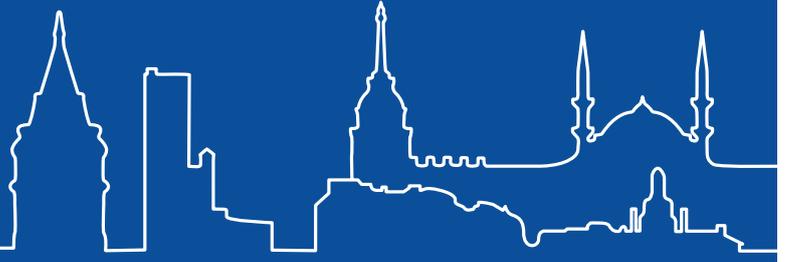


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POLICY BRIEF



LANGUAGES IN TRANSITION  
TURKISH IN FORMAL EDUCATION IN GERMANY  
ANALYSIS & PERSPECTIVES

**Almut Küppers**  
**Christoph Schroeder**  
**Esin Işıl Gülbeyaz**



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September 2014

**IPC**

**ISTANBUL POLICY CENTER**

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Küppers, Almut; Schroeder, Christoph; Gülbeyaz, Esin Işıl.

Languages in transition: Turkish in formal education in Germany - Analysis & perspectives; edited by Çiğdem Tongal. - Istanbul: Sabancı University Istanbul Policy Center; Essen: Stiftung Mercator Initiative, 2014.

[iv], 28 p.; 30 cm. - (Sabancı University Istanbul Policy Center; Stiftung Mercator Initiative)

ISBN 978-605-4348-88-6

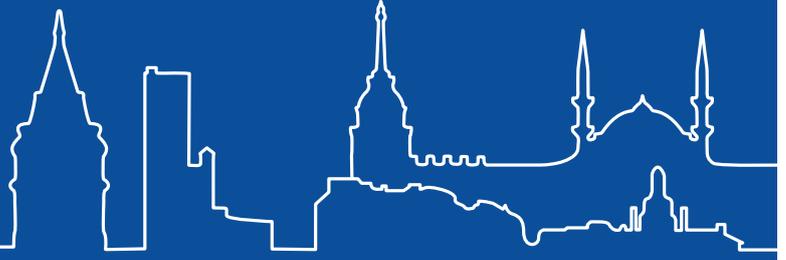
Cover Design: MYRA; Implementation: grafikaSU

Cover Photo: Heike Wiese (2013). Liebesgrüße aus Kreuzberg / From Kreuzberg with love, Zusatz zu Kiezdeutsch-Korpus (KiDKo) [www.kiezdeutschkorpus.de](http://www.kiezdeutschkorpus.de)

1.Edition: 2014

Printed by: Matsis Matbaa Sistemleri

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*The interpretations and conclusions made in this article belong solely to the author and do not reflect IPC's official position.*



## Executive Summary

The languages spoken by minority groups and immigrants in Europe are real value-added contributions to diversity in the European societies that host large immigrant communities. However, immigrant minority languages<sup>1</sup> are not protected by legal documents neither on the European nor on the national level. Much lip service has been paid to multilingualism<sup>2</sup> and linguistic diversity on the level of official language policy. Yet still, plurilingualism and bilingualism among the youth in a transmigration country such as Germany has long been viewed as a burden in state school education. Only recently, a paradigm shift has occurred toward valuing this diversity. Despite this shift in conceptualization, the overall atmosphere is still unfavorable regarding languages that migrant workers once brought into western European countries.

In this policy brief, we will argue that the potential of immigrant languages as an asset has not yet been fully appreciated in an expanding world of transnational (educational) spaces. Based on a thorough analysis of the current status of Turkish in formal education in Germany, we will show that adhering to the common labels of “heritage language instruction”<sup>3</sup> or “mother tongue teaching” perpetuates the ethnicization of problems related to issues revolving around (language) education of immigrant students.<sup>4</sup> Upgrading the teaching of immigrant languages and transcending them into the formal curricula as “modern foreign languages” would unlock their full societal value as subjects open for monolingual children, provide room for intercultural encounters, and promote two-way integration and social cohesion. In contrast, allowing immigrant languages to be taught only in informal educational settings such as mosques and Turkish associations would reinforce the

misconception that “Turkish belongs to the Turks” (and not to Germany).

## Introduction

Turkish is a pervasive minority language in Germany. Its vitality has been documented in various recent studies such as surveys from Essen (Chlosta et al. 2003), Hamburg (Fürstenau et al. 2003), Freiburg (Decker & Schnitzer 2012), and the federal state of Thuringia (Ahrenholz & Maak 2013). Not only is Turkish frequently heard in urban centers, it can also be seen displayed on shop signs, posters, and announcements. Moreover, Turkish is present in public space in Germany as a language used for advertising, not only in newspapers and books but also on various radio and TV stations that broadcast in Turkish. Similarly, Turkish is a lively language spoken in German school yards and in German classrooms. Children use Turkish not only in informal social settings among friends at school but also in sports clubs, during leisure time activities, and in the neighborhood. Eventually, Turkish is most at home in the families where it is mainly spoken among family members in the private space in which it is maintained.

However, unlike German and regional minority languages such as Frisian, Sorbian or Danish, Turkish is not protected by legal documents in Germany. At the European level, linguistic diversity has always been regarded as an essential feature of European identity. Yet, the so-called immigrant or heritage languages such as Turkish and Arabic have only recently been accepted and explicitly mentioned as an integral part of linguistic diversity in the European Union (cf. Moyer & Rojo 2007).

It is important to note that it can therefore not be taken for granted that the Turkish language has entered into the formal education system in

Germany (cf. also Yildiz 2012). In fact, the potential of Turkish as a modern foreign language subject taught as either a second or third foreign language or as a CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) language used in bilingual schools has been widely ignored by the educational establishment in Germany.

