

ETNİSİTE, DİL, EĞİTİM: ETNİK HANEHALKLARINDA DEVLET DİLİ VE ANADİLİN YÜZLEŞİMİ

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Özet

Bu çalışma etnik hanelerdeki dil değişimine odaklanmakta ve 2014 yılında İstanbul'un Zeytinburnu ilçesinde 57 etnik hane arasında anadil algıları üzerine yürütülmüş kalitatif bir araştırmaya dayanmaktadır. Araştırma verisi 2015 yılı ortalarında, Zeytinburnu'ndaki etnik haneledeki dil tercihlerinde iç karar mekanizmalarını Türkiye eğitim sisteminin monolisgualist yaklaşımının nasıl etkilediğini incelemek için genişletilmiştir. Ayrıca, devletin okullardaki dil politikaları ve etnik çocukların yaşam boyu grup üyeliğinin geleceği arasındaki ilişkiyi teorik olarak tanımlamaktadır. İlk ve ortaokullara devam eden çocukları olan etnik ebeveynler anadillerinin, hanelerinde bile ikinci dile dönüşmesinden duydukları endişeyi vurgulamışlardır. Fakat çocuklarının devletin dilini konuşma zorunluluklarını ve Türkiye'de eşit başarı fırsatına sahip olmak için söylemsel olarak planlanmış bu sürece katılmanın gerekliliğini kabul etmektedirler. Ebeveynlerin "politik niyetin" farkında oluşu bir kalitatif yaklaşımla analiz edilmektedir ve sonuçlar sosyolojik teori perspektifleri ve dil değiştirim çalışmalarına dayanılarak yorumlanmaktadır. Etnik ebeveynler çocuklarının potansiyelini yükseltmek amacı ile Türkçe konuşmalarını destekleseler de, kimliklerini ve kültürlerini canlı tutmak için anadilin düzenli olarak konuşulduğu çevreler kurgulamak gibi yaşam stratejileri de geliştirmektedirler.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Etnisite, Eğitim, Dil değiştirimi, Etnik hanehalkları, Monolisgualizm*

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ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE, EDUCATION: CONFRONTATION OF MOTHER TONGUE AND GOVERNMENT'S LANGUAGE WITHIN ETHNIC HOUSEHOLDS

Abstract

This study focuses on language shifts within ethnic households and is based on a qualitative research on perceptions of the mother tongue among 57 such households in Istanbul's Zeytinburnu district in 2014. The research data was expanded in mid-2015 to analyze how the Turkish education system's monolingual approach creates an internal decision-making process about language preferences within the ethnic households in Zeytinburnu. It also theoretically describes the relationship between the state's language politics at schools and the future of ethnic children's lifelong group membership. Ethnic parents with children attending primary and secondary schools expressed concerns about turning their mother tongue into a second language even within their homes but recognized that their children must speak the 'government's language' and participate in a discursively planned process to have equal opportunity for success in the Turkish society. The parents' awareness of 'political intention' is analyzed by a qualitative approach and results are interpreted from the perspectives of sociological theory and language shift studies. Although ethnic parents encourage their children to speak Turkish in order to maximize the children's potential, they also develop survival strategies to keep their identities and cultures alive, such as setting up surroundings in which the mother tongue continues to be practiced.

Keywords: *Ethnicity, Education, Language shift, Ethnic households, Monolingualism*

Introduction

The language rights of the Jews, Greeks, and Armenians living in Turkey have been guaranteed by the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. The government recognizes only these three non-Muslim groups as minorities, not the Turkish-born ethnic groups. *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* (the Law of Unification of Education), implemented in March 1924, seeks to achieve national unity and integrity by ‘Turkifying’ all Turkish-born ethnic people, particularly the Kurds, who constitute about 6% of the population. In 1934, *İskân Kanunu* (the Settlement Law) was passed, supposedly to address new arrangements for migration and population issues; however, these arrangements clearly reflected a monolingual approach, and the law directly targeted Kurds, calling for their assimilation (Beşikçi, 1991). The current Turkish Constitution (1982, Code 42) commands, ‘No language other than Turkish shall be taught as a mother tongue to Turkish citizens at any institutions of training or education...’ Thus, ‘Turkishness’ has been considered to be superior to other ethnic identities since the 1920s, and making Turkish the primary language nationwide has been consistently pursued, particularly in geographic areas that are densely populated by the Kurdish (Smits & Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2003; Zeyneloğlu et al., 2011).

