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Developing a language teaching policy for the endangered languages in Turkey

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The ability to reach unity in diversity will be the beauty and the test of our civilization.

GANDHI

Abstract

The present study mainly aimed to investigate the discursive construction of macro-level language teaching policy for the living languages and dialects in the context of Turkey introduced as part of the 4+4+4 education reform. To do this, first the official documents were examined in order to reveal the regulations conducted on macro-level, then the discursive construction of these documents were explored with the framework of Critical Discourse Analysis. The results indicated both promising and disappointing attempts as regards to the development and implementation of the policy indicating two main contradictory premises as democratization and bureaucratization. Furthermore, the exercise of these contradictory premises were revealed via two major discourse categories each of which involving two extreme points of a continuum as obviousness versus obscurity, and equality versus dominance. The implications of the study suggested development of policies with higher-level involvement of relevant actors in all procedures of language policy and planning and developing equal opportunities for all the languages spoken among the local communities.

Keywords: Language teaching policy, endangered languages, critical discourse analysis, living languages and dialects.

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Introduction

In today's world, globalization has made considerable impact on all aspects of life together with the language policies of countries all over the world (Tsui & Tollefson, 2007. cited in Kırkgöz, 2009) due mainly to the rising awareness for preserving minorities with respect to ethnic, religious, denominational. However, the other side of the coin showed the negative influence of globalization on several languages spoken by the minority individuals. Doubtless, there is a relationship between linguistic imperialism and endangered languages, in that as the linguistic imperialism in general (e.g. English) and official languages of a nation-state such as Turkish in particular increases, languages of small communities are becoming endangered or even extinct (Brutt-Griffler, 2009).

Büyükkantarcıoğlu (2012) drew attention to the importance of adopted ideology as a driving force on the survival or assimilation of any local language, culture and people within the dominant powers. Therefore, it is the preference of the powerful on making one superior to another via educational policies. The United Nations' Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) published an interactive digital Atlas (<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/>) based on information collected by over 30 linguists. According to UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger, there are fifteen languages endangered in Turkey and three of them are already extinct. Even if Turkey was claimed not to make any systematic attempt to save these languages, language teaching policy initiative for living languages and dialects was introduced as part of 4+4+4 education reform in 2012. With the initiation of "Living Languages and Dialects" (LLD) course, several languages such as Adyge, Abkhaz, Georgian and Lazuri were introduced.

According to Büyükkantarcıoğlu (2012), both the scientific and the popular discourse have specifically paid attention to the phenomenon of endangered languages, so this phenomenon needs consideration in terms of both "among the dusty pages of history" and "within the socio-politically and linguistically manipulated local and global strategies of today" (22). Grounded on the second conceptualization of Büyükkantarcıoğlu (ibid), this study aimed to shed light on the issue of endangered languages from the perspective of language teaching policy in the Turkish context. Therefore, this study intended to meet the need in the area of language teaching policy research in general and policy research on the endangered languages in particular in Turkish context with the single official language: Turkish.

Language Planning and Policy (LPP) research is mainly concerned with establishing connections between macro-, meso-, and micro-level language policies. Macro-level analysis of LPP pays attention to the large-scale sociopolitical forces, historical movements and the national and supranational policy documents. However, power in language policy is not restricted to one level; instead Blommaert (2013, p. 133) claimed

there are a number of hegemonies that co-occur in a social event, but their co-occurrence is layered, with macro-hegemonies (e.g. the official language policy) playing into and against meso- and micro-hegemonies (e.g. one's own ways of organizing practice, or more local pressures on performance).

In particular, this study intended to investigate the discursive construction of the macro-policy initiative to develop language teaching policy for LLD as an elective school subject. Therefore, the aims of the study were twofold: First, to document the regulations made as regards to the language teaching policy initiative for living languages and dialects reported in official documents; second, to examine discursive construction of these documents as macro-level policy initiatives from a critical stance.

Review of Literature

Research on LPP covers various issues concerning language use such as minority language empowerment (McCarty, Romero-Little, Warhol & Zepeda, 2011; Nicholas, 2011), language maintenance (Nagai & Lister, 2003; Tufi, 2013), diaspora communities like Tamil (Canagarajah, 2011), migration (King & Haboud, 2011), and multilingualism (Balfour, 2007; Hult, 2010).

