

ONUR KELEŞ

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EDUCATION

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics

International Max Planck Research School (IMPRS) Affiliate

Dec 2025 - Present

Boğaziçi University

PhD in Computational Linguistics (LLM, VLM & Multimodality focus)

Jan 2025 - Present

Boğaziçi University

M.A. in Linguistics

Sep 2021 - Jan 2025

GPA: 4.0/4.0

Boğaziçi University

B.A. in Foreign Language Education

Aug 2017 - July 2021

GPA: 4.0/4.0, Summa Cum Laude

PUBLICATIONS

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* (Q1), 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* (Q1), 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 Keleş (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., Özyürek, A., Ortega, G., Gökgöz, K., & Ghaleb, E. (2026, July). [The Visual Iconicity Challenge: Evaluating Vision–Language Models on Sign Language Form–Meaning Mapping](#). In *Proceedings of the 64th Annual Meeting of the Association for Computational Linguistics (ACL 2026), Main Conference*. (To appear.)
2. 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).
3. 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).
4. 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).
5. 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.
6. 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.

AWARDS & HONORS

2026	ACL 2026 Diversity & Inclusion Subsidy recipient; selected as an In-Person Volunteer, 64th Annual Meeting of the ACL (San Diego); 39th HSP Travel Grant (Boston).
2025	38th HSP Travel Grant (Maryland).
2024	AlgoRun Data Science Hackathon, Winner; Akademik Bilişim Conference, Best Presentation Award.
2022	<i>Language Acquisition</i> Best Article Contributing to Linguistic Diversity Award.
2021	B.A. awarded <i>Summa Cum Laude</i> (GPA 4.0).
Grants	TÜBİTAK 2224-A (Scientific Events Abroad, 2024), 2210-A National Graduate Scholarship (2021–2023), 2247-C STAR Researcher Internship (2020–2021).

SKILLS

Programming	Python · R · RMarkdown · L ^A T _E X
ML / NLP	PyTorch · Hugging Face Transformers · LLM fine-tuning · model evaluation & benchmarking · vision–language & multimodal models · low-resource & multilingual NLP · transfer learning · pose estimation
Tools	Git · ELAN · Praat · PsychoPy · PCIBex
Languages	Turkish (native) · English (C2) · Spanish (B1) · Turkish Sign Language (research exp.)
Training	MEDAL Summer School in Experimental Linguistics, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen (2024) · SocialComquant Workshops on Machine Learning and NLP, Koç University (2023) · 3rd International School on Psycho/Neuro/Clinical Linguistics, Novi Sad (2023).

RESEARCH & INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE

Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics	<i>Affiliated Researcher</i>	2024 - Present
– Benchmark vision–language models on sign and gesture iconicity.		
Boğaziçi University, Dept. of Linguistics	<i>Research Assistant</i>	April 2023 - Present
– Build computational models of sign language and sentence processing.		
Boğaziçi University, Psycholinguistics Research Lab	<i>Lab Manager</i>	June 2022 - June 2023
– Ran experiment design, data collection, and analysis (TÜBİTAK 1001 project).		
Codeswitch Software	<i>Research Intern</i>	Jan 2021 - Aug 2021
– Developed a sign language teaching application (TÜBİTAK STAR fellowship).		

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. Keleş, O., Bayraklı Keleş, Z. I. & 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.
3. 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.
4. 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, Istanbul, Türkiye.

SERVICE & TEACHING

Reviewing: NeurIPS 2026.

Teaching: Teaching Assistant, Boğaziçi University Dept. of Linguistics (2022–present): Computational Linguistics with Python, Linguistic Methodology with R, Intro to Linguistics, and Turkish phonology/syntax courses.