Turkish Women in Alsace: Language Maintenance and Integration

FERAY JACKY BASKIN
Indiana University, USA

Abstract

European political themes in the 21st century are dominated by concerns about the nature of national identity, the role of Islam in democratic society, and the impact of immigrants and their descendants on the perceived cultural homogeneity among the majority of EU countries. The immigration policy in France is known for having an assimilationist model of integration, in which immigrants are asked to become fully integrated into the French society, that is, to give up their own culture and language in exchange for the French language and culture. What is unique to the French case is that culture is prescribed through linguistic competence. In this article, I propose to examine ethno-linguistically the process of language shift and/or maintenance and its relationship to integration and identity among Turkish women in Alsace, France based on the following research questions. What is the correlation between integration and the linguistic varieties spoken by Turkish immigrants in French society?

Keywords

Language, immigration, women, discourse analysis, integration

Introduction

European political themes in the 21st century are dominated by concerns about the nature of national identity, the role of Islam in democratic society, and the impact of immigrants and their descendants on the perceived cultural homogeneity among the majority of EU countries. The immigration policies of the European Union have been critical towards immigrant populations in the sense that policies have been inconsistent and heavily focused on assimilationist processes.

French immigration policies are dictated by the assumption that full citizenship and inclusion in the French state is only achieved through proficiency in the French language and culture. While such a model of national identification is not unique to France, French immigration policies have vehemently upheld the assimilationist model (Tribalat 2013, Modood 2013) Furthermore, it is difficult to make a clear-cut generational distinction for the immigrants who arrive to European countries through marriage. These are, immigrants from the second generation marrying from Turkey instead of from France. What should one call these new grooms and brides? Is this a repetition of the first generation? In contrast to North African immigrants, who form the largest immigrant ethnic group in France, the

Turkish community has a different migration background. The Turkish speaking community from Turkey (which I define as immigrants coming from Turkey). This category can include minority groups as well i.e. Kurds and Alevis), is described as being the least integrated in France. According to a 1994 survey by l'INED¹, the Turkish case is described as: *"aucun group d'immigrés ne comporte les signes d'un repli identitaire aussi nets et répétés que celui de Turquie"... les femmes "sont presque totalement coupées de la société."* (Bozarslan 1996: 14)²

The Migration Policy Institute (2014) defines immigrant integration as: "the process of economic mobility and social inclusion for newcomers and their children." There are four important domains where integration can be measured: work, education, social inclusion and active civic rights, which are all intertwined and attained through language.

Methodology

In this paper, I address the question of integration by conducting discourse analysis of an interview extract with a couple of participants. The focus is on language and identity, linguistic choices and the preservation of culture through language in the Turkish community in Alsace.

The research was carried out in Wissembourg, France. The area is geographically advantageous as it is a border town between France and Germany. The town has a population of less than eight thousand inhabitants, of which approximately five hundred are of Turkish descent. In Wissembourg, national (French) and regional (Alsatian) values and identities are reinforced by the locals. Immigrants as well as locals cross 'linguistic borders' (France-Germany) to run errands on a weekly basis. Three of my participants who are shop owners, expressed the importance of knowing German in order to do business with German tourists when they visit the region. The linguistic market (Bourdieu 1991) is very well defined for these female entrepreneurs in order to enable economic growth and make tourism attractive. The intrinsic identity and linguistic negotiations in Wissembourg are key to the study and examination of Turkish women's practices, attitudes and what they can tell us about immigrant integration in Europe, more specifically in France.

In this paper, my sample consists of 16 adult female of Turkish background/heritage living in Wissembourg, France who are members

¹ Institut National d'Etudes Démographiques 'the National Institute of Demographic Studies'

² My translation: "No other immigrant groups show communalism as clear and repeated as the Turkish one...women are almost completely cut off from the society."

