

## Türkiye’de Yabancı Dil Olarak Almanca’nın Durumu: WoK Verilerine Dayalı Bibliyometrik Bir Analiz

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**Özet:** Türkiye’de İngilizce odaklı çalışmalara artan bir ilgi olmasına rağmen, Almanca önemini korumaktadır. 20. yüzyıldan itibaren Türkiye’de ilk olarak Fransız dili ile değişim izlenmiş, daha sonra Almanca üzerine girişimlerde bulunulmuştur. 1900’lü yılların sonunda ise İngilizce dilinin hem resmi hem de gayri resmi eğitimde bir üstünlüğe sahip olması Fransızcaya olan ilgiyi İngilizceye ve Almancaya bırakmıştır. Türkiye’de 21. yüzyılda ilginin İngilizceye yönelik olduğu açıktır. Almanca ise örgün ve yaygın eğitimde ikincil bir yabancı dil olarak yerini korumaktadır. Bu çalışmada Web of Knowledge verilerine dayalı bir bibliyometrik analiz yapılmıştır. Analiz kapsamında Almanca Dili kilit kelimesi araması ile Türkiye menşeli 165 makaleye erişim sağlanmıştır. Elde edilen bulgulara göre, son yıllarda yayın sayısı artmıştır. Ayrıca, Dil ve Dilbilim ile Eğitim ve Eğitim Araştırmaları alanlarının diğer araştırma alanlarına göre daha fazla atıf aldığı tespit edilmiştir. Atıf sayısı özellikle son on yılda artan bir eğilim göstermiştir ki bu da ilgili araştırma literatüründe Türkiye’de Alman dili alanına dair artan bir ilginin olduğunu ortaya koymaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Almanca, Bibliyometrik analiz, Yabancı dil olarak Almanca

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## The State of German as a Foreign Language in Turkey: A Bibliometric Analysis from WoK Data

### Abstract

Although there is a growing interest on studies with a focus on English language in Turkey, German still maintains its importance. In the beginning of the 20th century, the interest was followed initially with the French language and then attempts were made on German language in Turkey. Finally, English language had a superiority of interest both in formal and informal educational settings in the late 1900s. This movement surpassed the interest on French language and paved the way for German language after English. In the 21st century, the interest on foreign language has become undeniably on English but German language has still been focused as a secondary point of interest in Turkey. In this study, a bibliometric analysis was made from the Web of Knowledge data. The analysis included 165 articles originated from Turkey. The results indicated that the number of publications had risen in recent years more. Also, the fields of Language and Linguistics as well as Education and Educational Research employed more citations than other fields of research. Additionally, the number of citations showed a rising trend particularly in the last ten years, meaning the interest in the field of German language has been growing in the research literature.

**KeyWords:** Bibliometric analysis, German as a foreign language, German language

### 1. Introduction

Teaching and learning German as a foreign language is traced back to the Middle Ages in the Baltic while it can date back to the early modern period in the Mediterranean countries. It is also claimed that the learner groups included merchants, soldiers, diplomats, scientists, noblemen and women but also migrants and refugees. Later, German was most commonly taught by using textbooks in Italy, Bohemia and Russia in the Age of Enlightenment. However, starting from the Middle Ages and so on, German gained attention in the Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe and became significantly widespread in France and the Netherlands. Then, German was taught in South-Eastern Europe until 1918. Since then, German has been in demand less in the UK, in Italy, and in the Iberian Peninsula (Glürk, 2014).

The demand for teaching and learning German was also seen in Turkey; however, it was not so much present in the Ottoman Age. As Işık (2008) states the Arabic and Persian were the most common languages with a religious and educational perspective; however, foreign language education gained importance to communicate with the Western countries due to political interests, military issues and commercial concerns after the 18th century. In the nineteenth century, there had been some steps taken into for learning western languages in Turkey. For example, French was seen the *lingua franca* of education at that time and Turkey sent talented young people to France for learning French but the Ministry of Turkish National Education could not monitor the students' language development then this situation led to hosting French teachers at Galatasary Sultanisi (Formerly called Enderun School of Ottoman Empire) in 1868 (Tok, 2006). Tok (2006) finds it as one of the initial significant steps taken for setting the foreign language education in Turkey because Galatasaray Sultanisi offered classes in other languages such as Armenian, Bulgarian, English, Greek, Italian and German.

