Language, Power, and Identity: Experiences of Kurdish Bilinguals in Modern Turkey

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The intellectual content of this thesis, which has been written by me and for which I take full responsibility, is my own, original work, and it has not been previously or concurrently submitted elsewhere for any other examination or degree of higher education. The sources of all paraphrased and quoted materials, concepts, and ideas are fully cited, and the admissible contributions and assistance of others with respect to the conception of the work as well as to linguistic expression are explicitly acknowledged herein.

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Abstract

Language, Power, and Identity: Experiences of Kurdish Bilinguals in Modern Turkey

Hülya Ersoy, Master's Candidate at the Atatürk Institute for Modern Turkish History at Boğaziçi University, 2024

Professor M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Thesis Advisor

This thesis aims to examine the language ideologies encountered by Kurdish and Turkish bilingual university students in Turkey in their daily interactions within the framework of language and power dynamics. Although assumptions, thoughts, and beliefs about languages are attributed to linguistic realities, they are actually based on ideological foundations shaped by historical and political processes. This study investigates how accents and other linguistic features or the language itself are perceived by Turkish-speaking interlocutors through the experiences of students who started living in cities where Turkish is predominantly spoken to pursue higher education. The impacts of these experiences on the daily lives of Kurdish students and the role of language in identity construction are also discussed in relation to language ideologies and language and power relations. Findings from semi-structured interviews reveal that perceived discrimination and feelings of inadequacy related to language influence attitudes towards languages and identity negotiation processes.

33,439 words

Özet

Dil, İktidar ve Kimlik: Günümüz Türkiye'sinde İki Dilli Kürtlerin Deneyimleri

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Profesör M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu, Tez Danışmanı

Bu tez, Türkiye'deki Kürtçe ve Türkçe çift dilli üniversite öğrencilerinin günlük etkileşimlerinde karşılaştıkları dil ideolojilerini ve onların dil ve iktidar dinamikleri çerçevesinde incelenmesini amaçlamaktadır. Dillerle ilgili varsayımlar, düşünceler ve kabuller dilbilimsel gerçeklere atfedilse de, aslında tarihsel ve politik süreçlerin şekillendirdiği ideolojik temellere dayanırlar. Bu çalışmada, yükseköğrenime devam etmek amacıyla Türkçe'nin hakim olarak konuşulduğu şehirlerde yaşamaya başlayan öğrencilerin deneyimleri üzerinden aksan ve diğer dilsel özelliklerin ya da dilin kendisinin Türkçe konuşan muhatapları tarafından nasıl algılandığı incelenmektedir. Bu deneyimlerin Kürt öğrencilerin günlük hayatlarına etkileri ve dilin kimlik inşasındaki rolü de dil ideolojileri, dil ve iktidar ilişkileri açısından ele alınmaktadır. Yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmelerde elde edilen bulgular, dil üzerinden algılanan ayrımcılık ve yetersizlik duygularının dillerle ilgili tutumlara ve kimlik müzakeresi süreçlerine etki ettiğini ortaya koymaktadır.

33.439 kelime

To my mother and sister…

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AAVE	African American Vernacular
CHP	The Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi)
CUP	The Committee of Union and Progress (İttihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti)
DDKO	Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları (Revolutionary Eastern Culture Hearths)
EU	European Union
HEP	Halkın Emek Partisi (People's Labor Party)
TRT	Türkiye Radyo ve Televizyonu (Turkish Radio and Television
SHP	Sosyal Demokrat Halkçı Parti (Social Democratic Populist Party)
YIBO	Yatılı İlköğretim Bölge Okulu (Regional Primary Boarding School)

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"If you talk to a man in a language he understand, that goes to his head. If you talk to a man in his language, that goes to his heart."

– Nelson Mandela

1

Introduction

This thesis sets out to investigate the power dynamics embedded in language use in multilingual contexts in Turkey. Most beliefs, assumptions, and ideas about languages are readily presumed as commonsensical attitudes shared by everyone, and these assumptions are deeply rooted in social interactions (Woolard, 1998). Language has traditionally been considered a neutral tool with a referential function, and its social aspects and the agency of its speakers have been overlooked. However, as opposed to the early linguistic approaches, recent social theories and approaches have focused on the power dynamics that preside over language and its use in daily interactions. According to these theories, language is a site for power (Fairclough, 1989; Bourdieu, 1991). Therefore, beliefs and attitudes towards languages originate from power struggles that emerge in historical and political processes. The concept of language ideologies seeks to analyze the ways language is used as a mechanism to maintain social hierarchies. The concept is concerned with the manifestations of ideological attitudes towards language in daily encounters at various sites. In this thesis, I will examine the experiences of Kurdish bilingual university students based on their linguistic features in connection with the language ideologies permeating the social contexts where Turkish holds dominance.

Kurdish language has been linked to the Kurdish question in Turkey, leading to the stigmatization of language and marginalization of its speakers. The speakers of Turkish tend to associate the Kurdish language with certain traits, particularly negative stereotypical characteristics. These associations are oftentimes attributed to the linguistic features of the language. Having a Kurdish accent, for instance, can be regarded as a sign of being uneducated or lacking a good command of the Turkish language. In addition, speaking Kurdish in public or advocating linguistic rights are perceived as a threat to the unity of the state.

Social theories focusing on power dynamics ingrained in language issues posit that language has proven useful in exercising control over others, and the intricate interplay between language and power has been a central theme in such studies. If we look at this relationship between power and language in a broader context, it becomes evident that the emphasis placed upon a standard, official language, variety, or accent has granted privileges to its speakers. Language policies employed by nation states in their language planning efforts had a great impact on education, and those who acquired authority endowed certain groups with access to resources. By iconizing certain languages, minority languages have been subordinated, which brought about the erasure and marginalization of the speakers of these languages or varieties. Languages have been devalued and subordinated based on so-called linguistic explanations. Some languages have gained superiority over others, while the subordinate languages have been assigned derogatory labels as 'uncivilized', 'unintelligible', or 'crude'. The iconic status of standard languages has contributed to the consolidation of power imbalances. On the other hand, minorities deviating from linguistic norms have been deprived of symbolic resources, hence employment opportunities. To put it in other words, hierarchization of languages has resulted in the hierarchization of social groups. In line with these processes, it would be rational to assert that assumptions and beliefs about languages and attitudes towards languages and their speakers are ideological. In this study, I will scrutinize how language ideologies manifest themselves in various sites in multilin-

gual settings in Turkey, and I will try to demonstrate how Kurdish bilingual university students experience and perceive beliefs and assumptions about their languages and linguistic features such as accent.

Language policies implemented by nation states, and monolingual education policies, denying linguistic rights to minority groups, banning languages from the public space, misrepresenting them are all various ways language ideologies operate. Favoring one accent over the others, attaching stigma to those with an accent associated with stereotypes are, despite the efforts to account for them in linguistic terms, motivated by ideological stances (Lippi-Green, 1997) . Assertions in favor of education in the standard language under the pretext that it will benefit the minorities are part of the power struggles, perpetuating the existing power imbalances within a society. In this regard, assumptions about the Kurdish language in Turkey, attitudes towards Kurdish-accented speech, and the stigmatization of the language can be placed within this framework, and the debates that invoke linguistic justifications can be reinterpreted from this perspective.

In this thesis, I aim to analyze what Kurdish bilinguals experience in their contact with their interlocutors in the Turkish-dominant contexts. I will try to disclose politically loaded attitudes from the perspective of the Kurdish bilinguals. Furthermore, through the analysis of case studies, I will examine the ways they navigate through the power dynamics at play in their social interactions and their identity negotiation processes.

Following this chapter introducing the thesis, I will present the historical events leading up to today's Kurdish question and language issue. Although certain attempts have been made to ease the restrictions on the Kurdish language in the last two decades, Kurdish is still a marginalized language in Turkey. Kurdish speakers do not always feel secure when speaking Kurdish in public spaces. The current situation of the Kurdish language has its roots in the historical events that have been taking place since the end of the 19th century. Therefore, it is crucial to give an account of these events and their impact on the language. To this end,

I will devote the next chapter to the chronological evaluation of historical periods in the history of Turkey.

In the third chapter, I will present a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework, which will provide me with insights for the subsequent chapter focusing on the analysis of the findings. I will review the literature focusing on language ideologies and the way they are utilized by various sectors of society in power struggle. Case studies from the literature will enable me to put my findings into perspective.

In the fourth chapter, recurring themes and patterns in the interviews with Kurdish bilingual university students or recent graduates will be presented and analyzed in detail. I will find answers to the questions such as whether they are frequently faced with discrimination or prejudice with regard to their command of Turkish, as a group consisting of overachieving Kurdish bilingual individuals whose proficiency in Turkish is unquestionable. In this chapter, I will carry out a discussion of the recurring motifs in relation to the relevant literature.

The last chapter will be dedicated to summarizing the historical background, literature review, selection of findings and their analysis. The chapter will encompass final remarks as well as suggestions for further research.

§ 1.1 Methodology

In order to investigate how language, power, and identity intersect in daily interactions of Kurdish bilingual university students, eighteen participants were interviewed for this study. The group consisted of both current university students and recent graduates. The participants were aged between 20 and 30 and all had started learning Turkish as a second language with the formal education, usually starting from the age of seven. The individuals were selected from those who had been exposed to immersion in the standard Turkish in Turkish-dominant environments after their relocation to start their university education. The participants attended one of the higher education institutions located in İstanbul, Ankara, İzmir, Adana, Ankara, Mersin, Eskişehir, and Yalova.

The participants were primarily my own connections, some of whom were my former students. To contact the other participants, I used the snowball method. To ensure a level of trust for open communication with the participants I met for the first time during the interviews, I shared my teaching background in the Kurdish-populated region in Turkey, revealing the source of my interest in the topic.

To collect data, I conducted semi-structured interviews either face-to-face or via online platforms. I carried out some of them through cell phone conversations due to time and spatial constraints. The questions were mostly open-ended, allowing participants to freely communicate their experiences, perceptions, and sentiments related to their language use.

Consent was requested from all participants for ethical considerations. During the in-depth interviews, I took notes almost verbatim. For anonymity and confidentiality, a different name was assigned to each participant. Since the participants in this research are members of a highly sensitive social group, I have refrained from including an appendix to share their demographic information.

Qualitative analysis was employed to interpret the findings collected through the interviews. I categorized the recurring themes in the participants' accounts. The categorization of the data allowed me to interpret it and disclose the underlying suggestions regarding language ideologies and their manifestations in their lives.

As far as my own positionality as the researcher is concerned, I worked in the southeastern part of Turkey for approximately six years as a teacher appointed by the Ministry of National Education. Although I am not a Kurdish bilingual, I had firsthand observations of the language-related challenges experienced by both my students in educational settings and the local community. Additionally, as an instructor currently working at a university, I witness the experiences of my Kurdish bilingual students. My extensive experience working with Kurdish bilinguals allowed me to emphatize with the participants. By sharing my background, I was able to build their trust and remove any potential inhibitions they might have had.

At the end of the interviews, most of the participants expressed gratitude for my efforts to give voice to their experiences. Some even stated that it was like a therapy session for them as sharing their experiences with someone outside the Kurdish community gave them a relief. On the other hand, despite the advantages of my background, the fact that I am not a Kurdish bilingual may have constituted a hindrance to fully comprehending the subtle points and intricacies in their accounts.

To conclude, the methodology in this study aimed to reflect the experiences and perceptions of Kurdish bilingual university students in Turkish-dominant environments. By means of the meticulous analysis of the data, the study endeavored to shed light on the dynamics of language ideologies and their impact on the participants' lives.

2

Theoretical Background and Literature Review

§ 2.1 Language and Power

This thesis is concerned with the power embedded in language use and interaction. To discuss this concept in detail, I will draw on theories from linguistic anthropological studies. In order to better understand contemporary approach to the study of language, which I will employ to discuss the language ideologies and the multilingual situation in the context of Turkey, I will briefly examine how the study of language and debate over language have changed over time across various disciplines. First, Iam going to present briefly how different disciplines have handled the issue of language traditionally. Then, I will focus on the theoretical framework informing this thesis and a review of the literature, which shows that language is not merely a neutral tool for communication, but a site for power.

Today, multilingualism and bilingualism, as significant phenomena in most countries in the world, are approached by various disciplines such as linguistics, linguistic anthropology, sociolinguistics, and social psychology. Traditionally, as stated by Fairclough (1989), the discipline of linguistics studied language as a static, universal system and mainly focused on the internal functioning of it. By studying languages as fixed structures that have referential function to convey meaning

without incorporating the practice of language and its actual use, linguists failed to take into account the politically loaded social and historical aspects of languages (p.7). Therefore, linguists are criticized by post-structuralists for isolating languages from broader social, historical, and cultural contexts.

The discipline of Sociolinguistics, on the other hand, assumes that language is not static but variable, and the studies encompass linguistic varieties by acknowledging that 'variation exists even within the most homogenous societies (Woolard, 1985). However, this does not mean acknowledging multilingual diversity in equal terms. Sociolinguistics was also criticized for creating binary oppositions and hierarchical structures through which meaning is constructed. For example, Ferguson (1959) introduced the concept of diglossia, which refers to the separate social functions of certain varieties of the same language. Diglossia suggests that the dominant variety is referred to as high variety and is used in formal situations while low variety refers to the language restricted to the private sphere. The concept presents complex language systems in communities as mutually exclusive. Nonetheless, this concept is criticized for overlooking the fluidity of language use. A speaker may choose to switch codes, style or variety in certain contexts depending on their purposes. For instance, in some multilingual settings, speakers of 'low variety' may opt to use their own language to show resistance or to draw boundaries. Similar to Ferguson, Fishman (1964) introduced the concept of 'domain' in order to explain the distribution of different languages in a bilingual context. Speakers may display certain types of language behavior in different domains such as work, education, and/or social circles. Utilizing this concept, the variety or language used and the domains in which they were used were examined. This concept was also subjected to disapproval on account of its neat categorization of domains without taking into consideration the power dynamics and individual subjectivities in the formation of domains.

What should not be overlooked here is that diglossia and domain were useful constructs exploited by nation states to serve their interests in creating 'nations' in which one single language is spoken and one linguistic identity is embraced by the peoples living in it. Unable to avoid the diversity of languages, but needing uniformity in language, these concepts would facilitate dealing with the confusion caused by multilingualism. For instance, Fishman (1967) further suggests that the high variety should be selected and used in 'high domains' as the standardized language that has a written form, whereas the languages spoken by indigenous peoples should be limited to the lower domains such as communication among family members.

These concepts unwittingly contributed to the language policies of nation states. Restricting the spoken vernacular to the private domain eventually led to the legitimization of dominant varieties while, in some cases, other varieties were stigmatized or made invisible when spoken in public. Therefore, Fishman's approach was criticized by other scholars who pointed out the flaws in his arguments. For example, despite acknowledging to a certain extent its help in differentiating between the different uses of language, Heller (2007), argued that while Fishman's approach set out to explain the different functions of different languages, distinguishing between them as 'high' vs 'low' domains is conceived as 'deviations from the norm or standard language', failing to take into consideration the power relations when interpreting language use (p.11). It has been maintained that this distinction, perceived to be inherent in languages, led to the subordination of minority languages. For instance, Stephen May (2001) suggests that this distinction between the majority and minority languages results in the former being constructed as the language of 'wider communication' and the latter being restricted to the function of passing on 'historical identity' or traditions. Eventually, it leads to the language shift, and the minority language speakers abandon learning their first language, which they deem unhelpful, and they aspire to master the majority language (p. 257).

These frameworks were criticized since they either see language as an object with a referential function merely used in communication or prescribe the diverse languages or varieties to be ranked in a hierarchical order. It became evident that to be able to comprehensively grasp language use in its various aspects, scholars must take into account the role of power and work on developing new conceptual frameworks. (Cavanaugh, 2020).

In an attempt to discredit linguists such as Bloomfield, who focused solely on the formal aspects of language disregarding the social context, Silverstein's seminal work (1979) underscored the agency of the speakers in influencing the language structures. Moreover, drawing from Charles Peirce's semiotic models (1938-51), Silverstein introduced the concept of indexical order, which addressed the fact that meaning extends beyond merely referring to things. Meaning involves the interplay between signs, their context, and the individuals using them. His concept of 'indexicality' for instance, suggests that accents, signs of ethnic identity, may provoke certain associations in the minds of listeners. Furthermore, the Marxist and other political economic theories were gaining importance in various fields such as sociocultural theory, and linguistic anthropology was no exception. Topics such as grammar consciousness, language and political economy, language variation and cultural hegemony and language shift were delved into by the seminal works of widely- recognized scholars such as Gal, Hill, Irvine and Woolard (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 500).

With the introduction of new social theories, language and its impact on social issues have been studied from new perspectives. The works of critical theorists such as Bourdieu and Foucault focused on power relations that were embedded in language use and interaction. The concept of discourse introduced by Foucault examines how language shapes societal constructs, disclosing the power dynamics inherent in linguistic matters. Bourdieu, through his theory of linguistic capital, underscores how competence in language influences one's access to resources (1991). Since the beginning of the 1990s, scholars have scru-

tinized language and power relations, as opposed to language as a neutral phenomenon with a referential function. Out of such critical approaches, the concept of language ideologies was introduced within the discipline of linguistic anthropology, which will provide a theoretical framework to analyze the findings in this thesis.

§ 2.2 Language Ideologies

Linguistic ideology or language ideologies are defined by Kathryn Woolard (1998) as "representations, whether implicit or explicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world" (p.3). Although there have been endeavors to establish a definition for language ideologies, there is no core literature but a wide range of different emphases, prompting a lack of consensus on its definition (ibid). Silverstein (1979) defined linguistic ideologies as "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (p.193). For example, American feminists, challenged the use of the generic 'he' in standard language based on the assertion that it was exclusionary and discriminatory. They took a stance against the use of this grammatical rule since they thought it perpetuated gender bias within the language. Judith Irvine (1989, p. 255) puts more emphasis on the collective and multiple nature of ideologies and defines language ideologies as ''the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests.''

For Blommaert (1999), language ideologies can be conceived as "socio-culturally motivated ideas, perceptions and expectations of language, manifested in all sorts of language use." They are metalinguistic discourses about the language. To put it differently, language ideologies are language about the language. They encompass perceptions concerning the inferiority or superiority of certain languages, embodying the sentiments conveyed (Kroskrity, 2004, p. 497). In fact, there is no linguistic basis to suggest that a language is better, more prestigious, or richer than others. When we claim that a language is 'poetic' or 'rude' or 'polite', this

is not a trait inherent in the nature of the language, but it simply is related to the language ideologies that operate when categorizing languages (Nuhrat, 2018). These categorizations, then, are linked to historical, political and social processes which lead to the subordination or erasure of certain languages or varieties (ibid). In Turkey, where the standard and official language is Turkish, the fact that Kurdish is defined as 'rude' by some due to the guttural sounds that do not exist in Turkish illustrates how language ideologies operate because linguistically speaking, there can be no reason for a language to be 'rude' or 'polite'.

