

# A Case Study of Bilingual Language Use: An Account of Discursive and Literacy Practices in Swedish and Turkish by a Young Person

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## Abstract

In this small scale sociolinguistic and ethnographic case study, I explore how a young, bilingual boy with Turkish and Swedish as his two languages makes use of his bilingualism in different domains and with different interlocutors during the course of a day. The study provides an account of how this young individual employs his bilingual resources, both in his heritage language Turkish, and in Swedish, the principal language of his schooling. The final section of this paper discusses the cultural and social significance which this young person and his family have associated with the observed language practices. The discussion attempts to highlight the constraints and benefits of bilingual language use in an individual case, but it relates also to the broader societal issues of Swedish language policy, concerning the significance and value of bilingualism from different perspectives: the observed informant, the local school and the national Swedish curriculum for primary and comprehensive education.

## Keywords

Bilingual language use, literacy practices, discursive practices, language policy, intercultural knowledge, immigration and schooling, Turkish as heritage language

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## Introduction and Theoretical Framing

Since the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century, flows of labour migration and refugees have added to an increasing diversity in populations, resulting in multilingual and multiethnic societies. Sweden is by no means an exception. This diversity gives a good opportunity to explore how largely relatively monolingual and homogeneous nation states like Sweden value the bilingual resources and cultural heritages of children with migrant backgrounds. The maintenance of the heritage language and the acquisition of the second language, learned in the host country, have provided for decades an important sociolinguistic research field. In the same vein, the diversity also gives an opportunity to explore how important it is for various immigrant communities, as well as for individual immigrants to be able to use their heritage language and eventually pass it on to the next generation. In such cases, the question is in which domains and with which interlocutors do they use their two languages. Furthermore, what is the significance and the value ascribed to each of the languages by the bilingual speakers. According to a common view, encountered generally among the ordinary citizens of the host country, it is seen quite natural that the immigrant families by time abandon their mother tongues and shift over to the official language of the host country, even in their private conversations within the family. This view is especially common about immigrant families in the second and third generations. Not only the acquisition of the language of the host country, i.e. the second language, but also the bilingual and multilingual language use and cultural values of the people with immigrant background need to be shed light upon.

In this small scale sociolinguistic and ethnographic case study, I investigate how a young bilingual person with Turkish and Swedish as his two languages made use of his bilingualism in various discourses and literacy practices in different domains and settings during the course of a day. The aim of the investigation was to illuminate the linguistic preferences of the informant within these domains and settings, but also to sound out views on values attitudes ascribed to the two languages. For that purpose I spent thirteen hours observing Osman<sup>1</sup>, the bilingual informant of 11 years of age, in order to collect data about his bilingual language use in various domains and with different interlocutors. Osman was selected to be my informant, since he could be described as an ordinary pupil in his age group among many other pupils with Turkish immigrant background. His family originating from a small town in the central Anatolia and his grand parents' immigration history as ordinary workers made him representative for the group of young people with Turkish background in the third generation in Sweden. I

met him for the first time during my field work when I was collecting data about the bilingual proficiency of 9 years old pupils in a bilingual Turkish-Swedish class, at that time in another school in the same district. An additional reason to select Osman as informant was the fact that his command of both Turkish and Swedish were reasonably good, compared with many of his classmates, who might be more or less fluent in one of the two languages only. For this study it was thus necessary to observe relatively advanced bilingualism and illuminate the factors that might facilitate the development of bilingualism and biculturalism.

I accompanied Osman from the time of breakfast at home through his school day and leisure time activities after school. The documentation of his language use continued during the evening when he came back home and joined his family. The study provides an account of how this young individual employed his bilingual resources, both in his heritage language Turkish, and in Swedish, the principal language of his schooling. In the final section of this paper I discuss the cultural and social significance which this young person and his family associated with the observed language practices. The discussion attempts to highlight the constraints and benefits of bilingual language use from the perspective of an individual person. The discussion is also related to the broader societal context of Swedish language policy concerning the significance and value of bilingualism from different perspectives: the observed informant, the local school and the national Swedish curriculum for primary and comprehensive education.

This study draws on two theoretical traditions which were developed for exploring the uses and functions of literacy: the ethnography of communication (e.g. Hymes 1964, Heath 1983) and the New Literacy Studies (e.g. Barton and Hamilton 1998, Baynham 2004, Gee 1996, Street 1993a, 1993b) and on scholarly work on studies of bilingualism or multilingualism (Grosjean 1982, Jørgensen & Holmen 1997, Martin-Jones & Heller 1996, Martin 2003). This study is informed by the ethnography of communication in the sense that it has its focus on the language use in specific domains and events. It uses the communicative event as the basic unit for the investigation of language use in natural contexts, including the participants, topics and language code involved (Hymes 1964, 1996, Heath 1983). The ethnography of communication has inspired a number of similar follow-up studies within the ethnography of writing, focusing on the relationship between the writing in community and in school. Data collection within this approach includes observations of material resources,

e.g. the writing technologies, print or oral resources, people's cultural and local values of literacy and people's identities in practice (Schultz et al. 2002, see further e.g. Hymes 1964, Heath 1983, Martin-Jones and Bhatt 1998, Bartlett et al. 2002, Dagenais et al. 2006, Barton & Tusting 2005).<sup>2</sup>

The notion of *literacy* as a situated practice was first defined by Scribner and Cole (1981) in a way that took into account the particular purpose of reading and writing and the context where this took place, in its turn modelling what kind of reading and writing was enacted. According to this view literacy is not an isolated mental task, but a discursive practice in an ongoing literacy *event*, thereby taking "a social turn" in the contemporary studies on literacy. This view of literacy is also shared by The New Literacy Studies (NLS), a scholarly movement with roots in sociolinguistic and anthropological theories of language and schooling (Schultz and Hull 2002). NLS emphasizes also the nature of literacy as social and cultural practice rather than application of individual skills (see useful overviews Gee 1996, Street 2001, 2003). Research in NLS prefers ethnographic and discourse methodologies and has as one of its aims the documenting of literacy practices in local communities (see e.g. Barton and Hamilton 1998, Gee 2000a/b). Analyses of local literacy practices are often discussed in terms of the broader cultural and institutional practices (Schultz and Hull 2002).

