

## Advanced Turkish

Reviewed by

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### PRODUCT AT A GLANCE

**Product Type:**  
Drill & practice

**Language:**  
Turkish

**Level:**  
Advanced; adult

**Activities:**  
Multiple choice, fill-in exercises; pronunciation, dialog repetition; listening comprehension; transcription; vocabulary learning

**Media Format:**  
DVD-ROM

**Operating System(s):**  
Windows 2000/XP/Vista/7

**Hardware Requirements:**  
PC; DVD-ROM drive; hard disk space, N/A; sound card, microphone; 1024X768 or higher video

**Supplementary Software:**  
Internet Explorer 5.5+; Windows Media Player; Codec: Windows Media Audio 9.2, 128 kbps, 48 kHz, stereo 1-pass CBR; Windows Media Video V7

**Documentation:**  
printed one-page quick start guide; online user's guide

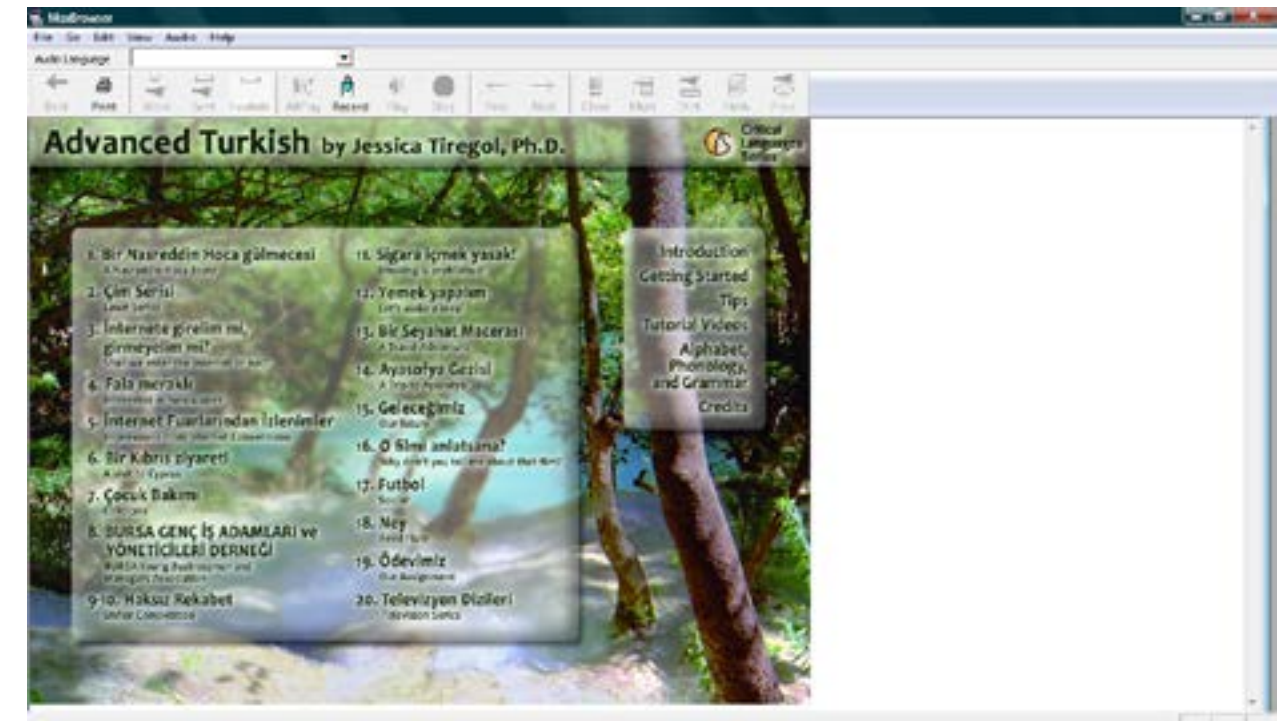
**Price:**  
Single user: \$79.95; discounts available for multiple copies; site license not offered

### GENERAL DESCRIPTION

*Advanced Turkish* is composed of audio and video clips accompanied with text and a variety of exercises. Created by using MaxAuthor — a free multimedia authoring system for language instruction — the software program presents 20 lessons for self-study for advanced level

