

## 95. Vocational foreign language teaching and translation activity in the Ottoman Empire: The case of dragomans<sup>1</sup>

Hatice DELİBAŞ<sup>2</sup>

**APA:** Delibaş, H. (2023) Vocational foreign language teaching and translation activity in the Ottoman Empire: The case of dragomans. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (37), 1484-1493. DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.1406980.

### Abstract

This research is an attempt adopting an interdisciplinary approach integrating historical analysis with cultural and translation studies by offering insights regarding language teaching. The aim of the paper is to explore language learning and translation activities of interpreters known as dragomans in Ottoman Empire by shedding light on their vital role in cultural interactions and diplomatic relations. Starting from 15<sup>th</sup> century, European states including Venice (1551), France (1669), Austria (1754) and England (1814) established vocational language schools in Istanbul in order to foster their relations with Ottoman government. It is thought that interpreters completing their education in these schools served as agents between Ottoman authorities and European nations in order to facilitate diplomatic and commercial relations. Correspondingly, these cultural ambassadors are thought to have an intensive education regarding different aspects of culture and history of empire in the schools called *School of Infants*. Besides their diplomatic skills, it is believed that dragomans being experts in Turkish language and culture with their language proficiency have managed to introduce history, literature, culture and daily life of Ottoman Empire by translating significant works into European languages. In this context, this paper reveals key positions of these translators by providing examples of language teaching and learning methods, textbooks, dictionaries used by dragomans as intermediaries of culture and language between Ottoman State and European powers. It is expected that the study highlighting multi-faceted roles of translators and synthesizing different notions such as language, culture and diplomacy will contribute to linguistics, translation studies and international relations.

**Keywords:** Dragoman, translation, culture, language, Ottoman Empire

### Osmanlı İmparatorluğunda mesleki yabancı dil öğretimi ve çeviri faaliyeti: Dragoman örneği<sup>3</sup>

#### Öz

<sup>1</sup> It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were followed during the preparation process of this study and all the studies utilised are indicated in the bibliography.

**Conflict of Interest:** No conflict of interest is declared.

**Funding:** No external funding was used to support this research.

**Copyright & Licence:** The authors own the copyright of their work published in the journal and their work is published under the CC BY-NC 4.0 licence.

**Source:** It is declared that scientific and ethical principles were followed during the preparation of this study and all the studies used are stated in the bibliography.

**Similarity Report:** Received - Turnitin, Rate: 4

**Ethics Complaint:** editor@rumelide.com

**Article Type:** Research article, Article Registration Date: 19.09.2023-Acceptance Date: 20.12.2023-Publication Date: 21.12.2023; DOI: 10.29000/rumelide.1406980

**Peer Review:** Two External Referees / Double Blind

<sup>2</sup> Öğr. Gör. Dr., Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli Üniveristesi, Yabancı Diller Yüksekokulu / Dr., Ankara Hacı Bayram Veli University, School of Foreign Languages (Ankara, Türkiye), hatice.delibas@hbv.edu.tr, ORCID ID: 0000-0003-3539-2350, ROR ID: https://ror.org/04pd3v454, ISNI: 0000 0004 0595 4604, Crossreff Funder ID: 501100014801

<sup>3</sup> Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduğu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaların kaynakçada belirtildiği beyan olunur.