In this paper, we will analyze the present state of Turkish instruction in formal education in Germany and by so doing we will also challenge the notion of “heritage language instruction.” The first part will be (1) a concise report of how Turkish is taught in German state schools. This is followed by (2) a critical appreciation of arguments for implementing Turkish into the curriculum and (3) the challenges of Turkish as a subject in the educational system in Germany. The final part is (4) a summary of our findings. This is followed by (5) an analysis on the prospects of Turkish as an established subject in German schools in light of an expanding transnational space between Germany and Turkey. The analysis will provide us with (6) a number of recommendations for language policy making, followed by (7) a proposal for a possible roadmap for implementation based on the situation in Lower Saxony.

## 1 Report on how Turkish is taught in Germany<sup>5</sup>

### 1.1 Overview of categories

Based on our analysis, we suggest classifying two distinct types of Turkish instruction in Germany. The reference point used is the previous knowledge learners have regarding the language in question. The first type we identify is “exclusive” Turkish teaching in which Turkish language instruction and subject teaching in Turkish is exclusively designed for children who have acquired Turkish in an informal environment at home and outside school. The second type is “inclusive” Turkish teaching in which there is no systematic distinction drawn between learners who have previous knowledge of Turkish and those who do not know any Turkish at all. We will look more closely at these two types of language instruction in the following sections.

#### Exclusive Turkish teaching

Exclusive Turkish teaching can be found in a variety of forms:

- Often referred to as “heritage language instruction” (*Herkunftssprachenunterricht*) or “additional mother tongue teaching” (*muttersprachlicher Ergänzungsunterricht*), this type of Turkish instruction is mostly found at the elementary level<sup>6</sup> and taught until the end of grade 4 (until the end of grade 6 only in Berlin and Brandenburg). Based on official policy resolutions issued by the ministries of education and cultural affairs in the respective federal German states, this type of Turkish instruction was institutionalized nearly forty years ago and implemented in various ways (cf. Beck 1999). Sometimes liable to the respective Turkish consulate in a federal German state and sometimes to the ministry of education

and cultural affairs, various curricula have emerged for which either the respective federal state, the Turkish ministry of education or the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Federal Republic of Germany (KMK) are responsible. In any case, Turkish instruction is provided only if a certain number of participants are registered (e.g. in North Rhine Westfalia /NRW, there are 15 learners at the elementary level, 19 at the secondary level; in Lower Saxony, there are 10 learners from one school and 18 from various schools). The Turkish language instruction provided by Turkish consulates is also based on the decrees and regulations issued by the respective federal German state. The Turkish lessons administered by Turkish consulates are almost entirely organized as extracurricular clubs that are not integrated into lesson plans and take place in the afternoon. Learners usually do not receive grades, and at best participation will be mentioned in report cards.

- In a few schools (to our knowledge, six elementary schools in Berlin, one in Cologne, and one in Frankfurt), Turkish heritage language instruction exists as coordinated German-Turkish literacy education at the elementary level in year 1 and sometimes in year 2 as well. This offer is usually geared to children who are already well-versed in the Turkish language. After year 1 (or 2), these classes are integrated into mainstream schooling. In a few cases, the program is continued as bilingual teaching into year 3 and 4 (cf. Nehr et al. 1988).
- Only a few German federal states (NRW, Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, Bavaria, Lower Saxony) offer native Turkish speakers to opt for Turkish language instruction as a second or third foreign language in the lower and upper secondary

levels. Turkish is also a possible subject as part of the leaving examination in NRW, Berlin, Bremen, Hamburg, and Lower Saxony (Abitur).<sup>7</sup>

- Only one school in Germany, the Carl-von-Ossietzky school in Berlin, offers CLIL for heritage speakers of Turkish at the secondary level for the biology, history, geography and the social sciences. The bilingual Aziz Nesin elementary school (see below) is located on the same campus. Both schools work in close cooperation and all participants of the CLIL-program are from the Aziz Nesin school.<sup>8</sup>
- Last but not least there is at least one vocational school, the Louise-Schroeder-School in Berlin, which has integrated Turkish for specific purposes as part of training programs in the field of office administration.<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, the Turkish community in Berlin runs a training program for elderly care nurses<sup>10</sup>, which includes the development of bilingual competencies for future nurses. Again, these programs seem to be exclusive as they are designed for those who already speak the language before entering the program. The overall objectives of these vocational courses seem to aim at providing participants with relevant subject knowledge in the Turkish language; they are not language learning courses as such.

### **Inclusive Turkish teaching**

Instruction of Turkish as a foreign language (mostly a third foreign language) is available for students at the secondary level who do not speak the language as a heritage language and can be found in schools in NRW, Hamburg, and Bremen.

A few promising concepts exist at the elementary level in integrating Turkish into their language

program without exclusively targeting native speakers.

- First of all, some elementary schools in Hessen, Bavaria, and again NRW integrated Turkish into their “Encounter Languages” (Begegnungssprache) concept. This was a prominent model in the 1980s and 1990s with the aim to familiarize children with (mostly the sound of various) foreign languages. The Encounter approach has more or less vanished in Germany with the landslide introduction of English as a foreign language at the elementary level in all federal German states starting around the 1990s. Only a few other languages other than English can be found in the curriculum of elementary schools in Germany, often neighboring languages such as French along the Rhine (Baden Württemberg), Polish in Brandenburg, Dutch in NRW, or Czech in Saxony. Nevertheless, it cannot be entirely ruled out that there are still a few schools across the country in which Turkish is used in a language encounter program.
- In rare cases, elementary schools have also introduced a bilingual German-Turkish program either for the entire school population or as a stream (i.e. Lämmersieth Schule and Heinrich-Wolgast-Schule in Hamburg and Aziz Nesin-Schule in Berlin). This type of Turkish instruction is organized in a joint fashion for two different groups of students. One group consists of students whose dominant language is German upon entering the program, and the other group’s dominant language is Turkish. Initially, literacy education begins in the respective dominant language. The other language is perceived as the “partner language” and is introduced through intensive language instruction at the same time.

