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THE MEANING OF *HALK* IN TURKISH LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

The main aim of this paper is to present the position of *halk* as a word and as the basic concept of the national state and important element of Turkish democracy. To begin with, the condition of Turkish must be taken into consideration. In the present paper I will focus on the language used in the period of *Tanzimat*¹ (1839) till the end of the Ottoman Empire and on the Language Reform of the 1920s, as well as the period during which *halk* gained strong position and many public institutions were opened. Numerous factors connected with *halk* which influenced the language and progress of all reforms included the position of religion and Muslim clerics, who had strong impact on political system, culture and lifestyle.

Having adopted Islam, Turks took on new points of view, new civilization and at the same time had to introduce words which could express and explain it. Therefore Turks started using Arabic and Persian words, and more importantly not only theological but also vocabulary they believed they needed. Simultaneously they followed the Persian style of writing, which they set as a model. In fact, expansion degraded the status of Turkish in two ways: by reducing the proportion of Turkish speakers in the overall population of the empire, and by elevating the status of Persian and Arabic because of the increased importance of Islam, particularly after the adoption of the Caliphate².

The language used by the elite of the Empire was a conglomerate of Turkish, Arabic and Persian words and grammar, and was called *Osmalica* (Ottoman Turkish). The fact that throughout the centuries the Empire was the center of the Muslim world resulted in both positive and negative influences on the language. On the one hand, using lexis from other Muslim countries especially from Persian and Arabic, allowed them to develop unique literature and artistic expressions, particularly in poetry. While vocabulary was borrowed from both of these languages, the Persian grammar, especially word formation – *izafet* became the principal model of writing.

On the other hand, however, by the 18th century, the language became so complicated that hardly anyone, apart from the well educated elite, could seamlessly write and read it. Turkish words had practically disappeared from written language, since schooling based on teaching Arabic and Persian was the foundation of education. Pure Turkish was not used in writing any more, but only in spoken tradition and everyday life. “Language was a central feature of the duality in Ottoman society where two different cultural worlds existed. (...) As opposed to the world of folk culture, which is based on orally-transmitted literary traditions, the media of communication in palace culture were controlled by a relatively small group of Doctors of Islamic law (*ulema*), higher employees in central administration (...)”³

For ordinary people, language used by the elite and officials was totally incomprehensible. Similarly, language used by common people was not understandable for administration clerks or intellectuals writing poems.

In the Ottoman Empire, before socio-political changes began in the 19th century, people who lived on the territory belonging to the sultan constituted two groups. One of the groups consisted of intellectuals called *havas* (elite, people who saw themselves privileged). The other one was established by illiterate ordinary people called *avam* (the vulgar, lower class), who

were unfamiliar with the literary language used by *havas*. The overall illiteracy rate in the society was about 80 %. Throughout the years the illiterate seemed as an inferior, lower category of human, used for war and to collect taxes on them. The attempt at reducing the lack of education among *avam* was connected with the new ideology and with the creation of a national identity.

Intellectuals creating the new ideology and national identity appealed to large groups of people who did not see themselves as Ottomans. Neither their status, nor the language they used fitted the Ottomans. The problem with the uneducated population became apparent when in the 19th century a group of intellectuals turned to them, but they did not understand anything, neither the idea of the new policy, nor changes proposed. The reason was not only the problem with grasping the new ideas, but also the fact that the language used by the intellectual elite was incomprehensible to them.

In the late 19th and at the beginning of the 20th centuries it was characteristic that the new nationalist ideology and the new words used to explain this ideology were adopted to the language at a rapid rate, mostly from the West. New vocabulary started to be borrowed from French, and this trend was intensified at the beginning of the 20th century. Arabic and Persian borrowings started to be replaced by French ones⁴. On the other hand, there was a strong attempt at returning to the pure Turkish language. The efforts of contemporary intellectuals focused on simplification of the language by elimination of loanwords and return to pure Turkish, which survived in other Turkish languages⁵.

The change introduced by *Tanzimat* (improvement / regulation) and reform charter of 1856 was not understandable for people for two reasons: first, the people did not know about the changes, due to lack of education, second they did not understand those changes, because of the vocabulary and ideas of the new ideology. At the same time journalism developed in Turkey. Obviously, writers and editors wanted to be comprehensible for as many people as possible, but in order to achieve it they had to change the language which they used for writing.

From the beginning, all the reforms which took place in the Ottoman Empire were based on changes in the language. Language is one of the most important elements of national identity and this importance was well understood by the first president of Turkey. Although in the Ottoman Empire many changes had been initiated, none of them was rigorous and there had never been a strong and authoritarian leader as Mustafa Kemal Atatürk.

Until the 20th century, Arabic letters were used as the only type of writing, and new words were being borrowed from Arabic and Persian. Most importantly, not only new words were borrowed, but also idioms, expressions and syntactic structures, which endangered the nature of Turkish. Therefore, the first effort to change people's perception of their own status in the country was dominated by changes in the language.

“With thousands of words borrowed from Arabic and Persian, the Ottomans elite created a hybrid vocabulary which was quite inaccessible to all except the highly educated. The vast majority of the population, being illiterate, relied on the oral traditions of folk poems and tales. The conservative religious officials obstructed the introduction of the printing press until 1720's, more than 250 years behind its appearance in Europe. Even then, the number of books printed and distributed was rather small until the middle of the 19th century”⁶.

