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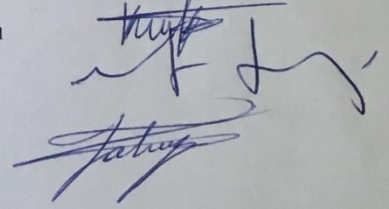
LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES OF LAZURI SPEAKERS IN TURKEY

GÜLŞAH TÜRK
13735011

THESIS SUPERVISOR
ASSOC. PROF. DR. KEREM KARAOSMANOĞLU

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	Title name surname	Signature
Thesis supervisor	: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Kerem Karaosmanoğlu	
List of Referees	: Prof. Dr. Bülent Bilmez	
	Asst. Prof. Dr. Fahriye Dinçer	

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ÖZ

LAZCA KONUŞANLARIN DİL İDEOLOJİLERİ
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Haziran 2019

UNESCO Tehlike Altında Diller Dünya Atlası'nda Lazca 'kesinlikle tehlike altında' kategorisinde bulunuyor. Türkiye vatandaşlarının anadillerine yönelik güncel nüfus verisi bulunmasa da çeşitli çalışmalarda Türkiye'de Lazca konuşanların sayısı en az 20.000 tahmin ediliyor. Lazca konuşan herkes Türkçe de konuşabilmektedir fakat Lazca'yı iyi seviyede kullanabilenlerin yalnızca %5-10'u çocuklar ve gençlerden oluşmaktadır. Bunun nedeni nesiller arası dil iletimindeki hızlı düşüş, dilin kamu alanında varlığının bulunmaması ve özellikle kent bağlamında özel alanlarda dahi kullanımının oldukça sınırlı olmasıdır.

Dil politikalarına dair erken örneklerin görüldüğü Geç Osmanlı Dönemi ve tekdillilikle sonuçlanan daha sistematik politikaların uygulandığı Cumhuriyet Dönemi'nin incelenmesi Lazca da dahil Türkiye'deki dillerin şu anki durumunu açıklayabilir. Fakat yalnızca bu tarihsel açıklama dile karşı farklı tutumları ve dili canlandırma çalışmalarına yönelik karşıtlıkları anlamaya yardımcı olmaz. Dil edimleri yalnızca yapısal değişikliklerden etkilenmez ve faillik unsurunun da dikkate alınması gerekir. Fakat literatürde Türkiye bağlamında bu unsurun incelendiği bir çalışma bulunmamaktadır.

Bu çalışma farklı çevrelerden gelen ve Lazca'yı farklı seviyelerde kullanan kişilerle derinlemesine görüşmeleri, sosyopolitik ve tarihi bağlam içerisinde inceleyerek mevcut dil pratiklerini ve dili canlandırma çalışmalarına yönelik tutumlarını etkileyen dil ideolojilerini analiz etmektedir. Topluluk içerisinde dilin geleceğine yönelik farklı duruşları anlamaya çalışmıştır. Anlatılarda ortaya çıkan temel temalar dil ideolojilerinin zamansal, mekansal ve duygusal yanları olmuştur. Bu araştırma karşılaşılan bu temaları anlayarak dil kullanımının ardındaki iktidar dinamiklerini anlamanın da mümkün olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Lazca, dil ideolojileri, tehlike altındaki diller, faillik

ABSTRACT

LANGUAGE IDEOLOGIES OF LAZURI SPEAKERS IN TURKEY
Gülşah Türk
June 2019

Lazuri from the Eastern Black Sea region of Turkey is listed among the endangered languages in UNESCO Atlas of the World's Languages in Danger. Despite the lack of census data on the languages spoken by Turkish citizens as their mother tongues, various research estimate a minimum of 20,000 Lazuri speakers in Turkey. While all speakers of Lazuri are bilingual in Turkish, only 5-10% of the proficient Lazuri speakers are children and teenagers (Kutcher, 2008) since there is rapid decrease in intergenerational language transfer, the language is almost non-existent in the public sphere, and its use in the private sphere is mostly limited especially in the urban context.

An analysis of both the early examples of language policies by the Late Ottoman Empire and the more systematic policies of the Republic causing monolingualism in Turkish might explain the current situation of languages in Turkey including Lazuri. However, it alone does not help to understand different attitudes towards the language and opposing stances taken in the language revitalization efforts. Language practices do not only change as a result of structural changes but there is also an element of agency. The literature review shows that this aspect has not been studied in the Turkish context yet.

Using data from in-depth interviews with Lazuri speakers from different backgrounds and analyzing the data within the sociopolitical and historical context, language ideologies that inform various language practices of Lazuri speakers have been explored. It aimed to understand the opposing positions within the community regarding the future of the language. The main themes that appeared in the narratives were the temporal, spatial, and the affective aspect of language ideologies. This research claims that by understanding these common themes that Lazuri speakers associate with their language, it is possible to understand the power dynamics behind language use.

Key Words: Lazuri, language ideologies, endangered languages, agency

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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1. INTRODUCTION

From the east of Melyat River in the Eastern Black Sea Region of Turkey up to the Turkey-Georgia border in Sarpi is where you find *Lazona*, the land of the Laz. Even though the term Laz had been used to refer to various historical and geographical groups, it gained an ethnic connotation from 1980s onwards. Most of whom identifying as Lazi, which will be the preferred term throughout the study, live in Arhavi (*Arkhabi*), Hopa (*Xopa*) and Borçka districts of Artvin province and Pazar (*Atina*), Çamlıhemşin (*Vijadibi*), Ardeşen (*Artaşeni*) and Fındıklı (*Viçe*) districts of Rize province. There are also Lazuri speaking villages in the Marmara region in the northwestern part of Turkey comprised of the descendants of the migrants fleeing the Russo-Ottoman war of 1877-1878 (Taşkın, 2016, 40). Lazuri speaking people also reside in the major cities of Turkey such as İstanbul and Ankara as a result of waves of migration since 1970s.

Lazuri is a Caucasian language and closely related to Mingrelian which is spoken in Georgia (Béller-Hann & Hann, 2003, 21). Lazuri has been an oral language until quite recently. The alphabet used today was designed by Feurstein in 1984 (Kutscher, 2008) even though there is a much earlier alphabet designed by Iskender Tzitaşi in 1935 (Lazika Publishing Collective, 2014).

Different studies cite quite contradictory figures in relation to the number of Lazuri speakers. A report by the Minority Rights Group states that there are between 750.000 – 1,5 million Lazi living in Turkey (MRG, 2009). Another report by KONDA (2006) estimates the number as approximately 0,12% of the adult population. These do not distinguish between the population and the number of Lazuri speakers. Other research by international scholars state there are 45.000 speakers of the language in Turkey (Andrews, 1989), while some place the bar as high as 500.000 (Holisky, 1991) (as cited in Kutscher, 2008). The discrepancy could be accounted for by the lack of census data, possible pressure that might be felt while disclosing information about one's ethnicity and language, and the varying levels of proficiency, which makes it hard to determine who is a speaker of the language.

As in the case of almost all languages spoken in Turkey other than Turkish, research on the language situation of Lazuri is highly limited if not non-existent. There are roughly two kinds of publications that add to the literature on the language. Independent researchers published the earliest resources in Turkish in which one can read on the history and the identity of the people speaking a language called *Lazuri*, which brought an entirely different perspective into an area dominated by the official history, the work of Fahrettin Kırzıoğlu titled *Lazlar/Çanarlar* being the most popular. These publications worked towards revitalization efforts for the language by designing an alphabet and claiming that the Lazi were an autochthonous people of the Caucasus and had a separate history, identity and a language from the Turks. Academic research on the Lazi and Lazuri, on the other hand, had been only carried out by international scholars until the 2000s. While Bryer (1966), Meeker (1971), Benninghaus (1989), Toumarkine (1995) and Hann (1997) provide historical and anthropological data, studies by Marr (2016), Feurstein (1984) and Kutscher (2008) focus on linguistics. More recent research by scholars from Turkey such as Taşkın (2011) and Serdar (2015) focus on the issues of Lazi language and identity. However, while they highlight the sociopolitical factors and harsh language policies leading to language loss, neither of these studies analyze the language situation from a sociolinguistic perspective and thus do not help to understand the play of structure and agency informing individual beliefs and stances.

As it was observed by Kutscher (2008), those over 35 years old can mostly speak the language competently while only 5-10% of children or adolescents are proficient in Lazuri. This is in parallel with the universal tendency in non-dominant language contexts where oldest generations are monolingual in their first language and sometimes have weak competence in the dominant language, middle generations are mostly bilingual with increasing preference for the dominant language and thus creating monolingualism in it for the youngest generation. From a linguistic perspective, Kutscher (2008) portrays shrinkage in the linguistic and areal domains for Lazuri. There is hardly any domain exclusively dominated by it. In terms of areal domains, Lazuri is not necessarily the home language for many. Its use for certain linguistic purposes might also be restricted to songs, stories, or jokes.

Even though there is decrease in intergenerational transmission, proficiency levels in the language and more importantly the levels of language use are not homogenous

within generations. For the oldest generation, Lazuri was their first language and they might have used the language more commonly. However, even for them the amount of Lazuri they would use depends on various criteria. Not all of those over 60 used Lazuri as the home language when they started a family and this affected the levels of language use by their children who are now middle-aged and are parents themselves. Intergenerational transmission seems to have been disrupted one generation earlier for many families. The middle-aged Lazuri speakers had already distanced themselves from the language when they started school.

While Lazuri has been listed as an endangered language by UNESCO, it has not followed an entirely downward path, particularly thanks to the revitalization efforts in the last couple of decades. The movement had its roots in Kaçkar Culture Association founded in Germany in 1992 and the LAZEBURA Association in 1997 (Koçiva, 2014, 81). In Turkey it was the OGNI magazine published in 1993, which had articles both in Lazuri and Turkish, that encouraged ethnic and linguistic awareness. In 1994 Lazuri rock band *Zuğaşi Berepe* (Children of the Sea) with its lyrics in the language popularized the language for the broader public. Since then there has been numerous publications and organizations aiming at language revival most active of which are Lazika Publishing Collective founded in 2010 and Laz Institute in 2013.

The rationale behind this study is that Lazuri, which has no institutional and almost no public use with limited domains such as the home or the village, requires a thorough analysis on the possible factors of its decreased use. The literature on language use in Turkey mostly focuses on language policy and planning. An analysis of both the early examples of language policies by the Late Ottoman Empire and the more systematic policies of the Republic causing monolingualism in Turkish might explain the current situation of Lazuri. However, it alone does not help to understand different attitudes towards the language and opposing stances taken in the language revitalization efforts.

There is no ethnographic study with Lazuri speakers in the literature to evaluate the causes and the results of their language practices. Therefore, without assuming homogeneous perspectives and overlooking the role of agency, this ethnographic study aims to explore how individuals might internalize structures in various ways that would in turn only be observed in their discourses and practices. Using data from

in-depth interviews with Lazuri speakers from different backgrounds and analyzing the data within the sociopolitical and historical context, this research addresses the language ideologies that inform various language practices of Lazuri speakers. It also intends to understand the opposing positions within the community regarding the future of the language.

After this brief introduction, the second chapter aims to provide a literature review by initially discussing the concepts of ideology and language ideology followed by the reasons and methods of their use in the present study. Language ideologies framework serves the purpose of the study by underlining that individuals and communities produce and reproduce certain beliefs and attitudes regarding languages to naturalize and legitimize power relations. The chapter will also outline the main arguments in the literature on the Lazi and Lazuri. Following chapter traces the language policies in Turkey from the Tanzimat era in the Late Ottoman to Early Republic, 1982 Constitution, and EU accession process up until today. This historical background chapter also provides historical, geographical and statistical information on the Lazi and Lazuri as well as the Lazi revitalization movement. The fourth chapter depicts the fieldwork experience, points to some significant observations and difficulties while explaining why an ethnographic methodology is adopted in order to reflect the data from the field appropriately. The fifth chapter analyses and discusses the observations and narratives from the field thematically using the language ideologies framework. The themes and associations from the narratives are detailed under the temporal, affective and spatial aspects of the language ideologies. The study is finalized with remarks on the possible repercussions of the findings and suggestions for further study.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical framework

This study sets out to analyze how individuals speaking the Lazuri language in Turkey perceive their language and its current position as an endangered language. To be able to understand their perceptions, I will be using the concept of language ideologies as an analytical tool. This chapter will introduce the concept of language ideology by summarizing the key definitions and common features suggested in the literature and point out the rationale behind adopting this concept to analyze Lazuri speakers' narratives on their language. Since ideology is a highly debated concept, the chapter will provide an evaluation of the main positions in the definitions of ideology and explain where this study positions itself.

2.1.1. Ideology

It seems crucial to think about what ideology is and how it works to be able to discuss language ideologies. Rather than discussing this concept at length, however, the chapter aims to present a brief summary of its definitions, mostly highlighting the aspects that this study will be adopting.

There might not be a single universal definition of the concept of ideology as clearly seen in Terry Eagleton's (1991) extensive work, *Ideology*, which analyzes a wide range of definitions from the Enlightenment to Foucault's discourse. However, common definitions could be roughly grouped in terms of their similar approaches so that it is easier to use the concept analytically.

One understanding of ideology is related to its function of meaning-making. As Eagleton (1991) points out, defining ideology as "the production of ideas, beliefs and values in social life" or "ideas and beliefs [...] symboliz[ing] the conditions and life experiences of a specific, socially significant group or class" would mean that it is almost synonymous with "culture" or "world view". Attributing to it neutrality, this meaning puts ideology in a highly different position from how it is commonly used in everyday life.

The second group of definitions is closer to what many people mean when they regard something to be "ideological". This understanding of ideology points to the false, distorted or illusory nature of the phenomenon. Marxist conception of ideology as "false consciousness", for instance, assumes that those who do not realize the true nature of their material conditions.

2.1.2. The concept of language ideology

Even though the intersection of language and ideology is a well-trodden field - in terms of both the role of language in shaping ideologies and the ideologies in shaping languages and language situations through language planning and policies, language ideology as an analytical concept is relatively new. There are occasional appearances of the terms linguistic ideology, language ideology and the ideologies of language in the literature in the seventies and eighties (e.g. Silverstein 1979, 1985; Hornberger 1988, Sonntag & Pool 1987, Woolard 1989, Haviland 1989) as reported by Woolard (1992). However, the concept was first thoroughly discussed in the special issue of Pragmatics (1992) edited by Bambi B. Schieffelin, Paul V. Kroskrity and Kathryn A. Woolard. After this issue, the work on the concept proliferates (Schieffelin, Woolard & Kroskrity, 1998; Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2006).

The research on language ideologies build on various definitions of the term, which roughly have two different sets of explanations depending on one's stance towards the concept of ideology. The broadest definition of the term is "shared bodies of common sense notions about the nature of language in the world" (Rumsey, 1990, 346), which assigns the concept a highly neutral meaning. Another definition, which argues that these are "self-evident ideas and objectives a group holds concerning roles of language in the social experience of members as they contribute to the expression of the group" (Heath, 1989, 53), narrows down the explanation to highlight the social function of language ideologies. However, an earlier definition by Michael Silverstein (1979), who suggests that what is meant by language ideologies is "sets of beliefs about language articulated by users as a rationalization or justification of perceived language structure and use" (p. 193), offers a critical understanding of the concept. This focus on the rationalization, legitimation or naturalization of linguistic practices means that language ideologies are held with a certain purpose and they are not basically a tool to make sense of the "nature of

language in the world" or "social experience of" the members of a group. In addition to Silverstein's definition, they could also be defined as "the cultural system of ideas about social and linguistic relationships, together with their loading of moral and political interests" (Irvine, 1989, 255). Language ideologies also help to see how "the beliefs and practices of speakers of a language" are connected to "their political-economic positions and interests" (Kroskrity, 2000). As mentioned before, the main discussion on how to define language ideologies is closely related to the understanding of ideology. Whether ideology is taken to be a tool for a group to make sense of the social reality or a tool to objectify, legitimize or justify social relations for group or personal interests defines the understanding of language ideologies.

