A Case Study of Linguistic Innovations Among Turkish Youth

Türk Gençleri Arasındaki Dilsel Yenilikler Üzerine Bir Vaka Çalışması

Alessandra NICOLOSI*

*Instructor of Italian language at the Department of Modern Languages, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey; anicolos@metu.edu.tr
ORCID: 0000-0003-1513-0994
ROR ID: ror.org/014weej12

Abstract

The paper examines teenage language and how it expresses itself in unique ways to help define identities among peer groups. Teenagers challenge linguistic conventions to set themselves apart from adults by using a particular speech pattern that helps them identify and maintain their group identification. This study investigates the language use of Turkish teenagers between the ages of fourteen and fifteen, focusing on distinctive speech patterns and recurring themes within their conversations.

The study analyses the spoken language of three Turkish teens over the course of two weeks, focusing on their vocative use, word creation, and cursing. The results show that in order to express their uniqueness and challenge societal conventions, this group of Turkish youths deliberately violates linguistic standards. Their overuse of swearing and the creation of new vocabulary emphasize their drive to set themselves apart from adults and create a sense of collective identity.

The study also reveals how the English language and social media have influenced Turkish teenagers' language, as demonstrated by the use of Anglicisms and the creation of new terms related to sexuality and social media. According to the study, teenagers who group together are better able to communicate their uniqueness and use distinct languages.

Keywords: Teenage language, Peer-group identity, Linguistic conventions, Lexical features, Sociocultural influences.

Öz

Bu makale ergenlerin dilini ve bu dili nasıl benzersiz biçimlerde kendilerini ifade etmek ve akran grupları içinde kimlikleri tanımlamalarına yardımcı olmak amacıyla kullandıklarını incelemektedir. Ergenler, kendilerini yetişkinlerden ayırmak için dil kurallarına meydan okur ve belirli bir konuşma modeli kullanarak grup kimliklerini belirler ve sürdürürler. Bu çalışma, on dört ila on beş yaş arasındaki Türk gençlerinin dil kullanımını incelemekte olup, konuşmalarındaki ayırt edici konuşma kalıpları ve tekrar eden temalara odaklanmaktadır.

Çalışma, iki hafta boyunca üç Türk gencinin konuşma dilini, hitap kullanımı, kelime yaratma ve küfretme üzerine odaklanarak analiz etmektedir. Sonuçlar, bu Türk gençlerinin, benzersizliklerini ifade etmek ve toplumsal normlara meydan okumak amacıyla bilinçli bir şekilde dil standartlarını ihlal ettiklerini göstermektedir. Küfretme sıklığı ve yeni kelime yaratma, yetişkinlerden ayrılma ve kolektif bir kimlik duygusu oluşturma isteklerini vurgular.

Çalışma ayrıca, İngilizcenin ve sosyal medyanın Türk gençlerinin dilini nasıl etkilediğini, Anglisizmlerin kullanımını, cinsellik ve sosyal medya ile ilgili yeni terimlerin oluşturulma yoluyla göstermektedir. Araştırmaya göre, bir araya gelen gençler, benzersizliklerini daha iyi iletebilir ve farklı diller kullanabilirler.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Genç dil, Akran grubu kimliği, Dil kuralları, Leksikal özellikler, Sosyokültürel etkiler.

Introduction

In this paper, the author will analyze teenage language. Teenager language marks itself for its peculiarity and for the fact that it can be used to delineate peer-group identity. It is only by using a specific way of speaking that the teenage groups recognize their members, and it is only by utilizing a common language that its members reinforce their group identity.

The common language shared among teenagers implies that they share the same knowledge and interests and that they form a unity. Moreover, in challenging the linguistic norms, teenagers try to distinguish themselves from adults and other young people (de Klerk, 2005).

Teenage language on a lexical level differs in many respects from adult language, for example, in the frequent use of intensifiers, lexical creations, foreign words and anglicism, swearing, and use of discourse markers and hedging. Furthermore, teenagers seem to use more slang words and informal word choices in a way that may not even be understood by adults. Their language choices are shaped by the subjects that dominate their talks, such as topics of relationships and games (Ives & Rana, 2018).

Nevertheless, teenage language is not a cohesive language used by all teenagers indistinctly, and it is impossible to frame it with stable etiquette. Teenage language is adaptable and ever-changing from person to person, from group to group, and from generation to generation. Its variability is due to many social, cultural and individual factors.

