public life. Overall the Turkish people were willing to give up Arabic and Persian's direct influence over every day Turkish language, but any language that was used as a part of religious practice was not to be touched and should remain in Arabic.

While the Turkish people guarded the sacredness of Arabic in religious life, they did not put up a great deal of resistance to the Turkificaiton of daily language. As mentioned in the introduction

to this thesis, some new Turkified words were incorporated completely into modern Turkish easily, while some lexical items were not able to gain any ground in common Turkish speech at all. The new Turkish word '*us*' meaning 'wisdom' is hardly ever used in comparison to the Arabic loanword '*akıl*,' though derivatives of the Turkic form such as *'uslu'* are used more often. The pattern in which the new Turkified words were unconsciously accepted or rejected provides a lexical treasure trove of study for both linguists and linguistic anthropologists.

The *Harf Devrimi* was an immediate action, while the *Dil Devrimi* of modern Turkish was more gradual. Both were considered important steps in revitalization Turkish for a modern state. Now that a century has passed, there are sectors within the Turkish political elite who no longer view the Ottoman/Islamic past of Turkish with a sense of disdain, but rather with a sense of longing, to the point that the Ottoman Turksih and Arabic language have been suggested to come back into Turkish education, much to the chagrin of strict Kemalists, as we shall see in Chapters four and five.

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Ottoman Turkish in Modern Turkish Society

1.0 Status of Ottoman Turkish Now

Naturally there were opposition to Atatürk's language reform, but given the clear reality that Latin-script Turkish has been able to penetrate mainstream Turkish society and maintain its official status for the last near-century, that opposition never able to gain momentum beyond its small circles.[1]

1.1 Shift in Cultural and Social Relevancy?

Currently Ottoman Turkish is offered at the university level of education in Turkey, however, within the last few years there has been talk about what the status of Ottoman Turkish should be in the Turkish educational system, whether it should be required or merely offered as an elective. As of the 2013-2014 academic year, Ottoman Turkish has been deemed a required class for social studies highs schools and an elective for other types of secondary schools.[2] This fierce debate is influenced by the sociological and sociolinguistic baggage that Ottoman Turkish carries as a symbol of the Ottoman Empire and as a symbol of a more traditional streak of Islamic-Turkish nationalism.

2.0 Societal Perceptions of Ottoman Turkish

While changing the alphabet was a drastic and sudden change, the removal of Arabic and Persian loanwords was a more gradual process. Thanks to the Sun Language Theory discussed in the previous chapter, the fervor of linguistic purists to remove all components of Arabic and Persian died down in the 1930s, though there was another surge of Turkish linguistic purism in the 1940s that was induced by Atatürk's successor, Ismet Inönü.[3] This second attempt at Turkish purism was less about creating new Turkish words, "but rather on attempting to persuade the people to adopt those neologisms previously developed by the Language Society."[4]

This explains why Turks of the younger generations will cite difficulty in reading Turkish documents from the 40s and 50s, even though it was by then written in the Latin alphabet, due to the use of Arabic and Persian vocabulary that has since been reduced to lexical anachronisms.

2.1 Perceptions of More "Perso-Arabized" Turkish

Ottoman Turkish is no longer in actual use in Turkey, but since the change occurred barely a century ago, there are what one might call a variety of Turkish languages out there that will vary on the extent of the Persian-Arabic vocabulary used. These differences in lexicon can be generational and they can potentially give insight into an individual' sociocultural standing.

Doğan Cüceloğlu of Boğaziçi University once was teaching a psychology course at Hacettepe University where he invited a guest speaker to lecture on the history of Turkish psychology. This was in 1973, not even century after the alphabet was switched from Arabic to Latin.

> After the lecture, D.C. asked his students whether or not they had enjoyed it and found it interesting. To his surprise, the students' comments were not about the lecture, but the lecturer. Most of them identified him as a political rightist, most probably not a supporter of the social reforms of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk...[5]

These observations prompted D.C to launch a fully study on the issue regarding the perceptions of Turks' lexical usage. His results were the following:

> As a result of the Turkish language reform, modern Turkish spans a range of styles from traditional (TT) to reformed (RT). This range has political implications, in that TT is preferred by right-wing, traditionalist, and religious sectors of the population, and RT is preferred by left-wing, modernist, and secular sectors…choice of terminology communicates important messages about political and social ideology of the speaker; and these messages will be interpreted differently based on the basis of the political and social   ideology of the listener.[6]

I myself have been subjected to these perceptions as well. Since I studied Arabic before I studied Turkish, my idiolect of Turkish is quite "Arabized" where I will almost always opt for the Arabic loanword over the Turkish equivalent as long as it is linguistically appropriate for me to do so. I also tend to use phrases such as "selamün aleyküm" quite frequently because they are used so often in speaking Arabic. For many Turks this can be quite jarring since they tend to interpret more usage of Arabic as indicative of a personal affinity to tradition and/or religion, which makes no sense for me as a non-Muslim foreigner.

2.2 Ottoman Turkish As an Extension of Arabic's Sacredness

As touched up in Chapter One, Ottoman Turkish can to varying degrees play on Turkish religious sentiments. Even though the language is not Arabic itself, the use of that alphabet evokes a centuries-old reverence for the writing system used to document the word of God. Arabic enjoyed the highest level of sociopolitical status, causing many languages, such as Persian, to adopt the alphabet as their own.

So high is the reverence for the Arabic alphabet that some Islamic scholars have argued for the linguistic superiority of Arabic. This is not a new concept that suddenly appeared during the Pan-Arabism of the twentieth century. Author and Mu'tazili theologian Al-Jahiz possessed the same ideals in the 8th and 9th centuries. In his piece *A Rich Concept of Arabic*, Jamal el-Attar of the University of Edinburgh reiterates the opinions that were held by Al-Jahiz. The Mu-tazili theologian took the superiority of the Arabic language a little farther and claimed that Arabs and Arab society as a whole was superior to others. "Owing to the superior feature of Arabic, the Arabs were elevated to a distinguished literary and socio-moral status among nations."[7] According to al-Jahiz, Arabic was the chosen language of God for his message. Other languages could not have carried God's message to mankind. What is interesting in al-Jahiz's position on Arabic was not only the linguistic aspects of the language, but also the implied "socio-moral dimensions."

By having the Qur'an revealed to the Arabs, in Arabic, al-Jahiz saw the Arabs as superior in three ways: (1) they had proven themselves worthy of being the world's first Islamic nation, (2) the Arabs had been bestowed the duty of spreading the message of the true religion, 3) As the Qur'an was given to humanity in Arabic, the Arabs were God's direct recipients.[8]

For the basis of this superiority, many Muslims turn to verses within the Qur'an itself.

"We verily, have made it a Quran in Arabic, that you may be able to understand, its meanings and its admonitions" (Q. 43: 3)

"Verily, We have sent it down as an Arabic Quran in order that you may understand" (Q. 12:2)

There are two ways to interpret passages such as these: (1) It can be interpreted that the Qur'an was sent down in Arabic specifically because Arabic was the only language that had the capacity to express God's divine and complicated message or (2) It was sent down in Arabic specifically because that was the language of the given people at that time, so they could understand what God wished to tell them. Those who believe in Arabic's superiority tend to believe the former, while pragmatists tend to side with the latter.

Given this sort of rhetoric around Arabic and the usage of its alphabet along with such a high frequency of loanwords, it is quite difficult for many to separate Ottoman Turkish from Arabic in terms of appealing to religious sensibilities.

2.3 Ottoman Turkish as a Link to Cultural Heritage

While some view Ottoman Turkish as a connection to Turk's Islamic identity, others view it primarily as a symbol of Turkey's cultural heritage. As early as the 1940s Turks were citing concern about the abrupt severing from centuries of history.

In 1950, Turkey's present foreign minister, Professor Fuad Koprülü, is reported to have expressed concern at the break in the continuity of the development of Turkish civilization

because the new script and language reform was alienating the younger generation from its religious and literary heritage.[9]

This concern is still present today, perhaps even more so as time goes on and less and less Arabic/Persian lexicon is in use.