**Çıkar Çatışması:** Çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir.

Adres | Address

*RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*

*RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies*

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com

e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,

tel: +90 505 7958124

phone: +90 505 7958124

Bu arařtırma, dil öğretilimine iliřkin içgörüler sunarak tarihsel analizi kültür ve çeviri arařtırmaları ile bütünleřtiren disiplinler arası bir yaklařımı benimsemektedir. Bu bağlamda bu makalenin amacı, Osmanlı İmparatorluęunda dragoman olarak adlandırılan çevirmenlerin kültürel etkileşimler ve diplomatik iliřkilerdeki hayati rollerine ışık tutarak dil öğrenme ve çeviri faaliyetlerini incelemektir. 15. yüzyıldan itibaren, Venedik (1551), Fransa (1669), Avusturya (1754) ve İngiltere (1814) gibi Avrupa ülkeleri, Osmanlı İmparatorluęu ile iliřkilerini geliřtirmek ve sürdürmek amacıyla İstanbul'da mesleki dil eğitimi okulları kurmuřlardır. Bu okullarda eğitimlerini tamamlayan tercümanların Osmanlı Devleti ile Avrupa ülkeleri arasında diplomatik ve ticari bağları geliřtirmek amacıyla aracılık görevi üstlendikleri düşünölmektedir. Bu bakımdan dil hakimiyetleri ile Türk dili ve kültüründe uzman olan bu kültür elçilerinin *School of Infants* adı verilen dil okullarında imparatorluk kültürünün ve tarihinin farklı yönleriyle ilgili yoğun bir eğitim aldıkları düşünölmektedir. Diplomatik becerilerinin yanı sıra bu tercümanlar, Osmanlı İmparatorluęu'nun kültürünü, tarihini, edebiyatını, gündelik yařantısını da anlatan önemli eserleri Avrupa dillerine çevirerek Osmanlı İmparatorluęunun kültürünü Avrupa'da tanıtmayı bařarmıřlardır. Buradan hareketle bu arařtırma, tercümanların kullandıkları dil öğretilme ve öğrenme teknikleri, ders kitapları, sözlüklerden örnekler sunarak dragomanların Osmanlı İmparatorluęu ile Avrupa arasında kültür ve dil aracısı olarak nasıl hayati bir role sahip olduklarını ortaya çıkarmaktadır. Çevirmenlerin çok yönlü rollerini vurgulayan ve dil öğretilimi, diplomasi ve kültür gibi farklı kavram ve nosyonları bir araya getiren bu çalışmanın dilbilim, çeviribilim ve uluslararası iliřkiler alanlarına katkı sağlayacağı düşünölmektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Dragoman, çeviri, kültür, dil öğretilimi, Osmanlı İmparatorluęu

## 1.Introduction

Translation profession has played a crucial role between nations to facilitate the international ties and improve the communication throughout history. In Ottoman Empire, for instance, translators and interpreters known as dragomans served as mediators between European diplomats and Ottoman authorities with their language expertise and skills to create efficient commercial, cultural and economic relations in the realm of diplomacy (Miović-Perić, 2001). It is worth noting that interactions between Ottoman state and Western powers could have been more complex and inclined to misunderstandings and even contradictions without dragomans' assistance and service in that era.

How these skilled people were called refers to their different responsibilities and various roles in the Ottoman state. However, the main difference regarding names is that translators or interpreters serving for foreign embassies and countries were called "dragoman" while the names such as "tercüman", "dilmaç" or "tilmaç" were used for the ones who work for Ottoman authorities. Besides these distinctive differences between translators, common point for these people called either "tarjuman", "tercüman" or "dragoman" during Ottoman rule is that they were not only translators who transfer knowledge from one language to another one but also culture ambassadors and intermediaries who were instrumental in assisting any kind negotiations regarding trade, culture and diplomacy.

**Finansman:** Bu arařtırmayı desteklemek için dıř fon kullanılmamıřtır.

**Telif Hakkı & Lisans:** Yazarlar dergide yayınlanan çalışmaları telif hakkına sahiptirler ve çalışmaları CC BY-NC 4.0 lisansı altında yayımlanmaktadır.

**Kaynak:** Bu çalışmanın hazırlanma sürecinde bilimsel ve etik ilkelere uyulduęu ve yararlanılan tüm çalışmaları kaynakçada belirtildięi beyan olunur.

**Benzerlik Raporu:** Alındı – iThenticate, Oran: %4

**Etik Őikayeti:** editor@rumelide.com

**Makale Türü:** Arařtırma makalesi, **Makale Kayıt Tarihi:** 19.09.2023-**Kabul Tarihi:** 20.12.2023-**Yayın Tarihi:** 21.12.2023; **DOI:** 10.29000/rumelide.1406980

**Hakem Deęerlendirmesi:** İki Dıř Hakem / Çift Taraflı Körlleme

Adres

Address

RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Arařtırmaları Dergisi

RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com  
tel: +90 505 7958124

e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,  
phone: +90 505 7958124

These extremely skilled people are known for indispensable part of Ottoman diplomacy as their “interpretive work was crucial in procuring for foreign diplomats a current store of knowledge about Ottoman politics and society” (Rothman, 2009). On the other hand, one of the interesting facts regarding this challenging profession is that dragomans were also necessity to conduct all kinds of foreign affairs between the Ottoman government and European states since officials in Ottoman State did not have the inclination to learn European languages (Lewis, 2000).

