

Fall 2004

Ich Rede, wie Ich Mich Wohl Fühle: Language and Ethnic/Cultural Identity among German-born Young Adults of Turkish Descent in Berlin

Emily R. Jenkins
SIT Study Abroad

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection

 Part of the [Anthropological Linguistics and Sociolinguistics Commons](#), and the [First and Second Language Acquisition Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Jenkins, Emily R., "Ich Rede, wie Ich Mich Wohl Fühle: Language and Ethnic/Cultural Identity among German-born Young Adults of Turkish Descent in Berlin" (2004). *Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection*. 512.
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/isp_collection/512

This Unpublished Paper is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Study Abroad at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Independent Study Project (ISP) Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

Ich rede, wie ich mich wohl fühle:

Language and Ethnic/Cultural Identity among
German-born Young Adults of Turkish Descent in Berlin

Emily R. Jenkins
December 8, 2004
SIT Central Europe
Independent Study Project
Advisor: Christina Limbird

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword	1
Introduction	3
Methodology.....	4
Theoretical Background.....	5
Findings	7
Relationship to Germans.....	7
Relationship to Turks in Turkey.....	11
Relationship to German-born People of Turkish Descent.....	14
Conclusion	18
Works Cited	20
Appendix 1. Demographic Information on Interview Subjects	21
Appendix 2. Interview Guide	22
Appendix 3. Translations	23

FOREWORD

I remember sitting on the porch swing my first year of college, having my first long conversation *auf Deutsch* with a native German speaker, and been told, “With every language you learn, you gain a new soul.” It took a while for me to understand the word “soul,” but when I did, I was so excited. It was as if there had been a “click” in my mind and suddenly I understood what had fascinated me about learning German all these years. I felt that I really *did* have another soul. All those years of learning “*der*,” “*die*,” “*das*” were starting to pay off.

Later, as I began studying sociolinguistics, I discovered that the connection between language and identity was not just a proverb but a field of study. I found academic literature on the topic and was fascinated by sentences like, “Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity- I am my language.”ⁱ I began learning Spanish and spent three and a half months on the U.S.-Mexico border. Northern Mexican/border Spanish has a very special place in my heart, and certain feelings will always be associated for me with this language. Perhaps it is too much to say I have a “Mexican soul” now, but I do know that a part of me thinks, feeling and acts differently because of the influence.

Now I am in Germany, speaking German every day and wondering what kind of a soul I am developing here. While I love the German language, I cannot say that I have found a great affection for German culture during my stay. I certainly have a deeper understanding of German society, history and politics.. Undoubtedly I am now more able to comprehend and empathize with Germans, and certainly some aspects of the culture

ⁱ Gloria Anzaldúa. *Borderlands: La Frontera*. 1987. San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute Book Company. 81.

have penetrated my subconscious in ways I will only later, or maybe never, realize. I would not, however, say that I *feel* at all German.

Even before coming to Germany, I struggled with not feeling particularly connected to or interested in German culture. My saving grace was the growing field of study on minorities in Germany, which I was lucky enough to discover relatively early. I was particularly interested in the experiences of immigrants in Germany. This sparked my interest in immigrants in the U.S., thus leading to my stay on the border. Now the story has come full circle, and finally I am here in Germany studying the topic first-hand.

I am most grateful to everyone who has helped me in ways great and small to achieve this project, particularly my interview subjects and my academic advisor, Tina Limbird. Thank you, *danke, teşekkür ederim*.

INTRODUCTION

My study consisted of ethnographic interviews with young adults ages 19-28, who were born and raised in Germany to parents emigrated from Turkey.ⁱⁱ My main research question was, “What role does language play in the subjects’ conception of ethnic/cultural identity?” Specifically, I focused on the role of language in how subjects identify with or distinguish themselves from: (1) the ethnic/cultural majority in their country of residence, i.e. Germans; (2) the ethnic/cultural majority in their parents’ country of origin, i.e. Turks in Turkey; and (3) others of similar immigration background, i.e. other German-born people of Turkish descent.ⁱⁱⁱ Originally I only intended to investigate how the subjects view their own and others’ identity, however it became clear that outsiders’ perceptions often affect self-conceptions, and thus I have included some discussion of this topic as well.

I will first detail the methodology of my study and give a brief an introduction to existing scholarship on the topic. I then present my findings in three sections, each analyzing the subjects’ relationship to a particular population: Germans, Turks in Turkey, and German-born people of Turkish descent. In each section, I examine the ways in which subjects identify with and distinguish themselves from the given population, both in general and in terms of language. In the first two sections, I also address how the

ⁱⁱ I designed my independent study project so that I will be able to incorporate the research I do here into my senior thesis. The complete picture consists of a comparison between the language ideologies of two groups: young adults of Mexican descent born and raised in the U.S. and young adult of Turkish descent born and raised in Germany.

ⁱⁱⁱ In designing my research, I intentionally described my target group as people born and raised in Germany “with parents from Turkey“ rather than “with Turkish parents,“ aware of the fact that Turkey is multinational/multiethnic state. I had one Kurdish interviewee, Serdar, who offered a unique perspective on some topics. Ultimately I decided not to discuss the issue of non-Turkish minorities in this paper, but it should be noted that there *are* differences and that this would be a fascinating subject for further research. See footnote xviii for more on terms.

subjects see themselves perceived by others and the extent to which they consider language is a factor. In the last section, I also consider how the subjects view others' ethnic/cultural identity. Finally, I will summarize my findings, present a set of conclusions and finish by raising a few questions for further research.