In the last twenty years of the 19th century, there were several viewpoints on the language issue. There were three main groups of intellectuals, who tried to force their opinions. One group wanted simplification (*sadeleştirme*) in writing and using pure Turkish words by eliminating non-Turkish elements and replacing it by Turkish ones, which were present in current speech. The other group wanted Turkized (*Türkçeleştirme*) language, which could be achieved by creating new words only according to Turkish grammar rules. However, in their opinion, borrowings from Arabic and Persian which were in use should be viewed as Turkish. The third group wanted purification of the language (*tafsiye*) by way of creating new words in accordance with grammatical rules belonging to different Turkish languages such as Kirghiz, Uzbek, Tatar.

The changes in the language were based on simplification of structures and reducing the number of new loanwords, especially from Arabic and Persian. This process lasted till the Language Reform in the 20th century and one can say that it is still in progress, though now the problem are the borrowings from English.

The new ideology needed a new language and this fact was emphasized by a new generation of intellectuals. Some names of the precursors are worth mentioning, e.g.: Ziya Gökalp, Namık Kemal, Ömer Seyfettin, Şemseddin Sami, Ali Suavi, and Ahmet Midhat. “The new policy undertook the task of creating a new social identity to replace the previous one with its emphasis on the Islamic community”⁷. In the history of Turkey, the language problem indicates efforts made to transform Turkish into an independent, national and modern language⁸. “The aim of Turkish language reform was to eliminate the Arabic and Persian grammatical features and the many thousands of Arabic and Persian borrowings that had long been part of the language. It comprised two different phases of activity: isolated attempts from the mid-nineteenth century on, undertaken mostly by private individuals and groups, and the government-inspired campaign that began around 1930”⁹.

According to article 18 of the Constitution of 1876, the official language was Turkish not Ottoman, and State employees had to know Turkish¹⁰.

In 1871, Ahmet Midhat published an article in which he did not use any Persian construction (*izafet*), which was unusual for written intellectual language:

“En evvel kalem sahiblerine şunu sormak isterim ki, bizim kendimize mahsus bir lisanımız yok mudur? Türkistan’da söylenmekte bulunan Türkçeyi gösterecekler, öyle değil mi? Hayır, o lisan bizim lisanımız değildir. Bundan altı yedi asır mukaddem bizim lisanımız idi, fakat şimdi değil. O Türkçe bizim lisanımız olmadığı gibi Arabî ve Farisî dahi lisanımız değildir.”

“The first thing I should like to ask our writers is, don’t we have a language of our own? They will point to the Turkish spoken in Turkestan, won’t they? No, that is not our language. It was, six of seven centuries ago, but not now. That Turkish is not our language, nor are Arabic and Persian our language”¹¹.

In 1881, Şemseddin Sami’s article “Lisân-ı Türkî (Osmânî)” was published. As he said: “Devlet-i Osmaniyyenin zîr-i tâbiyyetinde bulunan kâffe-i akvam efradına dahi ‘Osmanlı’ denilüp, ‘Türk’ ismi ise Adriyatik denizi sevhilinden Çin hududuna ve Sibiryâ’nın iç taraflarına kadar münteşir olan bir ümmet-i azîmenin unvanıdır. Bunun için, bu unvan,... müstevcib-i fahr ü mesâr olmak ıktıza eder”. – “So, too, members of all the peoples subject to the Ottoman dynasty are called Ottomans, while ‘Turk’ is the title of a great community extending from the shores of the Adriatic to the borders of China and the interior of Siberia. This title, therefore... should be a reason for the pride and joy”¹².

Moreover, in 1897 another modern Turkish intellectual – Mehmet Emin (Yurdakul) published his poem entitled *Türkçe Şiirleri*, which opens with the words:

Ben bir Türküm: dinim, cinsim uludur:

Sinem, özüm ateş ile doludur:

İnsan olan vatanımın kuludur:

Türk evlâdı evde durmaz; giderim!”

“I am a Turk, my faith and my race are great;

My breast and soul are full of fire.

He who serves his native land – he is a man;

The son of Turks will not stay at home, I go!”¹³

Language always plays a significant role in nation-building. It allows efficient communication between rulers and people. It is an instrument by which new ideology can be communicated to the people. But such languages must be understandable, in case of Turkey it means the necessity of change in the status and in the corpus of written languages. Until Atatürk’s reforms the word Turk had derogatory implications as illiterate, vulgar and inconsiderate.

In modern Turkey the process of creating a national identity and a national state was based on the motto: one state, one nation, one language. This “one language should be understandable

for everybody, that is for the common people and for intellectuals, it had to be different from the language used by the former government and the elite.

The Language Revolution was the most significant and important element of the Turkish Revolution. Language as the base of education afforded implementation of new knowledge and new ideology. It is known that: “Nationalism was alien to the Middle East. It was imported from Europe, as were many other political ideologies. Mustafa Kemal used the ideology of nationalism during and after the Turkish War of Independence to bind the Turks together into one nation. He was as much an instructor as a politician or general, teaching the Turks that they were a people with a noble common heritage”¹⁴.

