

## **Loanwords – Turkish Grammar**

### **Grammar – Loanwords in the Turkish Language**

*Probably we all agree that there are plenty of loanwords in Turkish Language. That most of the time makes easy to understand the written language.*

It is estimated that there exists more than 7000 languages currently spoken in the World. Even though we do not realize, there are so many words in use borrowed from different languages. For instance, the word “coffee” etymologically comes from the Turkish word\* “ kahve “. Although the favorite drink of Turks is tea nowadays\*\*, Turkish coffee is an important drink in Turkish culture. So, cultural contacts, wars, and many other things decide which words to borrow in a language.

Let’s learn more about loanwords in the Turkish Language.

Many Persian and Arabic words have been borrowed as Islam was embraced by Turks. But in the nineteenth century, The Turkish Language Society (TDK) made a long list of “pure Turkish” words. Their purpose was to start a movement in favor of a simplification and purification. Shortly after, many loanwords were successfully replaced by their Turkish counterparts in literary language. Those turkish counterparts were found from the other Turkic languages.

In the midst of the nineteenth century, Turks started to borrow words from French, English & Italian. Today many loanwords are still used!

Let’s see some examples.

**Turkish:** Televizyon açıkken, gazete veya roman okumamalısın.

Translation: You shouldn't read newspaper (tr. gazete) or novel (tr. roman) when television (tr. televizyon) is on.

**Turkish:** Kız arkadaşını restorana, romantik bir akşam yemeğine çıkar.

Translation: Take your girlfriend to a restaurant (tr. restoran or lokanta) for a romantic dinner. (tr. Romantik)

Gazete < (fr. Gazette)

Roman < (fr. Roman)

Televizyon < (fr. Télévision)

Lokanta < (it. Locanda)

Restoran < (fr. Restaurant)

Romantik < (fr. Romantique)

### **Loanwords in Turkish Language**

Let's take a look at another phrase.

**Turkish:** Muharebe yıllarında yazılmış bütün kitapları okuduğumu zannediyorum.

Translation: I suppose that I read every book written at the time of war..

	<b>LOANWORD</b>	<b>TURKISH COUNTERPART</b>
<b>Muharebe</b>	(Arabic, not commonly used)	Savaş (Commonly used)
<b>Kitap</b>	(Arabic, commonly used)	
<b>Zan-</b>	(Arabic, commonly used)	San- (Commonly used)

Although a large number of Arabic loanwords can be seen in literary language, Turkish counterparts are more commonly used in Daily Turkish.

It is still being debated as to whether the language reform was the right thing to do. But it is obvious that it worked. Although many Persian and Arabic words are still used today, the new generation mostly uses the Turkish counterparts. On the other hand, with the increasing use of social media, many English words are in use such as Selfie, twit atmak. (tr. to Tweet) etc. And as you might guess, some people have concerns about loanwords, in the sense of “language contamination”.

NOTE: Most of the loanwords do not follow phonological patterns such as vowel harmony or consonant alternation.

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