

## A COMPARISON OF THE FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICIES OF THE FIRST AND SECOND-GENERATION TURKS LIVING IN GERMANY

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**Abstract:** Adopting a mixed-method approach, this article investigated the differences in the family language policies of the first and second-generation Turks living in Germany under the categories of language ideologies, language practices, and language management as defined by Spolsky (2004). One hundred and two parents (54 first-generation and 48 second-generation) constituted the sample of the study. The findings indicated that both generations desire their children to be bilingual Turkish-German speakers but they differ in terms of their ideas concerning the onset of bilingualism. Starting school has an undeniable and formative role in the language choice of not only the children starting school but also their younger siblings highlighting the children's agentive role in language use in the families. Furthermore, while both generations think that maintaining Turkish means the maintenance of Turkish identity, culture, and religion; concerns for children's educational trajectories lead second-generation parents to prioritize German in their family language policies. Finally, no significant difference has been found concerning the language management activities of both generations.

**Keywords:** family language policy; Turks in Germany; language maintenance; language ideologies; language practices; intergenerational language use

### *Almanya'da Yaşayan Birinci ve İkinci Kuşak Türklerin Aile Dil Politikalarının Karşılaştırılması*

**Öz:** Karma yöntem yaklaşımını benimseyen bu makale, Almanya'da yaşayan birinci ve ikinci kuşak Türklerin aile dil politikalarındaki farklılıkları Spolsky (2004) tarafından tanımlanan dil ideolojileri, dil uygulamaları ve dil yönetimi kategorileri altında incelemiştir. Yüz iki ebeveyn (54 birinci nesil ve 48 ikinci nesil) çalışmanın örneklemini oluşturmuştur. Bulgular, her iki kuşağın da çocuklarının Türkçe-Almanca iki dilli olmasını istediklerini, ancak iki dilliliğin başlangıcına ilişkin fikirleri açısından farklılık gösterdiklerini ortaya koymuştur. Okula başlamanın sadece okula başlayan çocukların değil, aynı zamanda küçük

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*kardeşlerinin de dil seçiminde yadsınamaz ve biçimlendirici bir rolü vardır ve bu da çocukların ailelerdeki dil kullanımındaki etken rolünü vurgulamaktadır. Ayrıca, her iki kuşak da Türkçeyi korumanın Türk kimliğinin, kültürünün ve dininin korunması anlamına geldiğini düşünürken, çocukların eğitim durumlarına ilişkin kaygılar ikinci kuşak ebeveynlerin aile dil politikalarında Almancaya öncelik vermelerine yol açmaktadır. Son olarak, her iki kuşağın dil yönetimi faaliyetlerine ilişkin önemli bir fark bulunmamıştır.*

*Anahtar Sözcükler: aile dil politikası; Almanya’da yaşayan Türkler; dil sürdürümü; dil ideolojileri; dil kullanımları; kuşaklar arası dil kullanımı*

## **Introduction**

Be it either in large masses or small sizes transnational movement has always been a part of human history though this mobility is usually accompanied by issues such as assimilation, integration, cultural diversity, language, and identity. People from different languages, cultures, and nationalities have started to live together more than ever as the world has changed into a so-called village, and maintaining this diversity which was regarded as a “problem” before has begun to be considered a richness and respect for fundamental human rights. Accordingly, “unity in diversity” has been a motto of the European Union (EU) which promotes the mastery of two languages other than the mother tongue for all EU citizens. In line with this policy, the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML) brings legal protection to regional and minority languages and states that “Regional or minority languages are part of Europe’s cultural heritage and their protection and promotion contribute to the building of a Europe based on democracy and cultural diversity.” (Council of Europe, 2023). However, it is worth mentioning that the aforementioned legal protection and promotion offered by ECRLM is for autochthonous languages which refer to “the languages that are spoken by minority groups traditionally living in a certain state area” (Olfert and Schmitz, 2018, p. 399) such as Danish and Frisian in Germany. Allochthonous languages, in other words, languages that do not belong to indigenous minorities in a state are excluded from the scope of this protection (Küppers et al., 2015). Hence, the responsibility of maintaining minority languages such as Turkish and Russian in Germany or Chinese and Portuguese in France lies primarily on the shoulders of the speakers of these languages. To that end, conscious or unconscious endeavors of parents of heritage language (HL) speakers, their language use and preferences in the family as well as their beliefs and attitudes towards the use of their HL in the family or the support sought outside the family circle coupled with the dynamic changes realized in external and internal factors have, as a result, a decisive role in language practices in a family. In line with this argument, this article aims to find out the differences between the family language policies (FLP) of first and second-generation Turks living in Germany within the scope of Spolsky’s (2004) tripartite model of FLP composing of language beliefs and ideologies, language practices, and language management.

