

Headscarf or Turban? (Başörtüsü mü Türban mı?)

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1. The Social Problem

The veiling issue has been and is still one of the seemingly nonnegotiable fault lines of the secularisation project(s) of the Turkish Republic. Notwithstanding the current democratisation attempts of the pro-Islamist Justice and Development Party (JDP), the “guardian state”¹ still sees veiling as a threat to the Kemalist, by which they mean secularist, structure of the state. The Turkish society, dominantly a Muslim one, has been exposed to the top-down secularization projects of the ruling elite, the army and the judiciary as of the inception of the modern Republic. On the one hand, people in Turkey have (or been made to) internalized *laiklik*, the Turkish derivative for the French concept of *laïcité*, on the other hand, having used their democratic rights in favour of conservative parties since 1950 they gradually demanded desecularization of the public sphere.²

Although we could date the origins of the problem back to the early Republican era (1920s) when the Turkish society underwent drastic transformations, the legal basis of the current ban on veiling results from a ruling passed by the Constitutional Court in 1989 which banned wearing Islamic veiling in public institutions particularly including veiled university students. Since then, the discussion has changed its parameters, from radical Islamism to democratic conservatism, yet the problem remains the same. The veiling issue has been manipulated by different political groups and stigmatised as a political symbol (Saktanber & Çorbacioğlu, 2008, p. 519) not to mention anything of the western imagination and modernization accounts for which it has been an emblem of Muslim women and their subordination to patriarchy.

2. Changing Concepts

Beside the official and public attitudes toward veiling, the meaning and style of veiling in Turkey have changed over time. Part of the vicissitude results from the Islamic codes of veiling that change from one Muslim country to another, which is usually defined by cultural necessities and/or choices. The Arabic word *hijab* (Arabic:

¹ The guardian state is an amorphous power structure within the state hierarchy, which is upheld by interpersonal contacts at the highest levels (Öktem, 2011, p. 7).

² For further discussion of the increasing appearance of Islam in the public sphere see Yavuz (2003).

(حجاب) is almost nonexistent in the Turkish context, as well as the words *khimar* (Arabic: خمار) and *jilbab* (Arabic: جلباب) which are mentioned in the Holy Quran (24: 30 and 33: 59 respectively) in reference to women's modesty and chastity. The Turkish alternatives for veiling are: *çarşaf*, *i(e)hram*, *türban*, *tülbent*, *yaşmak* and *başörtüsü*. *Çarşaf*, which literally means 'sheet' in English, covers all of the body from head to feet except for the eyes and is sometimes completed by a *peçe* (face cover) to cover the eyes. To say that this is quite different from what is understood as an Islamic way of dressing in Turkey, as Saktanber and Çorbacioğlu contend (2008, p. 520), is problematic and insufficient as there are still people who prefer this kind of veiling over others. *İhram* or sometimes pronounced as *ehram*, is a local over-garment usually made of goat's woolen due to its availability and climactic function. Women in provincial areas, especially in the East, usually put this garment over their dresses when they go out, and cover their face with the end part of the garment, called *bürük* (folded), whenever they see an unfamiliar male. *Yaşmak* and *tülbent* are also local varieties of veiling, which are usually ornamented with hand woven embroidery. The way these are worn change from one area to another. The only words that are stigmatised, at least recently, are *türban* and *başörtüsü*. Today, women wear a headscarf that tightly covers the head, neck, and sometimes the shoulders, which was usually accompanied by a long loose over coat (*pardesü*) back in the 1980s (Saktanber & Çorbacioğlu, 2008, p. 520), particularly by university students. This was the type of Muslim women's attire which the state authorities called *türban* in an attempt to strip it from its religious connotations and attach to it a more *modernized* and political meaning. *Başörtüsü*, literally meaning 'headscarf' in English, is far from being a generic term now and has been used by Islamist activists and media sympathetic to their cause in reaction to the word *türban*. Today, *türban* or *başörtüsü* is no more the dress type of a handful of activist Muslim students, on the contrary, it is more visible and assorted in terms of variety and colourfulness. As a result, the struggle over the hegemony of either concept in official documents, amongst the public and media in particular, continue unabashedly and marks the ongoing ideological clash between state secularism and rising conservatism.

