Turkish Language Teaching in the US: Challenges, Opportunities, Sense of Belonging and Identities

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Abstract

This article discusses the status of Turkish language programs in the United States. It investigates three main types of programs which provide opportunities for the teaching and learning of Turkish in the US: (1) programs within the institutions of higher education (IHEs), (2) programs within community organizations, and (3) programs for children of school age. Focusing on the last program type, the article introduces a case study of a community-based school founded and operated by Turkish immigrants. The results of the case study reveal the differences between the first generation adults and the second generation children's language choices and linguistic identities. Overall, the article pinpoints the challenging factors and opportunities for the teaching of Turkish language and culture in the US.

Keywords

Turkish Americans, Turks in the US, Turkish in the US, complementary schools

1. Introduction

This article provides an overview of the status of Turkish language programs in the United States (henceforth, US). It also discusses the results of an ethnographic case study on the role and function of a complementary school in the lives of Turkish immigrant adults and their American born children (Otcu 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2013). Focusing on the case of teaching Turkish as a heritage or community language, the study sheds light on

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the challenges and opportunities for the presence of Turkish language and culture in the US, as well as on the senses of belonging and identities among Turkish Americans.

2. History of Turkish in the US

The presence of Turkish in the US is available in two ways: (1) Turkish as a heritage, home, or community language of the immigrants from Turkey to the US, and (2) Turkish as a foreign or second language.

2.1. History of Turkish as a Community/Home Language in the US

In order to understand the present community efforts in the maintenance of Turkish as a community or home language, we should look at the history of Turkish immigration to the US. There are three known waves of immigration from Turkey to the US: at the beginning of the 19th century, after World War II, and in the late 1980s (Kaya 2004). During the first wave between 1820 and 1920, the number of people who came to the United States was 291,435, representing the biggest immigration from the Ottoman Empire. Only 50,000 of these first immigrants were Muslim Turks (Ahmed 1986). For them, the primary marker of identity was religion (being Muslim or Ottoman) rather than their Turkish ethnicity. These first immigrants were mostly single Ottoman men who wanted to pursue a new life on a new land. They married American women, assimilated into the American culture, and shifted fast from Turkish to English language use (Ahmed 1986).

The second wave between the 1950s and early 1980s brought highly educated professionals, such as engineers, doctors, academics, and graduate students, for training purposes. In contrast to the first wave, these immigrants were nationalistic and secular (Kaya 2004). A number of Turkish American organizations were established during the second wave, one of which was the Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA) established in 1958. Atatürk School, i.e. the focus site of Turkish as a community language in this article, was established by this non-profit organization in 1971.

Between the mid 1980s and the 1990s, the third and last immigration wave to the US was stimulated by globalization. The most diverse group of Turkish immigrants arrived, including businessmen and blue-collar workers (Kaya 2004). Diversity Immigration Visa Program (aka US Lottery System which will be discontinued as of 2014) has brought an increasing number of Turkish immigrants to the US every year since the 1990s. The immigrants that came to the US on the second and third wave

showed bilingual characteristics and did not shift completely to English in their daily lives while the ones in the first wave did.

The largest Turkish community in the US today is concentrated in and around metropolitan areas such as New York, New Jersey, Washington D.C., California, Florida, Texas and Illinois. There has been an increase in the size of the Turkish American population in recent years. According to the 2005 American Community Survey (ACS), there were 164,945 people with Turkish ancestry in the US, although this number increased to be 198,551 in the 2012 ACS (US Census Bureau 2005, 2012).

Most Turkish Americans belong to the middle class and are highly integrated into the larger American culture (Kaya 2003). They usually have much higher educational levels than Turkish populations who have immigrated to European countries (Akinci 2002 and Karpat 1995 as cited in Kaya 2003). They also have increasingly established Turkish American organizations and institutions throughout the US, reaching out to the community through mostly bilingual Internet websites and electronic newsletters.

All of these organizations are gathered under three bigger umbrella organizations, namely the Federation of Turkish-American Associations (FTAA), the Assembly of Turkish-American Associations (ATAA), and the Assembly of Turkic American Federations (ATAF). The smaller organizations participate in the events and festivities organized by these bigger organizations. For instance, in May every year in New York City, FTAA organizes a Turkish Day parade and thousands of Turks join the event from all around the US. It is also common to encounter citizens of Turkic countries in Asia and Turks coming from other parts of the world such as Bulgaria and Cyprus joining these events. Turks have their own newspapers, radio and TV programs, clubs and restaurants, and social clubs all around the US and NYC[1]. All these media sources are an important part of their lives that keep them together.

2.2. History of Turkish as a Foreign or Second Language in the US

With the increasing number of Turkish immigrants and students coming to the US since the 1980s as well as business treaties made between two countries, there has been an increasing interest in teaching Turkish as a foreign or second language in the US in recent years. Institutes such as The Institute of Turkish Studies was established in 1982 with a grant from the Turkish government. Being a private educational foundation, it was, "dedicated to the support and development of Turkish Studies in

American higher education" (Trinkle 2006) from their location in Georgetown University in Washington, DC.

American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT) was founded in 1985, and is another institution, which promotes improvement in the teaching of Turkish especially in institutions of higher education (IHEs) and supports Turkish language teachers in the US. It has expanded its scope since 1993, and includes not only Turkish but all languages of the Turks (AATT 2013).