To start with, McCarty et. al. (2011) and Nicholas (2011) have addressed the increased value young language users display towards heritage languages in the USA. The former examined minority language empowerment in Native American and urban immigrant schools, while the latter addressed language marginalization among the Hopi youth. In a similar vein, Nagai and Lister (2003) reported the struggle of a few elementary school teachers to provide instruction via integrating their indigenous language and culture in the vernacular education context of Papua New Guinea. Tufi (2013) explored the struggle to maintain the minority language ‘Sardinian’ from a language ideology perspective. The specific characteristic of diaspora groups defined as ‘hybrid’ due to the lack of language-and-community models to address those communities was reported by Canagarajah (2011). King and Haboud (2011) noted the impact of globalization in general and migration in particular on language learning opportunities for youngsters in Ecuador concerning the indigenous language ‘Quichua’.

Balfour (2007) introduced school and higher education contexts that develop multilingual language policies. Considering the methodological perspectives, Hult (2010) proposed the ecology of language as a conceptual orientation to investigate the multilingual language policies in a holistic manner. He further suggested the ‘discourse-oriented work’ with a specific focus on time and space to reveal the connections between language policies and social actions of individuals.

Specifically, interest in using Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) in language policy research has been on the rise due perhaps to the following reasons as: 1) its attention to the various layers of context in which a text is produced and interpreted lines up well with the multiple layers of context through which language policies must pass; 2) its focus on discourse and power explains how language policies, and societal discourses, can hegemonically sculpt language education toward monolingual practices; and 3) while CDA recognizes the power of macro discourses, it allows for counter-discourses (Johnson, 2010, p. 64).

Theoretical Framework

Along with the argument discussed above, the framework proposed by Van Dijk formed the theoretical basis for the present study due mainly to the underlying assumption for

the convergence of discourse and power. Thus, *control of public discourse* and *control of mind* were suggested as the two main resources to reveal discursive power; in addition, he introduced *Power* and *Hegemony* as two distinctive characteristics of macro level political discourse (2001).

Power in general and *social power* of groups and institutions in particular were defined as *control* in Van Dijk's framework, in that "groups have (more or less) power if they are able to (more or less) control the acts and minds of (members of) other groups". Such perception on power implied the "*power base* of privileged access to scarce social resources" (e.g. money, knowledge, information, and etc.). Therefore, Van Dijk noted to the presence of different types of power depending on the resources used to exercise such power (2001, pp. 354-355).

'*Hegemony*' as another concept used for the macro level analysis of a political discourse means "the dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas" (<http://global.britannica.com/topic/hegemony>). In this regard, Van Dijk (2001) claimed that "power is not always exercised in obviously abusive acts of dominant group members, but may be enacted in the myriad of taken-for-granted actions of everyday life" (p. 355). He further emphasized that if an agency is strong enough to influence persons' mind (e.g. their views) such an influence may give the opportunity to this agency to indirectly control actions of these people.

Context and *structure of text and talk themselves* were proposed to explore how the powerful social groups control the public discourse, yet *structure of text and talk themselves* was not addressed as there was no verbal data to examine this aspect of the policy. Thus, *context* was described as "the mentally represented structure of those properties of the social situation that are relevant for the production or comprehension of discourse" and five distinct categories were drawn upon to identify the context exercising the control of the public discourse as: "*overall definition of the situation, setting (time, place), ongoing actions (including discourses and discourse genres), participants in various communicative, social, or institutional roles, as well as their mental representations: goals, knowledge, opinions, attitudes, and ideologies*". It was acknowledged that the context is controlled when one or more of these categories are controlled (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 356). Additionally, *deletion* and *substitution* as rhetorical operations were used to perform the micro-level analysis of the written policy documents. Simply, *deletion* shows that even if particular information is expected in a given context, it "is deleted for similar partisan reasons" and *substitution* refers to using and expressing "a concept different from the one would expect in the present context" (Van Dijk, 1997, p.35).