To better understand the nature of the concept, I will delve into Paul Kroskrity's work (2004), which proposes five levels of language ideologies. He examines five distinct but partially overlapping dimensions of language ideologies as a cluster concept. The first dimension, in his own words, is "language ideologies represent the perception of language and discourse that is constructed in the interest of a specific social or cultural group." To elaborate, language ideologies show people's perception of language and discourse depending on their political and economic interests. To illustrate, although efforts of nation states to standardize language may seem to stem from an endeavor to prioritize efficiency, what they serve ultimately is the interests of certain social groups (Woolard, 1985). A case study in Zambia, a country known for its linguistic diversity, demonstrate how the language subordination process also occurs to serve these interests (Spitulnik, 1992). Various social groups were involved in a struggle for longer airtime on Zambian radio, which serves as a platform for the acknowledgment of linguistic diversity. However, despite aiming to accommodate the interest of 73 different ethnic groups with seven main vernaculars, the fact that some languages are allocated longer time than others reveal how languages are hierarchized even when there are efforts put into ensuring ethnic egalitarianism.

The second dimension cited by Kroskrity (2004) is, "language ideologies are profitably conceived as multiple." Different social groups have different ideas about language. These ideas are shaped by factors such as gender and class. To illustrate, elderly men in Mexico long for honorific language, while women have hesitations about going back to old ways

since they associate them with their patriarchal past (Hill, 1998, pp. 78–9). This shows that the predominantly adopted notions about language can change depending on the speaker. It exemplifies how language ideologies intersect with gender dynamics.

As the third dimension put forward by Kroskrity (2004) suggests, "members may display varying degrees of awareness of local language ideologies." That is to say, some beliefs and ideologies are explicitly expressed whereas some others can only be inferred from how people use language. Fourthly, "members' language ideologies mediate between social structures and forms of talk." This dimension emphasizes that language use is influenced by individuals' culture and personal experiences, informed by language ideologies (ibid, p. 505). The last aspect of language ideologies according to Kroskrity is that language ideologies play a role in shaping identities. Language is an extremely powerful tool in shaping our identity. It is closely linked to nationality and ethnicity. How language has influenced these identities has long been a topic of research. Nevertheless, historically speaking, not all languages or dialects have been recognized equally. Certain languages have gained a superior position over others, giving rise to inequalities. Yet communities still regard language as a crucial element in preserving their cultural legacy. They put efforts into preserving their heritage languages to maintain their unique identity (Kroskrity, 2004, pp. 509-511).

These points highlight the impact of political, social, and economic influences on language use, beliefs about languages, individual awareness in shaping language, dynamics in society, and the role of language ideologies in constructing identities. I will now proceed to investigate these aspects in greater detail, unveiling how they shape current language perception in social contexts.

The language ideologies held by the institutions and the individuals in various contexts around the world have led to the subordination of particular languages. Low varieties or accented speech are deemed inferior whereas the dominant languages, or 'standard varieties' are accepted as the norm. In fact, acknowledging one variety as the dominant and standard one becomes commonsensical even among the speakers of

low variety (Gramsci, 1971). In order to explain how language ideologies operate and cause linguistic differentiation, three semiotic processes were introduced by Irvine and Gal (2000):

> "Iconization involves a transformation of the sign relationship between linguistic features (or varieties) and the social images with which they are linked."

In simpler terms, certain linguistic forms are associated with particular stereotypes over time by means of media portrayals and everyday interactions. An accent, a language, or a variety can be perceived as an iconic representation of a certain class, gender, race or a group as if it were an inherent trait of the group. Linguistic differences are iconized, consolidating established social hierarchy. In their case study carried out in Africa and Macedonia, Irvine and Gal (2000) found that Western linguists conducting studies in these regions misinterpreted their linguistic differences. To illustrate, with a colonial perspective, they asserted that click sounds resembled animal sounds, thus placing the speakers in an inferior position in the social hierarchy.

> "Fractal recursivity involves the projection of an opposition, salient at some level of relationship, onto some other level."(Irvine and Gal, 2000)

For instance, a linguistic feature can be viewed as having lower value, and the speakers of this language may be labeled as 'backward', 'illiterate' or belonging to a lower social class.
"Erasure' is the process in which ideology renders some persons or activities (or sociolinguistic phenomena) invisible" (Irvine and Gal, 2000, pp. 87-89). As a result of this process, some languages are erased and disregarded, while certain languages, dialects, or linguistic features are viewed as superior. The erasure process has also been employed by nation states through language planning policies and attempts to erase immigrant languages as in the case of English Only Movement in the USA. It has been taking place in many contexts and has had many conse-

quences on the speakers of languages other than the standard 'high' varieties. Among these three processes through which language ideologies are manifested, 'erasure' is particularly significant to shed light on the status of Kurdish in Turkey (Nuhrat, 2018).

To conclude, linguistic anthropological work posits that in bilingual or multilingual settings, language cannot be regarded as a neutral tool merely functioning as a means to convey messages in a rigid meaning system. Rather, linguistic structures and discourse are influenced by political processes. Likewise, an essentialist categorization of languages in these settings fails to provide a framework that takes into account the power dynamics and the complexities of the real-world contexts of interaction. Linguistic hierarchies are socially constructed and approaching language as a neutral tool reinforces power imbalances.

§ 2.3 Standard Language Ideology

Language ideologies and the semiotic processes discussed previously manifest themselves in the approaches to language in nation states and multilingual nations. The creation of standard languages in nation building processes and the attempts to connect them with state boundaries and uniform cultures have been pointed out by many scholars (Anderson 1983, Bauman and Briggs, 2003). Hobsbawm (1992) attributes these efforts to the creation of a national market. He maintains that with the rise of the bourgeoisie, they held the privilege to be in control of production and resources. To be able to legitimize this, they needed to achieve the integration of the market, which was possible through the ideology of 'nation'. Uniformization was required, and the concept of 'nation' facilitated this process. Several practices attempting to achieve uniformization and standardization such as censuses enabled the measurement of populations, which in turn cleared the way for the eradication of unwanted practices in language and culture. (Heller, 2008, p. 510).

Such practices aiming to create boundaries for states had consequences. Monolingualism is impossible to achieve since virtually all societies exhibit multilingualism due to the differences in codes, genres and styles (Blommaert, 2006, p. 243). However, Heller (2008) argues that because nations were imagined as monolingual entities, bilingualism was regarded as something to be dealt with as an object posing a threat to the clean division of languages and their speakers into pairings (p. 510). Therefore, 'monoglot language ideology' (Silverstein, 1996), which holds that a society is always monolingual, is an outcome of language ideologies that leads individuals in society to utter such remarks as 'We are Americans, so speak English' (Blommaert, 2006, p243). "Citizen, Speak Turkish" (Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş) campaigns in Turkey in the 1930s were also a result of the promotion of a single language. Although standardizing certain languages while erasing varieties seem to be commonsensical to achieve unity, Milroy and Milroy (1991) call language standardization 'a prescription which depends upon ideology, according to which things have to be done 'in the right way'. They argue that although the standardization of the writing system is relatively easy to achieve, it is obvious that spoken language cannot be fully standardized, which proves that the promotion of standardizing languages is actually not a reality, but an ideology (p. 19).

On the other hand, to explain the connection between the emergence of nation states and the standardized languages to create single languages assigned to a territory, Bourdieu (1991) argues that the French Revolution was in need of a revolution in the language that was viewed as a way of connecting the revolutionary thought to the new language. The language went through purification and purged the old uses which were seen as the symbol of the old society. According to Bourdieu, this cannot be solely attributed to the fact that the intelligentsia tried to ensure better communication during the centralization process, but also to their struggle for symbolic power. (p. 48).

As to the consequences of standard language ideology, embracing a standard language or variety, usually the dominant one, states

rendered other languages, varieties or accents invisible through the semiotic process called 'erasure'. (Irvine and Gal, 2000). When the dominant language is deemed the 'correct' variety, other languages or varieties by the minorities are iconized and stigmatized as 'incorrect' or 'deficient'. Standard Language Ideology posits that ways of speaking can be ranked based on their prestige, and prestigious people speak the prestigious form (Hill, 2008, p. 35). Furthermore, practical language regimes in the public sphere and especially in education are governed by this ideology. (Blommaert, 2006, p.247) That is, it leads to the denial of diversity, and hence, as Skutnabb Kangas et al. (2012) put it, 'linguicide' of the less desired languages. In addition to its effects on language planning, this ideology paves the way for states' ascribing identities (ibid). Invoking Foucault's governmentality and Bourdieu's 'habitus', Blommaert (2006) argues that states create a link between people and languages and these assigned identities become a habitus for the speakers of certain languages. These, he further asserts, have an impact on our identity (p. 244)

Having discussed the role of standardization of languages in building boundaries of nation states and in rendering dominant languages or varieties superior to the others, we can now examine the discrimination that arises from the adoption of standard language ideology. If there are more than two variants of a form, only one of them is considered 'correct'. Labeling certain forms in a language as 'correct', however, is not based on any grammatical fact; rather, it is ''an arbitrary result of politics and history'' (Hill, 2008, p. 35). To illustrate, double negatives in English is a grammatical principle called 'negative concord', which is fairly commonplace in 'African American Vernacular English (AAVE). It is usually associated with African Americans and the white working class. Negative concord is integral to lyrics or working-class speech in films. It is very well known by English speakers that using negative concord is associated with being crude or uneducated, which leads to stigmatization (Hill, 2008, p. 36). Nevertheless, categorizing a language as 'incorrect' and its speakers as 'uneducated' cannot be justified based on this rationale because some languages have negative concord even in their highest prestige

forms such as Spanish (ibid). Hill posits that the belief about 'correctness' is based on mathematical rules rather than linguistic principles (when you multiply two negatives, the result you get is positive). This belief is widely shared by white English speakers. Such rationalizations form the basis for stigma that users of double negatives are illogical, unintelligent, and unable to achieve coherence in their speech just because the way they talk does not follow universal logical and mathematical rules. Therefore, this belief apparently serves as a pretext for sorting people based on their intellectual and communicative skills (ibid).

The English Only Movement in the USA is an example of how standardization developed a consciousness of the 'correct' form of a language. In 1907, US President Theodore Roosevelt wrote, "We have room for but one language in this country, and that is the English language, for we intend to see that the crucible turns our people out as Americans, of American nationality, and not as dwellers in a polyglot boarding house" (cited in Crawford, 2000, p.8). The English-only movement, which advocates using only the English language in public spaces and government operations gained popular support during the 1980s. The proponents' arguments favoring this movement basically proposed that English had immense importance in serving as a social glue and that language diversity would be grounds for conflict, political separatism, and ethnic hostility. (Crawford, 2000, p. 6). However, as James Crawford contends, such arguments are not substantiated because language has never been regarded as an emblem of national pride in the USA. Rather, the founders of America emphasized nationalism based on democratic principles, not bonds of ethnicity (p. 6). Other arguments in favor of the movement express concerns for the English language to lose its status, but this does not seem to hold water either because English is already the lingua franca of today's world (Hill, 2008, p. 122). Also, the arguments that English-only policy will empower minorities and welcoming diversity will jeopardize the well- being of the English language do not provide a sound basis to support the English-only movement. The proponents are against bilingual education as well, yet according to Stephen Krashen (1999), children need to learn literacy and abstract thinking skills in their first language in order to be able to master

their second language (as cited in Hartman, 2010). What this movement illustrates with regards to language ideologies is that national identity is tied to proficiency in English, the language that is believed to be superior to the others in the USA.

The Ebonics debate in the USA is another case in point. When the Oakland Unified School District in California passed a resolution in December 1996, acknowledging the legitimacy of Ebonics or African American English Vernacular as an African Language as a language variety, the resolution aimed to maintain the legitimacy of the cultural and linguistic backgrounds of the students and facilitate their mastery of the standard English through their own 'rich' language. Still, this resolution stirred a great deal of controversy in the public and revealed how deeply ingrained language ideologies and misconceptions about language are in society. Wolfram (1998) argues that this controversy brought to light the foundational beliefs about language and linguistic diversity and exposed an alternative perspective on language and language variation (p.110). Renowned linguists such as William Labov and Orlando Taylor, who favored the resolution, were involved in public hearings in Senate. However, they were not as influential as some public figures with no linguistic expertise, which resulted in the proliferation of commonly shared beliefs about language and language diversity (ibid, p. 111)

On the other hand, beliefs about language are not always explicitly articulated as in the cases discussed so far. In fact, as Fairclough (1989) states, 'language ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible (p.85). Milroy and Milroy maintain that discrimination based on religion, race or social class are no longer acceptable in the social world, but when it comes to linguistic discrimination, there is no such concern despite the fact that linguistic differences may be caused by ethnic, class or religious differences. Therefore, it is important to look at the ways minorities are discriminated against in everyday encounters based on their 'marked' languages. Expecting someone to be able to speak 'good' language is taken for granted and not recruiting a job candidate, for example, because they do not have 'good' language does not constitute an act of

discrimination. As a result of the fact that non-standard varieties are associated with lower social groups, discriminating against a group of people based on linguistic differences allows elite groups to enjoy political power through possession of the 'standard' (ibid).

To conclude, although popular opinion may deem it commonsensical, making one language or variety as the more prestigious one and imposing it as the main language of formal settings and education leads to the erasure of other varieties or languages. In the USA, for instance, English has been promoted as the common language despite the existence of a variety of multilingual speakers of various varieties. In the Turkish context, although the number of Kurdish speakers is very high, adopting a single language during the foundation of the Turkish republic and language policies shaped by language ideologies led to the erasure of the Kurdish language from the public sphere. This has had consequences for the speakers of Kurdish language.

§ 2.4 Accent, Stigma, and Discrimination

Standard language ideology creates a dichotomy with some languages/varieties/dialects being superior while others are deemed inferior and erased from the public sphere. This leads to the stigmatization and marginalization of those speakers. Whether it is a variety or a whole language that is confined to the private spheres of the speakers, that language is now considered to be inferior. Due to this ranking among languages, failing to produce sounds in the 'right' way, that is, having an accented speech, exposes the speakers to discrimination.

Long (1990), in his literature review of the critical threshold in language learning and accent acquisition, argues that virtually all the individuals who begin learning a language after the age of 12 exhibit a noticeable accent. He says it is not possible to acquire a native accent if the initial exposure does not take place before the age of 6 (1990, p.266). Researchers have tried to find attitudes towards accented speech using the matched guise technique. This involves speakers who produce two different accents, with no change in other vocal aspects.

Listeners rate the speakers on various personal traits such as intelligence or friendliness. In one such study, Anisfel, Bogo and Lambert (1992) showed that non-standard speech is assessed more negatively than the standard by the listeners (cited in Derwing).

At this point, Michael Silverstein's theory of indexicality can provide us with a framework through which we can conceive the associations of certain accents, dialects or languages with certain social groups. Indexical signs depend on a given context and are shaped by other factors such as the identity of the speaker, social situation, and cultural norms. (p. 194). He proposes that indexicality operates at multiple and complex layers, each of which is a sign of a different level of connection between linguistic elements and societal connotations (ibid). Linguistic forms can have associations with specific social traits of speakers or contexts in which they are used. For example, in England, features such as high status or professionalism could be attributed to a person speaking with Received Pronunciation (RP). Likewise, in Turkey, speaking Istanbul Turkish or TRT Turkish is always promoted, and speaking the so-called standardized and 'correct' Turkish is associated with one's linguistic proficiency and high education level.

Certain languages or regional dialects as well as accents can serve as indexical signs reflecting one's identity as a 'person from X place' (Hill, 2008, p.143). In places where there is conflict over the language, the language choice may be intricate just as in the case of the city of Tucson in the USA. Calling it /tuk'son/ instead of /tuwsan/ signals the speaker's loyalty to her language, Spanish, and Chicana identity (ibid). In Turkey, this can be exemplified in the case of Dersim/Tunceli conflict. Calling the town Dersim instead of Tunceli can be an indexical sign of one's identity and political stance.

Another study that indicates how indexical signs can be used to signal a particular identity is by Jane Hill (2008), who deals with the implicit language ideologies manifested in Mock Spanish appropriated by American English users in the USA. White Americans use Spanish in public spaces in a mocking way. Spanish neutral words are mixed into English

to imply negative racializing representations of Chicanos and Latinos. Examples of such adoptions can be illustrated by the use of the Spanish word '*manana'* instead of 'tomorrow' as in *'See you manana'* Other Spanish loan words like *macho* (male), *cerveza* (beer), and expressions like '*Hasta la vista* (until we meet again) gain new meanings and become indexical signs of certain stereotypes.

In Jane Hill's words:

> 'Mock Spanish works to create a particular kind of 'American identity', a desirable colloquial persona that is informal and easygoing, with an all-important sense of humor and a hint not too much but just the right non- threatening amounts of cosmopolitanism, acquaintance with another language and culture. At the same time that mock Spanish helps to constitute its identity it assigns Spanish and its speakers to a zone of foreigners and disorders, richly fleshed out with denigrating stereotype. '(Hill, 1998, p.128)

Through her observations in daily conversations and by looking at printed materials, she shows that unlike bilinguals of Spanish, who are too self- conscious about their use of English and their hypersensitivity to correct usage, Americans who use Spanish in a mocking way exhibit disregard for the accuracy of the Spanish language. As a matter of fact, by doing so, the speaker is engaging in a covert attempt to attribute laziness and procrastination to Spanish speakers. She further argues that this is covert racism, and it cannot be recognized as easily as stereotypes and slurs. Users of Mock Spanish deny being racist and claim that they replace English words with the Spanish equivalents just because they are exposed to a great deal of Spanish in their day-to-day lives. However, the fact that the interlocutors find Mock Spanish funny as they associate it with the negative images and stereotypical representations of Spanish speakers shows that it goes beyond mere willingness to incorporate certain loan words from another language.

This appropriation, albeit in subtle ways, marginalizes Spanish and its speakers, perpetuating negative stereotypes and presenting a distorted perception of the Spanish language. American English speakers

iconize loan words from Spanish, using them as symbols of informality and humor. Therefore, linguistic hierarchies are reproduced and perpetuated during social interactions.

Silverstein's concept of indexicality focuses on how social meanings are associated with linguistic features. He describes different "orders of indexicality" to explain how these associations work. For instance, when a linguistic feature is linked to a specific speech community, it's a first-order index. If this link extends to an entire speech group, it's a second-order index. When these features are linked to stereotypes, it's a third-order index. Essentially, meanings are transferred across different levels, allowing readers and listeners to interpret dialects, accents, and grammar based on social associations. (Silverstein, 2003, p.193)

The choice of language or accented speech can be an indexical sign of certain groups, and they may be associated with a specific speech community. If listeners link them to certain stereotypes, this can lead to marginalization and discrimination of the speakers of that language. Lippi Green (1997), in her book 'English with an Accent', defines standard language as a 'myth' and gives a thorough investigation of how a nonnative accent is associated with 'bad' English, resulting in discrimination against those who use it. Just as any other myth can influence social behavior, the concept of standard language is also embedded in collective consciousness even though it is an abstract construct. In dictionaries, the definitions of Standard American English frequently place emphasis on its use by educated speakers, yet they fail to provide an explanation as to what it means to be educated and the correlation between being educated and being linguistically competent. According to Lippi- Green (1997), this myth persists because, by dictating certain norms in language use, it serves an important function, which is empowering certain groups and placing individuals in the higher ranks of linguistic and social hierarchy.