of generation 1.5 (born in Turkey but raised in France) and members of the 2nd and 3rd generations (born and raised in France). I met with each of these women and conducted semi-structured interviews in their homes as well as in the work place for a few of them. The language of the interview was either in French, in Turkish or a mix of both. I also conducted participant observation in public spheres such as the work place and associations. Each participant was asked to complete a questionnaire either in French or in Turkish. In the semi-structured interviews the following modules were introduced: basic demographic information, language proficiency evaluated through a scaling method, language choices and uses in different settings with different interlocutors; identity and integration; importance of cultural activities, and connections with Turkey. The question on language proficiency was measured on a 5-point scale where participants were asked questions such as: "How would you rate your speaking, reading, listening, and writing in Turkish and French?" The interviews enabled me to gather data about participants' uses of their language in different settings and with different interlocutors. Conducting participant observation in the households has enabled me to describe and investigate the importance of media, especially television, in language maintenance. It is worth noting that television, in most Turkish households, is regularly switched on. The programmes are all in the Turkish language and are diffused through a satellite dish, effectively bringing Turkey into Turkish households all across Europe since the late 1990s. In order to understand the role of Turkish television in the preservation of the ethnic language, participants responded to questions about the role of Turkish TV in the maintenance of the language. All responses were positive. However, where opinions vary was about which channels and which programmes were better in preserving what they call *asas türkce* ('real/authentic Turkish'). In addition, a significant number of the participants complained about the large amount of French borrowed words³ in the language.

There is a passive and slow process of adaptation to the French society, which is paradoxically facilitated by the Turkish TV channels. With the boom of the satellite dishes in the mid-1990s, Turkish women started to access information in Turkish. As of today, many Turkish women are only watching Turkish shows (e.g. cooking, talk shows, religious, entertainment and news).

³ The Turkish language has borrowed lots of French words. This borrowing had already started during the Ottoman Empire and is still happening.

Although Turkish television brought Turkey into the Turkish migrants' households through its cultural programming, and became the Turkish woman's best friend, it has also brought a new way of life through commercials, advertisements and more liberal channels showing the 'Western Way of Life.' This helped encouraged modernisation and hence partial integration by influencing consumption of similar types of goods as the mainstream population. However, Turkish channels can be seen as a hindrance to integration in the sense that they reinforce the use of the language and cultural practices.

Migration and Policies in Europe

Definitions

Politicians and (social) news media tend to use the words assimilation, integration and multiculturalism interchangeably. This is especially the case for the terms assimilation and integration (Modood 2013). The Migration Policy Institute (MPI) (2014) defines immigrant integration as: "the process of economic mobility and social inclusion for newcomers and their children." There are four important domains where integration can be measured: work, education, social inclusion and active civic rights, which are all intertwined and attained through language. Whereas, Johnston (1969: 1) defines assimilation and integration as follows:

Assimilation generally implies the acceptance by immigrants of a way of life typical of the receiving community...[whereas] integration is understood in terms of fusion of the immigrants' culture with the culture of the host group...it allow[s] to preserve their own [Turkish] culture, to influence the indigenous [French] culture and to be influenced by it.

A more recent distinction between these terms suggests that assimilationist policies "require ethnic minorities to become essentially undifferentiable from the host population, embracing its culture and identity along with its language, customs and traditions" (Hale-Williams 2013: 22-23).

The goal of this model is "sameness and unity" therefore homogeneity. Integration can be defined as representing "an inclusive state strategy whereby host societies provide clear legal and procedural channels for immigrant incorporation without requiring that they set aside all differentiating cultural manifestations of their native culture." (Hale-Williams, 2013: 2).

In contrast, "Multiculturalism attempts to celebrate diversity while promoting harmonious coexistence" (Hale-Williams, 2013: 2). This definition can be represented on a continuum with 'assimilation' and 'multiculturalism' on each end and 'integration' somewhere in the middle,

with different degrees of integration embraced by immigrants throughout time in the host society.

Therefore, there are thus different understandings about these crucial terms. And for many, including; political actors, members of the public, and researchers, the terms can be used interchangeably, which can lead to erroneous conclusions about ethnic groups, and policy implications.