3. From Theory to Methodology

The analysis in this study draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (henceforth CDA) and Corpus Linguistics (henceforth CL). At the theoretical level, CDA sees discourse as a form of 'social practice', which implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situations, institutions and social structures which frame it, and starts from a social problem (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Given the social problem at hand in this study, the researcher believes that the discourse on and around *türban* and *başörtüsü* is both socially constitutive and socially shaped. That is, the struggle over the aforementioned concepts helps sustain the status quo

in the sense that it helps the reproduction of the ideological loading of language in favour of some groups and in disadvantage of others. Crucial to CDA is the view that the choice of one word rather than another can encode a speaker's ideological position towards what they are talking about (Orpin, 2005, p. 40). Furthermore, the relations of power between unequal groups which underlie these ideological uses of language are often unclear to people, and the aim of this study is to denaturalize these opaque aspects of discourse.

At the methodological level, CDA offers a plethora of tools with which analysis can be carried out in tandem with other approaches, which will be CL in this study. The incorporation of CL with CDA has already been tried and proven useful in terms of facilitating the researchers' task in dealing with lots of data and decreasing subjectivity in choosing representative texts (Baker, et al., 2008). This study will also endeavour to show that the combination of both methodologies can benefit both CDA and CL mutually.

4. Data and Analysis

The data to be used in this study is compiled for my ongoing PhD project, titled "The Critical Discourse Analysis Turkish News Reporting on Islamism and Secularism". The below table outlines the corpus I have compiled from four national Turkish dailies.

Table 1: The Turkish News Corpora (TNC)

<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Hürriyet</i>	<i>Cumhuriyet</i>	<i>Zaman</i>	<i>Vakit</i>
<i>Time-span</i>	2008 March	2008 March	2008 March	2008 March
<i>Number of Articles</i>	62	58	140	60
<i>Tokens (running words in text)</i>	19.738	26.846	72.952	30.016
<i>Time-span</i>	1997 (February-March)	1997 (February-March)	1997 (February-March)	1997 (February-March)
<i>Number of Articles</i>	62	93	39	20
<i>Tokens (running words in text)</i>	21.775	40.161	16.828	4.269
<i>2008 Total</i>	320 Articles and 149.552 Tokens			
<i>1997 Total</i>	214 Articles and 83.033 Tokens			
<i>Overall</i>	514 Articles and 232.585 Tokens			

4.1 Frequencies

First, using a CL programme, namely Wordsmith 5, I have looked at the frequencies of the lemmas *TÜRBAN* and *BAŞÖRTÜSÜ* in the TNC. Here are the frequency results:

Table 2: Frequencies of *TÜRBAN* and *BAŞÖRTÜSÜ* in TNC

<i>Lemma</i>	<i>Cumhuriyet</i>		<i>Hürriyet</i>		<i>Vakit</i>		<i>Zaman</i>	
	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Freq.</i>	<i>%</i>
TÜRBAN	246	0.19	139	0.18	30	0.06	55	0.04
BAŞÖRTÜSÜ	29	0.04	11	0.03	169	0.14	251	0.17

Table 2 shows the frequency of each lemma across the four national Turkish newspapers that constitute the TNC. As is obvious in the above table, *TÜRBAN* is used remarkably more frequently in *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet* whereas *BAŞÖRTÜSÜ* takes precedence in *Zaman* and *Vakit*. Even though it would be insufficient to extrapolate from these raw figures, the abundance of either lemma in each set of newspapers³ is suggestive of the ideological stance of the agency towards the veiling issue.

4.2 Manual Scanning of Concordances

Frequency lists can be helpful in seeing where the focus of each news agency lies in relation to the specific problem in this study, however; qualitative analysis will be more productive rather than simply relying on quantitative methods. To this aim, I will look at a selection of concordances⁴ of *TÜRBAN* and *BAŞÖRTÜSÜ* from the two sets of newspapers, i.e. *Cumhuriyet*, *Hurriyet* and *Zaman*, *Vakit*.

³ *Cumhuriyet* and *Hurriyet* are known to be secularist papers whereas *Vakit* and *Zaman* are closer to Islamist parties or groups, albeit the variety of voices and ideological affiliations among each group.

⁴ A concordance is simply a list of all the occurrences of a particular search term in a corpus, presented within the context they occur in; usually a few words to the right and left of the search term (Baker, 2006).