Methodology

My primary motivation for choosing young adults as the target group was a desire to work with people close to my own age. I expected that the subjects and I would feel more comfortable with one another if we were of similar ages and thus “peers” in some sense. It was my personal impression that this did in fact have an effect on establishing a sense of candor in the interviews. I also wanted to work with young adults and not children because I wanted to focus on language ideologies rather than language acquisition or cognitive development. I tentatively set the age range at 20-25, and then expanded it to 19-28 as possible interview subjects became available.

In total I conducted ten interviews; due to limited time, I have restricted this analysis to the first five. I attempted to achieve a balance of males and females and a mix of individuals from different socioeconomic statuses. Neighborhood and education level were taken as indicators of socioeconomic status, although these factors are not reflective in all cases.^{iv} I found research subjects both informally through friends^v as well as through organizations that work with youth of Turkish descent in Berlin.^{vi}

^{iv} For further detail on demographic characteristics on the interviewees discussed in this paper, see Appendix 1.

^v Special thanks to Gökçen.

^{vi} Thank you to Cafer Şanalın at S.O.S. Kinderdorf Berlin-Mitte and Kenan Kolat and Veysel Çalıören of Türkisher Bund Berlin-Brandenburg.

The interviews were qualitative, semi-structured and ethnographic in nature.^{vii} My general approach was to pose open-ended questions and allow the interviewee to dictate the flow of conversation. When the subjects looked to me for more direction, I would pose follow-up questions, ask for clarification, or present a new topic. Eight of ten interviews were tape-recorded; for the other two I took extensive handwritten notes. All quotations are either transcribed directly from recordings or were transcribed word-for-word in my notes during the interviews.

Theoretical Background

While language ideologies among second and third generation immigrants are fairly well researched in the United States, fewer studies have been conducted on this topic in Germany. Keim et al. studied language use and attitudes among adolescent girls of Turkish descent in Mannheim, Germany. Their findings reveal that speakers situationally utilize a number of codes including highly proficient German, “rough aggressive German and Turkish formulaic utterances,” and a “Mischmasch” of Turkish and German.^{viii} Eksner investigated youth in Berlin-Kreuzberg, also revealing proficiency in and strategic employment of multiple codes. Specifically, Eksner focuses on the use of Turkish and Turkish-influenced German by young males to create an image of “toughness.” Eksner refers to her subjects “German Turks” and their code “Stylized

^{vii} For interview questions, see Appendix 2.

^{viii} Inken Keim. “Linguistic variation and communication practices in migrant children and youth groups.” 2004. Cited in Carol Pfaff, “The creation of mixed codes in an urban migrant community: Psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and political issues in the speech of Turkish/German bilinguals in Berlin” as presented to GLACSHEL, Ann Arbor, MI. 2004.

Turkish-German.”^{ix} Also influential have been the works of Feridan Zaimoğlu, himself an immigrant from Turkey to Germany. In his books *Kanak Sprak* (1995), *Abschaum* (1997) and *Koppstoff* (1998), Zaimoğlu presents rewritten anecdotes narrated to him by people of Turkish descent in Germany. Zaimoğlu calls his subjects *Kanaken* and the language they speak *Kanak-Sprak*.^x

^{ix} Julia Eksner. *Language and Youth Identities among German Turks: Ghetto Ideologies and Stylized Turkish German in Berlin-Kreuzberg*. 2001. Berlin: Institut für Ethnologie, Fachbereich Politik- und Sozialwissenschaften, Freie Universität Berlin.

^x The term “Kanake” comes originally from the Polynesian *kanaka* meaning “man” and was used to refer to indentured laborers in Australia in the late 19th century. The term was then imported to Germany, as a derogatory term for foreigners. Some people of Turkish descent living in Germany have assumed the term for themselves as a marker of ethnic pride. Carol Pfaff. “Ideological and Political Framing of Bilingual Development: Reflections on Studies of Turkish/German in Berlin.” 2001. Plenary lecture at 8th Nordic Bilingualism Conference. 13.

FINDINGS

PART I: Relationship to Germans

All subjects self-identify as proficient speakers of German. On one end of the spectrum within the group, Çığır states that he speaks German “genauso gut wie ein Deutsche.”^{xi1} On the other, Özlem reports that “Bei Türkisch kann [sie] sehr gute Sätze bauen aber bei Deutsch geht alles durcheinander.”^{xii2} Others fall somewhere in between, with Gökçen stating for example that she speaks German well, but that there are “noch Probleme mit deutschen Redewendungen, weil zu Hause deutsche Redewendungen nicht benutzt werden.”^{xiii3} All report that they can make themselves understood in German and converse with monolingual Germans without difficulty. All completed the majority of their formal education in public schools where German was the dominant language of instruction.

While I lack skill in judging other peoples’ spoken German, I personally considered their speech to be typical for young adults in Berlin.^{xiv} The interviewees spoke fluently, yet tailored the level and pace of their speech for my comprehension. I did not notice any grammatical irregularities. To differing degrees, all speakers used common filler/flavoring words and phrases such as “also,” “halt,” “irgendwie,” and “oder so.” I consider myself a poor judge of accent, but from instinct alone, I would say that two interviewees *may* have exhibited some kind of Turkish-influenced pronunciation or intonation, whereas the other three to me sounded completely typical.

^{xi} Çığır. (Last names were not solicited). Interviewed by author. Tape recorded. Berlin: Nov. 20, 2004.