Another component to reveal the discursive power was *control of mind* involving *contextual* and *discursive* dimensions, yet still only the discursive control of mind is concerned in this study because of the mere consideration of the macro-level practices as the frame of the study. In terms of *discursive control of mind*, global and local levels of discourse were taken into consideration. "At the global level of discourse, topics may influence what people see as the most important information of text or talk, and thus correspond to the top levels of their mental models." Within this context, the argumentation defended might seem

to be persuasive due to the “hidden” social opinions, so these opinions were taken for granted by the recipients. As for the local level of discourse, “to understand discourse meaning and coherence, people may need models featuring beliefs that remain implicit (presupposed) in discourse”. Thereby, the implicit notification of beliefs functions as manipulation; in other words, these beliefs are not explicitly asserted and as a result, there is not much chance to challenge them (Van Dijk, 2001, p. 358).

In light of the insights gleaned from critical discourse analysis as a theoretical basis, this study by and large attempted to examine the reproduction of the language teaching policy initiative for “living languages and dialects” as a discursive practice written in the macro-policy documents. To that end, the following research questions were formulated;

- 1) What do the language teaching policy documents for living languages and dialects published between 2012 and 2016 focus on?
- 2) How is the language teaching policy for living languages and dialects represented in the macro-policy documents?

Methodology

Based on the research questions posed above, the methodological frame of this study can be stated in two main stages: (i) document analysis to reveal the procedures undertaken concerning the language teaching policy initiative for living languages and dialects reported in the official documents (ii) a two-dimensional critical analysis focusing on linguistic (micro level) and social (macro level) analysis of the issue as a unified whole.

Starting with the document analysis, documents published in the Official Bulletin of the Ministry of Education (MoNE) between 2012 and 2016 and Official Gazette dating back to 1983 were obtained from the internet. CDA framework of Van Dijk was incorporated for the analysis of these documents due mainly to the explicit position taken to understand, expose and resist social inequality.

In this sense, Van Dijk (2001) classified a list of essential requirements to conduct a critical discourse research as: ‘focusing on social problems and political issues’, ‘multidisciplinary critical analysis of the social problem’, ‘not only describing but also explaining the discourse structure in relation to the social structure’ and ‘focusing on how discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge power and dominance in society’ (p. 353). Grounding on this perspective, the social problem and political issue concerned in this study is “the language teaching policy initiative for living languages and dialects”. Multidisciplinary critical analysis of this problem was tried to be conducted via linguistic (micro level) and social (macro level) analysis. Thereby, language teaching policy initiative for living languages and dialects as a social problem was first described by exploring the official documents (e.g. Official Bulletin) as the discourse structure, and this structure’s relation to the social structure was explained by analyzing the data at macro level. Lastly, how these discourse structures enact, confirm, legitimate, reproduce or challenge power and dominance in society was examined by taking an explicit position as a researcher.

Results and Discussion

The results of the study briefly overviewed the historical background of language teaching policy initiatives for living languages and dialects performed by the Turkish government since 1983. More specifically, the official regulations on this policy initiative which have been performed between 2012 and 2016 were reported, and the discursive construction of this policy initiative in these more recent macro-policy documents was examined via CDA as the last step.

Overview of the Historical Context of Policy Initiatives for Living Languages and Dialects

Language teaching policy initiatives for living languages and dialects dated back to the “Foreign Language Education and Teaching Act” issued in 1983, the act was renamed as “Foreign Language Education and Teaching along with Learning Different Languages and Dialects Act by Turkish Citizens” as a result of law amendment on a variety of legislations approved on 03.08.2002 and issued in the Official Gazette dated 09.08.2002. Thus, this act involved not only the foreign languages taught at the educational institutions and the schools providing medium of instruction with a foreign language but also the study of different languages and dialects spoken conventionally in daily life by the Turkish citizens. For this reason, the act provided the permission for the private institutions to open a course to study these languages. In this regard, “Regulation about the Study of Different Languages and Dialects Conventionally Used in Daily Life by Turkish Citizens” issued in the Official Gazette dated 20.09.2002 and numbered 24882 explained the procedure to open a course to study these languages and dialects. For instance, the regulation informed about the participants, and the agency to certify the course curriculum. The participants have to be Turkish citizens and a graduate of at least primary school, in case they are younger than 18 years old, written permission from their parents is required, 6th, 7th and 8th grade primary school students can register in the courses only at weekends and during the summer holiday.

However, this regulation was readjusted in 2003; in that the Official Gazette dated 05.12.2003 and numbered 25307 diversified the institutions to open a course for living languages and dialects so that not only private institutions but also private foreign language teaching institutions could open a course to study living languages and dialects.

