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A Study on The Foreign Elements That Enter into Turkish Through Technological Novelties

Türkçeye Teknolojik Gelişmeler İle Giren Yabancı Kökenli Sözcükler Üzerine Bir Çalışma

Sinan Çakır¹

ABSTRACT

The developments in the technological areas like automotive industry, computation, communication and media sectors accelerate the percentage of the borrowings that enter into Turkish from foreign languages, especially from English. The present study was carried out with the aim of determining the attitude of the young Turkish people towards the borrowings that enter in their native language through such novelties. It also tried to analyze the success and acceptance of the Turkish words that have been produced to replace such borrowings. The findings of the study revealed that young Turkish people mainly prefer to use the borrowed words rather than their Turkish counterparts. It was observed that majority of the target borrowed items could not be replaced with Turkish counterparts yet. The reason for this situation might be that such usages are viewed as more prestigious by the young Turkish people. Besides, the Turkish words that are produced to replace the borrowings seem not to be introduced to young people adequately.

Keywords: language contact, technological novelties, foreign elements in Turkish

ÖZ

Araba sanayi, bilgisayar, iletişim ve basın gibi alanlardaki gelişmeler Türkçeye yabancı dillerden -özellikle İngilizceden- ödünç sözcükler girmesi sürecini hızlandırmaktadır. Bu çalışma, son zamanlarda oluşan bu tür yenilikler ile dilimize girmiş olan sözcüklere karşı gençlerin tutumlarını saptamak üzere gerçekleştirilmiştir. Ayrıca, bu sözcüklerin yerine geçmesi amacıyla dilimizde türetilen sözcüklerin ne ölçüde başarı ile kabul gördüğü saptanmaya çalışılmıştır. Çalışmanın bulguları genç Türk konuşucularının genel olarak yabancı kökenli sözcükleri tercih ettiklerini göstermiştir. Ayrıca, bu ödünç sözcüklerin yerine üretilen Türkçe sözcüklerin Türkçeyi kullanan gençler tarafından yeterince benimsenmediği de saptanmıştır. Bu durumun sebebi olarak bu tür kullanımların gençler arasında daha saygınlık verici olarak görülmesi olabilir. Bunun yanı sıra, yabancı dillerden ödünç alınan sözcüklerin yerine geçmesi için türetilen Türkçe sözcüklerin de genç nesillere yeterli düzeyde tanıtılmadığı da gözlenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dilsel etkileşim, Uygulayım bilim gelişmeleri, Türkçedeki yabancı öğeler

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INTRODUCTION

As long as the people who are using different languages interact with one another, the languages that these people use will interact with one another as well. Hence, it is impossible not to have any foreign elements in a language. As Sır (2013) also states, 'relationships between languages is inevitable. All languages are in mutual effect with the languages which they have a relationship. They borrow language elements from each other and give each other. This is the same for the Turkish language as well.' (p. 969). Similarly, as Özdemir and Süğümlü (2013) emphasize: 'languages, like societies, change, grow and differentiate throughout the history. Turkish language has also changed, developed and differentiated in the course of history from Orkhun Monuments to date. The changes, developments and differentiations apply to all languages and are continuous' (p. 2270).

In the past, because of the historical and cultural reasons, foreign elements from languages like Persian and Arabic entered into Turkish immensely (Karahisar, 2013, p.73). At present, however, it is possible to mention a similar interaction between Turkish and the Western World. Küçük (2007) expresses that among Western Languages, the highest number of loan words have been borrowed from French, and the influence of this language on Turkish dates back to the Imperial Edict of Gülhane (Tanzimat Fermanı). As Vural & Böler (2008) and Ersoy (2006) assert, English started to be more dominant over Turkish after World War II and the influence of this language over Turkish is getting stronger and stronger day by day.

This is widely because of the technological developments in Western World. The developments in the technological areas like automotive industry, computation, communication and media sectors accelerate the percentage of the borrowings that enter into Turkish through these languages, especially through English. Since Turkey is not a technologically leading country, it is subject to the effects of technology, and foreign elements have started to be seen in Turkish more often day by day (Korkmaz, 1995a,b). For instance, via developments in computational technology, borrowings like, *komputer*, *printer*, *flaş disk*, *monitör* enter into Turkish, and because of the incredibly fast improvements in computational technology, the number of this sort of borrowings are increasing day by day.