^{xii} Özlem. Interviewed by author. Handwritten notes. Berlin: Nov. 26, 2004.

^{xiii} Gökçen. Interviewed by author. Tape recorded. Berlin: Nov. 16, 2004.

^{xiv} The interviews were conducted completely in German.

In terms of self-identification, the subjects draw a clear distinction between *speaking* German and *being* German. Özlem says, for example, “Ich kann alles erzählen, was ich will auf Deutsch, aber ich sehe mich nicht als Deutsche.“⁴ Being able to express herself in German does not have the effect of causing her to feel German; a common language does not mean a common identity. Gökçen reports that when someone in Turkey asks if she is German, she replies, “ja, ich komme aus Deutschland. Aber ich bin nicht Deutsche.”⁵ She explains, “Ich bin hier geboren und aufgewachsen aber ich bin nicht dadurch deutsch.”⁶ Gökçen thus draws a distinction between *coming from* Germany, i.e. having been born in and grown up there, and *being* German.

Reasons given by subjects for their self-identification as non-German are primarily cultural and not linguistic. Özlem explains why she calls Turkish “her language“: Ich bin doch Moslem, doch Türkin, denn muss ich auf Türkisch reden, nicht auf Deutsch. Ich bin in Deutschland und muß Deutsch auf Deutsch reden, aber wenn ich in der Türkei bin, dann rede ich kein Wort Deutsch.⁷ For Özlem, being Turkish is a matter of religion (“Ich bin doch Moslem“) and lineage (“doch Türkin“), while speaking German is a matter of necessity (“muss auf Deutsch reden“). For Serdar, the difference is a matter of mentality. He explains, “Nur weil ich Deutsch rede, bin ich nicht gleich Deutsche. Deutsch ist meine beste Sprache, ich bin hier aufgewachsen, aber ich bin nicht unbedingt gleich deutscher Mentalität.“^{xv 8} Serdar says he speaks German “viel lieber“ than Turkish and that “Deutsch ist eigentlich bei [ihm] die eigentliche Sprache, zu der [er] eigentlich den stärksten Bezug ha[t].“⁹ With few exceptions, among bilingual

^{xv} Serdar. Interviewed by author. Tape recorded. Berlin: Nov. 20, 2004.

friends he speaks “immer Deutsch. Nur Deutsch.”¹⁰ Yet because his mentality is different than that of Germans, he does not see himself as German.

In terms of perception by others, most subjects report that despite having grown up in Germany and being proficient in German, they are considered by Germans to be *Ausländer* (foreigners) or *Türken* (Turks). Ozan captures this sentiment succinctly in stating, “die Deutsche akzeptieren einen nicht als Deutsch.”^{xvi11} Gökçen explains, “die Leute hier [akzeptieren] dich nicht als jemand von hier. Du bleibst immer für die so ein Art Fremde von einer anderen Kultur, von einem anderen Land.”¹² Place of birth and citizenship are reported to be irrelevant. Ozan highlights this contradiction in noting that Germans do not accept a person as German, “obwohl [er] hier geboren [ist], eigentlich Deutsche [ist], auch laut Paß und so.”¹³ Özlem also points out the irony as she says, “Deutschen nennen uns ‘Ausländer.’ Aber ich bin kein Ausländer- ich bin hier geboren und habe die deutsche Staatsangehörigkeit.”¹⁴

Because Germans’ perception of the subjects was not one of my primary research interests, I did not question subjects further as to what they see as the reasons *why* they are not considered German by Germans. The most I can say to this topic is that language was not mentioned as a cause. As noted above, all subjects reported they could express themselves and converse in German without difficulty. Typical responses to the question, “How does it go when you talk to monolingual Germans?” were “gut,” “sehr gut,” and “normal.”¹⁵ Gökçen explains, for example, that she has no problem communicating with monolinguals, “weil [sie] beiden Sprachen halt gut sprechen kann.... [Sie] kann [sich] halt in beiden wirklich gut ausdrücken.”¹⁶

^{xvi} Ozan. Interviewed by author. Tape recorded. Berlin: Nov. 20, 2004.

Some subjects reported that being perceived and labeled as a foreigner causes them to identify more strongly as non-German. For example, Çığır says, “Ich würde mich als Türke bezeichnen, weil mir es oft bezeichnet wird.... also von vielen Deutschen, dass ich anders bin oder wo anders herkomme.”¹⁷ This quotation illustrates how the labels applied by others can become internalized and self-applied; because Çığır is described as a Turk and treated as one on a daily basis, he calls himself a Turk as well.

Other interviewees reported that being perceived and labeled as foreigners can cause them to actively distance themselves from Germans. Ozan articulates this in saying, “Wenn man hier ausgegrenzt wird, dann wehre ich mich selber ab, von den Leuten.”¹⁸ This self-distancing is achieved by acting foreign, namely by switching into speaking Turkish. He says for example that sometimes when is alone with a few other Turkish speakers in a group of Germans, he notices that some of the Germans are giving them hostile looks. In this situation, “rede[t] [er] einfach Türkisch, dann sollen sie auch gar nichts verstehen, was [er] rede[t] so.”¹⁹ He might also comment to one of his friends in Turkish, “Guck mal, die gucken uns voll blöd an.”²⁰ Speaking in Turkish thus allows one to comment on a situation without being understood by the others.