More recent regulations were started to be enacted as a result of “Amendment to Some Law Along with the Primary Education Law” approved on 30 March 2012 and issued on 11 April 2012 in the Official Gazette. This act was about the education reform called 4+4+4, in that a wide range of regulations were made such as minimalizing the schooling age, extending the basic compulsory education to secondary schools and restructuring the primary education as primary school and middle school. This act also introduced a range of elective courses including “Koran”, “The Life Span of the Prophet” in secondary schools and religious vocational high schools. Based on this law amendment, the permission to run private schools providing medium of instruction with different languages and dialects conventionally used in daily life by Turkish citizens was approved on the 2nd of March 2014 and issued in the Official Gazette dated 13.03.2014 numbered 28940. Finally, “Foreign Language Education and Teaching along with Turkish Citizens’ Learning Different Languages and Dialects Act” approved on 14.10.1983 and regulated on 03.08.2002 was extended via including all the

regulations effectuated between the years 2002 and 2014, and the Secondary Education Legislation published in 2015 presented this revised and enlarged version of the act.

Last but not least, of all the documents examined so far, none explained the reference to the term “different languages and dialects conventionally used in daily life”. In particular, although “Koran” and “The Life Span of the Prophet” were clearly defined as elective courses in Amendment to Some Law Along With the Primary Education Law, there was no clear reference to other elective courses such as LLD.

Table 1

Historical overview of the policy initiatives for living languages and dialects

Name of the Regulation	Document Type	Acceptance Date	Source
Foreign Language Education and Teaching Act	Law	14.10.1983	Official Gazette
Foreign Language Education and Teaching along with Turkish Citizens' Learning Different Languages and Dialects Act	Law	03.08.2002	Official Gazette
Regulation about the Study of Different Languages and Dialects Conventionally Used in Daily Life by Turkish Citizens	By-law	18.09.2002	Official Gazette
Regulation about the Study of Different Languages and Dialects Conventionally Used in Daily Life by Turkish Citizens	By-law	05.12.2003	Official Gazette
Amendment to Some Law Along with the Primary Education Law	Law	30.03.2012	Official Gazette
Amendment to a Variety of Legislations in order to Improve Basic Rights and Liberties	Law	02.03.2014	Official Gazette
Regulation about the Study of Different Languages and Dialects Conventionally Used in Daily Life by Turkish Citizens (revised and enlarged version)	Law	2015	Secondary Education Legislation

Official Regulations for LLD as an Elective Course

Taking the historical overview reported above to frame the governmental initiatives regarding language teaching policy for living languages and dialects, the official regulations issued ministerial level since 2012 were examined. The documents analyzed were the Official Bulletin of MoNE published between 2012 and 2013, official letters announced by General Directorate of Basic Education of MoNE and General Directorate of Human Resources of MoNE. To that end, five main categories emerged as: 1) weekly course schedules, 2) announcements for elective courses, 3) curriculum for different branches of the LLD course, 4) teaching materials for primary and secondary education, 5) teacher appointments for educational institutions of MoNE.

Regulations for Weekly Course Schedules

LLD has been offered as an elective course since 2012-2013 school year. Considering the regulations for the weekly course schedule, six different types of institutions were indicated as public primary education institutions, religious vocational secondary schools, disabled primary education institutions for visually-impaired, hearing impaired, orthopedically handicapped, mild-level mentally retarded children and application centers / schools for special education (heavily or medium-level mentally retarded / autistic children), music and ballet primary education institutions, private primary education institutions and school of minorities. LLD as a school subject was introduced as an elective course under the category of Language and Expression. It is offered for two hours in a week in each grade of secondary schools (grades five to eight), and students can register for the course for four times at most during their primary education. The elective course classes are formed according to the students' proficiency level; namely, the students from different grades of middle school are grouped into one class according to their preferred elective course.

Elective courses in Application Centers / Schools for Special Education (heavily or medium-level mentally retarded / autistic children), have been determined by the teachers council's selection from the "List of Elective Courses for Special Education Schools and Institutions". This course selection procedure considers factors like the parents' views, students' interest and the environmental conditions. However, these courses were previously determined by the school administration depending on the parents' demand according to the decision dated 29.06.2012 and issued in the Official Bulletin of MoNE in August 2012. More recently, with the amendment made in 2013 elective courses for Application Centers / Schools for Special Education Institutions (heavily or medium-level mentally retarded / autistic children) were specified, now that LLD is not offered in these institutions as "Language and Expression" category was not included in the list of elective courses.