The prestige, power, and potential value of this language shift have been reinforced by Turkey’s education system, including both public and private schools at the pre-university and university levels, in accordance with the country’s monolingual goal. As a result, among Kurds, the frequency of speaking Kurdish has markedly decreased with higher educational attainment, from 96% among the uneducated to 74% among secondary school graduates (Zeyneloğlu et al., 2011: 4). Attaining a higher educational level triggers greater socialization, socio-economic participation, and success in the workforce and affords greater freedom within the country’s institutions.

Meanwhile, the heavy toll that past events have taken on the Kurds and the challenges that this ethnic group continues to face in Turkey have inspired constant refreshing of their cultural memory. Therefore, by treating ethnic households as the smallest unit undergoing the three major, successive processes of migration, settlement, and acculturation, this article focuses on the correlation between current language preferences and the common

thought that ‘we never want them [our children] to go through what we went through.’ In this respect, the present study focuses on the ethnic households of a specific territory—Zeytinburnu—in order to consider the effects of political and linguistic exposure to the mother tongue that compel households to make a strategic decision. It examines the lingual inclinations that put ethnic parents in an in-between position, in which they must choose either to speak the government’s language to preserve the future, i.e., to construct a decent life for the next generation, or to speak their mother tongue to preserve their culture. Therefore, more than language socialization and/or language acquisition concepts, which mainly describe caregiver–child interactions with children acquiring linguistic and social skills and embracing cultural aspects, the focus here is on language shifts as one of the idiosyncrasies of language socialization taking place in a culturally heterogeneous setting.

Both language acquisition, the process through which people learn socially appropriate ways to build durable relationships with others in the social and cultural spheres (Garrett & Baquedano-Lopez, 2002), and language shift, the process that boosts sociocultural interaction, reproduction, and transformation, are inherently political. In other words, the efforts to impose the government’s language as people’s everyday language and to assign the mother tongue a minor status represent a clearly delineated political standpoint.

Demie (2015) criticizes the policy studies and researches conducted at British schools since they inquire the education of children of ethnic minorities and stage of recent changes in their educational achievements by ignoring the importance of language spoken at home. The household is the first place where the locally dominant or everyday language interferes with the secondary one, thereby holding back the language shift (Loo, 1985).

As Cohen and Sirkeci (2011) suggested, in providing for their well-being and security, individuals who are members of cultural groups and societies must consider cultural, economic, and social factors in their decisions, which are reached through discussions with other members of their household. The interviews conducted with ethnic households in this study revealed that the decision to migrate and settle in a safe place

is guided mostly by concern for communal traditions, customs, rural community practices (such as birth, festival, or funeral rituals), and national expectations, with the pre-eminent desires being to survive and to keep their culture alive. Likewise, resistance to or adoption of the language shift should be understood as the outcome of a decision-making process shaped by the competing ideals of protecting the culture and ensuring a good future, especially for the next generation.

During the field survey, just as McKeon (1994: 22) found, education emerged as *the main independent variable, embraced as a vital investment and key to advancement*. As Loo (1985) demonstrated, advancement in education is connected with increased opportunity for socioeconomic mobility, which is significantly enhanced by majority-language speaking ability.

Adult minorities, when using the government's preferred language as a second language, are similar to children in that they depend on others to reproduce and transform social relations (Loo, 1985). While going through the learning process, they guide the younger members at the same time. The children who are taught to comply with the school's rules in order to improve in their social relations and activities and succeed in life have been exposed to two cultural frames of reference—that of home and that of the school. For them, making the language shift at home facilitates their adaptation to the school and to the dominant language and culture. As for teachers, as Jarkovská, Lišková and Obrovská (2015) observed in Czech schools, despite the increasing number of minority ethnic pupils, they accept their students as identical despite the noticeable differences.

Based on the theoretical foundation presented above, the next section presents the methodological details of the field study, and the following section, by describing schooling as a contributing factor to language shift, depicts the theoretical-critical debate on communal ideals and language preferences reflected in the interviews.

Methodology

Verkuyten (2005) suggested that an ethnic identity provides people with both a situational and historical location; therefore, a narrative about

the group's history or genealogical characteristics provides a particular understanding of an ethnic identity. Each ethnic group has its own story and intergroup relations, which explains why each group has a different response to the same circumstances. Ethnic households, just like those of the dominant culture, may have either nuclear or extended family structures or may have just a single head, but in any case, they represent a history, cultural values, norms, and ideals; the common thread that links households is their purpose and role (Cohen & Sirkeci, 2011: 28–29). The mother tongue, providing uninterrupted interaction in the home language, is the major preserver of the cultural network among ethnic group members.

