

Competing Discourses in the Classroom: Turkish Instruction in Berlin

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Abstract

Turkish instruction has entered the school system in Berlin in the 1980s as a response to the increase in the school-age children within the Turkish community. In neighborhoods with a high population of Turkish residents, schools at various levels have come to offer Turkish as an elective foreign language. Moreover, Turkish is offered as one of the subjects on the secondary school finishing exams (MSA) and beyond that, the university prep programs (Abitur) in some high schools. My focus in this paper is one such school in the district of Kreuzberg, with an overwhelming majority of its student body Turkish in descent. Reporting on classroom ethnography in a 9th grade Turkish class, I focus on two major discourses in circulation: the standard Turkish discourse and the Ottoman Turkish discourse. Through microethnographic analysis, I demonstrate how these discourses are constructed, enacted, and received in the Turkish classroom.

Keywords

Multilingualism, classroom discourse, Turkish education in Europe, linguistic ethnography, interactional analysis

Introduction

“Şimdi, hangi perspektiften bakacaksın sen buna? Yani küresel gelişme mi belirleyici olacak, TC’nin, yani TC’nin eğitim politikası mı belirleyici olacak, Almanya’nın mı, yoksa Avrupa Birliği mi? O kadar şey var ki, fakat Almanya’da eğitim sisteminde o serbestliği öğretmene tanıyor, güzel olan tarafı o.”

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“Now, which perspective will you take? I mean, will the global developments be determinative, or the educational policies of the Turkish Republic, or of Germany, or of the European Union? There is a lot of [choices], but the education system in Germany grants that freedom to the teacher, that’s what’s nice about it.”

The quote above is taken from an interview with Ms. Kaya, an experienced teacher of Turkish who has lived most of her life in Berlin and worked primarily in high schools that offer Turkish classes. Answering a question about the Turkish curriculum design in her school, she expresses concern over the challenge of determining the discourses to be adopted and lists four major actors contributing to this decision. Discourses that inform Turkish classes are not limited to those listed by Ms. Kaya, and some might become more prominent than others in terms of the pedagogies adopted. Yet, her statement, albeit reflecting her personal opinion on the matter, points out to one of the most important problems curriculum designers face in the teaching of Turkish in Europe today. Decisions as to what kind of Turkish to teach and how (see Schroeder 2006) become more perplexing within the diasporic educational contexts where multilingualism is a daily practice for students of Turkish descent.

The purpose of this paper is to shed some light on discourses in circulation in the Turkish classes in a German school context and their reception by the students. Reporting on a linguistic-ethnographic study, I focus on Turkish classes taught at a *Gymnasium*¹ in the Kreuzberg district of Berlin. Below, I will first provide some background information on the immigrant Turkish presence in Kreuzberg and the Turkish education at the high school level in Berlin. This will be followed by a short review of the theoretical framework for the study, and finally, the presentation of my analysis.

The Turkish Presence in Kreuzberg

Kreuzberg is somewhat an iconic location within the context of Turkish migration to Germany that took its course in the early 1960s. Situated in the heart of the city today, this working class neighborhood lay in the easternmost point of West Berlin throughout the 30 years that the Wall was erect. The dorm-like housing structure prevalent in the district made it ideal for Turkish immigrants who initially came to Berlin as single guest workers on short-term contracts. In time, the Turkish population increased due to the continuing migration and the expansion of families through family reunification and ascending birth rate. Although the work-

ing-class Turkish immigrants lent the area much of its character in the early years of migration, this profile started to change after the fall of the Wall in 1990 due to the increasing diversity within the Turkish community. Kreuzberg today, according to Çağlar (2001: 602), is much more complex than can be explained in conventional means using ‘ghetto metaphors,’ which, ‘simplifies the complexities of immigrants’ presence in the society in a particular way.’

First of all, ethnic and religious diversity within the Turkish community itself has now become a matter of identity politics at the local and transnational levels. Strengthened ties with the homeland through developing technology and transportation have contributed to the shaping of these politics in Kreuzberg due to its highly politicized atmosphere. The ethnic identities in question here go beyond ascriptions like German-Turkish, on which there is no consensus, either (cf. Vertovec 2007). In other words, the “Turkish” in the Turkish presence in Kreuzberg today is not a monolithic category anymore. Next, compared to the early years of migration, Turkish community in Berlin today is more dispersed across the socioeconomic, political, and intellectual continuum. In addition to the larger group of working class Turkish residents, there is a more established middle-class Turkish culture in Kreuzberg now. Although still minimal in number, Berlin-born, highly educated white-collar professionals, artists and intellectuals with Turkish background have found home in Kreuzberg and added to the diversity of the Turkish community here. This middle-class focus more on their lives here rather than in Turkey, having accumulated a five-decade-long social discourse of their own and gaining more skills to integrate into the society. In addition, the Turkish community has produced its business elite in recent years (Yurdakul 2006). The contribution of these business people to the German economy has become more visible in the past few years’ economic crisis. This diversity in ethnic and class terms has had profound sociolinguistic impacts (see Backus et al. 2010). From the Turkish linguistic landscape to advanced pronunciation courses, or Turkish-only bookstores, the Turkish language as spoken in Kreuzberg shows a sophisticated diversity today. It is within this ‘metro-linguistic’ (Otsuji and Pennycook 2010) environment that the school context reported in this study is situated.

Turkish as a School Subject in Kreuzberg

Turkish as an elective language started to be offered in some high schools in Kreuzberg in the 1980s. However, the Berlin school system has changed its strategy with Turkish education of the immigrant children at

the high school level multiple times, such as shifting its status from *first* foreign language to *second* (Beck 1999). Finally in 1996, Turkish was officially recognized as one of the foreign languages that could span *Abitur*, but it was only in 2006 that a central Turkish program for high schools was accepted. *Abitur* in the German education system refers to university preparation, which takes 4 semesters of coursework after a student finishes 10th grade at a *Gymnasium* and passes a central exam known as MSA². After completing the *Abitur*, students apply for university programs in line with their specialization areas, such as science or arts. Approximately 40% of the students with German descent in Berlin are enrolled in *Gymnasiums*, while this ratio is around 15% among students with migration background (Pfaff 2010). According to 2011 estimates³, there are 116 *Gymnasiums* in Berlin, enrolling 80,774 students in total. Only 7 of these schools are located in the legislative district of Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, with a total population of 4676 students. More than 50% of these students come from immigrant backgrounds (n=2630). In Berlin at large, this percentage is roughly about 30.