Speaking Turkish may also serve as a reaction to Germans’ perception of the subjects as foreigners by confirming/parodying the stereotypes and expectations. Ozan says that in the situation described in the preceding paragraph, “Dann sagen wir, ‘Sollen die doch gucken.’ Manchmal natürlich bisschen proviezierend oder lauter reden oder so, weil wenn die sowieso schon denken, ‘Guck dir mal diese Ausländer an’ [...] dann sollen sie es recht denken...”²¹ Ozan relates that since certain Germans will consider and treat

him as a foreigner no matter what he does, he might as well play into their idea of the loud, aggressive, young Turkish man.^{xvii}

In contrast, Serdar explains that sometimes he is perceived as a German and says that speaking Turkish is his way of correcting this misconception. He says that he and his friends sometimes “[gehen] so stark in der Masse verloren²² because Germans do not realize that they are different.²³ Serdar relates that “manchmal hat man auch gar kein Lust irgendwie in der Masse irgendwie mitzugehen oder so, da verloren zu gehen.²⁴ Serdar explains that in response, sometimes a person wants to isolate himself from German society²⁵ because “es vielleicht keine so starke Identifikation mit den Deutschen gibt.²⁶ Thus a motivation to speak Turkish in public can be “zu zeigen, dass man jemand anderes ist oder nicht Deutsche.²⁷ In this example, speaking Turkish is a means of bringing others’ perception in line with self-identification.

PART II: Relationship to Turks in Turkey

In terms of self-identification, subjects express on the one hand a strong tie to Turkey. Two report a desire to live in Turkey. Özlem states this as self-evident, “Ja klar ich möchte in der Türkei leben,²⁸ while Gökçen specifically draws the connection between feeling marginalized in Germany and feeling a sense of connection to Turkey:

Man ist so unsicher hier... weil die Leute hier dich nicht als jemand von hier akzeptieren.... Deshalb ist es halt sehr schwer hier zu leben. Da hat man immer den Wunsch, ah in der Türkei kann es ja besser sein. Und hat man immer so eine Verbindung halt in der Türkei.²⁹

^{xvii} For more on the use of Turkish or Turkish-influenced German to provoke and project an image of toughness, see Eksner 2001.

Turkey is seen as a potential safe haven or retreat of sorts where one could perhaps be better accepted than in Germany.

All subjects expressed that they had grown up with and internalized Turkish culture; belonging to Turkish culture is thus part of their self-identity. Several interviewees elaborated on specific differences between German and Turkish culture. For example, two interviewees explained that in Turkey, bread is always divided between people regardless of who bought it, but not so in Germany.³⁰ Turkish culture was generally characterized as warmer, more open, and more marked by solidarity between people than German culture. Several interviewees also note that Turkish culture is not alone in these respects and overlaps with other societies.³¹

On the other hand, subjects also self-identify as distinct from Turkish people in Turkey in so far as they also acknowledge some differences between them and the former. Ozan, for example, says that while he would encourage dinner guests to take second portions, as is the norm in Turkey, he would only offer a few times and then stop. In contrast, he reports, someone in Turkey would persist until the guest ate more. Özlem says that in comparison to Turkish girls in Germany, “Die Mädchen sind anders dort. Sie kommen spät nach Hause, ihre Eltern kümmern sich nicht darum...”³² Several mentioned that in Turkey, people do not have as much contact to other cultures as in Berlin.³³

In terms of perception by others, subjects commonly reported that they are considered a foreigner or German in Turkey. Gökçe says, “...drüben ist es so, dass man auch nicht anerkannt ist als Türke oder so, sondern du bist drüben auch so

‘Deutschländer’^{xviii} so, weißt du, Deutsch, also.“³⁴ Çıgır speaks to being perceived as an outsider in both countries:

Also ich sehe mich weder in Deutschland vollakzeptiert [...] als auch in der Türkei vollakzeptiert. Weil, ja, in Deutschland wir mir eigentlich tagtäglich irgendwie vor der Nase gehalten, dass ich halt anders bin und in der Türkei genauso. Da werden wir auch “Deutschländer” genannt und auch mit anderen Augen angesehen als anderen dort lebenden Türken....³⁵

Thus the same phenomenon that occurs in Germany also occurs in Turkey: subjects are perceived as foreigners despite indications to the contrary. In Turkey, shared Turkish lineage and culture are indicators that the subjects are Turkish, yet language differences and indicators of German cultural influence mark them as different.

Language was viewed as a factor that established a connection between subjects and Turks in Turkey while at the same time accentuating differences between them. Language was seen as binding subjects to Turks in Turkey in that it enabled them to access Turkish culture and communicate with monolinguals. Gökçen’s articulates this view succinctly in saying language allows “Zugang zu der anderen Kultur.”³⁶ Several subjects mention traditional Turkish folk music, for example, as an important element of Turkish culture. These interviewees say they find it important for someone to understand the lyrics in order to fully appreciate the music. Thus a common language facilitates to some extent a common identity with Turks in Turkey.

All subjects report that the Turkish they speak is somehow different than the Turkish spoken in Turkey. The most commonly reported differences are less rich vocabulary, differences in sentence structure, occasional inability to think of the fitting word or accidental use of word in German, and atypical intonation. Gökçen says for

^{xviii} *Almance* in Turkish, meaning “German,” the same word used to refer to Germans in general

example, “die Satzstruktur wie wir es zusammenbauen benutzt manchmal ein bisschen deutschen Grammatik drin, also wie gesagt, Aufbaus und, ehm, wie du Wörter betonst, wie du einen Satz betonst. So eine Sache.“³⁷ Many expressed that their Turkish is not as “good” as that of Turks in Turkey. For example, Özlem reports that those in Turkey speak, “richtig perfekt Türkisch“ while those in Germany, “können nicht so gut Türkisch.“³⁸ The subjects do not say, however, that speaking nonstandard or “poor” Turkish makes them feel less Turkish; language does not seem to have a bearing on self-identity in this case.