It is no secret why Atatürk sought to de-emphasize the empire he had just overthrown. "It [the language reform] sought to obliterate a recent past too complicated, complex, and heterogeneous to deal with and evoke a distant past whose glorious resurrection would be achieved by the reclamation of a lost tongue."[10] However, in modern times as Turkey's Ottoman past slips farther and farther away, Ottoman Turkish is viewed less in some sectors of society as a language of despotism and more as a rich piece of heritage that has yet to be fully tapped into and appreciated. Some are resentful of what they consider to be the downright oppression of their linguistic heritage. "This opposition may manifest itself either because such individuals revere the Arabic and Persian languages as part of Islamic tradition or because they desire to maintain a connection with their Ottoman roots."[11]

Beyrettin Yazan conducted a study on how Facebook has been utilized by Turks who wish to study and maintain Ottoman Turkish. He concedes that "talking about language is ideological in essence, no matter who does the talking,"[12] immediately acknowledging language as a tool that can be in aid of wider-encompassing ideologies.

From his study he was able to organize his subjects into three primary groups: those who wish to teach Ottoman Turkish and provide instructional resources, those who wish to promote the preservation of Ottoman Turkish, and those who wish to profess their passion for Ottoman Turkish. In the midst of all the Ottoman Turkish's resources that were being shared amongst Facebook users, a main theme within the Facebook postings was a call for political activism. Several individuals would encourage other members to write to the Prime Minister's office demanding Ottoman Turkish be incorporated as an elective in high school curriculum.[13]

3.0 Moves to Bring Ottoman Turkish Back into Education

Turkish scholars have linked this revitalization of the Ottoman Turkish movement with the rhetoric of AKP. This has been argued in light of AKP's transition from their agenda of appeasing Europe's demands for a transparent, functioning democracy in hopes of gaining membership to the EU to a re-focusing on the Islamic portion of Turkey's national identity.

> OT does not enjoy any official role or status in governmental or legal spheres in present-day Turkey. However, this fact has not impeded the growing momentum of the language, especially in the last decade or so, under the Justice and Development Party (AK Parti) administration, which is often characterized as a bastion of neo-Ottomanism.[14]

Neo-Ottomanism has predominantly been used to describe the foreign policy changes AKP has made in terms of engaging with the Arab nations that were once a part of the Ottoman Empire, but the term has also be utilized within recent years to describe the phenomenon of domestic policies now sporting a more Islamic streak, and that undoubtedly has included perceptions regarding Ottoman Turkish.

The idea of bringing Ottoman Turkish back into more mainstream Turkish society, even purely at an educational level, is wrought with debate. As I mentioned in Chapter One, many feathers were ruffled by the president's bold statements in December 2014 to enforce the teaching of Ottoman Turkish in secondary schools. He has referred Atatürk's decision to move from Ottoman to a more vernacular, Latinized Turkish as "equal to the severing of our jugular veins."[15] His remarks at the time fanned the flames of a debate that had begun the prior week with the National Education Council's proposal to offer Ottoman Turkish as a required language course in religious schools and an elective in secular high schools.

3.1 Critics of Ottoman Turkish in secondary schools

Many have criticized the President's words on both ideological and logistical grounds. Eğitim-İş Union Secretary General Önder Yılmaz was reported to have said that Ottoman Turkish

would not be a practical subject for students of the science-focused high schools and thus the language should be demanded of them.[16] Professor Mustafa Safran of Gazi University's Education Faculty has said that there are not enough Ottoman-language specialists in Turkey's educational inventory to fulfill such an ambitious undertaking.[17] Historian Professor İlber Ortaylı has echoed this concern for lack of supply. He has gone on to say that not even the graduates of the İmam-Hatip schools are able to learn Arabic, so "how could they go on to teach Ottoman in high school?"[17] Nursuna Memecan, the Sivas deputy of AKP has voiced his opinion that Ottoman should be introduced, but only as an elective course. "I cannot understand how this course would contribute to our next generation's race to keep up with the advancing technology in the world."[18]

Those who criticize a more wide-spread re-introduction of Ottoman Turkish do not view the matter as a single, stand-alone phenomenon with the begin intention of preserving cultural heritage. They view is a wider-encompassing push to place more emphasis on religious teachings than what some might consider more practical subjects. Again, we see a "slippery slope" mindset that Ottoman Turkish would be the beginning of a less desirable educational policy.

> As with other slippery slopes, the danger of a political momentum slippery slope creates a social inefficiency: the socially optimal outcome might be A, but it might be unattainable because some people who support A in principle might oppose it for fear that it will lead, through political momentum, to B.[19]

Ayşe Karvan is the mother of two students enrolled at the Behçet Kemal Çağlar High School in Istanbul. She is less than pleased with the president's push to insert Ottoman Turkish into their schools. "The education system is in shambles, but instead of introducing real reforms, the government is pushing through irrelevant backward subjects that do nothing more than brainwash children with their ideologies."[20] From her standpoint, the educational system in Turkey is in dire need of reform and efforts should not be wasted on foolhardy sentiments of religion or heritage.

3.2 Conclusion

From the linguistic lovers on Facebook to the distraught parents worried for their children's economic viability, Ottoman Turkish is a language that can fire up emotions quickly, both positive and negative. Sentiments regarding Ottoman Turkish fall all over the spectrum. One the one hand, it has no practical value in Turkish society today, especially for those who prefer the STEM subjects to social studies. One the other hand, it inspires feelings regarding Turkey's past that can either be seen as benign or malevolent. The following quote from Jale Parla's article, "*The Wounded Tongue Turkish Language Reform and the Canonity of the Novel,*" explains the dichotomy quite cleverly with a linguistic pun.

> A column devoted to language issues in the Radikal, a highbrow daily newspaper, has the title "Dil Yaresi," a play on the word dil, which means "heart" in Ottoman Turkish and "tongue" in modern, purified Turkish. The expression dil yaresi, therefore, means both "the wounded heart" and "the wounded tongue," pointing to the ongoing controversy around an unsettled language still vulnerable to disputes regarding its vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. The controversy is rooted in the linguistic schism between the new Turkish, which was implemented as one of the major reforms in the early years of the Turkish republic, and Ottoman Turkish, with its vocabulary of Arabic and Persian origins.[21]

Ottoman Turkish was considered by many in the 19th century to be inauthentic by the enormous influence of Arabic and Persian that had taken hold of the court language. Yet since the language reform's inception there are those who view the drastic, forcible "purification" process of the 1930s onwards as inauthentic in and of itself, creating an environment consumed by both passionate defense and passionate defamation of Ottoman Turkish.

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Chapter Five

Arabic in Modern Turkish Society

Since Ottoman Turkish maintains a controversial position to this day, the Arabic language suffers from the sane controversy, perhaps even to a greater degree as the language of the Holy Qur'an. Arabic carries a peculiar position in Turkey, along with other non-Arab, Muslim majority countries. It is without doubt a foreign import, but its relation to religion allows it to be accepted by its adopters and sometimes it was even given greater sociopolitical status because of it. Some have gone so far as to justify the linguistic superiority of Arabic through its sacredness. While that idea was mostly squashed in the Turkish context, thanks to the efforts of Atatürk to redefine Turkish nationalism via ethnic rather than religious identity, bringing Arabic back into more mainstream Turkish society has been met with raised eyebrows and questions about AKP's intent for the direction that they are taking Turkey.

1.0 Arabic as the Language of the Qur'an

As mentioned in Chapter 4, Ottoman Turkish gleans both some of its promoters and critics by using the Arabic alphabet, an alphabet that is viewed as sacred since it was used to depict the words spoken to Mohammad by the angel Gabriel. To understand the way that Arabic has been able to maintain its prestigious status in non-Arab, Islamic communities, one must understand the Islamic philosophies regarding the translation of the Qur'an as well as the divinity that is believed to make Arabic somehow linguistically superior.

1.1 The Qur'an and the Notion of Translation

Translation is a human endeavor, and as such, it is open to the possibility of human error. This is why so many Islamic scholars feel that translating the word of God cannot be done, especially when Arab scholars themselves dispute some meanings of the Qur'an even in its original Arabic. Dr. Abdel Elsaie affirms in his book, *Please Revise the Bible, Again*, that since there has not been a

translation of the Qur'an that has been divinely inspired, it therefore cannot substitute the Qur'an in its original Arabic.