In less language-intensive subject areas such as physical education, music, and arts, both groups meet for mutual lessons. Science is taught as a bilingual subject for all students at higher grades. Alternatively, some subject areas are taught in one language and others in the partner language. The three schools mentioned above are known to work with this concept of Turkish instruction, which is organized in cooperation with the relevant consulates. The consulates also pay for the Turkish teachers (cf. Niedrig 2001, Gogolin & Roth 2007).

- At least one other German elementary school (Albert-Schweitzer Schule in Hanover) has introduced a bilingual Turkish-German program. It differs slightly in its organization, however. At this school, the language program is a tool for intercultural education from the start, and it was introduced to enhance mutual understanding, improve social cohesion, and reduce white flight<sup>11</sup> (cf. Küppers & Yağmur 2014, see also Barz et al. 2013). Language learning has been seen as a side effect of more important intercultural learning objectives, namely promoting respect and tolerance and dealing with others as equals. Turkish and non-Turkish speaking children (who may speak German and additional languages) are always taught together, both languages are part of the literacy education, and English is introduced on the third year and taught thereafter. Turkish is sometimes used in language lessons and sometimes in lessons with focus on subject learning. Five lessons per week are allocated to team-teaching with a Turkish teacher in bilingual classes beginning in year one.<sup>12</sup>

## 1.2 Teaching and testing materials

Teaching materials used for those Turkish lessons provided by the federal states (and not by the Turkish consulates) have been developed by teams of the respective education authorities. Moreover, the publishing house Anadolu-Verlag in Hückelhoven (NRW) has specialized in teaching and learning materials for a variety of European countries and languages and also has a range of materials for Turkish. At least two other names can be found in the slim assortment of Turkish materials within the immense German market of language teaching and (self-) learning materials. One is Önel, next to the big name Cornelsen, a well-known textbook publisher that has recently undertaken bilingual German-Turkish materials in its program. Moreover, there are a variety of Turkish publishing houses such as Çiçek Kitaplar providing children's literature in Turkish, but these are not always readily available in Germany. Teaching materials used for Turkish lessons provided by Turkish consulates mainly come from Turkey, and occasionally they are developed in cooperation with the German education authorities. However, according to Arslan (2013), teachers complain that the teaching material obtained through the consulates is outdated. Schmitz & Olferts (2013: 220) point out that there has not been a comprehensive schoolbook for Turkish at either the primary or secondary level.

Since 2013, a Turkish language test has been available in Germany specifically designed for elementary schools (cf. Çıkar 2013). The test was developed and produced by TELC, a language test developer and non-commercial subsidiary enterprise of the German school for adult further education (*Volkshochschule*). With the advent of suitable language tests, schools are now in the position to link Turkish instruction to a test format that acknowledges competencies in the Turkish language.

## 1.3 Participant numbers

It is difficult to provide exact numbers of those receiving Turkish instruction in Germany as official figures issued by the individual federal states are hard to access. Furthermore, classifications regarding the type of Turkish lessons (inclusive/exclusive) are not always clear, especially at the secondary level.

By calculating the numbers provided by Reich & Hienz de Albentiis (1998), we can conclude that a total number of 122,966 students participated in Turkish heritage language classes organized by the federal German states in 1996. As for today's participation in a state-run heritage language classes, reliable numbers in terms of inhabitants only exist for NRW, by far the largest federal state. Here, in the 2012/2013 academic year, a total of 48,542 students are reported to have Turkish as a heritage language (Schmitz & Olfert 2013: 218).

In 2001, the total numbers of participants in the consulate-run heritage language courses was reported as 172,017 by the education office of the Turkish consulate in Berlin. However, the figures are somewhat incongruent. Recent numbers indicate that the number of students participating in heritage language classes organized by the consulates must have dropped considerably. For example, in the 2013/2014 academic year, the education office in the Turkish embassy stated a total number of 5,641 students participating in consulate-run heritage language classes in both Berlin and Bremen (Berlin: 4861, Bremen: 780). Even if we assume that the total number for Germany is ten times this figure, it would still be considerably less than participant numbers since the turn of the century.

A total number of 12,807 students learned Turkish as a foreign language at the secondary level in the 2012-2013 academic year (Schmitz & Olfert 2013: 220 from Statistisches Bundesamt 2013: 104-107). However, no distinction has been made in the

official statistics between the inclusive (“Turkish as a foreign language”) and the exclusive (“Turkish instead of a foreign language”) type of Turkish instruction.

#### 1.4 Who teaches Turkish? The staffing situation in Germany

As it remains altogether difficult to draw a consistent picture of the present state of Turkish instruction in Germany, it is likewise challenging to characterize staffing procedures. What can be stated quite clearly, however, is that nearly all Turkish teachers in Germany speak the language as their first language and/or consider Turkish to be one of the languages spoken within the family.

If we use “training” and “employing institution” as criteria, we can categorize four groups of teachers:

- **Employees of the German education authorities, trained in Turkey /1/**

A large number of teachers who presently work in Germany as Turkish teachers have been trained, tested and certified in Turkey – often as elementary school teachers. In the best case scenario, this group of teachers has participated in some type of on-the-job / in-service training provided by the education authorities in Germany. In contrast to fully-trained teachers in Germany who have a qualified teacher status for at least two different subjects, these teachers only teach Turkish. As a consequence, most cannot be employed as civil servants but work as employees with a considerably lower income. These teachers usually work in elementary schools where they provide heritage language instruction.

