

# Loanwords and Soap Operas: the Return of Turkish to the Language Scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina

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## ABSTRACT

Bosnian, Croatian, Montenegrin and Serbian borrowed a considerable number of words from the Turkish language during the reign of the Ottoman Empire. In the ensuing period some of these loanwords were so thoroughly adapted that the speakers of any of the four aforementioned languages no longer recognised them as such. Some of them continued to be clearly recognised as oriental borrowings, which, for the most part, meant the shift towards the present-day colloquial usage, and some were reduced to obsolescence due to their fall from grace with the speakers.

At the moment, Turkish language is making a comeback to the language scene of Bosnia and Herzegovina in two ways: through Turkish private schools operating in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and through an increasing number of Turkish soap operas being broadcast on the TV programmes in the region. This preliminary research concerns the latter, and its aim is to: give an overview of this new phenomenon, start examining how it influences the speakers of Bosnian and consequently the Bosnian language itself, try to predict further developments, and suggest further research.

Methodologically, the research consists of conducting interviews with the speakers of Bosnian who watch Turkish soap operas. The interviewer uses a questionnaire which was previously given to the subjects to think about the questions and examples. The aim is to find out: how and to what degree subjects perceive shared language material, how their awareness of it changes, whether they notice the differences of usage in Bosnian and present-day Turkish, whether elderly subjects perceive loanwords words no longer used in Bosnian etc.

The first part of the research was conducted in the first quarter of 2011 when 46 interviews were conducted, and the second part in 2013 with 20 additional interviews.