> The translated Quran is not a substitute for the original Arabic Quran. It is only an attempt to help those who are trying to learn to read the Arabic text, since it is as close to the written text as possible. Translating the meanings of whole Quran is a tremendous task. The Arabic language of the Quran is like an intimate symphony, the very sounds of which move people to tears and ecstasy. The rhetoric and rhythm of the Arabic of the Quran are so characteristic, so powerful, and so highly touching that any human translation is bound to be an imperfect copy of the glittering splendor and the radiant beauty of the original text.[1]

Elsaie explains that the translation of the Qur'an into European languages was an idea that was proposed only for the sake of defending Islam against the Christians' deeply prejudiced assumptions. Given Islam's fluctuating relationship with Christianity throughout the ages, Muslims are quite right to be wary of the translated Qur'an, particularly if the translators themselves are not Muslim. The first translation of the Qur'an into English was made by a British scholar during the twelfth century, Robert of Ketton.[2] In 1143 the translation was finished and it contained numerous inaccuracies, confusions and misunderstandings. Its hostile commentary no doubt correlated to the sensibilities of the time period. It was developed with the historical backdrop of the Crusades, just two years before the second expedition headed by Louis VII, 1145-47.

1.2 Arabic's Perceived Linguistic Superiority

Misrepresentation of the Qur'an is a completely legitimate concern of Muslims who feel the message of their religion might be distorted, whether intentionally or not. However, what has happened within many Islamic circles is that because Arabic was the language that the Qur'an was recited in by Gabriel to Mohammad, it is innately more beautiful, more eloquent, and simply better than any other language on this earth.

Where does this point of view manifest itself today? In the Yemen Observer, there was an article written in 2005 by Zaid Al-Alaya named "The Arabic Language, the Root of all Languages." Here he describes Arabic's superiority over others by citing its numerous features, such as the template roots of words, and how idioms of few words can express complex ideas, while in other languages several phrases or sentences must be used. "In contrast with Arabic words, the words of those languages appear lame, maimed, blind, deaf and leprous, and entirely bereft of a natural pattern. The vocabulary of those languages is not rich in roots, which is a necessary characteristic of a perfect language."[3] Here is the disconnect, where Arabic has become not only the language of religious importance, but a language that shines above all others by default.

This was a newspaper article, and therefore lacked the length to provide meaningful evidence to support what the author claimed, but there are others of scholarly background who also believe in Arabic's innate superiority. This is not a new concept that suddenly appeared during the Pan-Arabism of the twentieth century; this mentality has been in existence since the earliest centuries of Islam's emergence. Author and Mu'tazili theologian Al-Jahiz possessed the same ideals in the 8th and 9th centuries. In his piece *A Rich Concept of Arabic*, Jamal el-Attar of the University of Edinburgh reiterates the opinions that were held by Al-Jahiz. The Mu-tazili theologian took the superiority of the Arabic language a little farther and claimed that Arabs and Arab society as a whole was superior to others. "Owing to the superior feature of Arabic, the Arabs were elevated to a distinguished literary and socio-moral status among nations."[4] According to al-Jahiz, Arabic was the chosen language of God for his message. Other languages such as English or Latin could not have carried God's message to mankind. What is interesting in al-Jahiz's position on Arabic was not only the linguistic aspects of the language, but also the implied "socio-moral dimensions."[5] By having the Qur'an revealed to the Arabs, in Arabic, al-Jahiz saw the Arabs as superior in three ways: 1) they had proven themselves worthy of being the world's first Islamic nation, 2) the Arabs had been

bestowed the duty of spreading the message of the true religion, 3) As the Qur'an was given to humanity in Arabic, the Arabs were God's direct recipients.[6]

Another explanation of Arabic's superiority and the Qur'an's inimitability is in the Holy Book's literary form. In his article *The Quran's Unique Literary Form*, the widely known public speaker and lecturer Hamza Andreas Tzortzis discusses how the Qur'an is neither prose, nor poetry, but is written in a rhymed prose that is unique unto itself. He goes on to explain the difference between Arabic poetry and prose and how the Qur'an is indeed divinely inspired since no one before had ever used such a literary form.

> "This is because the natural capacity of the text producer, or author, is able to produce the known literary forms in the Arabic language. The development of an entirely unique literary form is beyond the scope of the productive nature any author, hence a supernatural entity, God, is the only sufficient comprehensive explanation."[7]

I do not claim that the Qur'an was not of divine origin and was not transmitted to Mohammad through an angel, but since the message is divine, many have chosen to label the language itself divine as well, leaving a great disparity between Arabic and other languages. Many Muslims quote this verse to justify Qur'anic Arabic elevated status.

> **"If you are in doubt of what We have revealed to Our messenger, then produce one chapter like it. Call upon all your helpers, besides Allah, if you are truthful" (Q. 2:23)**

Since the message and the language are not differentiated, we are left with the mentality harbored by many that Islam chose Arabic, rather than Arabic chose Islam.

Joseph A. Islam, a scholar of Islamic tradition and Islamic jurisprudence, takes a more relaxed view of the Arabic language. He is one who interprets Surah No. 43:3 more literally, that the Qur'an's language was intended to suit the audience's specific linguistic need as opposed to suiting God's need. He is of the mind that "even though the final message was intended to be a timeless document for all mankind, its primary deliverance was in Arabic so that the Prophet could warn his

own mother town and the immediate towns around him."[8]   To advance his argument he brings this verse to our attention.

"And We did not send any messenger but with the language of his people, so that he might explain to them clearly; then God makes whom He pleases err and He guides whom He pleases and He is the Mighty, the Wise" (Q. 14:04)

God's message in regard to the Arabic language is evident through this passage. Arabic was used as a tool to have the Qur'an received so that the people clearly understood it. If the prophet preached his message to them with utmost clarity, then there was no reason left to deny it. This was no different for any of the messengers before Mohammad. Jesus was said to have spoken in Aramaic. Does his lack of the Arabic language make him any less of a prophet? I would think not, since Islam view Jesus as a figure of true spirituality.   All the prophets brought the message of God in the languages of their own people. Arabic is not different is this respect. Another verse is brought to our attention.

"And of His signs is the creation of the Heavens and the Earth, and the difference of your languages and colours. Indeed! herein indeed are signs for men of knowledge" (Q. 30:02)

From this passage it is implied that the differing languages of the world, like the forces of nature, are signs of God's intended creation. One must raise the question that, if Arabic is truly the king of all languages and is the language of the Heavens, then why would God bother with other tongues at all? Other languages were created by God and the variety amongst them is evidence for his existence.

While, I disagree with Joseph Islam when he criticizes the idea that extensive knowledge of Arabic is not required to understand the Qur'an (it very much is a necessity, and Islamic jurisprudence should never be done in a language other than Arabic), but I do agree that some had taken a step too far in declaring Arabic as the lord of all languages. There is no doubt that Arabic is crucial for

religious purposes, but its relationship with Islam should not be exaggerated at the expense of other languages.

This idea of Arabic's linguistic superiority has died down in recent times, but that still does not jeopardize the maintenance of Arabic's sacred status in Turkey and other Islamic countries, a sacredness that can either be perceived positively or negatively, depending upon one's personal wish to see religious life move into more mainstream society.

2.0 Moves to Promote Arabic in Turkey

As with Ottoman Turkish, Arabic and its importance to cultural and religious heritage is has been highlighted in recent years by the Turkish government, specifically by AKP. In addition to those ideals, however, there is a pocket of Turkish society that can see Arabic as worthy language to know in the modern world.

2.1 The Syrian Refugee Crisis

What makes Arabic extremely vital is the situation of the Syrian refugee crisis. The migrant crisis has its roots in the deterioration of the political and security situation in Syria in 2011. With the civil war against Bashar Al-Asad's regime and the rising power of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), millions of Syrians have been forced to flee their homes to escape the violence. There are approximately 4.5 million refugees outside of Syria and another 6.5 million displaced within Syria. Europe has had to cope with approximately 10% of the entire refugee population trying to cross its borders. Turkey, given the nature of its geographical position, is their main gateway into Europe, currently harboring over 3 million refugees.[9] While some Syrians refugees are trekking the longer journey through North Africa in hopes of reaching Spain via Morocco or Italy via Libya, the majority of refugees travel through Turkey in hopes of smuggling themselves to Greece and from there making yet another journey into northern Europe.