- **Employees or civil servants employed by German authorities who have accomplished a teacher training for Turkish in Germany /2/**

Turkish Studies (Türkistik) in Duisburg-Essen (NRW) has been in existence since 1995 and is the only university in Germany that provides full academic teacher training for Turkish teachers. Teachers are trained only for the lower and the higher secondary levels, not for the primary level. Three additional universities offer Turkish teacher training as an extension of other programs (*Teilstudiengang* or *Erweiterungsfach*), namely Hamburg University<sup>13</sup> (at all levels), Tübingen University (only *Gymnasium*),<sup>15</sup> and the Ludwig-Maximilian University of Munich (only *Gymnasium*).<sup>15</sup> In other words, there is only one place in Germany where Turkish teachers are trained for the primary level of education, namely Hamburg – and this program is under serious threat of closure (cf. Neumann 2014).

- **Employees or civil servants trained and employed in Germany but without any qualification to teach Turkish /3/**

Only the above-mentioned few places exist in Germany where potential Turkish teachers can obtain a university qualification. In other words, those federal states that do not provide teacher training often rely on teachers with a so-called migration background to provide Turkish instruction. These teachers are usually native speakers of Turkish or speak it as a family language and have been trained in Germany to teach other subjects aside from Turkish. Only two federal states, namely NRW and Lower Saxony, have decided to test the language proficiency of prospective Turkish teachers.<sup>16</sup>

- **Employees of the Turkish authorities / consulates and trained in Turkey /4/**

These Turkish teachers are commonly referred to as “consulate teachers” and usually teach in schools that cooperate with the Turkish consulate. They received training in Turkey and either have a teaching qualification for Turkish or German. As civil servants, they are usually sent to a teaching assignment abroad for not more than five years.

It is difficult to paint an up-to-date picture in regards to the total number of Turkish teachers in Germany. Figures for state-employed teachers (groups /1/, /2/, /3/ together) show 93 Turkish teachers in NRW, 30 in Berlin, 51 in Hamburg, 22 in Bremen as well as a few in Lower Saxony. With respect to the teachers employed by the consulates (group /4/), the Turkish Embassy in Berlin stated that a total number of 458 consulate-employed teachers worked as Turkish teachers at German schools in 2001. Complementary to the decreasing number of students in heritage language instruction classes offered by the consulate, we can presume that the numbers of teachers have also decreased. For example in the Federal State of Lower Saxony, there were ten teachers employed by the consulate in the 2007/2008 academic year, while there were three teachers remaining in the 2013/2014 academic year.<sup>17</sup>

## 2 Arguments in favor of Turkish at German schools

Although Turkish classes can be taught in an exclusive or inclusive manner, the overall learning objective of Turkish instruction remains the same. This objective is to develop communicative competencies in the five skill areas including speaking, listening, reading, writing, and mediation.

The written (Turkey) Turkish standard is defined as the reference point of the target language. Communicative Turkish competencies should enable the learner to participate in and critically appreciate (written) discourses in both Turkey and Germany.

These objectives unify all official statements that have argued for an integration of Turkish instruction in Germany. Other past and present objectives and arguments are the following:

- **The reintegration objective.** During the 1970s, this argument revolved around what was then referred to as “mother-tongue teaching” (*muttersprachlicher Unterricht*) and was supported by both Turkish and German authorities. The common line of thought followed that students with Turkish passports would one day move back to Turkey with their parents. They should then be prepared for reintegration both linguistically and culturally in Turkey. In the meantime, this objective was dropped as a rationale for the Turkish instruction carried out by the federal German states. Implicitly, the reintegration objective can still be found in the guidelines for Turkish instruction provided by Turkish consulates (cf. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı 2000).
- **The resource argument.** More recently, the resource argument can be found in official statements issued by the federal German states. No differentiation is made with regard to inclusive or exclusive / heritage or foreign language teaching, however two different perspectives can be delineated:

**(a) Turkish as an individual resource for learning:** This argument is directed towards the children who learn Turkish as a language spoken at home, and it is underpinned by the

interdependence and threshold hypothesis put forward by Cummins (cf. Cummins 2000). This hypothesis claims that learning about the world and cognitive development is closely connected to the acquisition of a first language. This follows then that developing competencies in the first language (in this case Turkish) would more easily facilitate both learning German as a second language and learning other subjects in German. Turkish as a cognitive tool for learning is an argument for exclusive Turkish instruction, in particular at the elementary level and up to grade 5 and 6 – an important phase in early childhood in which language development can be enhanced by educational support at school.

**(b) Turkish as a resource in society:** This argument is geared towards the pervasiveness of Turkish in Germany and accounts for both inclusive and exclusive teaching of Turkish. Students should be able to have the opportunity to develop the language as an extra qualification not only for schooling but also in the job market. The rationale behind this argument includes both the prevalence of the language in Germany as well as the growing economic interrelations between the two countries.

- **The nationalistic perspective:** The principles disseminated and advocated by Turkish consulates focus on learning Turkish as a means for children to learn about their cultural and national identities. At the same time, students learn to become advocates of their country of origin, being able to transmit their cultural and national identity (*Yurdumuz*, which means “our home” and refers to Turkey; cf. Millî Eğitim Bakanlığı 2000).
- **The intercultural competence argument:** In

sharp contrast to developing a national identity, learning foreign languages in Germany is generally seen as the most apt subject for the development of intercultural competencies. Students of the Turkish language should become competent mediators in a multicultural and multilingual (German) society. Furthermore, their heightened sensitivity towards cultural diversity would pay off in international relations. Moreover, a thorough Turkish language training will help the native speakers better understand their own linguistic and cultural characteristics. Such self-awareness will eventually facilitate individual’s understanding of and participation in Turkish society.

### 3 Challenges

In the following section, we will address a number of issues currently challenging Turkish instruction in Germany.

#### 3.1 Turkish instruction as heritage teaching

Teaching Turkish in Germany is deeply rooted in heritage language instruction. Turkish heritage language instruction cannot be compared to classical foreign language teaching. In its prototypical form, the latter does not assume students to have any previous knowledge. Hence, classical foreign language instruction starts from scratch and controls language acquisition through teaching progression. Turkish heritage instruction, in contrast, is based on the assumption that children acquire Turkish as a language spoken outside school at home. In this type of instruction, language acquired outside the classroom and language learning inside school merge and often reinforce each other.

