

# The Discursive Clash Between the Portraits of Turkey and the Ottoman Empire in Relation to Their Foreign Policy: The ‘Victorious’ Turkey Versus the ‘Defeated’ Ottoman Empire

Reyhan Kadriye Göksele

Department of Political Science and International Relations

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Abdullah Gül University, Turkey

E-mail: rgoksel@alumni.bilkent.edu.tr

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## Abstract

This article argues that the Turkish press of the early republican years was one of the instruments used by the Turkish political discourse of the early republican years to disseminate and reproduce its values in the public sphere. This article attempts to examine the discursive distinction between Turkey and the Ottoman Empire in terms of their international relations through the Turkish press discourse. To this end, this article focuses on the Turkish newspaper column "Sabah Gazeteleri ne diyorlar?" published in the Turkish newspaper Haber Akşam Postası on June 11, 1938, and conducts an argumentation analysis of the column by applying the Vienna School of Discourse-Historical Approach (Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Wodak 1990, 1994; Wodak & Meyer 2001; Wodak & Chilton 2005; Wodak et al. 2009). This article examines the rhetorical, discursive, and argumentative strategies used by the editorial writer Asım Us to persuade readers. One of the key findings of the article is the following: the negative portrayal of the Ottoman Empire versus the positive portrayal of Turkey. While the Ottoman Empire was described as "defeated" in World War I, Turkey was portrayed as a "victorious" country that was able to sign the Treaty of Lausanne with the Entente powers on an equal footing (Note 1).

**Keywords:** Discourse-Historical Approach, Argumentation schemes, Generalising synecdoche, *Topos* of love

## 1. Introduction

When Turkey was founded in 1923 on the ashes of the Ottoman Empire, the Turkish state wanted to make a clear break between Turkey and the Ottoman Empire. Turkey wanted to create a new and fresh identity that would be secular, westernised, modern and nationalistic. The construction of such an identity required systematic indoctrination, with which the Turkish Republic sought to make Turkish society adopt new socio-cultural, bureaucratic, legal and political norms and values. In the early years of the Turkish Republic, the process of constructing a new identity reflects how a modern Western-style nation-state was established in a non-Western country and a non-Western socio-bureaucratic structure. In modern nation-states, states are the main actors in the creation and dissemination of national identity to a wider public in their own country (Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1992). With their strong centralisation of power, they are the central authorities exercising control over their citizens within their territory (Gellner 1983, p. 4; Hobsbawm 1992, p. 4). They control their citizens through several instruments, including state institutions such as the legal system, security forces (Gellner 1983, p. 4) and bureaucratic mechanisms (Hobsbawm 1992, p. 4). Hobsbawm (1993) emphasises that the state, through its means of communication such as public education, played a central role in the process of nation-building by "disseminating the image and heritage of the 'nation' and inculcating attachment to it, associating all with the country a flag, often 'inventing' 'traditions' or even nations for this purpose" (ibid., pp. 91-92). Furthermore, Anderson (2006) and Hobsbawm (1992) emphasise that the printed press is also one of the instruments of the state in the dissemination of national identities. After the First World War, the concept of national identity was established through the use of "modern mass media", which are systematically manipulated by both "states" and "private interests" (Hobsbawm 1992, p. 41). Regarding the impact of newspapers on people, Anderson (2006, pp. 35-36) argues that newspapers have a constant influence on readers as they are read regularly in everyday life. Since newspapers are easily accessible to people, I believe that they can easily transmit any ideology to their audience.

In this article, I argue that in the early years of the Turkish Republic, the Turkish press was one of the instruments of the Turkish politicians to disseminate and reproduce the Turkish national identity. Because there was a strong connection between the newspapers and the Turkish politicians. Most newspaper owners or editors/columnists between 1930 and 1950 were also political figures in the Turkish parliament. Asım Us, Mahmut Esat, Abidin Daver, Şeref Aykut and Yakup Kadri Karaosmanoğlu were not only members of parliament but also editors of Turkish newspapers. Asım Us, for example, was a member of the Turkish parliament between 1927 and 1950 (Payaslı 2021, pp. 1-4)