Regarding the history of pre-service education on foreign language teaching in Turkey, there have been several steps taken. Nergis (2011) reports on them by classifying the attempts twofold:

one before institutionalising foreign language education between 1948 and 1982 and another with the official declaration of 4-year faculties of education after 1992. In the first period, Darülmüallimin (Teachers' School) hosted the teacher education in Istanbul on March the 16th in 1948 by using the supplements from Gazi Teacher School (Aydın, 2007). Gazi Teacher School was established in Konya in 1926 and later transferred to Ankara in 1927 – evolving into Gazi Institute of Education in 1946 (Demirel, 1991). Demirel (1991) states that to ensure foreign language instruction, Gazi Institute initiated French, German and English language departments in 1941, 1944 and 1947, respectively. Finally, the interest in English has arisen from 48.000 students learning English in the 1950s and then reaching to 1.5 million students in the 1980s. Then in 1982, the Higher Education Institute law legislated all faculties of education with more clear qualifications to equip the pre-service teachers with the pedagogical knowledge through establishing Educational Sciences Departments and enabling other students from different departments to get education (Öztürk, 2005).

In short, following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the western languages were focused on in Turkish schools with a political sensitivity, resulting in the interest firstly with French and then German in the 1960s (Altundiş, 2006). İnceçay (2011) states that after such concerns, the political and social relations with the USA paved the way for inclusion of English in the schooling and foreign language education system in Turkey.

When the pertinent literature is reviewed on studies with a focus on foreign language, there has been a plethora of studies on English as a foreign language; however, the scientific interest has not been evidenced in the similar vein for German as a foreign language. Although this is the case, importance of German is apparent in the scientific studies. Degener (2011, para. 2) states that “German was, alongside French and English, one of the leading scientific languages in the 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century and scientists like Max Planck and Sigmund Freud even spoke German at US American universities”. After the World War I, there was a linguistically boycott against the German language and German lost its importance in the scientific studies. However, now most German scientists believe that in Germany German is still the most significant scientific language particularly in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities and in philosophy in the international level. (Degener, 2011).

Skudlik (2011) purports that such discussions on French or German as for the language of science arose in the 1970s and 1980s; but now, English is the language for international scientific communication and therefore the status of all other languages has fallen against English. Although both German and English are the languages spoken by European countries, English has been seen as the *lingua franca* of the world; for that reason, a usual academic trend may have evolved to dig in studies evolving around English. Although there are such revolving debates, they are not conflicting because English has already been accepted as the language of science and many other domains. However, the case for German as an international language is not the same but in Turkey German has been taught as a foreign language in German Language and Literature, German Language Teaching Department and English Language Teaching

departments because the rationale may stem from Ataş and Genç's (2019) view that the young generation should speak more than one language. This may contribute to the significance of German as a second or foreign foreign language. Therefore, German has gained attention by language specialised academic programs in Turkey.

Since the interest to publish in English language is clear due to its status as the *lingua franca* of the world, this present study attempts to fill a research gap by analyzing studies with a focus on German published in Web of Knowledge (WoK, previously known as Web of Science [WOS]). That is, the purpose of the study is to see the extent of the attention on German in scientific studies. To achieve this goal, this study employs a bibliometric analysis, which shows analytical reports for the readers to get acquainted with the research trends in a specifically filtered out investigation. Supporting this, Donthu et al. (2021) argue that bibliometric analysis method to analyze the data brings opportunities for exploring, analyzing and illustrating large volumes of data in terms of various criteria such as year, topic and citation report of studies usually through Scopus and Web of Science. Within the scope of such investigation, this study seeks answers to the following research questions:

1. What is the distribution of years in the accessed studies?
2. What are the citation topics in the accessed studies?
3. What is the citation frequency in the accessed studies?

## 2. Method

Serdarasan et al. (2021) assert that performance analysis and science mapping are the two main methods of bibliometric studies and they are used to identify a research area and reveal the studies conducted in that area. Accordingly, while citation effects are evaluated in performance analyses, science mapping aims to show readers the results from different social, conceptual or intellectual developmental and dynamic aspects (Cobo et al., 2015). In this context, Cancino et al. (2019) state that it is a quantitative analysis used for the classification and reporting of the data on the studies examined with bibliometric studies. Therefore, this study employs a quantitative research design.