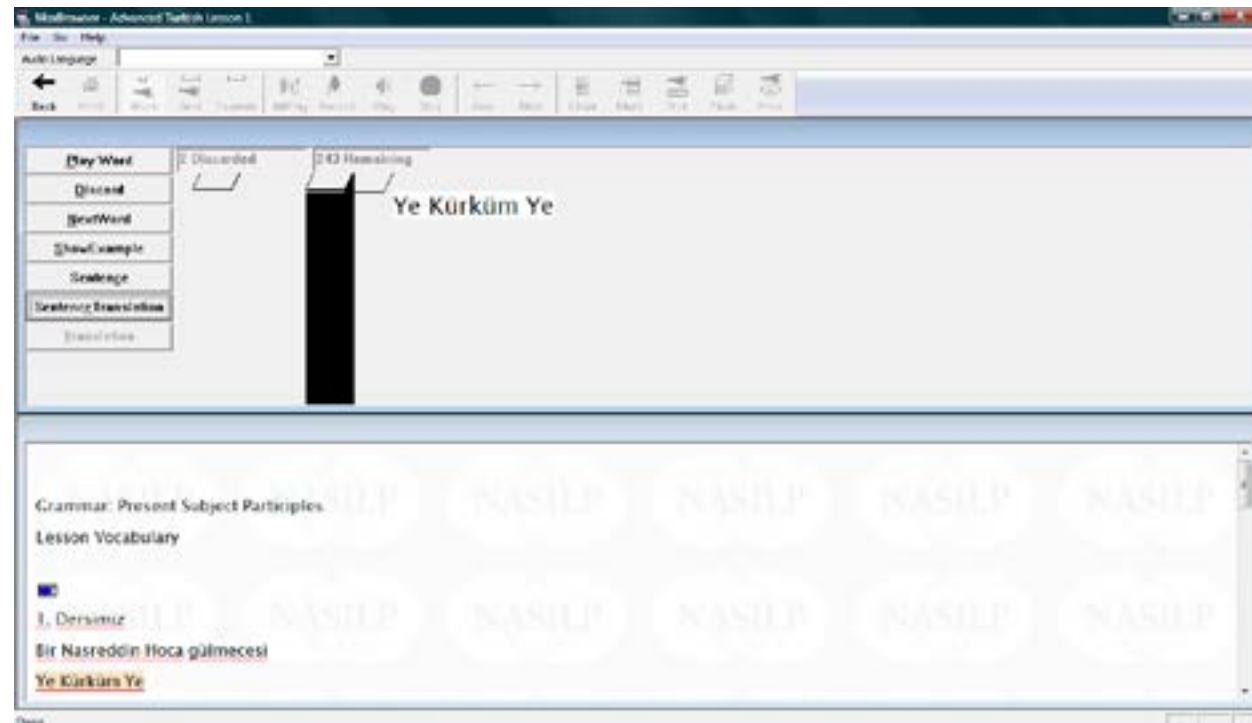
learners of Turkish. Extensive information on Turkish grammar is included in the software program as well. In each lesson, cultural aspects are embedded in the dialogs such as fortune telling out of a Turkish coffee cup, playing “ney”, Nasreddin Hodja, and so forth. In the initial welcome window (see Figure 1), there is a section with a brief introduction and in “Getting Started” the overall objective of the course is outlined. Tutorial videos for each type of exercise and for general use of the program are included in the welcome screen. No biographical information about the author is available in the program, except for her name and academic degree. More information is made available online at <http://clp.arizona.edu/cls/tur3/>

Figure 1  
Main Menu and Initial Welcome Screen



Each lesson is composed of three sections: Introduction; Text, Video and Exercises; and Lesson Summary and Further Practice. In the “Introduction” section, grammatical feature(s) studied in the lesson and a recommended course of study are listed in text format. “Text, Video and Exercises” constitute the main part of the software program. In this main section, users can read the dialogue text, watch the video clip, listen to the audio files for each word and/or sentence in Turkish or English, and complete the exercises: fill-in-the-blank, multiple-choice, dictation, and pronunciation exercises. A set of flashcards is also available for vocabulary learning only for some of the lessons (Lessons 11-20). In the flashcards, learners can play the audio file for the word or the expression, discard it, see an example for it, and listen to its translation (see Figure 2). A transcript of the performance is available for printing after the completion of the exercises. In “Lesson Summary and Further Practice” a lesson is summarized in a sentence or two and a few questions for further discussion/practice or research are presented. This section is again in only text format. All activities are displayed in Max-Browser — a browser window included in the software program.