With the change of the alphabet from Arabic to Latin in 1928¹⁵, the change in vocabulary, and the return to the original Turkish grammar structures and suffixes, a new generation became literate. The gap between the old well educated elite and common, ordinary people started to vanish. Obviously, the level of knowledge and the knowledge itself were different, but a big part of the populace gained the opportunity to read and learn, and to acquire knowledge even from foreign languages which used Latin letters, because learning them became easier than before.

Pure Turkish language, used by the common people was important already for Sultan’s government. The Ministry of Education instructed schoolteachers to collect colloquial words. Such attempts were made in Turkey on a very big scale in the 1930s, when not only schoolteachers, but everybody collected dialectal words and expressions. Another task given to the people was to find pure Turkish words in old records and specifications. People were also asked to make proposals for new Turkish words, which would be used as equivalents for eliminated Persian or Arabic words, they could use old Turkish suffixes, which existed in colloquial language or dialects, or came from other Turkish languages. Most importantly, however, they invented words to express new concepts and ideas which had come to Turkey from the West. Lists of such words were published in newspapers. As a result, many neologisms were constructed according to the Turkish language rules, but not many of them were adopted by the common reader. Another problem in seeking for equivalents for loanwords was that it seemed impossible to find one proper word, as the meaning of the borrowed one was too large. The result of all those efforts were *Tarama* and *Derleme Sözlüğü*, (dictionaries prepared by browse and collection old Turkish words), first TS published in 1962–79, next TS in 1965–77 (TS – consists of 8; DS – 12 volumes).

Non-Turkish words were seen as symbols of the past, and there was great nationalist enthusiasm, supported by government policies, to get rid of them. Purification of the language became a national case. Dictionaries began to drop Arabic and Persian words and sought to resurrect archaic terms or words from Turkish dialects, or to coin new words from old stems and roots to be used in their place. The Turkish Language Society¹⁶ (*Türk Dil Kurumu*), founded in 1932, supervised the collection and dissemination of Turkish folk vocabulary and folk phrases to be used instead of foreign words. The citizens at large were invited to suggest alternatives to words and expressions of non-Turkish origin, and many responded. In 1934 lists of new Turkish words began to be published, and in 1935 they began to appear in newspapers¹⁷. The “new” words proved the ‘historic Turkishness’ of the language, as dialects were the storage for original Turkish words.

The previous era had passed and had to be forgotten. A new state would be built on secularism, provided by the common people – the Turks, educated, believing in science and democracy. While talking about the reforms made in Turkey, it is impossible not to quote Atatürk, who expressed the importance of the language for the new born Republic in the following words:

*“Milli his ile dil arasındaki bağ çok kuvvetlidir, dilinin milli ve zengin olması, milli hissin inkişafında başlıca müessirdir. Türk dili, dillerin en zenginlerindedir. Yeter ki bu şuurla işlensin. Ülkesini, yüksek istikbalini korumasını bilen Türk milleti, dilini de yabancı diller boyunduruğundan kurtarmalıdır”*¹⁸.

There is a very strong link between national feelings and the language. Nationality and richness of the language are factors affecting the development of national feelings. The Turkish

language is the richest of all languages. It is sufficient to have it in mind. The Turkish people, who know how to protect their own country and ensure its future, must save its language from the yoke of foreign languages¹⁹.

“The Turkish language is one of the most beautiful, rich and easy languages in the world. Therefore, every Turk loves his language and makes an effort to elevate its status. The Turkish language is also a secret treasure for the Turkish nation, because the Turkish nation knows its moral values, customs, memories, interests, in short, everything that makes it a nation was preserved through its language despite the endless catastrophes it has experienced”²⁰.

“Abandoning the prestige and privileges of the *palace* language and elevating the status of the *folk* language was part and parcel of the cadre replacement. Nationalist ideology foresaw the sovereignty of the ‘nation’. From this point of view, making the ‘nation’ its own master required elevating the status of its language *vis-à-vis* Arabic and Persian, which were presented as symbols of religious fanaticism and tools of oppression by the dynasty and religious elites. (...) Coupled with the legal alphabet reform, the reform of the Turkish Language became not only a cultural, but also a political symbol of the struggle of Turkish nationalism against Ottoman-style culture”²¹.

Due to changes in the corpus of language, introducing neologisms and revived suffixes, and especially using Latin letters, the new generation of both educated and illiterate Turks had no literature to fallback. First, the Ottoman literature remained unread because of Arabic letters and the vocabulary and structures it contains; secondly, the image of the world it provided did not fit the changes in contemporary world with its new ideas and Westernized style of living.

Even the name of the ruling Republican People’s Party²² emphasized the importance of the Turkish people. On the other hand, the peasantist ideology appeared in Turkey as well. This ideology²³ became the background for every institution which worked towards inhabitants of villages, People’s Houses (*Halkevleri*), People’s Rooms (*Halk odalari*) and of course the most controversial Village Institutes (*Köy Enstitütleri*). These institutions worked as “public education” organs of the Republic. The task of these organizations, especially of the Village Institutes was not only to teach reading and writing, but also to introduce a new lifestyle into the society²⁴. The programme of education offered by Village Institutes gave young people the opportunity to understand the role of cooperation and the necessity of learning. The program included a wide range of learning methods such as: observation, “tests”, “review” and “discussion”. The characteristic of this program was getting rid of memorization, which in turn enabled students to think, to investigate, to explore everything using rational facts²⁵.