In such a case, when multilingual matters in a multiethnic society are framed by a critical-qualitative perspective, we can expect to observe the ideological effects on the link between the mother tongue, the dominant language, and a strong, pragmatic government. A household, particularly one based on blood relations, is placed in potential opposition to a state apparatus that undertakes the political construction of the subject(s). Individual ethnic households are the smallest units in which 'other' (i.e., non-majority) subjects are transformed into *normal* or *desirable* subjects through exposure to external institutional and relational rules and to the effects of being socially included.

According to the archives of the municipality's information center, Zeytinburnu, the location of the ethnic households I interviewed, was initially part of the district of Bakırköy when the Turkish Republic was proclaimed. However, it grew rapidly as its industrial facilities developed and became a district in 1957. Hart and Saran (1969) indicated that, as of the time of their study, 52% of the population was born abroad, mostly in Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Greece, or Romania. At that time, the rest of the population came from various regions of Turkey including the Black Sea, East Anatolia, and Central Anatolia. After the tanneries that employed many in Turkey's eastern and southeastern regions closed, the number of migrants into Zeytinburnu doubled. In addition, movements by the Kazakhs, Kyrgyz, Uighurs, Turkistanis, West Thracian Turks, and ethnic Turks living in Afghanistan and Bulgaria into the district have not stopped since 1960s. Unfortunately, we have no reliable data or maps to provide a thorough ethnic profile.

The population of this district today is 284,814 and is comprised mostly of low-income and middle-income households.

My field study, titled ‘Perceptions of the Mother Tongue among the Ethnic Households of Zeytinburnu,’ was conducted in spring 2014, involving visits with 42 households. In 2015, 15 more households were added to the study. The basic characteristics of the field study were as follows:

a) The purposive sampling technique, also known as subjective sampling, was used.

b) Interviewees must have spent at least ten years living in Zeytinburnu.

c) With the help of key contacts such as mukhtars, high-school teachers, and students, 57 households were visited. In each case, I interviewed one person age 25 or over within the household. In addition, each household had at least one child attending primary or secondary schools.

d) The ethnic breakdown included 20 Kurdish, 15 Arab, 8 Armenian, 8 Kazakh, 4 Georgian, and 2 Greek households.

e) Voluntary participation was an ethical requirement. Some of the Kurdish families who welcomed me into their homes seemed uncomfortable at times, but they never refused to talk about their ethnic identities and language practices; I sensed that their interest in talking about their mother tongue was an effective way to declare their ethnic existences. Most Armenians refused to participate, and some of them demanded that I show a document of authorization from the Patriarchate in Istanbul (which I did not have); only those Armenians who felt uncomfortable sharing information with me were interviewed. The Greeks also mostly refused to participate, questioning me about the reasons for the study, and the two who did agree to talk to me felt so uncomfortable that they kept their answers quite short. The Arab (both Sunni and Alawite) and Kazakh households invited me in without hesitation.

f) Notably, the persons who talked to me generally sent older members of the household away from the room where I conducted the interview; most of the older family members could speak little or no Turkish.

The main limitation that constantly hampered my work was the widespread fear of being interrogated by state forces. Prospective interviewees wondered why I was interested in their ethnicity and language practices or if I was part of a governmental operation intended to open an investigative file on them. This type of response demonstrates how previous experiences and memories constantly reproduce their pressures on citizens from different ethnic identities. The following section will further illustrate the effect of these pressures.

Stories of Language Troubles: The Interplay of Schoolyard and Household

Kurdish sociologist Engin Sustam's (2014) story about his mother's advice to him immediately after he registered for primary school gives a powerful clue to this group's experience of discrimination and its minority psychology. His mother told him, 'Son, you must think twice from now on.' She gave him this advice because he was both Kurdish and Alawite. Sustam explained, 'My parents were speaking Turkish at home to get us become more adjusted to the school and the language. It's of course the result of a political understanding rather than a fear.' (2014). Narratives such as Sustam's show how the identity of an ethnic individual is constructed on both the socio-cultural and educational platforms. Language becomes a key issue for both parents and children. Smits and Gündüz-Hoşgör (2003) suggested that by speaking the country's official language at home, ethnic parents aim to teach their children this language and increase their opportunities for social mobility, enabling young members of an ethnic minority to become part of the nation's *core* group (Smith, 1986). Nevertheless, members of Kazakh families, who strongly believe that they are originally Turkish and thus deserve to be considered part of the core group, explained that they receive some discriminatory comments (like 'Are you Chinese or something?') and unfriendly looks because of their slanted eyes and bodily features, even though their style of home-furnishings, extended family structure, clothing, rituals, and language (in which many words are the same as in Turkish) indicates a similarity to the Turks. Older household members strongly desired that their grandchildren speak Kazakh all the time, whereas young parents (as a cultural requirement, I talked mostly to Kazakh women), most of whom are socially and economically active, seemed to generally pay no attention

to discriminatory attitudes and viewed the schools as a competitive setting in which their children were battling to succeed. Following are two representative comments from Kazakh families:

Code 1: Kazakh families want their children to be very successful in schools and most of the parents must speak Turkish in the houses for comfort ... you know, actually for their future. [Kazakh, age 42, language: Kazakh]

Code 2: Sure, they can speak Kazakh; we have grandparents in the house. But we prefer to speak Turkish near them, because they might feel confused about the words at school. [Kazakh, age 37, language: Kazakh]

The well-known ‘one person, one language’ approach to raising bilingual children—i.e., children speaking Turkish with parents and siblings while speaking the mother tongue with older family members—was observed in different ways in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Kurdish, and Armenian households. The Armenians I spoke to seemed pleased about their current involvement in social life and cultural practices, such as Armenian language use, traditions, and religious rituals. They did not make a big deal of speaking Turkish at home, especially since the citizenship rules dating back to 1923 legitimated their existence. But the Kurdish households, who have clashed with the Turkish government for about a century and maintain a strong sense of their Kurdish identity, brought up more political expressions. The variety of responses supported Verkuyten’s (2005: 199) observation about the differentiation in the emotional meanings, pleasures, and satisfaction that different individuals’ ethnic identity brings them:

Code 3: Every Armenian cares about his or her identity and language. I went to Armenian schools too. But we have been living in Istanbul for centuries, so I can say that the official language [Turkish] is our mother tongue; my perception is so. It is the same for my seven-year-old boy. He is attending Armenian schools, but Turkish should be his main language throughout his life. [Armenian, age 37, language: Turkish]

Code 4: You have no other chance in this country. The new generation must learn Turkish very well, because their future, just like ours, has been shaped by the Turkish-language schools. [Kurd, age 37, language: Kurdish]

If the subjects' choices and ideological practices in a minority household have been voluntarily adjusted to each other and transformed into a politically desired outcome by means of not speaking the mother tongue, this situation automatically becomes part of an ideological project that makes the government policy both cause and effect. Tollefson (1989, 2012) claims that changes in the social or political role of language are identified with social, economic, and political aims. During a language planning process, the basis for the intended transformation is developed by taking the interests of the dominant class into account. In reality, most of the minorities living in Turkey are bilingual; most ethnic individuals can easily speak Turkish as their main language by early adulthood and relegate their mother tongue to the second position, even if the latter was the language that they first learned from their parents (Smits & Gündüz-Hoşgör, 2003; Zeyneloğlu et al., 2014). Demirtaş, the current leader of a Kurdish political party, has said, 'Our parents taught us Turkish as a favor to us so as not to let us bear the heavy burden of Kurdishness—so that we could succeed in this state, achieve a good position, and succeed in education.' It is clear here that ethnic parents are fully aware of the burden of being deemed a minority or 'other,' and therefore, when sending their children to Turkish schools, they know that they are voluntarily placing the children in a situation of potential conflict and will need to carefully watch the children's psychological condition, which can sometimes oscillate.

Code 5: Children can easily learn and use their mother tongue before starting their school life. However, after they become students, they notice that their language begins to make them different, and this teaches them 'otherization.' [Kurd, age 45, language: Kurdish]

Code 6: It [being Kurdish] is definitely a distinguishing factor. My daughter attending secondary school reacts when I speak Kurdish now. The perception of being Kurdish is not normal at the school and in the public area. She thinks that being Kurdish makes her an inadequate person. [Kurd, age 45, language: Kurdish]

Code 7: She was crying when she came back home because other children at school made fun of her, saying 'Arab girl, Arab girl!' She barely knows Arabian culture and can't speak Arabic, not even one word. It was so difficult to explain to her what was actually happening. [Arab, age 37, language: Arabian]

The quoted comments remarkably reflect the conflict between the ethnic self, shaped by in-group activities in one's household, and the schoolyard. Ethnic children are encouraged at home to reacknowledge their distinguishing ethnic characteristics because of their effective use of Turkish, but doing so makes them a different, inadequate, abnormal, or 'other' person. Thus, the schoolyard becomes a context where ethnic individuals must come to terms with their ethnic identity (Verkuyten, 2005). One 29-year-old Kurdish mother said, 'Our children's trouble with their identity starts with registration in a primary school.' Edwards (1997) and Verkuyten (2005) suggest that such a psychological state involving loneliness, anxiety, and depression cannot be discussed independent from the child's social experiences and discourse.