Today, IHEs in the US seem to have a uniformed approach to teaching Turkish and offering Turkish studies programs. This is mainly because of a framework for Turkish language teaching developed by a working group between 1993 and 1995. Consisting of five teachers of Turkish, this workgroup discussed and set the basic goals of the framework within the principles of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages. In 1994, in a workshop organized during the 28th Annual Meeting of Middle East Studies Association, overall principles of Language Learning Framework for Turkish (LLFT) were introduced, discussed, and put into use (AATT 2013).

Since these forerunning institutions set the frameworks for teaching Turkish, IHEs in the US started Turkish studies programs. Table 1 below shows that 10 universities in the US today offer Turkish studies programs as a major of study - as opposed to elective courses.

Table 1. *Turkish Studies Programs in the US (The Institute of Turkish Studies, 2013)*

Institution	Department/Program
1. Columbia University	Turkish Studies Program (Middle East Institute)
2. Harvard University	Ottoman and Turkish Studies
3. Indiana University	Turkish Flagship Program
4. Northwestern University	Keyman Modern Turkish Studies Program
5. Portland State University	Center for Turkish Studies
6. University of Arizona	School of Middle Eastern and North African Studies
7. University of Chicago	Ottoman and Turkish Studies
8. University of Texas at Austin	Turkish Studies
9. University of Michigan	Turkish Studies
10. University of Washington	Turkish and Ottoman Studies Program

Many other IHEs in the US offer Turkish as a foreign or second language and Turkish culture-related courses as electives. 45 universities presently offer Turkish language and culture courses at beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. Some of the courses are Ottoman-related ones including the Ottoman language and history. Turkish is included in programs of various geographic locations and among international languages. A majority of programs locate Turkish among Middle and Near Eastern languages. It is also represented among North African and Asian languages as well as Arabic and Islamic studies. Slavic and Eurasisan studies is another geographical division which includes the language in the IHEs. It is among less commonly taught languages as well as one offered within a History department. Such program variations show that "Turkish is not generally a part of 'career-oriented' programs but it is often a product of a 'language learning career' which aids students to do research in their specific fields" (Kuruoğlu, Algar, Sezer, Erol and Jaeckel 2002).

3. Opportunities and Challenges to Turkish Language Instruction

3.1. Turkish in the Institutions of Higher Education

As mentioned above, Turkish is taught in several universities in the US as a supplemental course for many students of general linguistics, anthropology, history and other social sciences. This fact creates many opportunities for the language to be taught and learned. Since Turkish is also classified as a "critical" language by the Department of State and Least Commonly Taught Languages by the Department of Education, there are many funding opportunities for students learning Turkish. One such funding opportunity is the Critical Language Scholarship Program (CLS) through which "applicants are able to study intensive Turkish language within a designated school in Turkey during the summer months" (The Institute of Turkish Studies 2013). Foreign Language and Area Study Programs (FLAS) fellowships constitute the other scholarship opportunity, and is administered by National Resource Centers (NRC) housed within the US universities. FLAS fellows can study "Turkish either as intensive summer language courses in the US or in Turkey and/or throughout the academic year in the US" (The Institute of Turkish Studies 2013).

Other opportunities are the Turkish language resources for institutions and instructors. Through the Fulbright Language Teaching Assistants (FLTA) program, for instance, young educators from Turkey can be hosted at a university in the US, where they can teach Turkish, improve their English, develop a cross-cultural understanding, and take graduate courses themselves.

3.2. Turkish in the Community Organizations in the US

There are a number of community organizations and media resources for Turks living in the US. However, the number and location of all these organizations and the nature of their efforts regarding the teaching and learning of Turkish language and culture are not exactly known. This situation poses a challenge to the language maintenance and development efforts in the US. Public schools do not have Turkish as a language of study nor do they offer Turkish-English bilingual education programs. Unless one lives in a neighborhood close to a Turkish community, has connections with a community or deliberately searches to find a Turkish community organization, it may be nearly impossible to find an institution that supports Turkish language and culture in the US.

A recent study of all community institutions in New York City identified 1,730 institutions by different ethnic communities and found institutional community support for 72 languages other than English (LOTEs) in the city (Matarese 2013). The study presented the number of institutions of these communities in 2004 and 2005 as in Figure 1 below, and Turkish is also included in it.

Figure 1. *Number of Community-Funded Institutions Identified per LOTE, 2004-2005 (Matarese 2013)*
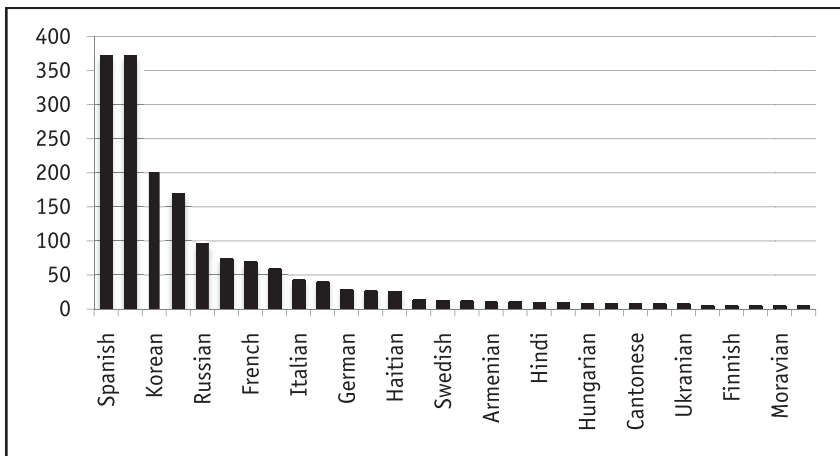

The figure strikingly shows that the number of Turkish community institutions is behind many other language groups in New York, and most possibly, in the US at large. Figure 1 reveals one of the most important

challenges which Turkish faces in the US: low numbers of community institutions and underrepresentation.