Village Institutes were established to train teachers for each village and send them back to form new village schools. In most of the institutes students built the school buildings and farmed their own food. Their education included both practical and classical courses. Their daily routine included gymnastics, reading and culture hours, and farming. “The Village Institutes provided rural Anatolian boys and girls a five-year secondary educational program in a boarding school, there they received a complete education and learned skill, such as carpentry or midwifery. The graduates were expected to go out to villages where they would become schoolteachers of other village youth, emphasizing modern techniques of agriculture and home industry, and seeking to inculcate the fundamental ideology of the Republic”²⁶.

People’s Houses were established in 1932 in order to educate people in small places where there was no school. In 18 years of operation, 478 People’s Houses and 4 332 People’s Rooms, which worked in villages, were opened. Obviously, apart from giving lessons in various areas of knowledge, teaching alphabet and overpowering illiteracy, those institutions introduced the political principles as Republicanism, Nationalism, Populism, Reformism, Secularism and Statism, which was widely criticized and that is why the Village Institutes were closed by the Democrat Party in 1952²⁷.

“(…) Atatürk supported and encouraged the visual and the plastic arts, which had been suppressed by the Ottoman leaders, who regarded depiction of the human form as idolatry. Many museums opened, architecture began to follow modern trends, and classical Western music, opera, and ballet, as well as the theatre, also took greater hold. Book and magazine publications

increased as well, and the film industry began to grow. Beginning in 1932, the People's Houses (Turkish: *Halk Evleri*) opened throughout the country in order to meet the requirement that people between the ages of four and 40 were required to learn the new alphabet as mandated. There were congresses for discussing the issues of copyright, public education and scientific publishing. Literacy reform was also supported by strengthening the private publishing sector with a new law on copyrights²⁸.

All the reforms introduced by Atatürk, from initiating the War of Independence, through secularization, to democracy, had the same aim: to make Turkey a modern country, the base of which was the people – Turks, who embraced their nation and status. As was said before, most people were illiterate, so to increase the literacy among the largest possible group, and to make them feel the national identity, education and changes had to be provided.

While speaking about the meaning of *halk*, the period of history and comprehension of this word at a given time must be taken into consideration. In modern Turkish dictionaries *halk* has eight different meanings: 1. people, 2. citizens, 3. neighborhood, 4. community, 5. populace, 6. mob, 7. human being, 8. folk²⁹. According to the Turkish-English Redhouse Dictionary, this word has only four meanings: “1. people, nation, 2. people, populace, 3. the common people, folk, 4. common, folk”³⁰.

Special attention should be given to the definition of a new concept, which was one of the six principles of kemalism, that is *halkçılık*.

halkçılık – populist³¹

*“Devletin vatandaşa, vatandaşın devlete karşı görevlerini hakkıyla yerine getirebilmesi için millî irâde ve hâkimiyetin her iki tarafça âdilâne kullanılmasının gerektiği, fertler arasında bir fark ve hak ayrılığı gözetmeksizin halkı bir bütün olarak kabul edip onun yaşayış seviyesini yükseltmeyi, refah ve mutluluğu için çalışmayı esas kabul ettiğini ileri süren görüş”*³².

Populism – Concept whose core element is working towards justly executing the duties of citizens to the state and of the state to citizens in accordance with the rules and the national will; towards increasing the welfare of the nation as a whole, regardless of social and individual differences; and towards making the nation happy³³.

Atatürk's conception of populism was based on giving the power to the people who saw themselves as Turks and citizens of Turkey, who worked, fought and were ready to die for their country. “He was the first to utter radical statements portraying the condition of the Turkish peasant in 1922: ‘Who is the owner and master of Turkey? The peasant, that is, the real producer! Therefore, he has the right and title to greater comfort, happiness and affluence than everyone else.’ He believed that the economic policy of the Government of the Grand National Assembly was directed towards the achievement of this objective. (...) Mustafa Kemal did not use the word ‘people’ for or on behalf of any social class. The War of National Liberation was fought with the cooperation of all classes”³⁴.

However, not only the definition of *halk* is of importance, but also idioms and proverbs. Proverbs are important because they contain advice, beliefs and thoughts belonging to common people, and even if they are metaphorical, the given formulas are clear. Idioms and new collocations appeared due to the need to express something using words existing in the language, or to say something in a more covert way, when the words used have a different meaning when used separately. This figure of speech is meaningful in historical or social contexts.

There are many collocations with the word *halk* in different meanings. In Redhouse Dictionary³⁵ we find:

halka açık – open to the public, public

halk adamı – man of the people

halk ağzı – vernacular, local tongue

halk bilgisi – folklore (i.e. the folklore of particular group)

halk bilimi – folklore (as a field of study)

halkevi – village gathering center established by the state for public instruction and social events

halk odası – village gathering center established by the state for public instruction and social events

halk cephesi – popular front, people's front

halk dili – popular speech, common language

halka dönük – popular, for the people

halk düşmanı – enemy of the people

halk yazını/ edebiyatı – folk literature

halk günü – reduced-price day (at movies, theatres, museums)

halkla ilişkiler – public relations

halka inmek – colloq. to accommodate oneself to the common level

halk matinesi – reduced-price matinée

halk müziği – folk music

halk oylaması – plebiscite, referendum

halkoyu – public opinion, popular vote

halk oyunu – folk dance

halk ozanı – bard, minstrel, troubadour

halk şarkısı – folk song

And there is one proverb:

Halka verir takımı kendi yutar salkını. – colloq. He/she doesn't practice what he/she preaches.