2.1.3. How to study language ideologies

How ideology, and as a consequence language ideology, are defined also determines the way language ideologies are studied. Woolard (1998) points to three areas where language ideologies can be discovered. Language use and certain linguistic practices could be one area to analyze to understand a group, institution or individual's language ideologies. The word choice, the pronunciation of certain words or the use or the lack of certain grammatical structures could all reveal a language ideology. To exemplify, a Turkish person who avoids using words with Arabic or Persian roots might have a purist language ideology, which means they believe a language should not borrow words from other languages and should be "pure". However, ideology is mostly accepted to be "explicitly discursive" (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Thus, theorists such as Silverstein argue that language ideology could be traced in *metalinguistic discourse,* that is, explicit talk about language (Woolard, 1998) rather than the actual use of the language. Certain language ideologies are not necessarily inherent in language use; however, they might come up when individuals are discussing the nature of language, language use, and language policies.

These discussions show that there are two approaches to the study of language ideologies. One claims it is conscious and explicit while others argue that language ideologies come up in behaviors and everyday social relations whether they are conscious or not, that is, they are implicit. From a mainstream sociological point of view, which requires a study of behavioral patterns, the effects of an individual's

language ideology should be observable (Hall, 1982, 52) in the language they use. This positivistic approach assumes an explicitness of ideologies and therefore of language ideologies as well. However, some level of taken-for-granted knowledge is necessary in communication to be able to make sense of it. This would mean people occasionally act on unconscious, i.e. implicit, beliefs without pondering over. Eagleton (1996) also claims that ideology should be taken as a "matter of discourse rather than language" (p. 223), that is, it is only possible to determine whether some statement is ideological by analysing its "discursive effects" (p. 223), not the statement itself. Then, there are those who claim that language ideologies should be detected in explicit discussions of language, others like Kroskrity (1998) warn that ideology might be internalized and naturalized and may not "rise to discursive consciousness". Therefore, different studies focus on different levels of explicitness or implicitness of language ideologies. While some study the discourse on certain practices that are related to language such as Spitulnik (1998) who analyzes the discourse on radio broadcasting practices in multilingual Zambia to discover language ideologies, others like Mertz (1998), who looks into language use in law schools, study language ideologies through linguistic practices themselves.

2.1.4. Common features of language ideologies

Even though there are different approaches towards how to locate language ideologies, there are certain characteristics of language ideologies that are widely accepted. There are several features of language ideologies that are discussed when drawing a theoretical framework of the concept.

One common focus is on the multiplicity of ideologies in a society. Cultures and ideologies are not homogenous. The language situation in a society cannot solely be the result of a single ideology of language. For instance, the reason why the language policies of a country create a monolingual education system is not nationalist ideology alone. Monolingual language policies mostly feed off multiple language ideologies as there is a multiplicity of ideologies in the society. Language ideologies in a society might even contradict each other; and even individuals might have contradicting ideologies of language. Kroskrity (2000) relates this multiplicity of language ideologies to the "multiplicity of meaningful social divisions (...) produc[ing] divergent perspectives" (p. 12).

Another element of language ideologies is that they might be contested; that is, they are not necessarily accepted throughout the society but might be questioned and challenged. Even though cultures, identities and ideologies are believed not to be stable but continuously negotiated, some ideologies might tend to remain mostly unquestioned if there is a lack of counter-discourse.

Ideological process naturalizes the historically and contextually constituted nature of linguistic practices (Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). Therefore, language ideologies mostly appear to be natural and timeless. Woolard (1998) also highlights the importance of the ways in which ideologies of language transform reality regardless of their origins. Briefly, language ideology is implicit or explicit rationalization, naturalization and legitimization of language hierarchies.

2.1.5. Why language ideologies?

Analysing language ideologies help to see how language policy/planning and language use interrelate. Both macro-level studies focusing on state policies on languages and micro-level studies on the use of certain languages within society show only one side of the picture. However, there is a two-way relationship in which language policies do not only create a language situation but also certain perceptions about language(s), and in turn these perceptions or rather ideologies keep feeding the language regime in which certain language policies can remain unquestioned.

2.2. Research on the Laz and Lazuri

Despite the existence of more than 20 languages as the mother tongues or the second languages of the citizens of Turkey, academic research on these languages and their speakers is fairly limited. Almost in line with the wider literature on language, the research on the issue of language in Turkey is dealt with either from the macro or the micro perspective but does not deal with the language ideologies, which is at the intersection of these two perspectives (for the micro-macro discussion in language ideologies literature, see Blackledge, 2005; Duranti, 2003; 2004; Hymes, 1996; Kroskrity, 2008; O'Rourke, 2011; Woolard & Schieffelin, 1994). The former set of research in Turkey discusses the trajectory of language politics, mostly analyzing the language policies of the early Republic along with some that focus on the Ottoman modernization period in its relation to the discussions on language (Balçık, 2009;

Bayar, 2011; Çolak, 2004; Eraydın, 2008; Heyd, 1954; Lewis, 1999; Sadoğlu, 2003). The area of study in these studies is the role of language and official language policies in modernization and nation-making.

Studies on the Laz or the Lazuri speakers in Turkey also mostly take on a macro viewpoint. Works by both academic and independent researchers mainly analyze the language situation from a historical / sociopolitical perspective or deal with the language insofar as it is pertinent to the culture or the identity formation of the members of the group (Avcı, 2002; Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2003; Biryol, 2012; 2014; Hann, 1997; Marr, 2016; Meeker, 1971; Serdar, 2015; Taşkın, 2016; Tzitaşi, 2014). The micro perspective, on the other hand, deals mostly with the language use itself. Most academic research on different languages of Turkey is linguistics studies and there are some, though limited, linguistics research on Lazuri that analyze the structure of the language as well as phenomena such as language use, language contact, code-switching or code-meshing (Gökdağ, 2011; Kutscher, 2008; Öztürk, 2010; Yüksel-Sökmen, 2015). Recently, there has been some interest in the ways these macro-processes affected the language use as well (Serdar, 2013; Kavaklı, 2015). Based on this existing body of research, this chapter aims to portray the current language situation of Lazuri, underline certain factors that have been proposed as reasons of language shift, and prepare the ground for the narratives from the field.

In her extensive article in which she discusses whether Lazuri use is changing through language contact or being lost, Kutscher (2008) points to the diglossia affecting the language (p. 89). According to Kutscher, there is decrease in both linguistic and areal domains in which Lazuri is preferred, restricting it to certain lexical items and functions such as joking, and to homes and villages (2008, 89). She also points to the language contact with Black sea Turkish and Greek leading to copies from these languages (p. 94). Yet, these instances are not necessarily deemed to be a process of language loss and rather linguistic strategies by speakers (p. 95). Despite this optimistic view on the language, the article also affirms that a mere 5-10% of competent Lazuri speakers are children or adolescents while most of the fully competent speakers are those over 35 (p. 85). Bellér-Hann and Hann (2003) make a similar point stating that those under 40 are more competent in Turkish than Lazuri. They observe that compared to the children in the coastal towns, those from the inner

regions might still learn Lazuri before Turkish (p. 47). Although this could be valid for certain areas, the field observations from a recent study by Yüksel-Sökmen (2015) analysing Lazuri-Turkish caregiver child interaction portray a "lack of child-direct speech in Lazuri" (p. 30). These clear generational differences in language use and proficiency are consequences of a disruption in intergenerational transmission, i.e., passing on of the language from parents to children. The literature mostly cite external factors as causes of this disruption such as economic reasons and impact of education (Kutscher, 2008), absence of official recognition of Lazuri (Kavaklı, 2015; Serdar, 2015), and language policies in Turkey (Kutscher, 2008; Serdar, 2015). Bellér-Hann and Hann (2003) also claim that there is no interest in the region for language activism. However, Kutscher (2008) believes the language can still be maintained since there are advocates of the language and some young native speakers of Lazuri could transfer it to the future generations.

Even though there are no ethnographic studies directly analyzing Lazuri speakers' beliefs about their language, there are a few oft-repeated causes that might help to explain the current language use. The most commonly cited factor is the accent. The accent Lazuri speakers might have in their Turkish is observed to be one reason parents refrain from communicating with their children in Lazuri (Hann, 2003; Özkan, 2012; Serdar, 2013; Taşkın, 2011). This negative perception of the accent is related to various other factors. One is the stereotype of "the Laz" commonly accepted by the general public. Meeker's 1971 study titled *Black Sea Turks* refers to the image of the Laz having "allegiance to the republic" but also having "peculiar and somewhat inferior accents" (p. 323). This reference to the "inferior accent" has long been internalized by the Laz themselves. It is no surprise Lazuri speakers hold the belief that their accent is somewhat inferior since it is commonly used as an element of humor in media (Taşkın, 2011, 48) and Turkish speakers mainly identify it as funny. In a study on the language attitudes towards accents in Turkey, Meryem Şen (2008) finds that Turkish speakers with the standard accent identify the Black Sea accent the most humorous among all (p. 193). The problem here is not all from the Black Sea have the same accent or not all accents used in the study were that of Lazuri speakers. However, the study makes it clear that the stereotype of 'the Laz' accent is quite strong. This accent was also found the most beautiful since it reminds them of jokes (p. 202). Most significantly, funny or not, speakers with accents are

disliked by 60,6% of the participants since they are seen linguistically incapable for not having the standard accent (p. 198). While the standard accent in Turkey is called the "Istanbul Turkish", it is not necessarily the accent of the city of Istanbul but rather the standardized, corrected and educated way of speaking Turkish not reflecting any regional characteristics. Therefore, it should be noted that it might also sound unnatural, formal, clean, and thus humorous depending on the circumstances.

Along with this negative perception, the accent is also seen as a possible obstacle to academic success. Özkan (2012) recounts his personal memory of kids speaking the languages of the region like Lazuri, Hemshin, or Greek being warned by some leftist brothers about leaving their accents behind for success in education. For them, education meant being modern while the accents were signs of rurality (p. 174). Serdar (2013) identifies the possible reason why parents did not transfer the language to their children as the "wish that their children achieve better than they did" (p. 3), which is also related to the accent issue. Taşkın (2011) quotes several Lazuri speakers who experienced language shaming due to their accent and concludes that this resulted in the "belief that the Laz language was extremely detrimental to the Turkish accent and as a result meant failure at integration process" (p. 40).

It is mostly concluded in the works on the Lazi that Lazuri is regarded a criterion for community membership (Bryer, 1966 in Meeker, 1971; Hann, 1997; Serdar, 2015). Hann (1997) lengthily discusses, however, whether the Lazi should be labeled a distinct ethnic group as Feurstein and Ascherson claim. He argues the Lazi do not have a common understanding of a Lazi history and an ethnic solidarity (pp. 141-150). He believes as a result of the differences in the Lazuri dialects, communication in Turkish is common. Thus, it is wrong to assume "a basis in language for social solidarity and a sense of community" (p. 147). Marr (2016) also observes the region during the Ottoman Empire and concludes that they do not have national sentiments as a result of ties with other peoples, hopes for financial gain, and migration. He sees religion as a common denominator within the community. Serdar (2015) makes a similar claim on the issue of Lazuri as an identity marker. She believes language is not necessarily an ethnic identity marker for the Lazi and following Bellér-Hann and Hann (2003) she argues they were mostly integrated into the national community through tea cultivation and market. A final point made on the Lazi identity is its relation to Kurdish movement. Even though the Lazi activists advocate a

revitalization of the language, they are mostly precautious not to sound like the Kurdish political movement demanding political rights (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2003; Serdar, 2015; Taşkın, 2016).

This brief summary of the literature demonstrates that the transfer of Lazuri to the next generation is not persistent throughout the community leading to language shift to Turkish. While language policies and economic factors as well as education and stereotyped accent seem to have a role in this change, what Lazi identity is and whether the Lazi regard the language as an inseparable part of their identity determines the future of Lazuri.

3. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. The Lazi and Lazuri

3.1.1. Who are the Lazi?

> When you have a look at the history, what was taught to us and what we have learnt since the Georgian border was opened are different. [...] we didn't know much of the culture. I mean, we are Lazi, yes, Lazuri is spoken from Melyat to Sarpi. However, they mention a history of 3000-4000 years. There was a Lazi kingdom here. We have just learnt about this, of course, but we have always spoken Lazuri (Aydın, Fındıklı)

What Aydın told me in their flat in Fındıklı where his wife and he offered me some tea and snacks seem to briefly answer the question of who the Lazi are. To be more precise, there is surely no definite answer to this question. However, it is of great help to compare the information gathered from academic studies with the narratives of the people themselves so that we can understand their standpoints and contextualize their narratives. In other words, while most of the anthropological and historical studies on the Lazi provide an etic perspective, this study will include the accounts of the Lazi people themselves to reflect an emic perspective. This chapter, thus, will provide background on the geography, the language and the history of the Lazi using academic data as well as narrations from the field.

3.1.2. Laz or Lazi?

> When they ask me where I am from, I say I'm from Rize. They comment 'so you're Laz'. Yes I am Laz but I am the real Laz. Not all from Rize are Laz, not all from the Black Sea are Laz. This is the biggest misinformation (Aynur, İstanbul)

> Everybody thinks the people from the Black Sea are Laz you know. In fact, the Laz settlement is from Melyat - in Pazar - to Borçka and there is Kemalpaşa and Sarp. People call all Black Sea people as Laz in the West (of Turkey). This is not the case. In Çayeli, where they don't speak Lazuri, there is no Laz. In Rize, there is no Laz. (Yaşar, Fındıklı)

For a great majority in Turkey, Laz is a synonym for Black Sea people as Aynur and Yaşar complain about. According to Meeker (1971), the use of the term Laz as a broad category has a long history. However, he uses two different terms to clarify the difference, that is, *Laz* as a broad category and the *Lazi* as the Lazuri speaking people. He explains:

> The word 'Laz' has been connected with various regions and peoples of the eastern bight of the Black Sea coast since the early Christian era. The word has often served to classify as a single group diverse peoples speaking diverse languages; therefore, 'the Laz' should not be understood as necessarily referring to a specific ethnic or linguistic group. This situation is further complicated by the fact that a Black Sea people who call themselves 'the Lazi' and who are also referred to as the Laz by outsiders do represent a specific ethnic group and do speak a language of their own. The principal settlements of the ethnic Lazi are found today at the extreme eastern end of Turkey's Black Sea shore in the coastal lowlands between Pazar and the Choruh River. Their language is closely related to Mingrelian and more distantly related to Georgian and Svan. The ethnic Lazi constitute a very small minority, even among Turkey's eastern Black Sea people (p. 336)

Following this distinction, this study also refers to Lazuri speaking people as the *Lazi*. Lazuri seems to be a significant identity marker both in Meeker's definition and for the people who speak it. It is a Caucasian language and closely related to Mingrelian which is spoken in Georgia (Béller-Hann & Hann, 2003, 21). A report by the Minority Rights Group states that there are between 750.000 – 1,5 million Laz living in Turkey (MRG, 2009) while a KONDA report (2006) estimates it as approximately 0,12% of the adult population (less than 80.000). As for the number Lazuri speakers, various research cite numbers between 45.000 (Andrews, 1989) and 500.000 (Holisky, 1991) (as cited in Kutscher, 2008). The discrepancy could be accounted for by the lack of census data. The question on the mother tongues of citizens was removed from census surveys after 1965. The data from earlier surveys show that Lazuri speaking population was 63.253 people in 1935 dropping to 11.668 in 1965. However, this number does not include people whose first language has become Turkish but still speaking Lazuri as a second language (Aslan, et al., 2015, pp. 166-168). Other reasons for the differences in numbers could be the possible pressure that might be felt while disclosing information about one's ethnicity and

language, and the varying levels of proficiency, which makes it hard to determine who is a speaker of the language.

