



AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF TURKIC LANGUAGES

In this Issue

- ◆ Executive Secretary's Note
- ◆ President's Note
- ◆ Remembering Erika Gilson
- ◆ 9th AATT Conference Reflections
- ◆ 2024-2025 FLTA Orientation Meeting
- ◆ AATT Roundtable at MESA 2024
- ◆ A Sevviye Talip Translation
- ◆ Remembering Ralph Jaeckel
- ◆ News From the University of Wisconsin
- ◆ News From the Intensive Ottoman and Turkish Summer School in Cunda
- ◆ Recipients of the AATT Awards and Prizes
- ◆ Reflections From Award and Prize Winners
- ◆ Erika Gilson Teaching Award
- ◆ New Summer Programs (APRI and MEDLI)
- ◆ 2023-2024 Enrollment Survey Report
- ◆ Calls for Volunteers
- ◆ Thank You to Institutional Members and Donors
- ◆ AATT Committee Members



THE EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S NOTE

İlknur Lider – University of Pittsburgh

Dear AATT Members and Supporters,

As I reflect on the past year, my heart is filled with a blend of profound sadness, immense gratitude, and deep appreciation. I am saddened by the loss of two pillars of our community. Dr. Erika Gilson's unwavering dedication, passion for language, and commitment to fostering a thriving and vibrant community through her work at the AATT has left a lasting impact on all of us. Dr. Ralph Jaeckel was a pioneer in designing innovative teaching methods and materials that have shaped language education in Turkish. They are the testament to our organization's growth and progress, and their legacies will continue to inspire us for years to come.

In this issue of the newsletter, we share highlights from AATT events and activities in 2024 as well as inspiring news from our growing community of scholars, practitioners, and students. This year, we held special sessions to commemorate and reflect on the life and legacy of Dr. Erika Gilson and Dr. Kathleen R.F. Griffin-Burrill, organized a workshop on the ACTFL and CEFR guidelines for language proficiency and assessment, welcomed new FLTAs with an orientation, hosted the 9th AATT Conference, and participated in the MESA Annual Meeting with a roundtable. Student achievements were acknowledged through awards and prizes.

We also revised and implemented our enrollment survey and maintained an active online presence through our [website](#) and social media sharing the latest news.

None of these would have been possible without the dedicated volunteers who served on the AATT committees and at various events we held. Your generous investment of time, effort, and expertise into the AATT has been genuinely inspiring. It is because of your steadfast support and dedication that we have accomplished so much together. Thank you for being such a vital part of our journey!

AATT is grateful for the support from our esteemed institutional and individual members as well as our generous donors. Your contributions have been instrumental in furthering our mission to serve the needs of our vibrant community. We kindly invite you to renew your membership, or if you're not already a member, we warmly welcome you to join us by following this [link](#).

Wishing each of you joy and prosperity in 2025!

İlknur Lider

THE PRESIDENT'S NOTE

Saadet Ebru Ergül – Stanford University



Dear Colleagues and Friends,

Together, AATT have built a vibrant community that not only advances the teaching and learning of Turkic languages but also fosters academic collaboration and meaningful connections.

As we look ahead to the future, we also take a moment to honor the past, remembering Erika Gilson with deep respect and a profound sense of loss. Her leadership and contributions to Turkic pedagogy have profoundly shaped AATT's mission and community. Her vision and dedication will continue to inspire and guide us in the years to come.

Today, we will also remember Ralph Jaeckel, whose tireless efforts and profound dedication to Turkic studies have left a very important mark on our discipline.

In their memory, let us renew our commitment to advancing our shared goals with the same passion and determination they embodied.

In 2024, AATT continued to work tirelessly, organizing a variety of impactful activities and initiatives. These efforts have brought our members together, strengthened our community, and advanced the teaching and learning of Turkic languages.

I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to our supporting institutions, donors, volunteers, members, colleagues, committee members, executive board members, and our dedicated AATT Executive Secretary. Your phenomenal efforts are the cornerstone of our success.

Thank you for your unwavering support and dedication. It is your expertise, collaboration, and enthusiasm that make AATT the thriving, impactful organization it is today.

With appreciation,

Saadet Ebru Ergül

President, AATT

REMEMBERING ERIKA HITZIGARTH GILSON JANUARY 1, 1940-MARCH 25, 2024



<https://aattweb2021.wixsite.com/ehocamiz/general-9>



Erika Hitzigrath Gilson started her fascinating life's journey on New Year's Day 1940 in Istanbul, Turkey. She passed away with tranquility and dignity in March 2024 just as a new day was dawning. After attending the İstanbul Alman Lisesi, she enrolled at the University of Heidelberg on a full scholarship. Before graduating, she was swept off her feet by an American soldier named Joe Gilson, married him, and moved to the United States. Her education continued at the University of Pennsylvania where she earned her PhD

in Historical Linguistics in 1981. Erika taught Turkish and Ottoman languages at Columbia University and at the University of Pennsylvania, followed by more than 25 years at Princeton University where she was a beloved and respected faculty member.

Erika Hocam, Hale Hanim or Helena as she was known to many, was a pioneer in the use of computers to analyze language and language acquisition. She was a co-founder of the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT) in 1985 and led the organization until 2012 becoming honorary president in 2013. She was a founding member of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages (NCOLCTL) and an active contributor to the Computer-Assisted Language Instruction Consortium (CALICO). She guided countless educational expeditions to Turkey, Eastern Europe and Central Asia for university students during the summer months for over 15 years. Erika was a longstanding member of the Turkish American Friendship Society of the US. Her contribution to Turkey, disseminating its culture, history, architecture, music and language to universities in the US and abroad has been heralded by many colleagues worldwide including Abdullah Gül, the former president of Turkey, who recognized her accomplishments and congratulated her on behalf of the country in 2024.

In addition to her academic accomplishments, Erika raised and nurtured five children (Minka, Kurt, Danielle, Joseph and Mark), 10 grandchildren (Anya, Veronica, Spencer, Nhya, Xavier, Roberto, Max, Emma, Rebecca and Kyleigh) and five great grandchildren (Judah, Bijan, Elisha, Erik and Kaes). She is survived by her husband of 64 years.

Erika was truly a remarkable woman, exceptional partner, passionate teacher, dedicated mentor, cherished neighbor and beloved mother who will be sorely missed.

