Nation Rebranding in Turkey: Etymological Hypersensitivities, Connotational Tensions, and Populist Agendas

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Abstract

In December 2021, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan issued a memorandum mandating the use of the endonymic version of the country's name, *Türkiye*, over its exonymic counterpart, *Turkey*, for all official activities and correspondences, and languages. Framed as a strategic maneuver to "strengthen the Türkiye brand", this toponymic reconfiguration is a multifaceted nation-rebranding strategy operating at the political, economic, and sociolinguistic levels (Selvi 2023). The present study adopts a micro-level focus on the role that populist sociolinguistic hypersensitivities have played in this change, including the deeply rooted etymological irritation stemming from the misinterpreted linkage between the *turkey* (the animal) and *Turkey* (the country) which have led to taunts and mockery; the pejorative semantic interpretations equating the name with "something that fails badly" or "a stupid person"); and the connotational nuances arising from turkey-related puns. It critically highlights inconsistencies, operational challenges, and ineffective nation-rebranding attempts. Furthermore, it underscores the central role of the English language as both the primary target and the catalyst— prompting a domino effect across languages in the instructed toponymic reconfiguration. Ultimately, this study contributes to understanding (re)naming practices as multi-layered manifestations of symbolic power, linguistic evolution, and complex identity negotiations across political, economic, and sociolinguistic domains.

Keywords: Turkey, Türkiye, toponymy, endonym, exonym, etymology, nation branding

1. Introduction

As we become more aware of the power of names and naming and their denotative capacity, emotional resonance, connotative power, ideological commitments, and econopolitical implications (Puzey & Kostanski 2016), we pay closer attention to renaming as a matter of redefining identity. Premised on this recognition, deliberate attempts have been undertaken to rename individuals (e.g., from *Cat Stevens* to *Yusuf Islam*); cities (e.g., from *St. Petersburg* to *Petrograd* to *Leningrad*, and finally back to *St. Petersburg* in Russia); corporations (e.g., from *Cadabra* to *Amazon*); products (e.g., from *BackRub* to *Google*); organizations (e.g., from *Boy Scouts of America* to *Scouting America* in the US); social media platforms (e.g., from *Twitter* to *X*) and sports teams (e.g., from *Dial Square* to *Royal Arsenal* to *Woolwich Arsenal* and finally to *Arsenal FC* in the UK). These re-naming phenomena are conceptualized as multi-level assemblages of symbolic power, linguistic evolution, and complex identity negotiations (Rose-Redwood et al. 2010), garnering scrutiny across various fields, ranging from marketing (e.g., Muzellec & Lambkin 2006) to applied linguistics (e.g., Mensah 2022).

While name changes for people, products, and organizations are relatively common, what if an entire country changes its name? Contrary to widespread perception, the renaming of countries is not an uncommon occurrence. In recent years, numerous nations have undergone name changes driven by a variety of motivations (see Méndez & Khoshnevis 2023 for a systematic review), including enhancing international appeal (e.g., from *Czech Republic* to *Czechia*); simplification (e.g., from *The Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya* to *Libya*); resolving political disputes (e.g., from *The Republic of Macedonia* to *The Republic of North Macedonia*); severing ties with a political or colonial past (e.g., from *Burma* to *Myanmar*); reclaiming national identity (e.g., from *Swaziland* to *Eswatini*); and demonstrating resistance (e.g., from *Persia* to *Iran*). While some of these changes have been successful (e.g., from *Siam* to *Thailand*), others have not gained widespread adoption (e.g., from *Macedonia* to *North Macedonia*), or have been disputed at the personal and political levels (e.g., from *Burma* to *Myanmar*). The common denominator among these initiatives is a politically motivated, deliberate, and strategic maneuver necessitating the allocation and deployment of substantial resources underpinned by the ultimate goal of reimagining, redefining, and repositioning a nation's image and identity (Olins 2002). Intersecting with issues of national identity, historical (meta)narratives, and international relations, shaping perceptions across domestic and global scales, these name changes function as sites of power, struggle, and conflict across time and space (Light & Young 2014).