Considering this aspect, it is certain that several European states, primarily Venetians, established language institutions called *School of Infants* where Turkish language was thought as a foreign language in great depth to train interpreters in order to carry out and strengthen international relations. In this sense, this paper attempts to explore language learning and translation activities of dragomans in Ottoman State by shedding light on their critical role in cultural interactions and diplomatic relations. Based on this purpose, the following questions are addressed throughout the research:

- What are the language learning activities and practices of dragomans to acquire Turkish language?
- How do dragomans contribute to translation and interpretation studies and Turkish literature with their translation activities?

By shedding light on the research questions above, the study is expected to offer insights on the roles of dragomans as cultural ambassadors, language experts and mediators. Even though there are various studies on dragomans (Ağildere, 2010; Driessen, 2013; Dökmeci, 2018; Muslu, 2020; Rothman, 2021; Tijana Krstić, 2009) what makes this research unique is that it offers an interdisciplinary approach providing insights on cultural translation, diplomacy and foreign language learning practices with potential repercussions regarding globalization and current international relations.

## 2.Methodology

This paper aims to provide a comprehensive analysis on the role of dragomans in Ottoman government by exploring their foreign language learning and translation activities through implementing an interdisciplinary approach. This holistic approach combines historical, cultural and linguistic aspects of vocational foreign language education of dragomans along with their translation activities. Thus, the study creates a distinct look into impact of dragomans in Ottoman state.

## Research design

This study is qualitative research. In this context, document analysis that is “is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents” was used throughout the research (Bowen, 2009). This analysis technique requires the evaluation and interpretation of resources or data in order to form an understanding on any topic in cultural and historical contexts.

## Data collection

In this research, primary and secondary sources were benefitted together in order to reveal vocational foreign language learning and translation activities of dragomans. In this context, while archival documents such as letters, personal notes and dictionaries were utilized as primary sources, various academic books, articles on dragomans were used as secondary sources.

## Data Analysis

Data analysis of this research is based on document analysis conducted through analysing and interpretation of documents, primary and secondary sources within the context of aim of the study and

Adres | Address

*RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*

*RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies*

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com  
tel: +90 505 7958124

e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,  
phone: +90 505 7958124

research questions. In this regard, the evaluation of primary and secondary sources was carried out with an interdisciplinary approach by combining key themes regarding language learning and translation activities of dragomans with culture, language and translation fields.

### 3. Dragomans as Culture Ambassadors and Interpreters in the Ottoman Empire

The expression "dragoman," which derived from old Turkish "dilmaç" or "tilmaç," words is transferred as "tercüman" to modern Turkish. When historical development of the word "dragoman" is considered, it is observed that different versions of it was used in various languages. For instance, it is used as "torcimani" or "dragumanus" in Latin, "dragomanno" in Italian, "drugument" in French, "turciman" in Spanish, "dragamaun" in Byzantine Greek (Balci, 2013). Based on this, it could be stated that dragomans named differently by numerous nations throughout history also played a central role in shaping diplomatic and political development between Ottoman diplomats and European authorities. Even if dragoman profession is one of the highest positions with excellent living conditions within the boundaries of Empire, it is also an occupation with challenges as between being death and life since even the smallest act of treachery in matters of state might lead to death or torture extremely quickly at that time (Lewis, 2000).

Dragomans filling the huge language and culture gap between European powers and Ottoman authorities are known for being crucial figures of Ottoman and European history. Even though the main responsibility of dragomans is to serve as interpreters and translators between two parties especially related to commerce, roles and positions of dragomans in charge of life-threatening and high-level responsibilities depend on their function in Ottoman society. Regarding this aspect, the activities of dragomans could be divided into two main categories. The ones in the first group are known for Grand Dragomans (Bab-ı Ali Baş Tercümanı) whose titles were akin to ambassadors or foreign minister while foreign mission dragomans that were equal to diplomats (Abbasbeyli, 2015). These dragomans are known as "chief negotiator" for tasks and duties such as translating and interpreting for Sultan and Grand Vizier during meetings concerning state matters.