In some *Gymnasiums* in Kreuzberg, Turkish is offered as an elective foreign language from grades 7 through 10. As with the other language curricula, the Turkish curriculum approved and advised by the Berlin Senate has a major structure to be followed, but its implementation is left to schools. That is to say, schools are independent in writing their own syllabi, choosing instructional materials, and determining the pedagogies to follow (see also Schroeder 2003). The Turkish instruction in grades 7 and 8 focuses more on grammar, vocabulary, and skills development. In grades 9 and 10, the focus widens to include more complex levels of language skills, as much as Turkish history, culture, and literature, and preparation for the Turkish portion of the MSA exam. Majority of Turkish teachers in Berlin schools are of Turkish descent, like Ms. Kaya mentioned above; however not all of them have immigrant background. Through various Euro-Turkish education programs Turkish teachers from Turkey come to Berlin to teach Turkish on short-term contract bases. At the same time, although scarce in number, there are some Turkish teachers of German descent in the Berlin school system.

Theoretical Background

The study that I report in this paper aligns with the linguistic ethnographic tradition of classroom research that is critical in orientation. Drawing on the work of scholars such as Bakhtin, Bourdieu, and Foucault, studies in this framework aim at revealing the complexity of classroom discourse

through close ethnographic analyses and connecting them with larger educational, social, and political contexts (e.g. Duff 2002, Eckert 2000). In this way, classroom language use as lived experience is seen to be closely connected with factors ranging from the design of the curriculum to the socioeconomic background of students. One major focus of research in this tradition has been classrooms with multilingual students coming from immigrant backgrounds. The linguistic diversity in such classrooms has been shown, extensively, to clash with the official monolingual discourses promoted at schools (e.g. Gutierrez et al. 1999, Heller and Martin-Jones 2001, Jaspers 2005, Rampton 2006). Teacher-led languages in the classroom, seen as more ‘authorized,’ have been analyzed to diverge from the unofficial, unauthorized languages that are spoken among students themselves. These unauthorized codes are shown to link directly with the cultural identities the students choose to construct as much as strengthening their solidarity with friends (e.g. Bucholtz 2001, Lytra 2007), and creating safe spaces in the classroom (Canagarajah 2004).

Critically informed linguistic ethnographic studies in educational contexts concern themselves with the ways power operates within classroom discourse, including interactions among teachers and students. In the case of schools with immigrant populations, language becomes the primary tool that contributes to the construction, distribution and execution of power; both because schools as institutions directly contribute to the way languages are spoken and taught, and because immigrant communities are more prone to being challenged by monolingual ideologies adopted at schools (Ricento 2000). These ideologies derive from the macro level structures of nation-states (Heller 1999, Blommaert 1999) that have an important role to play in the construction of what languages students should speak and be taught at school, and how.

While these studies have centered on the mainstream language classrooms, minority languages as taught in immigrant contexts have started to be analyzed through critical linguistic ethnographic lenses in recent years. There is a great variety in these schools across countries with immigrant populations; yet, research is still limited as to analyzing their educational pedagogies (Wei 2008). Turkish as an immigrant language in Europe has been investigated within this framework in a number of contexts. In the UK, for instance, Turkish is taught in complementary schools that operate in the weekends independent of the mainstream educational system. The schools are funded and organized by the Turkish community themselves and have come to develop their own curriculum and materials. Among

others, Blackledge and Creese's (2010) ethnographic study has revealed how nationalist discourses that are prevalent in the teaching of Turkish in these schools were juxtaposed against the hybrid identities bilingual Turkish students construct. These studies align with findings from larger-scale quantitative studies concerning the relationship between Turkish as the core marker of identity within the Turkish community in Europe (Extra et al. 2004). Further critically oriented linguistic-ethnographic studies will help capture the complexity of Turkish as a matter of heritage language instruction in Europe.

Methodology

The data that I analyze in this paper is driven out of my dissertation research that focuses on multilingual identity construction across German, English, and Turkish classes at a middle-sized Gymnasium in Kreuzberg. The school offers Turkish as an elective foreign language course (DaZ)⁴ together with French, Spanish, and German as a Second Language. It is possible to take Turkish as one of the subjects in the MSA exams; yet, not so many students choose this option in this school. In the Turkish class that I observed, less than half of the students were preparing to take Turkish in the MSA exams. Other than that, the motivation for students to choose Turkish varies. For those who start off less fluent, improving their language skills seems to be the main reason. For others at a higher level, increasing their grade averages or learning more about the history and culture seem to be the most stated reasons. The ratio of students taking Turkish in grades 7 through 10 is about 75%, the rest dispersing across DaZ, French, and Spanish as foreign language electives.

My ethnographic fieldwork in this school spanned 3 semesters; I followed one class from the beginning of the 9th grade to the end of the first half of 10th grade across German, English, and Turkish lessons with a focus on five participants. The participant group shows a variety of demographic characteristics, somewhat reflecting the variety in school, and within the Turkish community in Berlin at large. Four of the participants will be my focus in this paper, all of whom have been taking Turkish classes since they were in the 7th grade. Ela and Simla are both Berlin-born girls and come from working-class families in Kreuzberg. Mert, the only male member of the participant group, came from Turkey with his family after finishing second grade. Yelda is two years older than her classmates due to spending time in remedial German after coming to Berlin at the age of 11 to join her family. Following the fieldwork, all of the participants informed me through the Internet that they passed the MSA exams and

started their Abitur, which they are still in the process of obtaining. Interestingly, none of these students had received a Gymnasium recommendation from their elementary schools as they informed me during the fieldwork. If it were not for their families' persistence, they would not be able to attend a Gymnasium and be at the stage of preparing for university now.