An Arab father said, 'A child wants to be socialized at school but, you know, being Arab doesn't let him or her do this.' Minorities are not to be socialized in their own language in any national context. A Kyrgyz mother said of her son, 'By speaking fluent Turkish, he is saving his self-esteem in the school'; a Kurdish mother explained that her daughter 'learned Turkish so fast to win her teacher's and friends' favor.' Such comments show that the linguistic assimilation process denotes an internalization along the lines of Bourdieu's concept of habitus: children learn what is possible and what is not possible in their lives as they develop personal objectives and practices (Dumais, 2002: 46). Furthermore, the relationship between habitus market and discourse can be associated with grammar: 'The market plays a part in shaping not only the symbolic value, but also the meaning of discourse' (Bourdieu, 2012: 38). A linguistic habitus includes socially constructed dispositions that entail a certain propensity to speak and express certain interests, a certain capacity to speak (which involves grammatical principles), and a social capacity to use this competence in certain situations. Therefore, a linguistic market that has rules (grammar, pronunciation, etc.) and inwardly imposes a system of censorship works, in effect, cooperatively with linguistic habitus. However, Portes and Rumbaut (2001) argued that if an economic motivation appears for maintaining the mother tongue—usually as part of an economic model that involves maintaining the ethnic enclave—it is fortified despite the challenges to its transmission. They also noted that bilingualism may be related to higher educational achievement and cognitive advantages compared to monolingual persons. Alba et al. (2002) found that among children in the third and subsequent generations of an ethnic minority group, the

pressures to speak the dominant language exclusively are so strong that parental endogamy by itself is not enough to maintain the mother tongue. Nevertheless, in ethnic neighborhoods that promote the emergence of biethnic cultures, bilingualism is significantly widespread (for example, among Cuban children growing up in Miami or among Mexican children growing up near the U.S.–Mexico border). Therefore, the communal context is important. Among crowded and segregated groups, the mother tongue is more likely to be spoken on every occasion, and there is typically an intense desire to maintain it, which makes the linguistic assimilation process slower. In other words, linguistic habitus is fed by the decisive role of the educational system because primary school teachers determine children's language to build a common consciousness within the nation (Bourdieu, 2012: 49). Along the way, traumatized children's identity questions are pragmatically ignored by school schedules (syllabuses, school timings etc.) and usually by teachers—in effect, by the whole discourse surrounding the children.

Code 8: [My daughter] attended Armenian schools since she was 11. When she wanted to go to Anadolu (English dominated high school, but Turkish dominated in the schoolyard), I felt comfortable since she spoke Armenian very well. But afterwards, I understood how speaking Turkish predominantly would change her life; she needs it to survive! Also, she was noticing ever so strongly that she is different ... [this was] also painful. [Armenian, age 60, language: Armenian]

Code 9: In Mardin (a multi-ethnic province in the Eastern Anatolia Region), we learned that our friends we had played with in the playgrounds were actually Armenians when they did not join the religion class. ... I also tasted 'otherization' in the schoolyards for the first time, which is a situation my children will go through too. [Kurd, age 24, language: Kurdish]

Code 10: [My daughter] asked me what 'Alawite' was after two weeks at school. It took long time to tell her that we Alawites had a different life and traditions from the Turks but were as lovable as they are. [Arab, age 37, language: Arabian]

The first of this group of three quotations describes a kind of alienation impulse due to knowing one's ethnicity (Fishman: 1980). Over time

it becomes stronger as youths gain more knowledge about the beliefs, cultures, and histories of their own ethnic groups (Verkuyten, 2005). Moreover, during the course of this process, which is encouraged by in-group activities and by their parents, they also learn which values and creeds of the majority should or should not be embraced and how they should represent their own ethnic group's identity in various contexts. Nonetheless, ethnic students feel as strongly as lower-class majority-group students that the school environment is different from their home because of their lower cultural capital, which consists of poor linguistic and cultural competence (McKenon, 1994). For this reason, teachers and school programs are generally supported by the parents, who help their children practice the official language at home. In a Foucauldian sense, dominant institutions that attach importance to historical and cultural capital construct people's lives, so parents, as the experienced individuals or subjects who are aware of the objective intended by the official relationship between language and education, must follow the stipulated pedagogical system as carefully as do teachers. The objective of those in power is to understand the nature of children attending schools that are parts of 'a multiple network of diverse elements' (walls, space, institutions, rules, discourse) and then develop their faculties so that they are discursively positioned as both modern and moral (Ball, 2013: 41). Thus, schooling or, in general, literacy as an activity cannot be associated with the language in use, which is not the ethnic group's mother tongue, and references to the language commonly used by the ethnic group are mainly political and biased.