Another sector that causes an immediate need for borrowings in Turkish is the automotive industry. Via the developments in this industry, foreign elements like *ABS*, *ESP*, *enjektoryonlu motor*, *spoiler*..etc have started to be seen in Turkish. Of course, Turkish counterparts for these foreign elements are produced by Turkish Language Institution (TDK). Some of these borrowings have been successfully replaced by their Turkish counterparts and they are not used very often by the Turkish speakers; however, in some others it is impossible to talk about the same success.

Borrowings do not harm the natural structure of the language if it is done in normal and well circumstances (Sır, 2013, p. 969). Such items might be useful in increasing and prospering the vocabulary of the language. From this perspective, such borrowed items should not be viewed as language decay (Özkan and Musa, 2004). On the other hand, borrowing items from foreign languages might be unnecessary if the same meaning can be provided through the use of the words that exist in that language already. As Tosun (2005) points out 'changes in language and culture can be considered natural. Nevertheless, the borrowed rules from other languages spoil the structure of the language in which it is applied in terms of reading, writing, pronunciation, morphology, phonetics and semantics. Such a fact brings the degeneration into a language' (p. 136).

The present study was carried out with the aim of determining the attitude of the young Turkish people towards the borrowings that enter in their native language through the technological novelties. One of the purposes of the study is to investigate whether young Turkish people prefer to use the loan words or their

Turkish counterparts. In this way, the success and acceptance of the Turkish words that have been produced to replace the borrowed items would be analyzed as well. Another purpose of the study was to test if the young Turkish people prefer to use English or Turkish sound system while articulating the foreign acronyms. It can be claimed that the age and educational level of the young people are very influential on their preferences for the foreign elements that enter in their native language through the technological novelties. In other words, the students at primary school are expected to prefer the Turkish counterparts of the borrowings that enter into Turkish through computer technology and automotive industry relatively more compared to the students in the upper levels of education. Hence, this study aims to investigate the relation between age, educational level and the use of borrowed items in Turkish. It also aims to assess the success and acceptance of the Turkish words that have been produced to replace the borrowed items.

It aims to answer the following research questions:

- 1- Do the young people prefer to use the borrowings or their Turkish counterparts in their daily speeches?
- 2- What is the acceptance of the Turkish words by the public that have been produced to replace the borrowings?
- 3- What is the relation between age, educational level and the use borrowings?
- 4- Do the young people prefer to use the English sound system or the Turkish one to articulate the foreign acronyms?
- 5- What is the relation between age, educational level and the use of English sound system on the articulation of the foreign acronyms?

METHODOLOGY

The data of the study were collected through a task consisting of 15 items. In the first 10 items of the task, pictures or images representing the target words were shown to the participants (a picture of a mouse or an image of a file in desktop e.g.) and the participants were required to express what they see in the picture orally. When they could not provide the required response, the researcher helped them by explaining their functions without uttering their names. The aim of this procedure was to determine whether they would use the loan words or their Turkish counterparts to name them (fare & mouse e.g.). For the other five items of the task, the written forms of five acronyms (ADSL, MSN, USB, TTNET, MP3) were shown to the participants and they were required to articulate what they see in the paper. In this way, the researcher wanted to determine whether they articulate the acronyms by using the English sound system or the Turkish one.

The task was given to 60 participants (36 girls and 24 boys) orally and individually one by one. These participants are attending to the schools in Ankara and Çankırı: 20 in primary school (mean age: 12,4), 20 in high school (mean age: 16,6) and 20 in university (mean age: 20,2). All of them have got a computer at home, and they use it one or two hours a day. All of them have got a family car as well. The data obtained through the task were analyzed and put in tables in the light of research questions.

Limitations

While assessing the use of foreign items that enter into Turkish through technology, only ten borrowed items which have entered into Turkish through computer technology and automotive industry have been focused. The other borrowed items have been kept out of the study, because it is impossible to check all of the borrowed items at once.