Through a memorandum issued in December 2021 titled "Marka Olarak 'Türkiye' İbaresinin Kullanım" (The Use of the Expression "Türkiye" as a Brand), President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan single-handedly mandated the use of the Turkish endonym *Türkiye* rather than *Turkey*, *Turkei*, *Turquie*, etc. "in all kinds of activities and correspondence, particularly in official relations with other states and international institutions, and organizations" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey 2021). Adopting the endonymic (local/internal) version of the country's name (i.e., *Türkiye* in Turkish) instead of its exonymic (outsider/external) counterpart (i.e., *Turkey* in English) was justified as a deliberate endeavor to strengthen "the Türkiye brand", as it "represents and conveys the Turkish nation's culture, civilization, and values in the best way possible"

(Presidency of the Republic of Turkey 2021). In June 2022, the government formally notified the United Nations, officially changing the country's name to the *Republic of Türkiye* across all languages. Stemming from populist hypersensitivities toward the association with the bird and pejorative meanings in English, this name change was justified and operationalized through econopolitical rationales with the ultimate aim of consolidating neo-nationalistic political interests, power, and dominance. This toponymic reconfiguration is not only a manifestation of nation-branding and rebuilding efforts that are key to President Erdoğan's vision of *Yeni Türkiye* (New Turkey), but also an onomastic representation of his grand legacy for the new century of the republic, known as the *Türkiye Yüzyılı* 'The Century of Turkey' (Selvi 2023). The recent toponymic reconfiguration in Turkey functions as a nation-rebranding maneuver which operates at the political level by consolidating and elevating President Erdoğan's political power and authority; at economic level by harnessing the commodification and marketization of the Turkey brand with intended future economic gains; and at the sociolinguistic level by addressing the populist sociolinguistic hypersensitivities surrounding the term "turkey" (Selvi 2023).

This article aims to shed new light on the recent toponymic reconfiguration in Turkey by adopting a micro-level focus on etymological perspectives and sociolinguistic hypersensitivities with connections to toponymic implications. The rationale for this study is grounded in the complex interplay between language, identity, and geopolitics. First, this inquiry focuses on the etymological perspectives and sociolinguistic hypersensitivities as the primary surface-level motivations behind this change. Taking this perspective allows us to gain a deeper understanding of the linguistic and cultural forces at play. Second, this study extends our understanding of this instructed change and complement existing econopolitical investigations about the matter (see Selvi 2023). Finally, this study situates toponymic reconfiguration at the intersection of language and ideology and thus encourages (applied linguistics) scholars to scrutinize the defining role of language as a tool for constructing, silencing, and negotiating collective identities, complex negotiations, as well as (inter)national acceptance and recognition. Taken as a whole, this study contributes to the burgeoning body of research on toponymic changes and their broader implications by using a unique linguistic lens to understand Turkey's recent linguistic shift and its potential ramifications for national identity and geopolitical dynamics.

2. Toponym, Toponymic Changes, and Nation Branding

The term "toponym" is derived from the Greek words τόπος or topos for "place" and όνομα or onoma for "meaning". "Toponymy" is the study of place names assigned to geographical locations (Kadmon 2002). Scholars across various fields, ranging from linguists to archeology, engage in field- and map-based investigations to curate catalogs and databases that systematically document and explore naming practices, patterns, (inter)relations(hips), and changes anchored in place names (Giraut & Houssay-Holzschuch 2016). Toponyms come with what Shamai (1991) calls "a sense of place", which encapsulates "a folded linguocultural code" (Koroleva 2015), "toponymic identity" (Kostanski 2016), or even "place attachment" (Hidalgo & Hernandez 2001). In this way, toponyms help to create and maintain "an affective bond or link between people and specific places" (Hidalgo & Hernandez 2001, 274). Using this understanding of "place names" as a foundation for investigation, the examination of "place naming" may direct our attention to "a critical analysis of the social and political struggles over spatial inscription and related toponymic practices" (Rose-Redwood et al. 2010, 455).