The 2004-2005 research also identified the data for centers and non-profit organizations directly or indirectly supporting a LOTE, "either by simply offering services (health, welfare, educational, etc.) through that language or by offering the community a space to come together for activities, cultural and otherwise (often in that LOTE)" (Matarese 2013: 302). Figure 2 below indicates where Turkish is situated.

Figure 2. *Number of Community Organizations Identified per LOTE, 2004-2005 (Matarese 2013)*
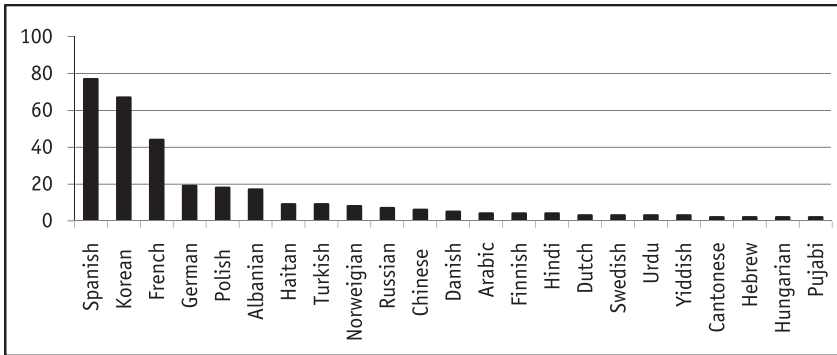
This time we see that the number of community centers and organizations supporting Turkish is higher than the two previous cases in New York City. In this category, Turkish community centers and organizations seem to be better represented, which would be an opportunity for maintenance and promotion of Turkish in New York and in the US. Besides such organizations and IHEs, the teaching and learning of Turkish in the US is available through language exchange opportunities, meet-up groups in different cities set up by Turks or non-Turks interested in Turkish, and private language schools that offer Turkish language courses. However, overall, it seems to be a challenge that there is not a uniformity of these efforts and it is at the individuals' motivation to pursue Turkish language study and to find the means to do so in the US.

3.3. Turkish Language and Cultural Programs for Children of School Age

Since there is limited data on the Turkish language and cultural programs in the US at large, this section only introduces the programs in and around New York. There are presently two types of educational programs

for K-12 students of Turkish families in the city: 1. All-day private schools, 2. Community-based weekend schools.

Private schools: The two Turkish-owned private schools operating in and around New York are Brooklyn Amity School (BAS) and Pioneer Academy of Science (PAS). Both of the schools were founded in 1999 by Turkish American businessmen, and operate in accordance with the New York State Department of Education regulations. The latter has two campuses located in Clifton and Cherry Hill Township, New Jersey. Both schools house around 200 students from various ethnic backgrounds, but Turkish American students comprise the majority. The schools emphasize math and science and prepare for college. While the medium of instruction in both schools is English, a few hours of Turkish are offered as elective. Students participate in activities and competitions of the school, one being the annual Turkish Olympiads organized in the US and Turkey (Brooklyn Amity School 2011, Pioneer Academy of Science 2011).

In terms of their ideological orientation, BAS and PAS seem to be similar. Among the Turkish community in New York, these schools are known as "cemaat schools" due to their close connections to "Gülen cemaat" which includes followers of Fethullah Gülen. It is said that there are now 135 charter schools "inspired by Gülen" in 25 different states, enrolling about 45,000 students, but the schools are recently under scrutiny because of their unusual business activities (Berlinski 2012).

The Turkish Olympiads which take place since 2003 both in the US and in Turkey are also organized by sponsors of the movement. In BAS and PAS, not only Turkish American but also students of many ethnicities study Turkish electively and prepare for these Olympiads. They can compete in the categories of Turkish as a foreign language or a native language. If they succeed during the elections in the US, they can compete in the main Turkish Olympiads in Turkey afterwards (Turkish Olympiad 2011). There are other ways these schools promote Turkish language and culture in the US: by organizing annual activities on Turkey's April 23rd Children's Day; frequently inviting Turkish diplomats to give speeches in their schools or visiting them in Washington D.C. or New York with a group of Turkish American students (Brooklyn Amity School 2011, Pioneer Academy of Science 2011); sponsoring trips to Turkey for US officials. There is no connection between these schools and the community-based school, Atatürk School, which is the focus of this article.

Community-based heritage/complementary schools: The focus of this article is the other program type for New York's Turkish American community, i. e. complementary schools. There have been other weekend schools founded for Turkish Americans throughout years, but only Atatürk School has been operating for more than 40 years since its establishment in 1971. There are no previous studies that have studied in depth a Turkish school in the US, and the exact number of Turkish heritage schools in the nation is not known. However, Atatürk School is similar to the Turkish complementary school researched along with three different non-English ethnic schools in England (Creese et al. 2008) in terms of its characteristics.