The fourteen to fifteen-year-old Turkish teens examined in this research were chosen for analysis because it is speculated that they represent a wider trend among young people in Turkish society. It is noted that young Turkish teenagers are exposed to rapid technological change compared to the previous generation. The use of the internet and social media, such as TikTok and media for communication, such as Instagram, WhatsApp, and Snapchat, has influenced how they talk and behave.

This paper aims to present an analysis of the oral language of three young Turkish teenagers and explore the social and psychological reasons behind some language choices. The use of swearing, the creation of new terms, and the usage of vocatives to refer to one another will all receive special attention. In order to achieve this aim, two research questions were asked:

1. Is Turkish teenagers' use of language a strategy to define themselves and their membership in their group?

2. Which language norms used by Turkish teenagers are distinctive in their eccentricity?

3. What are the most recurrent themes in Turkish teenagers' language use?

Literature Review

The adolescent years are often regarded as the most chaotic period of a person's life, i.e. a socially turbulent phase (Eckert, 2000). Teenagers are constantly changing physically, physiologically, socially, and cognitively. Teenagers' language is influenced by the social factors such as their desire to become independent, their broader connections, the need to split from parents, and peer solidarity, have an effect on their language. They spend time apart from their parents, and they adopt the non-standard language that their peers use. Teenagers get into the habit of employing phrases that their parents do not or will not understand. This is sometimes a deliberate

choice of one term over another. However, it is sometimes far more subtle, and teens themselves are unaware of how significant their differences from previous generations are. This implies that when it comes to determining what is happening in a language in general and where it is heading, children and teenagers, in particular are the crucial persons to investigate (Tagliamonte, 2016).

In the latter half of the twentieth century, teen language, in particular has been heavily criticized. Recently, due to technological developments and the invention of the internet, teen language has changed dramatically. There has been a groundswell of disdain for the Internet since its inception and development. Thurlow (2003) compiled a list of 101 popular news pieces regarding young people's language. The headlines analyzed show that literacy was under threat, that language was being destroyed, and that abbreviations and abbreviated language were being widely used. The majority of publications that established a direct link between Internet use and poor grammar blame teenagers. Numerous famous news outlets claimed that the language of SMS and instant messaging, in particular is not only causing grammatical problems but also hindering youths' ability to write properly (Thurlow, 2003).

One popular viewpoint on teen language is that it is rapidly getting worse (Tagliamonte, 2016). Slang is prevalent in teen speech, according to a widespread conclusion. Slang is a type of informal language that has its own set of traits in addition to its casual style. Slang is connected with a small, constrained age range of speakers regarded as less responsible than adult members of society (Mencken & McDavid, 1977). Slang is also the term used to describe language linked with out-of-the-mainstream social groupings or local peer group identification. This is why teens, in particular are frequently blamed for the invention and spread of slang due to their peer-group interactions. Slang terms are frequently used as synonyms for regular language. In other words, the person who uses the slang phrase is well aware that a more common alternative exists but deliberately chooses not to use it (Tagliamonte, 2016). Mencken and McDavid (1977) claim that slang is born out of a desire to make the language more vivid, emotive, and expressive, always by inventive persons.

Young people frequently want to distinguish themselves from the older generation by clothes and looks, musical tastes, and, most importantly, language. This is because language is a powerful symbol of social unity. As teenagers develop independence and expand their network of acquaintances, they are exposed to a growing number of new language uses, such as vernaculars and slang. New phrases enter languages when new applications spread among more and more teenagers, and they can even alter their grammar. Young people become the driving force behind linguistic development in this way. Girls are significantly more likely than boys to employ new aspects of language, making them the leading transmitters of new usages (Tagliamonte, 2016).

Eckert (1988) conducted a study on phonological variation within two groups of adolescents living in Detroit. The mechanisms of sound alteration spreading outward from metropolitan regions and upward via the social hierarchy were explained through detailed participant observation among Detroit area youths. In adolescence, the usage of local phonological factors was influenced by a social structure within the age group, which was controlled by two opposing and frequently polarized school-based social groups. These social groups represented middle- and working-class cultures, and they connected adolescent social structure to adult socioeconomic status. Differences in social network structure and orientation to the metropolitan region, and hence to urban sound changes, existed between these two social classes. Category affiliation was influenced by, but not

determined by, parents' socioeconomic status, and while category affiliation was a substantial predictor of phonological variance, parents' socioeconomic status was not.