The definition of literacy within NLS adds the notion of *discourse*, the use of language by people in order "*to affiliate and display their membership in particular social groups*" (Gee 1996: 128). The function of a person's discourses can be seen as his/hers "*identity kit*" (Gee 1996: 127), representing that particular individual, his thoughts, values and beliefs. In this study, the concept of discourse is used as a tool for analysing the topic and content of the social interactions, in which the informant participated as listener or speaker.

This case study also focuses on the communication of the informant as a bilingual individual. Consequently, the basic concepts for the research on bilingualism should shortly be mentioned. Language choice in relation to interlocutor(s) reveals the bilingual conventions of language use (see further e.g. Grosjean 1982, Jørgensen and Holmen 1997). Using the "wrong" language according to these conventions, e.g. Turkish in the ordinary classroom or Swedish in some specific events in the home or the Turkish community context, might be considered as a non-legitimate discourse practice or as an act of contestation (Martin 2003). Discourse practices in the majority language, while interacting with members in the ethnic community, might be considered as enhancing the linguistic power

of the dominant group and thereby symbolising the speaker's preference to be part of it. Accordingly, this strategy is labelled collusion, whereas the use of the minority language in some contexts, e.g. the school, might be characterized as contestation, challenging the status of the dominant (often official or national) language (Martin-Jones and Heller 1996, Martin 2003).

The strategy of *code-switching*, the alternating use of two languages, while interacting with bilinguals with the same linguistic repertoire, provides still an additional means to the strategic use of language, e.g. by including or excluding listeners or speakers in communicative events (Auer 1999, Grosjean 1982, Jørgensen 1998). The switches may occur within the same sentence or between the sentences and were earlier often associated with lack of vocabulary or expression, both by monolinguals as well as bilinguals. Nevertheless, more recent research shows that code-switching is not haphazard, but follows certain rules, e.g. how and where to switch between the two languages (Auer 1999). Thus, it provides still an additional way of communicating beyond the linguistic repertoire of the two or more languages. Some other terms that should be mentioned in connection with studies on bilingualism are language maintenance, language shift and language policy, referring to the survival of the minority languages, the shift or loss of a language, and the legal measures in a society in order to support or constrain the use of minority languages (Baker 1993).

### **The Turkish Community Profile in Sweden**

The migration from Turkey to the West-European countries<sup>3</sup> started in 1961 when the Turkish government passed a new law, permitting the citizens of Turkey to emigrate for labour reasons. At the same time, the West-European countries experienced a lack of labour, especially in the industrial section, which resulted in bilateral agreements signed between Turkey and a couple of European industrial countries. Despite the fact that a limited number of Turkish citizens were already living in Sweden in the 1950s, the beginning of the actual labour migration to Sweden is considered to have started in 1965, when a wave of male immigrants from the rural Anatolian regions arrived and settled down in the three largest Swedish cities. One of the districts from which many of the Turkish migrants in Sweden came is Kulu, approximately 100 km south of Ankara, the Turkish capital. Two peaks occurred in this labour migration: first, the male immigration in the 1960s and second, the reunion of families in the 1970s and 1980s when women and children left behind arrived in Sweden. Two military coups in Turkey, perpetrated in 1971 and 1980, re-

sulted in an increased number of political refugees, amounting to 1792 asylum applicants and persons granted residence permits as refugee or similar asylums during the years 1981-1987 and to 1178 asylum applicants during the years 1996-1999 (Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet, 1988: 64, Statistical Yearbook of Sweden 2001: 82). Labour migration ceased essentially in 1967 due to restrictions introduced by the Swedish government. This changed also the character of the Turkish migration, which continued mainly on the basis of in-group marriage patterns, political reasons (seeking political asylum) and specialist migration. The total number of Turkish citizens increased from 168 persons in year 1960 to 25 475 persons in 1990 (Statistical Yearbook of Sweden, various years). In 2005 Turkish citizens were the tenth largest group of people *born outside Sweden*, a total of 35 853 people (16 820 women and 19 033 men) (Statistical Yearbook of Sweden, 2006). However, Turkish citizens were not among the ten largest groups of *foreign citizens* in 2005, since the immigrants who are naturalized Swedish citizens and their children are not counted. These are the two main ways to calculate the total number of immigrants in Swedish statistics since registration of language or ethnic group is not included. One has to bear in mind that the group of Turkish immigrants includes also ethnic minorities, e.g. the Kurds and Assyrians. The statistics collected in December 2011 show that the number of foreign-born persons from Turkey amounted to 43 909 persons (24 182 men and 19 727 women) and the total number of persons born in Sweden with both parents born in Turkey amounted to 33 114 persons (17 000 men and 16 114 women), a total of 77 023 (Statistical Yearbook of Sweden, Population statistics, 2013: 100).

The educational background of Turkish immigrants varies between generations, between urban and rural immigrants, and between men and women, especially within the first immigrant generation. The first arrivals from the rural areas, especially women, had limited opportunities to formal education in their home villages and may lack any formal schooling. Despite their levels of education, most of these men and women found a job almost on the day of their arrival. Examples of jobs, available in the 1960s and 1970s were cleaning of hospitals and offices, dishwashing and kitchen aids at restaurants, and industrial work. The immigrants also started to establish their own enterprises, e.g. pizza and kebab restaurants, fruit and vegetable shops and markets, groceries specializing in Turkish provisions, and service industries like car and TV repair, carpentry, etc. A growing sector for the ones with an academic education was positions like

interpreters, mother tongue teachers, school welfare officers, psychologists, and social workers.

A common pattern for the Turkish families is the use of Turkish as the family language, also supported by the common pattern of in-group marriages. This pattern contributes to the maintenance of Turkish, supplying the community with native Turkish speakers which helps to ensure the transmission of Turkish to the next generation. However, the pattern of intergroup marriage is increasing and accepted within the young generation, especially in social groups with higher educational level. In 2012, Turkish citizenship was one of the most common citizenships in family related immigration and made newly established family relationships the most important reason for family related immigration (Statistical Yearbook of Sweden, 2013). The Turkish immigrants in Sweden are very well aware of the importance of learning to speak and use the language of the host country. The Swedish society encourages also the immigrants to participate in Swedish courses and study at no cost through the provision of adult education (e.g. Swedish for immigrants).