3.1.3. Where do the Lazi live?

> Rize is not Lazi [city]. Pazar, Ardeşen, Fındıklı, Hopa, Kemalpaşa, Borçka...There is no Lazi other than these. And there is also Çamlıhemşin. (Arif, Pazar)

In their comprehensive anthropological study in the Lazi region, Bellér-Hann and Hann (2003) share a map not quite different from what Arif claims to be the Lazi inhabited region. Many other studies mention the same area as the settlement of Lazuri speakers which includes the coastline of the Eastern Black Sea from Pazar - Melyat river to be more precise - Ardeşen and Fındıklı districts of Rize and Arhavi and Hopa districts of Artvin in modern day Turkey stretching to Sarpi at the Georgian border with some settlements inland such as Çamlıhemşin (in Rize) and Borçka (Artvin) (Kutscher, 2008; Meeker, 1971).
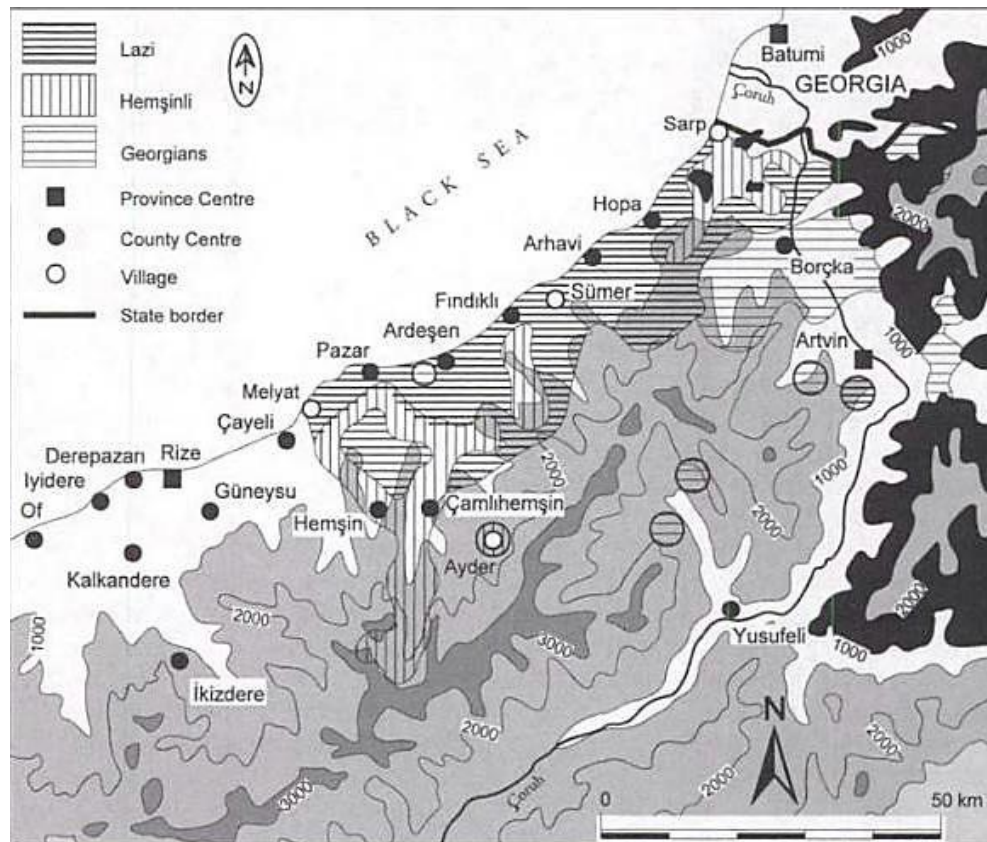

Figure 1: Lazi settlements in Eastern Black Sea Region
Bellér-Hann, I. & Hann, C., 2001. Turkish Region: State, Market and Social Identities on the East Black Sea Coast. Oxford: James Currey.

The stronghold of Lazuri is Ardeşen. It is spoken in Hopa, Akçakoca, Fındıklı and Pazar too. However, Lazuri is spoken the most in Ardeşen. My uncle is from Akçakoca, one of the Hopa migrants. He learnt Lazuri in Akçakoca so we have a hard time communicating with him. (Şengül, Ardeşen)

Apart from the area mentioned above, there are Lazuri speaking villages in Akçakoca as Şengül points out. Other than Akçakoca, Düzce, Sapanca, Gölcük, Karamürsel and Yalova in the western end of Black Sea region where it meets the Marmara region all have Lazuri speakers that immigrated from around Hopa during the Russo-Ottoman War of 1877-1878 (Kutscher, 2008, 83). As expected there are also many Lazuri speakers in larger cities in Turkey such as İstanbul and Ankara as a result of the waves of migration since 1970s (Avcı, 2002, 17).

Figure 2: Lazi settlements in Turkey

Nişanyan, Sevan. [10.05.16]. Index Anatolicus. https://nisanyanmap.com/?.

3.1.4. Who were the Lazi?

There is a place inland from the coast of Poti. They say there used to be a Lazi kingdom around there. I don't know about that history well but I guess there is a castle. I'll go on a tour there one day (Yaşar, Fındıklı).

The Lazi are actually a tribe from Central Asia. Their original name is *plasg*. The *p* and the *g* must have dropped and then it went on as Laz. I am, of course, a Turk, a Muslim first. Then a Lazi (Ahmet, İstanbul)

Official history traced the Lazi to Turkic tribes. In 1972 historian Kırzıoğlu famously claimed that the Lazi were related to *Çanarlar* and thus Turks in origin (Avcı, 2002, 81). Around the same period, international scholars were relating them to the Lazi

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who lived and ruled in the ancient kingdom of Colchis (Bryer, 1988; Feurstein, 1983; Meeker, 1971). It is important to note that, however, many people interviewed in this study like Yaşar and Aydın were expressing their surprise on this newly learnt information but not necessarily identifying themselves with it.

3.1.5. Publicizing Lazuri

Even though there had been no written material in Lazuri in Turkey before 1990s, in the recently published memoirs of both Nikolay Marr (2016), a Russian linguist, and İskender Tzitaşi (2014), a Lazi intellectual who spent his life in the Soviet Union, there is the mention of Faik Efendi from Hopa who worked on the first Lazuri alphabet but was suppressed by the Abdulhamid regime.

> After Stalin's death in Russia, the Lazi were able to receive education in their own language. They even had a magazine, *Mç'ita Murutsxi* - Red Star. Their alphabet is there, of course, written there (Arif, Pazar)

What Arif was telling me is the first newspaper in Lazuri that Tzitaşi published in Sohum in 1929. The alphabet was designed by Tzitaşi himself and he published *Lazuri Alboni* (Lazuri Alphabet) in 1935 (Tzitaşi, 2012, pp. 10-11). Neither the newspaper nor the alphabet was known to the Lazi in Turkey until recently. For them it was the time of social transformation under the Republic. Number of primary schools in Rize alone went from 41 in 1923 to 98 in 1945 (Avcı, 2002, 56). Around the same period, the state-backed tea cultivation started in the Eastern Black Sea region in 1924 (Avcı, 2002, 42) and Çaykur - the state-owned tea company - was founded in 1947 (Biryol, 2012, 88), which had game-changing effects on the livelihood of the people in the area. Before tea cultivation, people were mostly involved in subsistence farming of staples such as corn. These were abandoned for more tea gardens. This was followed by road constructions in the 1950s, which reached their peak moment in 2007 when the controversial coastal road was opened under AKP government (Biryol, 2012, pp. 117-118). These changes led to internal migration when the tea gardens became inadequate in sustaining the rising population (Avcı, 2002, 51).

From 1980s onwards, there have been numerous events that seem to be highly influential on Lazi identity construction and language. In 1984 when tea cultivation in Turkey was being privatized, a German anthropologist Feurstein and a Lazuri

speaker Fahri Kahraman were designing an alphabet for Lazuri, based on the Latin alphabet used in Turkey (Kutscher, 2008, 82). Also called the Lazoğlu alphabet, this work was a collaborative effort of Kaçkar Culture Center and Lazebura working group in Germany (Avcı, 2002, pp. 89-90). The opening of Georgian-Turkish border at Sarp in 1988 (Akyüz, 2012, 152) led many Lazi in the region to realize they share a language family with people on the other side of the border. It was almost the 1990s when identity politics were also on the rise in Turkey. The first bilingual (Turkish-Lazuri) periodical *OGNI* was published in 1993 dealing with issues of history, identity and language. The Lazuri alphabet was also shared in this periodical, which only published six issues. The first issue of *OGNI* was confiscated on the claims that it induced separatism.

In 1993 Mehmedali Barış Beşli, who was also among the group publishing OGNI, formed a bilingual (Turkish-Lazuri) rock band with Kazım Koyuncu called *Zuğaşi Berepe* (Children of the Sea) (Taşkın, 2011, 104). They released two albums Va Mişkunan (1995) and İgzas (1998). Taşkın (2011) believes they "managed to introduce the Laz language to a group of educated youth living in the urban areas" (p. 67). After the band broke up, Koyuncu went on making music including the soundtrack for a popular Turkish TV show and helped to introduce Lazuri to a wider audience until he passed away in 2005 (pp. 161-162).

> Kazım Koyuncu contributed a great deal to this region, you know. He sang in Lazuri, his music had tremendous effect. The interest in Lazuri has boomed after him. Even Şevval Sam sang in Lazuri, can you believe it? I don't think she's from around here, is she? (Yaşar, Fındıklı)

However, the interest in Lazuri did not necessarily mean revitalization. For the general Turkish speaking society, Lazuri as a separate language rather than a Turkish with a Lazi accent was still not a widely known fact. For the Lazuri speakers themselves and mostly for the youth, it might have partly restored its value. Yet, it did not encourage bilingualism, literacy or intergenerational transmission. The efforts for intellectual production in the language were not persistent, either. Some of the periodicals published after OGNI are Mjora (2000), Sima (2001), Skani Nena (2009), and Tanura (2011). Some organizations, which were mostly involved in these publications as well, have also been founded throughout 2000s. Laz Culture Association (2008) is the first such organization with *Laz* in its official name. Among

its founders, there was Mehmedali Barış Beşli of *Zuğaşi Berepe*. The association published a new issue of OGNI in 2018. İsmail Avcı Bucaklişi is another important figure who is a prolific Lazi activist/writer. He has published many Lazuri materials such as the Lazuri-Turkish dictionary he prepared with Uzunhasanoğlu in 1999, Lazuri grammar book with Kojima in 2003, and an extended Lazuri dictionary in 2007 with Uzunhasanoğlu and Aleksiva. He is also involved in Lazika Publishing Collective (2010) and the founder of *Lazuri Enstitu* (2013). The Institute created a curriculum for Lazuri elective courses to be offered in public schools and prepared the books to be used in these courses. Before the legislation by the National Ministry of Education to offer these courses in public schools, Bucaklişi was teaching elective Lazuri courses in Boğaziçi University. Currently he is also giving these courses in Istanbul Bilgi University.

The information provided in this chapter, when analysed along with the chapter on the language policies in Turkey, will be able to draw a timeline of the developments leading to the language situation of Lazuri speakers in Turkey. However, it also serves the purpose of displaying how the language ideologies have been formed or altered as a result of these developments.

3.2. Language policies in Turkey

3.2.1. The Late Ottoman Period

Turkey, a multiethnic / multilingual country since the Ottoman Era, has a single official language, Turkish. With its language policies finding their roots in the *İttihat ve Terakki* (Committee of Union and Progress) period – and even before that in *Tanzimat* (Ottoman Reformation), Republic of Turkey aimed to create a monolingual nation. The Language Reform (*Dil devrimi* – The Language Revolution in Turkish) did not privilege any major groups – not even the 'Turks' in Anatolia – since the Turkish of the Republic differed in part from theirs as well. However, the language policies to shape a monolingual Turkish nation still resulted in a greater disadvantage for many such as the Kurds, the Laz, the Albanian, the Circassian and all others who did not speak Turkish as their mother tongue.

As a result of its social structure (*millet* system), the language hierarchy in the Ottoman Empire was not one among various language communities but rather between the language used by the educated or hegemonic classes and the ones used

by the common people (be it a low variety of Turkish or the other languages used within the Empire). If we are to translate this into Bourdieu's theory of linguistic market; the linguistic capital valued in the Ottoman linguistic market was the high variety of Ottoman Turkish, which left all ruled classes, Turkish speakers or not, out of the picture. This explains why even though Turkish[1] was not the official language in the Ottoman Empire until the first constitution of 1876, Arabs, Pomaks and Albanians (Sadoğlu, 2003, 61) as well as urban non-Muslims (p. 279) considered it as an asset to learn the state language.

The status of various languages in the Empire was not discussed, at least in the state level, until the first constitution (*Kanun-i Esasi)*; however, language was always on the agenda from the *Tanzimat* onwards. What the Ottoman intellectuals mainly focused on was the simplification of the Ottoman Turkish so that it would correspond to the spoken language. If there were any questions on the status of the languages spoken by different linguistic communities, these were the questions on non-Muslim groups. As the famous *Tanzimat* intellectual Namık Kemal stated, it was "not possible to spread [our] language among the Rum and the Bulgarian"; however, the languages spoken by Muslim 'citizens' were not a threat because it was "definitely possible to spread it among the Albanian and the Laz, that is, the Muslim […] The Laz and Albanian languages would be forgotten in twenty years time" (p. 78). As a result of the *millet* system, non-Muslim communities provided education in their own language and until the 19th century Turkish was not a compulsory course. During the Reform Era, therefore, there were conscious efforts to introduce Turkish courses into the curricula of non-Muslim communities, which resulted in Turkish being an obligatory course for all local and foreign schools in 1894 (p. 91). However, in *Tanzimat* era monolingualism was not yet a state policy and the multilingual nature of the Empire was recognized even in the first draft of *Kanun-i Esasi* (the first constitution). The 12th Article in the first draft stating that "all peoples in the Ottoman country are free to teach and learn the language of their own" even though they had to learn the official language Turkish to be able to work for the state was later amended to exclude this statement (pp. 97-99). The policy of Pan-Ottomanism was gradually replaced by a greater emphasis on Turkishness with the influence of Young Turks who "realized the role of language in forming a national identity and focused more on the spreading of Turkish as well as the establishment of a common

culture so as to keep the subjects unified under the Ottoman rule" (p. 145). The Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihat ve Terakki)* member Ziya Gökalp, who had a major role in shaping the Republic's nationalist ideology, for instance, believed that "non-Turkish Muslim groups who lived together with Turks for hundreds of years could be Turkified through education" (p. 169).