Jørgensen (2013) conducted a study on Spanish teenagers' language. Her report consists of the findings of the study she conducted on Spanish adolescent language using Bergen University's COLAm corpus. According to the findings, it could be deduced that teenagers were attempting to establish their independence by isolating themselves from both adults and children, a condition that they shared with their peers. Interaction among them is vital and has an impact on their language. Another implication of the study was that the distinctive features of adolescent speech, such as frequent discourse markers, Anglicisms, intensifications, and taboo words, not only form ties among its members but also serve as identity identifiers.

Martínez (2020) examined over 500 instances retrieved from COLT (The Bergen Corpus of London Teenage Language) and LEC (London English Corpus). In his study, he focused on the usage and functions of so-called taboo vocatives (e.g. dickhead, you bastard, bitch) in the language of London teens. According to Martínez (2020), from the 1990s to the early decades of the twenty-first century, there does not appear to have been any significant changes in the use of these forms, but many of them have widened their meaning and may now be used with either male or female speakers. The bulk of these words are nouns that allude to sexuality, a bizarre or odd human state, or a derogatory animal-related connotation. The findings demonstrated a wide range of items in this category, demonstrating that they are more than just insults since they frequently help cement ties between young speakers and can even have loving meanings. Results showed that using slang words is a form of promoting solidarity between teenagers.

Stenström (2006) compared the usage of taboo terms among middle and upper-class teenage girls in London and Madrid using a corpus-based approach. The study compared two corpora of spontaneous speech, which revealed that the most frequently used terms by both groups had sexual connotations, followed by phrases related to body functions. It also revealed that the London girls used more prohibited terms in their talks, whilst the Madrid girls used somewhat more sexual phrases. The qualitative portion of the study, which examines why teens employ taboo terms and their many roles in speech, found that phatic usage is given specific attention. Phatic use of language is the one related to building social interactions and bonds among the members of the group. Teenagers used taboo words and slang to promote their solidarity (Laver, 1975).

Methodology

This study employs a sociolinguistic approach, integrating elements of Discourse Analysis (DA) within a case study framework to explore the language use of three teenagers in naturally occurring conversations. The analysis applies DA principles, such as examining patterns of language use, thematic structures, and conversational coherence, while focusing on the broader sociocultural context in which these interactions take place, emphasizing how language both reflects and constructs social relationships among participants.

As a case study, the research focuses on a small, well-defined group, allowing for an in-depth examination of language behaviours in their natural environment.

The primary focus is on specific linguistic features, such as the use of swear words and neologisms (the creation of mixed language terms that blend English and Turkish). These features are examined for their linguistic composition and social implications in the group's interactions, as

tools for social bonding and identity construction. The approach is contextual, taking into account the cultural norms of Turkish culture and how young people negotiate, confront, and modify these norms through language usage.

Participants

The participants of this study are three teenagers aged between 14 and 16, who are native speakers of Turkish. They were selected through purposive sampling, which is appropriate for studies aiming to examine specific linguistic behaviors within a target group. This approach ensures that the participants are representative of the specific demographic and linguistic characteristics being studied. Participants were chosen based on specific criteria, including age, linguistic background, and their regular connections with a peer group that met both online and in person.

The selection criteria included their willingness to be observed and recorded over two weeks and their consent and parents' consent to be involved in the study. Pseudonyms are used throughout the study to protect the participants' identities and ensure confidentiality.

Data collection

For this study, audio recordings of participants' natural conversations were made in private settings like their homes and during phone and video chats. Conversations varied in length, and the total recording time was sixty minutes. The conversations were then verbatim transcribed. The data is purely qualitative. The participants were observed for a period of two weeks during their online (phone and video meetings) and their face-to-face interactions. The observations focused on key themes such as language use, identity expression, and group cohesion and were documented using a structured observation form. The talks were transcribed by the researcher, who is fluent in Turkish and was followed by translation and double-checking by the research team. Attention was paid to translating Turkish teens' slang into English to preserve the same meaning. In order to confirm some unclear terms and hidden meanings, a brief interview was conducted with one participant to provide clarification, examples, and input on the recordings.

From this data set, the researcher chose some representative excerpts to illustrate how the teens use and manipulate the language to show adherence to the group, friendship, and solidarity and how they tried to express their identity. The teens' parents were asked to consent for their children to be recorded (See Appendix 1 and 2). The teens' names were not disclosed at any time, and the teens were given pseudonyms such as Ayşe, Filiz and Tolga to protect their privacy. Lastly, any explicitly personal information they discussed was anonymized.