An accent is described as 'a loosely defined reference to sets of distinctive differences over geographic or social space, most usually phonological and intonation features.' Although linguists claim that

there do exist differences between competence in communication, fluency level and accent, accented speech is, for the common people, merely 'the way the other speaks' (Lippi- Green, 1994, p.165). The author cites Milroy and Milroy's suggestion that 'standard language and non-accent are myths as well as abstractions, which refer to 'an idea in the mind rather than a reality - a set of abstract norms to which actual usage may conform to a greater or lesser extent'. It is made clear that there can be no such thing as 'standard language' since it is difficult to determine what defines 'the standard' in a phenomenon as complex as languages.

Lippi Green attributes the subordination process of certain languages to the dominant institutions' preoccupation with creating nation states with cultural and social unity by promoting a single, standard language at the expense of marginalizing others. The dominant language becomes superior, establishing social hierarchies by means of language ideologies. Accented speech is associated with being 'uneducated' or even 'dangerous' at various sites in social encounters. To expose one of these sites, the author scrutinizes Disney Cartoons and reveals the covert linguistic discrimination based on nonnative accents. It is a recurring phenomenon that nonnative accented speech is predominantly assigned to evil characters and villains as in the example of Lion King, in which hyenas are voiced in similar speech patterns to those of African American Vernacular English (AAVE) while Simba, the main character speaks with a 'standard' American accent. By means of the nonnative accent, they are depicted as uncouth and cunning. In the movies, it has been shown that a higher percentage of non-native speakers of English are depicted as villainous characters. As can be inferred, stigma attached to accents results in stigmatized identities. This shows how they systematically impose standard language ideology on children by utilizing stereotypes in the entertainment industry. Children learn to assign certain values based on differences in languages associated with the characters' race or ethnicity.

In addition to the media, as the author cites from Fairclough, standard language is actually utilized by whoever has the power to

"project their own practices as common sense" through formal institutions (1989, p. 33). In addition, some cases of judiciary sites, in which standard language ideology manifests itself in the form of discrimination in court, are presented in the book, and conclusions are drawn with regards to the discrimination in sentencing experienced by nonnative speakers of English**.** The fact that it is impossible for speakers to get rid of their accent after a critical age is emphasized (Penfield&Roberts, 1959), which means it is inevitable for them to be exposed to discrimination throughout their lives given the stigma attached to their accents.

Rosina Lippi-Green's book provides insights for this thesis because accented speech is associated with certain personality traits and identities in Turkey as well. Just as in the portrayal of foreign accented characters in cartoons, Turkish TV shows usually depict Kurdish speaking characters in a stereotypical way. In their day-to-day lives, bilingual speakers of Kurdish and Turkish in Turkey can be subjected to certain reactions based on their language features or accents. The way they speak Turkish is regarded as 'nonstandard', thus incompetent. Although those who have a strong accent may have a full command of Turkish, they are still expected to reduce their accent in order to be accepted as proficient Turkish speakers. This expectation, in turn, results in feelings of incompetence and insecurity among Kurdish bilinguals, even among university students who have partaken in interviews conducted for this thesis. In addition to the presuppositions that a standard accent means having a better command of Turkish, it is seen as 'belonging to us'. When speakers fail to comply with the expected norms in their speech, they are often asked where they are from, implying that 'you don't belong here, you are not one of us'. Upon hearing the answers, their interlocutors form opinions as to who they are, stigmatizing them as 'the other'.

Another work that is helpful in understanding the implications of speaking a non-standard language in the spheres dominated by the standard language speakers is Bonnie Urciuoli's book entitled 'Exposing Prejudice' (1996). The author sets out to demonstrate the Puerto Rican

experiences of language, class, and race in their day-to-day lives. Although languages are not objects, society starts to objectify languages if the language is 'incorrect' or contains 'mistakes'. This leads them to classify *people*, even though at first sight it may seem to be a classification of languages (1996, p. 2). Therefore, linguistic incompetence is attributed to those who lack 'proper' language skills if a prejudiced attitude is adopted by society. The author uses the word 'contaminated' to explain how such lenses view broken grammar rules, crossed boundaries, languages mixed and unintelligible accents. The findings of this work provide insights as it adopts the standpoint that communication is a politicized 'complex system of meaningful social action' (p.1). As far as this thesis is concerned, day-to-day encounters and experiences of the Kurdish bilingual university students show that they are exposed to language ideologies and hence covert prejudices due to either their 'marked' linguistic features, particularly their accents, or the language they choose to speak in public spaces.

Many Kurdish bilinguals in Turkey have a distinct accent. Reinforced by the exposure of stereotypes through media, Turkish speakers automatically associate the accent with a typical image of Kurds. When faced with judgments based on their accent or other linguistic features, Kurdish bilinguals pay extra attention to how they speak Turkish in the 'outer sphere' as in the case of Puerto Ricans in New York. Facing judgments, subtle criticisms or implicit classification during their conversations becomes a problem that bilingual university students must deal with. This feeling may derive from the desire to be equally competent in the 'market', in Bourdieu's words, by speaking proper language (1991).

§ 2.5 The intersection of Power, Language and Identity in Multilingual Contexts

Language ideologies create linguistic hierarchies and stigmatize certain varieties while promoting one language, variety or an accent. These

processes play a role in the identity perception and formation of the speakers of the minority languages. Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004) divide identity into three categories: imposed identities, assumed identities, and negotiable identities. In order to navigate through linguistic norms and their identity, individuals may employ certain strategies such as code-switching and language choice in specific contexts, as well as engaging in cultural activities and political activism. Bucholtz and Hall (2005) offer a view on identity from socio-linguistic perspective, which emphasizes the interrelatedness of language, culture, and society. The five principles they suggest for the study of identity underscore that identity emerges in interaction; it is not a static, pre-determined phenomenon (p. 587). To explain briefly, the first two principles, namely the principles of emergence and positionality, underline the fact that identity emerges in social interactions and individuals position themselves accordingly (pp. 587-597). For example, when speakers of non-standard languages come into close contact with dominant language speakers, the social dynamics at play during the interaction may encourage them to reconstruct ad negotiate their identity. Their non-standard language may determine their positions as subordinate to the dominant language group. They may adopt several strategies in response to this position such as embracing their first language to assert agency in shaping their identity. The third principle, 'relationality', refers to the construction of identities in relation to other people. They choose to highlight similarities in certain contexts while emphasizing dissimilarities in others by deliberately incorporating their accent or linguistic features of their mother tongue (Bucholtz and Hall, 2005, 598-601). The fifth principle, 'partiality' suggests that identity is never complete. We can only partially understand a person's identity since a lot of factors contribute to the construction of identity.

§ 2.6 Kurdish Speakers in Turkey and Language Ideology

Having looked at the theories and literature from other multilingual contexts, mainly in the USA, we can turn to the literature focusing on the language issue in Turkey. Kurdish speakers constitute 15 per cent of the population, and it is common for Kurdish bilingual speakers to have accented speech. With the historical background, the political conflict and the emphasis placed on language by the Turkish republic, demands for the use of Kurdish in education and in the public sphere historically has been regarded as an expression supporting separatism. Turkish is the only official language, which means the other languages have been erased from the public space. This has had several consequences regarding the status of the Kurdish language and Kurdish accent in Turkey.

Speaking Turkish with a Kurdish accent is usually associated with stereotypes; therefore, in daily encounters, Turkish speakers may display negative attitudes towards the accent in question. In a match guise study by Demirci &Kleiner (1999), it was indicated that according to Turkish speakers from Bursa, those living in the eastern regions speak the least correct and have the most unpleasant dialect of Turkish (p. 264), while they favor speech spoken by the people in provinces closer to Istanbul, the source of standard language.

Schluter (2021) conducted a study to investigate the attitudes of Turkish university students towards Kurdish-accented speech. The study used the matched guise technique, and the results indicate that Kurdish accented regional guises are favored far less than the standard Turkish guises. The Kurdish accent speaker was associated with 'toughness'. One of the speakers Harun from Diyarbakır, and his guise was associated with involvement in illegal activities such as terrorism or drug dealing. Although this thesis only uses the lens through which the perceptions of the

Kurdish speakers are focused as to the reactions to their own accent or language, the cited study tends to confirm that standard Turkish speakers stigmatize accented speech.

In line with Bourdieu's theory of 'symbolic capital' (1991), Gündüz- Hoşgör and Smits (2003) conducted research with Kurdish and Arabic women to ascertain the socio-economic consequences of not speaking Turkish. They state that from the 1998 Turkish Demographic and Health Survey, 4 % of women aged 15-49 in Turkey, mostly in the eastern and southern parts of Turkey, are not able to speak Turkish. Their findings show that most of these women engage in agricultural jobs and none of them are employed in non-manual or formal jobs. This indicates the economic consequences of not knowing Turkish. Moreover, their husbands have low education levels and jobs, resulting in lower family incomes compared to their Turkish speaking counterparts (as cited in Nuhrat, 2018). Being deprived of this symbolic capital leads to them being unable to climb the social ladder, which, in a broader context, places certain groups in lower ranks in the social hierarchy.

In another study with first grade Kurdish children and their parents, Ayfer Gökalp's research (2015) demonstrated that there was a hierarchy among the Turkish, English, and Kurdish languages according to parents and students alike. While parents thought maintaining Kurdish at some level was essential, they regarded Turkish and English as more valuable respectively. Parents interviewed expressed that school was the site where their children could gain the necessary linguistic skills required to have more prestigious jobs in the future instead of 'being stuck in their villages.' This illustrates how the stigma attached to the Kurdish language is internalized by them, reinforcing the superior position of Turkish as the dominant language.

As previously discussed, language ideologies can be explicit and affect the language policies of a state on the use or maintenance of the minority languages. Language ideologies that shaped the monolingual language policy starting from the early days of the Turkish republic inevitably rendered Kurdish 'inferior', leading to the marginalization and subordination of other languages, particularly the Kurdish language. Kurdish in Turkey is mainly spoken at home and in the private sphere. Most Kurdish speakers' first contact with the Turkish language starts with their formal education at state schools, usually at the age of 6-7. Children, whose sole communication tool is Kurdish, are expected to survive at school from day one in their communication with the Turkish-speaking teachers appointed by the Ministry of National Education. The study by Uçarlar, Coşkun and Derince, titled Dil Yarası (Scar of the Tongue) (2013) is a significant work in that it conveys the first-hand accounts of the subjects influenced by the national monolingual education policy. The study investigates the effects of nationalist education with a single language policy on students, teachers, and parents. As the title of the book suggests, the language issue turns into a 'scar' in the minds and the hearts of the Kurdish speaking children, who have had to learn the Turkish language and reading/writing skills at the same time. They start school with almost no knowledge of Turkish and are expected to survive and learn the information transmitted to them in a language with which they are unfamiliar. Interviewees in this work were adults who had attended school in the 1980s and the 1990s, when the Kurdish issue was hotly debated. All of the participants' first contact with the Turkish language was at school.

The accounts of the participants in this study are striking in that, in some cases, in addition to the problems caused by the language bar-

rier, students were treated brutally by their teachers, who were appointed by the state to these schools. They mostly came from other parts of the country. It goes without saying that their teachers strictly prohibited the use of Kurdish despite the fact that it was the only language through which the students could communicate with one another (p.42). This approach, which was actually a result of the stigmatization of the Kurdish language as well as the single language policy of the National Education System, was counterproductive to the universally accepted aims of education. While an educational environment requires the active participation of students, the respondents stated that they chose to remain silent throughout the classes fearing that they might be punished for inadvertently uttering Kurdish words. In fact, the first word they learned in Turkish was 'sus' (be quiet). The students were not allowed to speak Kurdish during their breaks either with the pretext that doing so would hinder their Turkish learning process (p.43).

The language barrier between the teacher and the student led to some traumatic events. For instance, one student states that some of his classmates even wet their pants just because they were unable to ask for permission to use the restroom. Some teachers even thought that students were retarded when they did not respond. Others accused students of deliberately refusing to learn Turkish (p.45).

The interviews in the work 'Dil Yarası' show that starting one's educational life under these conditions means having to work much harder to catch up with their Turkish-speaking peers in the following years. This work sheds light on some issues investigated in this thesis since the participants in my research, although I asked them exclusively about their experiences after moving to another city for higher education, referred to their experiences in primary school as well. I think

these memories were triggered by the questions I asked regarding the problems they encountered based on their linguistic differences.

Along with the problems primary school children experience because of the language planning of national education, bilingual people, later in their adulthood may also encounter prejudice and discrimination based on their linguistic differences such as an accent. Kurdish accented Turkish is an index to Kurdish ethnic identity, which has a stigma attached on it. This can be attributed to a range of historical, political, social circumstances and conflicts in Turkey. Stigmatization of the Kurdish identity is reproduced in everyday encounters of Kurdish people, which sometimes results in discrimination or racist attitudes. A recent study conducted by Serkan Turgut (2021), 'Kürt Damgası (Stigmatization of Kurdish identity) reveals the embeddedness of prejudice and discrimination in the daily life experiences of Kurds. The study is quite relevant for this research because both studies look into the Kurdish individuals' experiences in their daily activities and social lives. The study involves Kurdish adolescents attending formal education institutions in İzmir, a city located on the western coast of Turkey. Demographically, although it receives migrants from the Kurdish populated regions, the city's population is predominantly made up of people from neighboring cities as well as locals, the majority of whom are Turkish nationalists voting for the secular party CHP (Republican People's Party). The 'school context' was chosen not only because it is the institution in charge of reproducing and reinforcing the nation state ideals but also because it plays an important role in achieving upward mobility in the lives of socially and economically disadvantaged Kurdish youth.

Borrowing the concept of 'stigmatization' from Erving Goffman, the author scrutinizes in what ways students are stigmatized in their

daily lives and the strategies they use to deal with that stigmatization. The study is centered around the notion of 'ethnic boundaries' and defines boundaries, especially symbolic boundaries drawing from Bourdieu, as conceptual distinctions that individuals construct in their minds to be able to categorize objects, human beings or practices (p. 32).

The interviews in Turgut's study are striking because stigmatization and prejudice are still prevalent in society. The interview findings reveal that students are faced with a range of attitudes when their ethnic identity is known. They report that their friends, teachers, or acquaintances display hesitation and discontent while some go so far as to label them as 'terrorists'. In some cases, they even experience physical assault and insults as well as a double standard or disrespectful treatment (Turgut, 2020, p.106). In order to cope with the stigma attached to their Kurdish identity, students adopt various strategies such as confrontation, indifference, avoidance or discursive strategies to cope. As underlined by the author, interestingly, none of the students has ever considered going to court to sue for attacks or discriminatory treatment as they fear being further stigmatized and have trust issues with legal institutions.

Adolescents in the study live and go to school in İzmir, a city largely populated by Turkish people. As stated above, their ethnic identity is the major reason why they go through unpleasant experiences and need strategies to be able to destigmatize themselves. The most common strategy they use is to confront and respond in the same way. This sometimes means a physical attack. Some others think that they can change their opponent's prejudiced opinions, which they believe are a result of ignorance and try to convince them. Participants also express that they sometimes choose to differentiate between themselves

and the stigmatized group by claiming that they don't share the same characteristics. Finally, avoidance is another strategy frequently resorted to by the students. That is, they avoid the circumstances and the social circles in which they suspect that stigmatization may occur. I have included various accounts of participants from this study since I deem it significant to be informed of the challenges Kurdish people encounter on a daily basis.

§ 2.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter has aimed to present theories centering around language ideologies and their manifestations. Language planning in nation states, standard language ideology, language as a means of acquiring power and symbolic capital, hierarchization of languages and social groups have been discussed in relation to the relevant literature. The literature underscoring the effects of ideological stances on the Kurdish language have been reviewed as well. This thesis will contribute to the literature by conducting a case study investigating Kurdish bilingual university students' experiences of commonly held linguistic beliefs and their impact on their behavior and identity negotiation processes.

3

4

Historical Background

The Kurdish language has always been a site for political conflict in Turkey. It has been regarded as a threat to the unity of the state, consequently, faced restrictions. In order to understand the processes that the Kurdish language has gone through since the end of the 19th century, we need first to evaluate the historical and political developments taking place during the nation-state building in Turkey. There is no doubt that Turkish nationalism played a crucial role in the suppression of the languages spoken by the non-Turkish ethnic groups in an effort to forge a nation. The escalation of the conflict in the political arena has been mapped onto the linguistic and cultural rights as well. In this section, I will provide a chronological account of the developments shaping the Kurdish question and in Turkey so that we can understand the struggle to acquire power and authority through language.

3.1 Kurds in the Ottoman Empire

To better understand the evolution of the Kurdish question and 'invisibilization' of the Kurdish language (Haig, 2004), we need to analyze the changes in the nature of the relationships between the Kurds and the state in Turkey. In the Ottoman Empire, the millet system, in which one's nationality was determined by their religious identity, helped hold the Turks and the Kurds together, both having faith in Islam (Kirişçi & Winrow, 1998, p. 101). There was no self- awareness of their ethnic identity among the majority of the Turks. Only in the late 19th century, Turkish language and literature began to attract the interest of some intellectuals (ibid :90).

Although the language policies characterizing the new state are attributed to the early periods of the Turkish Republic, it had already started prior to this development. Aydıngün & Aydıngün (2010) argue that the purification of the language and the emphasis placed on it in constructing the Turkish identity can be traced back to the Tanzimat period, during which westernization efforts in the Ottoman Empire were promoted as of 1839. They state that authors writing in the Genç Kalemler (Young Pens) magazine, such as Ziya Gökalp, strongly supported the unification of spoken and written language so that national sentiments could be planted by means of a shared language. All these attempts to emphasize one single language as one of the most important symbols of nationhood and Turkism, actually evolved from Ottomanism (Aydıngün&Aydıngün, 2010) and led to the invisibilization of the languages other than Turkish. 'İstanbul Turkish' was promoted as the official language of the Ottoman Empire by this movement for the first time in Turkish history, which is a crucial point in understanding today's language issues regarding the standardization of the language and the discrimination based on different dialect, languages, varieties or accents in Turkey. The 'new language' was then politically embraced by the Committee of Union and Progress and it was largely used in administrative affairs (Çolak, 2004, p. 69).

Having made clear that the first seeds of nationalist ideology in language use were planted during the Tanzimat period, it will provide great

insights for us to focus on the other political developments with regards to the status of the Kurds and the political atmosphere of the late Ottoman period. Delving into the historical processes that have shaped the social and political landscape of Turkey will shed light on various deeply rooted aspects of the Kurdish question, including the language aspect. In the beginning of the 20th century, when the Ottoman Empire was about to lose its integrity, the Kurds were actively involved in the state's policies. In fact, when talking about the political history of the Kurds in Turkey, it is inevitable to refer to the 1908 Revolution (Jwaideh, 2006, p. 195). During the Abdulhamid II's rule, with the rise of nationalist movements in the Balkans, Anatolia became the center of Turkishness, and a non-Turkish community, the Kurds in this case, were called upon to defend the periphery (Bozarslan, 2002, p. 841). Hamidiye Alayları (Hamidiye Regiments), consisting of the members of the Kurdish tribes were established and deployed to fulfill this objective. This way, Muslim groups in the empire would be integrated into the system (ibid). Meanwhile, a movement of cultural nationalism was initiated by some other Kurdish groups, who regarded being involved in the Ottoman politics to be essential to organize a cultural Kurdish nationalism. Abdullah Cevdet, one of the prominent members of the Committee of Progress and Union (CUP), for instance, were in an effort to foster Kurdish identity and language. The constitutional revolution, for example, was carried out by the coalition of nationalist and revolutionary groups, namely CUP. The union included Kurdish members such as Abdullah Cevdet and İshak Sukuti. The revolution in 1908 was welcomed all around the empire with the hopes that it would pave the way for the recovery of the 'fatherland' owing to the help of all minorities in the empire (Kirişçi &Winrow, 1998, p. 198). Nevertheless, with the declaration of independence by Romania and Bulgaria and due to the internal opposition as well as uprisings among the ethnic minorities demanding more freedom, the hope of saving the fatherland was lost. These developments resulted in extreme measures by the Young Turks, who suppressed all the opposition in the country (ibid, p. 198). The Kurds

became the targets of the centralization efforts of the CUP. The Ottomanism ideology embracing various groups were being abandoned to be replaced by the Turkish nationalism (Kutlay, 1991).