Figure 2  
Flashcard Activity



There is a one-page quick start guide for the software program and tutorial videos and help features are included in the DVD-ROM in electronic format. Also in the booklet with the quick start guide is a two page diagram and explanation of the user interface and its usage. There are no companion books suggested for the program except for "Turkish Grammar" by Robert Underhill. Printed more than 30 years ago, this resource is likely to be outdated in terms of vocabulary use and of some other grammatical structures but it should reflect the main components of Turkish grammar for the user.

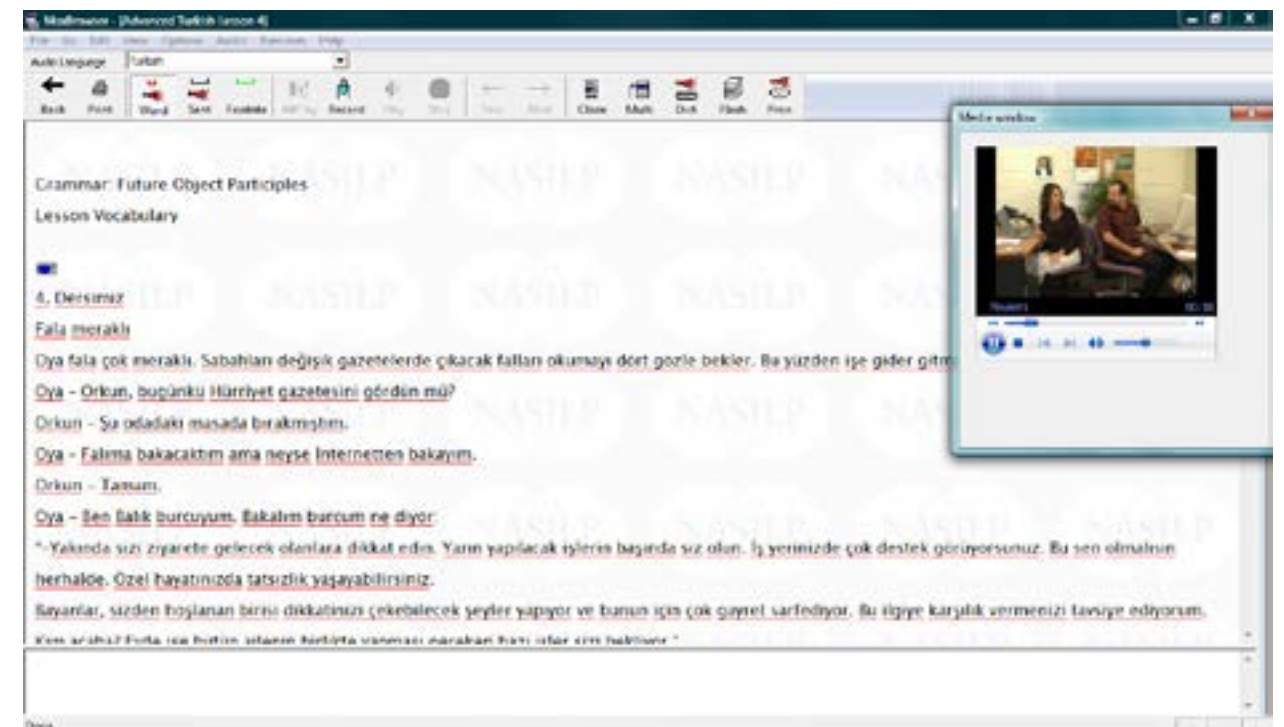
## EVALUATION

### Technological Features

*Advanced Turkish* is presented in a single DVD-ROM; installation is trouble-free and it is easy to uninstall the program. There are no delays in loading the software program content and audio and video clips run instantly. Video clips can be viewed in full-screen mode as well. No crashes or stalls were experienced in running the program. No java scripts, QuickTime or flash plug-ins are needed. The program runs only in PC platform, compatible with Windows 2000/XP/Vista and it has also been verified to work on Windows 7. *Advanced Turkish* comes with its own browser, MaxBrowser, and the html files related to the use of program features open in any browser. In terms of screen management, it would be fair to say that overall design of the interface and navigation could be a little more appealing. The video pop-up window can make it hard for the user to follow the text along with the video since moving the pop-up window would be needed to see certain parts of the text (see Figure 3). The video icon to play the movie in the main window is very small; a thumbnail would be more appropriate. The program is designed for a single user and it cannot be adapted for different user profiles such

as creating different records for multiple users. No Internet connectivity is required to run the program. Records of the performance in exercises can be kept and printed out. Speech records can only be evaluated with the help of an instructor since no speech recognition component is included within the program. The "record" button is still active even if the users are not in the "pronunciation" section. However, users are provided with the option of saving recordings so that they could e-mail them to their instructor for evaluation. Finally, there is no single button on which users can click to go to the main page of the software program.