Language differences do have an impact on others’ perception of the subjects in Turkey, however. Several subjects reported that people in Turkey notice the idiosyncrasies in their speech and question whether they are German or where they are from. Gökçen relates, “Die sagen dann schon, ‚du bist doch Deutscher, oder? Also für die ist man dann wirklich Deutscher “³⁹ She adds, “Wir sind dann nicht Türkisch. Du redest zwar türkisch aber... ist halt nicht wie die dort reden“⁴⁰ Once the difference in language is noted, a difference in atmosphere follows, as the listener now perceives the speaker as a foreigner rather than another native. Gökçen explains, “jetzt wissen sie wieder, dass du aus Deutschland bist und [...] dann ist es so ‘was anderes. Also dann ist es ein anderer Atmosphäre.“⁴¹

PART III: Relationship to German-born People of Turkish Descent

Although the subjects report that they self-identify and are perceived as different from both Germans and Turks in Turkey, they did not strongly articulate a shared conception of belonging to a distinct ethnic/cultural group made up of German-born

people of Turkish descent. Identification with others of the same background was generally expressed in terms of having friends who were also born in Germany to Turkish parents. Subjects generally refer to themselves and their friends of Turkish descent as “Turkish.” Distinction between German-born people of Turkish descent and Turkish people in Turkey is generally indicated through reference to where people live rather than through separate identity labels. Those in Germany are called, for example, “Türken hier,”⁴² “Türken, die hier leben,”⁴³ and “Leute, die hier geboren sind,”⁴⁴ while those in Turkey are referred to as “Türke[n] in der Türkei,”⁴⁵ “Türken, die in der Türkei leben,”⁴⁶ and “dort lebenden Türken.”⁴⁷ When asked for terms they would use to refer *specifically* to someone born in Germany to Turkish parents, subjects generally replied that they did not know any. The hybrid term “Deutsch-Türken”⁴⁸ was suggested once.^{xix}

The interviewees did not indicate that they identify with other German-born people of Turkish descent through sharing a common language unique to them. German-Turkish code-mixing was not considered a language in and of itself and most interviewees could not think of any term or name for it, with the exception of one subject who suggested “Türkisch-Deutsch.” Subjects did not claim to feel more comfortable conversing with other bilinguals over monolinguals. Rather, in response to questions such as “Do you find it easier to speak to bilinguals as opposed to monolinguals?” or “With whom do you feel most comfortable speaking?” most responded that they feel fine speaking to anyone. Gökçen mentioned that *some* people may feel they can express themselves better to other bilinguals, but she herself does not feel this way.⁴⁹ She does

^{xix} Terms from academic literature such as Zaimoğlu’s “Kanakan” and “Kanak-Sprak” or Eksner’s “Turkish-German” are not commonly used by the interviewees to refer to themselves or their speech. I have therefore avoided using such terms in this paper, settling for the more cumbersome “German-born people of Turkish descent.” It must be admitted however that this is not an entirely neutral designation either, as someone may identify for example as being of Kurdish and not Turkish descent.

say, however, that she “fühl[t] [s]ich auf jeden Fall mit Leuten, die beiden Sprachen können, ein bisschen sicherer.⁵⁰ One speaker did report that he situationally switches into speaking Turkish in order to establish a sense of connection among peers.⁵¹

Subjects did not generally equate being able to speak Turkish with *being* Turkish in their assessment of other German-born people of Turkish descent. Generally they consider a person with Turkish parents to be Turkish, independent of Turkish language ability. Several explain that some individuals do not learn Turkish because it is not promoted at home. Ozan reports that he would consider someone *not* Turkish on account of language *only if* that person were overly ostentatious about being Turkish. Otherwise, if a person has Turkish parents and self-identifies as Turkish, he will regard that person as such.

While interview subjects do not generally consider speaking Turkish a criterion for being Turkish, they do view language ability as an indication of how connected one is with his or her Turkish heritage. Subjects express concern that someone who does not know the language will not be able to access the culture.^{xx} When asked if she would no longer consider someone Turkish who did not speak Turkish, Gökçen responds, “Das kann man vielleicht nicht so sagen. Aber, die Sprache erleichtert bestimmt sehr viel., die anderen zu verstehen.“ She adds, “Also wichtig ist, seine Sprache zu können, um die Menschen zu verstehen, die in dieser Kultur oder diesem Sprachkreis leben.“ Çığır expresses that language does not determine who is Turkish, but shows to what extent the person identifies with or engages his or her Turkish identity.⁵²

^{xx} See folk music example in Section II.