Although Anatolia was becoming the center of Turkishness, the Islamic bond between the Turks and the Kurds continued to serve as glue which held the two groups together. This emphasis on religious brotherhood continued even after the First World War, when the western countries occupied most parts of Anatolia, in accordance with the Sevres Treaty. The Sultan sent Mustafa Kemal to accomplish certain missions that the treaty dictated. Yet, he set out with his own agenda to mobilize the public and start a resistance movement against the occupying forces. With his secret agenda, he organized several gatherings. During his visits to the eastern regions, he continued stressing the Muslim bond between the Kurds and the Turks and he called for unity for the expulsion of the impious Christians from the land of Muslims (Kendal, 1980, p. 55).

Initially, the Kurds were always played an active role in any scheme devised to save the country until the foundation of the Republic. For example, Mustafa Kemal, during the Independence War, had started the resistance movement with the hope of saving the Ottoman Sultan as the caliph as well as saving the country (Kirişçi & Winrow,1998, p. 91). As the symbol of the religious brotherhood, the caliphate played an important role and the mission to save the Ottoman sultan and the caliph convinced the Kurds to fight side by side with the Turks. In the National Pact adopted in January 1920, there was an emphasis on religion and Ottoman patriotism (ibid, p. 92). The assembly was opened after a Friday prayer accompanied with some religious rituals. Moreover, there was no inclusion of the word 'Turk' or no reference to Turkishness. This shows the emphasis put on religion as the bonding element. The assembly (Grand National Turkish Assembly) did not include the name 'Turkish' when it was first opened; it was added one year later (ibid: 92). Moreover, in 1922, Mustafa Kemal delivered a long speech in the assembly and the speech referred to the 1500- year-old Turkish nation instead of the preceding 700 years of Ottoman history. Following this speech, the assembly resolved to

abolish the sultanate and change the name of the country into the 'Turkish Republic' (ibid, p. 93). These developments preceded the dissolution of bonds between the Turks and the Kurds.

The Lausanne Treaty signed right after the Independence War recognized the new Turkish state and in line with this treaty, the territory of the Kurdish people was divided into four parts. Kendal (1980) claims that while the Treaty was a victory for the Turks, it was the beginning of a new phase for the Kurds. During the negotiations, the Ankara government delegation claimed to represent both the Turks and the Kurds and that these two nations were not distinct and had a common fate despite the distinctiveness of their language (pp. 58-59).

The Lausanne Treaty aroused a feeling of disappointment for the Kurds in Turkey in that the Kurdish identity and language were not recognized by the new state. To illustrate, some of the articles of the Treaty (Section 3 37- 44) stipulated the protection of the minorities, granting them their rights to speak their own languages in private or in the public sphere. The articles also stated that any non-Turkish speaking citizen would be provided with the facilities to be able to speak their languages. However, these articles did not involve the Kurds. In articles 40-45, it was made clear that the minorities referred to the non-Muslim population only. As was stated earlier, this was because, as the Turkish government strongly claimed, the Kurds were seen as the equal partners of the Republic. (Kendal, 1980, p. 60).

3.2 The New Republic and Language

In October 1923, the Turkish Republic was declared and the period right after the foundation of the Turkish Republic is important for us to understand the roots of the language ideologies operating in the emergence of the new Turkish state. It was a period when the Turkish language established itself as the most fundamental tool through which the new nation-state was built. We must analyze the developments in this period since they are an important indicator of how the language symbolized the new

republic and indicated the power structure just as it did in the case of the language policies in most nation-states around the world.

The issue of language in Turkey was influenced by nationalism and secularism, two principles adopted as the official ideology by the new Republic (Çolak, 2004, p. 67). From the beginning, with the foundation of the new nation state, Kurds had to live under the rule of the nationalist Turkish state. This meant 'statelessness' for the Kurds (Vali, 1998, p. 94). Ethnic diversity was not welcomed in the new republic because it was viewed as an obstacle in achieving unity. Muller (1996) states that M. Kemal Atatürk believed the collapse of the Ottoman Empire was brought about by multicultural diversity, which had rendered it susceptible to manipulation by foreign powers, ultimately resulting in the independence demands of those minorities (p.75). Homogeneity was promoted throughout this period. Ziya Gökalp, one of the most important figures laying the foundations of the Turkish nationalist ideology, emphasized the importance of homogeneity from nationalists' point of view in these words: "today in Europe only those states which are based on a single-language group are believed to have a future" (as cited in Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012). His remark clearly shows that a homogenous society was regarded as of utmost importance in forging unity. During the early years of the republic, a mass consciousness that could contribute to feeling part of a whole would be possible only through a common language (Çolak, 2004, p. 70). Actually, all nation states, starting from the 19th century tried put great efforts into homogenizing the people in them with a national language, a common education system (Sadoğlu, 2003, p. 20). Such policies eliminating diversity during the emergence of the new state in Turkey resulted in the denial of Kurdish identity and language. The official ideology insisted that there were no Kurds, but those who forgot their Turkishness (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 101).

One year after the foundation of the Republic, in 1924, the relationship between the Kurds and the new republic started to deteriorate, leading to the events that caused restrictions and oppression on the Kurdish language. Firstly, the assembly abolished the Caliphate, which, according to Zürcher (2004), eliminated an important symbol that had bound the

Kurds and the Turks together (p. 170). Accordingly, as another step towards secularization, The Law on the Unification of Education was also enacted on the very same day. Its aim was to bring all the education institutions under the state control and centralize the education system. The unifying of the educational system and other policies put great efforts into planting the seeds of nationhood among the population (Kirişçi &Winrow, 1998, p. 95). Turkish became the only medium used in instruction. Haig (2004) argues that the new law meant the 'invisibilization' of languages other than Turkish.

Another event that led to the deepening of the resentment of the Kurds towards the new state was the new constitution adopted in 1924. This constitution was one of the most important developments in Turkish history since it defined the term 'Turk' for the first time. Article 88 stated that 'the people of Turkey regardless of their religion and race were, in terms of their citizenship, to be 'Turkish (ibid, p. 96). The official language of the state was declared as Turkish (Part one, Article 3) (Çolak, 2004, p. 70). Nationalist ideology was becoming more dominant and the emphasis on the word 'Turkish' was a symbol of the character of the new state. Barış Ünlü (2018) argues that this constitution was a document signifying a transition from a Muslim contract to a contract of Turkishness.

The abolition of the caliphate provoked a reaction from the Kurdish elite since it meant 'a contract of Turkishness'. The discontent turned into a rebellion led by Seyh Said in Diyarbakır in February 1925. In accordance with the Law on the Maintenance of Order (Takrir-i Sukun Kanunu) of 1925 to suppress this rebellion and all forms of opposition to the new republic, any publication or organization could be banned in the event that they were considered to be a threat to law and order (Zürcher, 2004, p.171). The law also was used to close down several important newspapers and periodicals as well as some of the newspapers published in the Kurdish provinces. (ibid).

Reforms aiming at centralization and secularization of the state continued to cause eruption of revolts until 1938 (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p.106). The state suppressed all of them brutally and as a part of the sup-

pression process, forced resettlement and employed deportation policies. One such practice was the Settlement Law, which was passed in 1934, requiring the Kurds to be dispersed to the western parts of the country (ibid). According to the law, the country was divided into three zones. One of these zones, inhabited by the ones who were of Turkish ethnic origin and whose mother tongue was Turkish, was to receive immigrants from the different parts of the country (Kirişçi& Winrow, 1998, p. 99). One deputy in the parliament stated that the aim of the law was 'to create a country which would speak one single language, think and feel alike' (as cited in Kirişçi and Winrow, 1998, p. 99). This statement clearly demonstrates that the official language was imposed, and serious steps were taken to pave the way for utilizing language in assimilating the public to ensure homogeneity. Consequently, the Kurdish language was negatively affected by these relocation policies since the Kurds did not have the opportunity to speak their own language in their new land as much as they did in their hometowns. In forcibly exposing them to Turkish language and culture, the state' primary goal was to assimilate them, which meant 'linguicide' (Hassanpour et al, 2012) for the Kurdish language.

For this research, it is crucial to first examine the language revolution in the 1920s and the 1930s as part of the nation building project as today's language issues are, to a great extent, rooted in this period. In an attempt to develop a sense of being part of the same culture, along with the history, language was deemed essential; with this agenda, Turkish became the official language of the state in 1924 Constitution (Çolak, 2004, p. 70). Zeydanlıoğlu argues that the emphasis on modern Turkish was aiming to eliminate all the obstacles that had brought about the death of the empire stemming from diversity. One way to achieve homogeneity and nationness was to initiate a language reform (2012, p. 102).

The most signifiant step towards achieving the state's revolution in language was the change of the script from Arabic to Latin in 1928. One of the arguments put forward was that the Arabic alphabet was not compatible with the sounds in Turkish, so it was held responsible for the high illiteracy and ignorance rate; if the new state was to adopt western ideals and values as a whole, it was important to appropriate its writing style as

well (Çolak, 2004, p. 71). Zurcher proposes that although the arguments justifying the change of the script sounded rational at first glance, the underlying reason was actually ideological. It was yet another effort of the new secular nation state to cut its ties with the Ottoman past (2004, p. 189). The Arabic script as well as the institutions such as the caliphate, medreses and the sultanate were associated with the Ottoman Past, and now transition from this backward position to the Latin alphabet was necessary to save the Turks from this imprisonment (Çolak, 2004, p. 72). In 1929, in accordance with a law that parliament had passed, companies and organizations were ordered to conduct every written communication and all the other processes in Turkish. Therefore, it can be concluded that language was viewed as an important symbol which can be utilized to gain power and authority.

Following this development, a series of congresses were held, the first of which took place in September 1932. In this first one, namely First Turkish Language Congress, the fact that there was a gap between the spoken and written language was underlined, and the decision to purify the language from Arabic and Persian influence was made (Çağaptay, 2002, p. 251). In accordance with this decision, Turkish words and phrases in texts and spoken language would be compiled; new words compatible with the Turkish language would be produced, and an effort was going to be put into replacing the Ottoman words with these (ibid).

The purification efforts continued with the further adoption of nationalist ideals. In the second congress held in August 1934, when the purification attempts reached its peak, the Turkish History Thesis was strongly emphasized. Once again, it was claimed that Islam had imposed a foreign culture and language on the Turks and that the Turks had been proud of living with this foreign culture (Çağaptay, 2002, p. 255). After the second congress, in 1935, an Ottoman- Turkish dictionary was published; the dictionary contained a list of the words that substituted the Ottoman equivalents and thus dismissed a great number of Arabic and Persian words which had been in use for almost one thousand years. It is worth noting that the words that derived from French and other Western languages were not treated in the same way (ibid). This shows that all these

purification process had an ideological aspect rather than being merely about simplifying the language.

In 1935, scholars suggested a theory, namely Sun- Language Theory (Gunes-Dil Teorisi). It had a certain aim. The efforts to purify the Turkish language had caused a gap between the emerging language and the spoken language. Ordinary people were not able to understand the purified version of the language. M. Kemal Atatürk went to such extremes that his speeches did not make any sense to the public, so they sought ways to address this issue. The theory posited that the need for language sprang from the absolute source of heat and life, namely the sun. It suggested that the old Turkish equivalent of 'sun' was 'ağ', or 'aa' assumed to be the first sound uttered by human beings. The word 'ağ' is also a homonym, meaning 'to create', intelligence, fire, and light. Therefore, based on the Turkish History Thesis, Sun-Language Theory asserted that all languages derived from one primordial language, namely Turkish. (Sadoğlu, 2003, p. 248). Such resemblances between the Turkish words and those of other languages were presented as evidence, but for linguists, the evidence put forward was only speculative with no sound basis.

According to the theory, 'Turkish was the mother of all languages' (Hassanpour, 1992: 133). It suggested that the Kurds were actually a Turanian tribe (which is also Turkish), and that they had forgotten their native language since they lived in isolated villages in the mountainous areas. Kurdish, it was argued, was a language lacking grammatical rules and its vocabulary consisted of only 8428 words in total (Hassanpour, 1992, p. 133). This theory served the interests of the nationalist ideology to elevate the status of the Turkish language.

All these language policies implemented by the state to build a nation and national consciousness influenced the public perception and people volunteered to disseminate this ideological stance as in the example of 'Citizen Speak Turkish' (Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş) campaigns during the 1920s and the 1930s. The campaign gained widespread support, even among the non-Muslims. With the fear of receiving hostility because of their support for the opposition party, namely Free Republican Party, the Jewish community was the chief executer of the campaign. Along with the

Kurds, Circassians and Arabs, whose first language was not Turkish, were also negatively affected by this campaign and these Muslim groups were also target of hatred by the supporters of the campaign. (Çağaptay, 2002, p. 260). In one of the meetings held by Halkevleri in July 1934, some young members demanded that those who would not speak Turkish be assaulted and forced to speak Turkish (ibid). It is obvious that the state policies aiming at promoting one single language resulted in social and political conflicts persisting to this day in Turkey.

Girls' Institute established in Elazığ subsequent to the Dersim revolt in 1937-38 reflected the state policies towards language. The institute's main aim was to educate the girls that were orphaned after the brutal suppression of the revolt. However, the purpose of the institute went beyond mere education of girls. Shaping young individuals to match the language ideologies and cultural values of the emerging Turkish nation was another motivation. This is reflected in General Abdullah Alpdoğan's opening speech whereby he emphasized the importance of teaching Turkish to girls. He also claimed that not knowing Turkish could be regarded as being ignorant about home, family and even motherhood. Learning the official language of the state would make girls better mothers and homemakers who can instill national consciousness in their family (Akşit, 2009, p.34).

To conclude, the period between the Tanzimat and the 1940s was marked by the process of the nation state building of the new state, in which language played a central role. During this period, language was an important symbol of power; therefore, the founders enforced certain policies to exert power over other groups and emphasized the superiority of Turkish identity through the dominance of Turkish.

3.3 Multi-Party Period

Having looked at the developments following the foundation of the republic, we now turn to the 1950s and 1960s. Hamit Bozarslan argues that the Dersim Revolt in 1937, the last one of a series of brutally suppressed uprisings had rendered the Kurdish movement unable to continue their

struggle. The movement not only lacked the financial resources, but also did not have a strategy different from the revolts which had lasted for 15 years. He defines the 20 years following the Dersim Revolt as the 'silent years' (2002, p. 840). What marked the 1950s was the transition to multi-party system with the Democratic Party's coming to power. With the Democrat Party (DP) government, more liberal policies were introduced such as restoring the practice of prayers in Arabic. The DP also established good relationships with the Kurdish feudal leaders (Bozarslan, 2002, pp. 850-851). For instance, by including Seyh Said's grandchild as a member of parliament, the political actors at the time tried to make peace with the two opponents of the republic, namely the Kurds and the Islamists (ibid). However, Zeydanlıoğlu (2012) suggests that the Turkification policy still continued to be adopted in this period. (p. 107). In accordance with The Law No: 7268 in 1959, "village names that are not Turkish and give rise to confusion are to be changed in the shortest possible time by the Interior Ministry after receiving the opinion of the Provincial Permanent Committee" (Yildiz and Fryer, 2004, p. 23). This indicated that there was not any major change in the nationalist mentality of the state and the government persisted in denying the Kurdish identity by suppressing their language (Zeydanlıoğlu 2012, p. 107).

Barkey&Fuller (1997) also argue that the relative freedom granted in this period following the single-party rule, The Kurds' hopes for the expectations for the eastern and southeastern regions had been revived. Their silence since the suppression of the last revolt could be broken and their quest for rights could be restarted. However, this did not prove to be the case, which resulted in disappointment fort he Kurds (pp. 65-66).

On May 27, 1960, a coup d'etat took place and a new constitution was adopted in 1961. Article 54 was included in the new constitution as well, stating that, "Everyone bound to the Turkish state through the bond of citizenship is a Turk" (ibid). Article 58, of the new constitution, stated, "it is forbidden to use any other language or script than Turkish in propaganda disseminated in radio or television as well as in other election propaganda" (Yildiz and Fryer, 2004).

The In 1961, the president General Cemal Gürsel wrote a preface of a book and stated that:

> "This work, by virtue of the fact that the people living in Eastern Anatolia speak a language that does not resemble Turkish, and because of our ignorance, which led us to believe so, once again proves that our compatriots, who we thought were utterly different, are pure Turks." (as cited in Atılgan et al., 2015, p. 595).

On the other hand, Bozarslan (2002, p.853) argues that the implications of the 1960 coup were two- fold: while policies and discourse denying the Kurds continued, it also meant more liberties for the Kurds as a natural outcome of the constitution which ensured more freedom to various groups. It became possible to a certain extent to discuss the 'Eastern problem' (ibid). This was the period which witnessed the emergence of the Kurdish ethnic identity and urban Kurdish youth became radicalized and involved in the political scene (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1998, p.106). Revolutionary Culture Clubs of the East (*Devrimci Doğu Kültür Ocakları*) were founded in this period with the aim of organizing cultural and educational events, particularly in the eastern and southeastern parts of Turkey with the leadership of Kurdish intellectuals who sought to link class struggle with identity issues (Zürcher, 2004). DDKO's goals were promoting respect for the Kurdish culture and language, engaging in discussions with the leftist groups on Kurdish issue and resisting the oppression by the satate. The organization played a great role in the initiation of Kurdish political movement; however, they were closed down immediately after the coup on March 12, 1971 (Atılgan et al., 2015, p.599)

3.4 Escalating Violence in the 1970s

Another development which reflects the assimilation policies of the state was the opening of boarding schools (YIBO, Yatılı İlköğretim Bölge Okulları) in eastern Turkey. İsmail Beşikçi (1970) claims that these boarding schools, opened with the pretext of increasing the literacy rate in the eastern Turkey, had other motives as such schools were not opened in

the western provinces though there were many towns where illiteracy was quite high. The underlying reason was assimilating the children in the region. (ibid). It is reasonable to argue that it meant assimilation and erasure of the Kurdish language as well.

This period is primarily marked by economic and political chaos with violence in the country towards the end of the 1970s. The Kurds, as put forward by Van Bruinessen (2000), were 'changing the self-perception of a considerable section of the Kurds'. People who had long called themselves Turks started re-defining themselves as Kurds; youngsters in the cities, who knew only Turkish, began to learn Kurdish again (p.20). This atmosphere led the military to intervene in 1980, through which strict Kemalist policies were revived again (Kirişçi& Winrow, 2013, p. 110).

