

## MISSION



## VISION

Our mission is to deal with an often overlooked issue of refugees: communication. Due to the lack of quality resources in Turkish, we wanted to create a language learning set that will be free and accessible for the whole world at any time and any place. In this way, we aim to decrease the gap between the rich and the poor in terms of accessible resources and make the learning process easier for financially-disadvantaged people, especially for the refugees.



## The FAIR Project

Our vision is to make education cleaner, better, and more accessible with the use of digital instruments. We believe that quality resources should not be subject to big paywalls and that they should be available to anyone at any time. We think that the growing popularity and accessibility of the internet combined with caring and dedicated people will enable us to reach this vision. The largest encyclopedia in the world is a good inspiration for us.

## OUR TEAM



Hasan Taşçı



Ensar Batı



Faruk Ecirli



Mehmet Kaya



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## SUMMARY

Learning a language that is not as popular as English, Spanish or French might be overwhelming due to a lack of resources. This problem is further exacerbated when the learner cannot afford the learning materials because of financial reasons. Turkish, in particular, is one of the languages whose learners are in poverty, some of which are unable to afford adequate housing, let alone proper education. The reason for this is the dramatic increase in the number of immigrants from war-torn and economically destitute Middle Eastern countries. According to official estimates, there are close to four million refugees in Turkey who come from various countries such as Syria, Afghanistan and Pakistan. And their most overlooked problem is communication. This is the issue we tried to tackle by creating a high-quality learning set.



## AIMS

Some of our foremost aims in completing this project can be understood from the project's name (Free, Accessible, Intelligible, Reiterative), but they are not limited to this. We can summarise them in the following way:

- To encourage the learners to use already-available digital instruments rather than traditional learning, which requires paper-based materials such as books, notebooks and even transportation of the learner to a physical course.
- To provide quality education free of charge.
- To tackle one of the most important problems of immigrants/refugees: communication.
- To make it accessible for anyone who wants it, including the future learners.
- To decrease the gap between the rich and the poor in terms of accessible resources.
- To design a work that is aesthetic and does not bore the learner.

## THE PLANNING

We considered undertaking a few different projects during this stage, including fundraising and sending teaching materials to refugee camps or teaching kids coding. But, frankly, we found these tasks impossible and unsustainable, especially in the days of the pandemic where we cannot even properly go outside because of the lockdowns. So, we kept thinking until discovering the aforementioned problem about language learning, and then we started to research to see how we can tackle the problem.

As a result, we came across "Anki," a great language learning tool that utilises a technique called spaced repetition. After we found out that Anki is open-source, we thought basing our project on it would be a great idea. So we looked at how other learning sets utilise Anki. After finding out that they are generally based on the most used words in a language, we researched whether this approach helps to learn the language. We found out that the most used 5000 words constitute approximately 98% of all written texts and decided to centre our project around it.

After extensive research, contemplation and discussion with our teachers on how to best learn a language, we concluded that having only the word and the meaning is insufficient, and a language is best learned in context. So, we decided to include plenty of context to our cards, such as parts of the speech, etymologies and example sentences. Since learning in context is so important, we put a strong emphasis on properly used sentences, and we have written each and every example sentence by ourselves. The final product became an open-source learning set with speaking, listening, and writing modules that can be customised depending on the learner's wish.

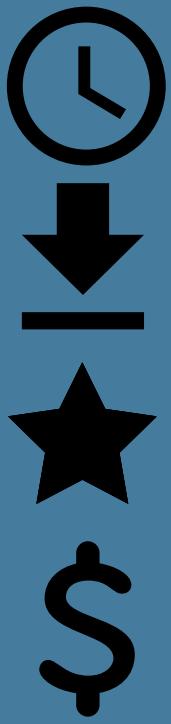
**Free-Accessible-Intelligible-Reiterative**

## THE DEVELOPMENT

After completing the extensive planning process, we decided first to publish a demo version of our learning set so that we could receive feedback and improve upon it. The development process was one of the most challenging parts of the project. Although preparing the learning set might seem like an easy job, with the level of complexity involved in our project, it has taken us much more time than expected. Preparing only one hundred words in our deck has taken, on average, 3-4 hours, mainly because we decided to write the example sentences on ourselves. Just the design part has taken more than 40 hours. Coordinating the group and assembling everyone's works has taken even more time. But the success of the whole project was dependent on only one thing.