The results of the 2004-2005 study of New York's community languages other than English (LOTEs) may shed a light into the shortage of studies on Turkish schools. The research team identified "community-funded schools that support LOTEs, that is, educational institutions who teach LOTEs that have been initiated by the language community and that are supported primarily through independent funds" (Matarese 2013: 299). Turkish community-funded schools are also among their results as the figure below shows:

Figure 3. *Number of Community-Funded Educational Institutions Identified per LOTE, 2004-2005 (Matarese 2013)*
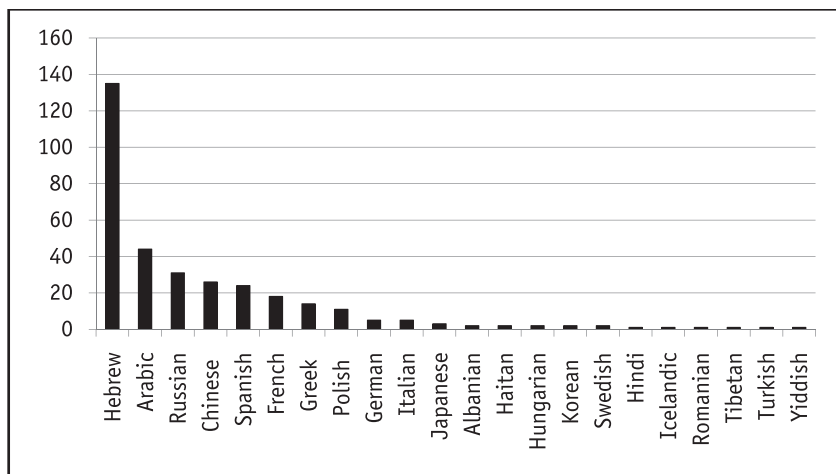
As it can be observed, Turkish is almost at the end of the spectrum of languages that are being taught in schools sponsored by community insti-

tutions in New York, aka community-based schools. Atatürk School is most likely represented among them.

Some Turkish American organizations in the US mention their own weekend schools on their websites. They are mostly located in Chicago, Orange County, Rochester, Michigan, Minnesota, North Carolina, San Diego, Philadelphia, and Washington D.C., and have been established more recently around the 1990s. Their student enrollment is between 15 to 70, and the age range is from 3 to 15. These more recent schools operate on Saturdays or Sundays for 1.5 to 2 hours in the mornings. They follow a secular education system like Atatürk School, and focus on teaching students how to write, read, and speak in Turkish, expand their knowledge of Turkish history, geography, music, folk dances, culture, and in rare cases mathematics.

4. Conceptual Framework

This article draws on the results of an ethnographic case study on the role and function of a Turkish heritage school in explaining the case of Turkish as a community language (Otcu 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2013). An integrative framework composed of of language shift and maintenance (Fishman 1972), language ideologies (Woolard 1998, Kroskrity 2000), and linguistic identity (Norton 2000, Blackledge and Pavlenko 2001) was drawn upon to explore the Discourses of language and identity in the research site.

Community-based schools are important language contact sites. A literature review of studies on similar research sites indicates that these schools have been given different names, such as *ethnic mother tongue schools* (Fishman 1980), *complementary schools* (Creese et. al. 2008, Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, and Martin 2008, Creese, Bhatt, Bhojani, and Martin 2006), *supplementary schools*, and recently *heritage language schools* even though the concepts of *heritage language* and *heritage language learner* are still being disputed (Carreira 2004, van Deusen-Scholl 2003). Fishman's 1985 study identified 6553 such schools in the US attended by more than 600,000 children (Fishman 2001). The recent numbers regarding community-based schools are unknown, because Fishman's study "was the last nationwide study of heritage language schools in the U.S." (Fishman 2001: 89).

Language maintenance and development stands as the most important goal of heritage schools. When immigrants adopt a host language as a second language, it is unavoidable that the second language becomes the

first language of the second generation (Fishman 1972). Due to the assimilationist language policies in the US, English is emphasized in mainstream education at the expense of students' home languages. Hence, in order to maintain and develop their home languages, ethnic communities make extra efforts and usually encounter considerable difficulties as follows: young bilingual learners' resistance, funding, quality of instructors and teaching.

Community-based language schools are significant and exemplify linguistic identities and ideologies. Language ideology is defined "as a set of core beliefs and attitudes shared by individuals, as members of groups, regarding the use of a particular language in both oral and written forms" (Martínez-Roldán and Malavé 2004: 161). Language ideology can be considered as a bridge connecting linguistic practices to broader sociopolitical structures (Blackledge and Pavlenko 2001, García 2009, Kroskrity 2000, Woolard 1998). The constant relationship between these micro and macro structures creates identities (Reyes 2007) and develops certain beliefs and attitudes toward languages in language communities. The Turkish school focused in this study is considered as such a site where language ideologies shape and create identities.

5. Methodology

In the case study, methods of linguistic ethnography (Creese 2005, 2008, Heller 1999) were employed. According to linguistic ethnography, "language and the social world are mutually shaping, and that close analysis of situated language use can provide both fundamental and distinctive insights into the mechanisms and dynamics of social and cultural production in everyday activity" (Rampton et al. 2004: 2). Data collection, which occurred between 2007 and 2008, included audio or video-recorded participant observations, semi-structured interviews, and a questionnaire. 49 sets of field notes, nearly 22 hours of audio-recordings, and 8 hours of video-recordings constituted the data which would be employed to provide an in-depth analysis and "thick description" (Geertz 1973, Canagarajah 2006, Hadi-Tabassum 2006) of the stakeholders as the research sample. The focal participants were seven students, their parents and teachers, and the school administrators. All focal students were US-born, second generation Americans with a Turkish parent born in Turkey.