On the contemporary TDK website³⁶ there are only a few, apart from the ones mentioned above:

halk okulu – public school

halk otobüsü – public bus

halk sağlığı – public health

halk şairi – *halk ozanı*- bard, minstrel, troubadour

halk şiiri – folk poetry

halk yordakçısı – 1. instigator; 2. populist

ev halkı – household

The latest Turkish Dictionary³⁷ contains all of the phrases mentioned above plus the following ones:

halk ağzı (dili) – *lisân-ı avam* – common language

halk etimolojisi – folk etymology

Halka verir talkını, kendi yutar salkını – *Başkalarına öğüt verir ama kendi tutmaz, âleme (ele) verir talkını kendi yutar salkını.* – He/she doesn't practice what he/she preaches. Moreover, does the opposite.

halk-ı âlem (cihan) – human being, universe, all the people

halk bilimci – folklorists

halk bilgisi – folklore

halkçı – democrat, populist

The situation with proverbs is more complicated, the proverb: *Halka (ele) verir talkını, kendi yutar salkını* in Ömer Asım Aksoy's *Atasözleri ve Deyimler Sözlüğü* is given only as an idiom. In his dictionary there are only two idioms with this word: *halka dönük* – for the people; *Ele (halka) verir talkını, kendi yutar salkını* – *Ele verir öğüdü, kendi keser söğüdü.* – He/she doesn't practice what he/she preaches. Moreover, does the opposite.

The difference between idioms and proverbs in Turkish is that a proverb can't be conjugated; no changes are allowed in word formation, adding or changing suffixes is unacceptable. In Parlatur's *Atasözler ve Deyimler Sözlüğü*³⁸ this phrase is given as a proverb and as an idiom. Several idioms have different explications, and there are a few which are not given in Aksoy's dictionary:

halka inmek – go down to the public, valuing the opinion of folk

Halka verir talkını, kendi yutar salkını – As a proverb has a different variant too: *Halka (âleme) verir talkını, kendi yutar salkını.*

Halka sıyırma kantar, bize gelince tam tartar. – He/ she is tolerant for the others but not for us.

Halkın ağzı torba değil ki, büzesin. – People always do rumour, it is impossible to shut them up.

Halkın dili/ sesi, hakkın dilidir. – People talk about what they believe.

The following table illustrates the list of expressions used in particular dictionaries:

	RH ³⁹ 1999	TDK web site 2013	MBTS/ TD 2010	ADS- AKSOY 1988	ADS- PATLARIR 2007
halka açık – open to the public, public	X				
halk adamı – man of the people	X	X			
halk ağzı – vernacular, local tongue	X	X	X		
halk cephesi – people's front	X				
halk dili – common language	X	X	X		
halka dönük – popular, for the people	X	X	X	X	X
halk düşmanı – enemy of the people					
halk yazımı/ edebiyatı – folk literature	X	X	X		
halk günü – reduced-price day	X	X	X		
halkla ilişkiler – public relation	X				
halka inmek – to accommodate oneself to the common level	X				X
halk matinesi – reduced-price matinée	X				
halk müziği – folk music	X	X	X		
halk oyunu – folk dance	X	X			
halk ozanı – bard, minstrel, troubadour	X	X			
halk şarkısı – folk song	X				
Halk-ı âlem – human being, universe, all the people			X		
halk bilgisi – folklore (i.e. the folklore of particular group)	X	X	X		
halk bilimi – folklore (as a field of study)	X	X			
halk ekmeği		X			
halkevi – village gathering center established by the state for public instruction and social events	X	X	X		
halk odası – a place to gather together in a sparsely populated area	X	X			
halk okulu – public school		X			
halk otobüsü – public bus		X			
halk oylaması – referendum	X	X	X		
halkoyu – popular vote; public opinion	X	X	X		
halk sağlığı – public health		X			
halk yardakçısı 1. instigator; 2. populist		X			
halk eğitimi – education given to adult people by Ministry of National Education across the country			X		

halk etimolojisi – folk etymology			X		
halk bilimci – folklorist		X	X		
halkçı – democrat, populist	X	X	X		

As we can see, the most frequently enumerated expression is *halka dönük* – popular, for the people, which existed in all of the dictionaries analyzed. This fact emphasizes the importance of *halk* and of the new point of view, because it was the *halk* that became the focus of intellectuals' activities.