## 2. Material

This article is the result of archival research that I conducted in 2014 as part of my doctoral thesis in the microfilm department of the Turkish Parliament. During my archival research, I collected over a thousand sources, including editorials, columns and news reports from Turkish newspapers that characterise Turkish identity. The newspapers I focused on are *Ulus*, *Cumhuriyet*, *Haber Akşam Postası*, *Inkılâp*, *Milliyet*, *Kurun*, and *Vakit*. In my archival

research, I examined their daily publications, and found that they published daily editorials about Turkey's radical break with the Ottoman Empire in terms of socio-cultural, political, administrative aspects. For this article, however, I deliberately chose the column by Asım Us in the Haber Akşam Postası of 11 June 1938. The reason for this is that this is the only newspaper column I found during my four months of archival research on Turkey's differentiation from the Ottoman Empire in terms of foreign policy.

### **3. Method: The Discourse-Historical Approach**

The Viennese School of Discourse-Historical Approach (abbreviated DHA) was developed by Wodak & Meyer 2001; Wodak & Chilton 2005 and Wodak et al. 2009. The Viennese School of Discourse-Historical Approach is a method based on qualitative research and focuses on social issues, including anti-Semitism in Austria (Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Wodak et al. 2009) and the national identity of European countries (Krzyzanowski 2009; Krzyzanowski 2016; Krzyzanowski & Ledin 2017; Krzyzanowski et al. 2018; Reisigl & Wodak 2001; Reisigl 2007, 2014; Richardson & Wodak 2009; Watson 2009; Wodak 1990, 1994; Wodak & Meyer 2001; Wodak & Chilton 2005; Wodak et al. 2009; Wodak & Forchtner 2014). This method emphasises the importance of the historical and socio-political background of discursive utterances. Their empirical data include press discourse (newspapers, radio, television news, pamphlets, social media, online newspapers), political discourse and they have found that European national identity after the 1990s is based on the othering and isolation of non-Europeans, including immigrants, asylum seekers and workers from outside Europe (Krzyzanowski 2009; Krzyzanowski 2013 a, Krzyzanowski 2013 b; Krzyzanowski 2015; Krzyzanowski 2016; Krzyzanowski & Ledin 2017; Krzyzanowski et al. 2018; Reisigl & Wodak 2001, Reisigl 2007, 2014; Richardson & Wodak 2009; Watson 2009; Wodak 1990, 1994; Wodak & Meyer 2001; Wodak & Chilton 2005; Wodak et al. 2009; Wodak & Forchtner 2014).

Reisigl & Wodak (2001) have identified five strategies, namely referential, predication, argumentation, perspectivisation and mitigation/intensification strategies (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p. 46). Referential strategies serve to introduce, define and categorise persons (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p. 45). Referential strategies include tropes, synecdoches, metaphors and metonyms, which can be used to categorise actors as a "we" or "they" group (*ibid.*, p. 45). Predicational strategies involve either positive or negative assessments or evaluations of actors by labelling them (*ibid.*, p. 45). Positive or negative attributions are made by "attributes in the form of adjectives, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, prepositional phrases, relative clauses, conjunctive clauses, infinitive clauses and participial clauses or groups" (*ibid.*, p. 54).

The discriminatory ideas are to be downplayed or emphasised through the use of intensification and mitigation strategies (*ibid.*, p. 45). One possibility of mitigation strategies is, for example, to disguise the actors responsible for negative events through euphemisms, nominalisations or passive voice (Wodak et al. 2009, p. 36). Intensification can take place in various ways: Such as, "intensity markers such as emphasising particles ('really', 'very', 'absolutely', 'only'), amplifying particles ('very', 'too', 'absolutely') and emphasising as

well as amplifying morphemes (for example, ‘super-’ and ‘mega’), exaggerating quantifiers and intensifying verbs (not least modal verbs) and verb phrases, adjectives and adverbs that encode the emotions, feelings, moods and general dispositions" (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p. 83).