One last aspect of weekly course schedules is the amendment made to the religious vocational secondary schools' program; in doing so, even if the regulation explained above was approved for these schools in 2012, the number of hours for elective courses including LLD was regulated as either one or two hours in a week depending on the number of elective courses chosen. In other words, if there is only one elective course chosen, it is instructed two hours a week; however, if two different elective courses are chosen, then each course can be taught for one hour in a week. On a more recent change, elective course duration for 8th grade religious vocational middle school students lessened to a week in 2014.

Ministerial Level Announcements for Elective Courses

With respect to announcements for elective courses as the second category for official documents on ministerial level, a total of six official letters announced and published between 20.06.2012 and 14.04.2016 in the General Directorate of Basic Education's website were reported. In addition, the videos for elective courses broadcasted on Education and Computer Network (Eğitim Bilişim Ağı-EBA) were examined. The official letters aimed to clarify the procedure to fulfill in selecting elective courses; for instance, academic counselor to guide in course selection, deadline for selection and minimum number of students required to start a course were notified. As for the elective courses videos, videos for a total of sixteen

distinct courses were publicized on 06.09.2013 and they are still available; even so no specific video to introduce LLD as an elective course has been posted yet.

However, it was of particular importance to examine the sample petitions attached in these official letters chronologically, because it was observed that the number of languages and dialects offered was increased. The petition published in 2013 involved two main categories for LLD including four languages named as Adyge and Abkhaz in one group and Kurmanji and Zazaki in the other group. Taking a step further, six different languages were offered separately for selection in 2015, and these languages were Adyge, Abkhaz, Kurmanji, Zazaki, Lazuri, and Georgian respectively. Finally, all the languages offered in 2015-2016 school year were noted to be offered again in 2016-2017 school year along with two different forms of Adyge as “Adyge-Prepared According to Cyrillic Alphabet” and “Adyge-Prepared According to Latin Alphabet”.

Regulations for Curriculum Design

As regards to the curriculum for different branches of the LLD course, documents published in the Official Bulletin of MoNE were reported. Five documents informing about the curriculum of the languages Adyge and Abkhaz, Kurdish, Lazuri, Georgian and Adyge-Prepared According to Latin Alphabet were found.

It is of particular importance to note that Kurmanji and Zazaki mean Kurdish. Although preparing course books for Adyge and Abkhaz, Kurdish and Lazuri were called for and decided in the abovementioned documents, course book preparation for Georgian and Adyge-Prepared According to Latin Alphabet was not stated; instead teaching materials was suggested to be used to implement the curriculum. Interestingly, even if LLD course is included in a wide range of primary education institutions, the curricula designed were intended only the public secondary schools and religious vocational high schools. With a doubt, the curriculum designed for primary education institutions do not suit the needs for the disabled primary education institutions and even for Application Centers / Schools for Special Education.

Teaching Materials

As for the teaching materials for primary and secondary education category, seven documents were found in the Official Bulletin of MoNE published between 2012 and 2016. Of all the documents examined, none of them reported a course book prepared for the languages. Instead, the materials prepared to be used in LLD course was named as teaching aids. In so doing, nine different materials for the languages Kurdish (Kurmanji and Zazaki), Adyge and Abkhaz, Georgian and Lazuri were found.

Teacher Appointments

Last but not least, teacher appointments for educational institutions of MoNE as the last category were examined and a series of crucial developments were observed. Four different documents were found in the Official Bulletin concerning the teacher appointments specifically referring LLD course between 2012 and 2016, and legislation for teacher appointments held in February, 2015 was included in the analysis. By this framework, the criteria for teacher selection and appointment for LLD course was first set and announced in

2012. In this regard, the Official Bulletin of MoNE in October 2012 noted that graduates of Turkish Language Teaching, Turkish Language and Literature Teaching, Social Sciences Teaching together with Turkish Language and Literature, Contemporary Turkish Dialects and Literatures who completed a non-thesis master program for relevant branch of LLD were given priority in appointment. Still other teachers who certify having enrolled in a relevant course during their undergraduate and postgraduate studies were also approved to be appointed. This criterion defined for teacher appointment in 2012 was included in the category of eligibility requirements in 2014. Thereby, the Official Bulletin of MoNE in March 2014 reported the document called “Teaching Branches, Appointment and Teaching Principles” which provided a chart describing 88 different branches for teaching as a list. Besides, this chart consisted of “Statements Regarding Teachers from Which Branches Can Teach Some Courses” at the end and teacher appointment for LLD course was categorized under the title of “Some Courses” with its criterion determined in 2012.