Other frequently occurring expressions are:

halk ağzı – vernacular, local tongue

halk bilgisi – folklore (i.e. the folklore of a particular group)

halk dili – popular speech, common language

halkevi – village gathering center established by the state for public instruction and social events

halk yazını / edebiyatı – folk literature

halk günü – reduced-price day (at movies, theatres, museums)

halk müziği – folk music

halk oylaması – referendum

halkoyu – public opinion

The most popular expressions show the area of interest connected with *halk*. As has already been said, the socio-cultural-political situation assumed that common people would be the base of the new country system. Folklore, common language, folk dance, folk music and oral folk literature, proverbs and sayings were all collected, analyzed and popularized. Even at universities (until today) there are lessons in folk dance, music, tradition, rituals and ceremonies from different parts of Turkey, and popular folk events are organized all over the country. On the other hand, regional expressions gained with time their own place in the linguistic system and became generally applicable, and, as has been shown, exist in the modern language and modern dictionaries.

Due to the changes in political system, the spread of education and big interest in country lifestyle, new words have become popular.

Intellectuals who turned towards common people were set as the example to follow. Therefore, the trend for fondness of peasant life and search for the essence of Turkishness in common country lifestyle still remains popular. New organizations like *halkevi* or *halk odası*, and the abovementioned *Köy Enstitüleri*, existed in Turkish cultural life till 1950s, and played an important role in popularization of new ideas and increasing the significance of education.

Expressions connected (only) with politics refer to widespread vote and participation in decision-making process. The opinion of the public became as important as the opinion of landowners, and in spite of customary law, everybody became equal.

In an attempt to analyze proverbs, one is faced in only a few, which occur in the abovementioned dictionaries:

Ele (halka) verir talkını, kendi yutar salkını – Ele verir öğüdü, kendi keser (Aksoy).

Halka (âleme) verir talkını, kendi yutar salkını. (Patlatır) – He/she doesn't practice what he/she preaches. Moreover, does the opposite.

Halka sıyırma kantar, bize gelince tam tartar. (Patlatır) – He/she is tolerant for the others but not for us.

Halkın ağzı torba değil ki, büzesin. (Patlatır) – People always make rumour, it is impossible to shut them up.

Halkın dili/ sesi, hakkın dilidir. (Patlatır) – People talk about what they believe.

In all of these proverbs the meaning of 'people' is 'the others', not 'folk'. Although proverbs are the result of observations made by rural communities, the word 'halk' does not refer here to 'folk', but rather to widely understood human being.

But when we look at them as at proverbs, which present folk believes, we can conclude that in these proverbs a common view of the world is present. People are different, they like to give advice and instructions to others, but do not practice their own tips. People's behaviour depends on mood and is not always fair. To the contrary, as we can see in the proverb: *Halka stırma kantar, bize gelince tam tartar*. (He/she is tolerant for the others but not for us), people do not behave in the same way towards everyone. Sometimes people do not measure others by the same yardstick.

People like talking, particularly about things they believe in, mostly to convince others to their opinion, or only to talk about something, which is obviously well known.

Chatting or rather gossiping is the topic of the last proverb listed. People's unique feature is the ability to speak and talk and this way they convey more or less important information. Talking to pass the time or just to harm someone is the feature exclusive to a human. Even if something is not true, but is controversial or unusual, though only invented, became the subject of discussion and rumor.

This feature is especially visible in a society or community, which is used to oral not written communication.

In conclusion it can be said that kemalism and the introduced changes made *halk* the base of Turkey, and this aspect is clearly visible in Turkish expressions.

¹ *Tanzimat*, «(Turkish: “Reorganization”), series of reforms promulgated in the Ottoman Empire between 1839 and 1876 under the reigns of the sultans Abdülmecid I and Abdülaziz. These reforms, heavily influenced by European ideas, were intended to effectuate a fundamental change of the empire from the old system based on theocratic principles to that of a modern state». <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/582884/Tanzimat> (12.09.2013).

² <http://www.ciemen.org/mercator/pdf/wp11-def-ang.pdf>, p. 5 (18.09.2013).

³ <http://www.ciemen.org/mercator/pdf/wp11-def-ang.pdf>, p. 5 (18.09.2013).

⁴ <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-202858> (11.06.2013).

⁵ Such attempts had been made before, for example in 13th century in Konya Şemseddin Mehmet Karamanoğlu as the chief minister decreed that Turkish would be the official language of the country. Ali Şir Nevai, who lived in the 15th century argued that Turkish is as good as Persian. Another example is the school of Türkî-i basit (15th–16th c.), represented by Aydınî Visalî, Tatavlı Mahremî or Edirneli Nazmî.

⁶ Justin McCarthy and Carolyn McCarthy, *Turkey and the Turks: Education Resource Guide*. Turkish Cultural Foundation, 2003, 2004. The American Forum for Global Education, p. 144.

⁷ <http://www.ciemen.org/mercator/pdf/wp11-def-ang.pdf>, p. 12 (18.09.2013).

⁸ E. Z. Karal, “Osmanlı Tarihinde Türk Dili Sorunu” (The Turkish Language Problem in Ottoman History), *Bilim Kültür ve Öğretim Dili Olarak Türkçe* (Turkish as the Language of Education, Culture and Science), TDK,

⁹ Lewis, Geoffrey, *The Turkish Language Reform, A Catastrophic Success*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 2.

¹⁰ This article held that: *A prerequisite for Ottoman subjects' employment in State service is that they know Turkish, which is the official language of the state*; <http://www.ciemen.org/mercator/pdf/wp11-def-ang.pdf>, p. 6 (18.09.2013) quoted from G. Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform*.