Moreover, the DHA is also interested in analysing argumentation. According to Toulmin (2003, p. 89), the structure of the argument is as follows: "minor premise; major premise; so, conclusion". For example, "Socrates is a man; all men are mortal; So, Socrates is mortal" (Toulmin 2003, p. 100). The DHA concentrates on argumentation schemes and regards them as topoi. According to Wodak et al. (2009), topoi/ fallacies are regarded as argumentation schemes. Topoi are also considered argumentation schemes by other scholars, e.g., Eriksson 2012; Reed & Walton 2001; Reed et al. 2007; Reisigl 2014; Macagno et al. 2017. Eriksson (2012, p. 210) states that in argumentation schemes, the author or speaker can create convincing arguments by using premises that speak in favour of the conclusion. Using argumentation schemes (topos or fallacy), speakers/writers can argue either positive" or "negative" opinions/views, including their intolerant, isolating or all-encompassing ideas (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, p. 45). Reisigl & Wodak (2001) explain topos as "parts of argumentation that belong to the obligatory, either explicit or inferable, premises" (Reisigl & Wodak 2001, pp. 74-75). Wodak et al. (2009 et al.) point out that "topoi or loci" are crucial for the construction of argumentation because "they justify the transition from an argument or arguments to the conclusion" (Wodak et al. 2009, pp. 34-35). A fallacy arises when an argument is based on irrational premises (ibid., p. 35). Topoi are usually based on "conditional" or cause-and-effect statements. For example: "If x, then y" or "If y, because X" (Reisigl 2014, p. 75).

In this article I am inspired by the five strategies of Reisigl & Wodak (2001). I will first examine how the editorialist Asım Us categorizes and classifies the actors and events by looking at metaphors, metonymies and synecdoche. I will then examine how Asım Us described and defined the actors and events. So, I will examine what kind of adjectives, adverbs, noun phrases or relative clauses, whether positive or negative, are used for the actors and events. Thirdly, I will find out what kind of argumentation schemes (topos/ fallacies) Asım Us uses to prove his arguments. Fourthly, I will look at Asım Us' style in explaining his ideas. For example, I will be interested in whether he takes into account the social norms or whether he makes an effort to portray himself positively while saying negative things about the actors and events. At this stage, I will examine whether he tries to use the mitigation or intensification strategies mentioned above to convince readers of his arguments.

#### **4. Analysis**

The following quote was written by Asım Us in response to the German press coverage of the financial agreement between Great Britain and Turkey. On 27 May 1938, Turkey and Britain signed a financial agreement according to which Britain would grant Turkey a loan of 16,000,000 pounds for Turkey's payments for its defence (Athanasopoulou 1999, p. 17). Kolinsky (1999, p. 22) mentions the two agreements between Turkey and Great Britain, the first from 1936 on the "remilitarisation of the Dardanelles"; the second from 1938, a loan

agreement (*ibid.*, p. 22). Turkey's rapprochement to Britain was not welcomed by Hitler's Germany, which reacted by cancelling the "Turkish order for heavy howitzers" (Steiner 2011, p. 962).

Below I have provided the entire quotation in English, despite of the fact that its original version was written in Turkish, and enumerated the paragraphs and sentences within the column to clarify my analysis for the reader.

The below quotation is taken from Haber Akşam Postası of 11 June 1938. It was written by Asım Us.

"1-) 1. The German newspapers know that Turkey has a completely different national identity than the Ottoman Empire which was defeated and collapsed in the World War as an ally of Germany. 2. This national identity made peace with all the belligerents which signed the Treaty of Versailles, with England in particular, in Lausanne based on legal egalitarianism. 3. Having full political, economic and financial independence, Turkey could have signed the same agreement with the Germans as well. 4. If it served their purpose, the Germans could also have signed such a financial agreement with Turkey. 5. In fact, the doors for this opportunity are not closed. 6. In this respect, why is the financial agreement signed between the Turks and the British dangerous to Germany?

2-) 1. The countries which would like to be on good terms with Turkey, especially those who would like to do business with Turkey, should know that no country or nation is entitled to a privileged benefit in Turkish territories. 2. The only benefit in Turkey is for the Turkish. 3. On the condition that they recognize this principle and respect the Turkish benefit, any country can agree with sovereign Turkey".