While selecting these ten borrowed items, it was taken into consideration that all of them have got Turkish counterparts which are also commonly used by the public. For some of the borrowed items, there have not been any Turkish counterparts produced yet, so these items have been kept out of the study. The same procedure was followed in the choice of the 5 foreign acronyms. They are

pronounced both with Turkish and English sounds by the public, and they are commonly encountered by people. The acronyms which are not well-known by the majority of the society were not selected as the target items of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

The findings of the study were demonstrated in tables and analyzed in detail. Table 1 below demonstrates the responses of the participants on the items related to computational technology:

Table 1: The Findings for the Items Related to Computational Technology

	Primary School	High School	University
Total	Students	Students	Students
Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Laptop / Dizüstü 88/12	80/20	90/10	100/0
Mouse / Fare 65/35	70/30	20/80	100/0
File / Dosya 7/93	0/100	0/100	20/80
Chat / Söyleşi 92/8	85/15	90/10	100/0
Resetlemek /Yeniden Başlatmak 65/35	20/80	75/25	100/0
Total 63/37	49/51	57/43	84/16

When the total percentages are taken into account, it is clearly observed that the participants use borrowings relatively more than their Turkish counterparts. However, when the test items and the group responses are analyzed individually, it is hard to follow this generalization. That is to say, it would not be right to neglect the acceptance of the Turkish counterparts by the public wholly. Especially in the case of *file / dosya*, a great majority of the participants preferred to use the Turkish one. All of the participants who preferred the borrowed item are the university students. The other students in the lower levels of education did not prefer to use the term *file*. A similar finding is on the use of *resetlemek / yeniden başlatmak*. All of the university students preferred to use the English element, but the Turkish counterpart was also preferred by the younger participants. Since their level of proficiency in English is higher than other students, university students prefer to use the foreign elements more frequently. Another reason for this situation may be that using a borrowing is relatively more prestigious for the university students, so they prefer to use the English ones. It is also observed that the Turkish words *dizüstü*, *fare*, *söyleşi* and *yeniden başlatmak* are preferred by some of the young people, but this does not mean that these items have been fully accepted and started to be used by them fully.

In the table, it is observable that the primary school students use the foreign elements and their Turkish counterparts almost equally when the total percentages are considered. The percentages for the Turkish ones are just a little bit higher than that for the English ones. The reason for this situation might be that since they are less proficient in English language, they are less subject to the influence of the foreign elements; and they prefer to use the items that belong to their native language relatively more than their elders. This case is obvious especially on the use of the terms *resetlemek / yeniden başlatmak*. Only 20 per cent of the subjects in this group preferred to use *resetlemek*, while all of the participants attending to university preferred to use the term *resetlemek* rather than *yeniden başlatmak*. The same assessment can be made on the use of *file* and *dosya*. None of the members of this group preferred to use the foreign element, which is not the case for the university students. On the other hand, as for the terms *laptop*, *mouse*, and *chat*, it is clearly seen that the foreign elements are more commonly used even by the

primary school students compared to their Turkish counterparts. These results suggest that even for the youngest group of the study using the borrowed counterparts of these items are more preferable. This situation shows that these items which have been produced to replace the foreign elements have not been accepted fully by the great majority of the young people in the society yet.

What is noteworthy to mention on the responses of high school students is the use of the items *fare & mouse and file & dosya*. Majority of the high school students preferred the Turkish words rather than the borrowed items. On the other hand, as for the terms *laptop, chat and resetlemek*, the participants in this group preferred to use the foreign elements in majority. Especially, the percentages for the items *laptop/dizüstü* and *chat/söyleşi* are quite noteworthy (both 90 per cent). When the total percentages are considered, borrowings are slightly more preferred for this group of participants compared to their Turkish counterparts.

The responses of the university students on the use of the borrowed items that enter into Turkish through computer technology reveal that a great majority of the participants in this group prefer foreign elements rather than their Turkish counterparts: % 84. Since they are more proficient in English compared to the younger participants, they are more subject to the foreign influence in language use. Besides, using foreign elements in university level seems to be more prestigious. Hence, they do not prefer the Turkish counterparts of the items in their speeches in most cases. All of the subjects preferred to use the borrowed items except for the *file / dosya* case.