In addition to ethnographic observations in the classroom, the data for this project came from audio recordings and interviews. I observed a total of 45 Turkish lessons, and recorded my participants' interactions in 34 of them. On average I joined one of the three Turkish lessons each week. During my observations, I took fieldnotes sitting in the back of the classroom with almost no contribution to the lesson. Still, I see my role in the classroom as a participant observer in that, my position assured 'getting close to people and making them feel comfortable enough with [my] presence' as would be in participant observation (Bernard 2006: 342). My observations were complemented with audio-recordings and interviews with the teachers and students. I placed audio-recorders on my participants' desks throughout the entire lesson time to retrieve their interactions as clearly as possible. In addition, I conducted a total of 11 interviews with the students, and 10 interviews with teachers throughout the fieldwork. I transcribed all interactional and interview data to be able to conduct analysis. For sake of convenience and to reach a wider audience, I am presenting a simplified version of transcriptions in this paper.

In approaching the interactions for analysis, I adopted the tools provided by ethnographic microanalysis (Bloome et al. 2005), which combines a variety of techniques such as ethnography of communication (Gumperz and Hymes 1972), interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz 1982) and micro-ethnography (Erickson 1996). Ethnographic microanalysis of classroom discourse aims at "foregrounding the daily life of classroom" because "classrooms are complex places where teachers and students create and re-create, adopt and adapt, and engage in a full range of human interactions" (Bloome et al. 2005: xvi). This understanding aligns itself with the linguistic anthropological tradition that takes into account the larger societal context in understanding language use. Bloome et al. (2005: xvii), likewise, see the classroom interactions as a part of the system at large: "[a]ny use of language (spoken, written, electronic, etc.) involves complex social, cultural, political, cognitive, and linguistic processes and contexts—all of which are part of the meaning and significance of reading, writing, and using language." Epistemologically speaking, the study subscribes to a

poststructuralist orientation in its approach to language and its speakers, in which boundaries among languages, their speakers, and contexts are blurred. This complexity is a good fit for the analysis of multilingual speakers of immigrant languages (McNamara 2012). I will detail my analysis in the next section.

Analysis

In addition to following the basic requirements of the Berlin Senate Department of Education, the Turkish program in this particular Gymnasium follows its own independent syllabus that centers on themes selected from a course book written by two Turkish writers based in Germany. The teacher Ms. Kaya has indicated multiple times throughout the fieldwork that she found the course book outdated and insufficient for students, yet it is still found to be the most accessible one in the market. The classroom materials, on the other hand, are not restricted to texts from the course book. Rather, the 9th grade syllabus is based on multiple sources of information, such as the Internet, which inevitably brings to the fore multiple discourses they are informed by. In this way, although designed to be monolingual, the 9th grade Turkish syllabus, my particular focus in this paper, shows heteroglossic and multimodal characteristics. The classroom practice as such makes way for transgression among not only languages but also discourses on a regular basis.

In my analysis here, I will first take up the discourse of *standard Turkish*, by which I mean the standard Turkish as spoken in Turkey, devoid of influences from German or any other non-standard varieties. I present this discourse as promoted by the course materials and the teacher herself; and standard Turkish as one of the varieties in the teacher's linguistic repertoire. I will then present the discourse of *Ottoman Turkish* as one of the discourses presented in class through course materials.

Discourse of Standard Turkish

The 9th grade Turkish teacher Ms. Kaya comes from a typical first generation working class immigrant family. Her family moved to Berlin more than 30 years ago when she was a teenager. Holding a university degree, she belongs to the educated minority within the Turkish community in Berlin, and a self-made member of the Turkish middle class in Kreuzberg (cf. Portes and Zhou 1993). Ms. Kaya has been teaching in this school for a number of years now, mostly concentrating in Turkish, but sometimes German history as well. She also coordinates the Turkish program at school and is a member of a number of networks in Berlin. With her ex-

ceptional background, Ms. Kaya represents the secularly-oriented group of Turkish immigrants, who in Turkish *speaks from* an educated, urban, middle-class transnational Turkish space (Blommaert 2005).

Ms. Kaya's approach to teaching can be viewed as a mix of student-centered and teacher-centered pedagogies; but more often the latter than the former. Thus, a typical Turkish lesson taught by Ms. Kaya is marked by the traditional IRE (Initiation-Response-Evaluation) pattern accompanied by her long turns. The following excerpt⁷ is taken from one of her long turns recorded in a lesson focusing on descriptive writing through the topic *news resources*. Right before this excerpt, the topic shifts from newspapers to how fast technology changes, and a teacher-led classroom discussion on technology starts spontaneously.

Ms. Kaya: Bakın, ben *Abitur* yaparken, yani 81 yılında, burada *Volkshochschule*'de daktilo kursuna gittim. Daktilo kursuna gitmek çok özel bir şeydi, aynı bugün siz nasıl bilgisayar kursuna gidersiniz (...) ben orada 10 parmak daktilo yazmasını öğreniyordum. 3 ay kursa gittim ve o benim için çok özel bir şeydi. Yani *Abitur* yapan, liseyi bitiren bir genç bayan daktilo bilmesi lazım çünkü devamlı yazı işleriyle uğraşıyorsun, o benim için çok özel bir şeydi. Fakat aradan zaman geçti, 92 yılında, şey pardon 90, 90 yılında ben *Examen* sınavını yaptım *Examen* sınavını yaptığımda ilk bilgisayarlar çıkmıştı. O zaman da ilk bilgisayarı almak için para biriktirdim, atari belki duymuşsunuzdur, çok eski (...) 1100 mark verdik. 1100 mark çok paraydı o zaman.

“Listen, when I was doing the *Abitur*, that is in the year 81, I went to a typing course here at the *Volkshochschule*. Going to a typing course was a very special thing, just like you going to a computer course today (...) I was learning to type with 10 fingers there. I went to the course for 3 months and it was a very special thing for me. That is, a young woman who finished the high school who is doing *Abitur*, she needs to know how to type, because you are constantly dealing with writing issues, it was a very special thing for me. But time passed, in the year 92, oh sorry, 90, in the year 90 I did my *Examen* test. When I did the *Examen* test the first computers came out. Then I saved up money to buy my first computer, atari, maybe you've heard of it, very old (...) We paid 1100 mark. 1100 mark was a lot of money then.”