Turkish Migration in Europe: France

After the Second World War, Western European countries needed cheap labour in order to rebuild their economies. Therefore, West Germany, France, and other European countries signed bilateral agreements with Turkey (starting in the early 1960s). These agreements made it possible for 640,214 Turkish citizens to migrate to Western Europe in search of work between 1968 and 1971 (Abadan-Unat 2011: 14). In 1973, France allowed “family reunification” for its immigrants. This was done in order to promote the integration of migrants into the host society. As a result, there was an influx of Turkish women between 1974 and 1990. Most of the migrants came from rural places in the central Anatolian area and the Black Sea region of Turkey. The immigrants were from lower social classes and experienced two levels of migration: 1) migrating from rural to urban areas, and 2) migration to a new country where they worked in low wage jobs. For men it was mainly in construction, and other physical labour related industries, while women ended up in the cleaning, textile, and food (family owned restaurants) sectors. (Kastoryano 1986, Hüküm 1996, Abadan-Unat 2011)

There are currently about half a million Turkish-speaking immigrants residing in France. In the French media, one hears negative discourses on immigrants from Turkey and their poor assimilation of French values, especially women who are portrayed as insulated within their own ethnic communities and unmotivated to learn the French language.

Caught between the standard and prestigious forms of both French and Turkish immigrant women from Turkey in France are pressured to understand and use both languages. Can one assume that there is a linguistic continuum between the two languages? This research will demonstrate whether or not there is a continuum and how these women are developing their own ways of speaking, including code-switching and/or “immigrant Turkish” (Backus 2005).

In France, immigrant women from Turkey negotiate the use of their linguistics varieties, i.e. French and Turkish and their variants within their social networks (e.g. family, friends) and national institutions (e.g. public spaces, government agencies). This helps them build their monolingual and bilingual communities, and it allows, to some extent, language maintenance across generations. It also facilitates or hinders their integration into French society. France is known for having an assimilationist model of integration, in which immigrants are asked to become fully integrated into the French society by giving up their own culture and language in exchange for the French language and culture. What is characteristic to the French case is the prominence of language competence in prescribing culture. Although the assimilationist model has failed in France (Tribalat 2013), does it mean that the French government should give up on integrating its immigrants altogether?

Measuring Integration

How can integration be measured? It is defined at the MPI (2014) website, 'Immigrant integration' as: "the process of economic mobility and social inclusion for newcomers and their children." Even this definition is not accurate in the sense that it applies to newcomers and not necessarily to those who migrated in the 1960s and 1970s for instance. In France, for instance, integration is defined as language mastery and it is measured in work, education, and social inclusion. As Akinci and Yagmur (2003: 112) highlight, "[the mastery of the French language is] seen as the most fundamental aspect of the acculturation process because language is considered to the overarching value to achieve social cohesion and national unity in France." According to the interviews I carried out for this research in Strasbourg and Wissembourg, migrants' main goals were to earn, save money and return to their home country. After five decades, the myth of returning 'home' has taken another direction. There is still a plan to return among the first generation, however, it is not a definitive return but rather a temporary one, which starts once they retire. Thus, this temporary return allows the first generation to have one foot in the home country and one foot in the host country. Women have plans and projects for the future: investing in home ownership in the host society, working, buying a car, and/or becoming business owners. This is a strong and stable indicator of integration. Those who work already feel integrated, and for those who do not work the relationship with the *other* remains at the basic greeting level: "*bonjourlasma* (say 'hello')" (Bozarslan 1996: 8). Despite this type of integration "*la durée du séjour est envisagé comme plus longue, mais il n'y a pas pour autant une volonté d'intégration.*" (Petek-Salom 1997).⁴

⁴ My loose translation: (even though) they decide to stay longer, there is not a greater will to integrate.

Linguistically speaking, French and Turkish are not related. French is a synthetic romance language whereas Turkish is an agglutinative Altaic language. There was already a linguistic handicap for the Turkish migrants when they arrived in the mid-1970s and were linguistically isolated. French language courses for migrants were not popular back then, which encouraged sticking together in order to 'survive.'⁵ According to people I interviewed, some were able to express themselves by using *tarzanca* 'Turkish foreigner talk'. It was the same for women who worked, because of their interactions and their linguistic environment, they were able to learn a 'broken' French, but enough to be understood by their French interlocutors. Families with children relied on them as their translator when going to the doctor or for administrative tasks, which is still the case today in many Turkish immigrant families in Europe. Parents, especially mothers, were dependent on the children. Because they were put into housing project neighbourhoods with their own community as well as other ethnic communities, the French language was not dominant in their daily life activities at all. This was especially the case for those who were not working.