The aim of this study is to perform bibliometric analysis of articles published on German Language on WoK. Donthu (2021) suggests several steps for conducting the bibliometric analysis. Among them, defining the aim and scope is the first step. In this study, the aim was to find studies which had the focus on German in the context of Turkey as for the scope. Secondly, the technique is selected. The technique was utilized by the built-in search engine tool on WoK. Thirdly, the data is collected by defining the search string, identifying the database, fetching the data by the employed technique in step two, clean data and check for errors. Accordingly, for the publications to be included in the research, firstly, a search was made in all fields with the search string "German Language" and filtered into Linguistics, Language Linguistics and Education Educational Research, then narrowed down into Turkey. Next is running the bibliometric analysis, accessing the results and limiting the results into the types of studies. The result was

211 studies. Among them, 165 of the studies were Articles and included in the purposes of this bibliometric analysis. Finally, the tables and figures are presented by the database outputs or other tools. The figures produced out of the WoK database were used. In sum, 165 articles in Turkey were identified and the figures were produced through WoK showing the year of publications, citations topics and the citations frequency in the next section.

#### 4. Findings

The WoK data revealed 165 articles with the keyword “German Language”. The first research question of the study aimed at revealing the distribution of years among the publications. Figure 1 shows the results regarding the publication years of the accessed studies below.

**Figure 1**

*Publication year*

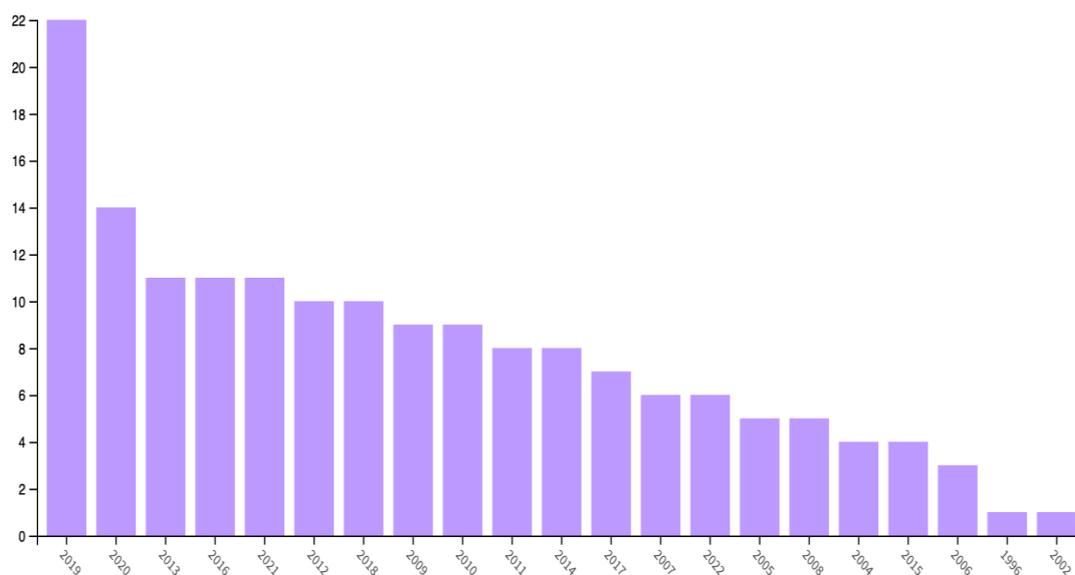
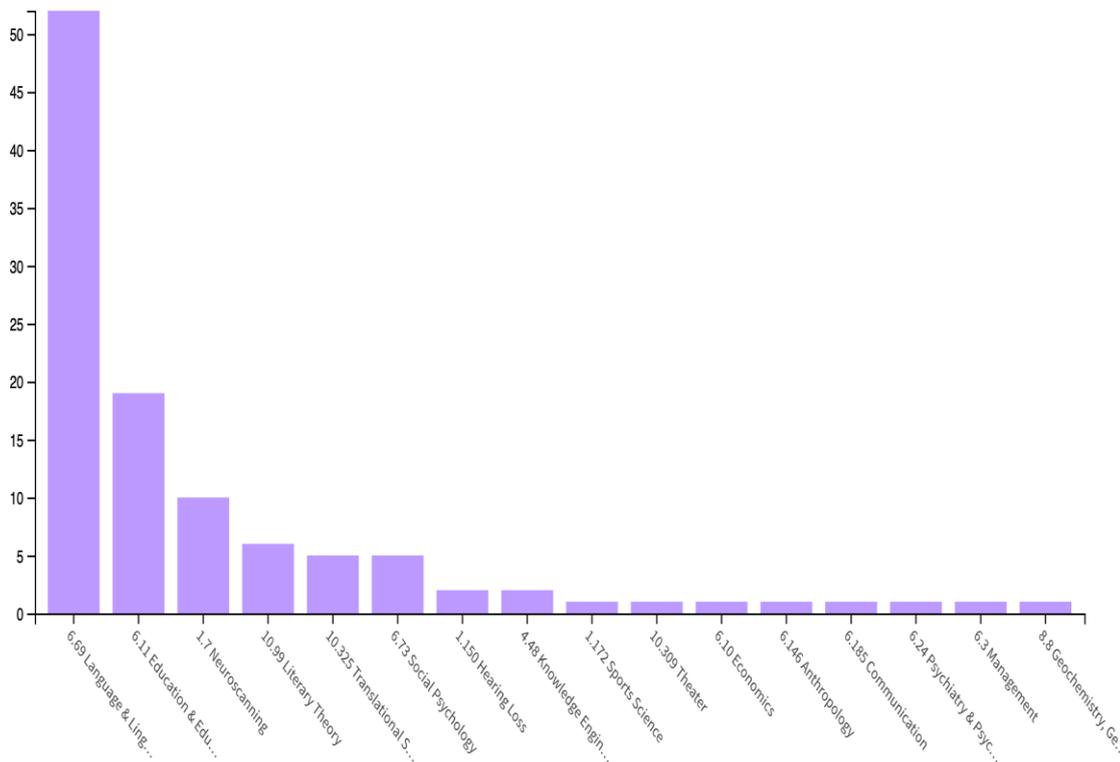