9TH AATT CONFERENCE: REDEFINING PERFORMANCE, PROFICIENCY AND ASSESSMENT IN THE AGE OF AI

*Elif Sayar Canay
Istanbul Technical University*

The 9th AATT Conference, held virtually on October 18, 2024, was a remarkable gathering that brought together educators, researchers, and practitioners from around the world to discuss the evolving landscape of language education. This year's theme, "Redefining Performance, Proficiency, and Assessment in the Age of AI," resonated deeply as we explored how artificial intelligence is reshaping our field.

The conference opened with a warm welcome by AATT President Saadet Ebru Ergül and an inspiring keynote address by Nicholas Swinehart, Managing Director of Instructional Technology at the Chicago Language Center, who emphasized the transformative role of AI in language learning and assessment. The discussions that followed during the parallel sessions highlighted innovative approaches and pressing challenges, including the

integration of generative AI tools in Turkish language activities, the adaptation of assessment methods, and the role of design-oriented thinking in developing linguistic skills.

As a member, I was particularly impressed by the enthusiasm and collaborative spirit of the participants. The vibrant discussions and the thoughtful questions during sessions showcased a shared commitment to advancing language education.

The conference concluded with heartfelt closing remarks by İlknur Lider, Executive Secretary of AATT, who highlighted the significance of collaboration and innovation in navigating the challenges and opportunities presented by AI in language education. Her reflections on the day's discussions ended with a commemoration of Erika Gilson, whose contributions to our community continue to inspire us. Erika Hoca's legacy reminds us of the importance of perseverance and innovation in our work.

Looking ahead, the 9th AATT Conference has been an inspiring milestone, and I believe the insights and connections we've gained this year will continue to foster growth and innovation in the future. My heartfelt thanks go to the organizing committee, our speakers, and attendees for making this event a success. Together, we are redefining what is possible in language education in the age of AI.



2024 FLTA ORIENTATION

*Damla Aydın, 2023-2024 FLTA,
University Of Washington*

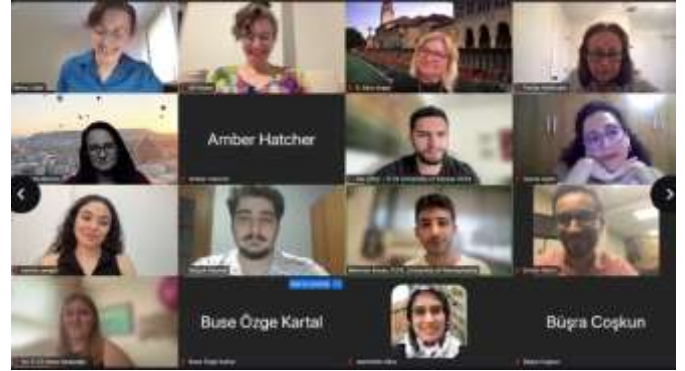
As a former Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant (FLTA), I had the privilege of participating in the orientation organized by the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT). Last year, AATT's orientation and its resources were incredibly valuable to me. While Turkish is my native language, I needed guidance on how to effectively teach it to others. The materials and resources provided by AATT became essential tools, offering a roadmap that I frequently referred to throughout the year. These resources not only shaped my approach to teaching but also inspired me to create my instructional materials.

One of the key teaching techniques I learned was task-based language teaching (TBLT), which I explored further through AATT's resources and the inspiration they provided. The communicative approach also became a central focus in my teaching, encouraging students to engage in real-life conversations in Turkish. Both of these methods helped me enhance my teaching practice and create a more interactive learning environment.

This year, I was delighted to share with the new FLTAs the materials and teaching practices I developed using the knowledge I gained from AATT's resources—just as previous FLTAs had shared with us.

During this year's orientation, I was introduced to upcoming Turkish language teaching conferences and the latest advancements in the field.

Although I have not yet attended these conferences, learning about them has been inspiring and has sparked my desire to continue developing as a foreign language educator.



Staying informed about the latest techniques in the field has already contributed to my academic work and personal growth as a teacher.

It was an honor to connect with the scholars at AATT and share my experiences with the new FLTAs, just as previous participants had shared theirs with me. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunities AATT provides the FLTAs, and I thank them for their continuous support.

*Cemre Zengin, 2021 – 2022 FLTA,
The University of Mississippi*

The FLTA orientation program organized by the AATT provided us with an excellent opportunity to share our experiences as FLTA alumni, helping new FLTAs adapt more easily to their new environments. The FLTA experience is both a teaching and learning journey that demands engagement, openness to new experiences, and a commitment to fostering mutual understanding between Türkiye and the U.S.

However, the skills required to offer insights into language use, culture, and customs often extend beyond what is taught in a standard textbook, and new FLTAs frequently seek guidance and support as they transition into their roles.

A shared characteristic among FLTAs is their eagerness to exchange knowledge and experiences with openness and enthusiasm. Benefiting from this, new FLTAs can hopefully navigate their experiences more smoothly by connecting with peers and mentors and recognizing potential challenges in advance. The collaboration between the AATT and the Turkish FLTA community ensures that this exchange continues to thrive, allowing us to achieve this shared goal.

Meeting new participants, academics, and peers who share similar aspirations and concerns has been a rewarding experience for me. These connections are crucial for both our professional growth and personal development. I am grateful that our journey continues with networking and re-gatherings, sometimes centered around virtual meetings.

NEW CURRICULAR UNIT & TEXT REPOSITORY FOR TEACHING SOCIAL JUSTICE ISSUES IN TURKISH LANGUAGE CLASSES

İlknur Lider – University of Pittsburgh

As part of [CARLA's Social SCILS Project](#), İlknur Lider (University of Pittsburgh) has developed a curricular unit and a text repository for Turkish language classes as an Open Educational Resource available at the CARLA website.

The curricular unit [Changemakers for Accessible Life](#) offers a rich, impactful learning experience designed for intermediate-high Turkish language learners in their fourth or fifth semester. Comprising six lessons with detailed plans, reading guides, handouts, vocabulary lists, formative and summative assessments, this unit provides an engaging approach to language acquisition while exploring disability as a social construct. Through authentic texts, students delve into the stories of three change makers who have made a difference in the lives of individuals with disabilities in Türkiye.

