

**Multilingual Diaries of an Engineer and Reserve Officer
during the Gallipoli Campaign (WW1): An Interdisciplinary Study between History and
Linguistics from a Digital Humanities Perspective**

by

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Gallipoli Campaign took place during the WWI (1915-1916) at the Dardanelles straits (currently in Çanakkale/Turkey). Between February-March (1915) British and French navy came from the Aegean Sea with the intention of passing through the Dardanelles towards the Sea of Marmara. Although the end goal was to occupy Istanbul, the plan failed due to fierce battles with the Turkish troops who joined the WWI in alliance with the Germans (Klaus, 2014). Between February-March (1915), six war ships of the allies were sunk by the Turkish gunfire and the Gallipoli Campaign was severely damaged (Çanakkale Boğaz Komutanlığı, 2008). Later in April (1915), the allies planned a landing (with soldiers recruited from Australia and New Zealand to support the British troops) from the sea on the shores of Gallipoli peninsula which resulted in a battle with severe casualties on both sides and leading to a failure for the allies.

Current study is about Mr. Tevfik Rıza who served as a Communications Engineer and Reserve Officer (Ottoman Army) at Goncasu Wireless and Telegram Station (located on a hill on the Gallipoli peninsula overlooking Dardanelles strait) where he kept diaries describing the battle on the sea (1915) multilingually as an eyewitness (Dođruöz, 2023). He was born (1889) in İzmir to a wealthy family and was educated in Beirut at a French-medium school for boys. Afterwards, he attended the university in Paris and graduated as an electrical engineer. Following his graduation, he stayed in London for a while. Later, he came back to İstanbul and worked for the Western Electric Company until he was sent to the war front in 1914. Miss Belkıs Tansuğ (his fiancé and later his wife) was the daughter of a Governor serving in the Ottoman Empire. She was fluent in French and well-educated through private lessons at home which was common for ladies not only in the Ottoman Empire but also in Europe at the time. To support her fiancé (later her husband) and to elevate his morale at the battlefield, she sent frequent letters and encouraged him to write his observations and express his feeling in the diaries which she sent from Istanbul.

Current study focuses on describing the multilingual textual data (French, Turkish, English, German) in the collection of handwritten diaries written by Mr. Tevfik Rıza at the battlefield (Dođruöz et al., 2017). The data includes 4 diaries (440 pages in total) which were kept multilingually (i.e., 395 pages in French, 15 pages in Turkish, 28 pages in Turkish and French, 2 pages in Turkish, French and English, 1 page in Turkish and German). The data set is partially digitalized, and the contents are still being analyzed.

In our interdisciplinary study between history and linguistics, we will present examples of multilingual text from a linguistic perspective (e.g., exploring the link between the language preference and the type of text) and compare the descriptions of the battle in the diary with the available literature on Gallipoli Campaign from a historical perspective.

Preliminary analysis of the data set from a linguistic point of view reveals that Mr. Tevfik Rıza preferred to write his personal opinions and/or feelings mostly in French and official news about the battle (e.g., telegrams) in Turkish. English and German were used sparingly with the purpose of quoting a famous saying or for nicknames/personal referrals. As mentioned in the diaries, he preferred writing about himself and his opinions in French not only because he was fluent in the language but also to keep these sections of the diary more private (only to be shared with his fiancé). If something happened to him in the battlefield, it would not have been easy for the third parties to read the contents of his diary easily. His verbal descriptions of the battles and the drawings (depicting the battle on the sea and sinking ships) are in line with the historical literature about the Gallipoli campaign. In addition to describing the battlefield vividly with accurate names (e.g., Generals, ships) and military terminology, he provides valuable insights about the old names of the military posts (which have changed later), how war influences humans with fluctuating emotions and devastation, difficulties about finding equipment, the daily life and the relations between military officials around him.

Our study fits well with the DH-Benelux (2023) theme on multilingualism and aims to bridge the gap between the linguistics and history through working on the same data set from different academic perspectives. The textual contents of the diaries are already translated into Turkish for academic publications in the history domain. During our presentation, we will dwell further into the multilingualism aspects as well as the current digitalization processes and plans.