3.5 The 1980s and 90s

The coup in 1980 was a period in which politically engaged individuals suffered a lot; those with leftist tendencies and the Kurds being the ones subjected to the most brutal treatment. The 1982 Constitution reflected the harsh reaction of the state against the Kurdish identity. Article 26 stipulated that: 'No language prohibited by the state shall be used in the expression and dissemination of information' (as cited in Kirişçi & Winrow, 2013, p.111). A subsequent law in 1983 numbered 2932, banned using Kurdish for dissemination of any information. Besides, political parties were banned on the premises that they were carrying out activities 'in conflict with the indivisible integrity of the state'. The military junta was determined to 'exterminate communism and separatism' (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 109). A book was disseminated internally by the Turkish Land Forces and in the book, the Kurds were defined as the primary 'divisive and destructive force' and it was argued that the Kurds were not a separate ethnic group, but 'Mountain Turks', who were named after a certain noise they made walking on snow which resembled the word Kurd (ibid).

Kurdish was further stigmatized after the coup. One of the notorious symbols of the coup, the Diyarbakır prison reflects how the Kurdish

language was perceived to pose a threat to the unity of the state. At the entrance of this prison, where prisoners were exposed to torture, there was a sign reading 'Speak Turkish, Speak it a lot' (Türkçe Konuş, Çok Konuş). The Turkish language and the Turkish History Society were revitalized as well, thanks to the new constitution (Kirişçi and Winrow, 2013, p.112). Kurdish and Turkish were claimed to be the same language and making a distinction between them would be interpreted as an expression of separatist aims. The junta employed religion once again to achieve unity in the country especially between the Kurds and the Turks believing that the separatist and Marxist ideas could be eliminated this way. The so-called Turkish Islam synthesis was the main ideology of the period. The military attributed the uprisings to intelligence agencies of foreign countries (Kirişçi and Winrow, 1998, p. 112).

In October 1991, in the general elections, the first legal Kurdish party HEP (People's Labor Party) united with the SHP (Social Democrat Populist Party) and 22 members joined the parliament with the SHP ticket. Two of them, namely Leyla Zana and Hatip Dicle, uttered Kurdish phrases in their oath. Leyla Zana expressed that she was taking the oath in the name of Kurd-Turk brotherhood and Dicle's oath included words stating that he was taking the oath just because the Constitution required him to do so. As could be anticipated, this incident aroused anger and protest among the Turkish nationalists, resulting in the expulsion of HEP from the SHP. HEP was prosecuted for separatism and the prosecutor demanded that the party be banned (Bruinessen, 2003, p. 256). Even a few words in Kurdish in the Turkish National Assembly could not be tolerated and even though the phrases did not include any messages that could be associated with separatism, the party was to be banned on account of this attempt. Because the aim was to draw attention to the linguistic rights of non-Turkish speakers, we can come to the conclusion that the exertion of power through language banning took place once again with this incident.

After oppressions and bans on the Kurdish language, a loosening period followed with the president Turgut Özal. In 1991, due the influx of more than 1,5 million Kurds country from İran and Iraq as refugees, the

ban on the Kurdish language was lifted (ibid). Such a concession could have aimed to convince the Kurds to stay away from the PKK. It should be noted that Ozal was the very first political figure who believed that the Kurdish problem could not be cited as a problem of terrorism only, but it had to be solved through political mechanisms as well (Bruinessen, 2003, p. 257). As far as the effects of lifting the ban are concerned, initially, it allowed publications in Kurdish to flourish, but those same publications that were for sale in the West were not allowed in the southeastern city of Diyarbakır. What is more, it constituted a reason for arrest (ibid), which indicates that the state was never able to overcome its preoccupation with the perception of a threat posed by the presence of another language in public spaces, even during the times when it decided to lift some of the restrictions. It could never abandon its predisposition to assume that the Kurdish language inherently imposed a separatist agenda.

The 1990s were also marked by the consequences of the PKK's (Kurdistan Workers' Party) armed resistance and the reaction by the state. From 1984 on, the PKK started its violent acts and this led to the further association of the Kurdish identity and the Kurdish language with the PKK and separatist sentiments. Villages were evacuated as the villagers were accused of aiding the PKK, so they had two options: either to migrate to urban areas or to become village guards and hunt down the PKK supporters (Bruinessen, 2003, p. 250). According to Hassanpour et al. (2012), the forced migration of the Kurds, which had started in the 1950s and continued in the 1990s was also responsible for reducing the rural base of the Kurdish language and the disappearance of the dialects spoken by the people migrating to western cities such as İstanbul, Ankara and İzmir.

3.6. Reforms in the 2000s

The 2000s were marked by easing of some of the restrictions on paper due to Turkey's bid for European Union membership although in practice restrictions on linguistic and cultural rights still remained. Copenhagen Criteria urges the candidate states to observe minority rights, which led

Turkey to implement some reforms that gradually loosened some of the restrictions on the Kurdish language (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012, p. 113). In 2002, the newly elected AKP government, which had its origins in an Islamist party, started implementing the changes that the eight reform packages and the harmonization packages entailed (Yıldız& Muller, 2008, p. 40). The reforms did not improve the protection of minority rights, but they still had a limited impact on some fields and public sanctioning of the reforms was achieved (ibid, p. 82). One such development in 2009 was The New Law on Broadcasting in Traditionally Used Languages and Dialects, with the state channel TRT (Turkish Radio and Television) starting to air in Kurdish along with several other languages and dialects (ibid). Also, Article 11 of this law, sanctioned starting private courses that teach 'different languages and dialects used traditionally by Turkish citizens in their lives.' (Uçarlar, 2009, p.144). However, these courses were closed down in 2005 as there was not much demand (ibid). Malmisanij (2007) argues that this was not because people did not care about learning their mother tongue considering the high number of books purchased to learn Kurdish (p. 89). These courses might seem to be giving linguistic rights to the Kurds at first sight; however, confining the teaching of the Kurdish language to private courses did not mean using Kurdish as the medium of instruction at schools. Given the fact that even the certificates issued by the courses were in Turkish, it can be inferred that the Kurdish language continued to be placed in a lower rank in the hierarchy of languages.

In addition to these steps, the restrictions on giving non-Turkish names to children, except the ones including the letters 'q, x, or w', were lifted in 2003 (Uçarlar, 2009, p 144). Currently, three state universities have Kurdish Language and Literature departments. On the other hand, the Istanbul Kurdish Institute, which was offering Kurdish courses, was closed down with the state of emergency decree after the coup attempt in 2016 and has not reopened.

To conclude, the Kurdish language has gone through suppression by the state under the pretext that it disrupted the indivisibility of the state. Even when there was relative freedom, officials were often alarmed in

one way or another and the restrictions on the language have never ceased to exist. Forging a nation entailed denying diversity since this process was a site for power struggle. Hierarchization of social groups, access to symbolic capital and acquisition of power became possible thanks to the emphasis placed upon Turkish as the official language. All these developments have had a huge impact on the failure of the Kurdish language to flourish. The attitudes of Kurdish speakers towards both Kurdish and Turkish have been shaped by them. These policies by the state and their repercussions on the individuals and society should be taken into account when trying to understand the issues arising from the language ideologies adopted by Turkey.

4

Language and Power

"I am my language.

– Gloria Anzaldúa

4.1 Language Ideologies in Daily Encounters

In this section, I will first present the findings that I gathered during the in-depth interviews with Kurdish bilinguals, and then I will interpret them in relation to the theoretical framework discussed in detail in the previous chapter. "Language ideologies are, among many other things, about the construction and legitimation of power, the production of social relations of sameness and difference, and the creation of cultural stereotypes about types of speakers and social groups" (Spitulnik, 1998, p. 164). Language ideologies are defined by Irvine (1989) as, "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests'' (p. 255). They are pervasive in social interactions, yet they are not always noticed easily. What is more, they are frequently internalized by those who are affected by them. Nevertheless, they cause the speakers of minority languages to encounter certain difficulties and discrimination based

on their linguistic differences. While the speakers of the dominant language need not be concerned about their language use, minorities may have to go through challenges, such as marginalization or discrimination. Consequently, they may resort to rejecting their distinct linguistic features and develop some coping mechanisms to deal with this linguistic insecurity. These challenges also shape their interaction patterns and attitudes towards both languages.

This research has revealed a number of themes and patterns in bilingual Kurdish university students' interaction with their professors, their non-Kurdish peers and the local public around them. I will scrutinize the language ideologies embedded in interactions from the perspective of Kurdish bilinguals. One of the recurring themes was related to their distinct accent. Even though Lippi-Green (1997) argues that there is no such thing as an accent, or linguistically speaking, everyone has accented speech, 'accent' here means the Kurdish accent of many Kurdish bilinguals, which can be noticed while speaking Turkish.

4.2 Accent and Stigma: Where are you from?

Almost all participants who can be described as speaking accented Turkish reported that the question 'Where are you from?' was raised whenever they uttered a sentence to a stranger. This question was asked not only by their classmates or peers in their social circles but also by their instructors at school. All of the respondents whose accent revealed that they did not belong to that city felt uncomfortable and nervous answering this question. This is the case for those with a strong accent, and I will examine in detail what they tell us about their experiences. On the other hand, Kurdish students who did not have a distinguishable Kurdish accent still felt uncomfortable when they witnessed their peers being subjected to this question. One participant stated that despite the fact that she did not have to deal with such a question as her accent was not so strong, she still empathized with those who did. As Helin put it:

> I don't have a strong accent, but I have many friends who do. In my faculty, almost all teachers ask my friends where they come from when they hear them speak. I think we, Kurds, always answer this question with a sense of inferiority, and this upsets me a lot. On the other hand, when they found out where we were from, our professors stated that they wondered why we did not prefer to study at Dicle University in Diyarbakır instead of İzmir. Why don't they ask the same question to those coming from other regions in Turkey?

All of the participants who had to answer this question stressed that they did not feel comfortable providing an answer. While highlighting that 'your language is different from 'ours'', the instructors also made it clear that they did not belong there. Linguistically speaking, no language in the world is inherently better or more effective than the others. However, "a standard language ideology proposes that an idealized nation-state has one perfect, homogenous language" (Lippi-Green, 1997). Standard language ideology renders the other dialects, accents, varieties or languages subordinate. The accent that the listeners hear belongs to a subordinated language in Turkey; therefore, the speakers of the non-standard language or the accent are marginalized and labeled as 'different'. The Faculty of Medicine in Izmir, one of the most reputable ones, is a school at which the most successful students from all over Turkey prefer to study. However, when a student from Diyarbakır makes this decision, it arouses curiosity as to the reason why. Such a remark underlines the fact that they are expected to stay in the region where they belong.

This study examines the accounts of the Kurdish speakers moving to a Turkish-populated city for higher education. Their encounters with the dominant language speakers made them reflect on the way they speak, which they had never questioned up until that time. It would be apt to express that for the first time in their lives, they started to hear comments about the way they spoke. Accent as an index of an ethnic identity leads to prejudice and stereotyping of the speakers.

Their perception of their own speech is largely affected by the reactions they are exposed to. One case provides insights as to the extent they are affected. A participant who studied in Eskişehir expressed that when she was free to participate in class discussions in either Turkish or English, she always preferred English to hide her strong accent in Turkish. She supposes that her Kurdish accent cannot be discerned when she speaks English. Her account is worth analyzing because after the reaction she received from her classmate, she was discouraged from actively participating in class discussions. In Dilan's exact words:

> My professors at school were quite interested in my mother tongue, but I still did not feel comfortable in classes. A friend of mine once tried to praise me by saying that I was courageous enough to raise my hand during class discussions even though I had a strong accent. She probably thought that she was complimenting me, but what she said made me self-conscious about my speech because I had never thought about it before I went to Eskişehir. Nobody in my hometown had told me that I had an accent. From then on, I became more anxious to speak when there were non-Kurdish people around me. This made me less responsive in classes.

This case demonstrates that Kurdish university students become self-conscious about the way they speak after frequent encounters with speakers of the dominant language. In other words, they find out that they are different in terms of their linguistic features. This is almost the first time they are individually told that their speech reveals their identity. Similarly, to quote another participant, Evin:

> When I first started school, when they asked me where I was from, I would tell them that I was from Şırnak and they would tell me that it showed. I was always surprised to hear this. It did not make sense to me. I did not understand what they meant by saying that they could guess where I was from because of my accent. Nobody had told me that before.

While having an accent is an index of being a stranger, it may also mean not being competent enough in Turkish for some native speakers of the language. Not speaking the language accepted to be 'the standard' paves the way for them to be branded as someone lacking a good command of Turkish. They may even be accused of speaking in a 'wrong' way on purpose. Their interlocutors may go so far as to warn them to speak proper Turkish if they don't suppress their accent. Ferhat got furious when he remembered what he once had to experience due to his accent:

> Last year, I went to an institution to fill in a document for organ donation. One of the nurses warned me to speak 'our Turkish' more properly. I got furious but didn't say anything and tore the form they gave me and left. When I was on duty for my internship at the hospital, some patients kept asking me where I was from. When I answered them, they usually tried to console me by saying "don't worry, Kurds are also human beings. There are some good Kurdish people as well just like you." Such remarks stem from their discriminative thoughts even though they try to sound as if they were embracing me. It is probably the guttural sounds I make that enable them to guess that Turkish is not my first language. However much I try, I cannot change the way I pronounce 'k' in Turkish.

As an important index of a language and ethnic background, these accents seem to arouse some kind of panic or discomfort on the part of the hearers. Upon hearing accented speech, the interlocutors feel the need to ask the speaker about his/her hometown. In the cases in this study, what they are trying to find out is the speaker's ethnic origin. In fact, they are trying to confirm that the speaker is Kurdish. The accounts of the participants in this research demonstrate that such an interaction contributes to their perceptions of discrimination against them. Although those who ask the questions often try to show affection and goodwill, Kurdish speakers I interviewed for this study do not seem to give credit to such attempts. Instead, such comments and remarks make them even more irritated

and reinforce their perceived discrimination or marginalization. It is apparent that their interlocutors match the accent with a certain stereotype. Selahattin furiously expressed his opinions on this:

> Because I was raised in Diyarbakır, my Turkish is broken. In Diyarbakır, we have our own version of Turkish. For example, we don't have question forms. Instead, we express them by changing the intonation. When I started university, people could easily tell that I was from somewhere else. They would ask me and when I answered, they would say: 'It is obvious that you are not from here.' They would tell me that Kurdish people are also nice and hospitable people. These remarks would make me angry. I mean… I mean, what's the point? Do they think they are great judges of character? Sometimes I told them they were right, giving them a nod without knowing what to say. Sometimes I confronted them and asked: "What are you trying to say?" I think they were trying to get a general idea about our ethnicity based on our language use.

Most of the participants expressed their discontent with the question 'Where are you from'. It can be argued that the reason was that the question was not asked out of mere curiosity or an attempt to start a small talk but to make assumptions about the speaker's ethnic background and position them accordingly.

4.3 Suppression of Accent and Diction Courses

Being stigmatized as 'different' due to the Kurdish accent in their speech, bilingual university students internalized the standard language ideology that there is a 'proper way of speaking Turkish'. Language ideologies justify beliefs or feelings about the languages with so-called linguistic arguments. They are ingrained in the minds of the speakers because of the stereotypes that the media and other sites of representation display all the time. Their own experiences both at schools and social lives also contribute to their perception. To be able to

sound competent in Turkish, they adopt several techniques. Some interviewees expressed that they tried very hard to suppress their accent so as not to sound 'weird' to Turkish monolinguals. Defining their own speech as 'weird' shows that this type of approach to a language has been naturalized by those who are negatively affected by the language ideologies. Defining an accent as 'incorrect' or 'weird' has been imposed as a natural, commonsensical fact. The following remark by Zehra discloses her feelings about how she speaks:

> When I was having conversations with my Turkish friends, I tried hard to suppress my accent so as not to sound 'weird'. But when I was with my Kurdish friends, I felt so comfortable. I knew that they wouldn't judge my language. I feel that I control myself while I am speaking Turkish.

Hearers match the accent they hear with certain stereotypes and thus believe that the speaker is supposed to have certain traits. Another participant stated that he had felt covert marginalization during his conversations with the patients he took care of as part of his job as an intern at a hospital. The students constantly received such responses, and they could sense the prejudice of their interlocutors. Ferhat's experience illustrates this:

> My accent includes guttural sounds. During my internship, patients would ask me where I was from and when I answered their question, they would usually say: "It's OK; they are good people too. Sometimes good people such as yourself can be raised among those people". I mean, in façade, they meant to comfort me by being tolerant about my background, but I think they were prejudiced.

Another participant, Baran's account reveals a similar situation as well:

> In my first week in İstanbul, I hitchhiked to go to another neighborhood to open a bank account. When we started to talk, the

> driver asked me where I was from. When I told her I was Zaza[1], she said: "How nice, you are able to get admitted to schools here, well done.
>
> His interlocutor's words imply that stereotypically it was extraordinary for him to be admitted to a school in her city. For him to be admitted to a school in İstanbul was an unexpected achievement because, to her, his accent is regarded as an indirect index of being 'academically backward', or 'less successful'.

So far, we have looked at the reports of the participants who encountered covert discrimination or prejudice based on their accents. As well as the presence of it, lack of an accent in a Kurd's speech can lead hearers to act surprised and respond. This time, listeners tend to exhibit surprise since they expect an accent, but the speaker does not have it. Implying that 'your speech does not conform to the one I would expect from you' is stereotyping. This is another way of expressing prejudice. The case of Berfin is an example, and she believes that this kind of stereotyping should have been abandoned long ago. In her exact words:

> When my professors or people from my social life found out where I came from, they were shocked to learn this, and they usually told me that I did not look like one of them. I mean, I do not label people like this. I don't tell anyone that they don't look like a member of a certain group of people. When I asked them why they said so, they usually responded: "Please do not misunderstand me". They think that this would make me feel less uncomfortable, but I don't like it. We live in an Internet age and the fact that people are still so ignorant is unbelievable.

[1] Zazas are a distinct ethnic group in Turkey although they are often considered a part of Kurdish population.

Unaware that they are demonstrating their negative bias, some people may mock Kurdish accent by trying to sound like them probably because they are trying to create a bond. Selahattin shared his experiences regarding mock Kurdish,

> Sometimes people try to talk to me with a Kurdish accent and they try to make 'rude sounds' intentionally. It irritates me a lot when they try to communicate with me like this. Some guy from my English course told me that my Kurdish was different from others and that mine was more polite. I thought to myself: the only Kurds he heard speaking Kurdish were probably Kurdish construction workers.

It was surprising for me to hear such a remark because these are the language ideologies adopted by the speakers of the majority language in Turkey. It is evident that he believes 'uneducated' Kurdish construction workers would be expected to have a strong accent and it sounds rude. It is also obvious that while he complains about stereotyping, he has internalized and naturalized the beliefs about his own language, and he stigmatizes the accent by linking a strong accent with being uneducated and doing a job that involves physical labor rather than an intellectual effort. They are accepted as linguistic facts even by the non-standard language speakers. In other words, those who are negatively affected by the language ideologies and the power relations embedded in speech may unconsciously tend to reproduce these ideologies themselves, contributing to their perpetuation.