5.1. Data Analysis

Gee's Discourse approach (1999, 2005) was used to transcribe and analyze all the relevant data[2]. Accordingly, there are six "building tasks" (1999: 6-

7) or areas of reality we construct when we use language: semiotic, world, activity, socio-culturally situated identity and relationship, political, and connection building. This method of discourse analysis requires asking specific questions for each building task. Specific answers regarding the present study were categorized into larger themes to explain the role and function of a Turkish school in the US in terms of Turkish language maintenance and cultural identity formation. The analysis yielded the findings below.

5.2. Findings and Discussion

Atatürk School: The school takes place only on Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. from October to June to provide complementary education to the elementary school-aged children of Turkish families[3]. There are no official holidays observed, and hence, no breaks throughout the year. The place-ment of pre-school and elementary school aged children (4 to 14 year-olds) into classrooms is done in accordance with their proficiency in Tur-kish. The graduates from the fifth grade receive a certificate, which may replace a Turkish elementary school diploma. The graduates can also satis-fy the foreign language requirement in their regular schools, receiving 3.5 credit points for having studied Turkish as a foreign language. In case they move back to Turkey, they can continue their education without losing a year.

The funding of Atatürk School is not by the Turkish Government. The founder and sponsor organization, Turkish Women's League of America (TWLA), is the only sponsor of the school. It operates voluntarily through donations from TWLA, as well as from parents and donors. For instance, TWLA organizes art or educational events in which tickets are sold to raise funds for the school. TWLA also applies for and wins small grants from community organizations such as the Turkish Cultural Foundation (TCF) for the school's benefit. Gains from such activities are spent on school expenses such as stationery, books, and gifts given to students on "bay-rams" and special days.

The stakeholders: TWLA gives priority to the protection of the school in its bylaws. The Principal of the school has been in charge painstakingly for the last 18 years. Teachers are preferred to have teacher education from Turkey, and have taught elementary school. Teachers should also be able to communicate and establish dialogue with students easily, love children, and be able to be both a friend and a teacher role model as well as establish discipline in the classroom.

Atatürk School has ten teachers: the grade level teachers who teach Pre-K through 5th grades, and teachers who teach arts, drama, music, and folk dancing. With the exception of music and folk dancing, all teachers are female. They have regular jobs during the week, and teach almost voluntarily. The common qualities of teachers are their love and respect for Atatürk, the founder of modern Turkey, and their commute from long distances to Manhattan to teach every Saturday.

Students' parents are willing to come from the city's different boroughs, upstate New York, and New Jersey. Mothers are usually in charge of bringing their children to school, rather than fathers. While a majority of the parents are first generation immigrants, there are also children of transnational families who are in the US for a short time. Parents' age range is between 32 and 49 with a mean age of arrival to the US of 26. Most parents are married to Turkish-born spouses (77%), while the rest are either non-Turkish or Turkish born outside of Turkey (Otcu 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2013). Most parents (73%) have higher education, and the top reason for coming to the US is to pursue a graduate degree.

In terms of the students, they are mostly second-generation immigrants. A majority of the school's children (73%) are born in the US. The rest of the students (27%) are born in Turkey, and have lived in the US for more than five years (Otcu 2009, 2010a, 2010b, 2013).

School activities and the subject matter: Three main kinds of activities are observed in Atatürk School: educational practices, routines, and rituals. All these activities show that the school teaches not only Turkish, but also the ways of being Turkish, i.e. *Turkishness*. All of the Turkish national and religious holidays, as well as important days, are celebrated with a ceremony, which establishes a collective Turkish identity among the school community. This is interesting because at the time of writing this article, these holidays have been devalued and discouraged in mainland Turkey for the last few years. Nevertheless, the years-long tradition continues overseas in this community school. Students, dressed in red and white reflecting the colors of the Turkish flag, perform their heritage language and cultural knowledge in all ceremonies.

Every Saturday starts with a ritual, in which the children recite "Andımız" (Our Pledge), a piece of verse similar to the Pledge of Allegiance. Starting 2013-1014 school year, the government of Turkey decided to discontinue this ritual as well, still a controversy in Turkey. However, in Atatürk School, it is an unchanging ritual and a chance for all the school students

to meet and communicate with their school Principal. Afterward, students disperse to classrooms until the lunchtime. At around 2 p.m, music education starts[4]. Students sing marches, patriotic songs, and folk songs from Turkey, which stands out as students' most favorite activity. Some of the songs frequently sung are: *Onuncu Yıl Marşı* [10th Year Anthem], *Hoşgelişler Ola* [Welcome Mustafa Kemal Pasha], *Gençlik Marşı* [Youth Anthem], *Atam Sen Rahat Uyu* [Sleep in Peace My Atatürk], and *Bir Köy Var Uzakta* [There's a Village Far Away]. The songs have similar themes: restoration of Turkey after the War of Independence in the early 1920s, the speedy success of modern Turkish Republic in its early years, the role of the Turkish youth in preserving the modern state, and being united as a nation despite living in the remotest regions of Turkey. Singing of these songs are not encouraged anymore in mainland Turkey, which may be the topic of another research study.