Figure 3  
Lesson Text and Video Windows



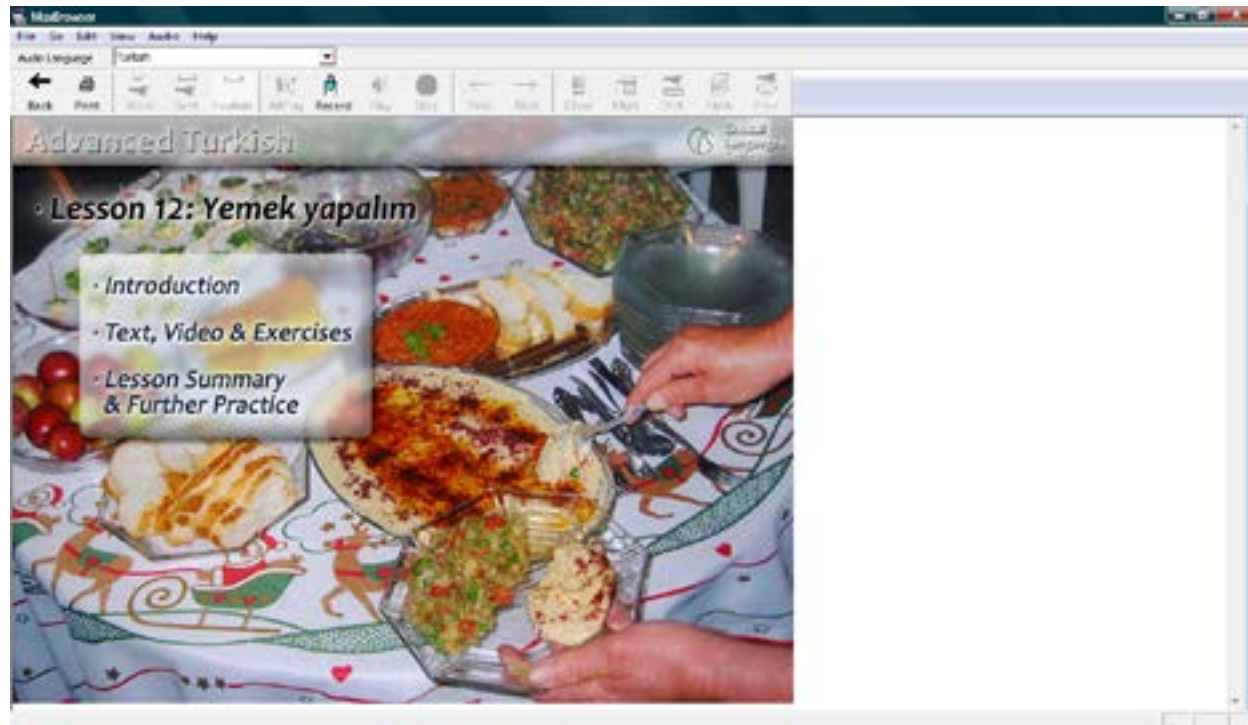
### Activities

*Advanced Turkish* is mainly an instructional software program, which consists of drills. Users are required to complete exercises before and after watching the video clip for each lesson. Grammatical structures covered in the lessons are given in a separate link as a whole; no link is provided for the grammar topic of the lesson. For example, the grammar topic of the first lesson is "Present subject participles -(y)En". It requires four clicks in order to reach the supplementary material for the grammar topic of this lesson. Users are encouraged to refer to a grammar resource book for a comprehensive overview of the grammar points covered in the lessons. A vocabulary list for each lesson is available at the beginning of the conversation text. By using the "footnote" function, users can see explanations about some of the grammatical structures or collocations. Conversations in the lessons are quite up-to-date such as latest smoking ban in indoor places in Turkey, technology, TV series, etc. and this aspect is likely to raise interest in students and allow them to keep up-to-date with the current terms and language use.

The activities focus on syntax, vocabulary, and spelling. Students read the text, listen to the audio clips for individual words or sentences and watch the video clip. It is also possible to record audio to compare pronunciation with the native speaker's in the audio or video clips but

there is no mechanism to assess this aspect. Another focus of the course is Turkish culture. In each lesson, a cultural trait of Turkey is embedded, which can be a valuable input for the learners in a foreign language (rather than second language) context (see Figure 4).

