

Story 1933 (1995 Tape 1)

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A Tale of Turkish Double-Talk

A resident of the city of Antalya once invited to his home a man who had been his friend for many years. The guest came from a town in northern Turkey. The guest enjoyed his stay in Antalya, and he admired the natural beauty of that part of the country. He was especially glad to be able to spend some time again with his old friend.

But this visitor from northern Turkey had some difficulty understanding the dialect of Turkish spoken in Antalya Province. One day he asked his host, “Why do people here so often echo their own words?”

“What do you mean?” asked the host.

“Well, I hear them say car-mar, hundred-mundred, yoghurt-moghurt.”

The host laughed and said, “Very few adults here would say such things. You must have been listening to the conversations of children-mildren!”¹

¹This is not a matter of dialect but of word play, and it might be used anywhere in Turkey, not just in Antalya Province. In fact, there is evidence of its use in other countries as well. Changing to m the first letter of a repeated word is a type of verbal humor. It is sometimes used in light mockery. If, for example, someone repeatedly

Story 1933

asks for ekmek (bread), anyone annoyed by the repetition might say,
“Oh, ekmek-mekmek!”