Extending this focus to (re)naming practices of countries, Hakala et al. (2015) view toponyms as a form of "linguistic signs and cores of brands" (264) that animate nation branding. According to Kaneva (2011), toponyms may also be seed as "a compendium of discourses and practices aimed at reconstituting nationhood through marketing and branding paradigms" (118). Thus, understanding (re)naming toponymic change can be perceived as a deliberate, strategic, and ideological (re)configuration of the connotative and locational value (Kostanski 2016) in place-identities that are entangled with geographic, linguistic, cultural, ideological, symbolic, and metaphorical elements.

3. Etymological Hypersensitivities: From *turkey* to *Turkey*

The turkey is a domesticated large gallinaceous avian species in the genus *Meleagris* that is native to North America (Smith 2006). The widespread conflation of this animal's common name in English with the name of the Euroasian country has created an interesting etymological puzzle for linguists (Lawler 2013). An examination of the etymological traces of the word "turkey" in various languages reveals a great deal of confusion about the naming of this animal.

Mario Pei, a professor of Romance languages at Columbia University, offers two plausible theories about the origin of the word "turkey" (Krulwich 2008). First, the bird was brought to the British Isles by merchants from Constantinople (İstanbul) and was initially referred to as "Turkey coq" which is French for "rooster". According to this theory, this term was eventually shortened to "turkey". The second theory offered by Professor Pei is that Europeans encountered the bird in North America but incorrectly identified it as a kind of "guinea fowl", a bird that had been imported to Europe from Guinea in West Africa by the Portuguese through Turkish dominions. The bird was therefore popularly known as "turkey fowl" or "Indian turkey": names that were eventually shortened to "turkey" (Onions et al. 1966). Another possible scenario is that there was some confusion between the "guinea fowl" which was brought to England from Madagascar by Turkish merchants and the "North American fowl" which was introduced to Europe by Spanish conquistadors (Forsyth 2013). This theory argues that, during the 15th–16th centuries, the North American bird was introduced to Europe by the Spanish. Once there, it became popular throughout the entire continent. During this time, the "guinea fowl" was re-introduced to Europe as an import from Ethiopia by Turkish Mamluk sultans; and this bird therefore known as "turkey cock" (Jurafsky 2010). As Smith (2006) argues, some other theories about the etymological origins of this word included onomatopoetic derivations from the "turk turk" sound it makes; and the physical resemblance of turkey head with a Turkish fez. These theories have been refuted, however, with good reason: a.) turkeys do not actually make a "turk turk" sound; and b.) the introduction of the fez to Turkey in the mid-19th century cannot explain the source of this 16th-century word (Smith 2006). Even though some of the other theories by Pei, Forsyth, and Jurafsky might be plausible, there is neither consensus nor conclusive evidence about the origins of this word in English and other languages.