The second type of dragomans, on the other hand, served as interpreters translating documents as well as accompanying ambassadors and attending meetings with administrative officials. Besides these, it is known that there were dragomans in the Ottoman state with various titles and responsibilities. For example, dragoman of porte (Bab-ı Ali Tercümanı) serves as chief dragoman working with embassies and diplomats in capital city while dragoman of customs in the ports were responsible for preventing high tax demands. In addition, legal dragomans were working in courts related to cases of foreigners or some dragomans were serving in shipyards for dealing with commerce by helping merchants. Beyond all these types of dragomans, it could be stated that there were also dragomans who facilitate and ensure safety of foreign travellers as guides or protectors (Abbasbeyli, 2015).

In light of the various roles of dragomans in the Empire, it is reasonable to infer those dragomans had responsibilities and duties in almost any institution of Ottoman Empire. This means that dragomans were indispensable part of Ottoman rule and society due to their communication skill, expertise in multicultural structure of Ottoman state by facilitating every aspect of life regarding especially foreign affairs. Training such talented professionals could be, on the other hand, both a challenge in terms of carrying out the profession between death and life as well as long years of intensive training to be a dragoman and a privilege in society providing them power and various advantages. In this sense, following part focuses on training and foreign language learning and teaching activities of dragomans.

#### Adres | Address

RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Arařtırmaları Dergisi

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com  
tel: +90 505 7958124

RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies

e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,  
phone: +90 505 7958124

#### 4. Dragomans' Training Policies and Language Acquisition Process

The borders of the Ottoman State reaching three continents and its increasing power over the world made Turkish the language of the Empire that should be learned by various states and countries having diplomatic and commercial relations with the Ottoman government. As a result of this case, “as numerous studies have shown, the early modern period witnessed an intensifying European awareness of and fascination with things Turkish” (Rothman, 2013, p. 394).

In order to carry out and foster these relations, western countries established language schools where Turkish language was taught and trained young and talented translators who could be faithful to their nations. In this context, Republic of Venice is known as the first one established a foreign language school named as Giovanni Della Lingua (1551) in Istanbul in order to raise dragoman apprentices (*dil oğlanları*) who will be fluent in eastern languages such as Persian and Arabic but especially in Turkish. Following Venice, the states such as France (1669), Poland (1766) and England (1814) established Turkish language schools in Istanbul to train translators (Ağildere, 2010; Aydın, 2007; Eruz, 2010).

Upon reviewing the schools' dragoman apprentice selecting procedures are analysed, the first thing that draws attention the requirements for being a dragoman apprentice. According to Venetian school example, the most important criteria are knowledge, dedication and loyalty (Dökmeci, 2018). The main aim of these schools is to train loyal translators among their own citizens due to trust issues with previous translator coming from non-Muslim Ottoman subjects such as Greeks from Phanar (*Fenerli Rum Aileleri*) and those with Levantine ancestry. Thus, they would communicate with Ottoman authorities with their own translators who were faithful to them (Bilim, 1990; Castiglione, 2014).

Besides these, one another criterion to be accepted these schools is kinship ties. Hitzel (1995) mentions that the Ministry of Maritime Affairs made a decision about apprentice dragoman for these schools would be chosen predominantly through kinship (Çelebi, 2021). Furthermore, one of the other important criteria to be accepted in these schools is the age. In this context, it could be stated that starting age for dragoman candidates was between 14 and 18 ages for the Republic of Venice. For the apprentices from Venice, the age could be even younger “as their name suggests, most *Giovani di lingua* started their apprenticeship in their teens. Initial legislation in 1551 set apprentices' minimum age at twenty, but over the years, children as young as eight or ten were regularly admitted” (Rothman, 2021, p. 35). Parallel to age policy of Venetians, the average age for French apprentices was between 8 and 17. The reason why apprentices were chosen at a very early age could be because early age might be an advantage to acquire language rapidly and also in order to reduce training expenses and lastly to take advantage of the very costly education for an extended period (Rothman, 2021).