Attitudes were more mixed in regard to individuals who *can* speak Turkish but choose not to. Gökçen and Çığır both state that it is “egal” to them if bilinguals choose to only use German.⁵³ Ozan however finds speaking only in German and never switching into Turkish “nicht richtig“⁵⁴ because “Man soll zu beidem stehen.“⁵⁵ He compares Turks who “überhaupt gar nicht mehr so Türkisch reden wollen, so, gar nicht zeigen wollen, dass sie Türke sind”⁵⁶ to certain African-Americans in the U.S. whom other African-Americans call “puppets of the whites.”⁵⁷ For Ozan, people who do not ever want to speak Turkish have become so absorbed into German society that he no longer considers them Turkish; rather, he would refer to such individuals as German.⁵⁸

CONCLUSION

Anzaldúa claims that “Ethnic identity is twin skin to linguistic identity- I am my language.” Yet for the individuals I interviewed, the connection between language and ethnic/cultural identity is nuanced and variable. In terms of perception by outsiders, an individual may be Turkish “by blood,” yet considered *almance* in Turkey because the Turkish he speaks is noticeably influenced by German; the same individual may speak flawless German and hold a German passport yet be considered an *Ausländer*.

In terms of the subjects’ self-conception of ethnic/cultural identity, language does not play as important a role as I expected. Other factors are more important in identifying with or against Germans, Turks in Turkey and other German-born people of Turkish descent. None of the interview subjects express an essentialist view of the connection between language and ethnicity, believing either that someone could become German by speaking German or become not Turkish by not speaking Turkish. I also did not find strong evidence of a Turkish-German hybrid identity specifically expressed through a Turkish-German hybrid code.

Nonetheless, language is important in subjects’ conception of themselves as bilingual, bicultural individuals. They particularly emphasize that knowing Turkish enables them to access Turkish culture. They also speak very highly in general about the benefits of bilingualism and the ways in which being bilingual has enriched their lives; many interviewees express that speaking multiple languages allows them to see multiple points of view. While there exists no consensus on what German-born people of Turkish origin should be called or call themselves, all subjects identify strongly with having

grown up under a mix of influences. Perhaps more than anything else, it is this identification with and positive value placed on being multilingual and multicultural that ties the interviewees together and could be said to constitute a common identity.

A number of questions for further research occurred to me in the process of this investigation. What is the connection between language and ethnic/cultural identity for individuals whose parents come from Turkey but belong to minority groups like the Kurds? What are the factors that cause one person to identify strongly with code-switching, another to disassociate him or herself from it, and another to be ambivalent? What roles do social class, gender, age, and education level play? What is the effect of the current political debate in Germany on “linguistic integration” on the language ideologies of young German-born people of Turkish descent? How will the language practices and attitudes of the third generation differ or resemble those of the first? I look forward to reading studies on these and other topics that are sure to appear in the following years. Even more strongly, I hope to have many more conversations with those people for whom themes like those discussed in this paper are not just research questions, but daily, lived reality.

Works Cited

Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands: La Frontera*. 1987. San Francisco: Spinsters / Aunt Lute Book Company.

Çığır. Interviewed by author. Tape recorded. Berlin: Nov. 20, 2004.

Eksner, Julia. *Language and Youth Identities among German Turks: Ghetto Ideologies and Stylized Turkish German in Berlin-Kreuzberg*. 2001. Berlin: Institut für Ethnologie, Fachbereich Politik- und Sozialwissenschaften, Freie Universität Berlin.

Gökçen. Interviewed by author. Tape recorded. Berlin: Nov. 16, 2004.

Keim, Inken. "Linguistic variation and communication practices in migrant children and youth groups." 2004. Cited in Carol Pfaff, "The creation of mixed codes in an urban migrant community: Psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and political issues in the speech of Turkish/German bilinguals in Berlin" as presented to GLACSHL, Ann Arbor, MI. 2004. Work obtained from author.

Ozan. Interviewed by author. Tape recorded. Berlin: Nov. 20, 2004.

Özlem. Interviewed by author. Handwritten notes. Berlin: Nov. 26, 2004.

Pfaff, Carol. "Ideological and Political Framing of Bilingual Development: Reflections on Studies of Turkish/German in Berlin." 2001. Plenary lecture at 8th Nordic Bilingualism Conference. Work obtained from author.

Serdar. Interviewed by author. Tape recorded. Berlin: Nov. 20, 2004.

APPENDIX 1. Demographic Information on Interview Subjects

Name	Gender	Age	Neighborhood	Education level
Gökçen	F	26	Neukölln	Diplom in progress
Çığır	M	21	Tempelhof, raised in Friedenau	Gymnasium in progress
Ozan	M	21	Charlottenburg	Hauptschulabschluß
Serdar	M	23	Charlottenburg	Gymnasium finished, Ökologisches Jahr in progress
Özlem	F	19	Wedding	Oberschulabschluß plus 1 year Realschule, Praktikum in progress

APPENDIX 2. Interview Guide

[Nachfragen mit bezeichnet]

1. Zur Person

1. Wie alt bist du?
2. Wo wohnst du? Wie würdest du deine Umgebung beschreiben?
 - Wie würdest du den Anteil von Leuten in deiner Umgebung einschätzen, die aus der Türkei kommen oder Eltern aus der Türkei haben?
3. Was machst du?
 - Studierst du? Was? In welchem Semester? Arbeitest du? Was für eine Arbeit machst du?

2. Einwanderungshintergrund

4. Wie kommt das, dass du in Deutschland lebst?
 - Wo wurdest du geboren?
 - Wo wurden deine Eltern geboren?
 - Wann sind deine Eltern hierher gekommen? Aus welchem Grund?