¹¹ Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform, A Catastrophic Success*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 15–16.

¹² Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform, A Catastrophic Success*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 17.

¹³ Geoffrey Lewis, *The Turkish Language Reform, A Catastrophic Success*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p. 18.

¹⁴ Justin McCarthy and Carolyn McCarthy, *Turkey and the Turks: Education Resource Guide*, Turkish Cultural Foundation, 2003, 2004. The American Forum for Global Education, p. 67.

¹⁵ Law No. 1353 on the Adoption and Application of the New Turkish Letters was passed through the Grand Parliament on 1st November, 1928. Thereafter all books and official correspondence should be written in new letters. People (educated and illiterate) had only two months to learn and practice the new style of writing. The changes in corpus lasted much longer.

¹⁶ TDK is known as the Turkish Language Association, too.

¹⁷ <http://www.allaboutturkey.com/reform.htm#dil> (19.09.2013): *The mid-1930s saw the height of the enthusiasm for language reform, and some of the suggested reforms were so extreme as to endanger the understandability of the language. Although purist and zealot opinion favored the banishment of all words of non-Turkish origin, it became obvious to many that some of the suggested reforms verged on the ridiculous. Atatürk resolved the problem with an ingenious political invention that, though embarrassing to language experts, appealed to the nationalists. He suggested the historically preposterous but politically efficacious Sun- Language Theory, which asserted that Turkish was the "mother of all languages," and therefore all foreign words were originally Turkish. Thus, if a suitable Turkish equivalent for a foreign word could not be found, the loanword could be retained without violating the purity of the Turkish language.*

¹⁸ Quoted from: Hikmet Bayur, *Atatürk ve Dil Devrimi // Dil Dâvası*, Ankara 1952, s. 22.

¹⁹ Translation of mine.

²⁰ <http://badevardarli.blogspot.com/2011/02/recent-language-reforms-in-turkey-and.html> (20.07.2013); Kongar 2001:29, cited from Eraydin 2003:13.

²¹ <http://www.ciemen.org/mercator/pdf/wp11-def-ang.pdf>, p. 14–15 (18.09.2013). According to O. Baskan, *Turkish Language Reform*, 1986 cited from as ab. (...) *language policy was used for all four processes in Turkish modernisation: Anti-secularisation, De-Ottomanisation, Pro-westernisation and Re-Turkification*, p. 16.

²² This party as the only one existed till losing election in the 50's.

²³ *Today [in the 30s.] even the leading industrialized countries take all kinds of precaution by jealously preserving peasant life against the proletariat, which shows the internationalist and revolutionary trends, and against the political currents which desire to pull the peasants into the cities and evacuate the countryside. In order to do so, they consider villages and village life abundant and clear resource of national life and the instrument for social stability;* A. Asim Karaömerlioğlu. *The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey // British Journal of Middle Studies* (1998), 25 (1), p. 47–73.

²⁴ <http://www.ardaboyu.com/index.php/ataturk-spor/103-halkevlerivekgyenstituleri.html>; Halkevleri ve Köy Enstitüleri [33]: *«Halkevleri, Halkodaları ve sonrasının Köy Enstitüleri üçlüsü "Halk Eğitiminin" Cumhuriyetin temelini oluşturmuşlardı. Bu kuruluşların, özellikle "Köy Enstitülerinin" görevi, köylüye yalnız okuma-yazma öğretmek değildi. Amaç, köylünün bütün yaşamını toplum içine almaktı».*

²⁵ <http://www.ardaboyu.com/index.php/ataturk-spor/103-halkevlerivekgyenstituleri.html>; *Köy Enstitülerinin eğitim sisteminde gençlere, sevgiyi, kardeşliği ve dostluk kavramlarını ediniyor, öğreniyor ve gelecekte de öğreniyorlardı. Bu programda "gözlem", "deney", "araştırma", "inceleme" ve "tartışma" gibi öğrenme yöntem ve tekniklerine geniş bir yer verilmiştir. 1943 programı bu özelliğiyle, ezberci eğitimden kurtularak, öğrencileri düşünmeye, soruşturmaya, gerçekleri akılcı yollardan araştırmaya özendirici bir nitelik göstermektedir.*

²⁶ Douglas A. Howard. *The History of Turkey / The Greenwood Histories of the Modern Nations*. Greenwood Press, 88 Post Road West, Westport, CT 06881, 2001, p. 107.

²⁷ See also e. g.: European Studies in Education, vol. 26, Arnd-Michael Nohl; Arzu Akkoyunlu-Wigley; Simon Wigley (eds.), *Education in Turkey*; Waxmann Verlag GmbH, Münster, 2008, p. 134–136: *People's Rooms were established to carry out the work of the People's Houses in a smaller towns and villages. The People's Houses, that became community centers, offered a wide range of educational activities under nine Arms (kols), each providing specific services or activities, namely: Languages, Literature and History Arm; Fine Arts Arm, Dramatics Arm, Sports Arms; Folk Schools and Course Arm; Library and Publications Arm, Villages Welfare Arm, Museums and Exhibits Arm, and Social Assistance Arm.*

People's Houses contributed to the efforts for rural development and promoting literacy education although there has also been criticism against these centers for providing services to government officials, teachers, and other professionals and not people from a rural-agricultural background. Besides, People's Houses were mainly identified with the Republican People's Party and so they have been criticized for being used as local party cells for the dissemination of political propaganda by the party. The rival Democratic Party won the general elections of 1950 and all 478 People's Houses and 4327 People's Rooms were banned in 1951.