Contact with Turkey has been established by the ways which were technologically possible at the time: earlier via paper letters (both written and spoken on tape recorder), telephone calls, video recordings, nowadays via internet, e-mail, Skype programs etc. Vacations are often spent in Turkey, if not every year, often every second or third year. At the beginning of the immigration period, holidays were often spent in the old home town or village (Kuyumcu 1995). Nowadays many immigrants seem to prefer a charter trip to any of the popular Turkish tourist sites or invest in a holiday place of their own in Turkey.

As in many other European countries, Turkish language media was until recently accessible in Sweden. One could buy most of the major Turkish newspapers in European editions in the districts where the Turkish population was concentrated. Nowadays, because people have access to these newspapers on the internet, many of the shops have stopped selling them. In addition, major Turkish TV channels can be viewed by those who have access to cable or satellite-TV. These media facilities have contributed significantly to the opportunity to read and listen to Turkish and to keep interested immigrants informed about the latest events in Turkey. Swedish libraries provide also books in Turkish for all age groups, children, youth, and adult. Furthermore, the Swedish Turkish Federation (the overall organisation of various Turkish Associations) brings out "Yeni Birlik", a magazine sent to the members of those associations. It contains articles

about actual events in Sweden and in Turkey and is written in Turkish. Further occasions to get into contact with Turkish culture are concerts with popular Turkish music artists, organised by those associations. For a short period in the 1980s a Turkish theatre was established in Stockholm<sup>4</sup>, providing plays both for children and adults.

### **The Language and Education Policy in the Swedish School System**

According to Farouky (*Time Magazine*, February 15, 2007) “Sweden is top of the class when it comes to bridging the learning gap between its immigrants and native Swedes, and some of the reason for that turns on how it handles language.” The article continues by describing the Swedish law concerning the possibility for bilingual immigrant students to get mother tongue instruction within the Swedish school system. “By law, if there are at least five students from the same country in one district, they have the right to be taught in their native tongue” (ibid). This article idealizes the minority children’s rights to mother tongue instruction in the Swedish schools, omitting some key facts, e.g. that the hours for such instruction are limited to 1,5 hours per week per group, and that these hours are often scheduled to the early morning hours or after school. The students participating in this instruction generally come from different grade levels in the same group and sometimes also from several schools.

During the period of the family reunions in the 1970s, Swedish schools often organized the instruction of the Turkish new arrivals in so-called bilingual classes or home language classes, according to the model of transitional bilingual education, where ever it was possible to establish this in school districts with a dense concentration of Turkish migrant families. The model started usually with a large proportion of instruction in Turkish, the amount varying between schools (starting often with 80 %) while a small proportion (20%) was provided in Swedish. The language of instruction shifted gradually towards a greater proportion in Swedish, the final stage consisting of ordinary monolingual Swedish classes in the secondary school (see further Narro 1998). This transitional bilingual model has not been used for the Turkish pupils since the late 1990s. Instead, the children speaking Turkish have the right to participate in mother tongue instruction in Turkish. Their number in 2012/13 was 6072 pupils, which made them to the tenth largest language group within this education (National Agency for Education, 2013).



## The Research Site

The local community where the study was conducted is a district of Stockholm which is connected to the urban city by the underground line, sometimes in a jocular vein called as “the Orient Express”. This reflects metaphorically the demographic composition of the district, largely made up by immigrants and refugees from various origins and currently one of the most multiethnic and multilingual districts of Stockholm. Until the end of the 1990s (demographic statistics USK, 1998), the Turkish community was the largest among the ethnic groups in this district. However, the population composition is continuously in a state of flux, depending on what happens in the global political arena. While new refugees from diverse corners of the world often find a safe shelter in this district, the more established residents of “the old immigrant communities” tend to leave this neighbourhood, seeking a more “Swedish” environment. The percentage of population with immigrant background in this district has greatly increased during the last decade, amounting to 83,9% among the population for the age cohort of 0-15 years and 92,4 % for the age cohort of 16-64 years (USK, 2009).

Such a multiethnic and multilingual population has generally been perceived as a problem by the mainstream population, which might fear that the integration of the immigrants<sup>5</sup> with the majority society is being endangered. Many of the immigrant parents may be of the same opinion, therefore attempting to find some more “Swedish” housing areas. On the other hand, from a multicultural perspective, the children growing up in this district are integrated with a large number of different cultures and ethnic groups, especially in the pre-schools and schools, thus integrating with other children from almost the entire world. However, this is a controversial issue, debated in numerous forums about integration, access to labour markets, acquisition of Swedish and children’s overall school achievements.

## The Methodology

In order to understand the character and function of bilingualism and the alternating use of two languages by a single person in different communicative and literacy events, one has to study the phenomena in an everyday context. The ethnographical methodology of this study provides a useful approach in a range of possible domains to study bilingualism and biliteracy on the individual level of the informant (Saville-Troike 1996, Erickson 1986). The main techniques for data collection and analysis in this approach consist of observing and note-taking in order to collect a record

of facts about the communicative events and discourses in which the observed person and other participants were involved, as well as the topics discussed during these interactions or dealt with in various literacy events. The main benefit of this approach is that ethnography offers a perspective through which it is possible to study particular activities and to document concrete details in a holistic and participant-informed way. This technique is generally called *a thick description of cultural contexts* (see further Geertz 1993, Erickson 1986).