Figure 4  
Lesson Main Page and Cultural Theme "Let's Make a Meal"



Although a recommended course of study is presented to the users, time to be allocated for each activity could also be included in this section. Moreover, the interface of the software program could be designed in a way that would lead the user to follow this course of study.

This software program can be a good supplementary resource for an actual *Advanced Turkish* course as it is usually difficult to find good materials for teaching less-commonly taught languages.

#### Teacher Fit

Language use in both formal and informal settings is presented to improve users' speaking skills and aural and written comprehension skills. On the DVD-ROM case cover, it reads "The many activities accommodate a wide range of learning styles and preferences" but this statement is not fully supported in the program. For example, optional subtitles would be a good component to add to the video clips so that learners who better learn by reading can consult the subtitles as needed (Grgurović & Hegelheimer, 2007). Some vocabulary items could have been represented as images in the vocabulary section in order to enhance the input (Chapelle, 2003). With some traces of the audio-lingual method, dialogues and drills based on these dialogues constitute the main axis of *Advanced Turkish*. Authenticity of the video clips and dialogues is supported by the use of cultural artifacts (small glass tea cups, Turkish coffee,

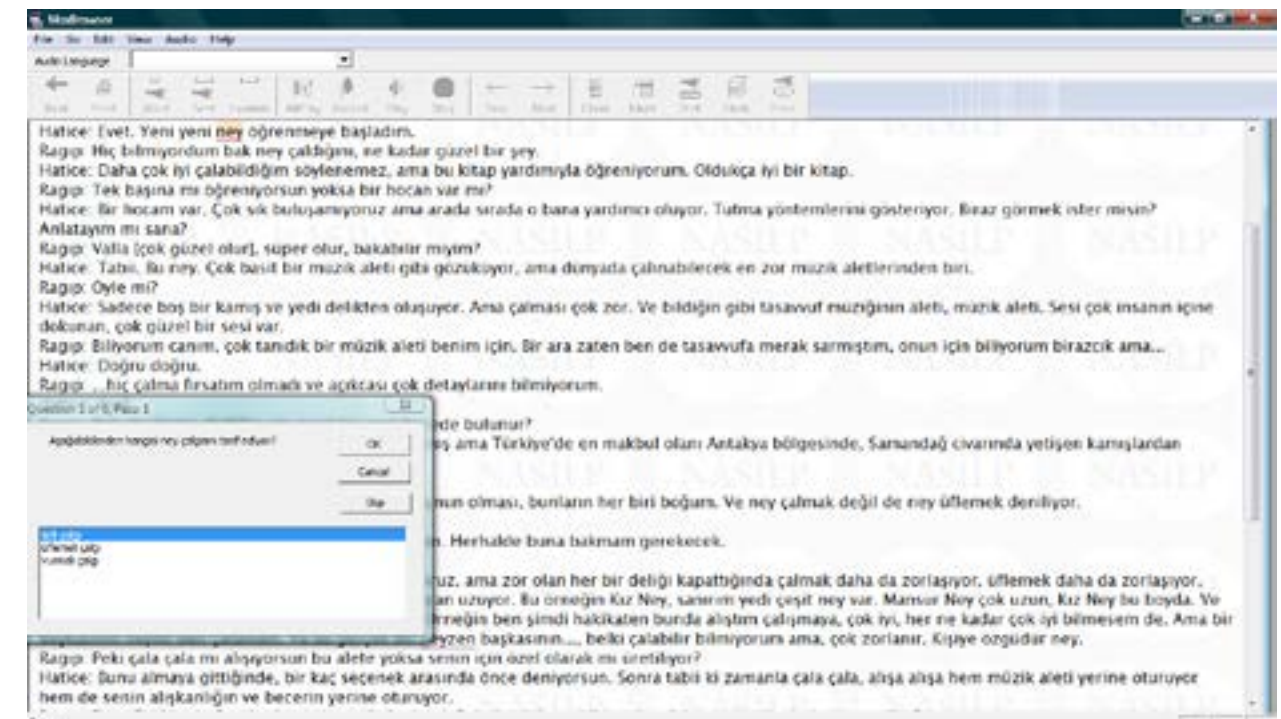
meeting room setting, etc.) but only two persons — native speakers — appear in all 20 lessons. Although these two native speakers reflect the everyday use of Turkish language very well, it would be more representative to provide exposure to multiple native speakers. In the "Lesson Summary & Further Practice" section exercises for improving writing, reading, and speaking skills are listed. For example, in Lesson 15 students are encouraged to summarize the lesson in writing, describe their career plans to someone, and search for blogs or articles on the Internet or in the library. These exercises are likely to provide students with more interaction with the language and culture but they would definitely require working with an instructor or an advanced-level learner.

