**Changing language attitudes towards Turkish in Austria and the indexical complexity behind it**

In the 1960s, in the course of the post-WWII economic boom, Austria signed a so-called guest worker treaty with Yugoslavia and Turkey. The treaty stipulated that blue-collar workers from these countries should be allowed to stay in Austria as long as their workforce is needed, and then return home. In practice, however, many Turkish guest workers have settled permanently, without any formal guidelines as to how they are expected to integrate.

Ever since, former Turkish guest workers in Austria have suffered from a comparatively bad social reputation (Pásztor, 2008; Wets, 2006). But much time has passed, and more than 50 years later, second generation Turks have become an integral part of the Austrian social landscape. This paper investigates whether Austrians’ attitudes towards Turkish and Turks have changed in accordance with this process.

My presentation will consist of two parts. In the first part, I shall discuss the results of a Matched Guise Test, conducted in 2015 as part of my Master’s dissertation project. Data collection involved recording short sections of *Cinderella* read in both Turkish and German by one male and one female bilingual guise, and then asking 155 participants, who had lived at least 3 years in Austria, to judge these guises based on 14 different personality traits (including aggressiveness, religiousness, economic wealth and enjoyment of life). Dimension reduction with the help of factor analysis and structural equation modelling showed that the German and Turkish guises were evaluated fundamentally differently. Either the guises were depicted as a Modern European or as an Archaic Migrant. The Turkish guises were overwhelmingly depicted as the latter, linked to the belief that they are aggressive, uneducated and badly integrated. There was, however, an age-effect, indicative of changing attitudes towards Turks among participants born after 1990, for whom this overall stereotype seems to be losing its influence. This development is likely due to the significant social upwards-mobility of Turkish women, and indeed, the female Turkish guise is considered to be significantly more modern than the male guise.

In the second part of the talk, I report on work currently in progress for my doctoral thesis. In the above experiment, participants were not told that the language they listened to was Turkish, for the sole purpose of bias-control. While a reasonable assumption that Austrians can recognize Turkish, as is common in Matched Guise Tests, numerous confounding variables can render the task of identifying which cues exactly participants responded to more difficult. To address this issue, a follow-up experiment, in which different sample texts were written to account for phonological differences between Turkish and German, was designed. The hypothesis put forward is that Austrian participants establish a sound-symbolic link between “dark” Turkish phonological features, such as the velarized lateral approximant [ɫ] or the high back unrounded [ɯ], and “shady” personality traits. Were this be proven, then it would suggest that some linguistic features carry more indexical “weight” than others.

Both experiments shed important light on the indexical complexity behind language attitudes that can be teased apart utilising statistical analysis. I invite the audience to consider the fact that attitudes are always subject to changing socio-cultural environments. This means that particular language attitudes no longer exist in the data, the ideological dividing line in question has probably ceased to exist. In the case of Austria, I argue that younger generations move away from post-WWII ideals of nation-building. Multilingualism has become normal and is no longer an exclusion criterion. With a changing social landscape, the ethnicized dividing line between Austrians and Austro-Turks has blurred, and the Us/Them conceptions with it.

References

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Wets, J. (2006). The Turkish Community in Austria and Belgium: The Challenge of Integration. *Turkish Studies*, 85-100.