Using the multiliteracies framework for teaching and learning languages, the unit highlights social justice issues like marginalization, exclusion, discrimination based on disability as well as inclusive practices for accessible cultural, social, and educational life. By engaging with changemaker narratives, students gain the ability to interpret practices and perspectives on disability in Türkiye, critically reflect on bias and stereotypes, and connect their learning to their own cultural viewpoints while fostering their own capacity to bring about meaningful societal change.

[Social Justice Text Repository for Turkish](#) consists of authentic texts in multiple modalities on various social justice-oriented topics and themes for Turkish language classes.

2024 AATT ROUNDTABLE REIMAGINING TURKIC/TURKISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION IN THE DECLINE OF THE HUMANITIES

*Nalan Erbil
University of Wisconsin - Madison*

This year's AATT Roundtable at the 58th Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association took place virtually on November 11, 2024.

Organized by Dr. Nalan Erbil, the Roundtable brought together Turkish language scholars and practitioners who discussed best and/or “failed” practices for Turkic and Turkish language program retention and improvement under the overarching topic of “Reimagining Turkic/Turkish Language Education in the Decline of the Humanities.”

Among the three panelists, Dr. Jeannette E. Okur initiated the conversation on an area of opportunity for Turkish and other less commonly taught language instructors who are often responsible for their language programs' overall maintenance, and who may be asked to offer a cultural studies course in English to “entice” students to the language program when language course enrollment numbers drop. Dr. Okur proposed that language instructors can gauge cultural studies courses in English to support language programs by offering strategies for maximizing the impact of English-language courses meant to draw new students into the language program and increase the intercultural competence and knowledge base of students already taking the language.

Drawing on examples from her courses, Dr. Okur discussed the importance of needs assessment, backwards course design, (inter)disciplinary cross-listing, and effective course marketing to attract potential future language students.

The second panelist Dr. Didem Havlioğlu elaborated on their approach to addressing enrollment issues at Duke University through an interinstitutional partnership that has been implementing effective blended learning models for Turkish language acquisition. Tracing the establishment of the partnership between Duke and UNC-Chapel Hill in 2015, Dr. Havlioğlu showed that not only did this hybrid program enable students from institutions lacking Turkish language offerings to study the language, but also the blended learning models effectively provided a flexible, interactive learning environment to enhance language acquisition outcomes for all students across institutions while also instilling in them a sense of community. In doing so, Dr. Havlioğlu underscored that such interinstitutional partnerships can help avert the negative effect of defunding of Turkish and other less commonly taught language programs.

In the final presentation, Dr. Nalan Erbil laid out the enrollment-focused outcomes of implementing the Turkish Flagship Language Initiative which was academically administered by the University of Wisconsin-Madison from 2020 to 2024. Analyzing the enrollment and student survey data for four consecutive years, Dr. Erbil summarized the federally-funded program's short- and long-term implications on the Turkish enrollment numbers and the assumed value of studying the language both for the host institution and in the nation.

Despite having increased the number of students for the summer program at UW-Madison, the program, reportedly, did not have an observable impact on enrollment numbers during the regular academic year. In the long run, however, Dr. Erbil anticipates that the program might help with increasing the visibility and importance of Turkish in the U.S. through the growing alumni network.

AATT WORKSHOP: LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY THROUGH THE LENS OF ACTFL AND CEFR

Gözde Mercan – University of Toronto

AATT organized an online Workshop entitled “Language proficiency through the lens of ACTFL and CEFR” on May 17th, 2024. The workshop featured three distinguished colleagues who kindly shared their expertise with the AATT membership on the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference) and the ACTFL (American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages) standards for languages. The three esteemed speakers were Professor Enrica Piccardo from the University of Toronto, Professor Saadet Ebru Ergül from Stanford University, and Professor Emine Çakır from the University of Oxford.

First Dr. Piccardo, a Professor of Language Education at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and a collaborator with the Council of Europe, provided the audience with a comprehensive introduction to CEFR. Then, Prof. Saadet Ebru Ergül, our current AATT president, provided an insightful introduction to ACTFL.

Finally, Dr. Emine Çakır, who is a Lecturer in Turkish at the University of Oxford gave a presentation entitled “Applying CEFR to teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language in the Higher Education Context: The Oxford Case.” These presentations were followed by engaging discussions with the active participation of the audience, leading to a fruitful conversation around the similarities and differences of the two systems and the respective strengths and challenges in their application in Turkish teaching and learning contexts.

As AATT, we extend our sincere gratitude to the three speakers for accepting our invitation and for their invaluable contribution to this enriching workshop, as well as to the audience for their active engagement.

WORKSHOP ON “RESEARCH-BASED PRACTICES IN THE TEACHING OF TURKISH AS L2”

Gözde Mercan – University of Toronto

An international workshop entitled “Research-Based Practices in the Teaching of Turkish as L2” was held on May 24, 2024 online via Zoom, under the auspices of the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (NMC) at the University of Toronto, as part of the outreach activities of the research project “How do L2 learners resolve ambiguity in complex sentences?” funded through an Insight Development Grant by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

Organized by NMC faculty and AATT executive board member, Gözde Mercan, and graduate research assistants, Jida Jaffan and Mengtong Li, the workshop aimed to promote exchange of knowledge and scholarly discussion among researchers, teachers, and students of Turkish as an additional language around the world.

In addition to the keynote speeches by the two distinguished invited speakers, Ayşe Gürel from Boğaziçi University and Emel Türker from the University of Oslo, the workshop program included four parallel sessions with 12 oral presentations in total and a poster session with six poster presentations on a range of topics on the learning and processing of Turkish as a foreign/ second/additional or heritage language and on methodologies in teaching Turkish as an L2. Detailed workshop information and abstracts to the presentations are available on the workshop website: <https://l2turkish.wordpress.com/>

With participants and presenters from all around the world, including Turkey, Canada, the US, France, Spain, Kazakhstan, India, and Taiwan, the event featured insightful presentations and sparked lively discussions. The organizers extend their heartfelt gratitude to the keynote speakers, abstract reviewers, session chairs, presenters and all participants for their contribution to the success of the workshop. The organizing committee also acknowledges the SSHRC Insight Development grant awarded to Gözde Mercan which made the event possible and expresses sincere thanks to the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto for their continued support.

CONGRATULATIONS TO AATT MEMBER İCLAL VANWESENBECK!

*Jeannette Okur –
University of Texas at Austin*

Her English translation of Halide Edip Adivar's *Sevviye Talip* was recently published by the CMES Modern Middle East Literatures in Translation at the University of Texas at Austin.