3. Sprachgebrauch

5. Welche Sprachen sprichst du?
 - Wie hast du Türkisch gelernt? Deutsch?
 - Welche würdest du als deine Muttersprache bezeichnen?
6. In welchen Situationen verwendest du die eine oder die andere Sprache?
 - Mit der Familien (Eltern, Geschwister), Mitbewohnern, Freunden
 - Auf Arbeit, in der Schule/an der Uni, in der Straße, beim Einkaufen usw.
7. Wie sieht es aus, wenn du auf Türkisch mit einsprachigen Personen redest?
8. Wie sieht es aus, wenn du mit einsprachigen Deutschen redest?
9. Wie sieht es aus, wenn du mit Zweisprachigen redest?
 - Mischst du manchmal die Sprachen, wenn du mit ihnen redest?
 - o An welchen Stufen? (innerhalb einem Gespräch, Satz, Wort)
 - (Falls nicht mischt): Was haltest du von Leuten, die die Sprachen mischen?

4. Identität

10. Wie würdest du dein Freundeskreis beschreiben?
 - Sie sie auch in Deutschland geboren und aufgewachsen? Haben sie auch Eltern aus der Türkei? Aus Deutschland? Andere Länder?
11. Wie siehst du dich selbst?/Mit welcher Gruppe identifizierst du dich?
12. Deiner Ansicht nach, woraus besteht Türkischsein?
 - Was für eine Rolle spielt die Sprache?
 - Wofür würdest du jemanden halten, der in Deutschland zu Eltern aus der Türkei geboren wurde, der Türkisch nicht kann, oder der Türkisch nicht reden will?
13. Woraus besteht Deutschsein?
 - Was für eine Rolle spielt die Sprache?

APPENDIX 3. Translations

- ¹ Just as well as a German
- ² In Turkish [she] can make really good sentences, but in German it all gets mixed up.
- ³ still problems with German figures of speech because German figures of speech aren't used at home.
- ⁴ I can say everything I want to in German, but I don't see myself as German.
- ⁵ yes, I come from Germany. But I'm not German.
- ⁶ I was born and grew up here, but I'm not German because of that.
- ⁷ but I *am* a Muslim, I *am* Turkish, so I have to speak Turkish, not German. I'm in Germany and I have to speak in German, but when I'm in Turkey, then I don't speak a single word of German.
- ⁸ Just because I speak German doesn't mean I suddenly am German. German is my best language, I grew up here, but I'm not necessarily suddenly of the German mentality.
- ⁹ German is actually for [him] the actual language to which [he] [has] the strongest connection.
- ¹⁰ always German. Only German.
- ¹¹ The Germans don't accept you as German.
- ¹² The people here don't accept you as someone from here. You always remain for them a kind of stranger from another culture, from another country.
- ¹³ although [he] was born here, actually is German, also according to his passport.
- ¹⁴ Germans say that we're foreigners. But I'm not a foreigner- I was born here and have German citizenship.
- ¹⁵ good, very good, and normal.
- ¹⁶ because [she] can speak both languages well. [She] can express [herself] really well in both.
- ¹⁷ I would call myself a Turk because I am often called that.... that is to say by many Germans, that I'm different or come from somewhere else.
- ¹⁸ When a person is excluded here, then I defend myself from the people.
- ¹⁹ [he] just speak[s] Turkish, then they shouldn't understand at all what he say[s].
- ²⁰ Look, they're looking at us totally stupid.
- ²¹ Then we say, "They should go ahead and look." Sometimes of course speaking a little provokingly or louder or something like that, because if they're already thinking, "take a look at these foreigners" anyway, then they might as well think it rightly.
- ²² get so lost in the crowd
- ²³ "gar nicht durch [s]einen Aussehen irgendwie gesehen [haben], dass [er] irgendwie Ausländer [ist]." (haven't seen at all through his appearance that he's a foreigner)
- ²⁴ sometimes a person doesn't feel at all like going along with the crowd or getting lost there.
- ²⁵ "vielleicht möchte man sich auch von der deutschen Gesellschaft so manchmal ein bisschen isolieren oder von dem deutschen Sein irgendwie isolieren" (sometimes maybe a person would like to isolate himself somehow from German society or from being German)
- ²⁶ there's maybe not such a strong identification with the Germans.
- ²⁷ to show that one is different or not German.
- ²⁸ Of course I would like to live in Turkey
- ²⁹ You're so insecure here... because the people here don't accept you as someone from here. That's why it's hard to live here. So you always have the wish, ah in Turkey it can be better. And you always have this kind of connection with Turkey.
- ³⁰ Özlem: "In der türkischen Kultur, [...] wenn du ein Brot hast und der anderer kein Brot hat, dann mußt du teilen, halbe halbe." (In Turkish culture, if you have some bread and the other person doesn't have any, then you have to share it, half and half.) Ozan: "Brot, z.B., wird immer geteilt durch alle die hier sind, ne? Es gibt nicht so, ja, 'Ich hab das Brot bezahlt, du kriegst jetzt nichts ab.' So was gibt's bei uns gar nicht so wirklich." (Bread, for example, is always shared. There's none of this, yeah, 'I paid for the bread, so now you're not getting any of it.' Stuff like that really doesn't exist at all with us.)
- ³¹ Serdar: "Hab aber immer unter türkischen Kreisen auch erkannt, wie nah eigentlich sich ähm die türkische und kurdische Mentalität eigentlich, wie sehr sie sich ähneln. Es gibt sehr viele Ähnlichkeiten irgendwo." (But I've always recognized in Turkish circles how near the Turkish and Kurdish mentality-how much they resemble each other. There are a lot of similarities.) Ozan: „Südländer- also südliche Menschen und westliche Mensche sind ein bisschen anders von der Kultur her. [...] Aber wie gesagt, die Menschen, nicht nur in der Türkei, auch, ich schätze in, was weiß ich, in Sudan und Ägypten, und so weiter

und sofort, in Spanien auch, sind viel freundlicher, oder in Italien, warmherzlicher so, ne?" (People from Southern countries- that is to say, southern people and western people are a bit different in terms of culture. [...] But like I said, the people, not only in Turkey, also, I'm guessing, in what do I know, Sudan and Egypt etc., also in Spain, are a lot friendlier, or in Italy, more warm-hearted, yeah?)