Language learning process of dragoman apprentices is challenging and quite long. In line with their education, primary expectation is to have dragomans who have excellent level of proficiency in not only target language but also source language. In order to manage this aim, various methods have been tried. In this context, it is believed that some of the dragoman apprentices were taken courses in France before they arrived the embassy in Istanbul while apprentices from Venice and Austro-Hungarian were sent directly to Istanbul to start their language education. The education and training process consist of various stages and practices. First of all, apprentices are thought to be divided into groups in terms of their language levels. The language education received by apprentices is thought to be between 5 and 7 years. enriched with reading, writing and translation activities with the guidance of experienced language educators. At the end of this intensive and costly education, apprentices are believed to take a proficiency exam in which if they failed, their entire training would be wasted and they would be repatriated (Çelebi, 2021).

Adres | Address

*RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*

*RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies*

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com  
tel: +90 505 7958124

e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,  
phone: +90 505 7958124

Regarding language teaching method they use in apprentice schools, it could be stated that grammar-translation method (GTM) in which the main emphasis is translation of literary texts was adopted (Ağildere, 2010). In this teacher-centred method, grammar and translation are focal points in teaching a foreign language and learners are expected to become familiar with the grammar of their native language by being exposed to grammar rules of target language (Larsen-Freeman, 2000). It seems like the world famous *Kelile and Dimne Stories* were used to teach Turkish with this method during the education of the apprentices in these language institutions according to a writing sample of a letter below dated 16 August 1813 from a dragoman apprentice named Cardin (Ağildere, 2010):

“My faithful *Humayun Name* followed me in Büyükdere as well. We read it every morning with Mr. Outrey (Embassy translator). After he has me print a piece, he attaches its translation. Mr. Ducauroy (Dragoman apprentices Headmaster and Head Translator of the Embassy) is also sometimes kind enough to enlighten us and explain our difficulties one by one” (Ağildere, 2010, p. 698).

As demonstrated by the letter example above, it is apparent that literary works were used and experienced translators offered help to overcome translation difficulties. It could be inferred that grammar translation method overlaps with language learning activities above since this method is based on reading and translation of literary texts in order to identify and internalize grammar rules and vocabulary of target text (Tetzner, 2004).

Along with this approach, it may also be argued that exposure to the target language and living in a location where it is spoken by native speakers are useful in aiding dragoman apprentices improve their speaking abilities. Furthermore, it is thought that these apprentices were also supported by basic grammar and speaking handbooks meeting daily needs. Some of the examples for these could be “*Guide de Conversation Turc-Français Allemand*” (Turkish-French-German conversation handbook) prepared by Cattergian in 1855, “*Guide de la Conversation Français-Turc a l’usage des voyageurs et des etudiants*” (French Turkish speaking handbook for travelers and students) prepared by Calfa in 1859 and “*Grammerie Elementaire de la Langue Turque suivie de la Dialogues Familiars*” (Basic grammar of the Turkish language and daily conversations) prepared by Mallauf in 1862 (Ağildere, 2010; Testa & Gautier, 1991).

Another crucial point that supports language education of these apprentices is that native Turkish instructors are employed for the courses. In this context, it is believed that Turkish courses were provided for four hours daily. At the end of the courses and after reaching a certain level in Turkish, the apprentices were provided internships in courts, consulates, shipyards along with other dragoman apprentices so that they could gain experience about how to negotiate and learn the art of diplomacy. Besides these, what contributed most to the education of dragoman apprentices is that they also had the opportunity to master simultaneous translation along with dragomans who were working for Ottoman government in the palace. (Çelebi, 2021). In this context, next part of the research focus on translation tasks and roles of dragomans in transculturation.

## 5. Dragomans’ Translation Activities and Roles in Transculturation

*Schools of Infants* established by Western different powers such as Venetians, French, Austrian, Polish and English in Istanbul have two main purposes. The first one is to enhance the commercial and diplomatic relations with Ottoman Empire. The second one, on the other hand, is to do research on Ottoman philosophy and science through translation to comprehend the essence of the *East* or *Orient*. In this perspective, it is possible to say that these schools contributed to the growth of the idea of orientalism by shaping the ideas such as “otherness”, “exoticism” or “idealisation” of the Ottoman Empire through travelogues and literary works (Said, 1979). Within this context, for instance, a book named “*Della Letteratura dei Turchi*” (On Ottoman Empire) written by the Venetian Baylos Giovanni