Ostensibly, one challenge for teaching Turkish in Germany is the danger of ethnicization which can best be subsumed under the slogan “Turkish remains to be a subject for the Turks.” That said, however, there is also a problem in identifying who exactly is a “Turk”. Secondly, there is the challenge of the language itself. The reference point for Turkish instruction is, of course, Turkish as it is spoken in Germany. The Turkish that is spoken in Germany has been subject to a number of developments that distinguish it from standard Turkish spoken in Turkey (cf. Şimşek & Schroeder 2011). It can be seen as a variety of Turkish in its own right and should not be regarded as a “deficient” form of standard Turkish. The situation becomes challenging the moment one group of stakeholders claim to know about “correct Turkish” or – unwillingly – devalues the competencies and knowledge of other people (cf. Schroeder 2003, 2006). These aforementioned challenges can be easily overcome as long as language planners, teachers, parents, and students are aware of these developments and have found ways to navigate through these potential stumbling blocks in the classroom.

### **3.2 The challenge to communicate the resource argument**

Turkish teaching rooted in the heritage language tradition has been facing another serious challenge. Since the turn of the millennium, the rationale undergirding the resource argument has been called into question. The first obstacle came about with the shocking PISA results indicating that a large number of pupils – mostly with a so-called migration background – failed in the German education system due to a lack of proficiency in German. The general public as well as segments of the political and educational establishment called for more qualified German instruction. It

became increasingly difficult to argue in favor of Turkish instruction for students who had failed in PISA due to poor skills in German, namely reading competencies. The overall sentiment in German society led to the emergence of extreme attitudes regarding teaching Turkish in Germany. For example, the sociologist Esser (2006) argued that Turkish has no return on investment in the job market for native speakers of the language. His position was further supported by scholars in educational science (e.g. Hopf 2005) as well as in empirical school research (e.g. Limbird & Stanat 2006, Dollman & Kristen 2010). It has simply not been possible to present ultimate, clear-cut empirical proof defending the idea that development in a second language is dependent upon development in the first language (in spite of Cummins 2013, 2014), but the discussion related to the resource argument is far more complex:

- Some studies have documented transfer effects of Turkish heritage language teaching in specific linguistic fields such as reading skills (Rauch et al. 2012), text and comprehension strategies (Knapp 1997, Reich 2011) as well as writing skills (Verhoeven 1994). However, this effect may not be taken for granted but is very much dependent on the quality of the Turkish/heritage language teaching, as argued by Reich (2011), Woerfel et al. (2014) and Woerfel (2014). In a longitudinal study, Reich (2011) shows the positive impact of a bilingual German-Turkish literacy program which was part of the school program and supported by the teachers. The study provides evidence for better results compared to Turkish heritage language instruction which is not part of the school curriculum and does not work in a contrastive manner.
- The impact of heritage language teaching as an empowerment tool should likewise

not be underestimated (cf. Cummins 1986, 2013; Fürstenau 2011). Turkish lessons are also perceived as helping children develop an overall positive and relaxed attitude towards their language spoken at home. Often, their language spoken at home is at best ignored but often stigmatized in Germany. These lessons then contribute to a more holistic self-perception on behalf of the students. Adding to the empowerment / identity argument, the Hanover study also points to the positive effect of an integrated bilingual approach on the level of teacher-student identity negotiations as well as power differences amongst children (cf. Küppers & Yağmur 2014, Cummins 2014). Turkish-speaking children develop more self-esteem in bilingual school settings where diversity is valued and an immigrant language like Turkish is used for concept learning and integrated in everyday classroom procedures. In such a context, students can develop higher ambitions with regard to their own academic achievements. Moreover, monolingual German-speaking children are less likely to develop a feeling of superiority after experiencing the challenge of learning a difficult foreign language such as Turkish.

Against this overall bleak backdrop, it seems unrealistic to expect much from both an inadequate teacher (training) situation and the marginalized Turkish / heritage language subject. Moreover, the (subtle) facets of structural discrimination and power differences surrounding the issue of Turkish / heritage language teaching are much harder to communicate to a general public than the alleged failure of the simple equation “more Turkish = better German”.

#### 4 Conclusions and Discussion

Many of the issues presented in our analysis challenge the traditional concept of Turkish instruction in Germany. In the following section, we would like to highlight a number of important issues.

In general, the distinction between Turkish heritage instruction and Turkish as a foreign language instruction seems to be dispensable for a number of reasons. Firstly, any kind of citizenship or ethnic argument as a rationale for Turkish instruction in Germany must be dismissed as dubious due to the ambiguity and irrelevance of identifying who is Turkish. Germany has been allocating German passports to students of Turkish background who are 3rd or 4th generation and who are almost all born in Germany and at times with little knowledge of their ancestral language. Furthermore, these students are from an increasing number of “bi-national” families and participate in heritage language classes as a “practical way out”. All these factors combined perpetuate the ethnicization of the multilingual situation in our schools and furthermore in our society. Continuing to distinguish between “heritage” and “foreign” language instruction necessitates a separation that, in fact, should urgently be overcome.

Presently we have to assume that those who are enrolled in either Turkish heritage language classes or foreign language classes have got a) some kind of previous knowledge in the language, b) that this knowledge is predominantly influenced by the Turkish spoken in Germany, and c) that heterogeneity with regard to previous knowledge is a common feature in any Turkish classroom. Consequently, differentiation moves to the heart of a modern methodology for Turkish teaching.