The language barrier between Syrian Arabs and Turks entails countless problems. With so many Syrian refugees in Turkey, the need for Arabic seems obvious, yet there currently are not nearly enough Turkish teachers who speak Arabic.

> Even if qualified Turkish teachers were assigned to camp schools, they would not be able to teach in Arabic, the language spoken by refugee children and their parents. One of the principal challenges for refugees and the Turkish authorities alike has been the lack of Syrians who speak Turkish, and Turks who speak Arabic.[10]

Clearly Arabic is needed to tackle this humanitarian crisis. The worsening situation in Syria means that it is less and less likely that the Syrian refugees will return to Syria anytime in the foreseeable future. That combined with the ever increasing restrictions of travel to Europe implies that these refugees will remain in Turkey for quite some time, enough so that it is worth investing in the education of Arabic to help Turkey have all the tools necessary to deal with this huge minority that they now have.

3.0 Resistance to Arabic

Despite the many economic and political benefits of Arabic, debate has arisen over the introduction of Arabic as an elective language in Turkish primary education. As mentioned in Chapter One, Arabic is now offered in the 2016-17 year as an elective language for students in the second grade upwards. MP Aylin Nazliaka formerly of CHP, purged from the ranks via disciplinary actions, had this to say about the emergence of Arabic in Turkish schools.

> If the goal was truly to preserve our historic and cultural heritage, we wouldn't have opposed it. But what they want is to assassinate secularism. Of course our children can choose to learn Arabic. But we are loading Arabic on a child who has just learned how to read and write. It is categorized as 'selective.' If children don't elect that course, they will come under pressure and be noted. Turkey's education system has two problems: the

curriculum and the system. Under AKP rule, the educational system has been constantly tampered with. The system was changed 11 times and the minister five times.[11]

In Nazliaka's opinion, the instruction of more Arabic courses is a direct affront on the very ideals of secularism. She is skeptical that Arabic will have the same status as the other elective languages. She fears that children will be pressured to take Arabic and then face discrimination should they refuse.

Eğitim-Sen (The Education and Science Workers' Union) issued a written statement that "the sole motivator of this passion for Arabic is to make children read religious books."[10] The union, which has approximately 170,000 members, is also unable to disassociate Arabic from its religion origins.[12] For these opponents, Arabic is not simply another foreign language to enhance a Turk's socioeconomic mobility, rather it is tool that they feel is being used to groom a more "pious generation."

Melis Alphan of the *Hürriyet* newspaper also starkly criticized Arabic. She lists the various ill of the Turkish educational system and feels it is impractical to introduce Qur'anic Arabic at this time.

> *It is hard to imagine that the mentality that introduced Arabic into the curriculum will bring us to the future when we cannot even teach the global language of English.[13]*

Alphan feels about Arabic the same negative sentiments that Ayşe Karvan mentioned in Chapter Four feels about Ottoman Turkish. Both agree that the Turkish educational system has far more pressing matters to attend to that the government should be wasting valuable time and resources to promote either Arabic or Ottoman Turkish.

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1   Original Turkish quote: *İşte bu çağda, daha biz dünya dili İngilizceyi öğretemezken müfredata Arapçayı sokan zihniyetin bizi geleceğe taşımasını hayal etmek bile zor.*

Modern Arabic to accommodate the reality of the Syrian refugee crisis may have pragmatic uses in modern Turkey, but the educational emphasis on Qur'anic Arabic to fuel the political propaganda of authoritative politicians is what has secularist Turks up in arms over the Arabic courses. They see Arabic as the linguistic extension of a system that wishes to indoctrinate a more conservative generation of Turks that will be pious, obedient, and Islamized, rejecting all the secular ideals that the Turkish political elite originally held in high regard.

3.1 Arabic as a Tool of Islamist Political Propaganda

Arabic has always maintained its sacred status due to preexisting ideologies that do not consider a Qur'an in translation to a be true Qur'an, but the Turkish government's use of Arabic to push an autocratic agenda has only increased the stigma of Arabic in the minds of secular Turks.

This is part is because of the way in which Qur'anic Arabic was presented to Turkish students. Minister of National Education Dr. Ömer Dinçer asserted that the students would only learn the alphabet and from that learn how to read and speak Qur'anic texts phonetically, a practice that is not restricted to Turkey, but also exists in other non-Arab, Islamic societies.[14] The Minister declared that students did not need to directly understand the Qur'an, but to just reiterate and respect it. It is that blind faith in religion that Turks take issue with.

Those are the concerns of secular Turks, that Arabic has been imposed on them and their children in a manner that has come at the expense of natural sciences courses, other language courses, and is being taught in a way that does not foster critical thinking. To them, Arabic represents the backward past that to which they have no desire to return. In this way, imposition of Qur'anic Arabic upon 7-8 year old children who have barely learned how to read and write in their mother tongue seems impractical and foolhardy.

3.2 Conclusion

Arabic is a language that has been attached to Islam since the religion's birth, which was why Atatürk worked so relentlessly to dismantle the association of Arabic's writing system from his own language. Nevertheless, Arabic has remained a stable force in Turkish religious life, even despite Atatürk's efforts to remove it from the call to prayer as was discussed in Chapter Three.

Despite the increasing need of Arabic and its relevance to modern-day social and economic trends in Turkey, the language cannot fully shed its religious connotations, which causes any effort to make Arabic more accessible in education to be met with bared fangs. Those who oppose the expansion of Arabic are skeptical that the Turkish government does not have an underlying agenda in their promotion of the language. They feel to offer Arabic any further space in Turkish society will begin a slippery slope that will infringe upon the secular society and lifestyle to which they have grown so accustomed. They also worry that the languages will compromise other critical academic subjects.

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The Islamization of Turkey

So far in this thesis I have discussed the evolution of Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish, and Arabic as the land of Anatolia morphed from the Ottoman Empire into the Republic of Turkey. I have discussed the intended marginalization of Ottoman Turkish and Arabic in the founding years of the Republic and beyond, but also the very recent possible reemergence of the two languages within Turkish society and how that reemergence is perceived both positively and negatively.

While the tension is in part about the languages themselves, as I have tried to argue throughout this thesis, the underlying issue is not linguistic in nature. The apprehension around Ottoman Turkish and Arabic is much more about the use these languages in a sociopolitical fashion to bolster a more overly Islamic identity, particularly when Turkey was seemingly at a breakthrough point in gaining the respect of key foreign allies and identifying itself as separate from an otherwise unstable Middle East.[1] The tensions are also about the current state of the Turkish educational system and how Arabic and Ottoman Turkish are viewed as hindrances to educational reforms deemed necessary by secular Turkish to have the country move forward in a positive way.

There is a growing concern among Turkish secularists and other opposition groups that AKP is taking the country in a direction that contradicts the secular values that Atatürk established with the Republic in 1922. "When these developments are considered in light of dramatic changes in Turkish voter behavior and societal values in the last decade...one cannot help but wonder if this country is systematically moving away, or has moved away, from laicist social and political values

and the pro-West policy orientation…"[2] Some Turks fear that this desire for religious piety is to ensure a docile population that does not question the government's authority as it becomes more and more autocratic.

1.0 The Islamization of Turkey

To say that AKP is solely responsible for the Islamic turn in Turkish politics would be an utterly false claim that would suggest the consolidation of AKP's power occurred in a vacuum rather than as a result of the surrounding political climate. A more accurate portrayal is that AKP has ridden the wave of an ongoing Islamic trend that has been in the works for the last three decades. It is only after gaining a firm enough hold on the various governmental branches does AKP feel the party can show a more overtly Islamic agenda without fear of retaliation for so dramatically disturbing the Republic's original tenants of secular Kemalism.[3]

1.1 Islamization After the 1980 Coup

On September 12th 1980 the most extensive and military coup in modern Turkish history took place. All major governmental institutions were dissolved and martial law was put in place. After about two years, the majority of violence has quelled, but that new stability did come at a price.[2]

> Curfews were imposed and most public activities forbidden. A wide range of magazines, newspapers, and films were banned, hundreds of thousands of allegedly subversive books were burned, and the activities of virtually all professional associations and trade unions were suspended. Fourteen thousand Turks were stripped of their citizenship and another 650,000 people were detained. Most were soon released, but over 230,000 were charged.[4]

After the coup, Islam was seen as an ideology that could combat communism (a Cold-War US concept), whose growing power had triggered the coup. "The 1980s witnessed rapid economic development and the Islamization of Turkish nationalism..."[5] Islam was a means to counteract the leftist phenomenon, but only the state was allowed to dictate the nature of that religious influence. When word reached back to the military junta that many Turkish children were receiving religious education outside the state educational system, they created Article 24 that stated, "Religious and moral

instruction and education are conducted under the supervision and control of the state. Instruction in religious culture and morals is included amongst the compulsory lessons that are taught in institutions of elementary and middle-school education."[6] Islam was supposed to be a moral guiding force that assisted to bolster national loyalty, not serve as a basis for civil society working independently from the state. Yet religion, an integral part of society, can be a difficult force to contain, especially in the Islamic context.