Figure 1 shows that the majority of the studies were published in 2019 ( $n = 22$ ), then it was followed more recently in 2020 ( $n = 14$ ). Later, the results showed the same number of publications ( $n = 11$ ) for 2021, 2016 and 2013. The interest was again the same in both 2012 and 2018 with 10 articles in each year. For the years 2009 and 2010, nine articles were published in each year. This decline is sustained from sixteen studies in 2011 and 2014 to the lowest publications in 1996 and 2002 ( $n = 1$ ). In sum, although the year 2022 attracted seven articles, the interest to studies with a focus on German language has risen relatively in the last ten years.

The second research question aimed at revealing the citation topics to the studies published in WoK. The results are shown in 2 below.

**Figure 2**

*Citations according to the fields of research*



In Figure 2, it is clear from the bar chart that most of the studies citing those 165 articles were from the field of Language and Linguistics ( $n = 52$ ), then the citation shows a sharp dip into 19 studies with a focus on Education and Educational Research, later it nearly halved and only nine studies from Neuroscanning cited the articles under the analysis. Following that, six studies from Literary Theory, and five each from Translational Studies and Social Psychology cited the studies under investigation. There are also other two fields in which two citations for each were made: Hearing Loss and Knowledge Engineering and Representation. All the remaining fields cited only one study were Sports Science, Theater, Economics, Psychiatry & Psychology, Management and interestingly Geochemistry, Geophysics & Geology. The third research question focused on the times of citations over the years. Figure 3 shows the results by illustrating both the times of citations with the sticks and the year with the bars below.