³² The girls are different there. They come home late, their parents don't worry themselves about it...

³³ Ozan: "wenn ich jetzt in der Türkei bin natürlich bin ich kein richtiger Türke, weil ich nicht immer so denke wie die, weil ich mehr gesehen haben von dem Welt einfach, und dadurch mir andere Sachen vorstellen kann..." (when I'm in Turkey, then of course I'm not a real Turk, because I don't always think like them, because I've just seen more of the world, and because of that I can imagine other things...)

Gökçen: Vielleicht haben sie [young people in Istanbul] halt was ich dich vorher erzählt habe, dieses Gemisch von vielen Kulturen und verschiedenen Menschen, vielleicht gibt's das dort nicht so wie es hier in Berlin ist. (Maybe they [young people in Istanbul], well like I was telling you earlier about this mix of lots of cultures and different peoples, maybe it doesn't exist there the way it does in Berlin.)

³⁴ over there, you're not recognized as a Turk, rather over there you're "Deutschländer," you know, German, like that.

³⁵ So I don't see myself as being fully accepted either in Germany or in Turkey. Because, yeah, in Germany it's actually rubbed in my face ("held before my nose") every day that I'm different, and in Turkey exactly the same thing. There we also get called "Deutschländer" and we're also seen differently ("with different eyes") than the Turks who live there.

³⁶ access to the other culture.

³⁷ They notice right away. [...] the sentence structure the way we put it together sometimes uses some German grammar, like I said, construction and, um, how you emphasize a word, how you emphasize a sentence. Things like that.

³⁸ really good Turkish, can't speak Turkish so well.

³⁹ Then they say, "You're German, aren't you?" So for them, you're really German.

⁴⁰ Then we're not Turkish. Okay, you speak Turkish, but... not how they speak there.

⁴¹ you feel a little disappointed then and say, 'hm, now they know.' Okay I mean, now they know that you're from Germany and... then it's different. Then it's a different atmosphere.

⁴² Gökçen: Turks here

⁴³ Gökçen: Turks who live here

⁴⁴ Ozan: people who were born here

⁴⁵ Gökçen: Turks in Turkey

⁴⁶ Ozan: Turks who live in Turkey

⁴⁷ Çığır: Turks living there

⁴⁸ Gökçen: German-Turks

⁴⁹ Hab' ich mir nämlich auch schon manchmal überlegt, okay, ist es vielleicht so, dass ich denen mehr von mir erzählen kann, weil sie alles verstehen. Es könnte sein, es könnte wirklich für einige so sein. (I've considered to myself before, okay, is it possible that maybe I can tell them more of myself because they understand everything. It could be, it really could be that way for some people.)

⁵⁰ feels in any case a little more secure with people who can speak both languages.

⁵¹ Serdar: Um [...] vielleicht zu denen eine gewisse Beziehung aufzubauen, ne? Es steckt da halt diese Beziehung zwischen zwei Menschen, zwischen drei Menschen, irgendwie da. Wenn man dann halt Witze auf Türkisch macht oder ne? oder auf Deutsch oder so, das verbindet.... (In order to... maybe to construct a certain relationship to them, yeah? There's this relationship between two people, three people, somehow there. When you make jokes in Turkish or in German, that unites...)

⁵² "[...] die Sprache entscheidet das nicht, aber die zeigt, ob der oder diejenige mit seiner türkischen Identität identifiziert oder auseinandersetzt. Ob er sich dafür interessiert, die Sprache auch zu lernen, die Kultur zu lernen. Es gibt auch viele Türken, die kein Türkisch sprechen, nur Deutsch, und die nichts von ihrer Kultur wissen, und da sieht man halt, dass die Sprache schon zeigt, ob sie... ob ihre Kultur interessiert sie." ([...] language doesn't decide it, but it shows whether the person identifies with or engages his or her Turkish identity. There are also a lot of Turkish people that don't speak any Turkish, only German, and that don't know anything about their culture, and there you can see that language does show whether they... whether their culture interests them.)

⁵³ all the same

⁵⁴ not right

⁵⁵ a person should stand by both.

⁵⁶ absolutely don't want to speak Turkish at all anymore, don't want to show at all that they're Turkish

⁵⁷ Ich sag mal in Amerika gibt's ja das Problem mit den Schwarzen, ne, und den Weißen? Und dann sind ja manche Schwarzen, die sagen zu dem Schwarzen, dass er eigentlich die Marionette von dem Weißen ist, ne? Weil er sich so gibt... oder so. So 'ne Leute gibt's auch bei uns.... (I'll put it this way, in America there's the problem with the blacks, right, and the whites. And then there are some blacks who say to a black person that he's really the puppet of the whites. Because he acts like it or whatever. There are those kind of people among us too....)

⁵⁸ "zu denen würden wir sagen, 'Ja guck mal, er ist voll verdeutscht' oder 'Deutsche,' so." (to them we would say, 'Yeah look, he's completely Germanized' or 'German,' like that.)