The main aim of the above editorial is to demonstrate Turkey's robust stance towards Germany. It emphasizes Turkey's distinctiveness compared to the Ottoman Empire and focuses in particular on its economic and political relations with the European nations. It presents Turkey as a powerful player in international politics. The main argument of the editorial is as follows: For Turkey, its own political and economic interests come first, and Turkey is free to make agreements with any country that suits its interests.

In the first sentence of the first paragraph, Asım Us explicitly emphasizes the "completely different national identity" of the Turkish Republic. Here, Us attempts to express the dramatic change between the national identity of Turkey and that of the Ottoman Empire. In the sentence, the temporal adverb "today's" Turkey was used to emphasize the profound change between Turkey and the Ottoman Empire and to point out that the Ottoman Empire has remained in the past and no longer plays a role in the present. In this sentence, the strategy of transformation was used to replace the Ottoman national identity with the Turkish identity in terms of foreign policy. The transformation strategy is defined as "aim to transform a relatively well-established national identity and its components into another identity the contours of which the speaker has already conceptualized" (Wodak et al. 2009, p. 33). In the above editorial, the author tries to replace the Ottoman identity with the new Turkish identity, which Asım Us emphasizes it as "independent" and "sovereign". To portray the Ottoman

Empire negatively, in the first sentence, the Ottoman national identity was depicted as "defeated" and "collapsed". Here, he subtly hints that the Ottoman Empire's decision to ally with Germany during the First World War was a mistake, suggesting that the empire could have avoided its eventual collapse if it had opted for a different alliance, especially if it had not allied with Germany. He thus characterizes the Ottoman Empire as a country that lacked strategic foresight in its international relations. Zurcher (2007, p. 112) argues that the Ottoman Empire misjudged the scope and possible participants of the First World War. Zurcher (2007) argues that for the Ottomans, the First World War would take place between Germany and Russia and that Germany would defeat Russia, thereby eliminating the Russian threat to Ottoman territories in the Balkans and the northern Black Sea region (ibid., p. 112).

In the first sentence of the first paragraph, German newspapers' privileged position of knowledge is emphasized. Here, the author pursues two strategic goals:

**Establishing credibility:** By referring to the German newspapers, Us wants to increase the credibility of his following argument about the different national identity of Turkey compared to the Ottoman Empire. This is because he implies that his argument is also known and accepted in German newspapers. He also wants to say that since his argument has already been shared by German newspapers, it is true. This increases his credibility. Furthermore, this argumentation scheme also serves to present himself as objective and unbiased towards the German newspapers and Germany. This is because he appears as a person who gives space to the opinions of the German newspapers.

**Framing the perspective:** Us tries to influence the reader's perspective and reiterates that Germany understands the clear difference between Turkey and the Ottoman Empire.

In the second sentence of the first paragraph, Us emphasises the divergence between Turkish national identity and the identity of the Ottoman Empire by highlighting the peace treaty that Turkey signed with the Entente powers in Lausanne in 1923 on equal terms. The second sentence aims to portray Turkey's national identity as robust, victorious, a fighter for independence and sovereignty and an equal power among the European powers. It also draws an implicit rhetorical comparison between Germany and Turkey by comparing Turkey's ability to sign the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923 on an equal footing with the belligerent powers with Germany's signing of the Treaty of Versailles as the loser in 1919. This comparison subtly emphasises Turkey's position as a sovereign and equal entity in international relations, in contrast to Germany's experience as a defeated nation. The sentence suggests that the term "Turkish national identity" functions as a metonymy, defined by Wodak et al. (2009) as a figure of speech in which the name of a concept is replaced by the name of another, closely related entity, whether concrete or abstract (Wodak et al. 2009, p. 43). In this context, "Turkish national identity" is used as a substitute for the Turkish Republic. This linguistic strategy aims to evoke a sense of collective identification and pride in the reader and to emphasise the strength, victory and independence of Turkish identity, especially in contrast to the historical experiences of other nations such as Germany. By linking the concept of Turkish national identity with the achievements and autonomy of the Turkish Republic, Us tries to evoke a protective feeling towards Turkish identity in the readers. Moreover, Us tries

to emphasise the rhetorical contrast not only between the Treaty of Versailles (1919) and the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), but also implicitly between the Treaty of Sèvres and the Treaty of Lausanne. As Van Dijk (1987, p. 108) points out, the rhetorical contrast serves to “signal the conflicting values, goals and interests of the in-group and the out-group”. One can argue that the use of rhetorical contrasts is a deliberate strategy to polarise the dynamic of 'us' versus 'them'.