The school ends at 4 p.m., but the teachers stay longer to hold their weekly meeting. If the students are members of the folk dance group or if they need to attend rehearsals for an upcoming show, they also stay and practice for a couple of hours.

Teaching of Turkish language and culture overlaps, because the school implements the Turkish elementary school curriculum focusing on the content areas except for math. Unless there is a need to make a mathematical explanation, references to math are minimal, only confined to the numbers in Turkish. Language skills are needed in all lessons to analyze texts and answer questions, hence students are exposed to Turkish constantly. Cultural information is provided in social studies, life studies and Turkish lessons rather than in isolated culture-focused ones. All activities, be it curricular or extra-curricular, are secular. Religious education sessions are also minimal. Traditional pedagogical methods are mostly employed such as rote memorization and recitation, writing, dictation, read-alouds, summarizing, and language tests. The classroom interaction is composed of teacher-oriented Initiation-Response- Follow-up (IRF) (Sinclair and Coulthard 1975) structure most of the time.

School policies, identities, and sense of belonging: Data analysis indicates that Atatürk School connects the Turkish American children to their heritage, especially via a focus on history, Atatürk, and to the social and school life in Turkey. This dynamic connection is at the heart of the school policies and constantly reflects on the school clientele's identities. Adults frequently "other" the non-Turkish elements in their lives, while collectively embracing Turkishness via "we-code" (Gumperz 1982). The

Principal's following words indicate the importance of adults' patience with the students as follows:

> "Bir de çocuklarımız burada *yabancı* bir ülkede yaşadığı için daha *değişik* ... ehm olaylara tepkileri, duygusallık açısından bazı *değişik* tepkiler verebiliyolar."

> "Also our children here because they live in a *foreign* country, they may react somewhat *differently*, more *differently* uhm in terms of their reactions to incidences and of being emotional. (Principal, interview, March 8, 2008, Turkish original above)"

The Principal's account points out to the positions of identity in the school. The italicized words, *foreign* and *differently*, "other"s the students. In reality, what this excerpt indicates is that the students behave in the American way, and this situation makes them "different" from regular elementary school students in Turkey, sometimes resulting in tugs of war between the students and teachers.

The overall beliefs and ideologies of the adults meet in the desire that the children know and be attached to their Turkish background. The third grade teacher's account below exemplifies the adults' wish for a Turkish core identity for the children, while acknowledging their Americanness at the same time:

> "Öz olarak Türk olmalarını isteriz ama burda yaşadıklarına göre iki toplumu da idare ediyolar. Çünkü vatan millet olarak Türkiye'yi bilmelerini isterim. Daima. Burayı ikinci vatan olarak görmelerini isterim. Yani ben – Türk isek biz, onlar da Türk. Yani Türkiye-de burda da doğmuş büyümüş olsalar bile özümüz Türk."

> "We want them to be Turkish in their core, but as they live here, they handle both societies. Because I want them to know Turkey as their primary homeland. Always. And I want them to see here as their secondary homeland. If I- we are Turkish, they are Turkish too. I mean in Turkey- even though they have been born and raised here, our core is Turkish. (Third grade teacher, interview, February 23, 2008, Turkish original above)"

There is a Turkish-only policy in the school. The adult clientele frequently warn students, "Speak Turkish!" Students know they should speak Turkish to adults, but they contest this policy by speaking English to each other. Pennycook (2003) refers to such language choice as *performativity*,

which questions pre-given identities and indicates performing identities via the use of language. The Principal explains the rationale behind the Turkish-only policy:

> "Okulda biz bunu mümkün olduğu kadar öğretmen arkadaşlarla beraber Türkçe kullanılmasını istiyoruz ve kesinlikle büyük sınıflarda kesinlikle yabancı- İngilizce kullanılması yasak diyoruz bir şekilde. Çünkü onları yönlendirmek Türkçe öğrenmelerini arttırmak amacıyla."

> "At school we, together with the teacher colleagues, want Turkish to be used as much as possible. And certainly in higher level grades, certainly foreign- English use is forbidden in some way because of the aim of directing them, of increasing their learning of Turkish. (Principal, interview, March 8, 2008, Turkish original above)"

The students are English-dominant, and speak English among each other. Only when talking about their Turkish homework may they speak Turkish to each other because of the topic. Adults try to accommodate to students' varying language needs. For instance, between pre-kindergarten to first grade levels where students' Turkish proficiency is low, teacher's translanguage (García 2009) in giving instructions and calling numbers by using both languages. In other cases, the teachers simply let the students express themselves in the best way possible. The Pre-K teacher explains her rationale for accommodating to students' needs:

> "Eğer ben onu kısıtlarsam çocuğu içine kapanık yaparım, yani çocuğun özgüvenini geliştirmesini engellemiş olurum. Buna da benim hakkım yok. Yani tamam burası bi Türk okulu, Türkçe öğretiyoruz, Türkçe eğitim veriyoruz ama çok da katı kurallar uygulayamayız. Hele hele anasınıfı için bu çok da iyi olmaz. Haksızlık olur. (...) Biz çocugu kazanıcağımız yerde kaybederiz."