Code 11: We all have learned Turkish at school. Maybe on the streets too ... my daughter must speak it as well as her mother tongue, because, look out! If you're not Turkish, you have to be well educated; otherwise you cannot understand what's going on around your identity. [Alawite Arab, age 37, language: Arabian]

Code 12: In the 1960s, my father attended Armenian secondary schools in Üsküdar just like me ... my children are going to attend such schools. But we should accept that Turkish is the first and Armenian is the second language here because our life has been arranged around Turkish words. Armenian is the language spoken among friends and relatives sometimes and customarily in the churches. [Armenian, age 37, language: Turkish]

Bernstein confirms that language generates codes that can classify society. For instance, the language spoken in schools belongs to privileged and educated people and works in favor of the dominant social class. In other words, language unifies discourse and activity; the languages spoken in school and at home are not necessarily the same for minorities (Adem Yıldırım, 2011). Thus, considering the teaching system as an ideological instrument for arranging the interchange among economics, politics, ethnic households, and deciding on which language to use within the household, choices of habitus are accomplished without consciousness and constraint and are a product of social determinism. In addition, as Bourdieu said, recognizing the imposed obligations as responsibilities and not 'causes' makes it impossible to understand the intimidation or symbolic violence involved (2012: 51).

Code 13: What a [expletive]! The history taught in the schools affects your consciousness and your social relations. The education system, official registrations...heroism, like as if Turk means hero! Every trouble with our identity and language is because of the government. How can you throw your child right into chaos by forcing him or her to speak the mother tongue? [Kurd, age 27, language: Kurdish]

Code 14: Turkish is the government's language, Arabic is our private one. [Arab, age 42, language: Arabian]

However, the unconscious accomplishment of choices of habitus is by no means taking place in most ethnic households. Their narratives show that ethnic identity is a matter of self-identification and is dynamic, so members of ethnic households have different perceptions or definitions of the mother tongue (the community's official language, the language of one's ancestors, mother's language, etc.) (Civelek & Zeyneloğlu, 2014). Regardless of the perception, the interviewees call attention to their ongoing loyalty to the unquestionable tie between identity, culture, and their own (ethnic) language when they explain how their children's language troubles are handled within the house. According to McKenon (1994: 22), such an attitude confirms that ethnic families do not totally embrace the cultural beliefs and practices of the dominant group; they simply develop survival strategies to cope with the conditions. In this case, those strategies might not be in harmony with what is required for school success; perceiving the

conflict, the families prefer to experience two different cultural frames. However, the dilemma for ethnic families' children is that they encounter two competing cultural structures and have to be both a good student and a good member of an ethnic group.

Code 15: My children and grandchildren must know my father and mother's language. Even when they want a glass of tea, they can say 'Tu dikari avé bide min?' It is not a shame to speak their mother tongue, it recognizes their identity. The language taught at schools is official. I mean, Turkish saves their lives, but Kurdish protects their Kurdishness. [Kurd, age 37, language: Kurdish]

Code 16: Turkish is official, Arabic is more sincere. The official language is spoken everywhere, even in your house ... for your family's good. Of course, you have to make a decision... and you finally choose your family's comfort, especially your children's success. The mother tongue is necessary to protect your identity and your tradition, but Turkish guarantees you a life. [Arab, age 41, language: Arabian]

The tendency to develop survival strategies instead of adopting the dominant group's values is based on previous experiences, which are placed in cultural memory, and on some ethnic-related events, remembered in chronological order. Ozolins (1996) noted that in places where ethnic relations are tense, language will become an issue. If there is conflict over anything, there will be conflict over language, occurring because of the symbolic place of language within ethnicity. Thus, political actions, prejudices, and problematic interactions between majority and minority groups will inevitably produce language conflicts, because language is embraced as part of in-group identification. Cultural memory and historical memory combine to present a long-term challenge to attitudes that discredit both ethnic identity and the mother tongue. According to Assmann (1988), cultural memory's horizon does not change with the passing of time, and language-based memory is maintained by keeping the tie between culture and mother tongue strong. Thus, constant confirmation of an identity is possible, and it reflects an awareness of group unity and peculiarity.