Against this backdrop, the question arises how to develop interest in learning Turkish among non-Turkish speakers, particularly monolingual German speakers. Furthermore, it needs to be asked how Turkish instruction can transcend into Turkish as a foreign language teaching. The bilingual programs we have described in this report appear to be promising. Some of the first empirical evidence derived from the Hanover study which tentatively points to CLIL models as an answer. CLIL has developed into the educational flagship program at the European level in the promotion of multilingualism and European citizenship. In Germany, however, CLIL has not only promoted English as the overarching CLIL language, but it also has an elitist bias as predominantly monolingual German pupils take part in and benefit from such programs (cf. Küppers & Trautmann 2013). The Hanover case, in contrast, shows quite clearly that a bilingual program run both in Turkish and German is regarded as an interesting educational offer. Monolingual middle class families who send their children to this elementary school perceive it as an intellectual enrichment program and appreciate the offer as an “extra challenge” for their children. Thus, this study also indicates that a bilingual program in combination with an all-day school structure can reverse “white flight” and improve social cohesion; in such settings plurilingual children are taught together with more monolingual peers / linguistic role models.

At a structural level and with regard to the widely acknowledged necessity to develop more all-day schools and fitting educational concepts, it should be asked how Turkish teaching could be better integrated into the overall school curriculum. Up to now, Turkish heritage classes offered at primary school level are usually not part of the curriculum. Lessons often take place in the afternoon and are frequently perceived as an extra burden by the

children (and also their parents). The fact that they do not usually receive grades contributes to the image that this event is an extracurricular activity and does not have to be taken too seriously. Parents sometimes do not even register their children for heritage language lessons despite the fact that Turkish is the language spoken at home. The explanations are manifold and range from “German is more important” to “the consulate teachers are often nationalists” and “the teaching is outdated.” All this further devalues Turkish as a language.

With the advent of a Turkish test format for elementary schools provided by TELC, there is a chance to upgrade Turkish in general and Turkish instruction in particular, if the test could be implemented, for example as part of an overall school program and / or in the Turkish (heritage) language classes. Turkish competencies could be made visible with such a certificate and as TELC has tests on offer also for higher attainment levels, at the elementary level the foundation could be laid for further progression.

The question of how to integrate such a test format leads to the controversial issue of teacher training. Presently, the staffing situation for Turkish instruction in Germany is rather unsatisfactory. Only one federal German state has established full academic training for Turkish-teaching degrees at the secondary level. Three more provide extensional programs. The only training program at the primary level is under serious threat of closure. The situation in all other federal states remains gloomy. Most teachers are forced to adjust their teaching in a learning-on-the-job style. They also often do not belong to the highest status group of colleagues in the staffrooms of German schools and sometimes teach at more than one school. This further contributes to the challenge to integrate their subject into a whole school program.

In sum, Turkish instruction in Germany is not based on a modern, evidence-based teaching methodology but exists as a *mélange* of various teaching approaches based on individual experiences and random local developments – some very promising, some less so.

## 5 Outlook

Multilingual practices have become a feature of everyday (work) life especially in urban centers of superdiversity. The reasons commonly named are global commerce / trade, international politics as well as increasing mobility, migration and multimodal ways of communication. Thus, the multilingual paradigm has been challenging the monolingual ideology of the nation state and its institutions, most predominantly its schools. Schools have traditionally been the place where children are subjected to educational processes with a view to reaffirming national identity and citizenship (cf. Heller 2007). However, the ideal monolingual citizen has been challenged by the plurilingual intercultural speaker who is able to interact successfully on the international stage. Moreover, it has been difficult for many European countries to accept the fact that they have developed into immigrant countries due to massive workforce immigration after World War II. Nation states like Germany are struggling to find educational answers in dealing with migration-induced multilingualism at school. Presently, additive school bilingualism is an acclaimed aim – but mostly monolingual German-speaking pupils benefit from modern CLIL programs. Linguistic diversity which plurilingual children bring to the classroom is mostly perceived to be a burden for teaching – despite the paradigm shift that has been executed on the level of official language policy. According to its recent Recommendations for

Intercultural Education, the KMK (2013) explicitly states that diversity is to be regarded as a norm in teaching and points to the necessity in valuing and developing plurilingualism in children.<sup>18</sup> The reality at school, however, tells a different story as plurilingual children whose parents or grandparents once immigrated to Germany still do not have the same chances to succeed in the selective German school system (cf. Barz et al. 2013, Morris-Lange et al. 2013). Some even argue that speaking Turkish in the family can be seen as a main reason for school failure. Instead of critically investigating the structure of the existing educational system for barriers and structural discrimination, the victims get accused and problems even become ethnicized (cf. Küppers & Yağmur 2014).

In this paper, we have argued that Turkish instruction in Germany is in a crucial phase of transition as the borders between exclusive and inclusive Turkish instruction are being transcended. In fact, the labels Turkish “heritage” and “foreign” language teaching are obsolete as they contribute to the perpetuation of ethnicization through languages. Languages have ceased to be only national symbols but are tools for international communication and important facets of identity. Through media, social networks, and open shareware, new languages can be easily accessed and learned without the help of teachers or schools. And as communication and social intercourse are increasingly transcending territorial borders, multilingualism increasingly develops into a blurred notion which cannot be further ethnicized.

There are undoubtedly several arguments in favor of learning and teaching Turkish as a foreign language (cf. Küppers & Çıkar 2014). Turkish has a fascinating agglutinative structure which provides new learning experiences and contributes to language awareness. Since Turkish is written in the

Latin alphabet, the language is easily accessible and allows for coordinated literary education alongside German. Furthermore, Turkish lends itself to language contrastive and language integrative teaching as it has taken up influences from many other languages such as Arabic and Persian but also French, German, and currently intensively from English. Above all, Turkish can be spoken and practiced inside Germany providing new opportunities for innovative approaches to teaching it. Eventually, modern Turkish teaching opens up a door to a fascinating stretch of European (Byzantine, Greek, Roman and Ottoman) history. As a modern foreign language subject and with more children from monolingual German-speaking families learning Turkish, there is also a chance to do away with biases regarding the Islamic world, which increased in particular after 9/11.