Village Institutes were established in 1940 by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) as a secondary education level boarding schools to which only the village elementary school graduates were admitted. These schools were of five years in duration and half of the school time was devoted to theoretical studies and the other half to practical work. The male students received functional knowledge of, and practice in, agriculture, husbandry, trades and industrial arts; whereas, female students mainly learned about and practiced housekeeping, emergency first aid, and children care. Those who were

considered as potential teachers were directed to the pedagogical track in the fourth year of the school, and others received training in public health service in order to become health officers and midwives (Şavlı 1974).

The importance of Village Institutes lies in the fact that young villagers were trained as teachers and sent back to their own villages not only to teach at schools, but also to provide education and training for village community in general. Therefore, those who became teachers would return back to their villages where they were provided with a home, land, and some seed capital to cultivate his or her own land to show villagers the way to better living and more progressive methods of land cultivation, husbandry, and trade (Arayıcı 1999).

Village Institutes trained 10 000 village teachers who worked with villagers in all aspects of farming and husbandry as well as reading and writing. This represented an innovative approach to rural development. However, as in the case of People's Houses, Democrat Party supporters and especially small town businessman "regarded the Village Institutes as a threat to a valued way of life and feared that their position in the rural areas would be undermined. Village Institutes were characterized as a "communist conspiracy" founded to subvert the country and its social and cultural heritage (Duman / Williamson, 1996, p. 291). After the Democrat Party came into power, 21 Village Institutes were closed in 1951. Although, the graduates of these institutes continued their contributions to the country in the ensuing years. There are still debates going on over the impact and merits of Village Institutes today. (...) the 1950s were characterized by social tension and, as indicated above, People's Houses, People's Rooms, and Village Institutes were abolished since they were identified with the People's Republican Party that lost the 1950 general election.

²⁸ <http://www.nationalturk.com/en/turkey-83th-anniversary-of-turkish-language-reform-to-be-celebrated-14675> (19.09.2013).

²⁹ "Halk – bir milleti meydana getiren insan topluluğu 2. aynı ülkede, aynı devlete bağlı vatan-daşların tamamı; 3. İsim tamlamasının ikinci ögesi olarak – Aynı yerde bulunan kimseler, mahalle halkı. 4. Belli bir bölgede yaşayan kimseler, Batı Anadolu halkı. 5. Bir milletin aydın tabakası ve devlet yöneticileri dışında kalan kısmı, ahâli. 6. Kalabalık, gürüh, 7. İnsanlar, yaratılmış olanlar. 8. İsim tamlamasının birinci ögesi olarak – Bir milletin aydın tabakasının dışında kalan büyük çoğunluğa âit, bu çoğunluk tarafından yapılan, ona has olan halk müzikîsi, halk edebiyatı"; Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük, İlhan Ayverdi, Kubbealtı, İstanbul 2010, p. 463.

³⁰ Türkçe-İngilizce Redhouse Sözlüğü / The Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary; SEV Maatbacılık ve Yayıncılık Eğitim Tic. A.Ş., İstanbul 1999, p. 360.

³¹ Türkçe-İngilizce Redhouse Sözlüğü / The Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary, SEV Maatbacılık ve Yayıncılık Eğitim Tic. A.Ş., İstanbul 1999, s. 360.

³² Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük, İlhan Ayverdi, Kubbealtı, İstanbul 2010, p. 463.

³³ Translation mine.

³⁴ Türkçaya Ataöv. *The Principles of Kemalism* // The Turkish Yearbook, vol. XX, 1980–81, p. 31.

³⁵ Türkçe-İngilizce Redhouse Sözlüğü / The Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary, SEV Maatbacılık ve Yayıncılık Eğitim Tic. A.Ş., İstanbul 1999, s. 360.

³⁶ http://www.tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_gts&arama=gts&guid=TDK.GTS.51cf2db7cd6c23.82536953 (29.06.2013).

³⁷ Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük, İlhan Ayverdi, Kubbealtı, İstanbul 2010, s. 463–464.

³⁸ İsmail Patlatır, *Atasözleri ve Deyimler I-II*, Ankara Üniversitesi, TDK, İstanbul 2007, v. II, s. 441, v. I, s. 267–268.

³⁹ Abbreviations used: RH – *Türkçe-İngilizce Redhouse Sözlüğü / The Redhouse Turkish-English Dictionary*, SEV Maatbacılık ve Yayıncılık Eğitim Tic. A.Ş., İstanbul 1999; TDK website – website of the Association of Turkish Language; MBTS/TD – *Misalli Büyük Türkçe Sözlük*; İlhan Ayverdi, Kubbealtı, İstanbul 2010; ADS-AKSOY – Ömer Asım Aksoy, *Atasözleri ve deyimler sözlüğü I, II*, İnkılâp Kıtapevi Yayın, İstanbul 1988; ADS-PATLARIR – İsmail Patlatır, *Atasözleri ve Deyimler I-II*, Ankara Üniversitesi, TDK, İstanbul, 2007.

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