Code 17: My older brothers were telling me that our parents did not allow them to speak Arabic in the 1960s because learning Turkish very well at

schools meant protecting yourself and your child's future. I have done the same thing; my two children can speak their mother tongue, but not as fluent as Turkish. See, nothing has changed. [Arab, age 42, language: Arabian]

On the other hand, Assmann's (1988: 133) defined another point that deserves emphasis: one generation remembers the past out of fear of deviating from its model, while the next remembers the past for fear of repeating the past. The narratives display both viewpoints. The fear of repeating the past is associated with all the reinforcements used to guarantee the next generation's success: socialization, economic incentives, and correspondence of language practices at home and school. At the same time, one can also observe defensive approaches and challenges against the political, financial, and institutional pressures imposed by the majority's system, with the aim of not deviating from peculiarities in the ethnic group's traditional model.

Code 18: In our time, there was martial law, and speaking Kurdish was forbidden. We abandoned our hometown and never taught Kurdish to our children since we were afraid. However, we always know that they will be strong individuals and that they will fight for their culture, identity, and mother tongue when they are adults. [Kurd, age 42, language: Kurdish]

Code 19: We must keep our traditions alive. Yes, we speak Turkish in the house or outside. But we have associations teaching our language, music, and traditions. All the celebrations such as weddings, birthdays, and funerals are always held in the Association of Kazakhs. A Kazakh child must learn his or her mother tongue and must be able to count back at least seven of his or her family's ancestors. [Kazakh, age 47, language: Kazakh]

Nevertheless, for parents, weakening the mother tongue's power through total adaptation to the dominant language means abandoning their entire distinctiveness and identity. The fear and perception, as Goffman (1986: 10) stated, are the results of stigma and violence addressed toward ethnic groups in the past and are signs of discrediting, which is part of an effective, if often inadvertent, discrimination process that reduces a person's chances in life. Language politics have made this discrediting process sustainable and forced ethnic group members devoted to their social and cultural values

to struggle for their existence in reaction to the intolerance expressed by the ‘normal’ members of society. The narratives typically show that ethnic parents are trying hard to demonstrate that their difference does not prevent them from being successful in society; they believe, and they make their children believe, that it is possible to excel in society (at school, work, etc.) and achieve things that are hard even for the ‘normal’ members of society (Goffman, 1986).

Code 20: The perception of being Kurdish is not normal at school and in public areas. The question ‘Are you Kurdish?’ creates the perception of ‘otherness’ immediately and a sense that one is outside the dominant group. My child knows that speaking Turkish lets her be successful at school and loved by other children and her teachers. All I know is that I must be supportive. She will understand what Kurds have gone through for years sooner or later. [Kurd, age 42, language: Kurdish]

Language policy, as a political action, places the education system in charge of discrediting minority languages. Consequently, ethnic parents accept that their children must speak the ‘government’s language’ and be involved in a discursively planned process in order to develop their potential. However, the narratives openly reveal that parents are also aware of the need for resistance. Even if they allow their children to be the subjects of nationalist expectations, including full adaptation to the official language during their training process, they also expect that the children will become strong defenders of their culture and mother tongue after they become adults and reach their personal goals.

On the other hand, nobody claims that a language shift cannot make itself perceptible; on the contrary, regardless of how voluntarily or involuntarily children and parents follow the rules, education is the most significant variable stimulating the deterritorialization of language and thereby assisting assimilation. As stated by Deleuze ve Guattari, unity of language appears as a political demand, and grammar represents power relations that subjugate people by way of forcing them to speak accordingly. What they called ‘self-closure of language’ signifies a sense of representation that leads to a limitation by the translation of the known world into the unknown. As long as every statement meets an action, the language, beyond being a means of transmitting information, will impose order-

words, which are actually employed to rearrange the world (questions, explanations, threats, desires, demands, requests, and expectations). Every statement and action that brings about a social responsibility is dominated by order-words. Education as a discipline represents the language of the orders, but effective use of order-words, or the process of 'self-closure of language,' starts with the opening of the doors of a household to the outside world. The more ethnic households speak the government's language, the more objective of the government is realized (Çalıcı, 2012). Elements of the mother tongue (accent, words, grammar, etc.) have been confronted by various strange 'governing' elements of a dominant language. Thus, the primary characteristic of a minor literature involves all the ways in which the language is affected by a strong coefficient of deterritorialization (Deleuze et al.1983: 16). Furthermore, everything in them is political and everything has a collective value.