3.2.2. Early Republican Period

It is clear from this brief historical background on the language policies in the Ottoman Empire that the discussion on the status of languages was neither entirely new nor completely the same. It was not unique to the Republic Era as Turkish was already a state language even though not the official language; and despite the recognition of the multilingual nature of the Empire, there was a move towards monolingualism from the *Tanzimat* era onwards (primarily for the sake of centralization, but increasingly for keeping the Empire unified around a common culture and language). The discussion was also not the same since the linguistic market evolved from one in which not learning the dominant language would keep one from certain privileges into another that the dominant language was the norm. The policy of having a single standard official language in the Republic was also not born out of a mere need for easier communication and increasing literacy but was also a result of the desire for symbolic dominance. As if through inspiration from the French revolutionaries, what the founders of the Turkish Republic (and before them the Committee of Union and Progress) aimed at was "the *formation* and *re-formation* of mental structures" (Bourdieu, 1991, 48) through language. To shape a language with an ideological framework, there should be a break with the past that the new regime wants to distance itself from. Pierre Bourdieu explains this process as "purg[ing] [language] of the usages linked to the old society and impos[ing] it in its purified form" "to impose a thought that would itself be purged and purified" (1991, 47). Replacing the Ottoman language and the Arabic alphabet was such a move; Mustafa Kemal explains the rationale behind it as "to eradicate the mistakes of the past" (Sadoğlu, 2010, 201). A language that lacks reference to the old society can be loaded with the ideology that one would like to shape the society with. Shaping the medium through which individuals think and express opinions is sure a method of symbolic domination.

Despite being the successor of the multi-ethnic and multi-lingual Ottoman Empire in Anatolia, the newborn Republic of Turkey was based on *Turkishness*, which prevented the recognition of any ethnic / linguistic minorities within. The only exception was the non-Muslim minorities whose right to mother tongue education was recognized in the 40th Article of the Lausanne Treaty (Eraydın, 2008, 167). As a result, Armenian, Greek and Jewish communities in Turkey were able to open schools and give / receive education in their languages. However; as these are not public schools but rather supported by communities themselves, it can be said that the Republic of Turkey has not yet offered its citizens education in their mother tongues. 1921 Constitution did not overrule *Kanun-i Esasi* with regards to languages in the country. In 1924 Constitution, however, 2nd Article states that the official language is Turkish and the 12th Article highlights that the ones who are not literate in Turkish cannot be elected to the parliament (Sadoğlu, 2010, pp. 275-276). Even though there was no law that prohibited any language in education in the 1924 Constitution, the Law of Unification of Education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu)* that passed on 3rd March 1924 aimed at a centralized education system whose means of education was Turkish while there was no official discussion on the rights of Muslim citizens to mother tongue education (p. 289). Sadoğlu claims that this policy aimed at *Turkifying* the Muslim ethnic groups.

Another crucial development was the passing of the law on the new alphabet based on the Latin alphabet on 3rd November 1928 (p. 226). One of the elements used to teach the new alphabet and increase literacy was the People's Houses (*Halkevleri*) which were "established in 1931 as adult education centres, scattered throughout the country as cultural branches of the ruling RPP [Republican People's Party]" (Çolak, 2004, 80). These centres had an important role in spreading a purist and monolingual language ideology in the country by "transform[ing] the Turkish of the native speakers into the dialect of the centre" and "educat[ing] or convert[ing] those whose mother tongue is not Turkish or who speak another language at home even if they also speak Turkish" (p. 81). Through the diligent work of People's Houses, 4228 people had been taught the language in the courses offered at 73 People's Houses by 1943 (Sadoğlu, 2010, 243). While literacy was being promoted by the state, there was also civil propagation of the use of the language in the public sphere through

campaigns such as *Vatandaş Türkçe Konuş*! (Citizen Speak Turkish!) that the Law students Istanbul University initiated in 1928 (Bayar, 2011, 116).

For the majority of the Muslim non-Turkish citizens were the Kurds, Şeyh Said Rebellion breaking out in 1925 led to certain actions to Turkify those Muslim groups who did not speak Turkish. The Settlement Law (*İskan Kanunu*) in 1934 primarily attempted to assimilate immigrants and refugees by settling or resettling them in certain areas. However, the law imposing relocation of Turkish speaking groups to the originally Kurdish speaking areas and vice versa, and banning groups who did not speak Turkish to establish villages or neighborhoods (p. 121) seemed to also aim a linguistic homogenization. The Interior Minister of the time, Şükrü Kaya made the purpose of the law quite clear: "This law will create a country that speaks a single language, thinks the same, and carries the same feelings" (Sadoğlu, 2010, 287).

Neither the 1924 nor the 1961 Constitution had any specific articles to support or prohibit mother tongues or education in languages other than Turkish. The multilingual composition of the society, however, had not disappeared. The censuses conducted by the state continued asking its citizens their mother tongues until 1985 (a recent publication by Aslan *et al.* (2015, 65) points out that the data on this item after the 1965 census are not shared with researchers). According to these data obtained from Turkish Statistical Institute, there were at least 21 languages accepted as their mother tongues by citizens of Turkey. This number cannot have significantly decreased to this day since a more recent survey by KONDA (2006, 19) lists more than 15 mother tongues (the exact number of the languages is not given as some languages are grouped under certain categories such as Caucasian, Balkan or Turkic languages).

3.2.3. From 1982 Constitution to the EU process

The 1982 Constitution, which was drafted after the 1980 *coup d'état,* brought drastic changes to the language regime. Article 42 of the constitution states that "*No language other than Turkish shall be taught as mother tongue to Turkish citizens at any institutions of teaching or education*" (MRG Report, 2009). Many bans on languages followed the coup such as the law no. 2932 on "Publication in languages other than Turkish" dated 19th October 1983 stated that "it is prohibited to express, publish or distribute opinions in any language other than the first official languages

of states recognized by the Turkish State" (Balçık, 2008, 105). It also stated that "the mother tongue of Turkish citizens is Turkish. It is prohibited to engage in activities concerning the use and distribution of languages other than Turkish as mother tongues" (p. 105).

Despite - or as a result of - these restrictions on any open claims to and recognition of ethnic identities, identity politics started to proliferate from the second half of the 1980s. In his article on the immigrant associations in Turkey, Alexandre Toumarkine (2001) claims that non-Turkish associations gained more flexibility in the softer political climate during the presidency of Turgut Özal, who recognized the cultural Kurdish identity (p. 427). The Law 2932 on Publications and Broadcasts in Languages Other than Turkish, which prohibited the expression, dissemination and publication of opinions in languages other than the first offical languages of countries recognized by the Turkish state was annuled in 1991 by the Özal government (p. 106). The languages and particularly Kurdish were no longer banned. However, there was already a misrecognition of Turkish as the only legitimate language in the public sphere which made it difficult for Kurdish publications and music to be distributed in practice. Özal period cannot be named as the only factor as the world in the 1990s also saw a rise of identity politics based on ethnicity after the end of the Cold War, which had polarized the world thus far.

Even though the 1982 Constitution is still intact and the Article 42 has not been changed yet, certain language policy changes have been implemented through Turkey-EU relations. Helsinki Summit that took place in 1999 led to reforms in human rights and democratization, which involved legal changes concerning languages other than Turkish (Eraydın, 2008, 170). Accession Partnership Document (*Katılım Ortaklığı Belgesi*) accepted in 2001 mentions linguistic rights (p. 171) and in the revised version that was published in 2003, highlights the importance of the availability of education and radio-television broadcasting in languages other than Turkish (p. 172).

In 2001 the 26th and 28th articles of the constitution regarding the declaration and circulation of opinions, and publication were amended. The paragraphs stating that "languages banned by the law" cannot be used were abolished (p. 174). *The Regulation on the Teaching of the Different Languages and Dialects Traditionally Used by Turkish Citizens in Their Daily Lives* was published in the Official Gazette

on 05.12.2003 and allowed the opening of language courses to teach citizens different languages traditionally used in their daily lives. (p. 175)

The Regulation Concerning Radio and Television Broadcasts in Languages and Dialects Used Traditionally by Turkish Citizens in Their Daily Lives that was accepted in 2004 allowed radio and televisions to broadcast in different languages and dialects five days a week for 60 and 45 minutes a day respectively. It is worth mentioning that the regulation limits the broadcasting to programs for news, music and traditional culture and not for the teaching of these languages and dialects (p. 176). In 2004 the state television TRT started broadcasting in 5 different languages and dialects: Bosniac, Arabic, Circassian, Kurmanci and Zazaki (p. 177.) The next move towards the teaching of languages other than Turkish was the introduction of the elective language classes under the title "*living languages and dialects*" in 2012. For now, these classes cover Kurmanci, Zazaki, Lazuri, Georgian, Adyghe and Abkhaz language[1]. In 2014 three private schools to give education in Kurdish were opened by the initiatives of NGOs and political parties[2], and have not yet gained official status.

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[1]   http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/egitim/yasayan-diller-ve-lehceler-dersini-85-bin-ogrenci-secti-28045465
[2] http://www.cnnturk.com/haber/turkiye/kurtce-egitim-verecek-okullar-acildi

4. METHODOLOGY

4.1. Into the field

This chapter aims to describe the scope of the research and the methods of data collection as well as the methodology of the data analysis. However, it will mainly focus on the experience of the field; the advantages, problems and limitations of conducting fieldwork.

Both during the fieldwork and also in my personal life, the first thing people were curious about upon hearing my research area was whether I was Lazi or from the Black Sea Region. Neither is the case; I am from a different part of the country and had not been aware of a language called Lazuri until after college when I developed an academic interest in the languages of Turkey. I had known of the term 'Laz' like everyone in Turkey, that is, as the name for the people from the Black Sea Region. It is striking - and not only in the case of the Lazi - that one can remain ignorant of a language spoken by a relatively fair amount of people in Turkey even on this day. That was one of the reasons among many others that motivated me for this research.

I was already interested in the Lazuri language activism and had carried out a small research on the social media accounts of Laz associations before this study. Both the primary observations and the motivation to study the Lazuri context came from that research. Even though the main object of analysis in this study is the narratives of the people interviewed, personal conversations with Laz activists, observations from both academic and casual meetings, the Lazuri classes I took, and the experience of the short field trip to the Laz towns all contextualized and contributed to the stories collected through these interviews.

22 semi-structured interviews[3] with people from Lazuri speaking families were conducted for this research between December 2016 and March 2017. 9 of these interviews were in İstanbul while the other 13 were in the Laz towns of Pazar, Ardeşen, Fındıklı, Arhavi and Hopa. Out of 12 women interviewed, 6 were between

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[3] Instead of participants' real names, pseudonyms are used throughout the study.

18-35 years old, 4 were 36-60 and 2 were over 60. Out of 10 men, 2 were between 18-35, 6 were 36-60 and 2 were over 60. I met most of my interviewees through "snowball method". I reached my first interviewees and also my contacts in the Laz towns through the Lazuri activists I got acquainted with in this process. Through these first contacts, I was introduced to the other people I interviewed.

While some of the interviews in İstanbul took place at cafes that the interviewees chose to meet, others were conducted at a local culture organization. The interviews in the Laz towns were conducted either at people's workplaces or their houses. However, three interviews in Ardeşen took place at a tailor's workshop where many women gathered to chat. So as not to disturb the dynamics of the conversation, I conducted a group interview with them rather than insisting on personal ones. Since the main aim was to get a sense of people's experiences and their opinions on these experiences, the length of the interviews varied from 30 minutes to as long as 120 minutes depending on how much the person wanted to talk.

Except for the interviews at cafes and houses, it was impossible to avoid interventions and to keep the interview one-to-one all the time. First such experience was at the local culture organization. Although I was there to interview the president of the organization, there were many people at the time to attend the *horon* activity. People were curious about what I was doing, they wanted to comment on the topic, many of them also asked to be interviewed. People were trying to learn why I was doing this research and teaching me some Lazuri. One young woman, who was a university student, was interested in research interviews and we chatted on her project and how to design an interview.

The free time I had in my field trip to Lazuri speaking towns and the Lazuri classes I attended in Istanbul were also beneficial as they added to the information collected throughout the interviews. These provided some significant observations. For instance, the only time I heard Lazuri clearly spoken on the streets and at a restaurant where I had lunch was in Ardeşen. There were also some Lazuri-based signs in Fındıklı. Other than these, the language I was exposed to was limited to the interview locations. The Lazuri classes I took helped me both to be acquainted with the language and to understand basic words and phrases and also to confirm once again that the misconception about Lazuri being a Turkish with an accent is still quite common.

Although it is based on a variety of sources such as my informal observations of Lazuri activism, acquaintance and informal conversations with activists, interviews with Lazuri speakers and observations during my fieldwork, this study does not claim representativeness for the whole Lazuri speaking population but rather aims at a diversity of perspectives.

4.2. Methods

The primary purpose of this study is to share the narratives of Lazuri speakers on their language practices and their experiences related to their languages. By doing so, the study hopes to comprehend their beliefs and understanding while contextualizing the narratives through a historical and conceptual background.

An ethnographic study effectively serves this goal by locating the researcher within a context she will be able to "see how language practices are connected to the very real conditions of people's lives, to discover how and why language matters to people in their own terms, [...][and] tell a story which illuminates social processes and generates explanations for why people do and think the things they do" (Heller, 2008, 250). This study comprises of observations and interviews through which the use of Lazuri and Turkish is related to the past, present, and future of individuals and the society. In the narratives collected throughout the research, certain "themes and patterns" were determined and these were analysed "paying attention to historical, social, political dimension" (Copland & Creese, 2015, 86).

In contrast to the existing research on Lazuri which either analyses language policies to understand linguistic practices or focuses on practices to find explanations in linguistics, this study believes a holistic approach must be adopted. As Spolsky (2004) puts forward in his language policy framework that "linguistic practices, language ideologies, language management are interconnected and interrelated". Therefore, language policy analysis alone does not suffice to understand linguistic practices and vice versa. The important element which is usually neglected in this context is the language ideologies. Analysis of the narratives were the core of this study since language ideologies are present in discourse through lexicalisation - through the use of certain lexicon to express ideologies (Van Dijk, 1998).

As mentioned in the theoretical discussion of this study, language ideology research is beyond a solely macro or a micro viewpoint. And for that, it will work on the narratives of Lazuri speakers regarding their language experiences to identify discourses, and recurring themes and patterns, which will help to understand "how linguistic practices are connected to asymmetrical relations of power" (Blackledge, 2008, 297) in our context.

4.3. Limitations

The ethnographic approach in this study has certain limitations. While the ideal analysis would be through the study of both linguistic practices and ideologies, observations were limited as a result of practical reasons and thus diverting the focus more to the narratives and the discourse. The language of the study is generally a limitation in research focusing on a minority language group for the implied power relations. However, as Bellér-Hann and Hann (2003) pointed out in their anthropological study in the Eastern Black Sea region in the 1980s, which was also carried out in Turkish, Lazuri is the weaker language of the majority under 40 (p. 47). While this meant I was able to conduct the research without the need for a translator, this situation alone requires a critical analysis.

Another obstacle, or rather challenge, was the misconceptions about the purpose of the study. Being introduced to people by my contacts as the student researching Lazuri, I struggled to make it clear that I was not in search of "facts" or "the real Lazuri". Many people tried to describe 'Lazness' to me or to direct me to more knowledgeable people on the language since they were not sure if they could be of any help in a research. Rather than telling their stories and experiences, most believed they were supposed to inform me.