Naturalisation and Integration

In France's assimilationist model, language is key to integration and opens up the door to many resources and new identities. For instance, in 1996 only 15,000 immigrants acquired the French nationality, and language deficiency seemed to be the main reason for this low number (Akinci and Yagmur 2003). Naturalisation applications had dropped by 30% between 2010 and 2012 during the former government administration (Sarkozy era), because of the level of difficulty. Applicants were required to take a multiple choice question exam (MCQ) on French culture and the history of the country, an oral exam, followed by an interview – all of this is in French. Applicants also had to show that they have a permanent job (i.e. not on the black market), in an economy recognised to be in crisis. (France24 2012)

With the new government of François Hollande, Prime Minister Manuel Valls made changes in the naturalisation application process. While maintaining a requisite for adequate knowledge of the French language as well as *charte des droits et devoirs du citoyen français* 'charter of the rights and duties of the French citizen', the MCQ examination was removed. For Valls "*La naturalisation doit demeurer la conclusion logique d'un parcours d'intégration réussi.*" (France24 2013).⁶ Thus, with these new

⁵ Personal communication with an informant.

⁶ My loose translation: Naturalization must remain the logical conclusion of a successful process of integration.

implementations, more immigrants will be able to apply for naturalisation, which will then allow them to express their voices during elections, and thus fulfil their civic rights as citizens. This point was strongly supported by Pierre Henry, director of *France Terre d'Asile* 'France land of Asylum' who advocated for immigrants who have been in France for decades, but because of not speaking *le bon usage* were not able to vote. This certainly includes Turkish immigrant women (France24 2013).

Turkish marriages are mainly endogamous (Tribalat 2013, de Valk and Liefbroer 2012, Milewski and Hamel 2010), which in our context means marrying someone not only from Turkey, but from the parents' village or town. In general Turkish families do not favour exogamic marriages.⁷ The spouse must be from Turkey or from Turkish heritage and preferably from the same region or village in Turkey. Most all new Turkish brides and grooms are 'exported' from Turkey, and they are referred to as *ithal gelin* and *ithal damat* –'exported bride' and 'exported groom' respectively. According to the 1997 statistics of the French National Institute of Statistics and Economic Studies, 98% of the Turkish women and 92% of the Turkish men married a Turkish person living in France or coming from Turkey. As an indirect result these endogamous unions seem to aid the maintaining of culture as well as language, and thus hindering integration.⁸

New Immigration Policies

"Today [in the mid-1990s] it can be noticed that there are very few differences between a woman who came to France 20 years ago and one that just arrived; if we take as criteria language, mobility and knowledge about the host society"⁹ (Hüküm 1996: 2)

This generalisation can only apply to the first generation, because the French-born generation is involved in the society and in politics as well, enabled by their fluency in French. Back in the mid-1970 and early 1980s, language proficiency was not mandatory as it is today. Furthermore, the immigration policies were not as strict as they are today. For instance, any 'imported' bride or groom has to have taken French language and cultural

⁷ It is more tolerated when a man marries a non-Muslim woman, but with the exception that she converts to Islam. In the majority if the Turkish immigrant families, for women an exogamic marriage is not conceivable, as it is perceived as a sin unless the spouse converts into Islam.

⁸ In Denmark there has been a discussion on passing a law to prevent the union of exported brides and grooms, but rather encourage unions between immigrants living in Denmark. This would better help the integration process because both parents having grown in the Danish society, know the culture and the language, and thus, can pass it on to their children. [This information was brought up during the Q&A of a paper on Turkish immigrants in Denmark, presented at the International Turkish Migration Conference in Europe: Projecting the Next 50 Years,- London, December 2012]

⁹ My own translation from the original: « On constate aujourd'hui qu'il y a très peu de différence entre la femme entrée en France il y a 20 ans et celle qui vient d'arriver; si l'on prend comme critères la langue française, la mobilité et la connaissance de la société d'accueil. »

classes at the French embassy in their country prior to coming to France. Once in France they are also required to take around two hundred hours of French language class. These laws apply strictly to non EU-citizens joining their spouse in France.