The following story told by a high-school teacher is noteworthy:

Code 21: I wanted my students to write a description of their utopia as a homework assignment. Each one brought in two or three pages of writing, except a Kurdish student, who is really hardworking and well behaved. After I asked why, he told me, 'I have a utopia but every detail in it is Kurdish, and it is so hard translating it into Turkish, so hard picturing it in Turkish ... sorry.'

This comment perfectly illustrates the emotional clash between the ethnic self and deterritorialization. Baudrillard believed there is always a desire not to be produced, interpreted, or expressed in terms of an interpretation—as many of the narratives indicate. The interpreter is representative of a social code or desire to decode or deterritorialize that is crucial for minorities attempting to retain their distinctiveness (1977, cited by Deleuze at all, 1983: 13). Government's language includes grammar and order-words, and it tries to deterritorialize the ethnic languages or to reinterpret them based on the dominant discourse. Educational institutions, including schools, books, and teachers are the interpreters serving assimilative or transformative purposes on behalf of the discourse of the outside world.

Is full deterritorialization or full reinterpretation possible? Smith's definition of an ethnic group (1991) is precisely reproduced by the

narratives because they all refer to cultural collectivity by associating it with certain historical memories, cultural values, and customs as well as the importance of the mother tongue. They show that ethnicity is the consciousness of difference, as Eller (1997) suggested, and that the acts of ethnic subjects have been arranged by discursive construction of identities. In addition, apparently, when one talks about the language of an ethnicity or minority, one refers to a language of kinship (Horowitz, 1985). Therefore, when it comes to learning the government's language, ethnic families are involved in a decision-making process coercing intrafamilial interactions. Households that have children attending primary and secondary schools generally decide in favor of the government's language out of concern for the children's future. On the other hand, such a decision should not be assumed as achieving a perfect assimilation or deterritorialization because those who believe that their identity and culture never disappeared must also develop survival strategies to keep their cultural values alive, including their mother tongues. For instance, creating various settings to encourage speaking the mother tongue, which is a common approach among the persons I interviewed, counterbalances the government's strategy. It further indicates an awareness of 'interpellation' in an Althusserian sense or of the 'power' that forces them to transform their identities and languages in a Foucauldian sense. More specifically, despite these monolingual policies, most of these ethnic groups, especially the Kurdish parents who believe in the Kurdish problem, have never given up the cultural activities, beliefs, and rituals that their children are also introduced to. Such practices will always remind the new generation of their origins, and when they are adults, they will almost always desire to know much more about their history, minority position, and problems.

In Lieu of a Conclusion

Pease-Alvarez and Vasquez (1994) suggested that the different cultural and linguistic practices of minority children are generally ignored in schools, increasing the conflict between household and school and thus threatening children's ability to interact and learn from one another. In contrast, parents, teachers, and students can all work together by acknowledging and building upon the meanings and experiences that students bring to school (p. 94). According to the parents' approaches, the teachers working at the schools in Zeytinburnu are very supportive. They understand ethnic

children's needs and language problems and, deal with any increase in segregation of 'other' in the educational settings such as classrooms, cafeterias, schoolyards.

Ball prepared a report for UNESCO (2010) noting that ethnic parents' perception regarding the value of learning a different language—that is, their choice whether to conduct intrafamilial interaction in the government's language or their own language—is crucial for their children because parents are the bridge between advocating mother tongue preservation and school education and success. Ball mentioned that parents in bilingual homes frequently construct context-specific communication systems to speak different languages, including a one parent–one language practice, using a particular language in particular settings or at particular times or occasions (Ball, 2010: 39). As reflected by the narratives, such context-specific communication systems cannot be separated from the ideological state apparatus to which ethnic households have commonly and constantly been subjected. One of these impositions is the language shift expected as part of Turkey's educational requirements.

Most of the interviews showed that ethnic parents are entirely conscious of the government's monolingual educational expectations and that they generally favor cooperating with them. However, this attitude does not reflect a perfect solidarity because the ethnic families have also developed three survival strategies:

- (a) being aware of the nationalist perspective but not completely rejecting institutional norms;
- (b) helping children in develop healthy socialization skills and guaranteeing their success in life by allowing government's language to be used in the household in a very active way; but also, at the same time,
- (c) continuing to mention and teach ethnic cultural characteristics, especially the mother tongue and the historical meaning of being different or defined as 'other.'

In view of that set of strategies, the message of 'never speak the mother tongue near the children' is a reality, but it does not refer to a complete language shift.

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