The rhetorical contrasts used by Us serve to paint a positive picture of Turkey, which is juxtaposed with a negative portrayal of Germany and the Ottoman Empire, whereby Turkey is positioned as "we" and the Ottoman Empire as "the other". In this narrative construction, Turkey's identity is described in contrast to the identities of Germany and the Ottoman Empire by characterising them as nations that were defeated at the end of the First World War and forced to sign peace treaties with the Entente powers. After the First World War, the Entente powers concluded the Treaty of Versailles with Germany in 1919 and the Treaty of Sevres with the Ottoman Empire in 1920, which was later replaced by the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923.

The terms of the Treaty of Versailles were imposed on Germany by the Entente powers without negotiation and included severe sanctions such as the admission of war guilt and the demilitarisation of the German army; in addition, some German colonies were annexed (The National Archives, 2018). Gustav Bauer, the German Chancellor at the time, actually expressed Germany's displeasure with certain aspects of the Treaty of Versailles. He emphasised that Germany accepted the treaty primarily for the good of the German people, who wanted an end to hostilities and did not want to be involved in further conflict. Bauer referred in particular to Germany's refusal to accept the annexation of German territories and the imposition of full responsibility for triggering the First World War (Mombauer 2002, p. 43). The Ottoman Empire also underwent significant changes under the Treaty of Sèvres of 1920: It agreed to the creation of an independent Armenia and an autonomous Kurdish region and ceded control of Izmir to Greece. In addition, the Ottoman Empire agreed to relinquish its rights to various territories in the Middle East. The terms of the Treaty of Sèvres were particularly strict, and Bernard Lewis considered them stricter than those of the Treaty of Versailles, which had been imposed on Germany (Lewis 1968, p. 247). Lewis (1968, p. 247) emphasises that the Treaty of Sèvres was not ratified due to Mustafa Kemal Ataturk's successful efforts to establish a new state in Anatolia. The success of the Turkish independence movement under the leadership of Ataturk led to a reassessment by the Entente powers, which culminated in the signing of the Treaty of Lausanne with Turkey. Signed in 1923, the Treaty of Lausanne represented a significant departure from the provisions of the Treaty of Sèvres. In the Treaty of Lausanne, the Entente powers agreed to withdraw from the Turkish territories they had occupied. Turkey regained control of Izmir and the planned independent entities of Armenia and Kurdish region were not established. In addition, the Treaty of Lausanne addressed and resolved several important issues, including Turkey's borders, the status of minorities, the abolition of capitulations, the population exchange between Turkey and Greece and the issue of war debts. By defining the borders of the

Turkish Republic, the Treaty of Lausanne played a crucial role in legitimising the independence of the newly established Turkish Republic.

In the third statement of the first paragraph, the author claims that Turkey has the potential to conclude a financial agreement with Germany. Us strategically presents Turkey as a powerful nation by emphasising its strength with the flag word 'full political, economic and financial independence'. He also emphasises Turkey's friendly attitude towards Germany, dispelling any impression of negativity in their relations. He uses the topos of lovely and idyllic place known as "locus amoenus". According to Wodak et al. (2009, p. 38), this topos is highlighted as an argumentation scheme that aims to singularise and emphasise national uniqueness. In their study of the discursive construction of Austrian national identity, Wodak et al. (2009) concentrate on analysing commemorative speeches by Austrian politicians and conducting interviews with Austrian citizens. In this context, they interpret the topos of lovely, idyllic place (locus amoenus) as a concept that is often expressed as "a beautiful place". This expression is often used in a broader sense, referring to the common national territory or describing an abstract ideal political space in which people live together joyfully, in prosperity, in harmony and without conflicts (Wodak et al. 2009, p. 97). Wodak et al. (2009, p. 99) illustrate the use of the topos of a lovely, idyllic place (locus amoenus) using the example of the Austrian politician Thomas Klestil. In this example, Klestil uses the topos to present Austria in a positive light by emphasising the country's prosperity and positive socio-economic characteristics. In my view, emphasising high standards in various areas such as social, political, economic, legal, bureaucratic and environmental aspects, including physical features, natural resources, lakes and mountains, can be considered a strategy of locus amoenus. This approach aims to emphasise the distinctiveness of a nation.

