



PREFACE

This is first book about Turkish Sign Language grammar*. As one of the outputs of extensive fieldwork and a corpus study, this book convincingly shows that Turkish Sign Language, *Türk İşaret Dili* (TİD), is a national sign language used by the Deaf community across Turkey. This book also shows that TİD is not a signed version of Turkish. TİD is not derived from another sign language, either. TİD is a natural language and emerged naturally as did other natural signed and spoken languages. TİD has unique grammar and, thus, is a different language from Turkish or other signed languages. TİD is used in the daily lives of the Deaf community across Turkey, in theatre, sports, the arts, and so on. As detected in natural languages, there are regional variations with respect to some lexical items in TİD but its grammar is the same across Turkey. Therefore, this book suggests that TİD should be used in every domain of life, including education, health services, and legal services.

This book is based on fieldwork and a corpus study which was conducted in six months in the second half of 2015. During this time, team members were trained, pilot studies were conducted, the study was planned, fieldwork was conducted, analyses were made, and the book was written and published. For the fieldwork, the data were collected in one-quarter of Turkish cities (a total of 26 cities) across Turkey. In each city, at least four native Deaf signers (a total of 113 native Deaf individuals [age range 12-65]) participated in this study. The data consisted primarily of natural conversations and narrations of picture books and short films. During data collection, hearing nonsigners were not present. The corpus consisted of 800,000 words / signs obtained from 6,240 minute-long video recordings from the fieldwork. One-quarter of this corpus was transcribed by native Deaf team members using ELAN. After that, the writing process of this book began. To our knowledge, this project has been the most extensive grammar project on sign languages worldwide.

Accomplishing this task within a very short period of time would have been impossible without the contributions of the Deaf participants and the research team members. This project was supported by the Turkish Ministry of Family and Societal Policies, Directorate General for Person with Disabilities and Elderly Services. The academic team consisted of four consultants and three researchers. Each of these team members was an expert in sign language research. One of them was native Deaf signer, while three of them were hearing signers. The team members conducting fieldwork, analysis, and technical support consisted of eight native Deaf signers who had previous experience in research projects on TİD. We first and foremost thank the Republic of Turkish Ministry of Family and Social Policies, Directorate General for Person with Disabilities and Elderly Services for its support and the Deaf individuals for their participation. Without them, it would have been impossible to complete such a project.

* This English version edited by Engin Arık is a translated, edited, and updated version of the book published in Turkish at the end of 2015 (Dıkyuva, Makaroğlu, & Arık, 2015). The Turkish version was intended to address the hearing, hard-of-hearing, deaf, and Deaf individuals as well as researchers working on TİD in Turkey. Therefore, both Turkish and TİD examples were used to explain some of the linguistic issues and to show how these languages differ from each other. In the English version, some issues regarding Turkish were removed to help international audience to focus on TİD. The English version aims at addressing international audience including deaf/Deaf individuals, sign language researchers, linguists, among others. We thank Emre Hakgüder, Deniz İlkbaşaran, Bahtiyar Makaroğlu, Derya Nuhbalaoglu, Aslı Özkul, Burcu Saral, Beyza Sümer, Cem Şeftalicioğlu, Abdullah Topraksoy, and Engin Arık for their help translating this book within a very short period of time.