As the excerpt indicates, Ms. Kaya draws on her own life story in Berlin and doing so, constructs her narrative in a frame that voices an educated Turk. While her self-positioning in the narrative is characterized by lacking power in trying to reach her target, the language that she uses places her at a higher status than that of the students, suggesting a process (Bloome et al. 2006). Her speech is devoid of any provincial Turkish or German-Turkish accents, in a sense that Bourdieu (1991: 63) would call *petit-bourgeoise hypercorrection*. An example in this excerpt would be her non-omission of the sound /r/ in progressive suffix /-yor/ in syllable-final position (Van Der Hulst and Van De Weijer 1991), as in “öğreniyordum” [I was learning] or “uğraşıyorsun” [you’re dealing with]. Whereas omission of this sound is quite common in colloquial Turkish, and even regular in some dialects, as Van Der Hulst and Van De Weijer (1991) report based on Sezer (1986); its non-omission by Ms. Kaya here might be read as an effort to sound as a standard Turkish speaker.

What is equally worth of attention here, however, is the teacher’s incorporation of voices from the modern urban Turkish in her speech such as the phrase “çok özel bir şeydi” [it was a very special thing for me], that she repeats three times; and the urban-sounding “pardon” [sorry] for self-correction, which is not so likely to belong to a German-Turkish linguistic repertoire. Her turn is monolingual Turkish for the most part, incorporating German only for the culture-specific vocabulary (Abitur, Volkshochschule, Examen). By coining these lexical elements with *yapmak*, she seems to be committing to a German-Turkish usage (see Pfaff 2000 for the use of *yapmak* by German-Turkish children; and Backus 1996 for Dutch-Turkish speakers). However, given the context of her speech, she might as well be vocalizing a Turkish usage inserting (mostly) English nouns into Turkish sentences, a common practice among the educated class in Turkey.

Ms. Kaya’s efforts to sound standard in her Turkish is further evident in incorporating vocabulary with “pure-Turkish” (öz Türkçe) resonance, as inspired by the language of the course materials. The most obvious marker of this style is the adoption of vocabulary made up of Turkish-only roots and affixes. In the following, the teacher starts introducing the new theme, ‘descriptive writing of an event’ and dictates a long description:

Ms. Kaya: Bir açıklama yazdırıcam size, dikte edicem, onu yazmanızı istiyorum, yazın lütfen: Bir olayı canlı bir şekilde sunmak için yapılan betimlemelere olay betimlemesi denir. *Handlungsbeschreibung* oluyo. Olay betimlemelerinde fazla ayrıntıya yer verilmez, nokta. Olayın akışı içinde, virgül, sıraya

göre en önemli noktalarla birlikte, olayın etkileri belirtilir, nokta. Etki burada, *Wirkung, die Wirkung* oluyor. Yani, betimleme yaparken, yani bir olayı başka birisine anlatırken, dinleyici veya okuyucu üzerinde bıraktığı etki, yarattığı etki. Yani bazıları çok dramatize eder, di mi?

“I will have you write an explanation, will dictate, I want you to write it, so please write: The kind of descriptions in order to vividly present an event is called descriptive writing of an event. *Handlungsbeschreibung*, in other words. One does not write much detail in event descriptions, period. In the course of the event, comma, in addition to the most important points in an order, one writes on the effects of the event, period. Effect here is *Wirkung, die Wirkung*. In other words, while describing, that is describing an event to somebody else, the effect it leaves on the listener or reader. You know, some dramatize a lot, right?”

Aware of the novelty of the term ‘betimleme’ that she introduces, Ms. Kaya immediately refers to its German equivalent in her dictation. She does that again with the word *Wirkung* in order to underline the terminological quality of the word “effect.” Doing so, she seems to assume that students know about these terms from their German classes already. By equating the pure-Turkish term *betimleme* directly with its German equivalent, she puts the two in the same standard language category.

Furthermore, her style in directly addressing the students in the first and last sentences of the excerpt diverges from her dictation. She maintains the distance of standard Turkish by inserting “please” at the end of her statement; and uses yet another standard Turkish form, “dramatize etmek” to paraphrase her explanation in the end. As in the case of “yapmak” explained above, “etmek” is a light verb frequently coined with foreign or foreign-rooted verbs. Here, *dramatize* seems to be a loanword adapted from English; but more than a German-Turkish usage as in *Abitur yapmak*, it seems to be an urban Turkish usage. The excerpt reveals, in short, that while Ms. Kaya easily adopts Turkish styles in directly addressing at the students, she helps them focus on form by foregrounding the pure-Turkish term. In Bloome et al. (2005)’s terminology of classroom discourse, she switches from an *interactional world* to the *ideational*, and then again to the interactional. While the interactional world that she creates is a mix of standard Turkish forms; the ideational world that she enacts is marked by back and forth switches.

Students' take on pure-Turkish words with terminological quality is not a straightforward process, however. The excerpts below are taken from students' interactions at their desks during the writing activity following the teacher's turn above. The task is to write a self-description. Yelda is sitting next to Simla, and the two constantly chat in a low tone of voice at their desk as they prepare to start the task. Simla plans the task aloud:

Simla: *Ich weiß. Özgeçmişim und danach kendi betimlemem. Özgeçmişim şu an, betimlemem başka.*
"I know. My biography and then my self-description. My biography at this moment, my self-description [is] something else."

Yelda: Betimleme
 "description"

Simla: Betimleme. Bunu daha süslemeliyim.
 "description (...) I must enrich this more."

Simla switches back and forth Turkish and German in her turn, typical of the peer interactions in this class. As an avid language learner, she has no trouble incorporating in her speech the new word that she hears from the teacher. In the next turn, Yelda picks up on the word *betimleme* only, and repeats it aloud with emphasis on the second syllable "tim". As understood from the recording, this repetition seems to function as a curious experimentation with an unusual word as much as an attempt to reassure the correct pronunciation. Simla's re-taking the word, with emphasis, again, on the second syllable, marks her shared understanding, as much as a confirmation of the correct pronunciation. After a short pause, Simla continues with her planning. In other words, within the context of a regular German-Turkish talk, emphasis on *betimleme* appears as a focus on form, a reflection on this new vocabulary item.