The participants included three Turkish teens, two females and one male. They were part of a larger group of teens who frequently interacted online via WhatsApp group and Snapchat in written form and via video group meetings, and they also met outside regularly, generally on Fridays at the members' houses. Some of them even went to the same class at the same school. The group's members shared common teenage problems related to their social and school spheres. Notably, some of them had known each other for many years, and their parents also knew each other. They share common interests in social activities, school activities, friends, sports, and music, and as a cohesive and stable group, they can be considered a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). In this regard, they used a similar language to demonstrate cohesion and membership. Based on the Turkish education system, they were all in the ninth grade of a private high school in Turkey, meaning they were between the ages of 14 and 15.

Data Analysis

The data analysis integrated the principles of Discourse Analysis (DA), which involves a detailed examination of the transcripts to investigate the language used by three teenagers in their natural conversations. The analysis focuses on how conversational coherence is maintained, examining how topics are introduced, developed, and shifted. Furthermore, the study is set within a larger sociocultural framework, emphasizing how these conversational aspects reflect and form social connections and identities among the participants. The audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, capturing not only the spoken words but also non-verbal cues such as pauses, intonation, and overlaps that are crucial for understanding the interactional dynamics.

The analysis focused on three main themes:

Use of Swear Words: The study examines how and in what contexts the participants use swear words, including the functions these words serve (e.g., expressing emotions, emphasizing points, establishing group membership) and the social norms surrounding their use within the peer group.

Creation of New Words (Neologisms): This theme explores how participants create new words or modify existing ones, the linguistic creativity involved, and the social meanings these neologisms convey. The study considers the influence of peer culture, media, and personal experiences on the formation of these new words.

Identity Construction and Modification: The study investigates how the participants use language to construct, negotiate, and modify their identities in different conversational contexts. This includes examining code-switching, language choices, and the strategic use of linguistic features to align with or differentiate from their peers.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the analysis process involved iterative rounds of coding, where the initial themes were refined and further categorized. Member checking was conducted by sharing the preliminary findings with the participants to confirm the accuracy and resonance of the interpretations. Additionally, peer debriefing sessions were held with fellow researchers to discuss and validate the analytical process.

Results

In this paragraph, the author will examine some of the main linguistic traits and the context in which three Turkish teenagers employed them. They will also investigate the words these teenagers use to foster a sense of community between themselves. The use of swearing, the creation of new words, and the use of vocatives to refer to one another were some of the most noticeable linguistic traits.

The group of young Turkish teens were observed conversing among themselves in a variety of circumstances. Generally speaking, they just talked about things that interested them in common, such as social media, music, and schools, and they did not communicate any real information. In addition, teenagers kept exchanging TikTok videos and showed a regular interest in talking about other group members during their absences.

When summarizing the results, the original data is presented first, followed by the translation below. Certain terms that are absent from the Turkish language are italicized. In this extract, Ayşe and Tolga were speaking about a friend who, according to them, had a particular interest in watching foot fetishism videos.

Ayşe: Merhaba abi. (Ayşe: Hi, bro.)

….

Ayşe: Bir şey söyleyeceğim. Beyaz ojeliyi yollasana.(Ayşe: I'm gonna say something. Send me the one with the white nail polish (video).

Tolga: Ne? (Tolga: What?)

Ayşe: Beyaz ojeliyi yollasana diyorum. (Ayşe: I'm saying send me the one with the white nail polish (video).

Tolga: Tamam. Abi TikTokta ne gördüm sana atmam lazım. (Tolga: Sure. Bro, you don't know what I saw on TikTok. I need to send it to you).

Ayşe: At. Bu arada kimi… (niye kapattın abi kameranı falan.) Bir siktir git. (Ayşe: Send it! By the way, who… Fuck off).

Tolga: Çünkü …... (sings a song in English). (Tolga: Because….(sings a song in English).

Ayşe: Abi sen Sergen'in ayak fetişi var. O olayı biliyor musun? [evet] O kadar komik mesajlar var ki... Bekle sana atacağım şimdi. Bak Selin şey atmış tamam mı? Bir tane TikTok atmış işte bir tane kadın beyaz ojeli ayaklarını gösteriyor. Sonra işte Sergen şey yazmış nereden buluyorsun böyle videoları deyip böyle gülen yüz ve gül atmış. (laughs) Iı nereden buluyorsun böyle videoları (mimics Sergen)?