In this case study, the informant was observed during 13 hours on an ordinary school day (Friday, the 14<sup>th</sup> of April 2000), in and out of the school context. I made the observations as a fieldworker, attempting to find key questions to the bilingual use of language and literacy by the bilingual informant. I am affiliated to the Turkish community by my proficiency in Turkish and through my contact with many Turkish families in the district. The type of role which I had as an observer can be characterised as both participating and non-participating. In the participating role I had to fulfil the obligations as an interlocutor in various interactions, especially in the role as a visiting guest in the family and as an unknown visitor in the school. However, the ambition was to interfere as little as possible and mainly to listen, observe and make notes of the communicative and literacy events as well as the discourses that the observed informant participated in, either as a listener or as a speaker. Paying attention to the role of the subject as a listener is similar to the approach of ethnographic microanalysis carried out for example by Erickson (1996). According to this approach, “speaking a language” is more than solo uttering and consists basically of the socially organised collective activity of *speaking and listening* (Erickson 1996: 298). Also the literacy events observed in this study are not entirely viewed as pure reading activities, but as activities where the written word is orally discussed about, interpreted and extended to the verbal interactions (Scribner and Cole 1981). The form of data collection, consisting of a “shadowing” of a person and taking notes in the communicative and literacy events in which the informant was involved, is in itself an unnatural situation as evidenced by the curiosity and astonishment of the school children. They kept asking me through the entire school day what I was doing and why. Some of the children tried also to read the notes I jotted down in my note book, as I often did it openly in front of the children.

These observations can also be characterised as “open observations”, i.e. they were made without any pre-prepared observation schedule and started without any prior expectations (see further Erickson 1986). The

data collection through observation is naturally not as accurate as collecting data through audio- or videotaped recordings. However, in this case study the observations were sufficient enough to provide an account of the different interactions, literacy events and discourses during that day. On the one hand, if the study had been based on recordings it would have been possible to obtain greater exactitude in the wordings of interactional data. On the other hand, the recordings might have constrained and limited the amount and the kind of discourses which emerged in the children's interactions in the various contexts.

Finally, the field notes were confirmed and completed with the reflections of the informant himself. Thus, before finishing the data collection the fieldworker read her notes aloud to the informant and gave him an opportunity to comment and reflect on what was written. This is an important step, which gives the researcher an opportunity to check the interpretations of the events and compare them with the interpretation of the informant. It is also a way to highlight the data from an emic view of the informant (Andrade and Moll 1993). Before starting the study, the fieldworker had naturally obtained the parents' approval for their son's participation and also the permission of the school for observations in the classroom and the school premises. The aims of the study are summarised as follows:

- To investigate the range of bilingual literacy practices, discourses and bilingual language resources of a young person in- and out-of-school context during one day.
- To explore the cultural and social significance of those literacy practices, discourses and bilingual language resources in- and out-of-school context.
- To explore the provision of bilingual language use in different domains: the home, school and leisure time domains.
- To draw attention to the cultural heritage and funds of knowledge that this bilingual informant draws on and to which he has access.

Before the analysis, the field notes were organised into a chart, which was divided to cover the various discourses and literacy practices in two different codes, Turkish and Swedish. This made it possible to explore the bilingual language use in different contexts and draw conclusions as to the legitimacy of language use in a particular domain. Comments on various circumstances, e.g. time, persons involved, group size, place, were also added to the chart and coded according to their topics and content. The chart was used as the data base while analysing and interpreting the observed practices.

## The Study

In this section I introduce the informant and his family and present the observations of Osman's bilingual language use and literacy practices in various events and domains. The presentation follows a chronological order, starting with the home domain in the morning and ending late in the evening before the informant's bedtime.

### Presentation of the Informant and His Family Background

Osman's grandparents came to Sweden as immigrants in 1968, his mother being eight years old. The grandparents had five years of schooling in Turkey and found employment in industry and hospital cleaning. The family settled down in the district of the research site, where they still live. Osman's mother completed Swedish high school and also participated in a vocational education for office clerical staff. At the time of the data collection she was employed as an interpreter in Turkish and Swedish, helping other Turkish immigrants in their contacts with Swedish authorities. She married a man from her former home town in the central area of Turkey. The young family consisted of the mother, father and two children, boys of 11 and 5 years old. However, on the day of the data collection the father was absent from home. Nevertheless, he had approved the participation of his son in this study.

Osman's parents did not differ from average Swedish parents when it comes to the type of family, clothing, leisure time activities, and vacation habits, but they also added some features of their Turkish heritage into their way of living. Osman, growing up bilingually, did not only acquire two languages – he also learned how to live culturally in two communities, the Turkish and the Swedish. One of the cultural values of the family, according to the mother, was the transmission of the parents' first language to the children, maintaining the linguistic heritage language of Turkish and celebrating the Muslim feasts. The communication among the family members took place almost entirely in Turkish or code-switching between Turkish and Swedish. Furthermore, the parents' conscious choice was to get the children simultaneously exposed to Swedish, in various communicative contexts outside the family and with a variety of interlocutors (e.g. the pre-school, free time activities, and peer contacts).

### Home Domain in the Morning

The case study started at 7.30 in the morning at the time of the breakfast before heading to the school. I was invited to participate and sit down around the kitchen table together with the mother and the two boys, Os-

man and his little brother. While the mother was telling me about Osman's school experiences, based so far on his attendance in three different schools, the five years old brother was curious about a text on the milk package. Osman read it aloud and explained the sequences of the process of how the milk from a cow ended up in the milk package. Although the text was in Swedish the conversation between the children was in Turkish. Osman drew on their previous experiences from a farm house while explaining and elaborating on the subject. Before we left the house, Osman's mother ensured in Turkish that he had the necessary equipment with him for school. Osman also made a short telephone call in Turkish to his friend Erkan, just to say that he was on his way. To begin with he spoke Swedish with me, explaining that his classmate Erkan used to accompany him on the way to the school. When Erkan joined us, the two boys switched over to Turkish in their interaction. The main topics were the coming events during the day, a visit to swimming baths with the school class during the morning hours and an excursion to a lake for fishing that afternoon. Some of the details these boys discussed were how much money they had received from their mothers to spend in the swimming baths and what they were planning to use it for. They also talked about their previous fishing experiences, how much fish they had caught, what kind of fishing equipment they owned, the quality and costs of different kinds of fishing rods. The boys were also code-switching between Turkish and Swedish in this interaction, using some Swedish vocabulary when they talked about topics like school, swimming baths and fishing.

When we arrived at the school yard the boys met their classmates and switched smoothly over to Swedish. A teacher came and asked who I was and about the purpose of my visit. When I explained, she proudly announced that Osman had chosen just the right school to attend. In this school he would need to use Swedish during his entire school day since there were not many Turkish pupils and also only one more with Turkish mother tongue in the same class. She also explained that the pupils were matched to collaborative peers, chosen from two different linguistic backgrounds. The purpose was to constrain the use of the students' heritage languages in their personal interactions. Emin, a boy with a Bosnian background, was chosen as "the collaborative buddy" with Osman. It meant that the couple should stay together and use Swedish, especially during the break.