In the quoted passage, the author Us applies the locus amoenus by presenting Turkey as a nation that has full economic and political independence. This portrayal is strategically designed to present Turkey in a positive light and to strengthen Turkish national identity, not only within the Turkish population but also in the perception of European powers.

The conclusion rule for the *topos* of lovely, idyllic place is as follows:

**Premise 1:** Turkey is a completely economically and politically independent country

**Premise 2:** Countries with complete political and economic independence have the power and ability to make financial agreements with other nations.

**Conclusion:** Therefore, Turkey has the power and ability to sign the financial agreement with Germany.

The fourth sentence of the first paragraph acts as a bridge between the third and fifth sentences by providing additional context and reasons for the conclusion. The implication in the fourth sentence is that Turkey is not solely responsible for the non-realisation of the economic treaty with Germany. Using the strategy of co-responsibility by blaming both Turkey and Germany for the non-existence of a financial agreement is certainly a form of mitigation. By pointing out that Germany also did not consider it necessary to sign such an agreement, the author introduces shared responsibility and mitigates the problem by avoiding



placing the blame solely on one party. This strategy aims to present a more nuanced view of the situation, recognising that multiple factors and perspectives might contribute to the absence of a financial agreement. It can also serve to encourage a more diplomatic tone when discussing the complexities of international relations and negotiations. In the fifth sentence, the author offers the final conclusion of the paragraph by expressing that the financial agreement between Turkey and Germany is still achievable. The use of the door metaphor, stating that 'the doors for this opportunity' gives the message an engaging and optimistic tone. The metaphorical language, which utilises the idea that the doors are not closed, is intended to appeal to readers and suggests that there is still a chance for the financial agreement to be reached. The use of the metonym 'opportunity' in relation to the financial agreement also conveys that the author sees the possibility of a financial agreement between Turkey and Germany as a positive and favourable prospect, which underlines the optimistic outlook at the end of the paragraph. In the sixth sentence, the author poses a rhetorical question and claims that the financial agreement between Turkey and the UK does not pose a threat to Germany. The use of a rhetorical question in this context serves as a persuasive device that encourages the reader to consider the implied answer that supports the author's argument. By presenting it as a non-threatening scenario, the author seeks to downplay any concerns or objections that may arise in relation to the financial agreement between Turkey and the UK and reinforce the idea that such an agreement is feasible and should not be viewed negatively by Germany.

The second paragraph claims that Turkey's economic interests come first in the Turkish Republic and that any nation wishing to do business with Turkey will not receive preferential treatment. The author appeals to the countries that want to maintain positive financial relations with Turkey and expects them to understand that the Turkish Republic prioritises its economic interests when doing business with other nations. Asım Üs uses the deontic modality to warn countries that want to maintain positive relations and do business with Turkey and emphasises that these countries should be aware of this principle. Expressions such as 'must,' 'should' and 'ought to' fall under the category of deontic modalities. These modal verbs convey a sense of necessity, obligation or permission and indicate what is required, recommended or permitted in terms of an obligation or duty (Suikkanen 2018, p. 354). There are three types of deontic modality: Deontic Necessity: This type of modality is associated with a strong sense of obligation. Expressions such as 'must' and 'have to', together with adjectives such as 'compulsory,' 'necessary,' 'obligatory,' and 'urgent,' as well as nouns such as 'obligation' and 'necessity' fall under deontic necessity (Suikkanen 2018, pp. 173-174). Deontic Advisability: This modality suggests a medium degree of obligation or recommendation. The modals 'ought to' and 'should' are examples of expressions used for deontic advisability (ibid., p. 174). Deontic possibility: This type of modality indicates a low degree of obligation. Modal verbs such as 'may' and 'can' are used to express deontic possibility (ibid., pp. 174-175).