Adres | Address

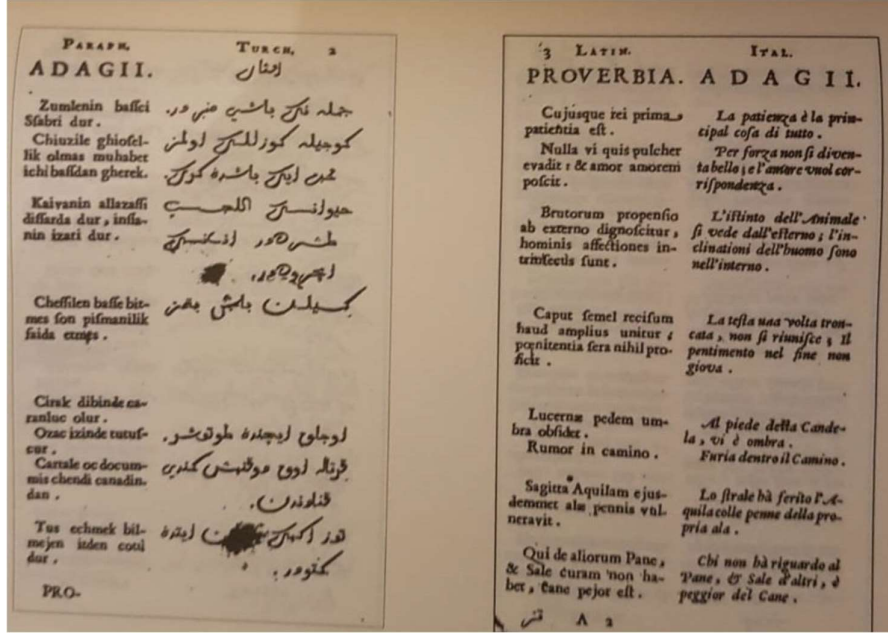
RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Arařtırmaları Dergisi

RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com  
tel: +90 505 7958124

e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,  
phone: +90 505 7958124

Donado regarding the literature of Ottoman state could be one of the first examples for Europeans to have an idea on literature of Ottoman state (Dökmeci, 2018). Besides this, Durmuş (2020) and Çelebi (2021) state that Donado formed a translation team and translated Turkish dictionaries and proverbs. Below is demonstrated a page of the book named “*Raccolta Curiosissima D’Adaggi Turcheschi*” (Interesting Compilation of Turkish Proverbs) regarding translation of Turkish proverbs:



Picture 1. Layout of a proverb book with translated samples (Çelebi, 2021).

The book illustrated in Picture 1 is 87 pages long and includes a total of 399 Turkish proverbs. As demonstrated in the Picture 1, the proverbs in Ottoman are located next to each other with their meanings or explanations.

Beyond the points mentioned above, one another aspect to take into account is that western countries have used translation as a tool to gain knowledge and explore the Ottoman cultural and political structure in order to explore the customs and cultural characteristics of multicultural and multilingual society of Ottoman. In this context, it could be stated that not only dragoman apprentices but also orientalist such as Antoine Galland and Francois Petis De La Croix contributed to translation activities considerably. For instance, the translation of “*Les Mille et une Nuits*” (One Thousand and One Night/ Arabian Nights) in 1701 by Galland has created such a significant impact in French literature that the tales were translated in various European languages by creating fashion of oriental tales during 18<sup>th</sup> century in Europe (Galland, 1704). Francois Petis De La Croix, on the other hand, is known for being in the Orient to fully understand the customs, art, languages, science and religions of people who live in the east. In this sense, Hitzel (1995) expresses that Jean de la Fontaine was inspired by not only Aisopos but also the fables that have eastern origins.

In addition to these, another orientalist named Guillaume Postel is acknowledged as the one who introduce Turkish language in French. Postel who was proficient in the languages such as Turkish, Armenian, Arabic and Greek wrote books justice systems and laws of Muslims and Turkish grammar books as well as translating Turkish folktales. The names of books mentioned are “*De la République des Turcs et la ou l’ocassion s’offrira des mœurs et loy de tous Muhamedistes*” (On the State of the Turks

Adres | Address

RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi

RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com  
tel: +90 505 7958124

e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,  
phone: +90 505 7958124

and partly on The Customs and Laws of the Muslims) and “*Des Histoires Orientales*” (the Stories of Orient) in 1575 (Hitzel, 1995).