## **Turkish Immigration to Germany**

The losses during the Second World War coupled with the need for a workforce emerging as a result of the rapidly developing industry directed the attention of Germany to other nations (Orendt, 2010), and following several other countries, Germany signed a labor recruitment agreement with Türkiye on 30 October 1960 to bridge this gap (Oner,

2014). This first group of workers was called “Gastarbeiter” (guest workers) because their residence was taught to be temporary. Yet, contrary to expectations, even though Germany ceased accepting new workers during the economic recession in the early 1970s, the Turkish population continued to grow in Germany since the family reunion law passed in 1973 allowed Turkish workers to bring their families to Germany (Sakin, 2018). The delay of the immigrants shaped the perspectives of Germans as the “Gastarbeiter” started to be called “Mitarbeiter” (co-workers) which left its place to “Migranten” (migrants) as the Turkish people became permanent residents of Germany (Başkurt, 2009). This first generation coming mostly from the rural areas of Türkiye did not attempt to learn the majority language as they aimed to reimmigrate to Turkey (Ayten and Atanasoska, 2020). In fact, during that period, German authorities provided the children of guest workers with instruction in their HL to make their reintegration process easier. The first generation kept talking only Turkish in their families and did not desire to learn German, and, hence, were monolinguals. However, their kids born in Germany grew up as bilinguals because, in addition to the HL, they were exposed to in their family environment, they learned or acquired German especially after they started school (Küppers et al., 2015). This resonates with Fishman’s three-generation theory (cited in Spolsky, 2012) which sets forth that while the first generation in the host country is monolingual in HL, the second generation is bilingual and the third generation is usually monolingual in the dominant environmental language of the host country.

With an average population of three and a half million, Turks are today the largest minority group in Germany (Almanya Türk Diasporası Atlası, 2022). In some parts of Germany, Turks outnumber the local population, and they may spend a whole day without speaking any German (Orendt, 2010). However, this does not safeguard the success of family language policies urging the development of Turkish as an HL because the policies regarding the instruction of Turkish in German schools have undergone a change over time.

Gradually reduced exposure to Turkish at home as the kids start using German after they start school, together with falling demand for heritage language instruction (HLI) at schools creates an issue of “unbalanced input” (Flores et al., 2019, p. 1) in HL accelerating the process of German monolingualism among the Turkish minority in Germany.

Nevertheless, as Fishman (1991) suggests, difficult as though, language shifts can be reversed and family language policies have a crucial role in this course. The next section is dedicated to a brief review of FLP in the literature.

### **Family Language Policy**

As a term first coined by Luykx (2003), family language policy both influences and is influenced by two different fields: Language policies and child language acquisition (King et.al, 2008). Language policy is about language beliefs and ideologies, language practices, and language management that refer to the ideas concerning which language to use in a group, actual uses of languages or varieties, and efforts to change and modify language beliefs and practices of a group, respectively (Spolsky, 2004, 2021). Child language acquisition, however, tries to uncover the mechanisms and conditions that are necessary or that scaffold children’s language acquisition process.