In the first sentence of the second paragraph, the author uses deontic advisability, with the use of 'should know,' when addressing nations seeking business relations with Turkey. This choice is strategic: firstly, he recognises that there is no direct power to impose measures on other countries. Secondly, he attempts to avoid a negative self-image and to avoid appearing

coercive or unfriendly. Instead, the author takes a diplomatic stance by making suggestions rather than directives when dealing with other nations. Moreover, in the sentence, he seems to act as if he is a spokesperson for Turkey, articulating Turkey's position and expecting the other nations to recognise a certain condition: No country or nation within Turkey will receive a 'privileged benefit'. The term "privileged benefit" in the first sentence refers to Ottoman capitulations granted by the Ottoman padishahs to foreigners residing permanently or temporarily in the Ottoman Empire (Ekrem 1934, p. 402). The capitulations granted foreigners in the Ottoman Empire numerous economic and legal privileges. According to Ekrem (1934, p. 402), the capitulations exempted foreigners from complying with the rules and regulations of the Ottoman Empire and merely required them to abide by the regulations of their respective consulates. Furthermore, these capitulations enabled European countries to enforce their laws against their citizens residing in the Ottoman Empire (ibid., p. 402). The capitulations were valid until the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and were abolished with the Treaty of Lausanne, which was signed between Turkey and the Entente powers in 1923. From 1924 onwards, Turkey pursued a nationalist economic policy in which Turkish citizens were supported in their economic activities. In the first sentence, the author emphasises that Turkish citizens in Turkey only have the privilege of benefiting from Turkey's economic activities.

Moreover, the use of referential vagueness becomes clear in the first sentence of the second paragraph. Referential vagueness, a form of indirectness, is used here by not explicitly naming the countries addressed. This technique corresponds to the concept of vagueness as a strategy of indirectness, which aims to convey a message without formulating it explicitly. As van Dijk (1987, p. 97) states, vagueness, together with other strategies such as implication, presupposition, avoidance and association, serves the purpose of conveying information indirectly. Strategies such as the use of the passive voice or nominalisations can, as van Dijk (1991, p. 184) points out, contribute to achieving vagueness in communication. The use of vagueness in van Dijk's (1991) examples focussing on racism in press discourse certainly reflects a strategic choice to make the responsible actors ambiguous. Vagueness as a linguistic and rhetorical strategy can be used to create ambiguity, making it difficult to identify specific individuals or groups responsible for certain actions or statements. By refraining from naming specific countries or actors, authors create a degree of uncertainty that makes it difficult for readers to clearly attribute responsibility. This tactic can serve various communicative purposes, such as avoiding direct accusations or presenting information in a way that allows for multiple interpretations.

The author, Us, deliberately avoids specifying the countries in question by not naming them explicitly. The use of vague pronouns such as "those" in the first sentence of the second paragraph, referring to countries seeking business relations with Turkey, introduces ambiguity into the sentence. This deliberate vagueness appears to be strategic, possibly to soften the impact of the sentence. By avoiding specific references to certain countries, the author mitigates the risk of appearing confrontational or singling out certain nations, which could potentially portray him negatively. This cautious approach is probably aimed at maintaining a

more diplomatic tone and preserving the author's intention of persuasion without creating a confrontational atmosphere.

The author's explicit statement of not granting “privileged benefits” to other countries in the first sentence is followed by a clear clarification in the second sentence, in which he emphasises that the ultimate beneficiary of economic activities in Turkey should be exclusively the Turkish people. This explicit stance emphasises that economic endeavours in Turkey primarily serve the interests and welfare of the Turkish people. The author implies that all economic benefits arising from activities in Turkey must directly and predominantly benefit the Turkish community, emphasising a nationalist perspective on economic gains within the country. In the same sentence, the use of “the Turks” is an example of a generalising synecdoche (totum pro parte/whole for a part), in which the term is used for the entire Turkish population. This linguistic device not only brings together the different elements of the Turkish population but also emphasises the unity within the community. Furthermore, the use of the generalising synecdoche helps to construct a strong Turkish identity and demonstrate a sense of ethnic, cultural, linguistic, religious and political cohesion among Turkish citizens. By presenting a united front under the term 'the Turks', the author aims to present a consolidated and impressive Turkish identity on the international stage.

