



## Book Review: Teaching Turkish Grammar to Foreigners

### Kitap İncelemesi: Yabancılara Türkçe Dil Bilgisi Öğretimi

Elif ERMAĞAN\* 

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**ABSTRACT:** In this study, Prof. Dr. Fatma Bölükbaş Kaya's work titled "Teaching Turkish Grammar to Foreigners" is aimed to introduce. This book consists of three main parts. In the first part of the book, information about the concept and types of grammar is given, and the place of grammar in teaching Turkish to foreigners is explained. The author included the section "Should grammar be taught in classes?" with the intention of addressing this inquiry. In the second part of the book, the answer to the question of which grammar subject should be taught at what level is sought. Here, the author is drawing on both the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages and the typological features of Turkish. In the third part of the book, how to teach grammar subjects of all levels is given. In this section, examples are presented by giving information about the meaning of grammatical structures, how to teach, which techniques to apply, and important points to be considered.

**Keywords:** Teaching Turkish to foreigners, book introduction, teaching grammar.

**ÖZ:** Bu çalışmada Prof. Dr. Fatma Bölükbaş Kaya'nın "Yabancılara Türkçe Dil Bilgisi Öğretimi" adlı eserinin tanıtımı amaçlanmıştır. Bu kitap üç ana bölümden oluşmaktadır. Kitabın birinci bölümünde dil bilgisi kavramı ve türleri hakkında bilgi verilerek, dil bilgisinin yabancılara Türkçe öğretiminde yeri açıklanmıştır. Yazarın bu bölüme yer vermesinin nedeni, "Derlerde dil bilgisi öğretilmeli midir?" sorusuna cevap aramaktır. Kitabın ikinci bölümünde ise hangi dil bilgisi konusu hangi düzeyde öğretilmelidir sorusunun cevabı aranmıştır. Yazar burada, Diller İçin Avrupa Ortak Öneriler Çerçevesi'ni ve Türkçenin tipolojik özelliklerini temel almıştır. Kitabın üçüncü bölümünde ise tüm seviyelere ait dil bilgisi konularının nasıl öğretileceğine yer verilmiştir. Burada dil bilgisi yapılarının anlamı, nasıl öğretileceği, hangi tekniklerin uygulanacağı ve dikkat edilmesi gereken noktalarla ilgili bilgi verilerek örnekler sunulmuştur.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Yabancılara Türkçe öğretimi, kitap tanıtımı, dil bilgisi öğretimi

\* Dr., İstanbul Medeniyet University, İstanbul, Türkiye, [elif.ermagan@medeniyet.edu.tr](mailto:elif.ermagan@medeniyet.edu.tr), <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2827-0155>

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Different types of grammar books, including pedagogical, functional, and prescriptive, have been published specifically for teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The aim of all of them is to teach the target language, Turkish and Turkish grammar, effectively.

However, upon examining the literature, it has been noted that no book comprehensively addresses the topics of grammar at all language levels ranging from A1 to C1 while also detailing the instruction of each individual grammar topic. Working as a faculty member at Istanbul Cerrahpaşa University, Prof. Dr. Fatma Bölükbaş Kaya's book titled "Teaching Turkish Grammar to Foreigners" claims to fill the aforementioned gap in the literature. This book has been prepared primarily on the basis of the idea that it is necessary to teach grammar in teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The book delves into the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching Turkish grammar to Foreigners within the scope of teaching Turkish as a foreign language.

The book was published by the Kültür-Sanat Press in 2021. It consists of three sections titled "Foreign Language Teaching and Grammar," "Teaching Turkish to Foreigners and Turkish Grammar," and "Teaching Grammar Subjects."

Bölükbaş Kaya started with the question of what grammar is in the first chapter. She deduced common items based on grammar definitions put forth by different scholars. In this way, presented a concise overview of grammar to the reader. After explaining different definitions of grammar, she gave information about different types of grammar. The author, who includes 14 types of grammar, draws a general picture in the reader's mind by defining each type of grammar and certain features. Afterwards, it reflects why grammar is necessary for foreign language teaching, mainly from the learner's point of view. Based on the literature, it presents the benefits of knowing the grammar of the target language for the learner. Later, the author underlines the importance of the triad of form, meaning, and usage in grammar, which will form a basis for effective language use for the learner. While she supports the literature that focusing on only one of these three does not provide effective language learning, she explains with examples that a method that includes all of them should be adopted. In the last title of the first chapter, some suggestions and explanations about grammar teaching are given by the author for the instructors. This list consists of the following recommendations. Firstly, grammar should be taught as native speakers use it, integrated with other language skills. Secondly, teaching should be done in the target language without trying to teach all that is known. Thirdly, one problem should be focused on the general rules, not the details or exceptions. Fourthly, the examples given should have real-life counterparts. Fifthly, basic sentence patterns should be taught without grammatical explanations. Sixthly, after a subject has been fully taught, it should be moved to another subject. Finally, new grammatical structures and words should be taught through previously learned ones, and students' grammatical errors should be corrected immediately, not left for later. Additionally, it is essential to measure only the intended feature during the process of measurement.