On a more positive note, teacher appointment criteria for LLD course as a separate branch was added to the chart titled “Teaching Branches, Appointment and Teaching Principles” in the Official Bulletin of MoNE in September 2014. Notably, such an initiative indicates the rising importance given to the LLD course on the ministerial level because it became a specific and definite course. Another major progress was about the teacher appointment requirement for graduation department of the teacher candidates in 2015. According to the Official Bulletin of MoNE in September 2015, graduates with a teaching certificate were announced to be given priority in teacher appointment for LLD course. Especially promising was the teacher appointment held in February 2015 as a first attempt to hire teachers specifically for LLD course. According to the legislation stating teacher appointments for the period of February 2015, ten quotas (eight for Kurmanji, two for Zazaki) were allocated for LLD course.

Critical Discourse Analysis of the Macro-Policy Documents

Based on the CDA framework adopted the discursive construction of language teaching policy for living languages and dialects reported in the macro-policy documents were indicated two main contradictory praxis of discourse as democratization versus bureaucratization leading to anti-democratic practices. In particular, the exercise of these two contradictions were revealed via two major discourse categories each of which presenting two extreme ends as the discourses of (i) obviousness versus obscurity and (ii) equality versus dominance. The analysis of the discursive data for each category was reported in accordance with the micro-level and macro-level of discourse as a unified whole (Van Dijk, 2001).

Obviousness versus Obscurity

The critical analysis of the official documents revealed the exercise of control over the context indicating *obviousness* whereas micro-level analysis of these documents as another component to control the public discourse displayed *obscurity*. From this perspective, the context to practice language teaching policy for living languages and dialects framed the procedure on how to initiate a course to study these languages and dialects and the agency to certify the curriculum to be used in the course regarding *overall definition of the situation*. In

addition, *the setting* was extended from private institutions and private language courses for foreign languages to six different types of institutions and scheduling the course for private institutions as at the weekends and during summer holiday. *Ongoing actions* to practice the policy were notified on which criteria the classes for the course should be formed such as the maximum time for enrollment and weekly course hours. Besides, the official letters examined provided the information on how to fulfill the procedure for selection by noting who is responsible to guide the students in selecting elective courses?, and when is the due date to finish selection?. As regards to the *participants in various communicative, social or institutional roles*, the macro-policy initiative involved the information about the participation requirements to a private language courses as being a Turkish citizen, being a graduate of at least primary school, and these requirements showed the role of *participants in social roles*. More recently, a new regulation explained the criteria for the possible candidates to be appointed as a teacher for these courses illustrated *the participants in institutional roles*.

However, taking a critical glance at the linguistic (micro-level) analysis of these documents displayed some crucial points, in that it was recognized that none of the documents explained “different languages and dialects conventionally used in daily life” and which languages and dialects are involved in this term indicated praxis of *deletion* as a rhetorical operation. Another *deletion* practice was observed with the videos for elective courses because there was no specific video to introduce LLD. The praxis of *substitution* as another rhetorical operation was detected and it was revealed that the teaching materials were named as “teaching aids” rather than “a course book” even though the curriculum to teach these languages had already been designed. A similar practice was observed in the document of “Statements Regarding Teachers from Which Branches Can Teach Some Courses”, that is, teacher appointment criteria for LLD course was categorized under the title of “Some Courses” without referring to the full name of the course. However, this substitution practice changed by attaching it into the list as a separate branch rather than being grouped under the category of “Some Courses”.

