

## A Content-Based Social Network Analysis of Reşat Nuri Güntekin's Letters\*

### Reşat Nuri Güntekin Mektuplarının İçerik Tabanlı Sosyal Ağ Analizi

Sümeyye AKÇA\*\*, Müge AKBULUT\*\*\*

#### Abstract

*Reşat Nuri Güntekin's letters are a significant source of information regarding the establishment of the Turkish Republic among scholars. Güntekin was a key person involved in the foundation of the Turkish Republic together with other important names, such as Atatürk and Hasan Âli Yücel. In this work, we visualize the relationships and implicit networks among these persons at an important period of Turkey's establishment. In addition, we determine important events described in the letters. Seventy-three geographic points are indicated in the world map and the map of Turkey. Using content and proximity-based analyses, we further establish the exact dates of the letters.*

**Keywords:** Social network analysis; Reşat Nuri Güntekin; letters; Ottoman Turkish

#### Öz

*Reşat Nuri Güntekin'in mektupları, Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin ilk yıllarıyla ilgili önemli bir bilgi kaynağı niteliğindedir. Güntekin, Atatürk ve Hasan Âli Yücel gibi isimlerle çalışmış ve Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nin kuruluşundan hemen sonraki dönemde üst düzey bürokratik görevlerde bulunmuştur. Bu çalışmada, Cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarını kapsayan bu mektuplardaki kişiler arasındaki ilişkiler ve örtük ağlar görselleştirilmiştir. Ayrıca mektuplarda geçen bazı önemli olaylar da belirlenmiştir. İçerikte yer alan yetmiş üç coğrafi nokta Dünya haritası ve Türkiye haritası üzerinde işaretlenmiştir. Tarihi olmayan mektuplar için yapılan içerik ve yakınlığa dayalı analizler neticesinde bu mektupların tarihleri ortaya çıkarılmıştır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Sosyal ağ analizi; Reşat Nuri Güntekin; mektuplar; Osmanlıca

\* This study is a slightly revised version of a poster presented in the Digital Humanities 2016 Conference (Poland/ Kraków, 11-16 July).

\*\* Dr., Hacettepe Üniversitesi, sumeyyesakca@gmail.com

\*\*\* Yıldırım Beyazıt Üniversitesi, mugeakbulut@gmail.com

## Introduction

*Reşat Nuri Güntekin* is an important figure in Turkish literature and a notable bureaucrat who played an instrumental role in the early years of the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Throughout his lifetime, *Güntekin* published a substantial number of essays and novels with important historical and literary value (Kanter, 2006). The letters he wrote his wife provide important information on the historical events and social atmosphere of a young Turkish Republic through the eyes of an author and statesman. These letters also deliver alternative historical and official information resources in terms of other important figures during the period.

*Güntekin* began writing letters to his wife, *Hadiye*, in 1927. Although 62 letters were written with their dates affixed, another 22 letters were printed without dates. These letters were written in *Ottoman Turkish*, transcribed into *Latin* characters and then published (Kanter, 2012). To discover the relationships between events and persons in the text, we visualize the letters by using social network and content analyses.