From the most acclaimed Turkish woman writer of the twentieth century comes a novel of violent political uprisings, opera, adultery, polygamy, modernity, liberty, and exile in the final years of the Ottoman Empire. Set in the early twentieth century, the novel follows Fahir, a philosopher, idealist, and reformist who graduates from Oxford University and returns to Istanbul after a voluntary (but possibly compulsory) exile. In the midst of political turmoil and social upheaval, Fahir finds himself embroiled in a love triangle with Macide, a traditional Muslim Turkish woman, and Seviyye, a rebellious references and landscapes from turn-of-the-century Istanbul and Cairo.

Halide Edib Adivar (1884–1964) was one of the most prolific Turkish women writers of the twentieth century. She is the author of more than a dozen novels, essays, short stories, memoirs, a play, a libretto, and various translations. She was the founder of Taali-i Nisvan Cemiyeti (the Organization for the Elevation of Women), worked as the head of the English Literature program at Istanbul University, and served in the Turkish Parliament as an MP from 1950 to 1954.



Iclal Vanwesenbeeck is an Assistant Professor at the State University of New York at Fredonia.

Copies of the translation may be purchased through the following site:

<https://utpress.utexas.edu/9781477330647/#generate-pdf>

IN REMEMBRANCE OF RALPH JAECKEL

Bill Hickman And Michael Fishbein



Ralph Jaeckel was born in Breslau, Germany (now Wroclaw, Poland), on November 4, 1932. His parents were university graduates who left Europe before the start of World War II. His mother brought Ralph and his sister to the United States; his father did not survive the trip. With help from the Quakers, they settled in York, Pennsylvania. Ralph's mother eventually moved to New York, where she became a Professor of German at Staten Island Community College. Ralph studied at Haverford College, receiving his bachelor's degree in 1955, having majored in Russian.

After graduation he worked for a time in Washington D.C. with a government agency. There he lived with several Turkish nationals and first encountered the Turkish language. With the encouragement of those friends (including Dr. Sabahat Tansuğ), he went to Istanbul (around 1957) and taught English at a number of different schools, eventually finding regular employment at Robert College (now Boğaziçi University) in the small community of Bebek, outside Istanbul, where he was hired by Dr. Sheldon Wise to teach in the school's English Language Division.

He mostly taught adults, some of them military officers, using a method of teaching English that had been developed by Dr. Wise.

Ralph's apartment in those years housed an enormous card catalogue of samples of Turkish he had collected from various sources, an indication of his future interest. He continued to teach at Robert College until 1965, when he returned to the United States and began his graduate study, initially under Professors Andreas Tietze, Janos Eckmann, and Stanford Shaw. It would not be incorrect to say that Ralph had been recruited by Tietze when the latter was in Istanbul on leave from UCLA. Considered the dean of Turkish scholars, Tietze recognized Ralph's linguistic skills and academic promise.

Before Ralph had gone far in his graduate study, however, Tietze returned to Vienna and Eckmann died. Andras Bodrogligeti had been hired to replace the latter and Ralph eventually finished his doctorate under him with a dissertation entitled, "Dukaginzade Taşlıcalı Yahya Bey's King and Beggar. A Sixteenth Century Ottoman Allegorical-Mystical Love Poem (Mesnevi)."

Ralph was about to turn 48 and had begun his Turkish teaching career and performed substantial research assistance by that time, especially for Prof. Bodrogligeti. His thesis was never published, but posthumous plans are underway to that end.

Ralph held numerous positions during his years of employment in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, beginning with his appointment as Research Assistant in 1972 and ending with that of Senior Lecturer, retiring from teaching in 1993 as Senior Lecturer Emeritus. He was a widely admired and well-liked teacher.

Ralph's contribution to the field of Turkish Studies was largely pedagogical. His books included:

- Turkish Grammar Step-by-Step. Vols. I and II (1997).
- Teach Yourself to Read Turkish: Decipher the Turkish Linguistic Code. Vocabulary and Grammar Explained in Context (5th edition, revised 2019).
- A Dictionary of Turkish Verbs: In Context and by Theme (with Gülnur Tanrıöğen, Georgetown University Press, 2006).
- Faruk Geç's "A Letter from Germany", An Interactive Module for Self-Study and Classroom Use. Adapted for students of Turkish (with Mehmet Süreyya Er [2010]).

He was working on a dictionary of Turkish adverbs at the time of his death.

Ralph was one of the first adopters of a desktop computer in his department. One of his colleagues remembers Ralph's enthusiasm for his Kaypro, a pre-DOS machine that operated on the CP/M system. Ralph strongly believed that he could use technology to help others learn a language in which he delighted and to which he devoted his life.

He was longtime member of the Turkish Studies Association—now the Ottoman and Turkish Studies Association. In 2005, he received the mentoring award of the Middle East Studies Association.

Besides his teaching, Ralph devoted considerable time over the years to photography. In his last years he established an ongoing relationship with the company Film Rescue International, which digitized the black-and-white images that Ralph had created during his days in Turkey.

It is hoped that an exhibit of some of these historic images can be organized soon.

Ralph died on October 21, 2024, in Los Angeles, after a short illness, leaving no survivors.

TURNING THE TIDE WITH HOPE- INSPIRING NEWS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN- MADISON

*Emre Murat Bozer
University of Wisconsin - Madison*

The post-pandemic era has accelerated digitalization, legitimized online educational practices, and transformed the landscape of education. Coupled with rapid advancements in artificial intelligence and virtual reality, these changes have brought language education — particularly in-person instruction and less commonly taught languages— into the spotlight.

A recent example is West Virginia University's controversial decision to eliminate its world language department, along with other social sciences majors and minors. This decision sparked widespread uproar among the public and academic communities alike. Disheartening updates about declining language study enrollments and cuts to social science programs have become all too common, as higher education policies increasingly prioritize the vocational appeal of STEM disciplines.

Amid this decline, I believe institutions and programs that promote linguistic and cultural diversity deserve greater recognition and appreciation than ever before. For this reason, I am thrilled to share that starting in the Fall 2024 semester, Turkish courses at the University of Wisconsin-Madison are being offered in-person by two instructors for the first time since before the pandemic: Teaching Faculty Dr. Nâîlân Erbil and newly hired Graduate Teaching Assistant Emre Murat Bozer.