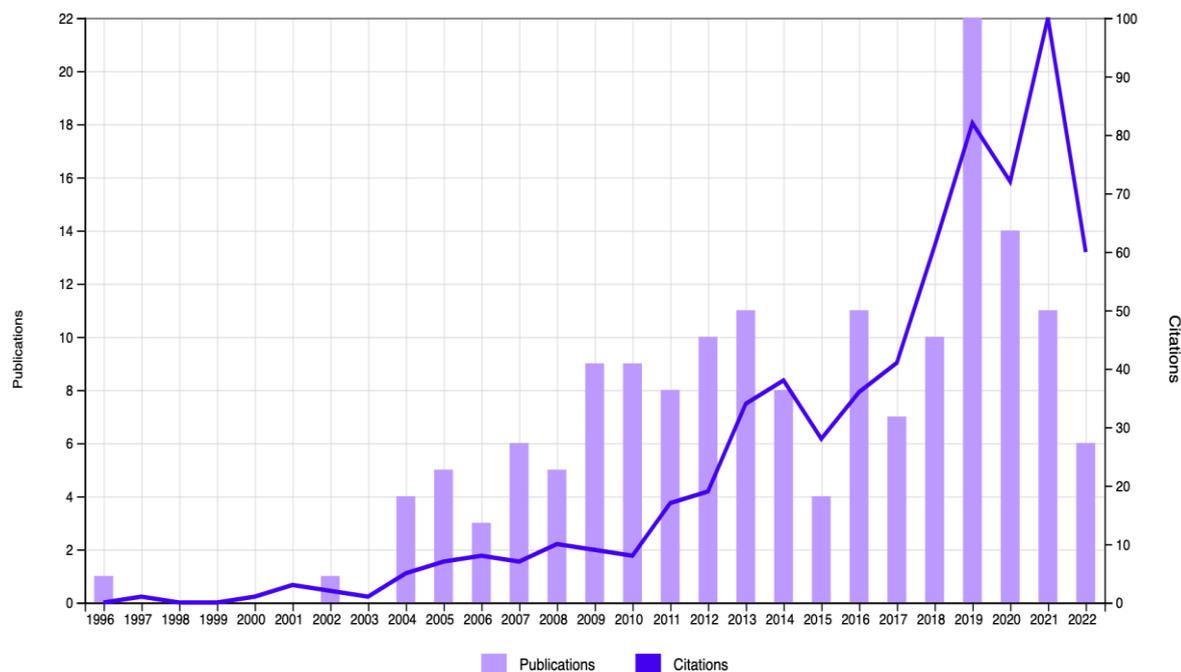
**Figure 3***Publications and citations across years*

Figure 3 shows that of the 165 studies, 22 of them were published in 2019 and they attracted the second most citations ( $n = 80$ ) after 2021 in which the citations were 100 but the number of studies was 11. The years from 1996 to 2004 showed two studies published and only one citation (in 2002) and there were no publications starting from 1997 with the consecutive four years. The most recent citations detected in the year 2022 were 60, which was the same in 2018, but 2022 may mean to employ more citations because 2022 did not finish when the analysis made (October, 2022). In sum, it is clear from Figure 3 that both the number of publications and citations showed a fluctuation in the last thirteen years but the trend in citations grew considerably after 2017.

## Discussion and Conclusions

There are many English-language oriented studies in the research literature but the extent of studies which utilized German as a focus of research interest is limited. Drawing attention from this gap, in this study, it is attempted to present a bibliometric analysis report on the articles published in Turkey with a particular focus on German Language. Looking at the pertinent literature, it is possible to claim that although the trend in foreign language education was followed dominantly in the English language in Turkey (Nergis, 2011), the shift towards German language has also been the point of secondary interest. This means, German language is also paid attention to in education programs in Turkey.

The findings of the research showed that the analysed studies showed growth in publications clearly in the years 2019 and 2020 and other studies citing the analyzed studies were mainly from Language and Linguistics as well as Education and Educational Research. This shows similarity to the interest in learning German as a foreign language in the Turkish context, where German was evidenced to be the most common second foreign language after English by the Turkish university students (Thompson, & Erdil-Moody, 2016). Additionally, the number of publications and the citations they received showed a growth but the citations have marked an overwhelming superiority to the number of publications in the recent years. This finding shows evidence that there is a growing interest in the published studies in German language. Therefore, it can be suggested that the number of publications should be increased and these publications should attract more international readers' interest. The evolving interest also falls into the scope of language education programs, where studies focus on developing the competences of pre-service German language teachers. To illustrate, König et al. (2020) dealt with conceptualizing and measuring the competences of pre-service German language teachers in order to develop the status of German and teaching it in foreign or second language contexts.

### **Recommendations and Limitations**

This study is limited to a bibliometric analysis which reports on the studies with a focus on German in Turkey by illustrating the year, citations from the research fields and a comparison of the two. This study could be well improved by demonstrating wider scope with other countries-not limited to Turkey. Also, the methodological soundness could be bettered by using other databases-not limited to WoK data. Finally, the findings could be dug in by qualitative research methods in order to see the content of the studies. However, this study may stand as the one which could call for further studies in an attempt to evoke interest in the German language, which is the most common second foreign language after English in Turkey.

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