Equality versus Dominance

A further critical analysis of these macro-policy documents as a unified whole involving micro and macro levels of discourse from the perspective of *discursive control of mind* indicated several practices located at the two extreme ends as *equality versus dominance*. Considering local level of discourse as part of discursive control of mind, several promising practices exemplified *the discourse of equality* such as the rising number and variety of institutions to open a course to study these languages starting with the private institutions (e.g. private language courses for foreign languages) towards the permission to run private schools administering medium of instruction with different languages and dialects, and the more recent regulations on providing the opportunity to register the so-called LLD course in six different institutions of MoNE. In essence, this policy initiative by its nature provided the discursive control of mind at a global level mainly because developing such a policy involved a highly persuasive argument, in that it showed the endeavor of the government agencies to preserve the endangered languages which have been concerned both in scientific and popular discourse.

However, performing discursive control of mind at the local level of discourse indicated *discourse of dominance* as well. That is, the dominance of some groups over some others was observed in the macro-policy documents. Within this context, regulations for curriculum design presented somewhat hegemony praxis performed via course book preparation procedure because there was a call for preparing course book for Adyge and Abkhaz, Kurdish and Lazuri, but there was no reference to Georgian. Another dominance practice was clearly observed in the regulations made for teacher appointments since appointments for LLD course involved ten quotas eight of which were for Kurmanji and two of which were for Zazaki. Therefore, within the local level application of discourse, it seems that the regulations made provided preference for the powerful (government) to make some languages and as a result their citizens superior to some others via educational policy even if it was not explicitly stated.

Democratization versus Bureaucratization

The above mentioned contradictions with respect to developing a language teaching policy revealed two main counter discourses as democratization and bureaucratization leading to anti-democratic practices. That is, at one end of the continuum were the regulations presenting promising official improvements starting with the permission granted for opening private courses with the medium of instruction in different languages in private schools. At the other end, were those of which bestowing a privilege on the praxis of some languages and thereby its citizens against others with varying ethnic, cultural and language backgrounds.

This policy initiative illustrated a major *discourse of democratization* considering the discourses of obviousness and equality. That is, the discourse of obviousness presented several encouraging improvements whose spectrum has been on the rise, as long as the setting to learn these languages and the variety of languages introduced are considered. Thus, Turkish citizens have been provided with increased opportunities to learn these languages in varying settings starting with the private institutions towards the primary education institutions. In addition, the variety of languages and dialects has been diversified by adding different varieties such as “Adyge-Prepared According to Cyrillic Alphabet” and “Adyge-Prepared According to Latin Alphabet”.

Nevertheless, regulations made as part of this policy initiative lend support for the *discourse of bureaucratization* that might lead to anti-democratic practices and applications as long as meso- and micro-levels of LPP are concerned. Particularly, discourses of obscurity and dominance revealed the possible resources to provoke anti-democratic practices. Herein, the term “Different Languages and Dialects Conventionally Used in Daily Life by Turkish Citizens” contributed to the problematized point of the argument, in that how many languages and dialects are involved in this category?, what is the criteria to differentiate between language and dialect?, on what basis the conventional usage is determined? A similar concern was observed in LLD as the name of the elective course, that is what does the word “Living” mean? And on which criteria a language or a dialect is accepted as “Living”?

In addition to the discourse of obscurity, mounting evidence for the consolidation of anti-democratic practices was observed in the discourse of dominance, because this policy initiative involved regulations such as curriculum development, materials preparation and

teacher appointments made for only few languages or dialects as Kurmanji, Zazaki, Lazuri, Georgian, Adyge – two different versions as Latin and Cyrillic- and Abkhaz. However, *Ethnologue* listed a total of 36 individual living languages in Turkey: 14 are indigenous, and 22 are non-indigenous. Also, of all these 36 languages 3 are institutional, 16 are developing, 5 are vigorous, 10 are in trouble, and 2 are dying (<https://www.ethnologue.com/country/TR>). Then the question that needs to be posed is on what basis those six languages or dialects noted above were chosen to be present as an elective course? What is the difference between those of six and the rest listed in *Ethnologue*?

A Socio-Political Discussion of the Results

In line with the premise of CDA, this study adopted the unified conceptualization of text with the wider societal, political and ideological perspectives and practices. For this reason, the policies and discursive productions of government were examined with a critical stance. By this framework, a primary discourse categorization manifested two contradictory premises as democratization and bureaucratization involving the discourses of obviousness versus obscurity and equality versus dominance.