Türban (in *Cumhuriyet* and *Hürriyet*)

N Concordance

- 179 dedi. AKP'DE ŞOK Danıştay'ın türban kararı AKP'de şok etkisi yarattı
180 Cumhurbaşkanı seçimi ve türban olayında AKP'ye destek veren
181 tavrı takınmalarına da sebep olmuştur" TÜRBAN İSLAM'IN BİR ŞARTI
182 etnik ırkçılığa zemin hazırlar. Türban din karşıtıdır. Dinsel protokolün
183 Türban Kuran'da yok, İncil'de var
184 Yayınları). Zekeriya Beyaz kitabında: "Türban Kuran'da yok, İncil'de var" diye
185 Bo konu böyle giderse, türban çatışması sürecek ve daha büyük
186 Eko Enerji Dergisinde, üniversitelerde türban serbestliğine ilişkin Anayasa
187 ve YÖK eliyle üniversitelerde yarattığı türban kaosunun ilk tohumları. 30 yıl
188 Öğrenci ve akademisyenlerden türban protestosu İstanbul Haber Servisi
189 aittir' görüşünde. Acaba diyorum, türban meselesi bilek güreşine
190 'donunu çıkar' demekten farksızdır. Türban sorunu özünde insan hakları
191 araya gelebiliriz. Bu güçlü mutabakat, türban sorununun çözümü için de en
192 süre sonra uçup gitmesidir. O nedenle türban yasağı konusundaki tutumumu bir
193 "zımnen ilga" ettiği söylenip, "türban yasağı kalkmıştır" yorumunun
194 yol açtı. Onunla akıllanmayıp "türban" sorununu Anayasa değişikliği ile
195 bulan bir karar verdi. Ona rağmen RP türban istisması yapınca, ben parti
196 Türban Şeriat Aracı 'Türban şeriat devleti
197 ve yeni bir konu olmadığını belirterek, "Türban şeriat devleti arayan İslami
198 Türban Şeriat Aracı Türban şeriat devleti arayan İslami

BAŞÖRTÜSÜ (in *Vakit and Zaman*)

N Concordance

385 bir anayasal yetkinin kullanılması ise başörtüsü yasağının serbest hale
386 getiren anayasa değişikliğine rağmen, başörtülü öğrencileri derslere almamakta
387 olduğu ima edilmişti. Ne garip değil mi; "Başörtülü Öğretmen" in, sokakta bile
388 Zaman zaman bazılarının "ben yanımda başörtülü gençler istemiyorum" dediğine
389 değildir. Tekrar ifade edecek olursak, başörtüsü serbestliği anayasa
388 bir tebligat gönderdiklerini açıklamıştı. 'Başörtüsü gereklilik' diyen Diyanet'e
389 gereklilik' diyen Diyanet'e kızdı Başörtüsü tartışmalarında konunun dini
390 ilişkindir. Unutmamak gerekir ki, başörtüsü serbestliği YÖK genelgesine
391 bazıları çıkıp diyor ki, "ben yanımda bu başörtülü gençlerle bulunmak
392 anlayışının destekçiliğine soyunabiliyor. Başörtülülerin haklarını AKP'nin icraatı ile
393 doğru olamadığına göre AKP'nin istediği başörtüsü özgürlüğü de kendiliğinden
394 Ama tam tersi bir cevabı başörtülü genç kız. 'hayır ben mini etekli
395 davasının AK Parti ile MHP'nin başörtüsü uzlaşmasından sonra
396 tarihinde 25 parti kapatılmıştır. Hele başörtüsü serbestisine kapı aralayacak
397 cevap vermek istiyorum. İlk önce başörtüsü serbestisinin laiklikle ne
398 üzere, davanın muhtemelen başörtüsü serbestisi ile ilişkili olduğu
399 demokratlar için mesele basittir: Başörtüsü özgürlüğü bireysel bir haktır
400 Paçacı, parti tabanlarında çok sayıda başörtülü insan olduğunu söylemiş,
401 kızım üniversite ikide ve ülkemizde hala başörtüsü problemi devam etmekte. Bu
402 kızları üniversiteye almazken, başörtülü annelerinin elini öpmeniz ve
403 başörtüsü yasağı kaldırılmalıdır ve başörtülü bayanların gasp edilen eğitim
404 çeliş kisini gözler önüne seriyoruz. Başörtülü öğrencileri kampusa girişlerine
405 ikincil bir neden ise, yasak kalkarsa başörtüsünün herkese dayatılacağı
406 tehdit etmediğini belirten Bakoyanni, 'Başörtüsü, kadınların kendisini ifade
407 "temenni" var mı bilemiyoruz, Ancak başörtülü bayanlar arasında Hazar Kültür
408 benzer düşünceleri savunan başörtülü genç bir kadın eğitimden
409 uygulanan başörtüsü yasağını eleştirdi. Başörtüsünün insan hakları ve laikliği
410 vurgu yapmak amacı ile kullanıldığı gibi başörtüsü mahkemeye göre son
411 da Anayasa değişiklikleri yoluyla başörtüsü yasağının kaldırılması
412 karşılar, çünkü, üniversitede okuyan başörtülü kız, eğitimin kazandırdığı
413 hakkındaki kapatma davası vardı. "Başörtüsü düzenlemesi olmasaydı
414 açıktı ki, yasağı savunmak isteyenler başörtüsü takanların 'farklı' bir vatandaş
415 şehid annesinin elini öptü ancak başörtülü kızları kampusa dahi almıyor.
416 vurulmuş şeklidir, ilgili madde gereğince başörtülü bayanların dini inanç