## School Domain

The first event undertaken in the morning was a swimming exercise with the class in the nearby swimming baths where they went by bus. The literacy practices during this event were naturally quite limited, consisting of reading the names of the bus stops and later in the swimming baths, reading the instructions on how to buy snacks and soft drinks in the automatic machine. The kind of language patterns accompanying the swimming exercise were mostly exclamations and commands of different kinds like “Look at me”, “Watch out”, “Get out of the way”, “It worked”, “I won”, “I was faster” and so on. After this swimming exercise the class walked back to the school, a distance about one and a half kilometre. The pupils marched two by two in a row, in the company of their collaborative buddies. I walked beside Osman and Emin and tried to catch their social conversation on the way back to the school. Most of the topics were quite situational, commenting on the various housing areas we passed, their appearance, imagining what kind of people might live there, but also reporting if they knew or had visited anyone there. We passed a farm-house of which both boys had previous memories from the time of their pre-school, since it was a popular place for children to visit in order to see domestic animals. The boys recalled a few of those memories, Osman telling about a goat that had run away and that they were chasing. When we came nearer to the school, Osman started to wonder what would be on the menu in the school refectory this day. The boys started discussing their favourite food and also what they disliked most, a timely topic for the lunch hour ahead.

Back in the classroom after the lunch, Osman was involved in several literacy events, among others a quiz, enacted as a competition between two teams of pupils. Both teams read the questions on a piece of paper, prepared by the teacher, concerning the content area knowledge in geography which had been focused on during the passed week. The team members negotiated with each other quietly about the correct answers and wrote them on the papers as quickly as possible, in order to win. In this event Osman seemed to be quite influential when they were choosing the answers in his team. The joy was great when the teacher announced that Osman’s team had won.

After this event, the mathematics lesson was on the schedule. It was based on pupils’ individual work and done silently. The students read the tasks in the book and tried to solve the problems. The teacher went round in the class, supplying guidance to the ones who needed it. In that case, the

interaction between the teacher and the pupil was acted in a low voice, the teacher directing the pupil's focus on the key elements or rewording the question in another manner, often shifting the linguistic register between the academic and the everyday language. Osman asked also for help from the teacher in order to make sense of the linguistic formulation of a problem. After a few questions, answers and negotiations the problem became clear to him. In this literacy event the class worked mostly silently and there was little talk accompanying the practices.

After the lesson in mathematics, there was a break which many of the pupils spent in the corridor outside the classroom. The group included Osman, Erkan, Emin and other pupils in a linguistically mixed composition. Swedish was the interactional language and their discourses started with the topic of the planned excursion with the leisure time activities. Emin claimed that he did not have any cash for the purpose of the excursion. Instead, he had a cash card with money on his own bank account. Osman and Erkan were curious to know how much money Emin had on his account, but he refused to tell. He just mentioned that he had received 500 Swedish Crowns from his relatives during the religious Muslim feast of "bayram". From his grandmother alone he had received as much as 100 Crowns! Osman and Erkan told in return how much money they had received from their relatives during that feast. A couple of other pupils joined the discussion, which diverged from current cash to the question of getting rich. The children took turns providing examples of people they knew who had succeeded to get rich. The children believed that the easiest way of getting rich was to start a business of one's own. Businesses they mentioned were pizzeria, kebab stand, sweet shop, restaurant, TV shop, and car repair shop. Osman said that his grandparents had once upon a time a sweet shop and had sold it at a good profit. A girl mentioned her relatives in Turkey whose family name was Zengin (meaning 'rich' in Turkish), but surprisingly, according to the girl, they were not rich at all. "Even though they owned a bank", she added. The discussions that Osman and his friends had about getting rich seemed to be based on the oral stories circulating among members of the Turkish and other immigrant communities, but flavoured with fantasy and exaggerated facts, in order to strike the listeners with amazement.

Another discussion about earning money took place in the same corridor, when the pupils noticed two cleaning ladies wiping the floors. Erkan asked if he could help and the ladies thanked and let him do some wiping. The other pupils started teasing him, commenting ironically that Erkan looked

really like a professional cleaner. Osman added that Erkan would very likely end up as such in the future, so this was an occasion of good practice. However, they felt pity for him, as they said he would not earn so much money. This discussion was returned to later in the day, now in a more serious mode, when Emin asked Osman, whether he really thought that Erkan would end up as a cleaner. The discussion continued then speculating about their future professions. Osman's dream was to become a vet.

The class also visited the school library, where the 6<sup>th</sup> graders had made an exhibition of their favourite football teams. They had cut out pictures from magazines and made wall posters, displaying the teams. Every poster included a text written by the 6<sup>th</sup> graders. The kind of literacy practices that evolved in this event were individual and group reading activities. After reading the texts on the posters, Osman was involved in various discussions, evaluating the teams, arguing with his classmates, explaining his beliefs about the best football teams in Sweden and internationally, comparing and discussing opinions with others. This seemed to be a literacy event that engaged the pupils, not only to read the posters but also to discuss and interpret the written texts collectively, associating them with their previous knowledge and experiences and expressing their opinions and attitudes about the topic.

An event of joint literacy practices was organised in the afternoon in a co-operation between the three parallel classes in grade 5, with 60 pupils and three teachers as participants. The place for this event was the assembly hall and consisted of the following practices. One of the teachers explained the purpose of the event, highlighting the importance of reading books, which she pointed out as a facilitating factor in the language development of the pupils' acquisition of Swedish. Many hands were raised when the teacher asked how many of the pupils read youth literature. Examples of several book titles were presented by the pupils. The teacher explained that she was going to read a chapter from a ghost story to which she encouraged the pupils to listen carefully, in order to be able to summarise and answer questions about the content. The teacher started reading the story in an engaged manner, but she had to break off several times since the audience had disciplinary problems and were not concentrating to listen. It seemed to be a difficult task to get the pupils from three parallel classes to co-operate, instead of teasing each other or playing the fool. Before this event came to an end, only one pupil was able to summarise the content, before the time ran out.