After teaching various levels of Japanese for the last three years at UW-Madison, I joined the Department of German, Nordic, Slavic+ to teach First Semester Turkish, with generous support from the Kemal H. Karpat Center for Turkish Studies.

Teaching multiple languages at the same institution had already enriched my professional development as a language instructor and as an emerging scholar in Second Language Acquisition. Reflecting on the language ideologies and discourses surrounding Japanese and Turkish from various stakeholders—students, teachers, and administrators—has deepened my commitment to promoting Turkish language and culture on campus. In an era of budget cuts and declining support for less commonly taught languages, the Department of German, Nordic, Slavic+ and the Kemal H. Karpat Center for Turkish Studies have taken an inspiring step forward and reaffirmed their dedication to linguistic and cultural diversity.

Currently, our instructional team offers three Turkish language courses: First Semester, Second Semester, and Fifth Semester Courses, along with a content course titled *Berlin-Istanbul Connections*. Beyond the classroom, we host a weekly Language Table gathering, where current students, program graduates, and speakers of Turkish from the university and local community come together to practice Turkish while enjoying traditional beverages and snacks. These events have attracted a great deal of interest so far. Participation continues to grow and fuel our excitement for future gatherings. We also collaborate with the Center for German and European Studies, the Department of German, Nordic, Slavic+, the Kemal H. Karpat Center for Turkish Studies, the Madison Association of Turkish Students, and the Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Language Institute (MEDLI) to facilitate campus and public events that celebrate Turkish language and culture.

The Summer Semester is equally vibrant at UW-Madison. In Summer 2024, we offered Elementary Turkish and Advanced Turkish under MEDLI (a total of 14 students). Dr. Nâîân Erbil served as the pedagogy director for Arabic, Persian, and Turkish programs, while I taught First and Second Semester Turkish during the intensive eight-week program. With 20 hours of weekly instruction and extracurricular events, our learners experienced an immersive environment to enhance their linguistic and cultural skills.

We are especially proud of our Turkish Flagship Language Initiative (TURFLI) scholars, supported by Boren Awards, who achieved or exceeded expected proficiency levels in their OPI exams. Our 2024 TURFLI graduates (9 students) are now continuing their Turkish studies in Baku, Azerbaijan, where we receive excellent feedback about their progress.

We are already looking forward to MEDLI 2025, which will be offered entirely online, hopefully allowing us to reach even more learners worldwide. We encourage AATT members to spread the word and help us connect with individuals eager to learn Turkish.

With these exciting updates from UW-Madison, I look forward to hearing hope-inspiring news from institutions worldwide about the promotion of less commonly taught languages. Institutional change begins with individual action, and together, we can create a more inclusive, linguistically and culturally diverse future in education.

NEWS FROM THE INTENSIVE OTTOMAN AND TURKISH SUMMER SCHOOL IN CUNDA

Tobin Johnson
PhD Candidate UMCP, History

Over the summer, I was pleased to have the opportunity to attend the Intensive Ottoman and Turkish Summer School in Cunda, which is marked by a beautiful location and wonderful people. I attended the early Ottoman Turkish class with Professor Selim Kuru and a number of classmates. We began the summer with documentary scripts and had the chance to look at a variety of exciting materials, including tezkires, court records, travel literature and more. The summer school also includes afternoon instruction in Persian and Modern Turkish, and I had the pleasure of reading Saadi's poetry from a digitalized manuscript in the advanced Persian group. I've since returned to UMD to begin working on my dissertation, and I'm using my Ottoman Turkish skills every day.

RECIPIENTS OF 2024 AATT AWARDS & PRIZES

WALTER G. ANDREWS

GRADUATE STUDENT OTTOMAN LANGUAGE SUMMER SCHOOL TUITION SCHOLARSHIP

This scholarship is sponsored by a generous donation from Melinda Andrews to honor the legacy of late Walter G. Andrews who was an invaluable scholar and historian of Ottoman & Turkish Studies.

This past year there were two recipients:

Tobin Johnson is a PHD student at the University of Maryland whose work focuses on the early Ottoman Empire in comparison and interactions with the Balkan states exploring issues like nomad-sedentary interactions, gender, sexuality and family as portrayed in epic literature.

Tom Abi Samra is a PHD student in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University whose research focuses on the interplay between Arabic and Ottoman literatures related to the emergence of new genres of poetry.

Both Tobin and Tom received the Walter Andrews Tuition scholarship to study at the 2024 Intensive Ottoman-Turkish Summer School in Cunda.

WALTER ANDREWS OTTOMAN TURKISH TRANSLATION AWARD

Mohannad Abusarah received the OTTA award in the advanced category for his translation of a hand-written document titled 'Yafa kasabasında inşa olunan mekteb-i rüşdiyye muallimliğine dair.' Mohannad is a PHD student at the University of Toronto studying Islamic Intellectual History and Social Development in late Ottoman Palestine.

Adrien Mercat received the OTTA award in the intermediate category for his translation of a newspaper article titled 'Nerede yaşıyoruz? Where do we live?' Adrien is a PHD student in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University focusing on the formation of nationalism and national consciousness in the South Caucasian region in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Please note that the AATT will award the Ottoman Turkish Translation Award again in 2025, so please encourage your students to submit applications. But unfortunately, we will not be able to award the Ottoman Language Summer School Tuition Scholarship in 2025 due to reduced support. OTSA officers may want to meet with AATT officers to brainstorm new sources of funding for this summer scholarship.

NORMAN ITZKOWITZ TURKISH SHORT STORY AWARD

Marsel Khamitov is a PHD student in Russian Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He has received this award for his short story titled ‘**Sürgün.**’

Sean Silvia is a PHD student in History at Princeton University. He has received this award with his short story titled ‘**Ada Alegorisi.**’

THE REDHOUSE PRIZE FOR BEST PROGRESS IN TURKISH

Marsel Khamitov is a PHD student in Russian Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was nominated by her Turkish instructor Dr. Nalan Erbil Erkan for his outstanding progress in Beginner Level Turkish language classes during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Veda Kanamarlapudi is an undergraduate student majoring in Linguistics and Economics at Stanford University. She was nominated by her Turkish instructor Saadet Ebru Ergül for her outstanding progress in Intermediate Level Turkish language classes during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Adrian Brunke is an undergraduate student majoring in Linguistics at the University of Washington-Seattle. He was nominated by his Turkish instructor Dr. Melike Yücel Koç for his outstanding progress in Elementary Turkish language classes during the 2023-2024 academic year.