The etymological origins of the name *Turkiye* (the Turkish equivalent of the English toponym *Turkey*) trace back to the post-classical Latin forms *Turchia* or Turqia, the Italian *Turchia*, and the French name *Turquie*, —all of which denote "land of the Turks" (Nişanyan 2013; Etymonline Online Etymology Dictionary n.d.; Oxford English Dictionary, n.d.). Various theories have been proposed regarding the etymological origin of the word "Turk", though many remain speculative and therefore lack broad scholarly consensus within Turkological circles (Paşayev 2014). According to Mahmud al-Kashgari's 11th-century "Dīwān Lughāt al-Turk" [Compendium of the Turkic Dialects], one of the earliest lexical sources of the Turkic languages, the term "Turk" was associated with meanings such as "strong" or "mighty," reflecting positive attributes of Turkic tribes (Kashgari, translated by Dankoff & Kelly 1982). Similarly, 19th and 20th century scholars, such as Wilhelm Muller and Gyula Nemeth, offer linguistic analyses linking the word to notions of "strength" or "lineage" within early Turkic languages (Nemeth 1927). As summarized in Paşayev (2014), other speculative hypotheses have proposed derivations from Mongolic or Sino-Tibetan roots meaning "helmet" or "to increase" (Vambery 1885); as well as sociocultural interpretations such as "relatives of the bride" (Baskakov 1960), or Ziya Gokalp's nationalistic claim connecting the term tot he word for "state." However, these interpretations generally lack linguistic substantiation (Kafesoğlu 1984). From the 13th century onward, Western European sources have increasingly adopted variations of the term 'Turk+ia'. Most notably of these is the Latinized "Turcus", along with Byzantine Greek "Tourkos" and French "Turc" (Golden 1992: Nişanyan 2013; Etymonline Online Etymology Dictionary n.d.). Over time, the term has been incorporated into various European languages, where it initially referred to Turkic-speaking peoples and then gradually came to denote Muslims more broadly, particularly during the height of Ottoman expansion into the Western world and psyche (Golden 1992). It is believed that the use of the name *Turke*y in its contemporary English spelling predates the founding of the nation of Turkey. The earliest attestation cited in the Oxford English Dictionary is 1719.[1] Centuries later, with the declaration of independence of the new republic on October 29, 1923, under the leadership of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the official name of the country was adopted: *Türkiye Cumhuriyeti*. This name was translated into English as *The Republic of Turkey*.

4. Connotational Dissatisfactions: From *Turkey* to *Türkiye*

From a semantic-connotational standpoint, the "turkey vs. Turkey" debate comprises three interrelated layers. The most overt layer stems from the fact that in English, the nation and the poultry animal share the same name. Despite the fact that the bird may well have been named after the country and not the other way around, there are those who find this semantic association irritating. According to them, the international use of the English place name *Turkey* is either a form of retribution or *"hınç alma yöntemi"* against the entire nation (Hepçilingirler 2006); or even a form of xenophobic Islamophobia aimed at tarnishing the nation's reputation (Dinçer 2022). To buttress this argument, such critics often provide anecdotal evidence of Turkish schoolchildren in predominantly English-speaking contexts who are regularly subjected to bullying, particularly around Thanksgiving which is also known as "Turkey Day". During this time, Turkish schoolchildren may hear taunts such as "Hey, turkey" or "Gobble gobble" (Uluç 2007). It is also at this time of the year that the media headlines are filled with turkey-related puns that reinforce the connection between

the animal and the country (e.g., "What a Turkey–Has the Turkish leader lost his head?" (Cook 2014)). A second, and somewhat less conspicuous layer involves the negative semantic connotations of the word "turkey". Turkish media have also voiced criticism over what is perceived as a symbolic misrepresentation, arguing that images of Turkish diplomats seated behind nameplates labeled "Turkey" may unintentionally evoke associations with representing the bird rather than the country itself (Maruflu 2015).