> To say that Islam is only for individual faith and conscience, should not intrude into the public arena, and cannot serve as a ground or source of guidance and direction for the state, for law, for social action, and for conduct, would seem for many to say that Islamic scholars either failed from the beginning to grasp the nature of the Kur'anic wisdom and truth or have deviated from it.[7]

To subdue religion as a means to bolster national loyalty was one of the main tenants of Atatürk's modernist vision of Turkey. However, under the leadership of AKP a more open Islamic identity is being celebrated among Turks in a way that the Turkish government did not used to encourage.

1.2 Islamic Trends in the 1990s

According to studies performed by Yeşilada and Noordijk, there has been a surge in religiosity since the mid-90s that can be linked to social conservatism, more than half a decade before AKP rose to power. "The findings indicate that this is not a phenomenon that started with the election of the AKP in 2002. It is a trend that can be traced to 1995 and has intensified towards more conservatism since then."[8] There was a positive correlation between God, religiosity and tolerance, meaning that when an individual's religiosity goes up, then level of tolerance goes down.[9] This lack of tolerance breeds a variety of other conservative values such as xenophobia, misogyny, and homophobia. This is why secular Turks have concern for the direction Turkey is taking because an Islamic agenda does not just encompass religion, it also implies a large list of socially conservatives values that massively hinder the modernist vision of Turkey as a liberal democracy.

Similar findings have been found by Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu. "The 1991 elections appeared to have been a harbinger of the new politics emerging in Turkey...A major shift in the voters' ideological orientation had begun to occur, and by the 1995 elections the RP [Republican Party], this time alone, would obtain more than 21.4% of the national vote..."[10] Çarkoğlu and Kalaycıoğlu portray the clashing ideals between modern and traditional Turks as a battle of those within the politically dominant center against those that lie within the once politically marginalized periphery. "The ruling 'center' has always possessed self-ascribed cultural superiority other the 'peripheral' masses."[11] The peripheral's insecurity over a political elite that does not represent their cultural values or best political interests has made them susceptible to the new trend of Turkish-Islamic rhetoric that has been in use since the 1990s. "...Conservatives in Turkey seem to be least attracted to maintaining the status quo, but, rather, prefer to return to the good old days, to a myth of a comfortable setting of customs and traditions that Turkey once had, with their current affluence intact."[12]

2.0 The Emergence of AKP

AKP won the 2002 election with a 34.28% vote, gaining 304 seats in the Grand National Assembly. The election occurred following a recent financial crash in 2001 that left the country bitter and resentful of the coalition governments that had controlled Turkey since 1991. Again, it would be exaggerated to presume that AKP gained power and stayed in power by purely relying on religious sentiments. The ruling party made sound economic decisions during the 2000s and was making reforms in the hope of appeasing Europe enough to make EU membership a real possibility again.

2.1 AKP's Re-election in 2007

By 2007 AKP won the general election again, this time with a 45.58% vote, although its did lose 10 seats in the Grant National Assembly. A study performed by Ersin Kalaycıoğlu examined and analyzed the reasons behind voters' choices, showing that voters engaged in a sense of cost-benefit analysis in terms of AKP's economic policies. With the decrease of the high consumer price

inflation that had lasted for the last 30 years, voters were quite pleased with the way AKP was han-

dling the nation's economic issues.[2] "The rank and file members of the AKP...are relatively pious

members of Turkish society...However, there is scant evidence to suggest that AKP voters support

the AKP on religious grounds."[13] As shown in the findings of his research, voter behavior in the

2007 election was more dictated by economic factors than anything else, although Kalaycıoğlu does

concede that the AKP is less moderate than its voters and that AKP "seems to be squandering its

chances of moderating its stance on polarizing issues and of seeking a national compromise over a

new constitution and buttressing tolerance of different lifestyles in the country."[14]

It seems there is a disconnect between the true reason AKP won the 2007 election and how

the party chooses to perceive that victory, "and with what sort of incentives they behaved after com-

ing to power."[14] AKP wasted a valuable opportunity to moderate its policies based on the moderate

constituency that voted the party in and instead continued forward with a conservative agenda that

would grow more and more prominent as the years went by.

2.2 The Significance of AKP as an Islamic-leaning Political Party

Though there were many non-cultural factors that contributed to AKP's popularity and rise

to power, it is still noteworthy to acknowledge the shift in paradigm that a political party more re-

ceptive to Islam and traditional values was able to gain momentum in an environment that had for

so long been dictated by a Kemalist undertone. "The 2002 election represents a historical break in

terms of providing to a socially Muslim party an opportunity to restructure the political landscape

and expand the public sphere."[16] More religious groups that had for so long now have a basis and a

political party that they felt served their interest.

In the transformation of the Islamic movement in general, and the electoral victory of the

AKP in particular, a "new" urban class, consisting of horizontally connected solidarity-

based groups with rural origins and shared Islamic ethos, played an important role.

This "new" urban class has been excluded culturally and economically by the Kemalist elite.

The excluded segment of the population utilized Islamic idioms and networks to overcome

their exclusion. Thus Islamic networks both facilitated this group's integration into modern opportunity spaces and offered it a hope for social mobilization.[17]

Naturally this new development was met with anxiety and trepidation for the long-standing secular elite, who felt the very essence of the Republic was being defiled by what they perceived to be the backward conservative notions that came saddled with religion.

> For the first time in the 80-year-old history of the Republic of Turkey is now governed by an Islamic-leaning party. All types of fears and controversies that preoccupy most secular minds have come to the surface. Divisions on religious and secular lines have always been sharp in Turkey, yet the decisiveness of AKP's victory almost caused a sense of despair among secular-minded Turks.[18]

> Perhaps this despair might have been able to label as an overreaction when the party was still engaging in policy that assisted the country both politically and economically, however much has changed within Turkey and the AKP since 2007 to suggest that those fears were not entirely without basis.

3.0 How Has AKP Changed?

AKP has undergone significant change in terms of its tone and ideals. It was originally described as simply a more Islamic-leaning political party, which in itself was rather unprecedented as a ruling party in Turkish politics. But now that AKP has steadily praised the virtues of Islam more frequently while it has tightened its grip on human rights, opposition groups in Turkey grow anxious over a leader who tries to use religious sensibilities to justify the more tyrannical way in which it rules. Eğitim-Sen, for example, is concerned that the school curriculum drafted by the ministry of education after the successful constitutional referendum will endorse a "'religious and national mindset' with its emphasis on Turkishness and Sunni Islam."[19]

AKP supporters, on the other hand, view this "tough love" as necessary for the greater good. "'Now there seems to be a new pattern of leadership: Erdoğan, Russian President [Vladimir] Putin, and Trump. They are not dictators, they are strongmen,' says Mr. Demir, approvingly. Erdoğan 'is

talking to people, he is doing it *for* the people. Maybe he is twisting some arms, but it is for a good cause.'"[20]

3.1 Getting into the European Union

Turkey, had it not sought EU membership, may not have instigated internal political reforms of its own accord. As we have watched events unfold in 2016, with global terrorism from ISIS and the Syrian refugee crisis, Turkey has obtained new-found leverage that has allowed AKP to stall its democratic reforms and even regress into competitive authoritarianism, all the while bargaining with Europe for visa-free travel to Europe for Turkish citizens. So emboldened has Turkey become that foreign minister Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu went as far as to say that all deals with the EU may be compromised, if the EU refuses to facilitate visa liberalization for Turks.[21]Having lost faith in the EU's commitment to the accession process, Turkey is no longer behaving as if EU membership is a top priority, shifting its gaze towards the Middle East and the Islamic world.