## 6 Recommendations:

Transcending from heritage language instruction to modern foreign language instruction

We have derived the following general recommendations from the analysis of the status of the Turkish language in the context of formal education in Germany:

### Curriculum development

It is urgently necessary for European and national policy makers to prioritize the revision of the outdated “heritage” language concept on the agenda. It is also essential that language planners raise awareness for the overall societal relevance in teaching minority immigrant languages such as Turkish with regard to a) developing an overall language-across-the-curriculum-approach, b) widening the narrow portfolio of modern

foreign languages in old European nation states, c) more educational justice, and last but not least, d) two-way integration, and e) improved social cohesion. Academic workshops and inter/national conferences focusing on these topics could help to raise awareness and to bring the matter onto the agenda in the ministries. Special issues of journals and teacher magazines likewise could contribute to the necessity in unlocking the educational potential of immigrant languages.

### Research

Projects that integrate the idea of non-protected minority immigrant languages and further develop innovative approaches to integrate these languages in the mainstream curricula of transmigration European nation states should receive more European / national funding. Likewise, European cashflow into projects that focus solely on English (CLIL / FL) should be severely limited (cf. Extra et al. 2013). Moreover, new recommendations and decrees issued by national or regional education authorities like the KMK Recommendations on Intercultural Education (KMK 2013) need to be buttressed by extra budgets in order to ensure their impact and success.

### Teacher Training

European/national attention and promotion should be given to innovative approaches in integrating immigrant languages at a higher education level as a modern foreign language subject in the existing education system. A workable solution can be seen in the further development of and support for existing extensional teacher training (see the Hamburg, Tübingen, and Munich - examples given in 1.4 above). Higher education and teacher

training institutions could cooperate with the ministries of education and consulates with the aim of developing in-service teacher training modules to certify foreign language teachers who speak an immigrant language as their mother tongue. Also Baur's (2001) proposal to establish an inclusive multilingual (immigrant) language teacher training as part of primary teacher programs should certainly be reconsidered.

### **Multiliteracy Methodology and Language Education Centers**

Baur (2001) argues for the necessity to establish more full chairs for multilingualism and multiliteracies education with a clear focus on minority immigrant languages and primary education. Following Baur, an enormous space for the development of integrative language teaching approaches becomes clear at two different levels. At the university level, the acknowledged demand for such concepts needs to be translated into teaching methodologies which draw on various existing fields of language education namely, German as a second language, foreign language didactics, and CLIL / language across the curriculum. At the level of teaching practice, existing expertise on language and literacy education offered by various regional and local providers could be pooled under one roof as Language Education Centers. On the one hand, this could set free synergy effects and improve cooperation - on the other hand, valuable initiatives could get rid of their "language-repair-shop" image.<sup>19</sup>

### **Bilateral negotiations**

Countries receiving migrant workers, like Germany, and countries sending migrant workers, like Turkey,

share a common interest. With the revised edition of the KMK Recommendations on Intercultural Education (KMK 2013), immigrant languages like Turkish are perceived as an asset for both individuals and the German society - at least at the official policy level. Turkey, likewise, has an interest in the maintenance of the Turkish language to enable its speakers and the following generations to move within the expanding transnational German-Turkish space and to potentially participate in both societies. Both countries could ally forces in order to financially and conceptually develop new strategies in how to a) transfer Turkish instruction into the mainstream curriculum of formal education in Germany and b) how to brush up the persistently unattractive image of the language in the receiving country.<sup>20</sup> After more than 50 years of workforce migration, it seems high time for the realization that Turkish not only belongs to Turkey but also to Germany (and Europe).

## **7 Roadmap: Languages in transition**

### **Aim**

The following suggestion of a possible roadmap aims to promote the transition from heritage language instruction to foreign language teaching. It also contributes to the implementation of the latest recommendations of the KMK for intercultural education as well as the latest decree issued by the federal state of Lower Saxony on the "Promotion of educational success and participation of learners whose mother-tongue is not German." Moreover, it can be read as an attempt to complement the existing initiatives which aim at integrating language education across the curriculum as a core element into teacher training (cf. the case of Lower Saxony).<sup>21</sup>

### **Initial Working group**

Representatives from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Education of Lower Saxony, the adviser for integration and participation to the Prime Minister of Lower Saxony, representatives from schools and universities (cf. from the initiative “Supporting Change / Umbrüche gestalten”) as well as regional language providers, the Turkish consulate / embassy and selected professionals with relevant expertise can be seen as possible participants in setting up an initial working group.

### **Additional Stakeholders and possible funding**

The Presidency of Turks Abroad, The Turkish Ministry for Education, Mercator Institute for Language Education and German as a Second Language (Cologne), German and Turkish Foundations (e.g. Mercator, Vodafone), TELC Testdeveloper could all be possible partners.

### **Concept development**

In the past couple of years, a number of chairs have been established in the higher education system in Germany with a specific focus on multilingualism and various alignments such as an affiliation to German as second or foreign language (Munich), Cognitive Linguistics (Potsdam), Interculturalism (Göttingen), or Diversity Education (Hildesheim). Moreover, a substantial research program has been issued by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF) on the topic of Language Education and Multilingualism in 2012.<sup>22</sup> Against the backdrop of our analysis, however, it seems highly recommendable to also define multilingualism from the perspective of the foreign languages in order to explicitly highlight and integrate the potential

of the immigrant languages as cognitive tools for learning and possible arenas for intercultural education. For concept development, a special focus should be placed at the elementary level in order to ally forces for the development of multiliteracies at a crucial stage of schooling.

## END NOTES

1 | In the European context a distinction is drawn between officially recognized “regional minority” languages like Frisian or Catalan and “immigrant minority” languages which are not acknowledged any legal status (for instance through the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages). Cf. Schmitz and Olfert 2013.

2 | In the context of European language policy the term “multilingualism” refers to the diversity of languages in a society whereas the term “plurilingualism” defines a set of linguistic competencies which are seen as the precondition for social interaction of an individual. Cf. [http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Division\\_en.asp](http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/linguistic/Division_en.asp)

3 | The term “heritage language” refers to a language which is spoken at home or is otherwise readily available to young children and is not a dominant language of the larger (national/majority) society.