From the beginning, we knew that the most challenging part of this project would be reaching out to people and promoting our learning set. Therefore, we started to think very early on how we can reach as many people as we can. After we have finished the demo version, we shared our learning set with our school since there are many international students and teachers who want to improve their Turkish. Afterwards, we shared it on other platforms such as [Instagram](#), [Reddit](#) and [different forums](#). We also created a form in which every aspect of the learning set could be rated. The first comments were very positive and encouraging for us. But of course, not all of them were good.

300+ Hours  
Spent



550+  
Downloads  
9.4 Average  
Rating

0\$ Spent on  
the Project

Bu deck is Mükemmel! This is way perfect. I've never faced such deck of a language with that way! This is really a great job! I don't know how long it took for you guys to finish this work! It's incredibly useful and the best deck yet around! I've been digging around for such kind of deck since months! Thanks a lot!

Great Job! Never seen anything like this before! It is really amazing. I don't know who you are, but I would send kisses right away for this amazing job!

## CRITICISM AND THE CHANGES MADE

Some people criticised the etymology part of our learning set, but most of the users liked it. The part which got the most complaints, though, were the audios. Although we have put an enormous amount of effort into each audio by using the best microphones we had, by editing the audios for hours with an app called "Audacity", this part of the learning set was not well received by the users mainly because of our inexperience in vocalisation and the mediocre quality microphones we have. Even though we were highly discouraged by these feedbacks, we decided not to take it personally and started to look for a solution. As a suggestion of a user in the review section of our learning set, we decided to use the text-to-speech technology by Google. To not make the audios robot-like, we used a [premium product that required us to use a free trial](#). As a result, we have gotten studio-level, high-quality audios which offer about 90-95% proximity to a natural human voice.

## CHALLENGES AND SKILLS

- After changing our initial plans due to Covid, our team fell apart, and we had to come up with a new team.
- Designing the cards and the Anki web page might seem effortless, but Faruk had to learn HTML to create them.
- Although we later changed it, vocalising the words and the sentences was a major problem for Kerem and Ensar since they used different microphones. They had to learn how to use an app called "Audacity" to compensate for the problems caused by this.
- Yusuf and Mehmet pushed themselves hard to solve the technical difficulties regarding Anki.
- We literally live in cities hundreds of kilometres apart, so coordination was a huge problem.
- Demotivation was our greatest enemy, but as a group of five supportive people, we solved it.
- There were countless instances in which we came close to a burnout due to overlaps between our own coursework and this project.

## FAILURES

- When the learning set was completely finished, we tried contacting refugee foundations and Turkish learning channels on YouTube. Even after weeks have passed, however, none of them has given us a feedback. But, we are planning to continue sending emails to such institutions/people even after submitting the project.
- After completing the learning set, we contacted students in our school who speak Arabic to see if they could help us translate the learning set. Since even translating takes a lot of time, everybody refused. (We will translate the learning set to Arabic in the future nevertheless.)

## CONCLUSION

Since we shared [our learning set](#) on the internet, over five hundred and fifty people downloaded and used it. We received over sixty ratings on Google forms with an overall average rating of 9.4 points. Our learning set is the most popular among Turkish learning sets on Anki's database. Anyone can easily reach it by only writing "Turkish" [on the website's search bar](#). The most important aspect of our learning set, though, is its sustainability. It will be readily available for anyone even after ten years of our graduation. Current growth rates show us that the total number of people impacted will reach a thousand within a year and tens of thousands during the following years, even without our constant promotion.

## SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

In short, we reached our SDGs in the following ways:

- With its free and accessible structure, our learning set reduces the inequality between the rich and the poor in terms of accessible resources.
- With its well-thought-out, intelligible, reiterative and elaborative structure, it offers quality education for anyone, anytime.
- With its digital presence and elaborative structure, it reduces the need for paper-based products such as books and notebooks. Also, it cuts transportation-related carbon emissions since language learners will not need to travel to physical language courses.

We spent more than 300 hours on this project, and, frankly, the result is priceless for us. Just thinking that this learning set will continue to impact people even after years of our graduation makes the whole experience worthwhile.



## NEXT TARGETS

The native language of most of the the Turkish learners is Arabic. This time, we could not translate our learning set since every Arabic speaker we know was unavailable to help us out. We tried using Google Translate but, apparently, the translations were inaccurate. So, we will ask them in the future again. We also plan sending emails and partnering up with institutions and YouTubers to make our learning set accessible to more people. Thousands of learners will download the learning set nevertheless, but we want to make it more widespread.