The school day also included a drawing lesson which was introduced by the teacher, asking about the name of the holiday starting next week. Easter was the correct answer and the teacher continued asking about the artefacts that signify the Swedish Easter holiday. The pupils contributed, suggesting items such as eggs, witches, chicken, and bunnies. I had expected that the teacher would also ask how the pupils' families used to celebrate Easter and what kind of items signified their holidays. After all, the class consisted also of pupils with Greek, Lebanese, Ethiopian, and other linguistic and cultural backgrounds and who also celebrated this Christian holiday in their families. The teacher dealt out a white paper with pre-printed egg shapes and urged the pupils to colour them with different colours and patterns. Osman showed his product to Emin and Erkan and got a short comment from the teacher: "Well done!"

The last literacy event ending the school day was individual reading and writing in the pupils' log books, used for self-evaluation of the achievements during the week. They also had to make a plan for the coming week (after Easter holiday) and write some future goals for their learning. Osman performed this task in short written text in Swedish and mentioned his successful studies in geography, his home work in mathematics and some problems related to written Swedish in school subjects. His future effort was to improve his mathematical skills and his writing in Swedish.

The observed material resources used for the literacy practices in the school domain can be summarised as the usual, traditional ones, e.g. pencils, papers, text books etc. The writing technology used by the pupils and teachers was handwriting with pencil or chalk. The pupils' oral responses were restricted to short answers during the lessons and teacher talk dominated the classroom work. As a contrast to the classroom practices, the visit to the exhibition in the school library provided an occasion for significant reading practices valued by the pupils.

### **Domain of the Leisure Time**

On the way to the leisure time activities after school, Osman and his friend Erkan read some of the written words and signs they encountered in the environment. These were the names of shops, the brands of car models, and street names on signs that raised their curiosity, speculating as to whether or not they would be good places for living. Particularly, the prices of candy captured their attention and made them compare prices among shops. Their talk in these practices switched between Swedish and Turkish. When we approached the entrance leading to the centre of the district, the boys drew my attention to the welcoming emblem, attached with a text "Welcome to

the exciting Centre of the district”. They wondered: “Why do they call this centre *exciting*? What do they mean by this?” In their mind this centre was just an ordinary, dull little centre and they were astonished that anyone would find it exciting. According to the boys, the centre of the neighbouring district was much more exciting, since it had a lot of different shops, several hamburger restaurants and other distractions.

Leisure time activities were arranged for the children after the end of the school day. These included various alternative activities, such as the fishing excursion planned for the day. Osman and Erkan looked forward to it eagerly, but to their disappointment, the excursion was cancelled because of heavy rain. Unwillingly, they continued with a task they had started the previous day, making some tassels out of yarn. Most of the children that afternoon seemed to have Turkish as part of their language repertoires and used it in their mutual communication. I could hear them code-switching between Turkish and Swedish, using some Swedish words while speaking in Turkish. Osman was upset, since he could not find his yarn tassel and kept accusing the others of its disappearance. He argued in Turkish that he had put it in a special place in a drawer, but it was not there now. When I was jotting this into my field notes, one of the girls saw me taking notes and asked Osman who I was. Before he had time to answer, I explained in Turkish that I was observing Osman’s bilingual language use. To my surprise, the group immediately stopped talking Turkish. Only once a girl asked Osman to help her, interestingly using a code mixing of a Swedish verb ‘klippa’ (to cut) and the Turkish auxiliary verb ‘yapmak’ (to do): “Buradan *klippa* yap onu” (Do cut it from here). I was wondering why the children switched to Swedish after I had addressed them in Turkish, but it did not seem appropriate to ask them, since I felt that my presence might be the reason. The staff asked if Osman would like to read something and left some books and magazines on the table, but he started with a new yarn tassel to replace the lost one.

### **Home Domain in the Evening**

After the leisure time activities, around 17.30 p.m. it was time for Osman to return home. He wanted immediately to demonstrate the functions of the new computer and the ways he could use it for various purposes. He first checked his e-mails and wanted me to read a special one, written in Turkish by his father. He had not answered it yet and suggested that we could formulate an answer in Turkish. We discussed how he would address his father, how to start and what to say. Much attention was given to the spelling, since Osman used Swedish letters in spite of writing in Turk-

ish. After this, Osman browsed to one of his favourite sites, an advertisement of Volvo cars, which was in Swedish. He read the text aloud and explained the prices of the various Volvo models as well as the different payment options, with various instalment terms for purchase. He revealed that his dream was to buy a Volvo in the future. Finally, he also participated in two Swedish chat programs for young people. In the first one he identified himself with a pseudonym named “Anders”, in the second one he called himself “Josephine”, and made a jocular role play with the pretended identities and gender roles in this literacy practice. Swedish was used for all these online practices.

While the mother was preparing the evening meal, she urged Osman to show me the books they had. Osman invited me to the children’s room where I noticed two book shelves of the same size, with nearly the same amount of books in each, one of them in Swedish and the other one in Turkish. Osman showed me a few of his favourite books in Swedish and quickly summarized their content. He told me also that his mother often read books for the children; occasionally they also borrowed books from the local library. Evidently, the books were considered as important print resources for the literacy practices at home, as well as oral resources to talk about. The bilingual collection of both Swedish and Turkish books symbolised also the cultural and linguistic affiliation of the family and their preference for literacy practices in both languages. The mother told me that the children’s literature in Swedish was aimed at facilitating acquisition of written Swedish, while the Turkish books would help them to expand their vocabulary in Turkish and give them some orientation to Turkish culture and social life.

During the evening meal the mother conversed with the children about their activities during the day in Turkish. Later in the evening the whole family viewed Turkish TV, more precisely the news and a Turkish film series they were fond of. The communicative event related to the television event included discussions about what was happening in the film. The children asked questions in Turkish and the mother confirmed their understanding or gave alternative explanations. They also anticipated future actions by the main characters or commented on the moral or ethical values of their behaviour in the film.