In English, in informal usage, the term can be used to refer to "something that fails badly" or "a stupid person" (Cambridge Dictionary n.d.). Furthermore, turkey-related idiomatic expressions where "turkey" is used to convey negative sentiments are common in English. Examples include "like turkeys voting for (an early) Christmas" (Collins Dictionary n.d.); "turkey shoot" ~ a fight or competition that is one sided because one combatant or competitor is far superior to the other (The Free Dictionary n.d.); and "turkeycock" ~ a strutting pompous person (Merriam Webster Dictionary n.d.). Such expressions have helped to exacerbate the national connotational dissatisfaction with the place name in Türkiye. The third and final layer in the "turkey vs. Turkey" debate concerns the potential for linguistic puns and semantic overlaps that may arise in various sociolinguistic contexts. However, this phenomenon is not unique to Turkey or the Turkish laguage. In English, there are other country names that may suffer a similar fate. For example, *Hungary* may be used as a pun to suggest "hunger" and the phonetical resemblance between *Iran* and "I ran" can be used for puns. Other fodder for toponymic puns include *Norway*/"no way", *Oman*/"oh man"), and *Greece*/"grease". These country names may also be used for humorous linguistic wordplay. Similarly, country names in Turkish can also become the source of puns. Examples include *Kazakistan* 'Kazakhstan', *Hindistan* 'India', and *Mısır* 'Egypt' which have unrelated meanings in the Turkish language: "kazak" means 'sweater', "hindi" means 'turkey', and "mısır" means "corn." Collectively, these examples demonstrate that the potential for linguistic punning based on semantic ambiguity is a widespread phenomenon. What distinguishes the case of *Turkey*, however, is not then the potential for puns per se, but rather the (inter)national response to these word-plays. In this context, the term and the associated toponymic reconfiguration have become a powerful symbolic site of cultural hypersensitivity as well as a motivation for political rebranding by the country's dominant political actor (Selvi 2023).

Over the years, the dissatisfaction and irritation with the semantic weight and connotational baggage caused by the associations between the *turkey* (the animal) and *Turkey* (the country) have increased and formed the basis for increasing resistance to the use of the English toponym. This movement has been facilitated by the increasing availability of media tools since the 1990s, and the growth of multimodal online spaces and social networking tools since the 2000s. Campaigns for the adoption of toponymic alternatives to Turkey have been the result. Some of these short lived, unsuccessful onomastic proposals include *Turkia* (Hepçilingirler 2006), *Turkish Republic*, and *Turkland* (Ok 2006). Along with these proposals have come campaign slogans such as *"Türkiye hindi değildir"* [Turkey is not a turkey] and "turkey değil Turkiye" (sic.) [Türkiye, not turkey]. These campaigns have appeared across various social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+) and websites (e.g., www.sayturkiye.com, www.Turkiyenotturkey.com, and www.hindidegilTurkiye.com)[2]. Together, these initiatives serve as a form of grassroots linguistic activism (Selvi 2020) which has helped unite various groups such as newspaper columnists, members of the Turkish diaspora in the United States, and Turkish politicians. Crucially, these actions have helped to keep this matter alive, even if it was a low-priority item on the neo-nationalist, populist sociolinguistic agenda.

5. Toponymic Implications: Endonymic, Exonymic, Both or None?

In this section, I examine the emerging implications of the recent toponymic reconfiguration specifically from a sociolinguistic vantage point. Following the issuance of the Presidential memorandum, the Directorate of Communications initiated an international public relations campaign entitled "Hello Türkiye". The campaign formally introduced the #helloTürkiye hashtag on social media. On February 3, 2022, this introduction was followed by a letter (Nr. E-84622821-010.08-161825) from the Directorate to all public institutions. This letter called for the adoption of the endonymic version in traditional and digital media as well as in national and international official correspondence, under the *Türkiye Markasının Güçlendirilmesi Rehberi* [The Guide for Strengthening the Turkey Brand] (Directorate of Communications 2022). The guide indicates how and where *Turkey* could be replaced with *Türkiye* on official correspondence, documents, websites, and social media accounts. Additionally, the guide also announced that the Directorate was planning to embark upon a new campaign, "Say Türkiye". The objectives, scope, and timeline of this campaign were not, however, made public.