Ayşe: Brother, Sergen has a foot fetish. Do you know about that? [yes] There are so many funny messages. Wait, I'll send it to you now. Look, Selin sent something, okay? Here's a woman who posted on TikTok, showing her feet with white nail polish. Then Sergen wrote something and said, 'where do you find videos like this?' and sent a smiley face and a flower sticker. (laughs) Ew, where do you find such videos (mimics that friend)?

Tolga: Bak attığıma. Şunu izle. Bak attığımı izle. (Tolga: Look at what I sent (to you). Watch what I sent (to you).

Ayşe: Selinle *stikerleşmemizin* yarısı Canan'ın dayı simgesi. Böyle dayı. (laughs.) (Ayşe: Half of the stickers Canan and I send to each other are The stickers of Canan's uncle).

Ayşe and Tolga discuss a friend of theirs and describe him as a foot fetishist. The discussion starts with a general question made by Ayşe, who required Tolga to send her a video of feet with white nail polish on them and then quickly turned about the gossip of a friend who is described as a foot fetishist because he always sends messages of appreciation on feet videos on TikTok. This small interchange shows some typical features of the teenage language. Firstly, the most apparent scenarios are the usage of swearing and short phrases. Additionally, the majority of the discussion's content is on social media and recent developments there. The fact that the teens seemed undisturbed by the swearing during this exchange is also noteworthy. Swearing seems to be the standard rather than the exception in this passage and many others that followed.

Filiz: Abi senin oyunculuğun bok gibi bu arada. (Filiz: Bro, your acting is shitty, by the way).

Ayşe: Elimize bir şey alıp Flash TV oyuncusu gibi sidik ebesi gibi konuşalım. (Ayşe: Let's grab something and talk like a Flash TV actor, like a piss midwife).

The usage of swearing among teens is intended to encourage good relationships rather than cause offence or insult. When parents are around, young people refrain from using vulgarity since it is not appropriate in Turkish families or other social settings. Swearing becomes more of a means of entertainment and loses its powerful semantic value when it is freely used in the group. In addition to rebelling against the constraints that adults impose on them, teenagers feel free to use swearing while speaking among themselves.

Another aspect is the use of vocatives. According to McCarthy and O'Keeffe (2003), vocatives are nouns of address. Tolga Ayşe and Filiz use the vocative ''*abi*'' 'elder brother' to address each other. Although the word ''*abi*'' is a masculine noun, Tolga uses it to refer to his female friends. Another vocative used is ''*kanka*'', which means ''bro''. Moreover, during the informal interview with one of the group members, it was underlined that the word ''*kanka*'', which is used less with respect to *''abi''*, was unusually used among them, as shown in the example. Tolga: ''*Bu sene tanıştın kenki*''. (Tolga: You met her this year bro). ''*Kenki*'' is the alteration of the word ''*kanka*'', and it is used only among this group of teenagers. It is a new word whose purpose is to cement this group's friendship. Such contested words also aim to distinguish the group from adults and other teen groups because new words are used to maintain cohesion among the teenagers and exclude those who do not understand their code (López, 2009).

Turkish teenagers' vocabulary is greatly influenced by the dominance of English, especially when talking about music and technology. In these words, Cheshire (2019) conveys the symbolic importance that English has worldwide ''it is used (...) so extensive throughout the world now that it can serve as an 'open reservoir' for symbolic meaning'' (2002). When Ayşe said ''*stikerleşmemizin*'' she wanted her friends to be sent stickers. The phonological adaptation of English loanwords into Turkish is particularly noteworthy here; the word sticker has been adapted into Turkish from English, and it underwent a phonetic adaptation to fit the Turkish sound system so that the term ''sticker'' is referred to in the spoken data as ''*stiker*''. The Turkish verb forming suffix ''*-laş*'', which turns the noun into a reciprocal verb, is one of the grammatical components to which the English term ''sticker'' has been linked. Vowel harmony, a linguistic phenomenon in Turkish where the vowels in a word must agree with each other, was observed, and the suffix ''*-laş*'' is pronounced as ''-laş'' based on the preceding vowel**.** The word has also been given the third-person plural possessive suffix ''*-mı*''*,* which turns it back into a noun. This newly formed term refers to the stickers they exchange with one another. Words of these kinds seem familiar among this group, and the result is the creation of mixed terms (Leppänen et al., 2009). Mixed terms serve as a cohesive instrument and are used deliberately among the members of the group. The commonly shared knowledge helps mixed terms to be exchanged in teen groups, and they are kept alive as long as the context is available, but they would lose their communicative meaning if taken out from this context. Sticker, for example, is a WhatsApp application, and it is an example of how the intense use of social media among the young generation is affecting their language. The popularity of such apps makes words such as ''*stikerleşmemizin*'' rise quickly. On the other hand, these words may have a short life span, and they may disappear as soon as the fashion of the new technological app fades out.