Zena Nameer Salman is an undergraduate student majoring in International Studies at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. She was nominated by her Turkish instructor Dr. Nilay Sevinç for her outstanding progress in Beginner Level Turkish language classes during the 2023-2024 academic year.

ERIKA GILSON TEACHING AWARD
CONGRATULATIONS TO DR. SYLVIA ÖNDER!



We are delighted to share that Dr. Sylvia Wing Önder has been awarded the **AATT Erika Gilson Teaching Award 2025**, in recognition of her outstanding contributions to Turkish language education and her longstanding leadership in the field. As a Professor and Director of the Turkish Program at Georgetown University, Dr. Önder has transformed the Turkish curriculum through her innovative pedagogy, interdisciplinary courses, and deep commitment to student learning. Her approach to teaching has not only inspired generations of students but also set a high standard for excellence in language instruction.

Dr. Önder's impact extends far beyond the classroom. Through her work with the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT) and the American Research Institute in Turkey (ARIT), she has created lasting opportunities for students and educators alike. From organizing graduate student workshops and scholarly panels to supporting immersive language programs in Turkey, Dr. Önder has shaped the field with her vision, generosity, and collaborative spirit. This award is a fitting recognition of her decades-long dedication to Turkish language education and to the broader community of Turkic studies.

<https://gufaculty360.georgetown.edu/s/contact/00336000014RewFAAS/sylvia-onder>

NEWS FROM SUMMER PROGRAMS

THE ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL READING INSTITUTE (APRI)

Banu Ozer Griffin – Cornell University

Transforming the way students meet graduate reading requirements

The University of Chicago has developed a groundbreaking method for teaching, testing and certifying advanced reading skills in world languages for any discipline.

65 Disciplines covered 12 Languages 95% Pass rate

ACADEMICREADING.UCHICAGO.EDU

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
ACADEMIC & PROFESSIONAL READING INSTITUTE
World Languages | Global Engagement

Dear Friends,

I am excited to announce that the University of Chicago is now accepting students for the new courses I have designed, aimed at equipping graduate students, academics, and professionals with advanced reading skills essential for their disciplines. These fully online courses combine synchronous and asynchronous components for flexible yet comprehensive learning.

Since 2022, I have meticulously developed these programs, creating all instructional materials, including presentations, worksheets, quizzes, assignments, and assessments. The courses are structured into two levels:

1. Foundational Turkish for Reading Designed for those with at least one year of Turkish study, this course helps learners advance to an academic proficiency level. It features:

- Structured grammar and syntax instruction
- Academic and discipline-specific vocabulary development
- Guided reading practice with comprehension exercises
- Video lessons, interactive worksheets, and quizzes for self-assessment
- Collaborative assignments and live discussions

2. Turkish for Research and Reading This advanced-level course prepares learners to engage with academic texts in Turkish, strengthening their research capabilities. Key components include:

- Intensive reading practice with humanities articles from various fields
- Skill-building videos and application exercises
- Exposure to discipline-specific terminology and scholarly discourse
- Preparation for the Academic Reading Comprehension Assessment (ARCA). Learn more about ARCA: academicreading.uchicago.edu/arca-certification

These courses, offered through the **Academic and Professional Reading Institute (APRI)** at the University of Chicago, provide an innovative and structured approach to mastering reading proficiency in Turkish.

Join us this summer and take your learner's academic reading skills to the next level!

MEDLI SUMMER 2025 ONLINE PROGRAM



Learn Turkish intensively online this summer! All levels of Turkish are available!

MEDLI is still accepting applications!

The Middle Eastern and Mediterranean Language Institute (MEDLI), formerly known as the Arabic, Persian, and Turkish Language Institute (APTIL) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, offers high-quality, proficiency-based courses in 4 languages for undergraduates, graduate students, and adult learners. Our 8-week programs are the equivalent of one year of study. Students learn speaking, reading, listening, and

writing skills through classroom instruction and a full range of co-curricular activities.

Students will receive 8 credits and a letter grade (A-F) after completing the program. MEDLI participants must complete both 4-week sessions for a total of 8 weeks. Courses meet Monday-Friday, 9-11am and 12-2pm (CST), from June 16 – August 8, 2025.

About MEDLI: <https://medli.wisc.edu/>

MEDLI

newsletter: <https://app.explore.wisc.edu/e/es?s=1427524768&e=1982489&elqTrackId=6bf940c8fcb4d2896cdc087ece57e37&elq=338c84dab0c34c09ad797062d280eb94&elqaid=64102&elqat=1&elqak=8AF5CA19A1C40FCBB957E343E82ED189D37550359E06448529F492ECAA0103F48D7B>

Application

form: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSf99qeeSMJea24N4Ws_JHY1KXL99pTzQsE0zH3fWm6PI2HxiA/viewform

2023–2024 ENROLLMENT SURVEY REPORT FOR TURKIC LANGUAGE COURSES AT POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS IN THE UNITED STATES AND CANADA

Sibel Crum – Indiana University

The members of the AATT Language Enrollment Survey Committee (Sibel Crum, Nilay Sevinç, and Emrah Şahin) express their sincere gratitude to all faculty and administrators who contributed to our organization’s annual report by participating in the online survey.

This report presents data from the 2023-2024 Academic Year (AY), based on responses collected from 21 colleges and universities across North America. These institutions were contacted via the AATT listserv, with the survey link distributed on three occasions. Additionally, individual emails were sent to Turkic language faculty and administrators to encourage their input.

Please refer to Table 1 for the complete list of participating colleges and universities.

Table 1: Colleges and Universities Participating in the 2023-2024 AY Enrollment Survey

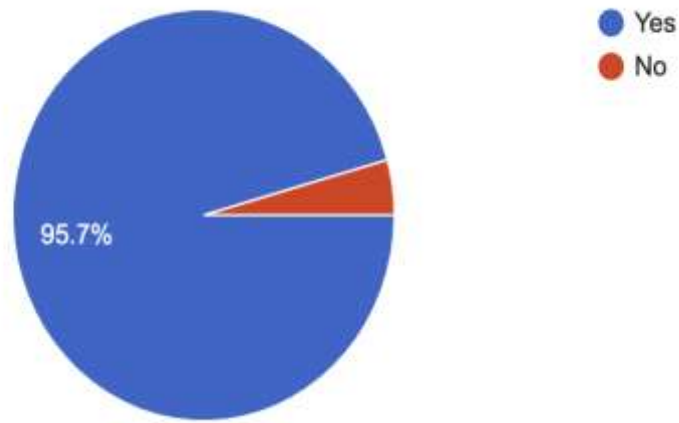
Binghamton University	Princeton University
Boston University	Stanford University
Brown University	University of Arizona
Cornell University	University of Florida
Duke University	University of Kansas
Georgetown University	University of Michigan
Harvard University	University of Pennsylvania
Indiana University, Bloomington	University of Pittsburgh
McGill University	University of Texas, Austin
New York University	University of Toronto
Northwestern University	University of Wisconsin, Madison

Survey data from colleges and universities across North America was included.