As it is the case in interviews, participants might have tried to give answers they thought I was looking for, misreported their uses of the language, or might have felt the need to emphasize their national (Turkish) identity. Though limited, observations compensated for these in certain situations.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Temporality

va mişkunan va mişkunan

çumanişa mu vuzvaten

va mişkunan va mişkunan

maşkurinenan

didalepeşkuni mtel ğurunan

aşkva var iziren kukumboli

va mişkunan va mişkunan[4]

(Zuğaşi Berepe, Va Mişkunan, 1995)

While the cases of language shift are closely related to macroprocesses such as socioeconomic changes, the language ideologies feeding the discourse on the language practices and languages in question should also be taken into account to understand the language shift dynamics (Gal, 1993; Kulick, 1992; Makihara, 2004; Seloni & Sarfati, 2013; Smith-Hefner, 2009). For Lazuri speakers, the major socioeconomic change was the state-backed tea cultivation and the waves of migration linked to it (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2003). Most narratives on the language throughout this study included a mention of these changes and their effects. These changes, however, were recounted through a lens of temporality. The temporality aspect in the language ideologies in language shift situations is already mentioned in various research (Hill, 1998; Tsitsipis, 1998; Cavanaugh, 2004; Howard, 2012). The concept of temporality in this context explains both the representations of change in the discourse on Lazuri and also the ways that the language shift is experienced by its

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[4] We don't know we don't know
What to tell to the future
We don't know we don't know
We're afraid
Our old women are all dying
Kukumboli is not found anymore
We don't know we don't know

speakers. Temporality will be studied here through the discourse of nostalgia, the associations made with the elderly, and the definition of the language as a tradition.

In her article on the language ideologies of Mexicano (Nahuatl) speakers, Hill (1998) formulates the elements of "nostalgia as a discursive system" (p. 69). She observes that the contrast between positive qualities of life in the past in terms of relationships and ways of living and the negative qualities attributed to the present is in parallel with the contrast between the 'pure' language of the past and the mixed language of today. Similar narratives of hard life conditions contrasted with the lost moral values of today are seen in other contexts of language shift. For example, Arvanítika speakers in Greece, who associate earlier times with Arvanítika and today with Greek, remember that "people suffered [...] with the bag here (on the shoulders)" but today "people abandoned god" (Tsitsipis, 1998, 132).

Contrast between the past and the present or temporal rather than a causal representations of changes appeared in most narratives on Lazuri. However, discourse of nostalgia dominated some of these as in the cases above. I met Zeliha, who is almost 80 years old, in a tailor's workshop in Ardeşen where she was chatting with a group of women from different age groups. She did not want to talk to me at first as she thought it would be a sin to record her voice - men she did not know could listen to it. She could not, however, stay indifferent to the group conversation where the women were talking about their experiences. She mainly talked about the past and made comments about how things have changed. This is how she recounts her childhood: "... it was all in Lazuri. The people of the past had Lazuri all the time. The kids today don't speak it anymore. It was all in Lazuri in the past." Following this comment, the other women start talking about how they started to speak more Turkish after they moved from the village to the town center and the increasing migration into Ardeşen from other regions for the job opportunities in the tea gardens. Zeliha joins the conversation and once again refers to the past:

> Zeliha: Most of the people from this town are in Ankara now. There was no tea (cultivation) before. No jobs. Now at least there is tea (cultivation) so there are jobs. In the past there were no jobs; we would plant and eat corn.
>
> Another woman: Now there is no work, the Georgians collect the tea.
>
> Zeliha: They would go to other cities to work in the past
>
> Gülşah: Did you learn Turkish at school?

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Zeliha: No, no! I know Turkish. I know Lazuri and I also speak Turkish. They did not send me to school. I don't know how to write. I was going to enroll to the school. My mom did not let me. She said I had to work. I got married. After I got married, I was 17 and I came here. Our village was in the hills but we settled here. My husband was working in the factory. There was no car, nothing. You would walk. Then my husband died. I had five kids. I raised them all, sent them to school; thank God. We suffered a lot in the past. My husband worked in the tea factory. He was 36 when he died.

Gülşah: Did your husband go to school?

Zeliha: They took him off school when he was in the fifth grade. Now I tell children, grandchildren to go to school and be a decent person [...]

Zeliha remembers her childhood as a period when everybody spoke Lazuri. However, it was also a time of hardship for they did not have education and financial well-being as people do today. Even though her narration does not link the language to the past sufferings directly, this form of narration in which events are temporally ordered may assume a certain cause and effect relationship between two phenomena (Ochs, 2004, 271). Thus, for Zeliha Lazuri is the language spoken by the people of her time when everybody was uneducated and poor while now people are better off and they have education and job opportunities which are all characterized by Turkish. Her narration is very much like the narrations of the Bergamasco speakers in Italy who associate the time they all spoke Bergamasco with poverty and peasantry and today with prosperity and Italian language (Cavanaugh, 2004, 25).

While Zeliha interprets the language shift to be natural, which is consistent with the discourse she speaks through, favoring education and development, similar changes in the region are condemned in other narratives that romanticize the past and accordingly the language of that time - Lazuri. Both Hill (1998) and Cavanaugh (2004) point to conflicting viewpoints about sociolinguistic changes. However, both in the discourses that favor the socioeconomic advancement and in those yearning for the lost traditions, the language shift is linked to a temporal change. Times have changed, so has the language.

Rıza, a bilingual poet in his late forties from Çamlıhemşin, narrates his story through a pastoral romance associated with Lazuri. While talking about his family, Rıza believes it is necessary to depict the Laz village culture now lost:

The Laz have at least two, at least four houses. They come to the village in winter. Come to the village in January and everybody is there. Towards spring you go up to

> the hamlets. [...] Then from the hamlets to the lower highlands. [...] From the lower highlands to the higher ones. Then again to the lower highlands, to the hamlets, to the village. And as I said there was almost nobody speaking Turkish. How is it now? Except for the elderly [nobody speaks Lazuri].

Rıza depicts a culture that he assumes to be lost since he switches to past tense when referring to the language of the village and contrasts it with today. A similar narrative is present in the story of Yaşar from Fındıklı, who is in his late fifties. While talking about a documentary on the history of Laz, he remembers his childhood:

> In the past when there was no coastal road, we could walk up to the coast. We could have a view of the sea back then. In the past we would play there at the beach or on the soil. There was a game called *bokuç* game in our childhood. It was also on that CD called *The 4000-year history of the Laz*. [...] Now when we look back to the past, we say 'our Lazuri …'

Yaşar cannot finish his sentence which he starts with a sense of nostalgia. As in the other examples above, the contrast between the past and the present is not directly linked to the language shift through linguistic connectors in the narrative. However, it is still the outcome of an implicit language ideology to follow the "mention of a cultural or linguistic trait" with another (Tsitsipis, 1998, 132) as if they are causally related. Both Rıza and Yaşar represent a kind of counterdiscourse that criticizes the destructive effects of the developmentalist mentality that is present in Zeliha's narrative. While their views on the socioeconomic changes conflict with each other, their temporal consideration of the language shift contributes to the sociolinguistic changes in the same fashion. Associating Lazuri with the past and poverty might lead to language shift but so does the romanticization of the same past and the language. Bauman and Briggs (2003) stress that "the feeling of nostalgia and loss that attends radical social change" might be eased by "estheticizing and valorizing the expressive culture" of the past while also "distanc[ing] ourselves from it" (p. 116).

Lazuri was not always openly attributed to the past as it was in the examples above. However, the language was often defined as "our culture". The use of the word "culture" mostly referred to "tradition" as juxtaposed by the modern way of living. In that sense, when people valorized Lazuri as it was "their culture", they were, in fact, distancing it from their everyday life. In her study of the attitudes towards Guernesiais language in France, Sallabank (2013) reports a similar perception that links the language with "nostalgia and traditional culture" and does not regard it to

be a "living form of communication" (p. 338). This is in paralel with how Cavanaugh (2004) describes the Bergamasco speakers' view of their language - "temporally distant from their everyday speaking repertoires" (p. 30). That was the case for Aynur, in her twenties, who was at the local culture association in Istanbul where I had the opportunity to observe and interview many people from different age groups and backgrounds. She expresses the importance of the language for her while not actively using it:

> Aynur: Why is it valuable for me? Because some things that are characteristic of a region, be it the food, the clothes, the *tulum* instrument for instance, the language of the region… These are all transferred together from one generation to the other [...]
>
> Gülşah: OK, as culture. How about for your own life? Would you like to keep using it?
>
> Aynur: I don't make a conscious effort actually. I have never thought that way, I mean, that I should speak Lazuri and not Turkish.

For Aynur, Lazuri is valuable as the culture of her ancestors. She would like to keep it in her life along with the local food and the music but she does not necessarily perceive it as a tool for communication. The president of the association (Ahmet, 50) also listed the language among other traditions that he valued. He wanted to work on activities such as Lazuri, *horon*, *tulum* and the cuisine as part of his duties as the president of the local association. However, for the time I was at the association, I did not hear him speak the language. Describing Lazuri as a valuable tradition or a part of your culture while not incorporating it into your daily life may result from various power dynamics one of which is to define a language as a tradition. This view of language stems from the ideology of modernity that links tradition to the past. As Bauman and Briggs (2003) express: "When used in the service of articulating a purified, modern conception of language, [...] that is, when it is used to differentiate the past from the present, tradition becomes a mode of discourse that is diagnostic of the past" (p. 11).

"Our old women are all dying / Kukumboli is not found anymore". These two lines from *Va Mişkunan* (We don't know) by *Zuğaşi Berepe (Children of the sea)*, a Lazuri-singing rock band from the 90s, link the discourse of nostalgia discussed above to another oft-repeated element in the narratives about Lazuri. *Kukumboli* is a local plant that cannot be found in the region anymore as a result of tea cultivation.

As Yaşar, who felt nostalgic about Lazuri after mentioning his memories of playing at the beach before the coastal road was built, the band hopes that "their language will not die" as did *Kukumboli* and the old women. To add to nostalgia and tradition, the "elderly" (particularly old women) is the final element of temporality reflected in the narratives. On the album cover of *Va Mişkunan,* there is a picture of an old woman (grandmother of Kazım Koyuncu, the lead singer of the band), which is highly representative of the responses and stories collected in this study. There was almost no interview in which grandmothers, old women or the elderly were not mentioned. Remziye was my contact in Ardeşen and she was the one taking me to the tailor's workshop where I also interviewed Zeliha. Even though she was 39 - much younger than Zeliha -, they seemed to be talking through the same discourse. When the group starts discussing how little Lazuri the children use, she comments:

> Now they cannot speak it themselves, how are they going to speak it when they have children? It will disappear in time. If the grandmothers speak Lazuri to their grandchildren again, then maybe they will understand a couple of words.

She believes the sole conveyor of the language is "the grandmother". However, she is not alone in making that connection. Throughout the discussion, there were similar remarks from different women.

> Bride: If we hadn't had our aunts[5], who would we have learnt it from, right? Thank God we have them.
>
> [...]
>
> Zeliha: My girl, each household has a grandmother, a grandfather. All children learn it (Lazuri). There are the elderly in all households.

The association of the language with the grandparents or the elderly has also been found both in the Kurdish context in Turkey (Çağlayan, 2014; İnal, 2014) and also in other language shift contexts (Cavanaugh, 2004; Jaffe, 1999) since there is a break in intergenerational transmission. Jaffe (1999) reports in her work on the language ideologies of Corsican speakers that among the most cited answers for the questions asking "where, when, with whom and in what circumstances people spoke Corsican", there was "with old people" along with "family", "friends", "village" and "at home" (p. 92). Referring to Urciuoli (1996), Jaffe (1999) concludes that these

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[5] The Turkish word she uses is *teyze*, which means both aunt and old woman. However, she uses the word with a possessive suffix that gives it a sense of intimacy rather than sounding as if she is talking about any other old woman.

answers point to an association with the "inner sphere" (p. 92). Even though they share the same element of intimacy and thus this association could be explained as being part of an inner sphere, other connotations of "the old people" should also be taken into consideration. There is a link between the image of old people in the minds of the respondents and the past, tradition and temporality. In *Voices of Modernity* in which they analyze the thinkers that shaped the understanding of modernity in relation to language, Bauman and Briggs (2003) mention that old women were decribed as "the vehicles for maintaining the old beliefs" and old people as the ones "who observe the old customs most persistently" (p. 82). In the case of Lazuri, the old women are represented as the vehicles for transfering the language as if it is a tradition whose knowledge only they have.

It is a fact that if there is decrease in intergenerational language transmission, there will be more old people who speak more of the language while children will mostly have little or no competence in it. However, the beliefs about the Lazuri competence of the old women or the elderly as opposed to that of the children or the young people resonate with a certain language ideology. In many interviews, the presence of "the elderly" was mentioned as a reason for speaking Lazuri. The assumption that it was natural to speak Lazuri if an older relative is around was in contrast with the general tendency to avoid Lazuri or to prefer Turkish when talking to or calling out a young person. People mentioned their surprise about the children speaking Lazuri. Aynur, who defined Lazuri as a valuable tradition earlier, remembers her mother's reaction: "The grandchild of our neighbor is around 8-10 years old. My mom finds it funny that a child of that age speaks Lazuri". Remziye also talks about a village where "**even** the children speak Lazuri well". Similarly, Jaffe (1999) describes the amusement of two Corsican women when a three-year-old child utters a Corsican phrase. Their reaction shows that they thought of this as a "humorous incident" (p. 90). Not only would they be surprised but adults would also give children automatic responses in Turkish even though the child addressed them in Lazuri. Okan, 24, was born and raised in Istanbul. He tells me about an experience he had while interviewing old Laz people for his project:

> I asked her to talk to me in Lazuri but she says things in Turkish. In fact her Turkish is really bad, she can't explain herself. She starts speaking in Lazuri but then goes back to Turkish again. I think because there was this thing there, this "don't speak

Lazuri with kids so that you don't mess with their Turkish". There was this belief in the past. Most probably it was instilled in her and she does this unknowingly.

Even though Okan was not a child anymore and talked to her in Lazuri, the old woman could not help but switch to Turkish while talking to a young one. When considered along with the fact that people perceive Lazuri to belong to the old, both the surprise that the adults feel when children speak Lazuri and the unconscious shifts to Turkish to address young ones underline the temporal associations with the language. A sociohistorical phenomenon is being naturalized both in the discourse and through the language practices.

As language ideologies are those discursive themes and strategies that are related to and emerge as a consequence of certain power structures and processes (Tsitsipis, 1998, 119), the temporal perspectives on Lazuri use and the language shift from Lazuri towards Turkish should be viewed through power relations. The social change experienced by Lazuri speakers is interpreted through the concepts of "then" and "now". Accordingly, this contrast between the past and the present is reflected on the languages in question. The sociolinguistic changes are experienced as if they are related to the passing of time. As one understanding of modernity is to link its formation to temporality (Bauman & Briggs, 2003, 10), that is, to view modernity as a break from the past, we should analyze these temporal elements in the narratives on Lazuri as a discussion on modernity. Lazuri and Turkish are indexed as the pre-modern and the modern. As a result of this - whether implicit or explicit - perception, it is either accepted that Lazuri does not fit in with modernity and its decreasing use is normalized or it is romanticized as a traditional "artifact or object" (Cavanaugh, 2004, 31) to be protected rather than actively used.

5.2. Language of the private and the emotional

The use of Lazuri is not strictly divided along the lines of the public and the private sphere. All respondents stated that their home language was predominantly Turkish. While the private sphere is not reserved for Lazuri, the language might be used in the public sphere for certain purposes. Then, the divide for the language use is mainly formed through the associations made with and the functions attributed to it. These associations and functions could be analyzed as belonging to the "inner sphere" (Urciuoli, 1996, 9). The language is primarily identified with its function to create

emotional and intimate conversations, which is believed to be lacking from Turkish but a core element of Lazuri. Respondents repeatedly mentioned in the interviews that they preferred Lazuri to joke, to hold secret conversations, and for intimacy.

It was especially surprising to hear every single respondent pointing out that Lazuri is the language preferred when telling jokes or making fun of friends and siblings. For instance, Ahmet said: "Some jokes, stories, anecdotes do not mean anything in Turkish. They are really funny in Lazuri so they are told in Lazuri."

While it is hard to convey the meaning of many expressions and phrases in a different language, it was the jokes that people mentioned the most. Even those who do not often use the language would use it to joke.