As has been stated before, the interviewees participating in this study were those who started living in Turkish-speaking dominant cities as university students for the first time in their lives. Being surrounded by the speakers of Turkish virtually for the first time makes them feel different based on how they speak. The accounts of some of the respondents show that the conclusions drawn from their distinct linguistic features make Kurdish speakers feel self-conscious after arriving in the city where they are going to receive education. The accent or linguistic varieties uttered by the Kurdish speakers of Turkish can be

easily recognized by their peers and the locals around them. Being nervous about how they sound, most of the interviewees reported that they resorted to a range of methods to 'correct' their accent. While some read books aloud or exploited audiobooks, others who were not happy with their accent attended a diction course in Turkish. Others considered taking a course but did not put it into action either because they did not have time or procrastinated. Zehra stated that

> I attended a Turkish diction course with some other Kurdish friends of mine when I was at university. We were so eager to go to classes. We knew that it was important to know Turkish very well. I improved my Turkish and pronunciation a lot. I became extremely happy.

There were also participants whose accent was not discernible, but they were still not content with their proficiency in Turkish. Their experiences in their new lives made them believe that they needed to put more effort into reducing their accent and having a better command of Turkish. As Aynur, a participant speaking without a noticeable accent based on my own subjective observation, contributed:

> Before I went to university, I read a lot of novels in Turkish because my vocabulary in Turkish was not diverse enough. I did not know the old Turkish words which are derived from Ottoman Turkish. Also, when I spoke, nobody could tell that my first language was not Turkish, but I thought the way I pronounced some of the 'e' sounds was not correct. Because of that, I started to attend a diction course. However, our teacher told me that my Turkish was the best. I was surprised because Turkish was the first language of the other students. The teacher told me that it was not necessary for me to continue the course and I quit.

The belief that they had to work harder to speak 'impeccable Turkish' was shared by almost all participants. Some spent time and energy on this, while some, for various reasons, did not.

Nonetheless, those who did not actively do anything, still thought they should have done something about it. When I inquired, Selahattin stated,

> My Turkish has improved a lot since I started university. However, I should have taken Turkish speech classes for a better accent, but I felt too lazy to do it and procrastinated. Now I regret it; I would rather have corrected my speech as I am tired of the questions posed regarding my accent.

As argued by Bourdieu (1991), there are other forms of capital in addition to economic capital. One such form is linguistic capital. Some students feel that they need to acquire 'proper Turkish' in order to be acknowledged in both their social relations and career. Concerning how he perceives Turkish as a linguistic capital, Şahin stated

> I have always felt incompetent with Turkish, so I think I always have to do something and work harder or compensate in different ways to catch up with my peers in terms of expressing and proving myself in the best way I can.

It is obvious that to avoid any possible prejudices and to achieve their career goals, Kurdish bilinguals believe that it is their responsibility to 'get rid of' their accent and have higher proficiency in Turkish.

Being stigmatized as 'different' due to the Kurdish accent in their speech, bilingual university students internalized the standard language ideology that there is a 'proper way of speaking Turkish'. Language ideologies justify beliefs or feelings about the languages with so-called linguistic arguments. They are ingrained in the minds of the speakers because of the stereotypes that the media and other sites of representation display all the time. Their own experiences both at schools and social lives also contribute to their perception. To be able to sound competent in Turkish, they adopt several techniques. Some interviewees expressed that they tried very hard to suppress their accent so as not to sound 'weird' to Turkish monolinguals.

That they define their own speech as 'weird' shows that this type of approach to a language has been naturalized by those who are negatively affected by the language ideologies. Defining an accent as 'incorrect' or 'weird' has been imposed as a natural, commonsensical fact. The following remark by Zehra discloses her feelings about how she speaks:

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The case of Berfin is an example, and she believes that this kind of stereotyping should have been abandoned long ago. In her exact words:

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happy with their accent attended a diction course in Turkish. Others considered taking a course but did not put it into action either because they did not have time or procrastinated. For instance, as Zehra articulated,

> I attended a Turkish diction course with some other Kurdish friends of mine when I was at university. We were so eager to go to classes. We knew that it was important to know Turkish very well. I improved my Turkish and pronunciation a lot. I became extremely happy.

Among the interviewees were also those whose accent was not discernible, but they were still discontent with their proficiency in Turkish. Their experiences in their new lives made them believe that they needed to put more effort into reducing their accent and having a better command of Turkish. As Aynur, a participant speaking without a noticeable accent based on my own subjective observation, contributed:

> Before I went to university, I read a lot of novels in Turkish because my vocabulary in Turkish was not diverse enough. I did not know the old Turkish words which are derived from Ottoman Turkish. Also, when I spoke, nobody could tell that my first language was not Turkish, but I thought the way I pronounced some of the 'e' sounds was not correct. Because of that, I started to attend a diction course. However, our teacher told me that my Turkish was the best. I was surprised because Turkish was the first language of the other students. The teacher told me that it was not necessary for me to continue the course and I quit.

The belief that they had to work harder to speak 'impeccable Turkish' was shared by almost all participants. Some spent time and energy on this, while some, for various reasons, did not. Nonetheless, those who did not actively do anything, still thought they should have done something about it.

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As argued by Bourdieu (1991), there are other forms of capital in addition to economic capital. One such form is linguistic capital. Some students feel that they need to acquire 'proper Turkish' in order to be acknowledged in both their social relations and career. Concerning how he perceives Turkish as a linguistic capital, Şahin stated,

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It is obvious that to avoid any possible prejudices and to achieve their career goals, Kurdish bilinguals believe that it is their responsibility to 'get rid of' their accent and have higher proficiency in Turkish.

4.4 Language Ideologies: Erasure and Discrimination

As was stated previously, some of the participants were directly asked where they originally came from because of their distinct accent. Some experienced prejudice based on their accent. On the other hand, two of the participants I interviewed reported that they were subjected to direct discrimination based on their language or accent. The hearers reacted fiercely upon finding out that they were speaking Kurdish. This can partly be attributed to the fact that Kurdish is stigmatized and has been rendered invisible through restrictions imposed upon it since the foundation of the Republic. As a non-existent language in state discourse, Kurdish has always aroused suspicion about its speakers. There have been many incidents in which people speaking the Kurdish language in public have been either threatened or subjected to physical assault. Many of the respondents expressed that they always tried to be discreet when they

needed to speak Kurdish in public. Still, in some cases, even hearing accented Turkish could be a reason for hostile treatment. Ali's case sheds light on such an attitude adopted by his interlocutor. In his own words:

> In my freshman year in Mersin, we were required to go up to the Taurus Mountains to apply the theoretical information we learned in classes. One day, after class, we wanted to have lunch at a restaurant. My Kurdish friend and I were walking around the restaurant. It was famous for its barbecued food. We had a chat with the man cooking the meat. When he asked us where we came from, we told him that we were from Diyarbakır and Batman. All of a sudden, he started to yell at us. He said, 'Why are you here? What are you trying to do by going to other cities to study? Why don't you go to a school in your own city?' We were shocked. Our professor witnessed what happened. He talked to the man in a sensible manner and told him that we were very successful students, and that it was our right to study anywhere in Turkey. We left there without having lunch.

What Ali experienced shows that although the restrictions on the public use of Kurdish have been eased to some extent, the prejudice attached to the language still pervades. The Kurdish accent is an index of an identity that has negative connotations as a result of the political and social conflict and beliefs held by the dominant language speakers. Hearing the language causes them to explicitly express that the members belonging to the Kurdish identity are not supposed to live in cities other than the ones located in the eastern part of Turkey. On another occasion, the same interviewee had to deal with a similar hostile reaction only because he was speaking on the phone in Kurdish:

> I guess it was my first year at school. I was sitting at a table in the middle of the school building talking on the phone in Kurdish. One guy started yelling at me and asked me how I dared speak Kurdish. He said that we were in Turkey and that if I lived in Turkey, I was supposed to know and speak Turkish. I kept calm and explained to him that the person I was talking to did not know

> Turkish at all. I told him I could not teach her Turkish at this age. I said: "we live in this country, too". After that day, I came across him a few more times at the same café, and we greeted each other. Later on, we started to have small talks whenever we saw each other, and at some point, he apologized to me, and we became close friends.

These two accounts took place in Mersin, where around 400.000 Kurds live. They have a strong presence in this city since many Kurds migrate there for economic reasons. Therefore, these accounts demonstrate that even in these cities where the Kurds are highly visible as part of social life, the Kurdish language is not tolerated by the locals in the public sphere. It is not rare to read or watch news footage showing Kurds being attacked for speaking Kurdish. For instance, in a recent incident, Kurdish construction workers in Trabzon were assaulted on account of speaking Kurdish with one another (Saygın, F., Gazete Duvar, 2023)

As has been stated earlier, Kurdish is commonly associated with the Kurdish question in Turkey. Demanding linguistic rights or even simply speaking the language are regarded as a threat to the unity of the nation state. The language policy has always been used to contribute to the national character of the state. As a result of this, the individuals influenced by these beliefs readily stigmatize the Kurdish language, and they feel that it should be restricted to the private sphere. Evin had to bear the effects of this stigmatization in her experiences when she started higher education. When I asked her whether or not she was exposed to discrimination because of her use of language, she talked about two particular occasions:

> I remember two instances like that. A friend of mine was following me on Twitter. One day I tweeted something in Kurdish. It had no political meaning. It was just a proverb meaning 'every man likes his own house.' This friend of mine blocked me on Twitter upon seeing my tweet. In another case, I was talking to my mum on the phone in Kurdish. My mother does not know Turkish. A friend who was passing by at that time got mad at me

> after the phone call. She told me to speak Turkish. She accused me of doing this intentionally, and she said, "you all know Turkish, but you don't not speak it on purpose". I was shocked. I did not know what to say or feel. I felt in the minority and excluded.

Speakers of Kurdish may resort to censoring themselves and try to be discreet so as to avoid being treated in a hostile manner or being verbally or physically assaulted. To illustrate this, Dilan's case should be examined:

> On my very first week at the dormitory, my roommates talked on the phone inside the room. I was going to talk to my mother for the first time and I went out and thought about it again and again. I tried to anticipate the reaction that they might show and whether I would be able to handle it. At first, I decided not to talk to my mother inside the room, but then I realized that this would arouse more suspicion or maybe they would further marginalize Kurdish, so I decided not to leave the room next time. I wanted them to 'normalize' hearing Kurdish. I always used some Turkish words during my phone calls so that they could follow the keywords and wouldn't feel uncomfortable. They normalized it within time. They even learned a few Kurdish words and enjoyed talking to my mother using those words.

In Turkey, because schooling is lower among women, not knowing any Turkish is more common among women than men. As a consequence, some participants had to speak Kurdish to be able to communicate with their mothers or other female family members on the phone. In Dilan's case, although her language is welcomed by her roommates thanks to the friendship bond developing between them, it is important to consider the fact that initially, she was not sure whether speaking Kurdish would be risky or not. Similarly, Zehra also stated that she always had hesitations about speaking to her mother on the phone in the presence of others. In her precise words:

> My mother does not speak Turkish. When she called me when I was at school, if I was around some Turkish friends, I would tell her in Turkish that I was at school. She would understand it and hang up the phone. I would call her again after school.

In a similar vein, Rezzan, another participant reported that he had censored himself so that he wouldn't suffer the possible consequences of speaking with a Kurdish accent:

> I attended a summer school and found out that the instructor was ultra-Turkish nationalist (*ülkücü).* I did not speak to him or even utter a word because I did not want him to understand that I was Kurdish. I was afraid of failing.

Illustrative is the account of Aynur as well, who hesitated and avoided speaking Kurdish in public:

> My roommates were Turkish. They did not mind it when I spoke Kurdish, but I never spoke Kurdish on the bus or other public places. I was afraid because I knew people were assaulted or even killed just because they spoke Kurdish.

Another account shared by Berfin is worth quoting here as it clearly depicts the erasure process of the Kurdish language in public space: To quote Berfin's account:

> I met someone in İzmir. When I told her that I knew Kurdish and that I mainly communicated with my mother and father in Kurdish, she couldn't believe it. I also told her that my grandmother did not speak Turkish at all. She was shocked. She asked me how I learned Kurdish. Probably, up until that time she had thought that Kurdish was a political instrument used for slogans.

The accounts of the participants demonstrate that although Kurdish is more visible in public space now, a number of Turks still refuse to believe that it is their native language and the main medium of communication among the Kurds, especially in the private sphere. Consequently,

it continues to be perceived as a threat by some and its speakers inevitably find it apt to employ strategies in order to avoid being stigmatized.

4.5 Conclusion

The interviews conducted in this research have revealed that bilingual Kurdish speakers have to experience the effects of language ideologies adopted by the speakers of the dominant language. Historically, the Kurdish language has been restricted, making it confined to the private sphere. The Turkish language has been considered to be an important tool in the attempts to forge a nation state. The promotion of Turkish and speaking it in a standard way as an indication of allegiance to Turkishness resulted in the marginalization of other languages or Kurdish accented speech. As we can infer from the accounts of the participants, when minority languages become invisible in the public sphere, their linguistic features become more prone to be stigmatized. Although they are ordinary, successful and law abiding university students that their Turkish interlocutors demonstrate willingness to make friends with, their language choice can be associated with many negative stereotypical traits, posing a threatening situation. Moreover, accents and dialects as well as languages are hierarchized and thus utilized in the classification of people (Urciuoli, 2013, p. 3). In short, the accounts indicate that language becomes a site at which power relations take place.

In this study, unpleasant reactions to the Kurdish language or Kurdish accented speech in Turkish is a theme that frequently appeared in the interviews. Believing that solely the Turkish language should be used in public sphere and that the language must have a standard form cause Kurdish students to be viewed as 'different' based on their accent. The way they utter words or sounds matters more than the message they wish to convey. Erving Goffman's (1963) framework to define 'the stigmatized' can be used to describe what our interviewees actually went through or their perceptions regarding their experiences. The person with a stigma has an 'undesired differentness' that does not conform to

the expectations of others who are 'normal'. The hearer, then, feels the urge to ask the question, 'Where are you from?', even in the middle of the conversation, as in the case of the professors interrupting students. The emphasis on the question, 'Where are you from?' underlines the suggestion 'You are not from here', 'You do not belong here' (Nuhrat, 2018), and 'I probably know in which region of Turkey it is located.' This question does not stem from mere curiosity but comes with a baggage of historical, ideological and political implications. That question is not a question seeking information. Rather, it is a yes/no question uttered to confirm the supposition in the hearer's mind. After confirmation, they either try to comfort the person as if he or she had committed a fault by having been born in one of the Kurdish provinces, or in some cases they explicitly express their judgmental attitude.

Blommaert (2006) asserts that almost all societies are multilingual since there are many varieties, genres, styles or codes. Aspiring to achieve standardization, especially in spoken language, is not realistic unless these assumptions are formed in accordance with the interests of certain groups seeking to retain their priviliges. Despite the reality, societies claim ownership and authority of the language and these ideas are reflected in utterances such as "this is our language", "We are Americans, speak English" or "he doesn't speak the language very well". The accounts of the participants in this study expose that Turkish speakers also believe that there is a correct way of speaking Turkish and they expect everyone to comply. In the event that they fail or refuse to do so, hearers view themselves in a position to pose questions to discover the reason why the speaker does not conform to these norms.

On the other hand, the participants' observations show us that not all of the other students having different regional accents other than Kurdish receive a similar reaction. It is widely known in Turkey that speakers of some accents and varieties are depicted as very nice, funny people. To illustrate, the way people living in the Aegean Region speak is usually associated with traits such as being cute and acting natural and innocent rather than being ignorant or having an agenda posing a threat to the unity of Turkish nation. On the other hand, the Kurdish question in

Turkey, and specifically the language issue, has a great impact on the perceptions of Turks regarding the way Kurds speak. To refer to the previously mentioned study by Demirci &Kleiner (1999), it was indicated that according to Turkish speakers from Bursa, those living in the eastern regions speak the least correct Turkish and have the most unpleasant dialect, while they favor speech spoken by the people in provinces closer to İstanbul, the source of standard language. The sentiments of the participants in this study apply to the case of Kurdish university students as well, as per my findings.

Schluter' study (2020) using the matched guise technique to find out the attitudes of Turkish university students towards Kurdish-accented indicated that Kurdish accented regional speech was favored far less than the standard Turkish. The guises speaking Turkish with a standard accent received higher ratings for positive traits. In contrast, 'toughness' was attributed to the speakers of Kurdish accent. The Kurdish accented Diyarbakır guise was even associated with being involved in illegal activities such as terrorism or drug dealing. In alignment with Schluter's study, viewed from the lenses of the Kurdish speakers in this research, it is not uncommon for standard Turkish speakers to stigmatize accented speech.

Both the reactions that the participants receive and their informed efforts to comply with this ideological imposition support that standard language ideology makes the speakers firmly believe there is a 'correct' or 'canonical' form of language' (Milroy, 2001, p. 535). The interviewees' self-consciousness about their accent, and the way they describe it as 'rude' or their endeavor to suppress it show their acceptance of the standard language ideology. Their attempts to erase their accent by reading books in Turkish or by attending Turkish diction courses indicate that they are made to believe they lack competence in the language and that it is an unwelcomed trait of theirs that they must change. Given the fact that monolingual education system in Turkey is an exam-oriented one and becoming successful in exams heavily relies on advanced language skills in Turkish, it is evident that the participants in this research cannot be considered to lack command of the dominant language.

Nevertheless, with the explicit or implicit messages conveyed by the listeners, they begin to feel self-conscious about the differences in their speech, fostering a sense of inferiority regarding the proper use of the dominant language. Their linguistic features or the language itself become subordinate by their very own consent. Although they value their heritage language in the private sphere, they aspire to sound less Kurdish in their encounters in Turkish dominant contexts. As Lippi Green (1997) explains:

> "When persons who speak languages which are devalued and stigmatized consent to the standard language ideology, they become complicit in its propagation against themselves, their interests, and identities. Many are caught in a vacuum. When an individual cannot find any social acceptance for her language outside her speech communities, she may come to denigrate her own language even while she continues to use it." (p. 66)

Bearing in mind that the participants are either university students or graduates, we can come to the conclusion that having a good command of Turkish is deemed necessary by them to acquire material resources by means of language as symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1991).

Myers Scotton (2006, p. 114) also argues that the language choices of bilinguals reflect the most valued language in the linguistic market. The fact that the participants in this research attended speech courses or read books to reduce their accents can not only be attributed to their desire to avoid being marginalized, but also to their desire to attain symbolic capital, which is competence in 'proper Turkish' in Turkey.

Eriksen (1992) suggests that minorities in nation states are subjected to indirect oppression through language policies and standard language ideology. He uses the term 'linguistic hegemony' to refer to the endeavors of the dominated to master the dominator's language because of its market value. Most of the participants in this study believe that it is of utmost importance to improve their Turkish and reduce their Kurdish accent so as not to sound incorrect. It is obvious that their accent makes them believe that they lack the competence in the language use as well. Considering the fact that the participants are all university students or

graduates, we can conclude that their efforts to speak impeccable Turkish stem from the firm belief that they will need the dominant, standard language to thrive in the competitive job market.