The three-component model of FLP (i.e. language beliefs and ideologies, language practices, and language management) postulated by Spolsky (2004), in its original form, is a top-down/ macro-level model highlighting the role of nation-states in language

policies. Later, Spolsky modifies his model as he recognizes the failures of national language policies highlighting the role of language policies at different levels such as in family or educational settings, and the effect of non-linguistic factors in shaping FLP. Another modification is implemented with the realization of the significance of individuals in language maintenance or shift, and hence, in addition to top-down or macro-level policies, bottom-up or micro-level policies were punctuated in the final version (King et. al, 2018; Nandi et al., 2022; Spolsky, 2018, 2021). Curt-Christiansen (2009) brings yet another perspective to the family language policy drawing attention to the dynamic nature of FLP and highlighting the constantly changing nature of external and internal factors.

The works in the area of FLP can be traced back to the classic diary studies of linguists who observed the bilingual developments of their children using a one person-one language (OPOL) method in which each parent uses a different language while speaking to their child(ren) to support their bilingualism. During this stage, the family was considered to be the key element in bilingual development. Later, not family but the quality and the quantity of input as well as the cognitive mechanisms to process that input gained prominence (Lanza and Lomeu Gomes, 2020). The fact that children living under the same conditions end up with varying language competencies in their HL or the mainstream language in minority environments has drawn attention to sociolinguistic, sociopolitical, socioeconomic, and sociocultural issues over time. (Curt-Christiansen, 2009, 2013; Lanza and Lomeu Gomes, 2020; Schwartz, 2008).

Language beliefs and ideologies are “often seen to be the underlying force in language practices and planning” (King et al., 2008, p. 911). Mostly, parents believe that HL should be the only language used among the family members because it means securing the national identity and a sense of inclusion in one’s ethnic group (Ayten and Atanasoska, 2020; Kirsch, 2011). Language ideologies are not constant and divorced from the context (Bezcioglu-Göktolga and Yağmur, 2022). On the contrary, they are in flux and influenced by constantly conflicting desires of maintaining the HL and being loyal to the heritage culture on the one hand and by pressures emanating from social, political, and educational spheres on the other. (Curt-Christiansen, 2023; Nandi et al., 2022; Schipbach, 2009). Interestingly, it is not always the overt and explicit ideologies (King and Fogle, 2006; Spolsky, 2012) that shape the FLPs as covert and implicit beliefs (Curt-Christiansen, 2023; Hollebeke, 2020) have also a strong influence on the language practices. This incongruity between the expressed beliefs and actual language practices shapes the language use in families (Curt-Christiansen, 2013; King, 2000; Kirsch, 2011; Kopeliovic, 2010; Romanowski, 2021; Schwartz, 2008). It is clear that parents’ beliefs and ideas, be they covert or overt, shape their linguistic practices which in turn shape the linguistic development of their child(ren). Yet, concerning the issue, De Houwer (1999) accentuates a bidirectional relationship unlike a unilateral one, stating that it is not always the parents’ beliefs or ideas that determine the language practices in the families but also children as active agents can sometimes have a decisive role in the language to be used in the family especially after they start school.

Having pro-HL beliefs or ideas is not the only factor effective in the FLP of parents. Several other factors such as (in)consistency in ideologies towards HL (King et.al, 2008) parental education (Curt-Christiansen, 2013; Romanowski, 2021), age, gender, reasons for migration (Schüpbach, 2009), institutional support (Bezcioglu-Göktolga and Yağmur, 2017; Coşkun Kunduz, 2022; Fillmore, 2000), value given to bilingualism (Romanowski, 2021), parental impact (DeCapua and Wintergerst, 2009; De Houwer, 1999) concerns

about children's educational trajectories (King and Fogle, 2006) and personal experiences (Schwartz, 2020) can be enumerated in the success of FLPs.