Considering the direct proportion between education and democratization, Gurin, Nagda and Lopez (2004) claimed diversity in education as a benefit for democratic citizenship. Undoubtedly, democratization of education is interconnected with democratization of a country. For this reason, this policy initiative was specifically introduced as representing the different segments of the society in terms of ethnic, religious and denominational. In addition, Banks et al. (2005) emphasized that “only when a nation-state is unified around a set of democratic values such as human rights, justice, and equality can it secure the liberties of cultural, ethnic, language, and religious groups and enable them to experience freedom, justice, and peace” (p.7). In doing so, adding elective courses in general and LLD in particular were in a sense introduced as an attempt to increase liberties of different segments in the society. From this perspective, the government’s attempt to embed such a course into the course schedule of primary education institutions was both a rational and sound decision.

However, the main problem shown in the official regulations was the dominance of some languages in particular Kurdish as Kurmanji and Abkhaz. By and large, such finding strengthened a case posit by Hamilton (2012) noting educational policies as an example for selecting and privileging certain practices. Thereby, the educational policy for LLD seems to granting privilege for languages such as Kurmanji and Abkhaz against others like Georgian and Lazuri and even some others whose names have never been pronounced in the official documents.

Importantly, Wang (2006) argued that foreign language teaching policy in Turkey indicates macro level policy design, but micro level implementation. In this sense, the author notified the development and planning of the policy centrally by The Board of Education and Discipline and the implementation of this policy by the English language teachers in the foreign language teaching classrooms. However, the documents about the curriculum design for languages taught as part of LLD course indicated the call for relevant authorities to

prepare teaching materials for the languages such as Adyge. Doubtless, such an attempt is promising for the implementation of the policy.

Overall, this study seemed to lend support for the argument proposed by Suresh Canagarajah (2006) with respect to the nature of LPP work with top-down fashion “shaping the linguistic behavior of the community according to the imperatives of policy-makers” (p.153). From this perspective, the superiority of some languages (e.g. Zazaki) over the others (e.g. Georgian), no mention of some languages notified in the Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger by UNESCO classified as unsafe, endangered, severely endangered and critically endangered (<http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/>) can be considered. To illustrate, even if Kabard-Cherkes and Adyge were categorized as unsafe, there was no policy initiative for Kabard-Cherkes. Further, languages like Hertevin, Gagavuz and Suret were signified as part of endangered categories, yet still there has been no consideration of these languages in the language teaching policies developed in Turkey.

Conclusion

This study mainly aimed to explore the language teaching policy initiative for living languages and dialects introduced in 2012 as part of 4+4+4 education reform. To reveal the picture on a more comprehensive basis, the official regulations such as Foreign Language Education and Teaching Act were examined dating back to 1983 (see Table 1). The document analysis indicated so many assuring progresses regarding the governmental attempts on preserving different languages and dialects spoken in local communities. However, there were some crucial drawbacks of the conceptualization of the policy with respect to the superiority of some languages over others.

In brief, this study focused only on the macro-level analysis of the language teaching policy for living languages and dialects. Therefore, these results invite further explorations into the micro-level implementation of this policy in the school context from the different regions of the country. Moreover, the perceptions of all parties like the teachers, the students, the administrators, the parents and even the natives of these languages should be investigated.

Finally yet importantly, based on the discussion so far this study has suggested that living languages and dialects as a term is in need of an urgent definition together with the selection criteria for the languages chosen and the differentiation between language and dialect. Instead of developing top-down policies, the policies increasing the opportunity to involve relevant actors should be developed by integrating these actors in all procedures for LPP to democratize both the education and the society. By this way, it is hoped that the policies developed concerning the living languages and dialects will be based upon a more concrete basis and will help the country to celebrate the differences with respect to language and ethnicity.

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Online Resources

- <http://global.britannica.com/topic/hegemony>
- <http://www.unesco.org/languages-atlas/>
- <http://www.eba.gov.tr/secmeliders>
- <https://www.ethnologue.com/country/TR>

Other Resources

- Amendment to Some Law Along With Primary Education Law (*İlköğretim ve eğitim kanunu ile bazı kanunlarda değişiklik yapılmasına dair kanun*). (2012). Resmi Gazete [Official Gazette]. No.28261, April 11. Ankara: General Directorate of the Turkish Ministry.
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