Mixed words s are also used here to play with the language and are usually used simply for "having fun" (Godin, 2006). For example, another English-Turkish new word used by Tolga that refers to his sexual arousal is "*hornileşmeyelim*" "let's not get too horny", and it is a formation between the English adjective horny, the reflexive reciprocal -leş and the modal verb "we shall" "-*yelim*".

> Ayşe: Abi attığım Tiktok'u izledin mi? (Ayşe: Bro, did you watch the TikTok I posted?)
>
> Tolga: Adam çok seksi abi.(Tolga: The man is very sexy, bro.
>
> Ayşe: *Çok hornyleşmeyelim* Tolgacım. (Ayşe: *Let's not get too horny,* my dear Tolga.)

Similar to vulgarity, talking about sex is frowned upon in Turkish culture, and youths avoid discussing it with adults. However, when other teenagers are around, it is now normal to talk about sex and sexual desire. The girls also discuss an instance in which the male made a sexual request, saying and doing things that would be considered inappropriate, but they don't appear to mind what he said. The next excerpt shows them discussing it in a quite lighthearted manner.

> Ayşe: Abi çok kötüydü ya. Ayağımı yala dedi ya. Ay ben yere silgi düşürdüm. Tamam mı? Yerden silgiyi alıyorum. Tolga hazır oradayken ayağımı yalasana yapıyor. Hoca şey yapıyor Tolga yeter artık bir tane çarpıcam ağzına. (Ayşe: Dude, it was terrible. He said, 'lick my foot'. I had dropped my eraser on the floor. Okay? I was picking it up. Tolga said, 'lick my foot while you're there'. The teacher said, 'Tolga, enough is enough. I am going to smack you on your mouth').
>
> Filiz: Peki abi şakasına mı diyor yoksa harbi mi söylüyor? (Filiz: Okay, but was the teacher kidding or for real?)
>
> Ayşe: Hoca ciddi ciddi söylüyor. Tolga yeter artık çarpıcam bir tane ağzına diye. (Ayşe: The teacher really means it. Like Tolga, enough is enough. I am going to smack you on your mouth.
>
> Filiz: Hoca Tolga yeter artık çarpıcam bir tane ağzına (in a humorous tone) tarzında mı Tolga yeter artık çarpıcam bir tane ağzına (in a serious tone) tarzında mı? (Filiz: Was the teacher like Tolga, enough is enough. I am going to smack you on your mouth (in a humorous tone) or was he like Tolga, enough is enough. I am going to smack you on your mouth (in a serious tone)?
>
> Ayşe: İkinci yaptığın. (Ayşe: The second one).

What the boy said was quite unexpected and vulgar for the teacher. Even though the boy probably knew that his sentences would make the teacher angry, he still said that because, for him, being funny is more important than being scolded by the teacher. This shows that teenagers do not always care about the adults' thoughts about them as much as they care about their peers' thoughts. Nor do they care for the societal norms. Also, Tolga either jokingly or in a serious way admitted that he found a video of a man sexy, so it can be said that taboo concepts like foot fetishism or homosexuality are not taboo subjects for him. The girls in the study talk about an instance in which Tolga was humiliated by one of the girls and the other teens in their friend group. The girl who

is telling the story is upfront about the fact that she had used abusive language towards the boy.

> Filiz: İğrenç gerçekten iğrenç. Böyle bir yemek yiyişi var çocuğun. Ayşe gerçekten böyle bir şey yok. En son gözleri doldu çocuğun bu kadar eleştirilince. (Filiz: Gross, really gross. The guy eats like this. Ayşe, there is really no such thing. His eyes filled with tears eventually as he was being criticized so much).

> Ayşe: Gerçekten mi? Üzüldü mü? (Ayşe: Really? Was he upset?)

> Filiz: Evet abi ama bütün grup eleştirdi. Ben de bir tık eleştirdim. Bayağı bir tık eleştirdim. (Filiz: Yes, dude, but the whole gang criticized him. I criticized him a bit too. I criticized him quite a bit).

For the first girl, membership in the group is very important because she justifies her criticisms by making it obvious that she was not the only one doing it and the others did it as well. She keeps making fun of him even though he was apparently hurt and he was her close friend. In the following excerpt, she mentions how she and another friend of hers mocked Tolga about the way he ate his food.