> "If I limit her/him, I make the child introvert. I mean I inhibit the child's developing her/his self-esteem. I don't have that right. I mean okay this is a Turkish school, we teach Turkish and we educate in Turkish but we cannot implement very strict rules. Especially for the Pre-K grade it would not be very good. It would be unfair. (…) We would lose the child instead of winning her/him. (Pre-K teacher, interview, February 2, 2008, Turkish original above)"

The children exhibit fluid and hybrid identities. They reject the adults' Discourses by speaking English among peers, and yet they also speak Turkish to adults when necessary and accept their Discourses. A student indi-

cates his love for Turkey as follows in an interview in Turkish, whereas the same student is seen speaking English with his friends at all times:

Bahar: Mesela sen sence Türkiye mi daha iyi Amerika mı?
        "For instance in you- your opinion is Turkey better or America?"

Kerem: Err Türkiye
        "Err Turkey."

B: Türkiye'yi mi daha çok seviyosun?
    "Do you like Turkey better?"

K: A but uhm uçağa girince sevmiyorum
    "Oh but I don't like when I enter the plane."

B: Ha bi tek yolculuğu sevmiyosun.
    "I see you don't like the trip."

K: Yeah gelince seviyorum.
    "Yeah I like it when I arrive."

B: Gelince seviyosun? Yani Amerikaya gelince?
    "You like it when you arrive? You mean when you come to America?"

K: No sevmiyorum. Türkiye'ye döndüğümde daha seviyorum.
    "No I don't like it. When I return to Turkey I like it more."

(Third grade student Kerem, interview, January 12, 2008, Turkish original above)

As Fishman (1991) argues, language maintenance depends on transmission across generations, and schools alone cannot reverse language shift without further steps that take the community language beyond the classroom. The parents are aware of this fact and try their best to achieve this at home and through school. A parent mentions the importance and purpose of the school as follows:

"İlerde faydası olcağını düşünüyorum. Onun dışında ailemiz var Türkiye'de. Onlarla gittiğimiz zaman görüştüklerinde zorluk çekmemeleri açısından, nerden geldiğimiz - en önemlisi de nerden geldiğimizi unutmamaları."

"I think it'll be useful in the future. Also we have family in Turkey - in order for them not to have difficulty when we are there, when they see them - most importantly in order for them not to forget where we come from. (Ceyda's parent, interview January 26, 2008, Turkish original above)"

Challenges: A community-based school as such in the US cannot be imagined without its challenges. The biggest challenge is the students' resistance to attend the school. This resistance stems from the stakeholders' generational differences, which teachers frequently refer to as "behavioral problems." The school tries to inculcate Turkish traditions, the most visible of which is *respectfulness*. The ways respect is taught do not exactly parallel the American ways, and are similar to the practices in Turkey: by standing up to greet the teacher, not eating, drinking or chewing gum in class, and not wearing baseball caps in class. During the ceremonies, students are taught to stand straight with their head high described as "asker gibi" [like a soldier]. Another attribute of a respectful student is *silence*, i.e. not talking unless given floor. If the students do not conform to these attributes, they are reprimanded in different ways: by moving away from their friend, repeatedly writing one sentence in Turkish (e.g., "I didn't behave well"), sitting at the Principal's desk, and cleaning up the school litter.

Other big challenges for the school is the teachers' teaching through traditional methodologies followed by lack of up-to-date educational materials, and limited school time. However, these are accepted as the present reality, and the teachers try to do their best with what they have. Parents point to the same issues, adding lack of recess times and inability to improve the teaching, to this list.

The data analysis point to another challenge the school faces: its disconnection from the mainstream public schools which the children attend, other than providing 3.5 foreign language credits. Administrators and teachers almost never relate to American mainstream education in terms of both practices and policies. Parents indicate their children's' complaints on Saturday mornings, as it is an extra school day for them. One parent says:

> "Şimdi beş gün okula gidiyorlar. E Cumartesi günü de dinlenmek istiyor. Zaten kendisi söylüyor, ben diyor altı gün okula gidiyorum, arkadaşlarım beş gün gidiyor diyor."

> "They already go to school for five days. Naturally he wants to take some rest on Saturday. He says, 'I go to school for six days, my friends go for five days.' (Kerem's mother, interview, January 1, 2008, Turkish original above)"

Despite such challenges, students know Atatürk School's limitations in comparison to their regular schools, and accept the school as it is. They indicate that they like the school once they arrive at the school. Turkish-

ness and Americanness go hand in hand and simultaneously challenge each other. The adults - as first-generation immigrants holding on to their essential values and ideas - see the US as a foreign country and refer to English as a foreign language, wheres the children show their hybrid and bilingual identities especially via their language choices.

6. Conclusion

This article shed light on the status of Turkish language programs in the US. While doing so, it spotted three main types of programs providing opportunities for the teaching and learning of Turkish in the US: (1) programs within the institutes of higher education (IHEs), (2) programs within community organizations, and (3) programs for children of school age. Focusing on the last program type, the article discussed the results of a case study of a community-based school in the US. The case turned attention to the teaching of Turkish as a heritage or community language. It also pointed to the factors challenging or providing opportunities for the teaching of Turkish language and culture, at the same time sketching a picture of Turkish Americans' sense of belonging and identities. The differences between the first generation adults and the second generation children's language choices and linguistic identities were revealed.