4 | The term “immigrant pupils” refers to children whose families have experienced migration. However, it is a controversial term as children of the 3rd or 4th generation of immigrants are commonly citizens of the receiving countries. Since there is a constant intake of newly immigrated children, we will nevertheless make use of the term.

5 | As part of this analysis all German federal states have been approached with the request to provide numbers of participants and teachers for Turkish classes. Some federal states do not administrate such statistics, some feedbacks were inconsistent, some overlap with numbers provided by the consulates, some other states ignored the request. In our eyes, this (again) points to the

difficulty of most of the federal states in Germany to come to terms with heritage language instruction as a type of lesson which does not (yet) fit into the overall scheme of school lessons.

6 | For example in the Federal State of North Rhine Westfalia, 72 % of the heritage language lessons takes place at the primary level, cf. Schmitz & Olfert (2013: 217).

7 | However, even here the situation is not quite clear. A recent survey (Schmitz & Olfert 2013) does not mention Berlin and Bavaria, but adds Hessen on the higher secondary level.

8 | However, only learners who speak Turkish as a family language participate in the bilingual program of the Carl-von-Ossietzky school. Aziz Nesin elementary school on the other hand is open for non-Turkish speaking children, too.

9 | Cf. <http://www.osz-louise-schroeder.de/html/proturkiye.htm>, access 23/06/2014.

10 | Cf. [http://www.tgb-berlin.de/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=154&Itemid=72&lang=tr](http://www.tgb-berlin.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=154&Itemid=72&lang=tr), access 23/06/2014.

11 | White flight is a term usually used for the phenomenon that middle-class families tend to un-register their children from problem-ridden “hot-spot” schools. The term’s implications are misleading, though, as not only middle-class families from the majority population avoid those schools but also middle-class families from other ethnic groups. In the case mentioned, also Turkish families with higher educational aspirations for their children un-registered from the segregated school in Hanover.

12 | An ethnographic monitoring study is currently carried out at this school and provides evidence of the effectiveness of this approach (cf. Küppers & Yağmur 2014). The final research report on the Hanover study will be published by Istanbul Policy Center in 2015.

13 | Cf. <http://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/voror/BA-Tuerkisch.html> for the BA-level, and <http://www.aai.uni-hamburg.de/voror/MA-Tuerkisch.html> for the MA-level, both access 23/06/2014.

14 | <http://www.uni-tuebingen.de/de/31046>, access 23/06/2014..

15 | [http://www.uni-muenchen.de/studium/studienangebot/studiengaenge/studienfaecher/turkologie/lehramt/la\\_gymn\\_/index.html](http://www.uni-muenchen.de/studium/studienangebot/studiengaenge/studienfaecher/turkologie/lehramt/la_gymn_/index.html), access 23/06/2014

16 | Future Turkish teachers must pass the C1-level of the Common European Framework of Reference.

17 | Recent (2013/2014) further figures that were issued for this group /4/ include 58 teachers in Berlin, 14 in Hamburg, 11 in Bremen.

18 | The first German state which – to our knowledge – has translated the KMK recommendations into a federal decree is Lower Saxony. This binding directive is called “Promotion of educational success and participation of learners whose mother-tongue is not German” and has come into effect on August 1, 2014. Here, heritage language teaching is defined inclusively and open to ALL learners. Moreover, it is recommended to integrate these language offers into the general school curriculum / integrated

language concepts and to implement the lessons into the morning timetables. Other innovative features are: heritage languages used for bilingual classes and as possible subjects for the leaving examination (Abitur) as well as recommended tests to certify language competences at other stages of compulsory schooling. Hence, this decree spells out some of the potentials linked to minority immigrant languages in Western European societies.

19 | We refer to initiatives which aim at integrating language development, language sensitive teaching in the content subjects as well as intercultural learning. Examples are the DaZNet in Lower Saxony, the FöRMig Initiative in Hamburg, the ProDaZ Initiative in Essen, to name just a few.

20 | A possible ally for such a cooperation on behalf of Turkey might be the “Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities” which was established in 2010 under the Prime Ministry.

21 | The nine universities of Lower Saxony in cooperation with the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Education as well as the DaZNet and other regional language providers and initiatives with a focus on intercultural education are contributing to the development and implementation of this initiative which in its German original is called “Umbrüche gestalten” <http://www.sprachen-bilden-niedersachsen.de/>. The initiative is funded by the Mercator Institute of Language Education and German as a Second Language in Cologne. Although “language support and language education” are at the heart of this initiative, it seems striking, however, that none of the foreign language disciplines like English seem to be involved in it. Likewise, the field of the so-called heritage languages does not seem to play a role in this otherwise best-practice network.

22 | The Kick-off conference for the projects being funded by this BMBF program will take place in Hamburg in November 2014. <http://www.kombi.uni-hamburg.de/>

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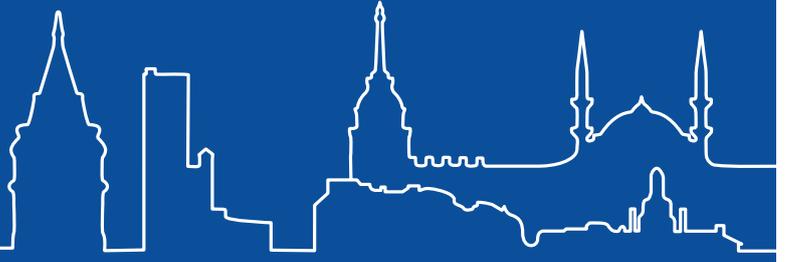
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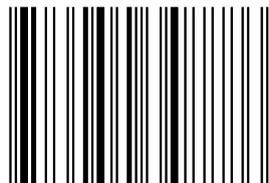
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