#### Learner fit

As a follow-up program for the *Intermediate Turkish* by the same author, *Advanced Turkish* is intended for upper-intermediate and advanced-level learners of Turkish. The software program is designed for both self-study and classroom use (with an instructor as a facilitator) and it is targeting adult learners. The topics and exercises in the lessons can be interesting for an adult learner but in order to attract younger learners and counter boredom it would be appropriate to add rewards such as vocabulary games, puzzles, etc. The software program is mainly text-based.

There are a few weaknesses of the program in terms of instructional design. For example, in the multiple-choice exercise, the correct answer is given directly if user fails to answer the multiple choice question in the first try. Hints could be displayed after the first try so that learners would think more about the question before seeing the correct answer directly (see Figure 5).

Figure 5  
Multiple Choice Exercise



When users listen to the audio file for the whole conversation, each word is recorded by different persons and this makes it difficult to follow the conversation. The "All Play" feature is best used when in "Sentence" mode, so that the sentence recordings are played back-to-back rather than the individual word recordings. The audio quality sometimes is not very good, and the sound levels are not the same.

As mentioned above, apart from videos, few visuals are used in the software program. Input enhancement (input salience, modification, elaboration), which is likely to increase the language learning potential, is mostly ignored in the design of the software program. Interaction with the target language is quite limited but with good guidance and the help of a native speaker or an instructor, expanded exercises can increase the level of interaction and add more authenticity to the exercises. Moreover, a list of internet resources, online dictionaries and other helpful web sites, could be a good component to add in a separate link or in the "further practice" section. The software program offers limited opportunities for linguistic production. Correction strategies do not seem to be constructive and help during linguistic production is not available.

Although tutorials are available for all components of the software program, an instructor could go over the grammar points in a video clip for each lesson and direct the learners to use the resources more effectively.

The author of the program states in the *Tips for Advanced Turkish* section that "in many cases, words are spelled the way they sound and spoken the way they look". In some parts of the conversations (such as in Lesson 3), however, pronunciation is not correct since some suffixes in Turkish are shortened as in the case of -[A]CAK suffix for the future tense. Yet, it is a fact that not many native speakers of Turkish follow those pronunciation rules and the actors in the video clips in *Advanced Turkish* reflect the everyday use of Turkish language. One can infer from the overall look, design, and structure of *Advanced Turkish* that the program was prepared with a limited budget, as would be the case for many other less-commonly taught languages. The burden on the two native speakers in the conversation videos is quite high but their overall performance is quite satisfactory. It would be safe to say that in essence *Advanced Turkish* has a lot to offer for advanced level learners of Turkish.

There seems to be an erroneous question in Lesson 8. In multiple choice question 6, the question needs to be reformulated in the affirmative:

Aşağıdakilerin hangisi "fedakarlıklarla" kelimesinin tanımında değildir? (Which of the following is *not* included in the definition of the word "with sacrifices"?)

bencil (selfish)

egoist (egoist)

özverili (self-giving)

doğru cevap (correct answer): özverili (self-giving)

Lessons 9 and 10 are combined without any reason. The term "make a meal" is presented as the equivalent of "yemek yapmak" in Turkish. This seems to be a literal translation and the verb "cook" could be a more appropriate equivalent for "yemek yapmak".

## SUMMARY

*Advanced Turkish* has the potential to provide English-speaking learners of Turkish with a variety of exercises on complex grammatical structures of the language and with the opportunity to improve vocabulary and listening skills. This software program can best be followed with the help of a native speaker so that linguistic production which is encouraged in the "further practice" section can be monitored and facilitated. With a better design and with a bigger

team, the software program could be more attractive for learners.

## SCALED RATING (1 low-5 high)

Implementation Possibilities: 4

Pedagogical Features (relative to evaluation parameters): 4

Sociolinguistic Accuracy (typos, grammatical errors, stereotypes): 4.5

Use of Computer Capabilities (multimedia bells & whistles): 4

Ease of Use (student/teacher): 4

Overall Evaluation: 4

Value for Money: 4.5

## REFERENCES

Chapelle, C. A. (2003). *English language learning and technology: Lectures on applied linguistics in the age of information and communication technology*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Grgurović, M., & Hegelheimer, V. (2007). Help options and multimedia listening: Students' use of subtitles and the transcript. *Language Learning & Technology*, 11(1), 45-66.

## PRODUCER DETAILS

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