Before this political degeneration within the last five years Turkey was making significant strides in its attempt to appeal to the EU. "When Turkey began accession negotiations with the European Union on October 3, 2005, this constituted an important turning point for Turkey's relations with the EU and for Turkish sociopolitical transformation."[22] Even before the negotiations resumed in 2005, scholar suggested that since the 1999 Helsinki Council that resulted in Turkey becoming a candidate country has been a prime motivator in Turkey changing its foreign policy, exerting more soft power than hard power in issues pertaining to the Middle East.[23] This could be seen in Turkey's foreign policy towards Iraq and the CFSP. This phenomenon is referred to as the Europeanization of Turkish foreign policy.

For the longest time the EU has had trepidations over Turkey's candidacy, but because Turkey plays a large role in Europe's security system as a NATO member and with its geo-strategic position, the EU was never willing to reject Turkey outright, always dangling the carrot in front of Turkey.[24] The EU hoped to bargain with Turkey by having it adopt a more European variant of democratic practices. "The domestic effect of Europeanization can be conceptualized as a process

of change at the domestic level in which the member states adapt their processes, policies, and institutions to new practices, norms, rules, and procedures that emanate from the emergence of a European system of governance."[25] The political conditionality that EU pressured on Turkey was spelled out in the Copenhagen criteria that listed all the prerequisites expected of EU candidates before they could become eligible for full membership, including institutions that preserved democracy and human rights, a market economy and an impartial judiciary system.

When the AKP came to power in 2002, it began a surge of political reforms in hopes of gaining approval from the EU. So promising were these changes that during that time Turkey was proclaimed the sole Muslim country with democratic institutions.[26]

However, in recent years the EU has lost quite a large chunk of its influence over Turkey via political conditionality. With the complete reconfigurations of the Turkish judiciary system in the 2010 Turkish referendum, nearly all impartiality has been eliminated. The terrible crackdowns on the Gezi Protests, the covering up and slighting of the corruption charges in 2013 have served to show that if threatened, AKP is prepared to revert back to a more autocratic style of rule, paying little mind to Europe's criticism as it does so. Turkey is no longer willing to jump for the carrot that the EU has dangled for decades, especially now that the EU needs Turkey to manage the flow of Syrian refugees. This reversal in Turkey's approach towards the EU illustrates that Turkey was never fully committed to political transformation for the sake of preserving democracy. The reforms were only implemented as a means to an end.

3.2 Bettering Women's Right

In its campaign to better its image on human rights issues and gain access to the European Union, Turkey in 2003 abolished Article 462 and introduced a mandatory life sentence for honor crimes. Article 82 in the new penal code states that "if the crime is committed with the intention of honor, the person

will be punished with qualified life imprisonment."[27] Unfortunately, the mandatory life sentence is only sporadically enforced. "Although the AKP does give in to political pressure, especially where admission to the E.U. is concerned, in the larger picture its form of gender politics is still shaped by a particular version of family ideology."[28] This sporadic enforcement Article 82 has even caused some men to start discussing the issues of honor crimes, however, not in the manner some women's rights activist may have hoped. These men are not condemning honor crimes as a horrible act that needs to stop, but rather they are disgruntled with the inequality they feel men face, knowing that a man who commits an honor crime in the southeast will likely receive a much lighter sentence that a man in western Turkey.

Not only are new laws not properly implemented, but still many detrimental articles remain in the penal code, such as Article 51. The notion of honor carries such weight that it goes on to affect other crimes. For example, in incidents of infanticide, according to Article 453 if an illegitimate child was killed in order to preserve family honor, the sentence lies around four to eight years imprisonment, unlike "normal manslaughter," which would carry a 24 to 30-year sentence.[29] In cases of child abandonment, according to Article 475 if an illegitimate child was abandoned for the sake of preserving family honor, the punishment would be approximately one-third of the normal punishment.

The spotty enforcement of justice for honor crimes is emblematic of the lack of true commitment to ending the terrible cultural practice, and to bettering women's rights in general, at least those rights they feel are detrimental to the image of the conservative Muslim wife and mother who dutifully wears the

headscarf. Any of the rhetoric of rights espoused by feminists are seen as a threat to the rights of the traditional women, who is the only female group they have interest in projecting, as it serves their cultural agenda.

3.3 The Turkish Educational System

For as much as secular Turks are concerned about Arabic and Ottoman Turkish and what they represent on an ideological level, many Turks' criticisms of the two languages stems from concrete issues that they find in the Turkish educational system. Turks want their children to learn English, yet in a study conducted by the Policy Research Foundation of Turkey (TEPAV) reported that Turkey ranked forty-third out of forty-four countries in the English Proficiency Index.[new] The only country ranked lower was Kazakhstan.

Instead of tackling the problems with the elective global langauges and the lack of proficiency that students obtain, many Turkish citizens view Arabic and Ottoman Turkish as poor distractions to the issues at hand. In contexts where Enlgish langauge teachers are not available, Turks are frustrated by schools' and the government's expectations that they accept Arabic as an appropriate alternative rather make efforts to make English more readily accessable.

In addition to seeing Arabic and Ottoman Turkish as less than desirable replacements for other languages, Turkish citizens are concerned with the space that Arabic and Ottoman Turkish could take in school curriculums are the expense of the natural sciences. Alpaslan Durmus announced in June 2017 that evolution will be removed from the secondary school curriculums by 2019. "As the students at ninth grade are not endowed with antecedents to discuss the 'Origin of Life and Evolution' section in biology classes, this section will be delayed until undergraduate study."[30] This is essence means that evolution will be shoved out of public schools altogether, only to possibly be made available at university.

Turks also worry about the increase of imam hatip high schools, where student enrolment has increased by 90% since the AKP came to power in 2002.[30] According to some Turkish media

reports, "about 40,000 pupils were forcibly enrolled in religious Imam Hatip schools"[31] in districts where religious schooling was the only alternative for parents unable to pay for private schooling.

From multiple standpoints Turkish parents feel they have no control over what is taught to their children. They feel the system is failing and instead of addressing the serious crisis, they feel Turkish authorities are wasting their time with Arabic and Ottoman Turkish. In that way, their worries are less about what Arabic and Ottoman Turkish are in their religious/traditional connotations, but what they are not, which are solutions to various flaws within the educational system.

4.0 Conclusion

It is imperative to state that it would be a gross oversimplification to paint Turkey as a nation in crisis from a black and white dichotomy between secularism and Islam. Turkey has undergone a complex history experimenting with a varieties of national ideologies where interests groups of every part of the political spectrum have had their say at some point over the last near century. For now, however, the reemergence of Islam in political life, its endorsement by the Turkish government, the current state of the Turkish educational system, and the passionate reaction of secularists is worthy of analysis.

The anxiety over the Arabic and Ottoman Turkish languages comes from what they represent. Secularists are mostly concerned with the political use of Islam and thee lack of attention given to the issues within the educational system.

Kemalist nationalism, which framed the Ottoman past as a decadent period and radical changes under the single party rule as the peak of Turkish history, was challenged by the new ideological wave of conservative nationalism. The latter considered Islam to be a crucial constituent of national identity and based national pride on the counter-memory of Republican/Ottoman/Islamic glories.[31]

This agenda that the conservative AKP seems to now possess not only deviants from cherished Kemalist tradition, but also with the modern sense of liberal democracy that modernists are

striving more in Turkey, which is partly why secularists are more anxious to move forward with English and natural sciences rather than "look back" with Arabic and Ottoman Turkish.

AKP has been showing its true colors in terms of its disregard for human rights as soon as it won the second election. "Following its electoral victory in the 2007 general elections, the JDP [AKP] abandoned its policy of seeking consensus with liberals, mainly the pro-Western business-men's association TÜSİAD and the secular-oriented media."[32] Very quickly they found favor with those who promoted Islam in a political fashion. "The JDP (AKP) successfully opened up new political opportunities favoring the Islamist media."[33]

AKP has been increasing its clampdown on its opponents since Gezi protests and the corruption charges in 2013 and has continued to do so, especially within the aftermath of the 2016 failed military coup.

