

ONUR KELEŞ

Istanbul, Turkey | +90 536 872 98 81
onur.keles1{at sign}bogazici.edu.tr

PROFILE

PhD researcher at the intersection of computational linguistics and cognitive science, investigating multimodality, iconicity, and spatial language across deaf signers, hearing non-signers, and vision-language models. Additional research spans psycholinguistic sentence processing and computational documentation of endangered languages.

EDUCATION

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

The International Max Planck Research School (IMPRS) Affiliate

Dec 2025 - Present

Boğaziçi University

PhD in Linguistics

Jan 2025 - Present

Boğaziçi University

M.A. in Linguistics

Sep 2021 - Jan 2025

GPA: 4.0

Supervisors: Kadir Gökgöz and Nazik Dinçtopal Deniz

Thesis: [Discourse Cohesion and Phonetics in Turkish Sign Language: An Experimental & Computational Approach](#)

Boğaziçi University

B.A. in Foreign Language Education

Aug 2017 - July 2021

GPA: 4.0, Summa Cum Laude

INTERESTS

Sign Languages · Multimodality and Spatial Language · Pragmatics & Discourse · Computational Linguistics

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Boğaziçi University, Dept. of Linguistics

Research & Teaching Assistant

April 2023 - Present

– Preparing and grading student assignments; holding problem sessions; carrying out administrative tasks.

Undergraduate Project Assistant

Jan 2019 - Jan 2022

– Undergraduate assistant at the BAP Project “Supporting Sign Language Development of Deaf Children with Hearing Parents through Linguistically-informed Preschool Stories.” PI: Dr. Kadir Gökgöz

Boğaziçi University, Psycholinguistics Research Lab

Lab Manager

June 2022 - June 2023

– Employed in a TUBITAK 1001 Project entitled “Use of syntactic and semantic cues in processing negative polarity items in Turkish as a first and second language.” PI: Dr. Nazik Dinçtopal Deniz.

Codeswitch Software

Research Intern

Jan 2021 - Aug 2021



– Worked on a sign language teaching application (undergraduate research fellowship from TÜBİTAK Star)

PUBLICATIONS

Preprints & Under Review

1. Keleş, O., Özyürek, A., Ortega, G., Gökgöz, K., & Ghaleb, E. (2025). [The Visual Iconicity Challenge: Evaluating Vision-Language Models on Sign Language Form-Meaning Mapping](#). *arXiv:2510.08482*. Accepted at ACL (Main conference).

Peer-reviewed Journals & Book Chapters

1. Keleş, O., & Dinçtopal Deniz, N. (2025). [Good-enough parsing in Turkish: Task effects in online processing of role-reversals](#). In B. Kırkıcı (Ed.), *Empirical insights into language and cognition* (pp. 137–163). Nobel Akademik Yayıncılık. ISBN 978-625-376-633-7
2. Keleş, O., Atmaca, F., & Gökgöz, K. (2023). [Reference tracking strategies of deaf adult signers in Turkish Sign Language](#). *Journal of Pragmatics*, 213, 12–35. 
3. Keleş, O. & Gökgöz, K. (2022). [Expression of Aboutness Subject Topic Constructions in Turkish Sign Language \(TİD\) Narratives](#). *Hrvatska revija za rehabilitacijska istraživanja*, 58 (Special Issue), 194–205. <https://doi.org/10.31299/hrri.58.si.10>
4. Keleş, O., Atmaca, F., & Gökgöz, K. (2022). [Effects of age of acquisition and category size on signed verbal fluency](#). *Language Acquisition*, 29(4), 361–383. (Winner of the annual prize for the Best Article Contributing to Linguistic Diversity.) <https://doi.org/10.1080/10489223.2021.2023814> 
5. Gökgöz, K. & Keleş, O. (2020). [Pragmatics: 6.4. Information Structure](#). In Meltem Keleşir (ed.), *A Grammar of Turkish Sign Language (TİD)*. 1st edn. *SIGN-HUB Sign Language Grammar Series* as part of the SignHub Project, EC, 693349.

Peer-reviewed Conference Proceedings

1. Keleş, O., & Deniz, N. D. (2025, May). [When men bite dogs: Testing good-enough parsing in Turkish with humans and large language models](#). In T. Kuribayashi, G. Rambelli, E. Takmaz, P. Wicke, J. Li, & B. D. Oh (Eds.), *Proceedings of the Workshop on Cognitive Modeling and Computational Linguistics* (pp. 219–231).
2. Keleş, O., Günay, B., & Doğan, B. (2025, May). [Cognate and contact-induced transfer learning for Hamshentsnag: A low-resource and endangered language](#). In S. Truong, R. A. Putri, D. Nguyen, A. Wang, D. Ho, A. Oh, & S. Koyejo (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 1st Workshop on Language Models for Underserved Communities (LM4UC 2025)* (pp. 76–85).
3. Keleş, O. & Bayraklı, Ö. T. (2024). [LLaMA-2-Econ: Enhancing title generation, abstract classification, and academic Q & A in economic research](#). In C.-C. Chen, X. Liu, U. Hahn, A. Nourbakhsh, Z. Ma, C. Smiley, V. Hoste, S. R. Das, M. Li, M. Ghassemi, H.-H. Huang, H. Takamura, & H.-H. Chen (Eds.), *Proceedings of the 4th Workshop on Economics and Natural Language Processing* (pp. 212–218).
4. Keleş, O. & Dinçtopal Deniz, N. (2024). [A comparative study with human data: Do LLMs have superficial language processing?](#). In *2024 32nd Signal Processing and Communications Applications Conference (SIU)* (pp. 1–4). IEEE.
5. Keleş, O., Oksal, C., & Bilgili, E. (2023). [Using Pose Estimation for Reference Tracking in Turkish Sign Language](#). In *31st Signal Processing and Communications Applications Conference (SIU)* (pp. 1–4). IEEE.