AATT Membership Distribution

95% of participants are members of the AATT organization.

Figure I: AATT Membership



Certificate or Minor Programs Related to Turkic Languages

Throughout the academic year 2023-2024, 63.5% of colleges and universities offered either a certificate or a minor program related to Turkic languages. Survey respondents highlighted a variety of academic programs involving Turkic languages and related fields. These programs can be grouped into three broad categories:

1. *Turkish Studies Programs*

- Turkish Minor
- Minor in Turkish Studies
- Minor Concentration in Turkish Language (18 Credits)
- Turkish and Turkic Languages Degrees/Certificates

2. *Middle Eastern Studies Programs*

- Middle East and North African Studies Major/Minor
- Middle Eastern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (MELLAC)
- Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies
- Ph.D. in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures
- MA in Middle Eastern Studies
- BA in Middle Eastern Studies
- Minor in Middle Eastern Studies

3. *Interdisciplinary Programs*

- Turkish Cultural Studies Minor
- Muslim Studies Minor

- International Relations - Middle East Track
- Middle East Studies Program and European Studies Certificate
- EU Minor
- EU Certificate

Turkic and Ottoman Language Programs in North American Higher Education

Modern Turkish language courses, ranging across various proficiency levels, were offered at 21 colleges and universities across North America. Table 1 provides a detailed breakdown of the institutions offering courses in Modern Turkish, Turkic languages, and Ottoman Turkish.

Table 2

Total North American Colleges and Universities with Enrolled Students in modern Turkish, Turkic and Ottoman Turkish Languages for the AY 2023–2024

Course	# of Universities Offering
Turkish I	21
Turkish II	20
Turkish III	16
Ottoman	5
Kazakh	2
Kyrgyz	1
Uzbek	1
Uyghur	1

Figure 1 and Table 2 offer a combined overview of language enrollment figures for both undergraduate and graduate students in Turkish and Ottoman Turkish. Figure 2 and Table 4 break down the enrollment numbers based on language levels, and they also combine students not enrolled in courses under the 'other' category.

Figure 2 Modern Turkish Language Enrollment Numbers, AY 2023-2024

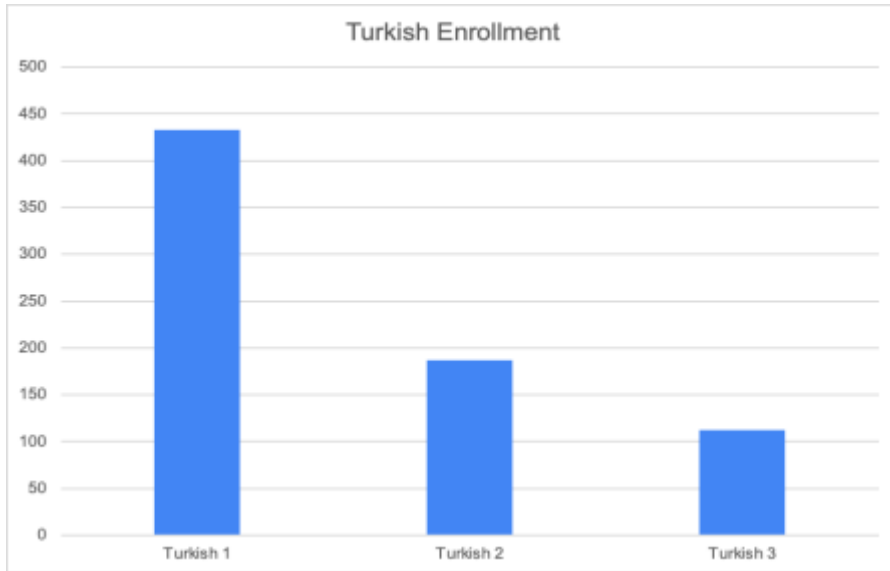


Figure 3: Student Language Levels in Modern Turkish, AY 2023-2024

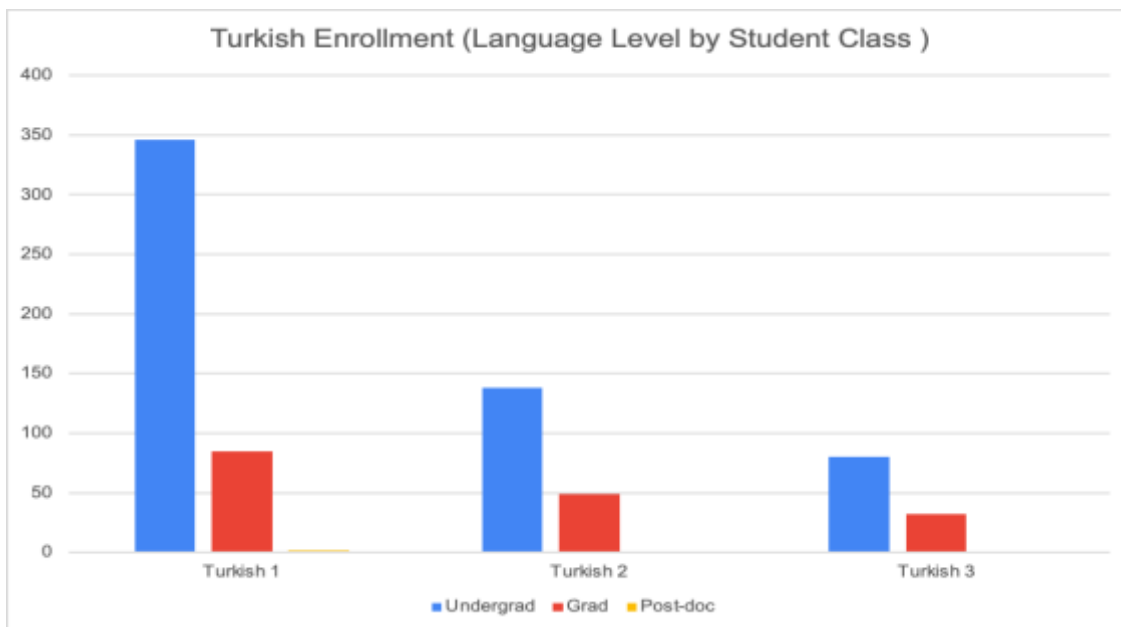


Table 3: Total Enrollment Numbers for Turkish, Turkic, and Ottoman Turkish Languages, Including ‘Other’ Categories