> Young people are interested [in Lazuri]. They try to tell jokes in Lazuri. When you tell a joke in Lazuri, you laugh out loud. However, when you translate it into Turkish, it isn't funny anymore so you have to tell it in Lazuri […] I don't address anyone in Lazuri in my everyday conversations. Maybe if old people or anyone else directly talks to me in Lazuri, I try to answer them. Apart from that, maybe in funny situations. I mean, I don't have Lazuri in my everyday conversations. (Aynur, İstanbul)

Similar claims on the link between the mother tongue and jokes have been reported in other studies on language shift. In her article on the experiences of Kam Muang speakers in Northern Thailand, Howard (2010) cites a mother who prefers to use Kam Muang at home because it is "not possible to be fun or to joke around with children in Standard Thai" (p. 74). Some young people from the study on Bergamasco also pointed out that "jokes and curses sounded better in Bergamasco" (Cavanaugh, 2004, 35). In their study on the language ideologies of Judeo-Spanish speakers in Turkey, Seloni and Sarfati (2012) mentioned the same communicative function of Judeo-Spanish (p. 20) and claimed that code-switching to make jokes is an indication of "in-group solidarity" along with expressing emotions (p. 22). The mother tongue as a language banned from the public sphere through language policies and limited solely to the intimate relations comes to be taken as the best conveyor of emotions, and jokes are communicative devices that evoke such emotions. However, it is also interesting to note that while both İnal (2014) and Çağlayan (2014) reported an association between the mother tongue and the emotions in the case of Kurdish speakers in Turkey, joking is not mentioned as a crucial element. In the case of Lazuri, on the other hand, it was the jokes that had to

be told in the language but not necessarily the other emotions. The ways that the jokes are portrayed in the comments of some of the respondents indicate that they symbolize a unique part of Laz identity for them. Rıza underlines the importance of jokes: "Lazuri is such a sweet language. I wish the state supported it. There are such gorgeous jokes that I would die if I didn't joke in Lazuri". To prove his point, he followed this comment with a joke.

Birol made it clearer that jokes are more than an emotional aspect of the language for him even though he felt he could claim it to be true for all Laz:

> For instance, there are the Temel jokes in Lazuri or Turkish. We don't feel offended. The Laz are not offended. I'm talking in plural because it's not only the ones from Ardeşen but all the Laz. We like joking around and all that. (Birol, İstanbul)

While Lazuri served a specific function through jokes to create a sense of in-group solidarity, it also helped to "mark conversation boundaries" (Seloni & Sarfati, 2012, 22) by allowing those who speak it to secretly converse with one another and hide certain information from others (mostly Turkish speakers). From personal experience through my grandparents and my mother who would switch to Bulgarian when they would not like us to understand what they were talking about, I was accustomed to this code-switching practice while also finding it bizarre that the language was not used in any other circumstances. In the same fashion, it was the case for most of the respondents not to have everyday conversation in Lazuri whether at home or in public whereas they would resort to the language for boundary-making.

> When we are in İstanbul with my friend, we speak Lazuri all the time. I swear we speak nothing else but Lazuri. Especially when you go somewhere and you want to share something [with your friend] and you don't want the sales assistant to hear. You talk about something, discuss something just between two of you. You speak Lazuri, then. (Yaşar, Fındıklı)

> We use Lazuri more often when we are outside together and there are others around us. We use it when we are talking about things we don't want others to understand (Okan, İstanbul)

Whether this function of the language to draw boundaries with the speakers of another language and thus create an "us space" is conscious or not for Lazuri speakers, it must be one reason why the language is still kept in the speech repertoires of many. For instance, while most of the vocabulary and the structure of Romani used in Britain have been replaced by English, the language is not "dead"

since some "Romani lexical items […] serve its speakers as an in-group or ''secret'' code" (Hancock 1984; Thomason 2001 cited in Garrett, 2004, 62). Even though the function of creating an "us space" is found useful, the use of language as a secret code has some negative connotations as well. Birol finds it disturbing that Lazuri has come to be associated with secret messages:

> Where do we use Lazuri? We use it to warn someone. A guest comes to our house and does not speak Lazuri. *Mu ikum!* It's like to tell a child "don't do it!" in Turkish […] When a guest comes, *Mu ikum! Oncğore! Aşo moxti!* Don't do it! What a shame! Come here! All in Lazuri. What's the point in doing this? (Birol)

Rather than the limited use of the language in general, Birol questions the way Lazuri is used for a certain negative purpose. As he mentioned above, using Lazuri to joke is acceptable while it is devaluing to use it as a secret warning for the negative associations it creates.

For some others, whether it has a negative association or not, using Lazuri as a secret language, particularly in public, should be avoided. The women I interviewed at the tailor's workshop mentioned more than once why they think it should be avoided:

> Gülşah: Do you use more Turkish outside? Shopping around?
>
> Remziye: Turkish, Turkish. We don't use Lazuri. Just with friends.
>
> Zeliha: Speaking outside, I mean Lazuri… Some don't know Lazuri so they look at you to understand whether you're talking about them. That's why we don't speak much Lazuri outside.
>
> […]
>
> Zeliha: If we have a friend with us, we speak Lazuri and they look at us like this.
>
> Remziye: When we go somewhere, like somewhere with friends, we might speak Lazuri because we think "never mind, they don't understand anyway".
>
> Tailor: Yeah, when the Laz go somewhere, they enjoy speaking Lazuri but when people around don't know any Lazuri, it might be misunderstood.
>
> […]
>
> Remziye: When we take the Georgian to collect the tea, they speak Georgian and I get really mad. What are they talking about? Are they gossiping about me? That's why we speak Turkish when we go somewhere public.

Even though they agree on and enjoy the function of Lazuri as a secret code, the women worry about what "the other" would think of them. It is interesting that

Remziye is that "other" for the Georgians speaking their own language among themselves. It is clear that for the different language groups in Ardeşen – Lazuri, Georgian and Turkish speakers – language is a marker of identity, which constructs difference and creates an "other". The disturbance created by the different language is that of realizing the "otherness". It might also be perceived as an identity claim; a claim for difference, which is again found disturbing. İrfan, who I met through Rıza, shared the love his friend had for the language while clearly pointing out that speaking a different language (than Turkish in Turkey) should not mean an identity claim as, he believes, the Kurdish speakers do.

> I was on the bus one day and there were foreigners speaking English. They can speak it. They are guests and they can speak their own language. I can't say anything to them. We were speaking Turkish and making jokes. There were these two other guys and they were speaking Kurdish. I could understand that because I recognize some Kurdish words. They were looking and laughing at us. We felt disturbed when we saw that they were laughing at us. […] I asked them, 'Why don't you speak Turkish in public?'. 'If you speak Turkish, I understand what you're saying but now I don't and I feel disturbed'. […] That's why I think it's just better if the languages are spoken locally.

Even though İrfan claims he was disturbed by the situation since he did not understand what the Kurdish speakers were saying, the way he mentions the English-speaking foreigners shows that he was more disturbed by the public presence of an identity that should stay local in his opinion. However, the way some Kurdish speakers feel about using their language in public is not very different from how Lazuri speakers feel in the same situation. İnal (2014) quotes a Kurdish speaker from Diyarbakır who believed "people can sometimes be disturbed" by their use of Kurdish with the assumption that they are "speaking something else, something secret" (p. 101). Even though the mother tongue is used as a secret code, a language people attribute a privacy function to, it is an act of difference when used in the presence of the speakers of another language.

The final link people form when talking about their Lazuri use, particularly in public places, is intimacy. Although the language is not usually present in the public sphere, it finds a place for itself for intimacy. The word 'intimacy' came up quite often when describing the instances people switched to Lazuri. Şengül, an English teacher in her

thirties, from Ardeşen underlined this aspect when talking about when people preferred Lazuri more:

> Intimacy is more important. Intimacy is one of the criteria for choosing to speak Lazuri. If you're close with someone, you speak Lazuri. Also if you know that someone speaks Lazuri a lot, you act accordingly. However, I believe the most important is intimacy. I have a friend working at the S. High School. When we come across, our first word is in Lazuri. We don't prefer Turkish. Intimacy is important for choosing Lazuri.

While it is usually more common not to initiate talks in Lazuri in certain institutions such as a bank, hospital or a government office, people do not address each other in Lazuri when entering stores or other less formal places either. When I asked the business owners I interviewed in the Laz towns whether they would hold conversations with the customers in the language, the answer was again related to the factor of intimacy. Ceylan (54), who runs a beauty salon in Hopa, is puzzled about the question on possible conversations in Lazuri with the customers:

> With customers? For instance, I enjoy talking to M.A. [the contact that introduced her to me] in Lazuri. I talk to friends who love Lazuri. When you're in a group of people and there are old people, too. Then, I also speak Lazuri. But I guess most of my customers don't know Lazuri. I mean, we don't have that kind of a relationship. When there is a friend I'm close with, only then [I speak it].

The reason people refrain from initiating talks in Lazuri with people they are not close with might be the possible reactions to it. İsmail Avcı Bucaklişi, who is a Lazuri activist and the writer of various dictionaries and books in the language including the Lazuri coursebook used in public schools, recounts his experiences of speaking Lazuri in public in the town of Pazar[6].

> In an electric accessories shop in Pazar I asked for a phone cable in Lazuri. The salesman directly warned me not to speak Lazuri. I'm sorry; it was a slip of the tongue. […] We were shopping as a family in the relatively big supermarket in the town. My two sons were running around the aisles, and I was warning the kids in Lazuri in an audible voice. The girl working at the supermarket commented: "Those speaking Lazuri are here again. They come every year.

As Bucaklişi wittily narrates, it is hard to guess how people will react to the public use of Lazuri. Therefore, while Ceylan is right to claim that most of her customers might not know the language, even those who can speak it do so only with the people

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[6] https://www.jinepsgazetesi.com/makale/yine-lazca-konusanlar-geldi-haziran-2016-notlari-1533

they are close with. When people mention intimacy as a criterion for choosing to speak Lazuri, it means they speak it to people whose reactions to the language they know.

From a different perspective, language use might also be an act of intimacy or solidarity. Jaffe (1999) claims that "code-switching to Corsican, or using Corsican in domains in which French is now habitual makes a claim on, or evokes the intimacy and solidarity of village-like relations" (p. 109). This kind of intentional code-switching is conceptualized as a "marked choice" by Scotton (1986) (cited in Jaffe, 1999, 109) or as a "metaphorical code-switching" by Blom and Gumperz (1972) (cited in Jaffe, 1999, 109). Okan narrates a story of his use of Lazuri as an act of solidarity in a public domain where Lazuri is not usually present:

> Actually [I speak it] in places where there are Laz people, in meetings, I mean at the institute or in another cultural event. However, when there is someone speaking Lazuri on the street … These kinds of things happened before, too. A guy argued with the bus driver. Then, he turned to his mother and said something about the driver in Lazuri. So I addressed them in Lazuri, I mean, things like 'yeah, you're right'. I do that kind of stuff when I see a Laz person somewhere. To be honest, I like doing this. It's like 'this person is one of us'. It's not that I discriminate among people. This is who I am, where I am from. What else can I do?

This is an instance of intentionally choosing to use the language for its solidarity effect, which means being aware of and a claim on a shared identity as well as "a symbol of its social consequences" (Jaffe, 1999, 109). Birol mentions a similar public domain where people speak Turkish almost all the time but might code-switch as an act of intimacy:

> He [the doctor] becomes more [interested] when he comes across someone [at the hospital] speaking Lazuri because he doesn't normally use it. He becomes curious. 'Who are you? Where are you from?' It's the same at the bank. I do not let someone go if they are Laz. The person [at the bank] notices your accent and asks where you are from. Then, he shows more intimacy. He switches to it and starts talking. Even if he doesn't speak the language himself, he feels pleased when he hears you speak it. […] This is not only in Lazuri but in every language. It happens in Kurdish, in Turkish, Abaza, and Georgian. This is the human nature. They come across someone they know or someone who speaks the same language. This person might even be your relative, who knows?

As Birol mentions, the joy that people experience when hearing someone speak the same language as you is the joy of coming across someone you can trust and act as if you know them. What he says about the possibility that the person speaking your language might even be your relative is exactly what Jaffe (1999) points to as "the intimacy and solidarity of village-like relations" (p. 109). These intimate relations that are not necessarily there in the public domains are formed by uttering words in Lazuri.

The absence of Lazuri from the public sphere seems to be misrecognized as a natural phenomenon even though it has more to do with language planning and policies than the properties of the language itself. As the language is attributed a function to create intimate and emotional relations, even its occasional use in the public sphere might create tension. It could be interpreted as a claim for difference, which is mostly not tolerated in the national habitus of Turkey.

5.3. Village and hometown

Throughout my field trip I was advised to conduct my interviews in the 'hometown' - *memleket*[7] or in the villages as it was more likely to find speakers of 'real Lazuri' there. This deep belief in the presence of a Lazuri 'more real' than that of the people interviewed in city centers is worth a critical analysis of the perception of the village and/or the local in this context. A fact to consider is that the ratio of the population living in towns and villages of Turkey was a mere 7,7% as of December 31st in 2018 (TUIK, 2019). Today the village is not an immediate reality for a great majority and the local is mostly a neighborhood in a city center. Taking this current phenomenon into account, Pietikainen and Kelly-Holmes (2013) in their co-edited work *Multilingualism and the Periphery* apply the center-periphery conceptualization into the study of multilingualism and underline the fact that "'centre' and 'periphery' (as well as locality, authenticity, [and] tradition, [...]) are not given, but are instead understood as discursive constructs, products of social interaction, reflecting the circumstances and dynamics of their construction" (p. 4). Thus, the recurrent mention of the village and the *memleket*, both centers and peripheries depending on the context, is to be taken as discursive constructs and analyzed as such. Bearing in mind the constructedness of village/*memleket*, the present chapter will highlight how

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[7] Turkish word for hometown

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these have an effect on the use and the image of Lazuri through language ideologies of boundary-making, authenticity/purism, and rural versus modern.

The Romantic ideal of a people speaking a single language was the basis for nation states to homogenize and standardize communities linguistically. This "monoglot standard", in Baumann and Briggs' (2000) words, served to "normalize and essentialize" one language-one community equation (p. 202). While it is the nation which is conceptualized as a community on a territory with clear boundaries, it also led to an understanding of a "territorialized language" (Canagarajah, 2019, 10). When Feurstein was designing the alphabet for Lazuri, he must have this identification in mind. Hann (1997) refers to his perception of the Lazi as "Herderian" since Feurstein sees them as "a Caucasian people (*Volk*) who have maintained their fundamental integrity throughout the many centuries that they have lived in their present *territory* [emphasis added]" (p. 144). Most of those identifying as Lazi today indeed in no way perceive themselves as an ethnic minority let alone a nation. However, there seems to be a boundary-making in process in relation to language use. Memleket or the village is this bounded territory that Lazuri is bound to. Interestingly, it is possible to go in and out of language by being in and out of this territory.

Even though many Lazi live out of the Eastern Black Sea now, it is quite common for people to spend their summer in the memleket. With the tea-picking season, even the people in the region leave town centers for the villages. In the heat of the summer, many move to the houses up in the plateaus. Aynur has been living in Istanbul since she got into university. As her parents are in the memleket, she tries to spend her summers there, though increasingly less often. She looked for some Lazuri expressions to tell me throughout the interview but her memory failed her. She was not quite hopeful about the future of the language either.

> When I compare myself to my cousins who were outside [of the hometown], for instance, their Lazuri is almost zero. Now we are also outside, we might experience the same thing. I think it [Lazuri] will go on for the ones staying in the hometown but when you go out [of the hometown] it is forgotten whatever you do. You do not speak Lazuri and this also affects your child.