SELECT PRESENTATIONS

Conferences

1. Keleş, O., Özyürek, A., Ortega, G., Gökgöz, K., & Ghaleb, E. (2025). [Agentive Iconicity in Signs: Visual Context Helps Form-Meaning Mapping in Minds & Machines](#) (Poster presentation). 39th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing: Boston, US.
2. Dinçtopal Deniz, N., Erdemir, Z., Keleş, O., Nuh, Stenai, & Sürücü, F. N. (2025). [Tracking predictive and memory-based processes in L2 Turkish NPI licensings](#) (Poster presentation). 39th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing: Boston, US.
3. Keleş, O., Bayraklı Keleş, Z. İ. & Deniz, N. D. (September, 2025). [How good-enough is L2 sentence comprehension? Processing of thematic role \(reversal\)s in L2 Turkish](#) (Poster presentation). Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing (AMLaP): Prague, Czechia.
4. Keleş, O. & Deniz, N. D. (September, 2025). [Task effects in good-enough parsing in Turkish: Human and LM comprehension of thematic roles](#) (Poster presentation). Architectures and Mechanisms for Language Processing (AMLaP): Prague, Czechia.

5. Keleş, O., Gökgöz, K., & Deniz, N. D. (March, 2025). *Pragmatics predicts phonetic reduction in signed narratives* (Poster presentation). 38th Annual Conference on Human Sentence Processing: Maryland, US.
6. Keleş, O. & Günay, B. (May, 2024). *Transfer Learning to the Rescue! Cross-Lingual Transfer for POS Tagging in an Endangered Language: Hamshetsnag* (On-stage presentation). Turkey Computational Social Sciences Conference (TCSS) 2024: Koç University, İstanbul, Türkiye.
7. Gökgöz, K., Keleş, O., & Bilgili, E. (November, 2023). *Morpho-phonology and Articulatory Energy in Expressing Complex Motion Events in Turkish Sign Language (TİD) and Age of Acquisition Effects* (On-stage presentation). 47th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD): Boston, USA.
8. Keleş, O., Atmaca F., & Gökgöz, K. (November, 2020). *Age of Acquisition Effects on Verbal Fluency in Turkish Sign Language* (Poster presentation and Paper Alternate). 45th Boston University Conference on Language Development (BUCLD): Boston, USA (Online Conference).

TEACHING

Boğaziçi University

Teaching Assistant in the Dept. of Linguistics

Sep 2022 - Present

- LING 313. Phonology & Morphology of Modern Turkish, Instructor: Ceyda Arslan (2025, Fall). [Syllabus](#).
- LING 314. Syntax & Semantics of Modern Turkish, Instructor: Balkız Öztürk (2025, Spring). [Syllabus](#).
- LING 411. Linguistic Methodology with R, Instructor: Ümit Atlamaz (2024, Fall). [Syllabus](#).
- LING 101. Introduction to Linguistics I, Instructor: Ömer Demirok (2024 Fall). [Syllabus](#).
- LING 360. Computational Linguistics with Python, Instructor: Ümit Atlamaz (2024, Spring). [Syllabus](#).

Turkish Instructor

Jun 2024 - Aug 2024

- Taught Upper Intermediate Turkish as a foreign language (speaking) for graduate students from the US.

Robert College

Teacher Intern

Oct 2020 - Jun 2021

- LP and L9 English, Instructor: Melissa Altintas

SKILLS

Training

MEDAL Summer School in Experimental Linguistics at Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, Netherlands (June 2024).

3rd International School on Psycholinguistics, Neurolinguistics and Clinical Linguistics at University of Novi Sad, Serbia (April 2023).

SocialComquant Workshops on Machine Learning, and Natural Language Processing & Topic Modeling with Python at Koç University, Turkey (March 2023).

The Summer School of Linguistics (with a focus on psycholinguistics methodology) at University of South Bohemia in České Budějovice, Czech Republic (August 2022).

Select Awards

TÜBİTAK 2224-A Support for Participation in Scientific Events Abroad, AlgoRun Data Science Hackathon Winner (2024), Academic Computing Conference Best Presentation Award (2024), TÜBİTAK 2210-A National Graduate Scholarship (2021–2023), Language Acquisition Best Article Contributing to Linguistic Diversity Award (2022), TÜBİTAK 2247-C STAR Researcher Internship Program (2020–2021).

Select Programs

LaTeX · RMarkdown · Python, · R, ELAN, & Praat

Languages

Turkish (native) · English (C2) · Spanish (B1) Turkish Sign Language (research exp.)