Primarily geared towards the local audience, the call for the one-to-one replacement of *Turkey* with *Türkiye* soon faced challenges. The far-reaching sociolinguistic implications of toponymic reconfiguration appear not to have been fully anticipated by the government, suggesting that the campaign had been insufficiently planned for truly comprehensively implementation. For example, in his public address at the

commissioning ceremony of the TÜRKSAT 5-B satellite in June 2022, President Erdoğan announced the re-branding of *Turkish Airlines*, the national flag carrier of Turkey and the most valuable global Turkish brand operating since 1933 (Brand Finance/Statista 2024). Erdoğan stated: "We have taken another symbolic step by changing the name [of our country] from the internationally used form of 'Turkey' to 'Türkiye'. There is no longer *Turkey*. There is only *Türkiye*. From now on, we will write 'Türkiye Hava Yolları', not 'Turkish Airlines', on the fuselages of our planes" (Presidency of the Republic of Turkey 2022). For local branding experts, this deliberate top-down rebranding of *Turkish Airlines* was ill-conceived, financially impractical, unnecessarily complicated, and irreversibly destructive to the brand's recognition and value (Başpınar 2022; Middle East Eye 2022). The same day as the President's speech, an application for "Türkiye Hava Yolları" was filed with the Turkish Patent and Trademark Office (reference number: 2022/085425). However, the President later clarified that instead of *Turkish Airlines*, the "our national airline will make its flights under the name of 'Türk Hava Yolları'. The President did not offer a clear timeline for the rebranding. Today, the carrier still operates under *Turkish Airlines*. This brandname appears on both its official documents and its aircraft. There are several linguistic possible reasons why the original name has been maintained.

The absence of the character "ü" in the Latin alphabet as well as the limited access to umlauts on standard English keyboards pose significant challenges in written communication for non-Turkish users. These problems have been resolved by adopting the closest approximant "u", as in *Turkiye* (Soylu 2022). Beyond typographic limitations, the name change introduces several additional challenges. These include the lack of technical and linguistic support for the Turkish language in online and technological environments; inconsistencies that may arise from the non-standardized use of related terms which use "u" instead of "ü" (e.g., "Turk", "Turks", "Turkic", and "Turkish");and the need for pronunciation guides to assist non-Turkish speakers to accurately render the new name.

These challenges have implications for search engine optimization (SEO) and text encoding on digital platforms, contributing to what Giraut (2020) refers to as "plural toponymies". The concept of plurality is further exemplified by the coexistence of endonymic and exonymic versions, as evidenced by the U.S. Department of State's usage. Following a request from the Turkish Embassy and the subsequent approval by the U.S. Board on Geographic Names, the U.S. Department of State (2023) adopted the preferred spelling citing its greater familiarity. As depicted in Figure 1, various stakeholders and institutions emerging are taking distinct positions regarding the instructed where individuals and institutions position themselves in terms of the instructed toponymic reconfiguration.
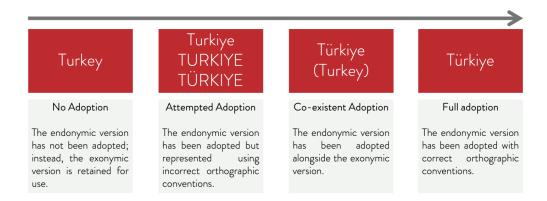

Turkey	Turkiye TURKIYE TÜRKIYE	Türkiye (Turkey)	Türkiye
No Adoption	Attempted Adoption	Co-existent Adoption	Full adoption
The endonymic version has not been adopted; instead, the exonymic version is retained for use.	The endonymic version has been adopted but represented using incorrect orthographic conventions.	The endonymic version has been adopted alongside the exonymic version.	The endonymic version has been adopted with correct orthographic conventions.