According to Irvine & Gal (2000), language ideologies operate in three semiotic processes: iconicity, fractal recursivity and erasure. Monolingual ideology and its rendering invisible the other varieties or languages in nation states results in their erasure. In this study, perceived stigma and prejudice lead the participants to censor themselves and suppress their accent. Put differently, ideological attitudes towards minority languages are internalized even by those mostly affected by them.

It is apparent that the semiotic processes defined by Irvine and Gal (2000) are at work in this case study. Firstly, iconicity takes place when a certain accent is marked and associated with certain people and traits. Almost all of the participants experienced hostile treatment albeit with varying degrees. When the attitude of the state towards the Kurdish language is taken into account, it goes without saying that indifference or even in some cases hostility are not directed towards the inherent characteristics of the language itself. The hostility arises from associating the language with the Kurdish question and the conflict; therefore, the interlocutors of Kurdish bilinguals hold the belief that the speaker uses the Kurdish language for the conveyance of their separatist tendencies. Secondly, as a natural result of iconization, speakers become linguistically more self-conscious and hesitant, which further contributes to the erasure of the Kurdish language from public sphere.

Given what we know about the links between social identity and linguistic variation, there can be no doubt that when we ask individuals to deny their own language, it is not the message, but the social affiliations. We cannot legally compel people to change the color of their skin, their religion, their gender, yet we regularly insist that they suppress or deny the most effective way they possess to position themselves socially in the world (Lippi Green, 1997, p. 63).

5

Language Ideologies: Their Impact on Kurdish Bilinguals

The interviewees in this study learned from experience or observation that their accent makes them 'different' from others. They sensed the pressure to suppress their accent or hide their linguistic features, which resulted in their avoidance to express themselves in the presence of people who would point out their distinct way of speaking. While some of the respondents stopped participating in class discussions, others struggled to produce 'correct' sounds whenever they spoke Turkish. When I inquired whether the kind of reaction they encountered affected the way they interacted with speakers of Turkish, they pointed out certain patterns. Firstly, the interviews revealed that there is a tendency to engage with other Kurdish students. Secondly, being judged because of their different language or linguistic features was the main reason why many of them experienced low self-confidence, linguistic insecurity or even a sense of inferiority. Thirdly, the fact that their Turkish friends were prejudiced against the Kurdish language seems to have created boundaries between the two groups.

5.1 Socialization and Interaction Patterns

As can be inferred from the accounts of the participants I interviewed , they exhibit a tendency to become friends with other Kurdish students when they migrate to cities predominantly inhabited by Turks. As presented above, some of this can be attributed to the fact that these students experience incidents of marginalization based on their 'marked' accent or speaking Kurdish. Such stressful encounters impel them to spend time and energy conforming to 'the linguistic standard' imposed upon them. This means they do not feel comfortable when they are surrounded by those whose first language is Turkish. In order to avoid feeling insecure or sticking to exclusively a single code, they tend to seek the company of friends who share their cultural and linguistic background. What Mervan has to say on this provides insights as to their feelings:

> Once, I talked to my mother on the phone but tried to keep it low. A friend of mine was surprised and told me that it was the first time he heard a Kurdish speaker talking so softly. When I am around my Kurdish friends, I do not feel the need to suppress my accent; on the contrary, I have realized that it gets stronger because I feel relieved. My girlfriend's first language is Turkish, and sometimes I feel that I cannot express myself correctly, especially during our disagreements. She thinks that I am using this just as an excuse. However, I feel that I can express myself much better in Kurdish while arguing. I have had Kurdish friends mostly since I started university and met three other Kurdish students in my class. One of them is still my best friend.

Mervan was one of the few respondents who expressed that he sometimes had some communication problems stemming from not being proficient in Turkish. Some others stated that they were not familiar with some of the proverbs or idioms in Turkish along with some Ottoman Turkish words. However, the rest reported that they never had difficulty conveying their message in Turkish. Likewise, they feel confident in comprehension.

Speaking however they wished without feeling constrained when they interacted with their Kurdish peers made them feel at home. In fact, almost all of them became emotional when they were referring to their affiliation with Kurdish. They all expressed that they realized how much they missed Kurdish after having to speak only Turkish for a couple of days. The affective aspect of using mother tongue to express deeper and more intimate feelings frequently emerged as a motif during the interviews. Şahin poignantly shared his experience:

> When I first started prep class, I felt isolated. I was so different from the others. Before long, I met three other Kurdish students in my class. I was very happy. One of them is still my best friend and most of my friends now are Kurdish.

Berfin also stated that she mostly made friends with Kurds when she first started school.

> When I first started school, I was staying in a single room. Then I made friends with someone from Diyarbakır and although I did not know her very well, we immediately became closer and started to live in the same room. Although our Kurdish was different from one another, we insisted on communicating in Kurdish.

Berfin made another thought-provoking point with regards to this:

> I had a very close friend from Ankara. She was jealous when I had more fun during my conversations with my Kurdish friends. She could observe that I felt more comfortable when I talked to them.

I am very well aware that attributing their bond solely to speaking the same language would be wrong. The shared culture and ethnic identity background may as well account for the interaction patterns of the students, but when I asked them in a direct manner, they admitted that sharing a language was an important contributing factor as well. In the eloquent words of Eren:

When I first went to university, I made friends with the Kurds almost exclusively. I think this was because of traumas. This is usually the case in Turkey. Kurds find each other, Arabs find each other. Alevis too, but this is more so for the Kurds. This is probably because of the conflict that has been around for years. The language is another reason too. We are actually forced to do this. We are seen as 'the other', so we have to find one another and feel better. When people find out where we come from, they immediately create a boundary and categorize us. They like people with an Aegean accent, but regard ours as rude or uncivilized. However, those who speak the same language as ours do not judge us.

As I stated above, the emotional dimension of language recurringly surfaced in this research. Most of the participants were poignantly willing to share how much they miss speaking Kurdish or speaking without worrying about their accent. Speaking in one's mother tongue carries emotional significance since it is acquired through experiences in various contexts in family. Emotions, culture, and other aspects of one's identity are connected to the language spoken among family members. It signifies one's sense of belonging to a particular speech community. Therefore, it can be concluded that when Kurdish people do not feel comfortable speaking with an accent or when they do not have the freedom to code-switch to feel a sense of relief and security, they may tend to abstain from interacting with non-Kurdish speakers.

5.2 Linguistic Insecurity

To get a glimpse of the psychological aspect of their experiences, I inquired what impact do communicating in Turkish exclusively and feeling marginalized have on them. Some of the participants reported a decline in their self-confidence, causing subsequent changes in their

behavior. What Şahin shared clearly indicates feelings of insecurity he experienced:

> When I first came to Istanbul, I didn't speak Kurdish for days, and this felt really strange to me as it was the first time that I hadn't talked in my native language for such a long time. Later on, I made friends with a couple of Kurdish students in my class. It gave me a sense of relief. Then we became very good friends, but I made lots of Turkish friends as well in the following years. My friendship circle was not limited to the Kurds. I think this was because I did not meet so many of them. Students from my region usually choose to study medicine or law for economic reasons, and Boğaziçi University does not offer these degrees. When I came here, I did not sense any discrimination based on my ethnicity or language but being surrounded by people whose language and culture were totally different caused my confidence to decline. Actually, this has never stopped haunting me. I have always had this belief that I have to work harder if I want to catch up with their academic level and social skills.

Not producing the 'correct' sounds in Turkish or being distinguished from others based on their accented Turkish means being less competent for the participant, leading them to become shy or nervous when talking. Some of the respondents expressed straightforwardly the relation between their accent and low self-confidence in both their social and academic lives. Helin's account provides an illustration:

> There are students from cities in the Central Anatolia Region or Hatay. They have distinct accents as well. Yet, they never suffer from low self-confidence like us. We are the group that feels this in the deepest way. I abstained from joining social clubs, for example, just because I did not feel competent.

I asked the interviewees directly whether they felt insecure or lower self-confidence on account of the way they spoke, yet some began to talk about their experiences even before I posed my question. Most of

them made this remark: “This is a thorn in our side”. To a great extent, this feeling should result from the stereotyping they are subjected to. Being Kurdish and speaking Kurdish come with stigma, which causes them to avoid being stigmatized in different ways. A memory that Mervan eagerly wanted to share with me is an illustrative case:

> I was giving private lessons to a primary school student in my freshman year. The student noticed my accent. He asked me where I was from. Not being sure how to answer this question, I said I was American. The child was surprised and astonished, but I still do not know why I answered that way. I think I was not sure how he would have reacted if I had told him the truth.”

Likewise, Şahin, the participant who expressed that he was not content with his command of Turkish, stated that he was well aware he had to work hard to compensate for this ‘flaw or shortcoming’ of his:

> When I first started school, I definitely experienced low self-esteem. This was both because of my identity and my low competence in the language. In fact, I am still experiencing it. I have always had the belief that I need to work harder to catch up with other people. I mean, for example, in business life if I had a strong accent, this would be judged, but if an American manager spoke Turkish with an accent, nobody would react in the same way. It upsets me a lot. I think I need to be better in other areas to make up for the language.

The treatment the respondents experience in their day-to-day lives, coupled with the subordinate status of the Kurdish language, undermine their confidence in their linguistic competence. Invisibility of the Kurdish language reveals the bitter truth that their language is not recognized. Belonging to a group whose language is not acknowledged and respected creates a sense of insecurity and desire to reclaim the dignity of their language. These sentiments can be demonstrated best by a dream that Selahattin had:

> One day, I had a dream, which made me wake up happy and hopeful. In my dream, we were in the lecture hall sitting in the alphabetical order of our names. We had internal medicine textbooks in front of us. The professor was giving a lecture in Kurdish! I was looking around happily. I cannot express enough how happy I was. Then the professor started talking about 'dengbejs'. He even mentioned Shakiro, a Kurdish poet. He was talking about Kurdish literature as if it were a scientific field of study. My Turkish friends were asking me what the instructor was talking about and whether I could translate for them. I felt that my ego was boosted. When I woke up, my heart was beating fast and I told my dream to a friend from Diyarbakır. He felt even happier than me. Maybe because this dream was vivid and influenced me so much, I have begun to aim to give lectures in the medical faculty in Kurdish someday.

The same participant elaborated on his linguistic insecurity in these words:

> I usually felt a lack of self-confidence in class. I never sat in the back rows of the classroom because when the professor asked a question, or I needed to participate, I had to answer loudly. I did not want to talk loudly because then I was not able to suppress my accent that much. When I speak Turkish, it sounds like street language. One day, we took a verbal quiz in surgery class. The instructor asked me to list the symptoms. A classmate next to me listed 18 of them. I was not able to add another one. He skipped my turn. The next day, to prove myself, I started speaking very fast as I was so nervous. As I spoke very fast, my speech was not intelligible. He stopped me and asked me which language I was speaking. I got upset because I did not sound right only out of nervousness, but he thought that I couldn't speak Turkish well."

Şahin's account sheds light on the participants' feelings towards their language:

> I feel like my connection to Kurdish is fading. I don't understand; why is Kurdish not spoken anywhere else but only among Kurdish people. I wish it were used in other places too. I don't know the spelling of Kurdish words. I can't write in Kurdish and this makes me extremely upset. I would like to learn it. I hope Kurdish can be developed enough to express many things. I know it has huge vocabulary but needs to be revived."

5.3 Bonding and Boundaries

Speaking the same language does not only make the respondents feel comfortable but also allows them to feel at home by creating strong bonds with one another. Speaking the language of the majority, on the other hand, entails trying to suppress one's accent or other features of Kurdish sounding 'rude'. This makes the participants feel closer to people sharing the same linguistic background; therefore, they prefer to interact with them. Zehra's emotions were tangible as she recounted her story:

> When I spoke Turkish, I felt that I had to control what I was saying, and I tried to lose my accent so that I did not sound weird to them. This was a bit tiring for me. But speaking Kurdish meant having a break. I wanted to speak Kurdish all the time. I felt comfortable speaking Kurdish to my Kurdish friends because they wouldn't judge me. They were used to it. Also, when I was with my friends from Hakkari or Diyarbakır, for example, we did not always comprehend each other very well. But I still enjoyed exchanging local equivalents of some words. I enjoyed it so much probably because I missed my language so much. When I wanted to give examples from Kurdish during our conversations, my Turkish friends did not show any interest in them. In fact, they would try to change the subject.

Some of the participants reported that they enthusiastically tried to share some words or sayings in their language, yet to no avail. Their interlocutors either showed no interest or stated that that particular word or saying did not make much sense or was not as funny as it was supposed to be. This pattern underscores the effects of stigmatizing languages because even when they are intimate friends, Turkish students still feel uncomfortable and do not want to hear their language, which comprises an important part of their friends' identity. Kurdish bilinguals are recognized as friends as long as they do not explicitly reveal their language and identity. The respondents seemed to feel resentment towards their Turkish friends when they received such a reaction as in the case of Serhat and his friends:

> I always felt happy to meet up with my Kurdish friends. I rented an apartment with four other Kurdish friends of mine, and we told stories to each other in Kurdish. This was something that made me really happy. On the other hand, my Turkish friends did not care much when I shared with them something in Kurdish. When I wanted to share some words or phrases in my language, they were trying to remain neutral, trying hard to hide their reactions. Whenever I went back to my village from Izmir, I felt so relieved to hear everyone else speaking Kurdish around me.

The occasions when the students made attempts to share some elements of their language emerged as a recurring theme in the interviews. While some of them did try several times, some of them refrained from doing so although there were moments when they could not help the urge to pass on some Kurdish sayings or words. When I asked him whether he had experienced a similar situation, Serhat responded as follows:

> I talked about the Kurdish language with the Kurds. We mainly spoke in Turkish, but I never attempted to share anything in Kurdish with my Turkish friends. I had a kind of close friend

> from Aydın, for example, and I never tried to mention the Kurdish language when I was with him, probably because I was afraid of being stigmatized. This must have been ingrained in my mind subconsciously. I was probably refraining from receiving a hostile reaction. Although they never explicitly said or implied something, I might have sensed this from their gestures or attitude.

It is obvious that in their social interactions, Kurdish bilingual students may tend to hide their linguistic identity, which, in turn results in their language becoming invisible. Although some of them had never been subjected to any hostile or prejudiced attitude, they anticipated it based on previous observations and abstained from revealing their language and linguistic features indexing their ethnicity.

Another participant's memories confirm that students avoid mentioning even some witty or funny sayings, proverbs or simply some words in their own language. They are tempted to do so as they think that it precisely describes the situation. Most of them made an attempt at it, but their experience taught them not to do so. Aynur's case constitutes an example:

> Whenever I had funny moments with my Turkish friends, I always wanted to use some Kurdish idioms as they were precisely describing the situation. However, I avoided doing that since I thought they would not understand. I tried doing so for a few times, but they did not respond at all. Most probably, it did not make much sense to them.

What Dilan told me tells a lot about how they feel about switching between Kurdish and Turkish. The Kurdish language is associated with emotions, a sense of relief, and feeling at home. In her exact words:

> Speaking Turkish all the time feels like eating dorm food. But Kurdish felt like eating homemade food, my mum's food. Whenever I had to speak Turkish for a long time, I would call my mum and fulfill my longing for my language.

Boundaries can be observed in their romantic relationships as well. Helin's account describes what I mean by that:

> I flirted with someone for a few months. I liked him, but not being able to share anything in Kurdish with him made me upset. I could sense that he didn't want me to utter anything in Kurdish. I had a gut feeling that he was trying to ignore the fact that my first language was Kurdish. But my brother had a Turkish girlfriend, and she loved listening to Kurdish songs. I think I would have felt very well if my boyfriend had agreed to go to a Kurdish singer's concert with me.

On the other hand, four participants from Boğaziçi University did not report any perceived discrimination against their language on the campus premises. Even though two of them still preferred to make friends with Kurds and suffered from low self- confidence in their first year, they stated that they never felt intimidated to speak in public. This might be attributed to the fact that this school is known for embracing individuals with diverse ethnic, religious or social backgrounds.

Sedat, a student from Boğaziçi University explicitly pointed out this fact when I asked him whether or not he tried to suppress his accent or felt insecure:

> I thought that my accent was a positive trait of mine. I felt different as I was bilingual. This was a positive aspect. If I had studied in a different school, I may have faced different treatment, but I did not sense any prejudice around the school, so as you can hear now, I never changed anything about the way I speak.

Similarly, Muhammed, another participant studying at Boğaziçi University commented on this:

> I talked about Kurdish with my Turkish friends when I first came here. It was not normalized yet, but I don't think they felt uncomfortable. I don't think a student from this university would feel uncomfortable.

One participant stated that he found it extremely pleasing when he met Turkish people trying to learn Kurdish. In his exact words:

> It makes me really happy when a Turkish friend tries to learn Kurdish. I had some friends at this school (Boğaziçi University) who were trying to learn Kurdish. I remember that I felt honored and appreciated them.

5.4 Conclusion

When I asked the interviewees what strategies they adopted in response to the treatment they encountered in their day-to-day lives, most of them expressed that it was easier for them to make friends with Kurds, and they preferred their company more since they could communicate without being concerned about their accent the code choice. They used various strategies to navigate linguistic hierarchies driven by their vulnerability springing from the fear of being targeted as a non-native Turkish speaker.

Due to the similarities between the cases, we can refer to Urciuoli's research on prejudice against Puerto Ricans in New York based on their language, race and class, here (1996). She uses the terms political topography, inner sphere, outer sphere to describe the bilingual situation among Puerto Ricans. For them, while 'broken' or 'incorrect' English and Spanish belong to the 'inner sphere', and valued by the members of their community, correct English is the formal language of 'the outer sphere'. 'The outer sphere is where language rules and measurements manifest symbolic power' (p.104). Bilingual Puerto Ricans oftentimes try to use correct language, or even pretend not to speak Spanish. While in some cases, they may refuse to speak English altogether and demand translators in official settings. They negotiate their bilingualism in different settings as a form of resistance. The participants in this study, likewise, acknowledge the importance of speaking the standard language, Turkish, without any interference of Kurdish, while they also value the Kurdish language or at least the freedom to switch codes during their private conversations. They may as well refuse to reduce their accent to assert their identity as a form of resistance.

Similarly, in the book reviewed in the second chapter, 'Kürt Damgası', Turgut (2021) investigates the stigmatization of Kurdish students living in Izmir. Referring to de-stigmatization theories, he demonstrates that avoidance was a common coping strategy among participants, who isolated themselves from the situations in which they would need to reveal their identity (p. 162). The students strongly believe that their appearance or the other indexes of being Kurdish can constitute a problem for them. Because of that, they tend to avoid disclosing their ethnic identity by concealing where they come from and refrain from speaking Kurdish in public spaces.

The results of my own study bear resemblance to those of Turgut's research. It is evident that students avoid situations in which they may be marginalized or discriminated based on their ethnicity indexed by their accent. They tend to make friends with those with whom they can speak Kurdish or those they think will not judge the way they speak. This is the case even when they speak different regional dialects of Kurdish and fail to comprehend each other as spoken Kurdish is far from being standardized. In addition, as another consequence of stigmatization, their self- confidence may be undermined. This can be traced back to their primary school period, when they were exposed to Turkish for the first time. To refer back to the study by Coşkun et al., (2010), it is very common for Kurdish primary school students to be subjected to hostile treatment when they are unable to speak Turkish properly. Being labeled as 'different' in a negative sense leads them to believe that they need to 'correct' their language or exert extra effort to compensate for their perceived inadequacies.