In the last sentence of the second paragraph, by explicitly mentioning the condition that countries must respect the primacy of Turkish economic interests to do business in Turkey, the author creates a crucial precondition. With the reference to ‘sovereign Turkey’ (egemen Türkiye), the author affirms and consolidates Turkey's independence, thus echoing the emphasis on the independence in the first paragraph. This formulation serves as a clear message to foreign countries, signalling that Turkey is not dependent on external powers for its economic and political sustenance. Instead, it reaffirms Turkey's autonomy and its ability to prioritise its interests without outside interference or dependence. Furthermore, it constructs Turkey's identity as a robust and sovereign nation that prioritises the well-being and preferences of the Turkish people. Such an emphasis reproduces the discourse of Kemalism - an ideology centred on Turkish nationalism, secularism and modernisation- by emphasising Turkey's self-reliance and putting its interests first.

The contrast between Turkey and the Ottoman Empire is subtly hinted at in the second paragraph. The author hints at a change, albeit indirectly, by suggesting a different approach. This change is embedded in the dichotomy described above: Turkey, portrayed as safeguarding the economic interests of its people, contrasts with the implied earlier practise of the Ottoman Empire, which granted privileges to foreigners. This juxtaposition draws a clear line between Turkey's perceived priorities and the historical practices of the Ottoman Empire. This indicates a departure from an earlier era in which the Ottoman Empire was seen as more accommodating or favourable to foreign interests, while today's Turkey prioritises the economic well-being and sovereignty of the Turkish nation above all else.

## 5. Conclusion

Using the discourse-historical approach, this article analyzed the argumentation and discursive strategies employed by the editorialist Asım Us, with which he reflects the clear

break between the national identity of Turkey and the identity of the Ottoman Empire in relation to their foreign policy. This article makes two contributions to existing scholarship. First, it adds thematic and temporal dimension to the scholarship of the Viennese school of Discourse-Historical Approach (DHA), which focuses not only on the anti-Semitism, anti-immigrant and anti-foreigner discourse in Europe after the 1980s, but also on the discursive construction of national identities in Europe in the post-World War II period (see: Krzyzanowski 2009; Krzyzanowski 2016; Krzyzanowski & Ledin 2017; Krzyzanowski et al. 2018; Reisigl & Wodak 2001, Reisigl 2007, 2014; Richardson & Wodak 2009; Watson 2009; Wodak 1990, 1994; Wodak & Meyer 2001; Wodak & Chilton 2005; Wodak et al. 2009; Wodak & Forchtner 2014). In contrast to DHA scholarship, in this article, I have focused on a non-European country, namely Turkey, and a non-European discourse, namely Turkish newspaper articles. In contrast to DHA scholarship, which is mainly concerned with the post-WW2 and post-Cold War period, in this article I focused on the discursive construction of Turkey's national identity with regard to its foreign policy through a newspaper column published in 1938, which thus reflects the period before the Second World War.

Furthermore, this article contributes to scholarship on the early republican years in Turkey by analysing a Turkish newspaper column from 1938 and by reflecting the editors' efforts to differentiate Turkey from the Ottoman Empire. In this article, I have shown that the main aim of Asım Us' column is to shape the global perception of Turkey as a "strong" and "sovereign" nation in which Turkish citizens come first. This image stems from the Western philosophy of the modern nation-state, which protects the economic and social interests of all citizens in an independent, compact territory. In the column, Asım Us tries to portray the Turkish Republic as a victorious country that maintains economic, political and diplomatic relations with European countries on an equal footing. He presents this kind of portrayal of Turkey in a binary contrast to the Ottoman Empire, which had entered the First World War as an ally of Germany.

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## Note

Note 1. I have written this article on the basis of my doctoral (PhD) thesis, which I completed at King's College London, University of London.

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