The French educational system is a challenge for immigrant students, especially those with a Turkish background and whose parents are from the first generation immigrants. Most of them did not achieve more than primary school education, especially women who are often illiterate. This 'handicap' and the lack of knowledge of the French language unable these parents to help, participate and assist their children in their education. Crul et al. (2012) analysed the integration of second-generation immigrants conducted in fifteen European cities, and found that Turkish parents are supportive at the emotional level for their children and in supporting the pursuit of an education. In addition, the role of older siblings is not negligible in helping their younger siblings, because they went through the same educational system and have the knowledge of the language and the material.

Religious as well as cultural associations are domains that aim to help integration. However, Akinci (1996) states that Turks who are unable to integrate into the French society gather in associations, of which they become members, in order to maintain their practices, customs and cultural traditions. This is not necessarily the case because cultural associations are created in order to be a point of reference, a resource for the immigrant community, where culture and language are valorised and where cultural activities and events are organised and introduced to the local host community. In other words, associations are a bridge between the ethnic community and the host society.

Preserving Culture Through Language

Studies on gender and language demonstrate the relationship between gender roles and language change in different migration as well as regional dialectal contexts. Gal's bilingualism study (1978) on Oberwart, a small town in Eastern Austria, where German and Hungarian are spoken, showed that women were leading the language shift by moving away from using Hungarian because of its association with 'peasantness' (hence the rejection of that identity) to German, which was associated with job opportunities, better life as a spouse, i.e. socially prescribed modernity. Another study in which social mobility and prestige is demonstrated through language shifts is in McDonald (1995: 55) in which Breton women associated

their language with “the peasant lifestyle and the French language with finery and a city life.”

Cavanaugh (2006) also demonstrated the prestige of the standard language versus the dialect. She studied the language shift of the vernacular of Bergamo, a small town in Northern Italy, to standard Italian. She stated that women are not maintaining the vernacular - on the contrary; they are encouraging and facilitating the use of standard Italian within the household and elsewhere. In fact, women are blamed, in a social context, when using the vernacular with their children because “they are responsible for their children’s linguistic habits and abilities, just as they are held responsible for their socioeconomic futures through their education” (Cavanaugh 2006: 200), which is in standard Italian and not in their regional dialect. This is an expectation from within a female community to see pressure to speak standard Italian, to their children early on, so that “they will not endure the linguistics difficulties and social humiliation their parents and grandparents suffered in school as they struggled to learn Italian.” (Cavanaugh 2004 in Cavanaugh 2006: 201). If standard Italian is associated with women and social prestige, the dialect of Bergamasco is associated with a particular type of blue-collar man, either isolated shepherds or manual unskilled labour, and thus with a low social economic status.

Furthermore, there is a stigma attached to bilingualism in this community among the teachers who describe the situation as follows: “[children] arrive at school speaking a localised Italian, with numerous Bergamasco features. Children who speak in this way are often judged to speak incorrectly in general and deemed rough and uneducated.” (Cavanaugh 2006: 202) For these reasons women do not maintain the (ethnic) vernacular language because of its association with ‘non-modernity.’ In all three studies, upward cultural and economic mobility is associated with the language of the host society at large. To avoid digressing, I will not bring up additional questions related to universal generalisation on the role of women as leaders of their ethnic language shift and maintenance.

During my interview¹⁰ with Züleya, a 2nd generation informant, her brother joined us and made the point by saying that he and his siblings were required to speak Turkish until their 15th birthday. This was in order to preserve the Turkish culture. The interesting part in his utterance is when he switches to Turkish (line 13.3) to refer to the Turkish culture.

13.1 *parce qu’on avait*

¹⁰ I conducted the interview in French, but participants were free to respond in either French or Turkish.

because we had

pour pas qu'on oublie le turc

so that we don't forget Turkish

13.3 *kendi kültürümüzü falan unutmuyalım diye*

so that we don't forget our own culture

Later on in the same conversation I asked about whether losing one's own language means losing the culture (line 14). For my female participant, the response was partly affirmative (line 15), because only a part of the culture will be lost if language is not preserved, whereas dining practices may still be observed.

Nevertheless, she thought that the transmission of the culture occurs through language. In contrast, her brother strongly believed that if the language is forgotten, everything is forgotten (line 18). The utterance "*on oublie tout*" (line 18) refers not only to culture, but also to the identity of the individual.