The everyday experiences of the participants in this study seem to have led them to create strong bond with other Kurdish students due to a shared language. It is a pattern for them to forge close- knit groups comprised of Kurdish members, whereas they often establish boundaries with their Turkish-speaking peers.

6

Identity Negotiation in Multilingual Contexts

Upon being faced with accent stigma, discrimination or linguistic insecurity, Kurdish bilinguals participating in this study tend to engage in social interaction with other Kurdish students. Their distinct physical appearance or accent facilitate detecting the students with the same ethnic origin as theirs. For instance, to explain their tendency to seek company of Kurdish speakers, Eren stated:

> When I first went to Ankara, my roommates at the dorm kept distant after finding out that I was from Diyarbakır. I was not able to become close friends with them. Due to this, I hung out with my Kurdish friends. 80% of the people with whom I spent most of my time were Kurdish. I moved in with 4 other students from Diyarbakır later on. One of my close friends was Zaza. I met many other people through him. Being able to speak in our broken Diyarbakır Turkish was really fun. Kurdish students also found one another at the school cafeteria because we could easily distinguish between who was Kurdish and who was not. Sometimes, they directly asked loudly if there were any Kurds among the bunch of students there. I guess, along with political stance, our shared language was one of the most important factors that made us come closer. We enjoyed this friendship a lot because during the Newroz celebrations, for instance, when Kurdish was the most 'visible' at Ankara University, we felt a

> sense of unity through songs and activities in Kurdish. We were filled with joy as we strongly felt that we belonged to a group and our identity was visible. It was a time when we were able to share our joy with people similar to us.

In order to find out how they navigate linguistic hierarchies in their social encounters, I posed them some questions regarding their emerging attitudes towards their first language. My intention was to find out whether their awareness and interest in the Kurdish language grew or not after starting higher education, to which almost all of them replied affirmatively. Considering the fact that they also invest their time and effort in acquiring 'correct' Turkish, this may sound contradictory. One might regard this as a strategy to reconcile their linguistic identities. Yet, this should be interpreted as an act of resistance. Based on their accounts, their engagement in socialization with other Kurdish students was a reason for the increase in their eagerness to improve their knowledge of the Kurdish language overall, despite the fact that in some cases they were unable to comprehend varieties. In addition to teaching one another the Kurdish equivalents of words, they also studied together to better their Kurdish. One frequently emerging expression was improving their 'academic Kurdish', by which they meant formal and standard Kurdish. Serhat's words sheds light on the participants' feelings concerning their resistance to linguistic marginalization:

> When something is forbidden, it suddenly becomes more valuable. Speaking Kurdish where I come from is nothing extraordinary, but in İzmir I wanted to spend time only with my Kurdish friends and I wanted to speak Kurdish.

Selahattin's enthusiasm to improve his Kurdish was particularly thought-provoking:

> I wanted to learn my language better when I came to Izmir. I was the first person in my village to get such a qualified education. After all, I was going to be a doctor. I thought I was supposed to be very good at my mother tongue as well. It would be a shame on me if I did not learn Kurdish well. I became interested in publications in Kurdish. I

> was especially keen on Kurdish literature, and oral literature more specifically. I have a book about Kurdish folklore on my desk at the moment, for instance. I believe that if I were studying at Dicle University in Diyarbakır, I would not be so aware of my own language. When I first came here, I was faced with some problems because of the way I speak. This led to a kind of reaction in me. I became more aware of the problems that we experience based on our language. I attended a Kurdish course when I first came here; however, I hid this from my Turkish friends because I was afraid of being stigmatized because they tended to associate Kurdish with a certain political stance. I did not even bring my Kurdish books to the campus with me.

Selahattin was the most eager one to have a better command of Kurdish among the participants I interviewed. Having been influenced by language ideologies and reflecting these ideological assumptions concerning languages, he expressed that elevating the status of the Kurdish language as the language of science was a goal he aspired to accomplish. What he said about his dreams for the future is significant in that sense:

> Kurdish is not the language of science. I am going to be a scientist. That means there must be certain things that I can do to contribute to formal Kurdish. I want to make it sufficient for expressing scientific thought. How I can contribute concerns me a lot. I may not be able to achieve success on my own to make Kurdish a language that has all the equivalents of scientific terms, but I may, for instance, be able to write a scientific article in Kurdish on diabetes or other diseases. I will do my best to accomplish this.

> To him, being a successful person entailed learning 'academic Kurdish' very well and contributing to the development of the Kurdish language.

The interviews have revealed another pattern in the participants' attitude towards Kurdish. Engaging in the practice of reading books in Kurdish to enhance their Kurdish skills was a common habit among them. Even though

they can speak the language, it is not uncommon for Kurdish people to be illiterate in terms of reading and writing. The Kurdish alphabet differs from its Turkish counterpart, making it imperative for its speakers to put extra effort into learning how to read and write. After they arrive in their new city, as they increasingly become more aware of their distinct linguistic identity, they seek ways to improve it. To this end, most students start reading publications in Kurdish. Both fiction and non-fiction books are very popular among them. By reading books, their connection to their language is strengthened as they can learn the intricacies of their language better. Ferhat eloquently articulated his thoughts on this:

> I have discovered that Kurdish has an equivalent for every Turkish word although we have been using the Turkish substitute up until now. As I learned new words, I felt more committed to my language.

Serhat's remarks agree with those of Ferhat. He also emphasizes his raised awareness as to the importance of mastering Kurdish to be able to assert his identity.

> I became more aware of my language. I attended a course to improve my Kurdish. I wanted to explore the literary aspects of the Kurdish language. My friends coming from different Kurdish cities knew more than me and when I listened to what they had to say, my interest in Kurdish literature grew. I wanted to read books. I tried to learn academic or written Kurdish. Even though I did not understand those coming from different cities such as Şırnak very well, we still tried to communicate in Kurdish. However, when we had to talk about topics other than daily conversations, we had to switch to Turkish since we did not have the vocabulary in Kurdish."

When their non- Kurdish friends inquired about their language and identity, and they were not able to respond, this paved the way for them to embark on a journey to delve deeply into their history, language and identity as they would be expected to answer questions if they wanted their identity to be recognized and respected. Failing to do so meant acknowledging that Kurdish was not a distinct and proper language as has been traditionally claimed

by many. On the other hand, when they had greater knowledge about the origins of their language and identity, they thought they could come up with answers to such questions and prove that their language exists; in fact, it has existed for quite a long time. Some students' remarks reveal that their endeavor to prove this fact turned into a matter of saving the honor of their language. What Zehra says concerning this is really striking:

> When my non-Kurdish friends asked me about the origins of the Kurdish language, I failed to answer them, and I started to look for the answers. I myself started to have doubts as to whether Kurdish was a language not. I needed to reach conclusions to convince myself as well as my friends.

Her interest in Kurdish music also grew significantly:

> I began to listen to Kurdish songs more often. My roommate was from Diyarbakır, and we always listened to songs in Kurdish together, and this made us feel very happy.

Virtually all participants agreed that their aspirations to acquire greater knowledge of their language and history was affected by several factors, one of them being their unpleasant experiences. Some specifically expressed that they felt extremely excited whenever they went to a bookstore and come across books on Kurdish history, language and culture. Some did not specify the resources they used, but Ali and Evin, with excitement in their voices, told me that they could not resist the temptation to get the relevant books whenever they found them in bookstores. Ali's words clearly demonstrate the fact that this is a prevalent feeling among his peers:

> For example, I bought several books, and I was so happy about it, but when a friend of mine visited me and saw the books on my bookcase, he was astonished and asked me to lend them to him. I couldn't say no because he appeared really enthusiastic about reading them.

In a similar fashion, Evin shared her own experience, which is worth mentioning right here as she also wanted to make sure that her people and language deserve to be recognized. It seems that the common political discourse asserting that Kurdish people are actually 'mountain Turks' and Kurdish is a distorted version of other languages left them in a state of confusion; as a consequence, they needed to be convinced to restore their belief in the authenticity of their identity and language, which actually contributed to the reinforcement of their identity awareness. Evin notes:

> I had a friend in our dorm. She was nationalist. Once we were discussing the results on the election day. During the discussion, I said something about Kurdish. She fiercely reacted and said: "There is no such thing as Kurdish; do not make it up". Whenever I went to the bookstores, the books on the Kurdish language, literature and history attracted my attention and I wanted to read all of them. That's how I started to read this category. I thought I had to read all of them because I doubted whether or not we, as the Kurdish people, existed and whether or not ours was a made-up language, not an authentic one. I wanted to be able to respond when they claimed otherwise"

Sedat's account is similar to the ones above in that he was also convinced that he needed to engage in more research on his language, history and culture:

> My roommates were politicized students. They were Turkish nationalists. Before I met them, I was defending the rights of the Kurds, but I did so without awareness. When I started discussing these matters with my roommates, I realized that I needed to know more about our language and history to be able to refute their arguments. It was important for me to find out more and prove that we existed, and we had a language and history. Of course, it was easy to find these resources in İstanbul.

Most participants' insights expose the fact that they place great emphasis on learning how to read and write Kurdish language as they tend to believe that only if a language has written, formal, and standard form can it

be recognized as a distinct language and respected by wider community. Berfin's reflections on this are as follows:

> I know colloquial Kurdish. I feel emotionally fulfilled, but I think learning written Kurdish is also of utmost importance if we want to understand our literature, music, etc better. If I have kids some day, I will teach them formal Kurdish. Unfortunately, we didn't have this opportunity. I want to preserve our heritage language.

Obviously, students may tend to seek ways to uphold their identity and language as a reaction. Keeping the historical and political processes in mind, becoming more self- conscious about the way they speak and being faced with certain reactions to their manner of speaking, they may find themselves longing for their mother tongue. This results in their increased enthusiasm and willingness to master the Kurdish language and they deem it necessary to speak their language with their Kurdish friends whenever possible. A memory told by Dilan indicates that identity negotiation situations can be very complex. To show resistance and to assert their linguistic identity, they might intentionally choose to speak Kurdish in the presence of their Turkish peers:

> Once I had a birthday party, and I invited both my Kurdish and Turkish friends. My Kurdish friends spoke Kurdish all the time. This made me feel uncomfortable as I was the one who had invited them as their mutual friend. After the party, I got mad at my Kurdish friends. What surprised me was that the group did not use to speak Kurdish much with one another on our previous gatherings. I knew that they were speaking Kurdish on purpose, just as a reaction. It was simply political.

As well as getting better command of the Kurdish language, some believe that Kurds should seize every opportunity to speak Kurdish. To quote Şiyar's remarks:

> My political awareness increased in university. Now, when I meet a Kurdish person, I speak Kurdish even if they don't want to, so that they also embrace their identity and don't hide themselves.

> Kurdish is disappearing; soon it won't even be spoken in the villages. The language and culture are associated with ignorance and backwardness. I no longer feel hesitant about speaking Kurdish. This is actually a reactionary stance.

Deliberately keeping one's accent might as well serve as a form of resistance to the dominant ideology. Ali was proud to say that he never changed his accent, and he believed that it was an important part of his identity:

> Some Kurdish university students go to diction courses to change their accent. I never did that. I am not ashamed of my accent. I did not change my accent. It makes me feel different. I am proud to be bilingual. I don't like those who change their accent.

6.1 Conclusion

Most of the participants in this study increasingly became more interested in improving their Kurdish, learning the written form and reading Kurdish literature after leaving their Kurdish-populated hometowns. In addition to the language and literature, some interviewees stated that their interest in history had grown. Based on their accounts, I argue that, albeit partially, this stems from the fact that their contact with speakers of the dominant language contributed to their self-consciousness about their linguistic differences. Being a member of a 'marked' identity, they adopted a different attitude towards their mother tongue, which they had taken for granted before coming to the Turkish-dominated parts of Turkey.

Kroskrity (2004) suggests that language ideologies play an integral role in the creation of identities. This involves strategies such as resistance of minority language speakers and assertion of their distinct linguistic identity. The case of Arizona Tewa speech community illustrates how they set clear boundaries between the contexts they use their purified native language in certain contexts as part of aims to maintain and preserve it. The participants in this thesis also reported certain strategies they adopt in order to preserve their first language (p.509).

Most of the participants in this study also developed a special emotional attachment to their mother tongue and they continually articulated how at ease and confident they felt in the presence of their Kurdish peers. Evidently, their experiences of stigmatization or marginalization as well as their hesitancy and anxiety to speak Kurdish in public trigger a sense of resistance, resulting in increased motivation to learn the written, standard Kurdish. The question 'where are you from?' unveils their differences, and this realization results in a rise in their awareness of their linguistic distinctiveness. It would be wrong to attribute their greater awareness to solely being marginalized. Kurdish politicians' efforts to claim Kurdish linguistic rights as well as the relative freedom in terms of the use of Kurdish in public space contribute to this significantly as well. However, as some of the interviewees explicitly stated, the prejudice or stigma attached to the Kurdish language and denial of its linguistic value led them to believe that it was their responsibility to be knowledgeable enough so that they could defend their language and prove that lingustically speaking it deserves to be categorized as a separate language. This could be interpreted as an attempt to subvert the language ideologies at play in their interactions. The erasure process employed by the nation state and its standard language ideology are questioned; consequently, their attitude and attachment to their mother tongue undergo a transformation.

Eriksen (1992) suggests that, analogous to appreciating the importance of clean air when it becomes polluted, the significance of one's culture and identity can become more evident when it is faced with the risk of loss. The findings in this thesis appear to confirm this assertion. To challenge the identities imposed upon them, the participants begin to exhibit more willingness contribute to the maintenance of their heritage language.

7

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have explored the intersection of language, power and identity in the context of Turkey with regards to the status of the Kurdish language. The objectives of this thesis were two-fold. First, I sought answers to the question how standard language ideologies are manifested in daily interactions of Kurdish bilingual university students. Secondly, I tried to reveal the ways they navigate or challenge the power dynamics and negotiate their linguistic identity in Turkish dominant- contexts. Through the interviews conducted with university students and graduates, I have looked into the embeddedness of language ideologies in cases where they are disguised as linguistic facts regarded as assumptions held as common sense about language use.

The discussion of the theories and literature on language ideologies emerging within the discipline of linguistic anthropology in the second chapter provided with the framework to delve deeper into the power relations taking place in invisible sites involving language use. The theories proposed suggest that from a post-structuralist perspective, language is not merely a tool for communication, but rather underlying the interpretations, evaluations, and attitudes towards languages in everyday life or social domains is the reflection of power struggles through language. Language can be a very useful tool through which social hierarchies are maintained, which may even lead to covert racism. The

literature on interactions and attitudes regarding language ideologies in multicultural countries has been reviewed. Issues such as the stigmatization of accented speech, language and symbolic power, and the hegemonic adoption of language ideologies by those subjected to discrimination have been presented. Theories regarding the belief in a standard language within a language, or the belief that a nation should have only one language, leading to the idolization and ultimately erasure of other languages, have been discussed in detail.

In the following chapter, I provided a chronological account of historical developments that led up to the persisting conflicts centering around Kurdish language, culture and identity. As was pointed out in the literature, stances towards language are commonly depicted as though they derive from concrete linguistic facts. Nonetheless, they stem from political and economic interests of certain groups although not explicitly articulated. The historical developments arising from the power struggles in Turkey were scrutinized, with a specific focus on the period of the nation state formation in Turkey. Overemphasis on single language and subsequent language policies and language planning informed by power dynamics have been examined in relation to the hierarchization of social groups in Turkey. Furthermore, I have provided a discussion of restrictions imposed upon the Kurdish language since the end of the 19th century.

In the third chapter, I have analyzed the findings gathered from the interviews conducted with university students or recent graduates. The participants were Kurdish bilinguals aged between 20- 30. They had acquired Kurdish in their homes and started learning Turkish as a second language after the age of six or seven in formal education instructed solely in Turkish. One of the most significant themes revealed during the interviews was the issue of accent. Interviewees who speak Turkish with a Kurdish accent have experienced feelings of discomfort, sometimes discrimination, and in some cases a sense of inadequacy regarding Turkish dominance due to these linguistic characteristics. The findings demonstrate that during the first two years of university, they often become conscious of speaking with an accent. Subsequently, they make efforts to

eliminate these linguistic differences. They attend Turkish diction classes (diksiyon kursu) and started reading books in Turkish for the purpose of acquiring 'proper' Turkish. Despite having proven their academic success by obtaining high scores in exams and being admitted to reputable universities, most of the participants reported that they felt a general sense of inadequacy due to an abstract and essentially mythical index such as accent (Lippi Green, 1997)

In the analysis of the findings chapter, I have also examined the ways they challenge and navigate the dominant language ideologies implicit in their interactions with their peers, instructors and local community. Their accounts made it clear that they tend to avoid situations in which their linguistic differences can be noticed. Their strategies to deal with this can range from socializing exclusively with other Kurdish students to avoid participating in class discussions. Many of them stated that communicating without having to suppress their accent was a great relief. Even though it might be wrong to attribute this situation solely to a shared language, as the participants expressed explicitly, it is a significant contributing factor. They internalize the assumptions and beliefs imposed by standard language ideologies and they actively seek a solution to improve the way they speak. Their submission to the hierarchy of the languages does not only indicate their endeavor to cope with stereotyping and marginalization but also to acquire access to resources in the market, where language serves as a symbolic capital.

In the interviews, another revelation was that students coming from Kurdish regions to Turkish dominant cities gain further linguistic awareness of linguistic differentiation. The statements of the participants indicated that their interest in Kurdish history and language is reinforced as a reaction to the treatment they are subjected to due to their linguistic differences. Although several reasons can be cited for this, they explicitly stated that their perceived linguistic marginalization played a significant role. Most of the participants emphasized that learning formal Kurdish and understanding the structure and history of Kurdish was of utmost importance to remedy the feelings of inferiority and to show pride in their first language. To counter the arguments maintained by their close

social circles claiming that Kurdish is not a distinct language in its own right, they attach great importance to being actively involved in the maintenance of Kurdish. This can be explained by the contrast resulting in ethnic identity, as proposed by Eriksen (1992).

To conclude, the interviews conducted within the scope of this thesis demonstrate that even in the most unexpected situations, Kurdish individuals speaking with a Kurdish accent or speaking their own language in public can be frowned upon. Due to the roles played by language ideologies pervasive in the discourse of society, characteristics attributed to the language and its speakers, as well as political ideological associations, can lead to problems and tensions in interpersonal interactions even among very close social circles such as roommates and friends. Utilizing linguistic hegemony serves the interests of certain groups while marginalizing others. Historical and political events inform attitudes towards languages although individuals firmly believe that their justifications are rational and scientific. All in all, this thesis has revealed that language ideologies pervade a number of contexts in Turkey and greatly impact Kurdish speakers in various ways. Future studies can focus on the challenges Kurdish bilingual university graduates face in their careers. The findings and frameworks presented in this thesis can be helpful in investigating whether they are denied any opportunities in the workplace or job market based on their linguistic differences.

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