The mass arrests and detentions of prominent secular AKP critics further raised uneasiness of the secular segment of the society. For example, the former RPP (CHP) Chair Baykal criticized the arrests by arguing that they reminded coup periods and totalitarian regimes of Hitler and Stalin. Baykal also asserted that secular people in Turkey were now targets of the AKP and the Islamist media.[34] Islam is not the main issue, nor is Arabic or Ottoman Turkish, which are the two linguistic extensions of Islam in the Turkish context. The issue that secularists are up in arms about is the ever-growing hegemonic rule of the AKP and their disregard for the issues within the educational system.

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Conclusion

Closing Remarks

There are countless ways in which language can be promoted, discouraged, or transformed to fit a specific political agenda. Whether through a change in orthography or the removal and/or addition of certain lexical items, language can have a powerful political role in a country's national narrative. "Planned help in the development of new words (lexical or terminological elaboration is the formal name) has long been a recognized as an important language planning activity."[1] Language planning is an enormous source of soft power that Turkey has historically and currently tapped into in order to rally national sentiment, albeit in different ways.

1.0 Language as an Avenue for National Discourse

As more modern definitions of nationalism took hold of the minds of 19th century thinkers, language played a more vital role in defining national identity. "The genesis of the perception of a sacred bond between language and nation can be traced back to the impact of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744- 1803)."[2] This then carried over into the 19th and then 20th centuries. Language does not merely carry the message of nationalism; it contains a national quality in itself, which is why languages has played a prominent role is political divisions around the world such as Hindi vs. Urdu, Swedish vs. Norwegian, and the numerous examples of colonizing European languages vs. indigenous languages.

The 20th century has therefore seen the development of a linguistic nationalism "model" which has continued to consolidate itself through a nationalist political power at the head of the autonomic institutions. It may also be said that the language has been the subject of a metonymisation/symbolisation process within the nationalist discourse from a simple *representation* within a political ideology to the central, driving, representational element of the ideology in question.[3]

While it would be inaccurate to describe the multilingual empires of the past as inclusive in the modern sense, the importance of language as major contributing factor to nationalist rhetoric demonstrated the changing ideals of what a modern nation-state was and how to define oneself in linguistic terms. Through purist rhetoric language has taken on a political role. "Linguistic identity is largely a political matter and languages are flags of allegiance."[4]

As the median of communication, language has a part to say in the political rhetoric of its speakers. "Language is an important resource in any society. It is the means by which the members communicate with each other in conducting their daily lives. But it is also an instrument for shaping reality by influencing people's perceptions of that reality, and of what counts as reality."[5] As the bearer of what is reality and what is not, language carries a heavy burden.

1.1 Linguistic Nationalism

The definition and components of nationalism are hard to pin-point. "This multi-dimensional nature of identity, and its mutations across disciplinary boundaries and theoretical paradigms, makes it difficult to account for its meaning."[6] Yet language has emerged as a major marker of national identity, to the point that if one does not speak the national language, one is not perceived as being part of the group. "The feature clustering underlying group identification is such a powerful cognitive mechanism that knowledge about one feature is assumed to be enough, especially when it concerns language. As a result, groups that are distinguished solely on the basis of a distinct language are often treated as 'real' ethnic groups."[7]

This has created a linguistic nationalism that plays a huge role is defining national identity in general. As is the nature of nationalism, there must be an "Other." that the nation must either battle against or and the very least define itself as different from.

"This is obviously the establishment of a model of *linguistic nationalism* that presents a hard core of *representations* (exclusivity, a historical-patrimonial nature, the aggression/oppression of which the language is/was a victim, the community loyalty with   regard to it, which was exemplary in the past and must extend itself into a linguistic political activism) whose relevance would probably be discovered in a variety of places."[8] So as the ethnic/religious community was oppressed by the "Other" so too was the language, being treated as a sacred survivor that must be built back up to its former glory.

1.2 Turkish as a Prime Example

The history of the Turkish language is one of the world's prime examples of how languages fit into politics. After existing as a fusion of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian, Ottoman Turkish was radically changed to better suit the modernizing ambitions of Atatürk and the Kemalist elite. "In this function, language assumes a greater importance than usual in situations of conflict. Language bonds its speakers internally and bounds them externally."[9] He understood that a nation's language is a wealth of soft power and had no intention of wasting it by keeping Ottoman Turkish as it was, a major symbol of all the Middle Eastern and Islamic sensibilities that he sought to crush.

Atatürk sought to completely undo the traditional linguistic make-up of the Ottoman Empire through reforms that he felt would "unite" the country. "Historically, the coexistence of peoples of different languages and cultures is normal; or, rather, nothing is less common than countries inhabited exclusively by people of a single uniform language and culture."[10] Yet this is precisely what Atatürk sought out to accomplish.

2.0 Turkish's Relationship with its Previous Ottoman Counterpart

The lexical and grammatical content of the Ottoman language was not a priority to the early or mid-Ottomans from the 13th to 18th centuries. If anything, the use of Arabic and Persian garnered

Ottoman Turkish a higher literary status that it would not have achieved without the use of those languages. Yet as modern notions of nationalism and language purism started to leak into political life across Europe and eventually Turkey by the 19th century, it became more difficult for policy makers and social theorists to ignore the vast foreign influence that Arabic and Persian had on Ottoman Turkish.

It had long been in Atatürk's mind to change the orthography of the Turkish language. He had the idea in his mind as early as 20 years before the alphabet was changed.

> "As a matter of fact, long before the Turkish Republic was founded, Atatürk revealed his perspective on this issue. When he met Ivan Monolof, a Bulgarian Turkologist, in 1906, he put forward this viewpoint: We have to select the Latin alphabet, getting rid of the language that prevents us from entering Western civilization."[11]

There was constant debate over the nature of the language reform. Not only was the writing system and Perso-Arabic influence challenged, so was the very name of the language. "The debate over the name of the language was essentially a debate over identity, in particular which of the three aspects of the identity of the Turks came first: the Ottoman, the Islamic, or the Turkish."[12] Ottoman was a throwback to Ottomanism, the Empire's failed attempted at inclusiveness. Turkish was decided to be the best name to promote a Turkish Republic that possessed the unity of all Turks in ethnicity, culture, and language. "If Turkish is the marker of Turkish identity, it must there serve as the foundation of a Turkish national culture; and if this means purging the language from external influences, even those that are derived from the languages of co-religionists, so be it."[13]

Many indigenous languages have existed without the use of a writing system, so the development a writing system in innately a sociopolitical endeavor. "The most obvious corpus planning activity arose from the need to establish a writing system for an unwritten language...once a writing system is in place, one might wish to change it, so that orthography or spelling reforms is a regular topic for corpus policy."[14] Atatürk changed the alphabet from Perso-Arabic to Latin in a bid to

modernize/westernize the language in the same manner that he was modernizing the rest of the Republic of Turkey. "While other members of the Alphabet Commission proposed to bring the new alphabet into use gradually, using it side by side with the old for a period of either five or fifteen years, Mustafa Kemal wished to see it put into use almost immediately."[15] Never had such a shift alphabet been enacted before. There are very few examples that can top the radical nature of Turkish's language policy, except perhaps the revitalization of Hebrew. "To the extent it stems from earlier versions of Hebrew, Modern Hebrew appears as an unprecedented historical achievement that represents a breakaway from its status as the language of prayer and Torah."[16]

2.1 Turkish's Relationship with Arabic

Arabic has maintained a close relationship with Turkish since the Turks' conversion to Islam. Its connection to the Holy Qur'an made it a sacred and permanent fixture in the fabric of Turkish society. Translation the Qur'an into Turkish and basing Turkish Islamic practice off of that translation was never considered an option due to the belief in the inimitability of the Qur'an, that no human translation could ever accurately convey the true meaning of the Qur'an from Arabic. Because of this, Arabic has kept its sacred status in every part of the globe that Islam reached, even in the regions where Arabic was not the native language of the people, such as Turkey.