Figure 1: Various Positions on the Adoption Continuum

6. Conclusion

> You mean Türkiye, right?
> — Turkish Foreign Minister,
> Mevlüt Çavuşoğlu, in response to a
> question on whether "Turkey"
> would lift its veto on Finland's and
> Sweden's accession to the NATO

The toponymic reconfiguration right before the centenary of the Republic of Turkey in 2023 was a powerful, strategic, and symbolic move by President Erdoğan. As the nation's leader, this onomastic change became an indispensable cornerstone of his grand political design and legacy known as the "Türkiye Yüzyılı" [Century of Turkey] for "Yeni Türkiye" [a new Turkey] (Selvi 2023). The hegemonic reign of his neoconservative nationalist ideals intertwined with neoliberal capitalist principles. His re-naming of the country in a new century built upon the general dissatisfaction with the negative connotations, etymological (mis)connections, and ideological hypersensitivities (Yenen & Zürcher 2023). In this entangled picture, toponyms play an indispensable role and importance in the authoritarian neoliberalism, conservatism, and neo-nationalism. The nation's onomastic rebranding accompanied the construction of an newly imagined Turkish community for a new century. From a sociolinguistic standpoint, the change from *Turkey* to *Türkiye* was built upon prevailing resentments, hypersensitivities, and semantic irritation revolving around the term "turkey". In this context, the English exonym was considered a disgrace to the Turkish people's national pride— a deliberate act of disrespect towards the country's cultural and historical significance. Even though the success or the "nominative dexterity" (Weiner 2023) of this economically driven, ideologically charged, and lexically enacted change was beyond the scope of this paper, the emerging positions (see figure 1) and anecdotal observations on conventional and social media indicate a gradual process. At present, the sphere of influence of this toponymic rebrand is limited to local state officials and organizations in their formal channels of communication. Nevertheless, "the change marks one of the key moments in the unmaking of the old Turkey in favour of a new Türkiye in the country's new century" (Yenen & Zürcher 2023, 542).

The English language plays a central role in the instructed toponymic reconfiguration from *Turkey* to *Türkiye* for several compelling reasons. First and perhaps most significantly, English serves as the principal impetus behind the perceived necessity for this change. English usage has played a critical role in making the etymological connections and pejorative connotations associated with the term "turkey". The very fact that President Erdoğan's memorandum specifically called for the adoption of the phrase "Made in Türkiye" over "Made in Turkey" to label export products exemplifies the deliberate effort to counteract English language conventions directly. It is no accident that the governmental guide "for strengthening the Turkish brand" systematically provides examples of ways to expunge the English exonym *Turkey* from various domains, such as websites and social media platforms. This emphasis highlights once again the pivotal role of English in this transformative and transitory process. President Erdoğan's declaration that there was no longer *Turkey*, only *Türkiye* further underscores and reinforces the profound influence of the English language as the nation stands at the crossroads of its toponymic transformation and imagined national linguistic identity. Consequently, English not only emerges as the primary target for linguistic reconfiguration but also acts as a catalyst prompting a domino effect that resonates across languages.

Notes

[1] It is believed that the use of the name *Turkey* in its contemporary English spelling predates the founding of the nation of Turkey. The earliest attestation of *Turckie* cited in the Oxford English Dictionary is 1275. Early literary portrayals of "the Turk" can be found in early modern England. In these descriptions, a pattern of distance, ambivalence, and even cultural anxiety are clearly evident. For instance, Shakespeare's works echo the dominant perception of the Turk as an infidel and a threat to Christendom. Excellent examples are found in "Richard III" (e.g., "as irreligious as the Turk," Act 3, Line 41) and "Othello", where the protagonist refers to his enemy as "the circumcised dog" (Act 5, Scene 2, Line 3,720-3722) (Draper 1956, 531). These depictions reinforced a cultural imagination in which the Ottoman Empire is represented both a source of fascination and fear. As Katz (2016, 271) notes, English authors "furnished the minds of English readers with images of Turkey that compelled fascination and bolstered an attitude which kept Turkey-in-Europe without abandoning Turkey-in-Asia—the most Western part of the East, unmistakably the most Eastern country in the West."

[2] The following websites were active between 2012-2016 but are now defunct (www.sayturkiye.com, www.Turkiyenotturkey.com, and www.hindidegilTurkiye.com).

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Disclosure Statement

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