> Filiz: Öyle değil kusmak anlamında değil. Mesela bak ağzına sokuyor. Böyle yapıyor. Buraya kadar her şey normal. Çıkıştan itibaren başlıyor ağzı açık böyle (makes a sound) böyle yiyor Ağzı açık yiyor bildiğin yani. Şapırdatmıyor da böyle ağzı açık yiyor. Öpüşerek yiyor yani (makes a sound). O ses çıkıyor. (Filiz: Not in a throwing up kinda way. Like he is putting it into his mouth. Doing like this. Up until this point, everything is normal. It starts from the moment when he takes out the food, his mouth is open like this (makes a sound). He eats with his mouth open, you know. He does not slurp but eats with his mouth open. He is making out with the food (makes a sound), you know. He makes that noise).

> Ayşe: Iyyy abi. (Ayşe: Ewww dude).

> Filiz: Hani adam öyle bir zevkle yiyor ki yemeği. Ben iğrendim yani. Cidden böyle bir şey yok. Ciddi iğrendim. Ben bunu bayağı bir vurguladım.(Filiz: Like this guy eats his food with such pleasure that I am disgusted by it. There is really no such thing. I was seriously disgusted. I emphasized this a lot).

> … (again in the same conversation)

> Filiz: Abi sen bilmiyorsun. Biz bir ara Sema'yla şöyle yapıyoruz. Abi sen kamerasın [Filiz: Ben kamerayım] Böyleyim abi. İkimiz Sema'yla bakışıyoruz. Diyorum ki Sema'ya bakma zaten midem kötü oluyor. Sema diyor ki evet benim de kanka. Oğlum Sema yanından kalktı Tolga'nın benim yanıma geldi sırf o yemek yemeyi duymamak ve görmemek için. (Filiz: Dude, you don't know. We were doing like this with Sema at one point. Dude, you're the camera now. [Filiz: I'm the camera.] I'm like this dude. Sema and I are staring at each other. I'm saying, 'don't look at me I'm already feeling sick' to Sema. Sema says, 'yeah dude me too'. Bro, Sema got up from Tolga's side and came near me just not to see or hear his eating).

> Ayşe: Oğlum yazık çocuğa ya. Bu kadar da yani. (Ayşe: Bro, I feel sorry for the guy. It's too much).

Filiz justifies her behavior toward her friend, Tolga, by stating the fact that she was not alone while doing these things. Ayşe feels sorry for Tolga because he is their friend, and she does not want him hurt. However, Filiz does not care about Tolga's feelings that much because teasing each other has become the norm for their interaction. She and Sema tried to make it obvious that they were disgusted by his eating. In a grownup interaction, this kind of humiliation, either by words or by behaviour, could lead to more serious consequences, such as fighting or ending the relationship. In their previous interactions, Filiz and Tolga used some insulting words, such as "*mal*", which means stupid in English, to address each other or to tease each other, but none of them seemed to mind the words. Those words simply did not mean the same thing that they normally mean to other people. They were considered words that boosted their friendships and made their bonds stronger.

To summarize, the recurrent themes were related to sex, social media and gossip about other kids at school. They used words like "*abi*" and "*kenki*" to address each other during conversations. Also, swearing was not thought to be something bad but rather something that is fun and defines group membership. They also justified their behaviours or the language they used by stating the fact that others in the group were doing the same things as well. Language use in the group showed similarities to each other.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical guidelines for research involving human subjects. Informed consent was obtained from all participants and their guardians, and they were assured of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences. All recordings, transcripts, and analysis results are stored securely, and only the research team has access to the data.

Conclusions

This study recorded three adolescents' talks over the course of two weeks in order to examine the language used by three Turkish teens. Two dimensions of the data were examined: language as a means of identifying individuals within the group and recurring themes/distinctive usages. Based on the findings, it can be said that it is not possible to conclude that teen language is an over-simplification, as suggested by Thurlow (2003). Turkish teenagers analysed in this research use the language purposefully. They deliberately challenge the language's norms imposed on them by society, parents, and school to try to feel different from adults and rebel against strict social rules. Such a need is evident in the excessive use of swearing and the invention of new terms whose significance sometimes remains obscure. Group unity, in this case, becomes essential because it is only by belonging to a group that teenagers will use a distinct language and impose their identity.