Much later in the task, Simla uses the word again in an out-loud comment on her own writing, but this time Yelda clearly warns her:

Simla: *aslında bu iyi haa, kendimi betimliyorum sonuçta yani*
 "this is nice in fact, I'm describing myself in the end, I mean"

Yelda: betinliyorum değil, betimliyorum!
 "not betinliyorum, betimliyorum!"

Simla: betimliyorum *hab' ich gesagt!*
 "betimliyorum *I said!*"

The exchange shows that the exact pronunciation of the word continues to be a matter of debate between the two girls. Thinking that Simla mispronounced the syllable “tim”, Yelda repeats it with more emphasis. Simla immediately responds to Yelda, at which point she switches to German. As is often observed in bilingual talk, one of the interactional contexts for code-switching is those emotionally marked moments. Being perceived as failing to pronounce correctly seems to turn Simla angry. What is interesting in these two excerpts, then, is Simla’s insertion of pure Turkish vocabulary as a marker of standard Turkish into her German-Turkish speech. In other words, as in the teacher’s turn above, student talk in Turkish is also a combination of various voices in one stretch. It is worth attention how students perceive and transform the teacher’s efforts to sound standard. I will now take a closer look at this perception.

Students’ perceptions of standard Turkish and how it is enacted in class by Ms. Kaya varies. I will focus on two seemingly opposite cases here, the Berlin-born Ela, and the most recent immigrant Yelda. Ela comes from a family with 8 children, and is one of the youngest siblings at home together with her twin sister. She has informed me in the interviews that there is a strong emphasis at home to speak only Turkish, while the only TV channels the family watches are the Turkish ones. She has taken Turkish as a foreign language elective since the 7th grade. Yelda, on the other hand, comes from a small Azerbaijani-Turkish family, who speaks a mix of Azerbaijani, Turkish, and German at home. She retains an accent in her Turkish, while her linguistic repertoire is more sophisticated than her peers in class. Like Ela, Yelda is exposed to a lot of Turkish on television at home. Both girls get high grades in Turkish all the time, but Yelda is usually among the first few in rank in class.

In our interviews, I had the participants elaborate on their ideas of the teacher’s Turkish as much as their own. With respect to Ms. Kaya’s Turkish, Ela had the following to say:

“Frau Kaya, böyle, aşırı böyle, nasıl diyim, ilk başta hatta biz çok gül-müş-tük, hani onun sosyete şivesi var ya böyle, bizim baya komiğimize gitmişti, ama alıştık, bilmiyorum yani.”

“Ms. Kaya is like, over-, like, I mean, we were laughing hard at the beginning [when the teacher spoke], you know she has this high society accent, it made us laugh really hard, but we got used to it, I don’t know.”

With “high society Turkish,” Ela seems to be referring to the word high-society as used in Turkish; however, what she probably implies is the educated Turkish elite that she thinks the teacher is a representative of. Later, Ela contrasts Ms. Kaya’s Turkish with Mr. Yenici’s, another Turkish teacher at school and a resident of Kreuzberg. Unlike Ms. Kaya, Mr. Yenici preserves his dialectal accent in his Turkish for the most part, and this is inevitably transparent to the students. Ela says:

“Herr Yenici bildiğimiz Türkçe konuşan insanlar gibi Türkçe konuşuyo.”

“Herr Yenici speaks Turkish like the people we know who speak Turkish.”

What she is likely to be implying with this statement is the kind of Turkish that is devoid of local elite codes (Blommaert 2005) that define Ms. Kaya’s discourse. Ela describes Mr. Yenici’s speaking a non-standard variety as ‘speaking like the people we know who speak Turkish.’ In another interview, she adds the politeness dimension to her description of the teacher’s talk and connects it with Turkish as spoken in Turkey:

“Ben öyle, nazik konuşmayı sevmem, mesela Frau Kaya öyle. Zaten Türkiye’de olan Türkçe, hoch-Türkçe.”

“I don’t like speaking politely like that, for example FA is like that. The Turkish in Turkey is hoch-Turkish anyway.”

Hoch-Turkish is a term that Ela makes up inspired by *Hochdeutsch*, the perceived standard form of German. By defining the Turkish spoken in Turkey as *hoch-Turkish*, Ela marks a twofold distance from this language; it is both a ‘high’ form of speech that she ‘doesn’t like speaking’; and, termed in this way, it is reminiscent of *Hochdeutsch* that she apparently feels distant to.

At another point in the interview, when asked what she understands from standard Turkish, she clarifies the distinction through her own perception:

“Ne olabilir.. Türkçe, yani bi konuşabilmek, yani bildiğimiz Türkiye-yani standard Türkçe benim için daha çok şey geliyo, mesela Almanya’da yasayan Türkler’in Türkçeyi bilmesi. Ama Türkiye’de olan Türkçe, daha çok böyle standard değil de, ii nasi desem, yüksek Türkçe. Hani diyolar ya hoch-Deutsch, onun gibi, öyle bi şey, olabilir.”

“What might it be... Turkish, I mean, being able to speak, I mean the Turkey- the standard Turkish as we know, feels to me more of, for example, the Turkish knowledge of the Turks living in Germany. But

the Turkish in Turkey, is more like, not standard, but, ihhm, I mean, high Turkish. You know how they say hoch-Deutsch, just like that, something like that, seems to me.”

As she tries to make up her mind about the term standard Turkish, Ela comes to the conclusion that the standard is what she hears from other Turks around her, whereas Turkish spoken in Turkey would be the more prestigious form. This view diverges from the conventional definitions of standard language and the teacher’s promotion of it in the classroom. What the teacher tries to promote and in some instances model as standard Turkish from her perspective sounds to Ela the *high* form of Turkish that she hears in Turkey.

On the opposite end of the spectrum of participants, Yelda has a quite different take on Ms. Kaya’s Turkish:

“Onun Türkçe’siyle benim Türkçem kıyaslanamaz bile...*Ganz ehrlich* Frau Kaya Türkçe bilmiyo.”

“Her Turkish cannot even be compared to my Turkish...*Honestly* Ms. Kaya does not know Turkish.”