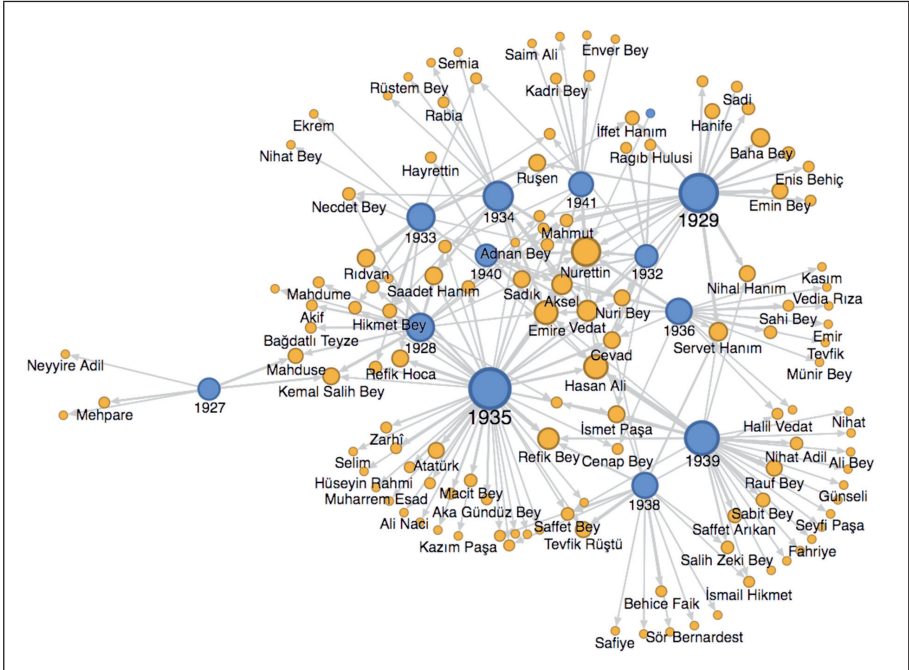
## Method

Social network analysis is used to visualize connections between communities whose existing connections are difficult to perceive and model by describing the network's structures (Al, Sezen & Soydal, 2012; Gürsakar, 2009). This type of analysis allows description of complex concepts in a simpler manner. The fact that *Güntekin's* letters to his wife were sent from different cities and spoke of important people in the period during which they were written renders these letters suitable for social network analysis. Using the social networks determined from the letters, the relationships between historical figures and the indirect effects of these connections can be described. Historical inferences may be further made by examining these connections. Content analysis is a process through which the content of written information and the messages they contain are summarized. This method has been used frequently in the social sciences and is typically preferred for analyzing written text, such as in books, letters, and newspapers.

Descriptive statistics regarding the contents of the letters are presented, and findings from our content analysis of the messages are revealed. In this paper, a broad perspective is presented and details are explained through social network analysis. Indirect connections are then made apparent. The relationships between people and citations, among others, are suggested through social network analysis studies. However, the relationship between the people in the mentioned letters is not clear. Therefore, it is determined in the study based on the proximity and frequency of the names in the text (Şahin, Can & Kalpaklı, 2012). The proximity-based method is applied to similar names mentioned in the letters. Content and proximity-based analyses were employed to establish the exact dates of the 22 letters described in this work. To complete this study, *Google Fusion Tables Network Graph*, *Google Maps*, and *CiteSpace* software were used for visualization.

## Findings and Results

We initially visualized the relations of *Güntekin* with the persons mentioned in his letters; in this endeavor, we did not consider nicknames (Figure 1). Figure 1 shows the dates of the letters as well as the persons described in them. Here, larger circles indicate more frequent mentions of a name or date.



**Figure 1.** Relations of *Reşat Nuri Güntekin* with the persons mentioned in his letters (See interactive graph at <https://goo.gl/8Qwqq1>).

*Reşat Nuri Güntekin*, as a noted bureaucrat, had visited many locations in Anatolia and Europe. Seventy-three geographic points mentioned in his letters are indicated on the world map (Figure 2) and the map of Turkey (Figure 3). These locations indicate that *Güntekin* maintained relationships not only within Turkey but also throughout Europe and Asia.



**Figure 2.** World map (See interactive graph at <https://goo.gl/7xeeCm>).



**Figure 3.** Map of Turkey (See interactive graph at <https://goo.gl/7xeeCm>).

The letters were clearly written over a span of 13 years beginning in 1927; writing appeared to be interrupted in 1930–1931. Some important events mentioned in these letters include:

- 1927 - Marriage of *Reşat Nuri Güntekin* to *Hadiye Hanım*
- 1928 - Writing of the novel “*Yeşil Gece*”
- 1933 - Ten-year celebration of the foundation of the *Republic of Turkey* and the Russian Film Studies Regarding the Independence War

- 1935 - Purchase of a house in Prinkipo Island, election of *Hüseyin Rahmi Gürpınar* from Kütahya as a member of the parliament, and drafting of the Turkish dictionary under Atatürk's orders
- 1935- Atatürk's request to transcribe some works into the new alphabet
- 1939 - Stealing of the sealed examination questions of the Turkish Board of Education, election as a member of the Parliament, writing of the book "Anadolu Notları," completion of the novel "Yaprak Dökümü"
- 1940 - Adoption of the Law of the Conservatory

## References

- Al, U., Sezen, U. & Soydal, İ. (2012). *Türkiye'nin bilimsel yayınlarının sosyal ağ analizi yöntemiyle değerlendirilmesi*. (TÜBİTAK Sosyal Bilimler Araştırma Grubu - Project No: SOBAG 110K044). Hacettepe Üniversitesi Bilgi ve Belge Yönetimi Bölümü. Ankara.
- Gürsakar, N. (2009). *Sosyal ağ analizi*. Bursa: Dora Yayınları.
- Kanter, M. F. (2006). *Ölümünün 50. yılında belgelerle Reşat Nuri Güntekin*. İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları.
- Kanter, M. F. (2012). *Hadiye'ye mektuplar..* İstanbul: İnkılap Yayınları.
- Şahin, P. D., Can, F. & Kalpaklı, M. (2012). *Osmanlı metinlerinin görsel ve yazısal analizi ve erişimi* (TÜBİTAK Proje No: 109E006). Bilkent Üniversitesi. Ankara.