

TARZANIAN TURKISH

A cartoon illustration of a man with dark hair and a mustache, wearing a green loincloth, swinging on a thick brown tree branch. The background is a light yellow-green color with several green leaves scattered around the tree.

Minimalist
Turkish

A Grammar-Free Guide
to Instant Speaking

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Introduction to Tarzanian Turkish

I was once hiking along the Lycian Way in Fethiye when I met a young German traveler, about 20 years old. He knew only a few Turkish words: *merhaba* (hello), *bira* (beer), *istemek* (to want), *lütfen* (please), and *teşekkürler* (thanks). Curious to learn more, he asked me about numbers. I showed him with my fingers: *bir*, *iki*, *üç*. He repeated them carefully. When I continued with *dört*, *beş*, he stopped me and said, “That’s enough for now.”

At the time, it seemed amusing. But it also showed something essential: communication doesn’t begin with mastery. It begins with a few words used confidently and meaningfully.

In this book, you will begin building simple Turkish sentences from the very start.

The goal is not perfection. The goal is communication.

This is *Tarzanian Turkish*: simple, direct, and focused on meaning.

You will create your own sentences. They may not be perfect, and sometimes you may be misunderstood. That is normal.

You will use words with body language, facial expressions, and context, just as in real communication. You may not always find the exact word you need, and your sentences may sometimes sound unusual. But you will be expressing yourself in your own words, not just repeating fixed phrases.

When you speak simple Turkish, native speakers will often simplify their language in response. This makes communication easier and more natural.

On the next page, you will find a short section titled *How Turkish Works*. Read it for a general overview before you begin.

Thanks for choosing *Tarzanian Turkish*. Go full Tarzan. Speak boldly, make mistakes, and enjoy the adventure. I would love to hear your feedback.

Halit Demir

How Turkish Works

A Simple Introduction to Turkish

Spelling and pronunciation

Turkish spelling is quite regular. Each letter represents one sound. Words are usually pronounced as they are written.

You can find the Turkish alphabet and listen to it [here](#).

Suffixes

In Turkish, much of the meaning is shown with suffixes. They can show tense, person, and many other meanings.

Example:

Ben karı**ma** çi**ç**ek alaca**ğ**ım.
I will buy *flowers* for my wife.

Don't worry! In Tarzian Turkish, we don't use suffixes. We may still show them for comparison, so you can see the difference.

Vowel Harmony

In Turkish, suffixes change their vowels to match the last vowel of the word. This is called vowel harmony. These changes are shown in writing.

Examples:

ev**de** — *at home*
okul**da** — *at school*

Lesson 1

Ben Tarzan. Türkçe kolay.

1. Say who someone is

Pattern: subject + noun / adjective

To do this, you need the subject pronouns:

Ben	<i>I</i>
Sen	<i>You</i>
O	<i>He/She/It</i>
Biz	<i>We</i>
Siz	<i>You</i>
Onlar	<i>They</i>

Note: Turkish is gender-neutral. **O** = He/She/It. **Siz** = also for singular polite **you**.

All the English translations in the book mirror the Turkish structure as closely as possible.

Examples:

- 1) Ben Tarzan. Ben mutlu.
I Tarzan. I happy.
- 2) Türkçe kolay.
Turkish easy.
- 3) Ben Nick. Ben doktor.
I Nick. I doctor.
- 4) Siz çok kibar.
You very polite.
- 5) Biz turist. Biz Amerikalı.
We tourist. We American.

You can listen to all the examples [here](#). Follow the numbers.

What we drop here

We drop the **personal endings** from nouns and adjectives. These endings change with the person and work like the English verb **to be**.

Here are the standard forms of a few Tarzanian sentences above for comparison:

Ben doktor**um**.
*I **am** a doctor.*

Sen çok kibars**ın**.
*You **are** very polite.*

Biz turist**iz**.
*We **are** tourists.*

Now it's your turn. Go full Tarzan.

Make at least 5 sentences using the words below. You can begin with any subject you like. Say them aloud.

hasta (sick) – arkadaş (friend) – Meksikalı (Mexican) – ev hanımı (housewife) – kibar (polite) – evli (married) – güzel (beautiful) – aç (hungry) – yakışıklı (handsome) – bekâr (single) – mutlu (happy) – öğrenci (student) – işçi (worker)

Example:

6) Sen çok güzel.
Ben öğrenci.
Pablo Meksikalı.

You can read and listen to the sample sentences at the same [audio](#) link above. This applies to all the following activities as well.

Thematic Word List

In Tarzanian Turkish, the goal is to express words you don't know using words you already know.

These real-life examples from young children show how this works:

- A child who knows **dizüstü** (laptop) may describe a **desktop** (masaüstü) computer as **yerinde duran bilgisayar** (a computer that stays in one place).
- A child who knows **virgül** (comma) may call an **apostrophe** (kesme işareti) **uçan virgül** (a flying comma).

In the same way, you can express what you want to say with the words you already know:

- **Kısa** (short)? You know **uzun** (long). Say **uzun değil**.
- **Elma** (apple)? You know **meyve** (fruit). Say **kırmızı meyve** and show its shape with your hands. For **muz** (banana), say **uzun sarı meyve**.
- **Gri** (gray)? You know **siyah** (black) and **beyaz** (white). Say **siyah ve beyaz**.

Each category in the list below contains only the most essential words to get you started. Some of these words also appear in the lessons.

Let's start with the first category.

1. İnsanlar ve İlişkiler — People and Relationships

kadın — woman

anne — mother

adam — man

baba — father

evli — married

bekâr — single

eş — husband/wife

çocuk — child

kardeş — sibling

aile — family

arkadaş — friend

kız — girl

oğlan — boy

Listen to all the words [here](#).

2. Gündelik Eşyalar — Everyday Objects

telefon — phone

bilgisayar — computer

çanta — bag

anahtar — key

cüzdan — wallet

para — money

kredi kartı — credit card

masa — table

sandalye — chair

kapı — door

pencere — window

kitap — book

kalem — pen

3. Yerler — Places

ev — house / home

bahçe — garden

park — park