Not only is Yelda suspicious of the teacher’s Turkish, she also perceives her own Turkish much better than the teacher’s. Her short switch to German at the beginning of her second sentence marks her strong feelings about the case.

In addition to accent and speech, Yelda comments on Ms. Kaya’s teaching of grammar, which she finds suspicious, too:

“Ama bazen unuttuyo! *Letztes Jahr*, özneyle yüklem, koskoca özneyle yüklem yerini karıştırdı! Ben diyom, parmak kaldırıyom, Hocam, böyle değil diyom, yok, böyle. Sonradan fark etti de, Allah’tan.”

“But she forgets sometimes! *Last year*, she confused the places of subject and verb, the subject and verb! I say, I raise my hand and say, teacher, it’s not like that, but no, it is. Thank God, she realized later.”

This statement complements Yelda’s self-perception of being a better Turkish speaker than the teacher. She indicates in quite a strong way that it is unacceptable to confuse the places of subject and verb; and doing so, positions herself at a knowledgeable status. In contrast to Berlin-born Damla’s self-positioning against Ms. Kaya’s Turkish, the Turkey-born Yelda seems to be confident about her Turkish. Some examples in the next section will reveal more on this perception.

The discourse of standard Turkish promoted in class that I have related here to Ms. Kaya's talk is not the only available discourse in the Turkish lessons. However, it is the standard Turkish discourse juxtaposed against other varieties in class that underline their non-standardness further. This is not solely conveyed through interactions, but also in the ways materials that present non-standard forms are used. One such non-standard form, for instance, is the dialectal varieties of Turkish. Some of these varieties already appear in the hybrid language practices of the multilingual Turkish students (Hinnenkamp 2003). Still, their presentation in the Turkish lessons and reception by the students do not acknowledge this practice, and instead treat them as exotic elements of the language. This was most visible in a series of lessons focusing on folk literature. In one, introducing the famous Turkish minstrel Aşık Veysel, the teacher played one of his poems, "Çiğdem Der Ki" (The Crocus Says) in its song form multiple times from a CD. The class' task was to write down as many words as they could catch during listening. This was a challenging task for the students. As my recordings later revealed, there was a lot of dispute at the desks about the correct spelling or meaning of the words they were trying to catch. After listening for the first time and not catching any word, the following exchange takes place between Ela and Mert in a low voice at their desk:

Ela: Şivesi çok zor!

"His accent is very difficult!"

Mert: Ne şivesi kızım? Türkçe değil!

"What accent? It's not even Turkish!"

Ela: Ne dedin sen?

"What did you just say?"

Mert: Türkçe değil.

"It's not Turkish."

At that point, another girl sitting close to the pair chimes in and confirms that it is Turkish that they are listening to. The rest of the conversation on the tape is inaudible, but this little exchange reveals the students' initial reactions as they listen to the song. A high-achieving student like Mert, who would normally have no problems understanding that the poem *is* in Turkish, was most likely distracted by the central Anatolian accent that Veysel speaks/sings, if not by the quality of recording. The non-standard accent is then a remarkable surface feature for both students that they keep distant from their repertoires.

Meanwhile, listening to the same song at her desk, Yelda is not convinced by the correctness of the pronunciation of certain words that she hears. She talks

to herself: “Hepisi mi, hepsi mi?” (Is it ‘all’ or ‘all?’) after hearing the line “Hepisinden ben âlâyım” (I am more virtuous than all). The original standard Turkish form “hepsi” is used in some Anatolian accents as “hepsi”, inserting another /i/ before the second syllable to ease pronunciation or to match the measure of the line, as a common form of folk poetry. Yelda’s sensitivity to standard Turkish seems to lead her into questioning this non-standard form.

Besides the non-standard forms juxtaposed against the discourse of standard Turkish, the discourse of Ottoman-Turkish as presented in class attracts considerable attention in Ms. Kaya’s 9th grade class. Although the coursebook does not quite contain material in Ottoman Turkish, students are exposed to it through outside sources that the teacher chooses for them. This will be my focus next.

Discourses of Ottoman Turkish

The 9th grade Turkish curriculum aims at introducing students with some basic elements of literature, history, and culture, which are supplemented by sources other than the coursebook. These elements involve, among others, the pre-Republic, Ottoman era history with its examples of literary products; folk literature; and early Republican literature. However, the effort to promote standard Turkish becomes more complicated against these various discourses. To exemplify, one of the issues that need to be solved is the Ottoman Turkish-modern Turkish dichotomy that emerges pretty often in lessons focusing on Ottoman history and literature. Throughout the semester, students read a number of biographies, poems and short stories from this era, and focus on language with the help of the teacher. For instance, in order to acquaint students with the pre-Republic period Turkish literature, Ms. Kaya spent a number of lessons on texts that she chose from the first psychological novel in Turkish, *Eylül*, written by Mehmet Rauf (1901) in the late Ottoman era. The focus of the first lesson was on comprehension of the text:

Ms. Kaya: Ne diyor burada, “o zaman o levha bütün bütün etrafa yayıldı.” Ne diyor?

“What does he say here? ‘then the scene started to spread out’? What does he say?”

Yelda: haa levha, ateşin o şeyi değil mi?
“ohh, levha, isn’t it that thing with the fire?”

X: laava
“laava”

- Ms. Kaya: hayır, lava değil şimdi [smiles]
“nooo, it’s not lava now, come on! [smiles]”
- Simla: laaavaa, ha ha ha
“laaavaa, ha ha ha”
- Mert: benim bildiğim levha tabela gibi bir şeydir mesela sokakta gördüğümüz
“as far as I know, levha is something like a signboard, like those we see on the streets.”
- Ms. Kaya: evet, ama burada mecaz anlamda kullanılıyor,
“yes, but it’s used metaphorically here.”
- Yelda: ateş mi oluyor?
“is it fire?”
- Ms. Kaya: levha resim oluyor
“levha is picture”
- Mert: haa
“haa!”
- Yelda: haa
“haa!”
- Ms. Kaya: yani, o görünüm anlamında levha, *ja?* o görünüm.
“that is to say, levha means that view, *ja?* o görünüm.”