2023-2024 Academic Year	<i>Total number of students including the category of others</i>	<i>Total universities with enrolled students for each language and level</i>
Turkish 1	433	21
Turkish 2	187	20
Turkish 3	112	16
Ottoman	18	5
Kazakh	23	2
Kirghiz	4	1
Uzbek	10	1
Uyghur	12	1

Non-Language Course Offerings

Both the 2022–2023 and 2023–2024 academic years saw a diverse range of course offerings related to Turkish and Turkic studies, with some variation in content. For instance, courses such as “Berlin-Istanbul Connections” and “Modern Turkish Literature in Translation” remained consistent between years, while others like “Turkish Pop Culture History” were newly introduced in 2023–2024. There was also a noted emphasis on advanced Turkish-English translation courses in the 2023–2024 academic year.

Table 4: 2023–2024 AY content and area studies course offerings were as follows:

Courses Offered in English	Courses Offered in Turkish
Berlin-Istanbul Connections: Reimagining Germany Contested Istanbul Independent Study: Turkish Politics and History Islam and Islamism in Turkey Modern Turkish Literature in Translation Research Fellow Program (project based) Turkish Culture & Society Turkish Food Culture Turkish Linguistics Turkish Pop Culture History World Cities: Istanbul Women in Turkish Popular Culture	Advanced Turkish-English Translation Modern Turkish in Context Modern Turkish Readings Reading Turkish I-II Turkish for Heritage Learners Seeds of the Peace

Conclusion

The 2023–2024 enrollment data highlights both positive and concerning trends. The consistent interest in Turkish I, despite fewer participating institutions, indicates ongoing interest for Turkish language beginner-level courses. However, the drop in advanced course enrollments underscores the challenge of retaining students beyond the introductory level.

AATT VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY!

Join Us as an AATT Newsletter Editor!

This is a volunteer position ideal for anyone who enjoys editing, organizing engaging content, and has a strong command of written English. The AATT Newsletter is published once a year. As an editor, you'll work closely with contributors and the AATT Executive Board to bring the newsletter to life in an electronic format.

What You'll Do:

- Communicate with potential contributors from academia and professional networks
- Collect articles, reports, news, and announcements
- Copy-edit texts and secure permissions for photos
- Format and design the newsletter using user-friendly publishing tools already available for our editors
- Edit and publish the AATT Newsletter by March 5th each year
- Create announcements and promotional materials for AATT events, such as posters and announcements
- Work closely with the AATT Executive Board to align with organizational goals
- Attend AATT Executive Board meetings when needed

Thank you

**AATT WOULD LIKE TO THANK OUR
INSTITUTIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL
MEMBERS FOR THEIR CONTINUING
SUPPORT**

American Councils for International Education
American Research Institute in Turkey
Indiana University-Bloomington
Kemal H Karpat Center for Turkish Studies
University of Wisconsin-Madison
Nazarbayev University
New York University
North Carolina Consortium for Middle East Studies
Princeton University
Stanford University
University of Arizona
University of California-Los Angeles
University of Chicago
University of Pennsylvania
University of Pittsburgh
University of Texas at Austin
University of Toronto
University of Washington-Seattle
Yale University

And a Special Thanks to

Gilson, Itzkowitz and Andrews Families



AATT 2024 COMMITTEE MEMBERS

AATT President

Saadet Ebru Ergül – Stanford University

Executive Secretary

İlknur Lider – U Pittsburgh

Treasurer

Jeannette Okur - UT Austin

Executive Board

Didem Havlıođlu – Duke University

Emrah Şahin – U Florida

Kağan Arık – U Chicago

Gözde Mercan – U Toronto

Conference Academic Committee

Didem Havlıođlu – Duke University

Sibel Crum – Indiana University

Gözde Mercan – U Toronto

Nalan Erbil – U Wisconsin Madison

Betül Czerkowski – U of Arizona

Melike Yücel Koç – U of Washington

Conference Organization Committee

Feride Hatibođlu - U Penn

Elif Sayar - İstanbul Üniversitesi

Saadet Ebru Ergül – Stanford University

Jeannette Okur – UT Austin

İlknur Lider – U Pittsburgh

Gülden Tüm – Çukurova University

Graduate Preconference Committee

Kağan Arık - U Chicago

Hakan Karateke - U Chicago

Uli Schamilođlu - Nazarbayev University

Sylvia Önder - Georgetown University

Chris Gratien - U of Virginia

Gözde Mercan - U Toronto

Language Enrollment and Steering

Emrah Şahin – U Florida

Sibel Crum – U Indiana

Nilay Sevinç – U Michigan

Awards, Prizes, Scholarships Selection Committee:

Asuman Kafaoğlu-Büke

Ayten Alkan

Benjamin C. Fortna

Beyza Lorenz

Burcu Karahan

Esra Özdemir

Feride Hatiboğlu

Gregory Key

Helga Anetshofer

İlknur Lider

Jeanette Okur

M. Şükrü Hanioglu

Mark Gilson

Mehmet Zaman Saçlıoğlu

Nilüfer Hatemi

Nursuna Memecan

Saadet Ebru Ergul

Selim Sırrı Kuru

Sine Ergün

Tülin Kozikoğlu

Website:

Esra Predolac- University of Kansas

Salim Gürbüz- Independent Scholar

Social Media Accounts Manager:

Banu Ozer Griffin- Cornell University

Newsletter Editors:

Banu Ozer Griffin- Cornell University

Oya Topçuoğlu Judd- Northwestern University



www.aatturkic.org



@aateachersofturkiclanguages



/aattusa



AATTsecretariat@gmail.com



@aateachersofturkiclanguages