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The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success

By Geoffrey Lewis

Oxford University Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW PRINT ON DEMAND., The Turkish Language Reform: A Catastrophic Success, Geoffrey Lewis, This is the first full account of the transformation of Ottoman Turkish into Modern Turkish. It is based on the author's knowledge and experience of the language, history, and people of Turkey. The transformation of the Turkish language is probably the most thorough-going piece of linguistic engineering in history. Its prelude came in 1928, when the Arabo-Persian alphabet was outlawed and replaced by the Latin alphabet. It began in earnest in 1930 when Ataturk declared: 'Turkish is one of the richest of languages. It needs only to be used with discrimination. The Turkish nation, which is well able to protect its territory and its sublime independence, must also liberate its language from the yoke of foreign languages.' All Arabic and Persian vocabulary was replaced forthwith by words collected from popular speech, resurrected from ancient texts, or coined from native roots and suffixes. The snag - identified by the author as one element in the catastrophic aspect of the reform - was that when these sources failed to provide the needed words, the reformers simply invented them. The reform was...



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