Moreover, the group analyzed showed some peculiarity in the choice of themes. This group's topic was mainly about the exchange of TikTok videos and gossiping through WhatsApp. Technology and virtual world social connections played a significant role in shaping their conversations and choice of terms. The recurring themes included some taboo subjects like sexual fantasies and homosexuality. Several studies on teenage language also report similar results (Jørgensen, 2013; Martínez, 2020). Also, social media and gossip about other students at school were other common themes of the conversations. During their talks, they addressed each other using terms like *abi, mal*, and *kenki*. Similar to Stenström (2006), profanity was not regarded as a terrible thing but rather as a fun way to indicate group membership. They also excused their actions or words by citing the fact that others in the group were doing the same thing. This finding is in line with Martínez (2020). In

other words, in the present study and the aforementioned one, the swear words that were used by the teens had lost their bad connotations and picked up good ones. Moreover, the group's language use was comparable to one another in terms of their vocabulary choice and sentence length. Another finding of the study shows the impact of social media and English on Turkish teens' language. There were some examples of Anglicisms in their language, where they created new words by adding Turkish suffixes to English words, especially words related to social media or sexual matters.

Research aimed at the Turkish teenager group aged 14 to 15 is scarce in the literature, and this paper is unique in this respect. In this study, three teenagers were observed, and their conversations were recorded. The number of participants was not enough to generalize the findings to the whole. Therefore, future researchers can observe more teenagers for longer periods of time to arrive at more generalizable results. Also, in this study, only the spoken interactions were examined. Teens' written interactions or a combination of both can also be investigated for further study. Finally, the study did not investigate possible differences in gender in language usage among the participants, which may have offered valuable insights into how gender effects language use.

Extended Abstract

This study aims to investigate language choices among Turkish teenagers between the ages of fourteen and fifteen and how their use shapes a sense of group. Teenage language is known for having certain characteristics that are influenced by individual, social, and cultural factors, and this article discusses how varied it can be, taking into account things like vocatives, cursing, and neologisms. In the specific, this study identifies unique language norms and explores the most recurrent themes in their communication.

The literature review conducted for this study draws from diverse sources, including works by Mencken and McDavid (1977), Eckert (1988, 2000), Thurlow (2003), Stenström (2006), Jørgensen (2013), Tagliamonte (2016), Martínez (2020). The objective of the review is to explore the impact of social, technological, and linguistic dynamics on the language of Turkish teenagers. The literature reveals that adolescents, driven by a desire for independence and peer solidarity, often adopt distinct linguistic patterns and slang.

Three Turkish teenagers, two females and one male, attending the ninth grade in a private high school, are the subjects of the study. Over a two-week period, qualitative data were collected through audio recordings of both online and face-to-face interactions. The researcher transcribed and translated the conversations, focusing on the teenagers' language choices, the impact that the language uses in social media and the influence of English had on their linguistic expressions.

The analysis of the collected data revealed unique linguistic features. Swearing, rather than being offensive, emerged as a tool for building social bonds and maintaining a friendly atmosphere within the group. Use of vocatives, such as 'abi' (elder brother) and 'kanka' (bro), are used to address each other, even if the terms are traditionally gender-specific. Additionally, the creation of new words, influenced by English and social media, demonstrated the group's cohesion and inventive language use.

Talks about social media use, gossip at school, and discussions about taboo topics like sexuality were common themes among teenagers. The study emphasized how the group's usage of vulgar speech and mocking became accepted behaviour and aided in the development of friendships. The selection of discussion subjects and the creation of new terms clearly demonstrated the influence

of social media, especially apps such as TikTok. The study also highlighted how the teenagers' language was influenced by English, as seen by the frequency with which they added English words to their discussion and in the vocabulary they used.

In summary, this research explores the complex world of adolescent language, where tradition and innovation coexist, and the demand for authenticity combines with the dynamic forces of social interaction and technological advancement. Turkish teenagers express themselves through their language, navigating the complex web of identity development and societal integration while creating solid ties among themselves and, at the same time, questioning traditional conventions. They build their own narratives on social media, influenced by global English trends, merging individualism and group experiences.

This study has different goals. First, it exposes not just language occurrences but also the complex cultural content that shapes the lives of modern Turkish teenagers and highlights the role that group membership plays in shaping linguistic preferences. The results imply that Turkish teenagers deliberately utilize language to question social norms.

It also contributes to the body of literature by shedding light on the language used by Turkish teens, a demographic that needs more attention. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of investigating the complex interplay across varied adolescent groups between language, identity, and technology.

However, it is vital to use care when interpreting the results due to the small sample size. Future studies might broaden the scope by watching more teens over more extended periods of time and considering written exchanges.

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