In accordance with the books translated by dragoman apprentices, it could be stated that these books include various topics such as dictionaries, history, mysticism, Turkish grammar, literary texts, music, natural science and travelogues. Ağildere (2010) highlights the fact that these books translated by dragoman apprentices were both final thesis before they become a dragoman and also these translated books were sent to Royal Library's Oriental Language Works Collection in France. Ağildere also emphasizes that the number of these works in Turkish, Persian and Arabic were over 600 and formed the basis of Translation Studies in France (2010). Below demonstrated some of the works translated by dragoman apprentices.

| Author                      | The name of book  | Year |
|-----------------------------|---|------|
| J. B. Couet                 | “Phrases Turques et Françaises” (Türkçe ve Fransızca cümleler)  | 1712 |
| J. L. Clairambault          | “Histoire de Behram Gur, Roy de Perse” (The story of Iranian King Bahram Gur)   | 1741 |
| L. Dantan                   | “La vie et les miracles de Hadgi Isa, Caïmmécam d’Émir Sultan Muhammed Buhary”(Life and miracles of Hadji Isa, District Governor of Sultan Muhammad Buhari) | 1733 |
| B. Guinrand                 | “Vie de Tcheleby Hussam Eldin” (The life of Çelebi Hüsam Eldin)   | 1734 |
| J. B. Bérault and E. Roboly | “Différentes instructions d’un prophète apellé Mevlâna” (Various views of a prophet named Mevlâna)  | 1733 |
| Maltor                      | Recueil de différentes histoires turques (Collection of various Turkish stories)  | 1742 |
| D. Fornetty and Roustan     | “Histoires, contes et fables” (Stories, fairy tales and fables)   | 1742 |
| Wiet                        | “Recueil de différentes histoires terminées pour la plus part par une morale” (Collection of different stories ending for the most part with a moral)       | 1740 |

**Table 1.** Translated book examples by French Language School students (Ağildere, 2010).

As demonstrated in Table 1, books translated by dragoman apprentices include a broad spectrum of topics and represent a selective collection. This suggests that translations carried out in these schools contributed not only to gain knowledge about Turkish language but also can be considered as the foundation of Orientalism that represent biases and stereotypes regarding the East. In other words, it could reasonably be inferred that these translations have created an extensive impact on shaping the European perspective and perception of “Orient” in the West.

## 6. Conclusion

This research is an endeavour to explore the language learning practices of apprentice dragomans and translation activities carried out throughout their language acquisition journey. Within this framework, the results of this research highlight the significant role of dragomans in the realm of Ottoman Empire by applying an interdisciplinary approach. The study also underlines the fact that dragomans as agents and culture ambassadors in history had a significant role for ensuring communication in Ottoman Empire representing the tradition of multilingualism and multiculturalism. In this sense, the study highlights an aspect of dragomans that is not much emphasized before by offering significant insights on language education system in diplomacy and foreign language learning institutions called *Schools of*

Adres | Address

RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Arařtırmaları Dergisi

RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com  
tel: +90 505 7958124

e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,  
phone: +90 505 7958124



*Infants* as well as shedding light on examples of curricula, language teaching techniques, textbooks, dictionaries as well as translated works of dragomans on literature, art and society of Ottoman Empire. As a result of the study, it could be stated that dragomans contributed to the society in every aspect of daily life sometimes at the expense of their lives. In addition to this, this study is also valuable in that it sheds light on the origins of Orient studies and Orientalism by serving as catalyst between the notions of “West” and “East” and contributes to literature to raise cultural awareness regarding roots of cross-cultural communication with the case of dragomans by highlighting inseparable and complex interplay between culture, language and diplomacy. Based on the results of the study, it could be stated that taking practices of dragoman training policies and their language learning practices in history could be useful for improving modern departments of interpretive and translation studies and prepare translators and interpreters to be more sensitive for diverse and rapidly changing conditions of today.