The responses of the participants on the items related to the automotive industry are presented in Table 2 below:

Table 2: The Findings for the Items Related to Automotive Industry

Total	Primary School	High School	University
	Students	Students	Students
	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Per cent			
Airbag / Hava Yastığı	65/55	80/20	100/0
68/32			
Sunroof/ Açılır Tavan	60/40	45/55	100/0
68/32			
Distribütör/ Dağıtıcı	90/10	80/20	100/0
90/10			
Spoiler /Rüzgarlık	5/95	20/80	5/95
13/87			
Hız Limiti / Hız Sınırı	0/100	70/30	75/25
48/52			
Total	44/56	53/47	76/24
57/43			

When the total percentages are taken into account, it is noticed that they mainly prefer to use the foreign elements rather than their Turkish equivalents. Similar to the findings for the computational technology, only in one item of the task, the Turkish word was preferred more commonly than the loan word. The term *rüzgarlık* is much more preferable for them compared to *spoiler*. The reason for this situation may be that the term *spoiler* is not acquainted for them so they prefer to use its Turkish counterpart which is far more meaningful for them. This means that the correspondent term has been successfully developed before this borrowing fully entered into Turkish. However, it is not possible to make the same judgment for the other foreign elements like *airbag, sunroof, and distributor*. These loan words are more frequently used than their Turkish counterparts. The terms *limit* and *sınır* seem to be equally preferred by the young people who took part in the study.

The total percentages show that the primary school students prefer to use the Turkish items more frequently than their foreign counterparts. Especially, the percentages for the use of the terms *rüzgarlık* and *hız sınırı* are quite noteworthy.

Almost all of the subjects in this group preferred to use the Turkish items, which shows that they are less subject to the foreign influence in the use of language compared to their elders. As for the terms *airbag*, *sunroof* and *distributor*, the subjects in this group preferred these foreign elements less than the subjects in other groups; but the preference for these foreign elements are still relatively higher than their Turkish counterparts.

When the total percentages for the responses of high school students are taken into account, it is noticed that the numbers are quite close to each other. This means that high school students use the foreign elements and their Turkish counterparts almost equally. For some of the test items they prefer to use the loan words more (*airbag*, *distributor*, *hız limiti*), and in some others they prefer the Turkish words more: (*açılır tavan*, *rüzgarlık*).

A great majority of the university students preferred the foreign elements over Turkish ones with 76 per cent in total. Only the term *spoiler* got opposing results. This term seem not to have settled into Turkish fully yet and its Turkish counterpart appears to be more meaningful for the participants and they prefer to use it instead of the borrowed item. All in all, the total percentages show that university students prefer loan words over their Turkish counterparts.

The responses of the participants on the articulation of foreign acronyms are presented in Table 3 below:

Table 2: The Findings for the Articulation of the Acronyms

	Primary School	High School	University
Total	Students	Students	Students
Per cent	Per cent	Per cent	Per cent
Per cent			
ADSL (Eng) / (Tur)	90/10	90/10	100/0
93/7			
MSN (Eng) / (Tur)	85/15	60/40	100/0
82/18			
USB (Eng) / (Tur)	100/0	100/0	100/0
100/0			
TTNET(Eng) / (Tur)	70/30	95/5	100/0
88/12			
MP3 (Eng) / (Tur)	95/5	95/5	100/0
96/4			
<i>Total</i>	88/12	88/12	100/0
92/8			

The results in the table show that young people prefer to articulate the foreign acronyms by English sounds rather than Turkish ones. In all levels of education, the students prefer to articulate the acronyms by using the English sound system rather than the Turkish one.

It is clearly noticed in the table that the foreign acronyms *ADSL*, *MSN*, *USB*, *TTNET* and *MP3* are not preferred to be articulated with Turkish sounds even by the youngest group of the participants. It is highly possible that majority of these speakers do not know the full form these acronyms, but they still prefer to articulate them by English sounds.

All of the participants attending to university preferred to articulate the acronyms in English. None of the 100 responses indicated the use of the Turkish sound system. These results are very clear and reveal a lot about the language attitude and language use of the university students.