The survival of Lazi depended on the ones that were *inside* while those like her went *out* and there was nothing they could do to keep the language once they left. As her

words escaped her, Lazuri would be forgotten. Many others who contributed with their comments in the local culture association where I talked to Aynur differentiated between themselves and the ones living in the memleket. Birol was a "memleket-lover" as he claimed. He has lived in Istanbul since he was 13 and been involved in various businesses. Although he was 56, he jokingly claimed his ID card said 27 and a half. His energetic and fun character meant he was ready to share his life story as well as emotional folk songs in Lazuri. It was his cousin, Ahmet, that the original interview was arranged with. After that first interview, however, he volunteered. He did not agree with some of the claims his cousin made. He believed it was because Ahmet left the village earlier: "Ahmet did not live in the hometown as long as we did. I lived there until I was 13. Until 13 we uploaded whatever we could to the computer".

It was as if the memleket was the only source of the language where one can fill up their hard disk. This constant reference to the village and the memleket depicts Lazuri as a locally bound entity while, as Blommaert (2010) puts it, languages are "mobile resources" people make use of in any communication opportunity. There might be no opportunities for communication in a certain language at a certain place for sure. However, as Birol pointed out like many others, it was not the lack of favorable circumstances that held people back most of the time:

> Now the schools are in the cities, there are few schools in villages. The kids raised in the cities - and I mean it's still the cities of Lazi - but if their parents live in the city, then their mothers are teachers or pharmacists. So the ones born in the town speak very little Lazuri anyway. Most of them speak Turkish.

Even though a Lazuri speaking family lived in a dominantly Lazuri speaking town center, their children rarely speak the language if ever. They are defined as kids raised in the city as opposed to kids in villages, which was used many times in narratives as a category of Lazuri speakers.

Orhan made a similar comment about Lazuri use: "Except the ones in the villages, people in the cities cannot fully use it. They understand it but do not speak it". His statement made it unclear whether people cannot or do not speak the language. Yet, there were very few among those interviewed who claimed this was a conscious choice. Rather it was something unavoidably left behind when they moved out of there. The identification of the language with the village comes up in many other

studies, including studies related to the languages spoken in Turkey. Kaya (2014) in her work about the Hopa Hemshin, for instance, observes women preferring to speak Hemshin in tea lands, and some of the participants claim this language "belongs to village life" (p. 147). In other studies on Kurdish speakers, participants share similar stories:

> If we were in village, we would speak Kurmanji. Outside there is Turkish in general. Sometimes we go to the village and we speak Kurmanji (Devran, second generation, 25, secondary education, Ben u Sen, interview in Turkish/Kurdish)
>
> (Çağlayan, 2014, 85).
>
> When I was little, I thought that Turkish language was 'bajarî' meaning the ones
>
> from the city. I was in the village and I thought Kurdish was the language of the
>
> villagers and Turkish was that of the city-dwellers, the elite or the civil servants. (Male, Diyarbakır, 35, University graduate) (İnal, 2014, pp. 78-79).

Devran's use of the word *outside* resembles that of Aynur when she stated that the language is doomed to be forgotten when people move *out*. Although there was no direct reference to Lazuri being the language of the villagers, the location - the village or the hometown - was deemed fundamental to the survival of Lazuri. The language and the identity could not be carried by the individual but was "linked to one place on the ground" (Jaffe, 1999, 43).

Despite the quiet consistent discourse on Lazuri belonging to the hometown, Orhan mentions a possibility others did not clearly point out:

> People in this region are not aware of their mother tongues. They do not realize if their mother tongue is disappearing or what its importance is. Only when someone leaves Arhavi they realize what's happening. They meet people from different identities, languages and then they learn the value of their language and care about it more.

In fact he acknowledges the existence of people with different languages in cities. Unlike many other people I interviewed in the region, Orhan was quite observant about the situation of the language. He had a certain reputation as an activist in Arhavi. After spending some time in the Arhavi center, I went to a small cafe serving homemade food. When the women working there learnt I was about to visit Orhan for an interview, the first thing they remembered about him was that he would organize events for Lazuri. Still, he was not immune from the understanding of

"multilingualism as a set of parallel monolingualisms" as described by Heller (2006, 5). She claims that despite the positive value sometimes attributed to multilingualism, "languages are still seen as autonomous systems" rather than "a hybrid system" composed of multiple languages to serve different functions together. Therefore, Orhan recognized a multilingual reality despite it being separate languages existing side by side. He still tended to attribute monolingualism to people leaving Arhavi since they left their language behind so that they could adopt another one in the city.

Birol, however, definitely had reservations related to multilingualism even or maybe just because he saw it as parallel monolingualisms:

> Birol: Take the Kurds, our Kurdish brothers. They insist having Kurdish in schools. Is it even possible? We have only one language. Our language is Turkish.
>
> Gülşah: How about having both of them?
>
> Birol: Then it would be confusing. As Ahmet said, that wouldn't be possible. I mean I would like that there is education in Lazuri but then when I want it in Lazuri, the other will demand it in Circassian, Greek, another will ask for Romani, Georgian. This is not OK. I mean how can the state deal with them all?

The thought of more than one language used for schooling did not make sense for Birol. The country was multilingual and he accepted that. However, these languages all had their separate places and utilizing different languages for different purposes would be confusing. This monolingual ideology does not only render a true multilingualism impossible but it also has a great impact on the speakers of a single language in terms of their perception of proficiency.

During my visit to Yaşar's bakery cafe in Fındıklı, many interested passersby joined our discussion. Since I did not have the chance to get their permission for a recording, I started taking notes on people's comments. One comment, probably backed by a couple of people, reads: "Our language is purer in the villages. A village in Çamlıhemşin speaks 100% Lazuri. They do not mix it with Turkish". They were not the only ones thinking villages have "more real" Lazuri. Kathyrn Howard (2012) also cites being "advised to go outside the city to seek out "really real," "really deep," or "really authentic" Kam Muang" in her study in Northern Thailand (p. 73). While the image of authentic language speakers in villages or far from the city center seems, at first, to be related to the constructed village-identity equation, the ideology

of purism is apparently another aspect. Recounting his visit to the region in 1910, Marr (2016) complains about the difficulty of getting hold of Lazi women, who are "the best guards of pure Lazuri" (p. 59). This purity was explained to me by Remziye and Zeliha who were also praising the Lazuri use in the villages:

> Remziye: In some villages they have no Turkish, they only know Lazuri. Even the kids speak it so beautifully. They speak it like a nightingale [fluently - idiomatic]. When they start school, they learn Turkish, of course.
>
> Gülşah: Then are there ones starting school without any Turkish? I mean is it hard for them?
>
> Remziye: It must be hard, sure.
>
> Zeliha: My girl, there are grandparents in every household. All kids learn it [Lazuri]. However, in villages they don't know any Turkish, they just speak Lazuri.
>
> Gülşah: What's the difference between the village and here, then?
>
> Zeliha: I mean when old women came here, to the center, they did not know any Turkish. There were outsiders so you need to speak Turkish. Then we got used to Turkish, you see?

The praised villages were portrayed as places where a single language, Lazuri is spoken, fluently and where there are no outsiders and thus no contact with Turkish. This depiction very much resembles the ideal speaker Moore, Pietikainen and Blommaert (2010) argue to be increasingly assumed as "full, fluent, perhaps monolingual" and accordingly "a pre-language-contact speaker (p. 12). Aynur, for instance, does not see herself as an ideal speaker of Lazuri:

> It would be nice to be able to speak Lazuri fully but we [those in Istanbul] are all in the same condition so we can't speak it fully. Maybe with the elderly since they can fully speak Lazuri but as I am not fully proficient I cannot answer fully in Lazuri.

Her repetitive use of the word "fully" highlights the common understanding of "a 'native' or 'mother-tongue' (L1) speaker [...] possess[ing] all the resources of the language" (p. 11). Believing that she is not an ideal native speaker, Aynur hesitates to speak Lazuri, particularly when she is in İstanbul with others in the same condition as she is. What makes the ones in the villages have full Lazuri, then? In a different part of the conversation, she made a point about these villages that many others repeated in other narratives:

> I mean thinking about speaking it [Lazuri] at school … Our school was by the coast and our village is already a coastal village that's why the school was also at the

coast. Kids from upper villages, the villages in the highlands, would come by school bus. They would speak it more. The coastal villages like ours would speak less and speak more Turkish and so the kids. However, the kids coming from highlands, as their parents conversed more in Lazuri, they would speak more, more than we did I mean.

These ideal native speakers' being monolingual, fluent, full, and thus pure has been related to their isolation in the highlands by many like Aynur. In fact, when I was first mentioned of a village speaking pure Lazuri, it was *Dutxe* (Tunca in Turkish). Interestingly, the literal translation of its name is upper location (from Lazuri *dudi-xa*[8]). Other villages from the highlands quite close to *Dutxe* were also referred to by different people as places where real speakers of Lazuri live. Their common feature was that they were isolated and the Lazuri spoken there did not have any contact with Turkish.

> When you think about kids, most cannot count the numbers [in Lazuri]. I mean the Lazi kids. Not in our family at least. But there is a village called *Ǧvandi* [Çayırdüzü] in Ardeşen. The kids really counted in Lazuri and it was not because someone with an awareness of Lazi identity taught them. The kids just learnt it there. Actually it is because it is a closed community, 30-40 km away from the city center. They come to the center once a week if ever. The kids also go to school there [in the village]. I guess this is the reason." (Okan, İstanbul)

> During the period I was growing up in the village - until I was 13-15 - how many people retired do you think? Imagine a village of 1000 people in 500 houses. How many retired people were there? Only one. Do you know why? There was no connection with the outside world. (Rıza, İstanbul)

> Gülşah: You were talking about the highland villages, upper villages. What does it mean exactly?

> Arif: The thing about the villages close to the center is.. I mean those in the city do not speak Lazuri. There were people transferred to these cities to assimilate. They brought them from Iran, for instance, during the Ottoman times. That's why they did not speak Lazuri. The ones who needed to contact them in the center had to speak Turkish. The ones in the upper villages did not have such a problem. They did not have any connection to the city. (Arif, Pazar)

> My nephews used to speak really rich Lazuri because that village, the village where my sister got married, speaks Lazuri very well. That kid could not speak Turkish 19

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[8] https://nisanyanmap.com/?y=dutxe&t=&lv=1

years ago. The village is Timisvat [Köprüköy]. Now he can't speak Lazuri and lives in that village. (Birol, İstanbul)

The reason Lazuri speakers from these villages spoke pure or full Lazuri in their opinion was that they were far from the city and contacted very few Turkish speakers. As mentioned before, these people represented pre-language-contact speakers. However, it is getting harder if not impossible for people to not be exposed to another language. Language contact, in turn, leads to code-mixing, code-switching and many borrowed words. Birol's cousin, for instance, spoke Lazuri very well as a child whereas he cannot speak it well now even though he lives in a village. What Birol means must be that he mixes more Turkish into his Lazuri or switches to Turkish more often. Mehmet, an 18-year-old I interviewed in Ardeşen, had a similar perception about language mixing:

> Probably my Turkish is better. There are a lot of words I don't know in Lazuri. I know the most common words but for example we use *ama* (but) in Turkish and not Lazuri.

The word he mentions to exemplify his inadequate use of Lazuri is an Arabic-origin word and must have entered Lazuri vocabulary way back just as in Turkish. However, it was enough for him to think his Lazuri lacks significant elements. Unfortunately, assuming the pre-language-contact or pure Lazuri speaker to be the ideal is not realistic and in fact does harm to a majority not conforming to it. Actual performance of a speaker could be "mixed and heterogeneous" however they might see it as "defective, especially in 'minority language' communities located in nation-states with an official standard language and a vigorous culture of standardisation" (Moore, Pietikainen & Blommaert, 2010, 13). Rather than performances being devalued as defective, not full or fluent, they can be acknowledged as performances of a 'semispeaker' as conceptualized by Dorian (1977). It is also crucial to realize that purism attributed to villages for their more resourceful Lazuri furthers the "linguistic alienation and insecurity among [...] "semispeakers" (Jaffe, 1999, 24). This insecurity, then, might "silence would-be speakers" (p. 25) or "reduces the motivation of community members to use or learn the language. (Canagarajah, 2019, 43).

Even though the image of the romanticized monolingual ideal speaker has not been questioned much, this comment by Rıza shows a certain awareness of different possibilities:

> There was this 'Do not let children speak Lazuri'. Why? Then they cannot speak Turkish. The ones speaking Lazuri but not Turkish cannot understand the teacher and fail. People quit Lazuri for their children's success. This was one of the main reasons. Is this really the case, though? Now when I think about it, I have a son and he's Lazi. You know Hasan studied Translation and Interpretation, he speaks German, English, Lazuri, and Turkish. I realized you can learn a lot of languages. I mean back then our generation or our parents might not have known these because of their [social] position. The educated must have known it though.

Despite not being dwelled upon much in narratives, a temporal aspect regarding villages is worth a brief analysis. A significant change in the history of Lazuri speaking region as in whole Turkey was the name changes. From 1930s onwards as a method of Turkification, places with names from different languages were given Turkish names (Bellér-Hann & Hann, 2003, 94). This means a mental break with the past. Throughout the interviews I was almost always given both names:

> "Salinköy but now Armağan Village is the new name" (Ahmet, İstanbul)
>
> "Boğazlı Village but the old name I mean the Lazuri name is Cigetore" (Arif, Pazar)
>
> "The elderly say Ğere but we call it Işıklı Village" (Aynur, İstanbul)

It is possible to find the roots of this old-new and Lazuri-Turkish dichotomy in the modernization project of the Republic. Taşkın (2011) claims the nation-state demanded its members to leave their "old-fashioned" culture behind (p. 20) and this included the language. Being a modern citizen meant speaking an urban Turkish. Despite his love for Lazuri and efforts as an activist to help it survive, Okan cannot help but associate the language loss a result of urban life:

> My grandmother lived in İstanbul for a really long time. She had the İstanbul culture and then she went to Germany. She was mostly raised in an urban culture so she might have just forgotten it.

In parallel with Taşkın's (2016) argument that "the Lazi mostly identify Lazness with the past and the village" (p. 64), narrations in this study show that Lazuri is also identified with these two concepts. This identification was mostly pointing to these three beliefs. The language is immobile and belongs to a location, that is, the hometown/village, the urban means modern and thus Turkish, and a full proficiency

in Lazuri means a pure Lazuri, which devalues the semi-speaker proficiency. This indicates that a perception of a Lazuri speaker who is urban, multilingual, and fractured but able to communicate would have a great impact on the use of the language.

6. CONCLUSION

The primary purpose of this study was to address a gap in the literature in Turkey regarding the decreasing use of Lazuri. Studying such a language shift is of value not only because it is an endangered language but also since languages have a critical role "in the production, maintenance and change of social relations of power" (Fairclough, 1989, 1). Power relations in this context are related to the issues of being a minority or majority, understanding of a nation and citizenship, and social capital as well as the right to name and narrate. It is possible to analyse this linguistic phenomenon through language policies in Turkey, which have, for a long time, limited languages other than Turkish to the privacy of homes through coercion. This approach, however, assumes a one-way, top-down direction of power. It also, as stated, defines power in terms of coercion. Yet, the perspective adopted here is closer to the Gramscian hegemony, for power is exercised "not without the due measure of legal and legitimate compulsion but principally by means of winning the active consent of those classes and groups who were subordinated" (Hall, 1982, 81). Therefore, instead of solely focusing on the language policies and the historical and sociopolitical background, power relations were traced in the narratives of Lazuri speakers themselves.