14. FB¹¹: OK

okay

alors est-ce que oublier la langue c'est oublier la culture ?

so does forgetting the language mean forgetting the culture ?

15. Z : *une partie quand même*

some of it though

16. FB: *comment ça ?*

how so ?

17. Z : *ben pour comprendre la culture faut quand même avoir des connaissances en langue*

so in order to understand the culture you must at least have some knowledge of the language

enfin j'ai pas

well I don't know

18. B : *chez nous on a un proverbe si on oublie la langue on oublie tout*

(here) we have a saying if one forgets the language one forgets everything

¹¹ [Key: FB: researcher, Z: Züleyha, B: Züleyha's brother. The use of Turkish is indicated in bold.]

This phenomenon, of culture being maintained through language in ethnic communities, has been accounted for in the literature by Mukherjee (2003) and Zuercher (2009). For instance, in Malaysia, Bengali immigrant women with a close network use the Bengali language more than those who have a diffused network (Mukherjee 2003). Furthermore, in order to preserve their culture through language, the elderly women in the community advocate for brides from India, because they are more valued than the young women born into the Bengali Malay community in preserving the language (Mukherjee 2003). Thus, women in the community are involved in different activities to preserve their ethnic language, and so consciously decided to use Bengali as an identity marker (Mukherjee 2003) as well as a form of loyalty toward their culture. In comparison, the younger generation chooses to speak English primarily for economic reasons (Mukherjee 2003).

In essence, through linguistic practices, i.e. speaking the minority language in the household, the ethnic culture is preserved and passed on to the future generations. In contrast to the Bergamasco case, in some cultures, such as Turkish for instance, women are perceived as bearers of tradition and culture specifically through their choice of language. In my interviews some of my participants alluded to their role or bearer of the Turkish culture and the language. However, there are reasons to think that language contact will result in language shift and that women are the primary leaders of this process. Nonetheless, this is not universal, as women are also the gatekeepers of their culture through language (Mukherjee 2003).

Language Choice in the Process of Preserving the Ethnic Language

In bilingual societies and communities there is a case of diglossia which is defined as a “stable language situation...[where] there is a high codified superposed variety...which is learned largely by formal education and is used in [formal settings], but it is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation” (Grosjean 1982:130). This definition has been extended to situations where two, or more, (unrelated) languages are in contact and used in different settings (formal or informal). In an immigrant community, it is more complex than the clear-cut distinction between the use of the high versus low variety, in ‘formal’ versus ‘informal’ settings respectively. For instance, in a formal setting two bilingual speakers may code-switch instead of using the high variety as expected. Furthermore, how are these settings defined? Aren’t there other variables that need to be considered in deciding which variety to use?

Fishman (2000) uses the notion of “‘domains of language behaviour’” in order to analyse multilingual settings within groups and to describe pattern choices. According to Fishman (2000) in describing language patterns in multilingual settings, three areas need attention: 1) Group membership (e.g.

age, gender, religions, association, social status, etc.); 2) Situation also called Setting (e.g. physical settings, topics, functions of discourse: greetings, apologies, information, offering information, and style), and 3) Mode of intimacy and familiarity which refers to speaking one particular language because speakers perceive it as the language of solidarity (e.g. the use of *verlan* -a slang and youth language- among male immigrant teenagers in France as an identity marker) and/or intimacy (e.g. mother using words of affection with her child)S

In my preliminary ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Wissembourg, France, among the Turkish community, to the question “Are there any topics that you think you use more French rather than Turkish or the other way around?” One of my second-generation female participants’ responded as follows: “When talking about religion to my son, I use Turkish because that’s the language in which I learned about religion.”

This is a typical phenomenon that happens among all bilinguals, the use of one language with one topic, because the jargon of the topic has been acquired in that same language and is thus easier to access, rather than trying to translate into the other language.

Another second-generation participant from my preliminary fieldwork said that, with her siblings, she uses French if the topic of the discussion is abstract and Turkish if it is about mundane everyday activities or topics and thus more concrete themes. Like the example of religion for one of my participants, at times language choice in a multilingual setting also occurs for reasons of verbal ‘economy’, in the sense that retrieving the information as quickly as possible, (lines.5.3 and 5.7) in order to keep the conversation going smoothly. This sentiment is clearly expressed by my informant:

5. Z¹²: *ouais*
 Yeah
 en fait
 actually
5.3 *ne kolay geliyorsa*
 what ever is the easiest
 şimdi böyle
 here is the thing

¹² [Key: FB: researcher, Z: Züleyha, B: Züleyha’s brother, M: Züleyha’s mother—the use of Turkish is indicated in bold.