DISCUSSION

In the past, Turkish was mainly influenced by the languages like Arabic and Persian because of the religious and cultural connections with the counties these languages are spoken. Nowadays, especially by means of the technological developments, foreign language influence on Turkish is mainly from western languages, especially from English. As a result of the technological novelties in the

fields like computational technology and automotive industry, foreign elements have started to be seen very frequently in Turkish. Especially the young people who are learning English at schools and who are following the novelties in the technology are subject to the influence of the foreign elements very much while they are using their native tongue. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relation between educational level of the young people and the use of foreign elements in Turkish by them. It was hypothesized that the age and educational level of the young people are very influential on their use of the foreign elements that enter in their native tongue through the technological novelties. In other words, the students at primary school were supposed to use the Turkish counterparts of the foreign elements that enter into Turkish through computer technology and automotive industry relatively more compared with the students in the upper levels of education. Another aim of this study was to assess the success and acceptance of the Turkish words that have been produced to replace the borrowed items.

When the data gathered in the study were analyzed, it was clearly noticed that the participants preferred the foreign elements relatively more than their Turkish counterparts; however it would not be right to neglect the acceptance of the Turkish counterparts by the young people wholly. What had been hypothesized before starting the study was supported by the data analyzed. It was noticed that young learners who are attending to primary school use Turkish counterparts of the foreign elements relatively more than their elders. A great majority of the university students preferred to use the borrowed items rather than their Turkish counterparts. Hence, when the age and educational level of the participants increase, so do their preferences for the borrowed items. The reason for this situation might be that they become more proficient in English language in time and they become more acquainted with the foreign words. Besides, by getting older, using foreign elements in their native tongue might be viewed as more prestigious for them.

When the test items are analyzed individually, it is noticed that a great majority of the participants preferred to use the Turkish word in the case of *file / dosya*. The four participants who preferred the foreign element are the ones who are attending to University, which is a significant finding in the study. The other students in the lower levels of education did not prefer to use *file*. Since their level of English is higher than other students, university students prefer to use the foreign elements more frequently.

As for the case of *rüzgarlık / spoyler*, the Turkish item was much more preferable for the participants compared to the foreign element. The reason for this situation may be that the term *spoyler* was not acquainted for them so they preferred to use its Turkish counterpart which is far more meaningful for them. This means that the correspondent term has been successfully developed before this borrowing fully entered into Turkish. However, it is not possible to draw the same conclusion for the foreign elements *chat*, *mouse*, *laptop*, *airbag*, *sunroof*, and *distributor*. They were preferred more than their Turkish counterparts. The terms *limit* and *sınır* seem to be equally preferred by the young people in Turkey.

In the articulation of the foreign acronyms, the students in all levels of education preferred to articulate the foreign acronyms with English sounds rather than Turkish sounds. The difference among the variables was very clear. In all levels of education, the students preferred to articulate the acronyms in English rather than Turkish. Especially in the university level this choice was far more dominant. None of the University students preferred to articulate them in Turkish. Especially the articulation of the acronym *USB* was very noteworthy; none of the sixty participants preferred to articulate it by Turkish sounds, which was an important finding of this study. These results are very revealing about the language preferences of the young people in Turkey. They have a tendency to use the foreign sound systems for the articulation of the acronyms.

CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal how technological novelties in Western world increase the number of loanwords in our language. It is apparent that majority of these borrowed items could not be replaced with Turkish words yet. It is also certain that some of the Turkish words that have been produced to replace the foreign borrowings are not adequately introduced to young people.

In the study, it was observed that the frequency of loan word usage increases in parallel with the age and educational level of the young people. That is to say, when the age and educational level of the young people increase, so do their preferences for foreign words to Turkish ones. The reason for this situation might be that they become more acquainted with the foreign language in time and using foreign words in their speeches might appear to be more prestigious for them.

This study was carried out on sixty participants. In further studies, the number of the participants and the number of the borrowed items may be increased in order to be able to make a more detailed analysis of the issue. Besides, in this study only the young people who are attending to the primary school, high school and university have been chosen as the participants of the study. The other age groups were kept out of the study. Further researches can be carried out on these age groups as well.

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