The second part is teaching Turkish to foreigners and Turkish Grammar. This main title is designed over three sub-titles. These topics are Language Levels According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, Subject Ranking in Grammar Teaching, and Grammar Teaching in Turkish as a Foreign Language Books.

In the first title, there is the function of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages, its place in language teaching, and briefly why it was prepared. Then, the author gives a summary table of the linguistic competences that basic, independent, and competent language users should have. The first title has two sub-titles. These are linguistic competences, another is grammatical proficiency, and grammatical accuracy. It indicates how many components linguistic competences consist of, referring to their place in the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages. In the other chapter, grammar proficiency is defined, and it is explained which categories should be considered according to the European Recommendations Framework for Languages and has included a set of steps for grammatical accuracy.

She specifically states that the subject order in Turkish should be answered by experts in the field. She expressed that both the grammatical areas of the European Recommendations Framework for Languages and the typological features of Turkish should be taken into account.

The second title of the second chapter is "Subject Ordering in Language Teaching," and grammar topics for all levels are shown in the table in the form of summary explanations. The author first describes the typological features of Turkish; presents them in items as phonologic, morphologic, and syntactic. She states that these items should be taken into account in the development of grammar content and strongly emphasizes the importance of the European Recommendation Framework for Languages in setting content. In addition, she states that the achievements here prevent the formation of big differences between institutions in language teaching in general and grammar teaching in particular.

The last title of the second part is "Teaching Grammar in Turkish as a Foreign Language Books." Textbooks are the primary material used in teaching language in classrooms, and instructors typically rely on them as a guide to teach grammar topics at different proficiency levels. Therefore, Bölükbaş Kaya examined how grammar is included in Turkish as a foreign language books in order to raise awareness for those who teach Turkish as a target language. The author has reached the conclusion that although different approaches are preferred in all of the books she has examined, grammar is included in all of them.

Another remarkable topic in this section is the teaching of grammar in Turkish as a foreign language teaching books. The author, who examined Turkish as a foreign language teaching set in terms of teaching grammar, identified three approaches. First, the sets that do not include grammar in the book and meet this need with a separate grammar book (e.g., Gazi University TÖMER's Turkish Teaching Set), secondly, the sets that give a table about grammar rules in the unit and also the end of the book (e.g., Ankara University TÖMER's New Hittite Set), and the third one is the sets that give explanations about the grammar rules in the unit (e.g., the New Istanbul Set).

Another point that the author draws attention to is that the content of the same subject is arranged differently in the textbooks. By providing examples and justification, this approach helps raise awareness among teachers and creates a foundation for instructors to question their own teaching practices. Another point that Bölükbaş Kaya emphasizes is the difference of terms in grammar subjects in the textbooks. In the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language, it is stated that the

terms used in the books create difficulties for the learner due to the education and different traditions of the authors of the books. The examples given from the textbooks on this subject embody this situation in the eyes of the user.

The third part is about teaching grammar subjects. The author, who divided the grammar topics into levels, examined the grammar topics at 6 levels from A1 to C1.

To demonstrate, the author who used the verb -mAK structure for the A1 level states that this structure is used to indicate a request. While describing this structure, the subject of nominalisation should not be explained and should start with direct examples. It states that after the usage and information are comprehended, it is necessary to proceed to explanations about the formal features of the structure. The author states that the -mek or -mek form should be used according to the last vowel of the verb to which the suffix -mAk is added. In the negative use of the structure, she emphasizes that the negative suffix should be added to the verb "-iste," not to the suffix "mAk." She emphasizes that this structure should be reinforced by speaking and writing about positive, question, and negative uses.

Here, the author referred to a list using the names of grammatical terms. The author gave brief information about each grammatical structure and gave information about how to explain that structure to the learner. In these explanations, based on her own experiences, it was thought at which points the learner could make mistakes. In this book, the presentation of the lectures and activities applied by the author as an example will ensure that the book is seen as a reliable material source for the instructors who will use the book and those who will do academic studies. The experience of the author, the points that need to be emphasized, and the places that need to be paid attention to.

It was also stated which techniques should be used in teaching. The author proposes the induction technique instead of direct grammar teaching. It recommends that the learner proceeds to the grammar explanation after the examples or speaking and listening and the grammatical subject are intuited. In addition, the in-class activities that will teach the subject are explained in detail and clearly by the author. In this respect, it also serves as a guidebook for activity and material design for instructors. It can be considered a grammar handbook, especially for those who are preparing to become instructors with no experience in this field. After explaining the subject through various activities and language skills practices, the author emphasizes making sure that the subject is understood by the learners. Then, she recommends moving on to grammatical explanations about the formal dimension of the structures.

This book has the feature of being the first book that gives together how to teach grammar topics for all levels, from the perspective of an experienced teacher, how to start the subject, how to continue, what activities and practices will make the subject active and how to teach the structure formally. In this respect, it is expected to form a basis for studies on grammar teaching.

## References

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