It is evident from the features and numbers of the abovementioned programs that teaching and learning of Turkish in the US faces many challenges. It is not certain and cannot be known how many of all the three types of programs described above are available in the US. While we may get information on the availability of the programs within the IHEs, it is hard to track those within community organizations and the ones for young children. The programs that can be accessed today will not match each other in terms of their curricula. The framework to teaching Turkish as a foreign or second language depicted by the work of American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT) is the only comprehensive curriculum available presently, and is only used by IHEs. It is promising that the same curriculum could be used by the programs within community organizations that offer classes of Turkish as a foreign and second language, and yet it is not known how such programs would be made aware of AATT's framework. In the case of Atatürk School, AATT's framework would be useful, but it is questionable if the school would like to employ it. Since it is not a language school but a heritage school, the elementary school curriculum of Turkey is being used. The young heritage learners' unique language needs are not adequately met through this monoglossic content-based curriculum reflecting life in Turkey.

The case of the Turkish school pointed to unique difficulties which all schools depending on their communities' efforts face: monoglossic teacher-centered teaching methodologies, lack of recent educational materials, limited school time, lack of recess time, lack of professional development, and disconnect from the mainstream schools. It is advised to the adult members of the school and other representatives of the community that they pay attention to these issues in order to improve the school's teaching quality and popularity among young Turkish Americans.

Regarding the sense of belonging and reflection of identities, the case of Atatürk School stands out among the other type of programs that promote Turkish. It exemplifies Fishman's (1980) argument that an ethnic mother tongue school moderates and modulates "ethnic uniqueness at the same time that it channels Americanness via the community's own institutions" (243). Continuous repetition of Discourses (e.g. school policies, discipline, respect) points to the production and reproduction of ideologies in the school. Through these ideologies, the school becomes an institutionalized language ideological site (Kroskrity 2000) and continues "the repetition and ritualization of the situations that sustain" it (Gee 1999: 83).

Despite the challenges, the Turkish heritage school fills gaps in the current educational system by promoting Turkish as the home language of young bilinguals. In order to ensure that their work is effective and the children can grow up bilingual and bicultural, the schools' efforts must be expanded and made relevant to those of the mainstream public schools.

Notes

[1] For detailed information on the Turkish media, visit:
http://www.turkishconnection.com/media.htm

[2] According to Gee's discourse analysis model employed in the larger study, all discourses are ideological. Gee (1999, 2005) makes a distinction between "Discourse" with a "capital D" and "discourse" with a "little d." "Discourse" with a "little d" is language in use, or the way language is used on site to enact activities and identities. Gee argues, however, that "activities and identities are rarely ever enacted through language alone" (1999, pp. 6-7). It is when "little d" discourse (language-in-use) integrates with non-language components to enact specific identities and activities that "big D" Discourses are involved. Gee's Discourse with a big "D" brings together both language and non-language elements (e.g. sign systems, beliefs, attitudes etc.) to explain how language is situated in and influenced by the context in which it is used.

[3] Until Fall 2012-2013, Atatürk School operated on the second floor of the Turkish Consulate at the United Nations. The floor was turned to a make-shift school on Satur-

days using room dividers. In 2012, the Consulate building had to be vacated, which caused the school to move out. While initially creating difficulties, the move brought positive effects such as learning in real classroom environments.

[4] The music teacher visits each classroom to teach Turkish songs, carrying his portable keyboard. When the school was still in the Consulate building, he would play an actual piano in the big hall and all students would gather together as the room dividers would be opened.

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ABD'de Türkçe Öğretimi: Zorluklar, Fırsatlar, Aidiyet ve Kimlik

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Öz

Bu makalede Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'ndeki Türk dili programlarının durumu tartışılmaktadır. ABD'nde Türkçe eğitim ve öğretimi için olanak yaratan üç ana program türü incelenmektedir: (1) yüksek eğitim kurumları bünyesindeki programlar, (2) toplum dernekleri bünyesindeki programlar ve (3) okul çağındaki çocuklar için olan programlar. Makale, üçüncü program türüne odaklanmakta ve Türk göçmenler tarafından kurulup işletilmekte olan bir toplum okulu hakkında yapılmış bir durum çalışmasını da tanıtmaktadır. Durum çalışmasının sonuçları birinci nesil yetişkinler ile ikinci nesil çocukların dil seçimleri ve dilsel kimlikleri arasındaki farklılıkları göstermektedir. Makale bütünüyle ABD'nde Türk dili ve kültürü öğretimi için zorluk ve fırsat yaratan etkenlere işaret etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Amerikalı Türkler, Amerika'daki Türkler, Amerika'da Türkçe, toplum okulları

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Преподавание турецкого языка в США: проблемы, возможности, принадлежность и идентичность

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Аннотация

В этой статье обсуждается состояние программ обучения турецкому языку в Соединенных Штатах Америки. Рассмотрены три основных типа программ, предоставляющих возможность обучения турецкому языку в США: (1) программы в рамках высших учебных заведений, (2) программы в рамках общественных объединений, и (3) программы для детей школьного возраста. Статья посвящена третьему типу программ и содержит анализ состояния общественной школы, созданной и эксплуатируемой турецкими мигрантами в Америке. Результаты исследования показывают различия языковых предпочтений и языковой идентичности между взрослыми первого поколения и детьми второго поколения. В целом, статья обращает внимание на факторы, которые затрудняют или облегчают изучение турецкого языка и культуры в Соединенных Штатах.

Ключевые слова

американские турки, турки в Америке, турецкий язык в Америке, общественные школы

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