At the end of the day, when I read my field notes over the day to Osman he was positively surprised which caused some laughter and giggling. He corrected a few issues which I had misunderstood and added some items, which I had overseen. Additionally to the observations, questions were

asked, especially about the value and significance of his bilingual language and literacy practices. These questions were mostly directed to the mother, after all the parents decide which language(s) the children learn to speak in the home domain. For Osman it seemed to be natural to be able to speak two languages and he had not reflected on this issue very much. He told that he preferred sometimes to speak Turkish as a secret language when he talked about something that he did not want everyone to understand. Also he appreciated to speak Turkish with his parents, his little brother and his grandparents as well as keeping in touch with other relatives in Sweden and in Turkey, especially by using e-mail.

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

According to the data, the alternating uses of Turkish and Swedish were largely bound to the two main domains: Turkish at home and Swedish at school, each language having a slightly separate social and cultural purpose. Turkish was the language of solidarity and intimacy, used in the close social relationships with family members, and in the Turkish community, as was told by the mother. Swedish, on the other hand was the main language of the schooling as prescribed by the language ideology operating in the school and more widely. Its role was to enhance Osman's academic school knowledge in various school subjects. The parents' expectation was also that knowledge in Swedish would be beneficial as a future investment for the children's upward social mobility.

The alternating bilingual language use of the informant can be interpreted as the legitimacy recognised to each language in the various communicative domains. In this study, Turkish has legitimacy within the community of Turkish speakers and Swedish has legitimacy in the Swedish society. Legitimacy of language use can be analysed in vertical and horizontal directions (Nic Craith, see also Martin 2003). In the vertical direction, e.g. on the school level, Osman's discursive practices fitted with the value of the legitimacy of Swedish language in the communicative events inside the school. Outside the school, one could observe Osman and the other Turkish children speaking their heritage language in personal interactions with each other. They were thereby constructing socially the value and recognition attached to the heritage language in the horizontal direction, i.e. between peers in the Turkish community. It can be concluded that Osman mainly used Turkish with his friends in order to affiliate to the social group of Turkish speakers, thereby signalling his membership in the Turkish community, an identity kit associated with his family story of immigration (cf. Gee 1996).

During the leisure time activities, an episode took place when the young Turkish speakers suddenly stopped using Turkish and switched over to Swedish. This behaviour can be interpreted in several ways, for instance as an instant of reflexivity, e.g. how the observer's presence and behaviour influences the observed and the researched (Denscombe 2000). Maybe these young people saw me as a representative of the Swedish society and concluded that Swedish was the "legitimate" language to use in this event. Alternatively, they might have wanted to demonstrate their proficiency in Swedish, since there are claims, especially in the media, that the young people growing up in the district don't learn "proper Swedish". Still another interpretation might be the fact that these young people did not want to be associated to the dialectal variety of Turkish, relating them to the "rural origin" of Turkish immigrants. The linguistic attitudes towards this dialect have in many cases stigmatized its speakers as inferior (knowledge I gained through my personal contact with the speakers). These young persons might have associated my "variety" of Turkish as urban and associated it to the language of "power". Their code-switching to Swedish could then be interpreted as enhancing their own power position by avoiding an assumed positioning as "rural" (cf. Jørgensen 1998 for similar observations in a Danish context).

One of the aims of this case study was to illustrate the cultural and social significance associated with the discourses and literacy practices from the emic perspective of the family and Osman himself. In the home domain, the language maintenance of the linguistic heritage was desired and supported. For that reason Turkish was deliberately preferred as the medium of interaction within the family. The goal was that Osman would develop a high level of bilingualism, enhanced by participating in the mother tongue instruction in Turkish. Developing Turkish to an academic level of schooling needs a lot of support and mother tongue instruction for one and a half hour per week can be considered insufficient in this regard. Nevertheless, it gives the Turkish children like Osman an opportunity to learn how to read and write in Turkish and through this the access to the written language, which in turn might be beneficial to their language development in any language. Literacy skills in Turkish might be important for these young people as adults, e.g. in their future academic or professional carriers. Knowing one's mother tongue is also generally considered beneficial, not only for language development but also for learning in the second language.

According to my interpretation, the engagement that Osman showed towards computer literacy at home, his personal and voluntary choice of

practice seemed to be the most significant literacy event for him during that day. He also confirmed that he was amused by the computer which gave him the opportunity to keep contact with his father<sup>6</sup> and other relatives, in Turkey and elsewhere in Europe. According to my interpretation, Osman did not only amuse himself when he took different roles with pretended identities in the chat programs: he also experimented with different identities and the kind of values that could be associated with them. His pseudonym as “Anders” reflected a pretended Swedish identity and affiliation, and as “Josephine” he experimented with the female gender roles and expectations related to them. I am not aware, whether there are chat programs in Turkish, available to young people worldwide. At least, Osman did not mention about chatting in Turkish.

The analysis of the topics of Osman’s discussions with his fellow pupils in the school domain revealed a relationship to broader societal issues, even if these young people addressed them in a jocular manner. The discussions about money and how to earn one’s living are important questions to anyone, but perhaps particularly to people who have immigrated in order to create a better life for their families. Another important issue, discussed by Osman and his classmates in a playful manner, was the Swedish labour market and the positioning of immigrants in this regard. The teasing of Erkan as a future cleaner seemed to be related to the fact that many adults among the first arrived Turkish immigrants worked in a segregated labour market, in service sectors like cleaning.

### **Macro (societal) Level and Local Community Level**

Despite the positive ethos on the societal level, expressed e.g. in the Swedish curriculum and syllabus on the role of mother tongue, the language policy on the local school and community level appears to be less supportive. The kind of bilingualism, represented by immigrant minority languages, appears to be considered as an obstacle instead of a resource for learning, often used as an explanation for immigrant children’s difficulties in school (cf. Haglund 2005, Lahdenperä 1997). One reason to this, as explained by Moll (1992) might be that bilingualism in immigrant minority languages is often associated with the identity of working class in the host countries. In this case study, whereas Osman’s family emphasized the importance of maintaining the heritage language and bringing up a new generation of bilingual speakers, the local school did not appear to see the pupils’ mother tongue as any substantial resource in the context of schooling, as the comments of the teacher on the school yard in the morning gave evidence for. In schools where bilingual children are in the majority,

there is much worry about the pupils' language development in Swedish. Also the parents are concerned and try to find the best model of schooling for their children. In Osman's case he started in the first grade in a nearby school in a class where the instruction was in Swedish. When a Turkish-Swedish bilingual class was arranged in another school in the district, the parents wanted him to attend that school. However, after the third grade the school wanted to close this bilingual class since the conviction among the Swedish teachers was that the children did not learn Swedish well enough for their age level. As a consequence of this, Osman was transferred to the third school where this study was undertaken.