Schwartz (2020) makes a distinction between language strategies and practices after reviewing the recent literature on FLP. She uses language strategies to refer to language management issues and language practices to actual uses of language(s) in the family context irrespective of management efforts. She names OPOL, "maximum engagement with the minority language", and "design of home language environment" (p. 205) under language strategies while "goal-directed code-switching", "flexible language use and translanguaging at home", "ritual language practices", and "bidirectional reciprocal learning" are listed under language practices (pp. 206–211). Doyle (2013) conducted a study with 11 intermarried families in the capital of Estonia, Tallinn, and found that 10 out of 11 families were successful in raising at least one bilingual adolescent child. The families in the study mainly used OPOL and the findings of the semi-structured interviews revealed that apart from the language policies of the families; the sociolinguistic setting in Tallinn and the status of languages contributed to the success of bilingualism. Juan-Garau and Pérez-Vidal (2000), however, followed a Catalan-English bilingual child in their longitudinal study for about two years and showed that the use of OPOL alone would not bring the same success if the father had not insisted on receiving answers in the minority language from the children. Still; Venables, et al. (2013) revealed in their ethnographic study that in families adopting OPOL, fathers or mothers speaking the majority language also contribute to the development of the minority language in their children using different strategies such as lexical modeling, providing context, encouraging the child(ren), and praising the child(ren) when they use the minority language. To recap; through their cognitive and emotional endeavors, families can have a cornerstone impact on the (dis)continuity of the HLs. In this respect, this article aims to explore the FLPs of first and second-generation Turks living in Germany by searching for answers to the following question:

RQ. Is there a significant difference between the first and second-generation Turks living in Germany in terms of their language ideologies, practices, and management strategies?

Although there are studies concerning the linguistic skills of Turks, Turkish instruction at schools, and the history of the Turkish diaspora in Germany; to the best of the authors' knowledge, there is not a study comparing the intergenerational differences in the family language policies of the Turkish families. What is more, this study provides valuable findings parallel to the focal shift from the relationship among "identities, practices and outcomes" in FLP research (King, 2016, p. 731) to "meaning-making, experiences, agency and identity construction in transnational families" (Lanza and Gomez, 2020, p. 154) highlighting the dynamic effects of external factors such as economic and political conditions and internal factors like parental impact beliefs and child agency (Curt-Christiansen, 2009).

## **Method Research Design**

The current study adopts a mixed-method design as both qualitative and quantitative data were gathered. Mixed-method studies offer a more comprehensive understanding of the researched phenomenon as they provide the researcher with different perspectives which in turn help validate the findings (Dörnyei, 2007). Quantitative data regarding the FLPs of the first and second-generation Turks living in Germany were collected via the questionnaire developed by Bezciöglu-Göktolga, et al. (2019). The survey in line with Spolsky's (2004) tripartite model gathers information regarding language ideologies, language practices, and language management of the participants. The qualitative data were collected through semi-structured interviews with two first-generation and two second-generation parents (fathers and mothers). According to Dörnyei (2007), semi-structured interviews are suitable when the researcher may formulate broad study questions regarding the topic ahead of time but does not wish to use pre-made response options that would limit the depth of the participant's experiences. Data collected through the semi-structured interviews as they have parallel themes with the questionnaire were provided in the form of excerpts under the appropriate theme while presenting the findings of the survey analysis.

#### **Data Collection Tools**

The questionnaire developed by Bezciöglu-Göktolga, et al. (2019) is a one hundred and thirty-one-item, 5-point Likert scale indexed by 17 subscales giving information on three main categories: Language practices, language ideologies, and language management (See Appendix A). Bezciöglu-Göktolga (2019) states that observation of 20 families, interviews with 35 parents, and literature reviews together with the monitoring of two field experts were used to prepare the items of the survey. Furthermore, following the piloting of the items, two professors in the field of sociolinguistics provided the necessary revision to finalize the survey. Out of the 17 subscales; five subscales had internal consistencies greater than .90, nine were between .80 and .90, two were between .70 and .80, and the remaining three were between .60 and .70. The relevant consents were obtained by the researcher before using the survey.