### References

- Abbasbeyli, E. (2015). The role of dragomans in Ottoman Empire. *Aicc.net*.
- Ağıldere, S. T. (2010). XVIII. Yüzyıl Avrupa'sında yabancı dil olarak öğretimini önemi:Osmanlı İmparatorşuğunda Fransız dil oğlanları okulu. *Turkish studies*, 5(3), 693-704.
- Aydın, B. (2007). Divan-ı Hümayun Tercümanları ve Osmanlı Kültür ve. *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, 29, 41-76.
- Balcı, S. (2013). *Babilî Tercüme Odası*. İstanbul: Libra Kitapçılık ve Yayıncılık.
- Başbakanlık Osmanlı Arşivleri, İstanbul Ecnebi Defteri.
- Bilim, C. (1990). Tercüme Odası. *OTAM Ankara Üniversitesi Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi*, 1(1), 29-43.
- Bowen, G. A. (2009). Document Analysis as a Qualitative Research Method. *Qualitative Research Journal*, 9(2), 27-40.
- Castiglione, F. (2014). Levantine' Dragomans in Nineteenth Century Istanbul: The Pisanis, British and issues of Subjecthood. *Journal of Ottoman Studies*, 44, 169-95.
- Çelebi, M. (2021). Osmanlı devleti döneminde bir dil öğretim deneyimi olarak dil oğlanlar okulu (Yayımlanmamış yüksek lisans tezi). Fatih Sultan Mehmet Vakıf Üniversitesi.
- Dökmeci, V. (2018). İstanbul'daki Venedik dragomanları ve dil oğlanları (1551-1797) (Yayımlanmamış doktora tezi). İstanbul Üniversitesi.
- Driessen, H. (2013). Mediterranean Divides and Connections: The Role of Dragomans as Cultural Brokers. S. Jobs, & G. Mackenthun içinde, *Border-Crossers, Mediators, Go-Betweens*. Münster: Waxman.
- Durmuş, O. (2020). *Türkçenin Basılı İlk Atasözü Kitabı-G.B Donado'nun Derlediği Türk Atasözleri*. Ankara: Türk Kültürünü Araştırma Enstitüsü Yayınları.
- Eruz, S. (2010). *Çokkültürlülük ve çeviri:Osmanlı Devleti'nde çeviri etkinliği ve çeviri*. İstanbul: Multilingual.
- Galland, A. (1704). *Les mille et une nuits: Contes arabes*. Paris: Barbin.
- Hitzel, F. (1995). *Dil oğlanları ve tercümanlar*. İstanbul: Yapı Kredi Yayınları.
- Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Technique and Principles in Language Teaching*. Oxford Language Press.
- Lewis, B. (2000). *The muslim discovery of Europe*. W. W. Norton & Company.
- Lewis, B. (2004). *From Babel to Dragomans: Interpreting the middle east*. New York: Oxford Univeristy Press.
- Miović-Perić, V. (2001). Dragomans of the Dubrovnik Republic: Their Training and Career. 5, 81-94.

Adres | Address

RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi | RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies

e-posta: editor@rumelide.com | e-mail: editor@rumelide.com,  
tel: +90 505 7958124 | phone: +90 505 7958124

- Muslu, Z. (2020). Language and Power: The Dragoman as a Link in. *Journal of the history of law*, 22, 50-74.
- Rothman, E. N. (2009). Interpreting dragomans: Boundries and crossing in the early modern mediterranean. *Comparative studies in society and history*, 51(4), 771-800.
- Rothman, N. (2013). Dragomans and “Turkish Literature”:. *Oriente Moderno*, 93, 390-421.
- Rothman, N. (2021). *The dragoman renaissance: diplomatic interpreters and routes of orientalism*. Cornell Univeristy Press.
- Said, E. (1979). *Orientalism*. New York: Random House.
- Testa, M., & Gautier, A. (1991). Les drogmans au service de la France au Levant. *Revue d'histoire diplomatique*, 105(1/2), 7-101.
- Tetzner, R. (2004). *Grammar Translation Method*. Louton: University of Louton.
- Tijana Krstić. (2009). Of Translation and Empire: Sixteenth-Century Ottoman Imperial. C. Woodhead içinde, *In the Ottoman World* (130-42). London: Routledge.

**Adres | Address**

RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Arařtırmaları Dergisi | RumeliDE Journal of Language and Literature Studies

**e-posta:** editor@rumelide.com | **e-mail:** editor@rumelide.com,  
**tel:** +90 505 7958124 | **phone:** +90 505 7958124