In many schools, bilingualism is officially defined as a cognitive and social resource on the curriculum level, but on the local school level, it can be viewed as a problem for learning, integration and cultural cohesion, especially in the schools with a large number of students from a specific language background. According to Jaspers (2007: 96) "This can be seen as the paradox in European discourse on multilingualism, where at an international level, linguistic diversity and citizens' knowledge of different languages is cherished and promoted, while intra-nationally, linguistic diversity (and immigrant minority languages in particular) is seriously problematized and conceived as an obstacle to the 'integration' of ethnic minorities".

Although the use of more than one language is a reality for an increasing number of school children in Sweden and many other European countries, their cultural experiences outside school are largely ignored in the classroom, as noticed during the day of the study. Their experiences were not taken into account, even when there were good opportunities to do so. While this may be understandable, since teachers do not have access to the knowledge and experience of all different cultures in the global world outside Sweden, it is nevertheless important that teachers have some intercultural knowledge, which should be provided in the teacher education at the university level.

### **Micro (individual) Level**

A common assumption among the members of a majority society is that children from families with immigrant background have limited material and conceptual resources or receive poor intellectual stimulation in their home environment (cf. Gonzales, Moll and Amanti 2005, Martin-Jones and Saxena 2003). In the same manner, minority children are often associated with poor school performance and the blame is placed on their parents rather than on the quality of the schooling. The observations made in this case study do not support such generalisations and stereotyping

depictions, despite the fact that it might be premature to draw any generalised conclusions on the basis of the observations limited just to one day and also to a single person.

Drawing on the data of this study, the young bilingual informant at school in a multilingual and multiethnic community is naturally immersed in various cultures and lifestyles, providing an opportunity to create acts of cultural translations, experimenting with cultural orientations and identities as shown by the data. An immigrant child like Osman is thus able to identify himself with both Swedish, Turkish and other ways of living, thereby creating a position of the cultural “third space” (Hall 2002: 5). It is a space which is continually created without totally assimilating, neither to the cultural origin of the parents, nor to the mainstream culture of the society, in my interpretation simply meaning a space to become a combination of both Turkish and Swedish. In creation of this third space, technological artefacts like computer and parabolic antennas, in addition to the artefacts and channels available in Swedish, may have a positive contribution. Nevertheless, this view often contradicts the common opinion of mainstream society, which generally blames these artefacts as obstacles for integration. However, from Osman’s emic perspective, these technological artefacts linked him to several cultures, multiliteracies, multiple discourses and several identifications, representing the heritage as well as the mainstream society, and thereby connecting him to broader social networks of a trans-national character.

## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The names and insignificant details about individuals have been changed to ensure anonymity and protect confidentiality. For the same reason the names of the schools, the district and institutions are not mentioned with their real names.
- <sup>2</sup> Schultz et al. (2002: 11) provide a useful overview of the theoretical traditions that have influenced the study of literacy outside school context, including the ethnography of communication and literacy (see also Barton and Hamilton, 2005, p. 14).
- <sup>3</sup> This section is based on Andersson 1986, Lundberg 1991, Lundberg & Svanberg 1992, Eyrumlu 1992, Lundgren 1997, Svanberg 1997, Statistical Yearbook of Sweden, Statistics Sweden (1997-2013).
- <sup>4</sup> Initiated by the internationally acknowledged Turkish actor Tuncel Kurtiz.
- <sup>5</sup> The term covers both refugees and labour immigrants.
- <sup>6</sup> The father’s absence from home is a private matter and cannot be revealed for ethical reasons.



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# İkιδilli Dil Kullanımı Üzerine Bir Vaka Çalışması: Bir Çocuđun İsveççe ve Türkçe Okuma-Yazma ve Söylev Alışkanlıkları

Eiija Kuyumcu\*

## Öz

Bu küçük ölçekli sosyolengüistik ve etnografik çalışmada iki dilli bir çocuđun Türkçe ve İsveççe'yi günlük hayatın deđişik anlarında ve deđişik kişilere karşı nasıl kullandığını araştırdım. Bu araştırmanın son bölümü ise, bu gencin ve ailesinin dil kullanımının sosyal ve kültürel açıdan nelere bađlı olduğunu tesbit etmektedir. Bu tartışma bir kişinin iki dil kullanımının artı ve eksilerini ön plana çıkartmaya çalışmaktadır. Yazı aynı zamanda İsveç'in dil politikasına da deđinerek iki dilliliđin deđerini ve önemini deđişik açılardan ele almaktadır: gözlenen kişi, gittiđi okul ve İsveç'in ilk ve orta öğretimindeki milli müfredat programı.

## Anahtar Kelimeler

İki dillilik, okuma-yazma ve söylev alışkanlıđı, dil politikası, kültürler arasındaki bilgi, göç ve eğitim, miras dili olarak Türkçe

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## Исследование использования двуязычия: языковые привычки ребенка читать, писать и говорить на шведском и турецком языках

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### Аннотация

В этой небольшой социолингвистической и этнографической работе автор исследовал использование турецкого и шведского языков двуязычным ребенком в повседневной жизни и в общении с различными людьми. В заключительной части исследования определяются социальные и культурные факторы, влияющие на использование языка молодежью и их семьями. Эта работа призвана показать положительные и отрицательные стороны использования одним человеком двух языков. Эта работа затрагивает также языковую политику Швеции и показывает важность и значение двуязычия с различных точек зрения: наблюдаемый человек, образовательная школа, шведская национальная учебная программа начальной и средней образовательной школы.

### Ключевые слова

двуязычие, привычка читать, писать и говорить, языковая политика, межкультурное знание, миграция и образование, турецкий язык как наследие

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