Arabic will never be able to separate itself from its literary Islamic origins. Apart from perhaps Hebrew in Judaism and the historical example of Latin for Catholicism, there is no language that possesses the same level of religious value in the same manner that Arabic has in Islam. "It is a well-known fact that the prestige of Arabic in the world derives from the role of the language as the medium of the Qur'an and that of the vast intellectual tradition to which Islam has given rise since its appearance on the past lives on world stage in the seventh century."[17]

As the language of the Qur'an, any critics of a more visible Islam influence in Turkish education and society will naturally criticize Arabic for all that the Semitic language represents religiously in a non-Arab, but still predominately Muslim society. "The Arabic script was also one of the defining characteristics and elements of Muslim identity. In other words, Ottoman Turkish was

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strongly connected with Islamic civilization and the Eastern societies through its mixed language."[18]

Despite Turkey's conflicted idealization and resentment towards the West, moving Turkish in a Western direction was considered better than keeping any Islamic/Middle Eastern attachment through language and orthography.

> On the one hand, the Republic of Turkey looked toward the 'west' as the only source and model of modernity, the ultimate prize that Kemal Ataturk and the republican elite coveted so much. On the other hand, an equally strong feeling of distrust toward the 'west' counterbalanced this high regard for things western that bordered on unbridled adoration.[19]

This begrudging respect caused Turkish to be completely revamped in such as swift and radical way that the backlash of it is now being felt today in the push for Ottoman Turkish and Arabic.

3.0 Where Does Turkey Go From Here?

Both internal and external expectations for Turkey have been dwindling since 2010 in light of the President and AKP's change in goals and tactics. Reforms that were once viewed as necessary to gain the ultimate political desire to enter the E.U. have since been replaced by dreams of personal grandeur and a vision that he can replicate the imperial glories of the Ottoman Empire. The role of Ottoman Turkish and Arabic's in all of in this is to provide cultural symbols of the old order that was traditionally so heavily suppressed and ignored by Turkish elites. For those Turks who are less concerned about the ideologies that others attached to the languages are worried about the more prominent role of the languages when students are failing to become properly proficient in English.

3.1 Democracy to Autocracy

Opposition to the AKP are sincerely worried that the President will be successful in his goal to create a more executive presidency that will significantly increase his power to a level that no Turkish leader has experienced since the days of the sultans.

> The amendments expand the powers of the president. The president will thus be able to chair the cabinet or individually appoint the head of the government. In accordance with

the new amendments, the president will be able to issue decrees and submit issues of constitutional changes to referendum. The president may not suspend his party member-ship.[20]

His appeal to the Ottoman past knows no bounds, having even garnered the support of one of the descendants of the Ottoman royal house. "His campaign to endow himself with constitutionally en-shrined executive authority — many call it one-man rule — is being cheered on by a real Ottoman princess."[21] His yearning for the good old days of the Ottoman Empire and the absolutist authority that sultans like Abdulhamid II once possessed has been documented for the last several years in Western media. "Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan makes no secret of his yearning for the Ottoman Empire that was abolished by Kemal Ataturk, the founder of the modern republic, with the stroke of a pen."[22]

His increasingly bold steps in suppressing his opponents since the failed military coup showed that he has no intention of relinquishing power any time soon nor engaging in policies that would make the EU more inclined to accept Turkey as a member. "Debates had made it clear that Erdoğan did not want any form of checks and balances but promoted an idea of a popularly elected leader as president, who would be accountable to the voters (nation) only."[23] This sort of strongman that was legitimately voted into office by the Turkish people shows the disturbing trend of Turkey as it enters a political scene that is less democratic as it is electoral authoritarian. "What confronts Turkey is not a choice between presidential versus parliamentary democracy, but an electoral au-thoritarianism of a la Turca presidentialism versus some form of parliamentary democracy."[24]

3.2 Arabic and Ottoman Turkish as a Symptom of a Greater Issue

After having Turkish change so quickly and drastically in the 20th century, it is somewhat ironic that barely a century later Arabic and Ottoman Turkish are making a comeback through AKP's desire to incorporate them more fully into the Turkish educational system and society in gen-eral. Ironic, yet not entirely surprising since the repression of anything often results in a reactionary

response. "The Turkish case illustrates the need for authenticity and search for historical legitimacy in times of rapid modernization and shift from one civilization to another."[25]

While some have claimed that the desire to bring back Ottoman Turkish in education stems purely from an objective standpoint of simple cultural preservation and prosperity, others are wary that these benign motivations are a smoke screen for an intentionally more Islamic, conservative agenda. "Under the subtle but relentless Islamising influence of the Justice and Development (AK) party, co-founded and led by Mr Erdogan until he became the nation's (theoretically non-partisan) president, the Sunni Muslim component of Turkey's complex national identity has strengthened."[26] Given the trend of increasing conservative ideology in Turkey, this streak of Islamic nationalism is likely to stay. "Conservatism, with a Sunni Islamic core, which coheres with authoritarianism, dogmatism, and anomie, will be a part of Turkish society and politics in the near and forseeable future."[27]

Strides have been made to try and push Ottoman Turkish and Arabic back into Turkish education. As of the 2016-2017 academic school year, Arabic has been introduced into elementary schools with other elective language such as English, French, and German. And the president sparked a national outcry when he insisted that Ottoman Turkish should be required at secular secondary schools. Religious and traditional sentiments aside, Turkish parents worry that valuable time and resources are being squandered by focusing on Arabic and Ottoman Turkish instead of bettering the situation by addressing the issues with English instruction and the natural sciences. Not only are parents concerned, but Turkish educators themselves are wary of the president's motives behind the promotion of Ottoman Turkish and Arabic. These worries range from wasting resource on languages that have less economic use in modern Turkey to full-blown fears of the reversal of the Turkish language reform of the 1920s.

But are people truly frightened of the languages themselves? Of course not; it is all about what they represent, the regression of Turkey into all the ideologies that Kemalists fought so much to dismantle. Modernist Turks feel that these languages cannot represent a modern Turkey that

should be taking its place as a part of Europe and/or as a true global player in the international community. They feel that the president has robbed them of that golden opportunity.

> Had he stayed the course, however, with the socio-political and judiciary reforms and economic developments that he put in motion during his first nine years in power, Turkey could have become a major player on the global stage and a regional powerhouse...Sadly, Erdogan abandoned much of the impressive democratic reforms he championed. Instead, he embarked upon a systematic Islamization of the country while dismantling the pillars of democracy.[28]

4.0 Conclusion

The amount of debate surrounding Ottoman Turkish and Arabic in modern Turkish society is still worthy of analysis. AKP and its use of Ottoman Turkish and Arabic represents the sociolinguistic aspect of the ideological shift in Turkey from a more Western-oriented nationalism to one that speaks more to the Islamic, Ottoman imperial past.

The extent of the outcry in Turkey among Turkish secularists show how powerful a role language can take in politics. "It [language] unites and it divides. In the context of conflicts involving nationalist groups in Europe (and elsewhere), these opposite tendencies turn language into the target and the battlefield of interethnic strife."[29] Language can be used in interethnic conflict, such as the well-documented suppression of the Kurdish language, but it can also be a platform for ideological battles among of the same ethnic community. "What we must not lose sight of as we ponder the postmodern phenomenon of the dissipation and rehashing of identities is that the question of identity is fast becoming a politically loaded issue."[30]

Language, particularly in a context like Turkey when lifestyles can vary significantly, becomes a means to channel identity. The three languages of Ottoman Turkish, modern Turkish, and Arabic then become both shields to defend one identity and then swords to attack the others. "There has been a tendency in the last few decades to view language fully as a pragmatic, multifunctional

instrument rather than as essentially a descriptive instrument that simply makes propositional state-ments about the facts of the world."[31] The use of Turkey's heritage and current language is emblem-atic of this.

"Languages and language loyalties have in the past often served as powerful rallying points and they continue to do so."[32] From their political use they take on roles of either allies or of ene-mies. "The instrumentality of language...is heavily laced with symbolism. When deployed in the prosecution of sociopolitical conflicts, language derives much of its power from this symbolism."[33] AKP and its use of Ottoman Turkish and Arabic represents the sociolinguistic aspect of the ideolog-ical shift in Turkey from a more Western-oriented nationalism to one that speaks more to the Is-lamic, Ottoman imperial past. The people's response to that shift is based both on the ideologies that some hoped had been left behind a century ago as well as the pragmatics of the educational sys-tem and the feasibility of bringing in Arabic and Ottoman Turkish when so many other issues need to be addressed first. Arabic and Ottoman Turkish are perceived as one of the initial steps of the "slippery slope" of less desirable outcomes for the Turkish educational system, both ideologically and pragmatically.

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