> We used to find it hard to understand some of the things that the teacher said. We would ask those older than us what the teacher meant. In the fifth grade, especially, we had a woman teacher. Despite being Lazi herself, she would assign someone to punish those speaking Lazuri at school. Actually not only at school, even outside school that student would note down who was speaking Lazuri. A friend, once, speaks Lazuri. The note is taken down, of course, so he gets beaten. He feels offended and swears "I will never speak Lazuri again". One day he goes herding the cattle in the village. One of the cows tumbles down the cliff. As he is far away from the house, he calls out a neighbor. "Uncle! The cow did that thing!" He can't say tumble down. He could say *puci marginum* "the cow tumbled down". However, he had sworn he wouldn't speak Lazuri again and as he can't remember the Turkish word, he says "the cow did that thing". The man comes and sees the cow down the cliff and starts beating him down. "Why don't you shout *puci marginum* if the cow

> tumbled down? It died down there." The kid then says to himself "I spoke Lazuri and got beaten. I didn't speak Lazuri and got beaten again. What am I to do?"

The story from his childhood that Arif told me is a representative of the experiences and dilemmas most speakers of the languages other than Turkish recount. Not many narratives in this study mentioned or overtly complained about these bans, punishments, or negative experiences. Arif was from the generation that first encountered the strict language policies of the Republic. Even though fewer and fewer Lazuri speakers experienced actual negative experiences with Lazuri after Arif's generation, their effects pursued without their original reasons being talked about. This meant "existing social relations and differences of power" needed to be "legitimiz[ed]" and this is achieved "through the recurrence of ordinary, familiar ways of behaving" (Fairclough, 1989, 2). Language ideologies, therefore, are formed to naturalize or legitimize those historical and sociopolitical power relations.

> As we have been using it in the family since I was a child, sometimes I cannot help but let something in Lazuri just slip when I am somewhere I shouldn't be speaking it, like when I am with my teachers or the principle. I just tell myself "I wish you hadn't said that".

18-year-old Mehmet claimed he never had a negative experience for speaking Lazuri. At a later point in our interview, however, he mentions quite unknowingly that there are places where he better not speak Lazuri. For him, this is natural and common-sense.

These ideologies might be originated in the state discourse as a means of consensus. As Hall (1982) argues "a democratic society with capitalist principles and unequal distribution of wealth and authority needs popular consent to its structure and values for the continuity of its existence" (p. 59). In the same fashion, a monolingual state needs popular language ideologies for the continuity and legitimization of its existence. In Turkey, the state discourse endorsed one state-one language equation, praised a standard and 'pure' Turkish, and named the languages in Turkey other than Turkish "languages used traditionally by Turkish citizens in their daily life". These ideologies of monolingualism, purism and minority languages' being local or traditional languages shaped the minority discourses on languages.

The state aims to reproduce these ideologies to continue its existence; however, this does not mean all individuals in a community homogenously hold the same beliefs

and with the same motivation. The power relations and their existing consequences are the current shift from Lazuri to Turkish, the limited but varying domains Lazuri is used and the decrease in intergenerational transmission. Rather than pointing to or even being aware of any historical or sociopolitical phenomenon, Lazuri speakers adopt certain language ideologies as they help to explain their lingustic practices. Since many Lazuri speakers define their identity as Turkish-Lazi, objectifying the current situation of the language rather than questioning the Turkish state policies is preferrable even though not always consciously. While claiming agency for their linguistic practices is another option, it might also harm their Lazi identification. Therefore, language ideologies serve the purpose of building a coherent Turkish-Lazi identity.

The taken-for-grantedness of the present situation, position, and use of Lazuri and Turkish in the community leads to certain binary associations. While Turkish is urban, modern, national, and the language of reason and intellect, Lazuri is identified with rurality, tradition, past, females, and praised as the language of emotions. Besides these binary associations, there are also certain ideologies about languages in general such as language being an independent entity with clear borders and belonging to certain people and locations. The monolingualism and purism ideologies also force people to choose one of their languages over the other and leave one behind if they believe their mixed use means they are not an ideal speaker.

Even though it is possible that language ideologies change, most of them have been reproduced for generations and even by the activists working to revitalize the language. Essentializing languages and not accepting hybridity have a great impact on language shift. Romanticizing and depicting an unchanging image of Lazi identity as well as not incorporating the language to the actual lives of the community are the other obstacles against a possible revitalization. For people to be more eager to welcome the language in their lives, more public awareness of bilingualism and languages as mobile and hybrid resources is called for. It is also essential that the historical and sociopolitical situatedness of all current phenomena regarding language situations in Turkey is made known instead of reproducing common language ideologies.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1 - Participants

Rıza - Istanbul, 25.12.16

I first met Rıza at his cafe on a side street in Kadıköy, where you can eat certain Laz dishes and drink tea. A mutual friend introduced us over a steaming pot of *Muhlama*. He was apparently better known as a former football player and currently as a Laz poet than a cafe owner. His cafe was rather a hang-out spot for him to welcome his visitors and publicize his poetry books. We arranged a date for the interview and exchanged numbers. He met me by the ferry terminal in Kadıköy that day and suggested us go to a nearby cafe he believed would be quiet enough for us to conduct the interview. On our way to the cafe, he talked about his family - his two sons and his wife. He said they were distantly related and quite young when they got married, which had been a relatively common practice in his hometown at the time. He was born in a village of Çamlıhemşin in Rize in October 1969. 'My mother is quite sure of the month' he said 'the people of the time did not take note of the year but they would know what time of the year it was'. He had the unique skill of making all his answers into stories, so his account of being Laz and speaking Lazuri had a pastoral tone. He argued he didn't make any decisions or form his opinions regarding his identity based on political ideologies but rather through his principle of loving and accepting all living things.

İrfan - Istanbul, 25.12.16

He was from the same town as Rıza and introduced to me by him. He did all sorts of jobs as he put it and was unemployed at the moment. He was fluent in Lazuri and talked to Rıza in the language on some occasions. Unlike his friend, he was

dismissive of any ethnic identity claims by any group in Turkey, particularly the Kurds. He was a Turk, then a Laz.

Meliha - Istanbul, 25.01.17

Meliha was a colleague of a friend of mine. She was a 34-year-old woman from Arhavi, Artvin. We met at a hip coffee shop in Beşiktaş, which was her suggestion as a meeting place for the interview. She was fairly open about herself from the beginning and started off the conversation by talking about personal matters. You could tell from her stories about herself that she was a highly self-confident and ambitious woman. She had just quit her job and was writing a book on her experiences in business while at the same time training to be a pilates instructor. These were important details while making sense of her narrative and analysing her comments and attitude towards my research questions. She identified herself to be an *Atatürkçü* (not a Kemalist per se but rather an *Atatürk-lover*). Her fierce reaction to my questions on identity, mother-tongue and education in the mother-tongue changed the tone of our interview at one point. I decided to end it since she wasn't being open anymore.

Ahmet - Istanbul, 09.02.17

I was referred to Ahmet by Memedali Barış Beşli. He was born in a village of Ardeşen, Rize in 1967. He was the president of a local culture organization. He invited me to the organization on the day of the *horon* class they held weekly. He was a friendly person but at the same time had the formal tone of a president. He contradicted himself or insisted on his version of the truth that others around him disagreed with. He mostly recounted official history rather than his autobiographical history.

Birol - Istanbul, 09.02.17

Birol is Ahmet's cousin and from the same village of Ardeşen. He was born there in 1961 but moved to Istanbul when he was around 15. He was extremely eager to share his stories and songs in Lazuri since he believed I should be taught about the Laz

culture as an outsider. Even though he had just met me and learnt about my study, he insisted on having an interview. He mostly corrected what he believed Ahmet was wrong about. For instance, he contradicted him by saying that there were still some really old women in villages who did not speak almost any Turkish.

Öznur - Istanbul, 09.02.17

I interviewed Öznur at the same local culture organization, which she started frequenting quite recently. She was in her 20s and did not speak much Lazuri since her family would not communicate in the language. She told me she was now realizing the importance of her identity and would like to learn the language as well. She was the only one among those interviewed at the organization who underlined the concept of the right to mother tongue rather than romanticizing or localizing the issue.

Aynur - Istanbul, 16.02.17

Aynur was a 28-year-old mechanical engineer who came to Istanbul from Ardeşen in her early 20s. I met Aynur the second time I visited the office of the organization. It was her first time there and she agreed to talk to me a bit unwillingly upon the request of Ahmet. She was hesitant as she believed she may not be quite knowledgeable about the language. On the contrary, her remarks and anecdotes proved really fruitful.

Zümra - Istanbul, 16.02.17

I had first met Zümra the week before but she requested the interiew to take place the next time I visited. She was a 20-year-old university student who had moved to Istanbul at the beginning of the semester. Before I was introduced to her, I eavesdropped to Öznur and Zümra talking about Zümra's accent. Öznur was surprised that she did not have a strong accent considering she had lived in Ardeşen all her life. Zümra guessed it could be because "she read [books] a lot".

Okan – Istanbul, 24.03.17

Okan was a 24-year-old music student working on Laz traditional music. He was an active member of the Laz Institute. We met at a cafe in Beşiktaş. His family was from Ardeşen, where he spent his summers as a child. He asserted that his love for the hometown must have shaped his identity.

Ceylan – Hopa, 27.03.17

I was introduced to her by Mehmedali Barış Beşli. We met at her beauty salon in Hopa. She was born in 1963 in Hopa to a Turkish-speaking mother and a Lazuri-speaking father.

Neriman – Hopa, 27.03.17

I met her at Ceylan's beauty salon. She was born in Arhavi in1966 but got married and moved to Hopa. She spoke fluent Lazuri and had a strong accent in her Turkish. She did not communicate to her children in the language but mentioned their interest in Lazuri.

Orhan – Arhavi, 28.03.17

He was born in Arhavi in 1955. He lived in Ankara while he was studying university but dropped out of school for political reasons. He was well known in Arhavi as a Lazuri activist. He wrote several books in Lazuri. I met him at his office.

Gülay-Aydın – Fndıklı, 28.03.17

Gülay and Aydın were the parents of an activist I met in Istanbul. They hosted me at their flat in Fındıklı and we had a casual discussion over tea and biscuits.

Yaşar – Fındıklı, 29.03.17

Yaşar was a 58-year-old man running a bakery cafe in Fındıklı. He was quite interested in working towards the revival of the language. He had the Lazuri alphabet pinned to some tables at the cafe. Our conversation at his cafe was really helpful since many passersby also joined the discussion at some point.

Remziye-Zeliha-Nazmiye – Ardeşen, 29.03.17

I was introduced to Remziye through Zümra, who I met at the local culture organization in Istanbul. Remziye was born in Ardeşen in 1978 and she was the mother of four children. The interview was initially set to take place at their store in her husband's office. However, she talked to a friend who had a tailor's workshop nearby who invited us there where we could also meet some of the old ladies living in their neighborhood. The interview set with Remziye soon turned into a group discussion involving Zeliha and Nazmiye in their 80s. Many passersby to the workshop also joined the conversation at some point.

Şengül-Mehmet-Yeliz – Ardeşen, 29.03.17

I was introduced to Şengül by Okan. She was in her late 20s and a teacher of English at a high school. She was quite proud of her language and she had a slight accent in her Turkish even though she said she had only realized it when people pointed it out. She introduced me to Mehmet and Yeliz, two 18-year-old students who were about to take the university exam. Mehmet thought he had an accent and some problems while speaking Turkish since he was a villager and his family always communicated in Lazuri. He wanted to study automotive engineering since he was interested in cars. Yeliz was quite the opposite. She almost refused to speak Lazuri, which must have been a result of her father's attitude towards the language. He almost alwys communicated with her in Turkish. She said she might become a dietitian.

Arif – Pazar, 29.03.17

It was a bit hard to set a meeting with Arif, who was spending the day in the village and returning to the town center only on certain days. We finally met that evening at a restaurant in Pazar town center. Even though I chose the restaurant, it was clear that he was well known by the staff. He was in his 80s and had managed a radio broadcasting from the region for most of his life. He was one of the people who encouraged Laz youth to make music and embrace their language, accent and identity.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Gülşah TÜRK

Personal Information
Birth date / place: 20.11.1987 / Bursa
Address: Muradiye Mah. Nüzhetiye Cd. No: 51/10 Beşiktaş
 ISTANBUL - TURKEY
Mobile phone: 0905446791765
E-mail address: gulsahturk1987@gmail.com
Website: https://yildiz.academia.edu/GülşahTürk

Education
Graduate degree
Yıldız Technical University
Institute of Social Sciences
Humanities and Social Sciences
GPA: 4.00 / 4.00
July 2013 – May 2019

Undergraduate degree
Hacettepe University
Faculty of Letters
English Language and Literature
GPA: 3.00 / 4.00
September 2004 - June 2008

Honors and Awards
Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry Scholarship (2004-2008)

Work Experience
Currently a lecturer of English at İstanbul Bilgi University since 2014
Actively teaching English at different institutions since 2009

Academic Presentations and Workshops
Istanbul – October 2018
Writing Society: Politics and Ethics of Research in Precarious Times
International Symposium and Scholarly Writing Workshop
Temporality Aspect in the Language Ideologies of Lazuri Speakers in Turkey

Amsterdam - May 2017
Conference Politics of Multilingualism: Possibilities and Challenges
Language ideologies of Laz language speakers in Turkey

Bangkok - October 2016
5th International Conference on Language and Education
Language ideologies in Turkey: The discourse related to MTB-MLE

Poznan - July 2016
IPSA World Congress of Political Science
What if they all start demanding it? Online presence of Circassian, Kurdish, and Laz associations advocating linguistic rights

Non-Academic Workshops and Presentations
October-November 2018
Planning the teaching and learning environment for students whose mother tongue is not Turkish
Given two seminars as part of *The teacher support program for the social integration of immigrant and refugee children through education* at Helsinki Yurttaşlar Derneği (Helsinki Citizens' Assembly)

October 2018
Multilingual learning environment
Moderated a collaborative workshop with Eğitmen Panda (agency based in Istanbul designing workshops and trainings related to intercultural communication)

June 2018
Mother tongue based multilingual education: Why and How?
Presented with Jessica Frechette at the Education Forum organized by Anadolu Kültür (NGO based in Istanbul working on arts, cultural diversity and human rights)

March 2017
Dilimizin Geleceğini Planlamak (Planning the future of our language)
Organized and assisted the moderation of the workshop at HerDilDer

Volunteer Work
Turkish translation for the talk given by Kimmo Kosonen (SIL International) titled
Toward wider acceptance and greater use of non-dominant languages in education: Practices and processes of policy change
19th January 2016 - Istanbul

Turkish translation of the UNESCO Advocacy Kit for Promoting Multilingual Education

Memberships
Co-founder
Her Dil Derneği – NGO based in Istanbul working on linguistics and multilingual education

Certificates
Human Rights – A Recurrent History Summer School Diploma
Swedish Research Institute in İstanbul
June 2014

Syllabus and Materials Design
ITI – International Training Institute
March 2013

Cambridge CELTA Pass A
British Side Language School
June 2012

 ELT Certificate
Hacettepe University
June 2007

Languages
Turkish   Native
English   Native-like
Italian   Intermediate
Kurdish   Beginner

Research Interests
Language ideologies, language and power, multilingual education

Personal Interests
Modernist literature, 20th century abstract, Coffee brewing

References
Assist. Prof. Kerem KARAOSMANOĞLU
Yıldız Technical University
Department of Humanities and Social Sciences
keremk@me.com

Jessica Frechette, MA
Her Dil Derneği / SIL
jessica@herdilder.org