As the excerpt reveals, students have difficulty in grasping the meaning of the sentence the teacher chooses, mainly because they are unfamiliar with the Ottoman-Turkish usage of the word *levha*, a word Arabic in origin. While its Ottoman-Turkish usage refers to ‘view,’ its most commonly acknowledged modern-day usage, which the students are most likely unfamiliar with, means the ‘signboard.’ In Yelda’s lexicon, it is closer to *lava*, as she attempts to describe; however, the word *lava* itself comes from another student, either from his Turkish or German lexicon, as the word sounds similar in these languages. While we understand from Ms. Kaya’s explanation that the word sounded German to her, we get the impression from the way Simla ridicules the word that her friend’s pronunciation might have sounded like a failed Turkish attempt to her. In the end, the teacher explains the meaning of *levha* as used in this Ottoman-Turkish text and the topic shifts to another sentence from the text.

Students have access to Ottoman-Turkish vocabulary not only through texts, but also through popular media that they are familiar with. Turkish

televisions have in recent years invested enormously on expensive productions such as TV series with historical themes. As the Turkish media is quite widespread in Europe, students have awareness of the popular shows and this is quite noticeable in their interactions in and out of class.

In another excerpt from the same lesson above, Ms. Kaya talks about the separation of the living space in rich Ottoman homes. She describes the word *harem* and *selamlık*, which roughly refer to women's and men's living spaces, respectively. Both words, Arabic in origin, continue to survive in modern-day Turkish; but as in *levha* above, with slightly different meanings. In the following excerpt, Ms. Kaya incorporates students into a co-constructed word search:

Ms. Kaya: selamlık ne oluyor çocuklar?
“what do you think selamlık means guys?”

Yelda: salon!
“hall!”

Mert: giriş!
“entrance!”

Ms. Kaya: hayır, selamlık giriş değil işte!
“noo, selamlık is not entrance!”

Yelda: saloon!
“haall!”

Ms. Kaya: [reads] “konağın selamlık tarafı artık ateş içindeydi”
“[reads] the selamlık part of the mansion was now on fire”

Ela: ııı caddeye bakan tarafı?
“ehh, the side overlooking the street?”

Ms. Kaya: değil
“no”

Ela: dışarı bakan değil mi?
“isn't it the part that faces outside?”

Ms. Kaya: değil, şimdi selamlık, tabii-
“no, ok, now, selamlık, of course—”

Simla: *Wohnzimmer, oder?*
“living room, right?”

Ms. Kaya: haremle kadınlara ayrılan daire
“harem is the quarter of women”

Yelda: Topkapı Sarayı’nda var
“there is one in Topkapı Palace!”

Serdar: Muhteşem Yüzyıl!
“The Magnificent Century!”

As the teacher cannot elicit the response that she expects, students compete in offering new suggestions. While Yelda insists on “salon,” Simla feels the need for a clarification check in German, which seems clearer and more available to her than the Ottoman Turkish word “selamlık.” The teacher attempts to redefine *harem* through the end, in an effort to trigger a reconsideration of “selamlık.” This time, however, she inspires in Yelda the actual place of the *harem quarter* in Istanbul, the Topkapı Palace; which in turn reminds Serdar of the famous Turkish TV series *Muhteşem Yüzyıl*⁶. This is followed by an extended chat among students about the latest episode of the series. The students, therefore, respond to the word-search across a wider range of discourses than the teacher initially designs. They present a wider context for one single word in a free-recall fashion in their world of reference: its simplified meaning in German, the name of the spatial context the word denotes, and the name of a TV show which often bears references to the place.

As the word search continues with other new words, Simla and Yelda start chatting at their desks. Simla seems to be inspired by the old Turkish houses that the teacher has been talking about. She remembers another highly popular Turkish TV series based on a novel of the same Ottoman era, namely *Aşk-ı Memnu* (The Forbidden Love). The novel takes place in a mansion similar to the one described so far by the teacher. The two girls exchange the following:

Simla: aynı aşk-ı memnu gibi
“it’s the same as aşk-ı memnu”

Yelda: aşk-ı memnu’dan bi tane daha vardı.
“there was another one like aşk-ı memnu”

Simla: *kennst du adab-ı, adab-ı muâşeret’i biliyo musun?*
“do you know adab-ı, do you know adab-ı muâşeret?”

Yelda: neyi?
“what?”

- Simla: adab-1 muaşeret
“adab-1 muaşeret”
- Yelda: adab-ı?
“adab-ı?”
- Simla: adab-1 muaşeret. Filmi. Çok güzel.
“adab-1 muaşeret. The film. Very nice.”
- Yelda: galiba ben onu düşünüyom. Ama bi tane daha böyle bi şey vardı.
“I think that’s what I have in mind. But there was another thing like this.”

The Persian-based noun phrase structure that follows noun+izafet suffix (-ı)+noun/adjective as in ‘aşk-1 memnu’ is probably what makes Yelda say in her first turn, “there was another one like aşk-1 memnu”. Simla as a response brings up yet another commonly known structure ‘adab-1 muaşeret.’ We understand in the end that she is actually referring to a film with the same name. Focusing on a noun clause as such does not have anything to do with the meaning of the clause. Rather, through its structure, which apparently seems exotic to the students, the noun clause is made the object of attention. The Ottoman Turkish, once again, is stripped off its political connotations in the students’ take on vocabulary. Rather, the Ottoman past, its culture and language become popular cultural items through the power of transnational media and this is seen as something enjoyable.

Especially for Simla, incorporating Ottoman Turkish vocabulary into her speech is a stylistic issue; sometimes as an expression of underlining her adulthood, sometimes as a matter of language play. However, this is always challenged by Yelda, who seems to claim more ownership of Turkish than German in general. In the following playful exchange, Yelda challenges Simla’s use of the Arabic-rooted Turkish word for creatures, *mahlukat*:

- Simla: ne biçim bir mahlukatsın sen?
“what kind of a creature(s) are you?”
- Yelda: sen önce mahlukatın ne olduğunu biliyo musun?
“do you know what creature(s) is, before anything else?”
- Simla: *Natürlich!* Yaratık!
“Of course! Creature!”