The concordances indicate that TÜR BAN in Cumhuriyet and Hurriyet are an object or predicate of *conflict, struggle, abuse, chaos* and *problem*, particularly in legal contexts. It is also used in connection *with Shariah* and the ruling party, *JDP*, in the first set of papers. Similarly in Zaman and Vakit, BAŞÖRTÜSÜ is again the object of a legal problem, issue and struggle. In the second set, however, BAŞÖRTÜSÜ is also used in connection with professions like ‘teacher’ ‘student’ and individuals like ‘young girls’, ‘women’ and ‘those who wear’. Another striking difference in the second set is that BAŞÖRTÜSÜ is used here in the contexts of reformation and freedom more frequently.

4.3 Semantic Profiles

What follows is a collocational⁵ analyses of TÜR BAN and BAŞÖRTÜSÜ. Table 3 shows the top lexical collocates of the selected items in the TNC.

Table 2: Top lexical collocates⁶ of TÜR BAN and BAŞÖRTÜSÜ in TNC

Lemmas	Main Lexical Collocates
TÜR BAN	(In <i>Cumhuriyet</i> and <i>Hürriyet</i>) In English: <i>Constitution, the JDP, Turkey, free, issue, related, universities, court, Shariah, problem, law, HEC (Higher Education Committee), education, agenda, ban</i>
BAŞÖRTÜSÜ	(In <i>Zaman</i> and <i>Vakit</i>) In English: <i>Ban, universities, constitution, issue, Turkey, against, free, freedom, support, related, support, change, bringing, Zaman, different, problem, NAP (Nationalist Action Party)</i>

The semantic overlap between the collocates of TÜR BAN and BAŞÖRTÜSÜ is reflected in the abundance of terms that relate to legal procedures and institutions, to the ban on veiling and university students in the special context of this study. What is

⁵ Collocation is the tendency of words to be biased the way they co-occur (Hunston, 2002, p. 68).

⁶ The Wordsmith has a cut-off point of 5 occurrences before something counts as a collocate, and each collocate has to occur within a span of 5 words to the left and right of the node word.

more interesting, since I am concerned with the concept of lexical choice and the possible ideological consequences of these choices, is where there are divergence among the collocates of each lemma. The positive words, 'support', 'change' and 'freedom' in *Zaman* and *Vakit* highlight this difference in the above table. Such is the case with the political party names, which need further qualitative analysis to see how the use of each lemma in connection with different party names relate to the overall ideological stance of the news agency.

5. Conclusion

This paper has attempted to address a contemporary problem of Turkish politics and social life, i.e. the veiling issue, from a (critical) linguistic perspective. I have been able to deal with a large amount of data by using Corpus Linguistics, which would respond to recent attempts to combine CL with CDA. The results have shown that the stance towards veiling issue is clearly marked by the choice of words and the way they are used in four different Turkish dailies. In *Cumhuriyet* and *Hurriyet*, as staunch secularist papers, veiling is always associated with struggle, problem and bans, and agents, in other words people who are affected by this problem, are almost backgrounded to silence. Creating the same semantic area of problem and struggle as regards to veiling, *Zaman* and *Vakit* differ from the former set of papers by taking into consideration the agents of this problem and struggle and also associating these with a more positive semantic background.

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