ça dépend

it depends

si on doit trop chercher euh

if we have to think too much euh

5.7 *hangisinden geliyorsa aklımıza x*

which ever comes to our minds

en fait

actually

In the above extract (5), the setting, topic of the conversation determines the use of one language over the other. For this participant, the dominant language of French allows her to express herself with her siblings, in a more abstract way than her ancestral Turkish language. Therefore,

“[d]omains [of language behaviour]...help us understand that *language choice* and *topic*, appropriate though they may be for analyses of individual behaviour at the level of face-to-face verbal encounters, are...related to widespread socio-cultural norms and expectations. Language choices, cumulated over many individuals and many choice instances, become transformed into the process of *language maintenance* or *language shift*.”(Fishman 2000: 93).

The benefits of anthropological tools, such as ethnography, including but not limited to observing and interacting intensively with the participants, will tell us more about the different cultural and social factors which are at play in language maintenance and language shift.

Discussions

Studies of (regional) bilingualism (McDonald 1994, Cavanaugh 2006, Gal 1978, Mukherjee 2003, Zuercher 2009) have examined choices and uses of different varieties of languages by women and their significance for the community as well as for the larger society. Since in many cultures the mother is the primary caretaker of the infant (Cavanaugh 2006) she decides what language to speak to her children. For this reason, when it comes to the preservation of the ethnic language, women are either conservative, and use the ethnic language as the main linguistic tool within the household and with their friends, or they are un-concerned with the preservation of their ethnic language and encourage the use of the host country's language within the household (Cavanaugh 2006, Khemlani 2003). In Wissembourg, France, the Turkish

language of the immigrants is still alive within the household and the ethnic community.

The intergenerational transmission issue reveals that it is much more complicated than it appears, especially among the younger generations. Generations 1.5, 2 and 3 maintain their parents' dialectal Turkish language to some degree, within the household and in the communities, they may speak French with their friends; and they may even mix both languages when talking to a peer, as some of my participants have noted, "whatever is the easiest." In addition to parental use of Turkish, Akinci (1996) argued for the essential role of television and other forms of Turkish media, which I question in another paper.

In a sociolinguistic study, about the future of the Turkish language in France, conducted among participants from Lyon, Akinci (2003a) concluded that there is a generational difference. The first generation did not see a future for their ancestral language; on the other hand, the younger generation believed that "the Turkish language is going to obtain a strong status in the future" (Akinci 2003a: 140). Why this disconnect from what the youth believe and what adults predict? Who is right? Are both groups right in a way? In this research I found that the first generation continues to use the Turkish language within the family, and when gathering at the cultural Turkish associations, for instance. In this research both first and second generations agree that the Turkish language is changing mainly due to the introduction of satellite dishes that allow Turkish channels into the immigrants' households. Therefore, Turkish media seems to play an important role, though not as important as the role women play, in the change as well as in maintaining the language in the community.

For immigrant languages to be preserved and accepted at some level, the mainstream society at large needs to welcome the "*bilinguisme de masse*,"¹³ and not stigmatise its immigrants' languages, so that, as Grosjean (1982) noted, the bilingual immigrant does not have to reject his or her language, and culture.

References

Abadan-Unat, Nermin (2011) *Turks in Europe: From Guest Worker to Transnational Citizen*. New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books.

¹³ The "*bilinguisme de masse*" refers to Turkish, Arabic in contrast with *le bilinguisme d'élite*, which are languages such as English, German, Spanish, and Italian, viz. languages being taught in schools.

Akinci, Mehmet-Ali (2003a) Une situation de contact de langues: Le cas turc-français des immigrés turcs en France. In J. Billiez (ed.), *Contacts de langues: Modèles, typologies, interventions*. Paris: L'Harmattan, 127-144.

Akinci, Mehmet-Ali & Yagmur, Kutlay (2003) Language use, choice, maintenance, and ethnolinguistic vitality of Turkish speakers in France: intergenerational difference. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 164, 107-128.