Knowing the meaning of an Arabic-rooted word seems to be a matter of sophistication between the girls. Simla shows her strong feelings about it in her bilingual utterance in the last line, showing off her strong hand against Yelda.

To recapitulate, the Turkish ‘linguistic supermarket’ at Bertolt Brecht Gymnasium includes discourses alternative to the discourse of standard Turkish. It is hard to claim that students readily subscribe to any of these discourses. It is equally questionable, on the other hand, whether any of the possible monolingual discourses cater for the needs of the multilingual students presented in this article. Within the current complexity of immigrant communities, standard Turkish as promoted in Turkish classes remains to be an unattainable goal while alternative variants and their discourses continue to be underestimated. This brings to mind the question that Schroeder (2006) raised with regard to the availability of Turkish as first, second, or foreign language. He questions the monolithic take on Turkish as an immigrant language and asks “which Turkish” we should be concerned with when we focus on German-Turkish speakers. The same question could be extended to the particular case of formal Turkish education in Germany. The discourses to follow in these programs are intertwined with concerns about the definition of standard Turkish and its role vis-à-vis other variants, including what has come to be analyzed as German-Turkish.

Conclusion

Debates on mother tongue education in mainstream German schools are almost non-existent in social discourse in Germany. Immigrant first languages continue to be discussed with respect to their potential intervention on the learning and use of German. The recent years’ rising local interest on Turkish among the German-speaking community, remedial language courses for the spouses who hit the language requirement of the new immigration law, or the variety added to the Turkish language private courses do not transfer as such into the mainstream school system. As a result, the Turkish curriculum developers do not receive enough governmental support to develop their curricula in a way to contribute better to the Turkish students’ multilingual school experience. This includes the development of more bilingually-oriented models instead of establishing new systems of parallel monolingualism.

Students with Turkish background are not only able to switch back and forth languages, but they show sophisticated awareness of different varieties and discourses within those languages. Their uptake on Turkish is much beyond the stigmas that put them as failing language speakers. Not only do they pull resources from the Turkish heteroglossia, they are also

able to combine them in a way that would best reflect their linguistic identity. Their more cosmopolitan outlook on their lives in Kreuzberg than their teachers' helps them evaluate the language exerted upon them. This suggests that traditional teaching models of Turkish need to go through some screening in which students' needs and goals are taken to be central.

The multiplicity of discourses in circulation in the Turkish classes is in fact a fertile ground for curriculum developers and policy makers. By being exposed to many faces of the same language, students develop a better multilingual flexibility that will eventually make them more "integrated" citizens. Due to lack of connection among language classes, this potential is being underexploited for the time being; however, given the current birth rates and the future projections of Germany, Turkish education might be more important in the near future than it seems right now.

Notes

- ¹ In this paper, I prefer to keep the German word *Gymnasium* as it is, to underline the unique character of these schools. In the German education system, *Gymnasiums* are the type of high schools that are oriented academically and target higher education.
- ² An acronym for *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* (Secondary School Finishing Exam).
- ³ All factual data retrieved 06.02.2013 from: http://www.statistik-berlin-brandenburg.de/produkte/Jahrbuch/jb2012/JB_201204_BE.pdf
- ⁴ This remedial German course offered in some schools in Berlin is designed for students who require supplementary instruction in German.
- ⁵ All through the text, English translations are in italics, German is marked in bold form, and the foci of analyses are underlined. All English translations are mine.
- ⁶ Translated as *The Magnificent Century*, this TV series has been the most popular and the most expensive ever produced and aired on a Turkey-Turkish TV channel. It is about the life and reign of the Turkish Emperor Süleyman of the 16th century.

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Sınıftaki Rakip Söylemler: Berlin’de Türkçe Öğretimi

Işıl Erduyan*

Öz

Berlin’de Türkçe eğitimi 1980’lerde, okul çağına gelen göçmen çocuklarının sayısının artmasıyla birlikte başlamıştır. Türk nüfusun yoğun olduğu mahallelerde bulunan çeşitli düzeydeki okullarda Türkçe seçmeli dil dersi olarak günümüze kadar okutulagelmıştır. Bunun yanında, bazı okullarda orta öğretim bitirme sınavları (MSA) ve üniversiteye hazırlık programlarında (Abitur) Türkçe diğer yabancı dillerle birlikte alan seçeneklerinden birini oluşturmaktadır. Bu makalede Kreuzberg semtinde bulunan ve nüfusunun büyük bir bölümünü Türk kökenli öğrencilerin oluşturduğu bir lisenin 9. sınıf Türkçe derslerinde yapılan etnografik bir araştırmaya yer verilmektedir. Makalenin hedefi söz konusu derslerde öne çıkan iki temel söylemi incelemektir: standart Türkçe söylemi ve Osmanlı Türkçesi söylemi. Bu söylemlerin sınıfta nasıl oluşturulup kullanıldığı mikroetnografik bir analiz yöntemi aracılığıyla gösterilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Çokdillilik, sınıf söylemi, Avrupa’da Türkçe eğitimi, dilbilimsel etnografi, konuşma analizi

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Конкуренция дискурсов в классе: обучение турецкому языку в Берлине

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Аннотация

Обучение турецкому языку в Берлине началось в 1980-х годах в связи с увеличением количества детей турецких мигрантов школьного возраста. В школах различного уровня образования, находящихся в районах плотного проживания турецкого населения, турецкий язык в качестве предмета по выбору преподается по сегодняшний день. Вместе с этим, в некоторых школах турецкий язык наряду с другими иностранными языками является экзаменом по выбору среди выпускных экзаменов средней школы (MSA) и программой по выбору наряду с другими иностранными языками среди подготовительных программ для поступления в университет (Abitur). В этой статье даны результаты этнографического исследования, проведенного на уроках турецкого языка 9-ого класса общеобразовательной школы, находящейся в районе Кройцберг и большинство учащихся которой составляют ученики турецкого происхождения. Целью данной статьи является исследование двух основных дискурсов, выявленных на этих уроках: стандартный турецкий дискурс и османский дискурс. Формирование и использование этих дискурсов в классе показано методом микроэтнографического анализа.

Ключевые слова

многоязычие, дискурс класса, обучение турецкому языку в Европе, языковая этнография, анализ речи

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