Akinci, Mehmet-Ali (1996) Les pratiques langagières chez les immigrés turcs en France. *Ecarts d'Identité*, 74, 14-17.

Backus, Ad (2005) Turkish as an Immigrant Language in Europe. In Tej, and W. Ritchie (eds.), *The Handbook of Bilingualism*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 689-724.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1991) *Language and Symbolic Power*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Bozarslan, Hamit (1996) Femmes originaires de Turquie en France où en est l'intégration? Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée Orientale et le monde Turco-Iranien. *Cemoti*. Available at: <http://cemoti.revues.org/560> [accessed: 20.10.2015].

Cavanaugh, Jillian (2006) Little Women and Vital Champions: Gendered Language Shift in a Northern Italian Town. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 16(2) 194-210.

Crul, Maurice et al. (2012) *The European Second Generation Compared: Does the Integration Context Matter?* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press.

Fishman, Joshua (2000) Who Speaks What Language to Whom and When? In Li Wei (ed.), *The Bilingualism Reader*. London: Routledge, 89-106.

France24 (2012) Manuel Valls souhaite assouplir les critères de naturalisation. *France24*, Available at: <http://www.france24.com/fr/20121018-manuel-valls-france-immigration-etrangers-criteres-naturalisation> [accessed: 20.10.2015]

France 24 (2013) Manuel Valls continue de faciliter l'accès à la nationalité française. *France24*, Available at: <http://www.france24.com/fr/20130828-manuel-valls-continue-favoriser-acc%C3%A8s-naturalisations-francaises-ump-immigration> [accessed: 20.10.2015]

Gal, Susan (1978) Peasant Men Can't Get Wives: Language Change and Sex Roles in a Bilingual Community. *Language in Society*, 7(1), 1-16.

Grosjean, François (1982) *Life with Two Languages*. Harvard University Press, 113-166 and 228-341.

Hale-William, Michelle (2013) *The Multicultural Dilemma: Migration, ethnic politics, and state intermediation*. London: Routledge.

Hüküm, Pinar (1996) Le point de vue d'une responsable associative: qu'en est-il de l'intégration des femmes turques en France? *Cahiers d'Etudes sur la Méditerranée Orientale et le monde Turco-Iranien*, 21, 179-183.

Johnston, Ruth (1969) *The Assimilation Myth: A study of Second Generation Polish Immigrants in Western Australia*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

Kastoryano, Riva (1986) *Être Turc en France. Réflexions sur familles et communauté*. Paris: L'Harmattan.

Khemlami, David, et al. (2003) Language Maintenance and Language Shift among the Punjabi Sikh Community in Malaysia? *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 161, 1-24.

McDonald, Maryon (1994) Women and Linguistic Innovation in Brittany. In P. Burton, K. K. Dyson & Sh. Ardener (eds.), *Bilingual Women Anthropological Approaches to Second-Language Use*. Oxford: Berg, 95-110.

MPI (Migration Policy Institute) (2014) *Immigrant Integration*. Available at: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/topics/immigrant-integration> [accessed: 20.10.2015].

Milewski, Nadja and Hamel, Christelle (2010) Union Formation and Partner Choice in a Transnational Context: The Case of Descendants of Turkish Immigrants in France. *International Migration Review*, 44(3), 615-658.

Modood, Tariq (2013) *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Mukherjee, Dipika (2003) Role of Women in Language Maintenance and Language Shift: Focus on the Bengali Community in Malaysia. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 161, 103-120.

Petek-Salom, Gaye (1997) *L'enfant turque à l'école*. Available at: <http://www.bleublancturc.com/Franco-Turcs/enfantturc.htm> [accessed: 20.10.2015].

Tribalat, Michèle (2013) *Assimilation, la fin du modèle français*. Paris: Les éditions du Toucan.

de Valk, Helga and Liefbroer, Aart (2012) Partner Choice Patterns Among Descendants of Turkish Immigrants in Europe. *European Journal of Population*, 28(3), 241-268.

Zuercher, Kenneth (2009) The Linguistic Construction of Gender in Azerbaijan: Sociodemographic Factors Influencing Russian Language Choice. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 198, 47-64.