In the questionnaire; the mean score of the subcategories named language practices of parents, language choice of children, language use of children before and after starting school, language dominance, and social media use are computed as language practices score. Language ideologies score is calculated by taking the average of the indexes titled beliefs about language preferences of family members, children's use of German, children's use of Turkish, language use in the family, school achievement, bilingualism, society and authority's attitudes toward Turkish, language importance, and reasons for language maintenance. Finally; the mean scores of the two subcategories specified as language management for Turkish and German, and the role of father and mother in language management constitute the score of language management. The questionnaire is a 5-point Likert scale in which a score closer to 1 refers to *always German or strongly disagree*, 2 *more German than Turkish or disagree*, 3 *equal use of German and Turkish or undecided*, 4 *more Turkish than German or agree*, and 5 *always Turkish or strongly agree*.

Semi-structured interview questions were used to support the survey findings (See Appendix B). There were 14 interview questions and they were parallel to the categories and subcategories of the questionnaire in order to reach a deeper understanding of the reasons lying behind the FLP of the families. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, and 14 were used to elicit information about the language practices; questions 5, 6, 12, and 13 were

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to collect data concerning language ideologies and finally, 7th and 8th questions were included to gather data regarding the language management activities of the families.

**Participants**

Fifty-four first-generation and 48 second-generation Turks living in Germany constitute the sample of this study as a result of a snowball sampling. First-generation refers to Turks who were not born in Germany but who have been living in Germany for at least ten years while second-generation Turks refer to the Turks who were born in Germany and have been living there since they were born. Having at least a child minimum at kindergarten age was a prerequisite for both the first and second-generation Turks participating in this study. The characteristics of the sample are summarized in Table 1.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

The questionnaire was transformed into Google Forms and delivered to the participants in digital format. The interviews were conducted via Zoom with two first-generation and two second-generation families using semi-structured questions for a better understanding of the factors shaping the family language policies of the participants. All family members were informed that their names would remain confidential and they were under no obligation to answer the questions they did not want to. The interviews were recorded, transcribed verbatim, translated into English, and given as accounts in the findings section under the appropriate theme.

Characteristics of the Sample		N	%
Gender	Female	69	67.6
	Male	33	32.3
Age	25-35	25	24.5
	36-45	42	41.1
	46-55	20	19.6
	≥ 56	15	14.7
Marital Status	Married	92	90.1
	Single parents	10	9.8
Education	Primary	11	10.7
	Lower secondary	11	10.7
	Upper secondary	55	53.9
	University and/or above	25	24.5

**Table 1.** *Characteristics of the sample*

The data collected through the questionnaire was analyzed via SPSS v.24 software. The mean scores of the subcategories were calculated and an Independent sample T-test was used when the sample was normally distributed and when not Mann Whitney U-Test was employed to compare the mean scores of the first and second-generation parents. Furthermore, in order to make within-group comparisons Paired sample T-test was used.

**Findings and Discussion**

As the research question was “Is there a significant difference between the first and second-generation Turks living in Germany in terms of their language ideologies,

practices, and management strategies?”, the data collected through the questionnaire were analyzed under three main categories and presented below under the topics of language ideologies, language practices, and language management, respectively. Furthermore, the quotations from the qualitative data were provided to assist the survey findings.

### Language Ideologies

Data concerning the language ideologies of the participants were collected through ten subscales in the questionnaire and the findings are summarized in Table 2.

As is clear in the table, the only statistical difference between the first and second-generation Turks living in Germany concerning their language ideologies is in the subcategory of beliefs about language preferences of the family members ( $p < .05$ ) which includes items regarding the language in which the participants feel more comfortable and prefer when their children or spouse talk to them in and out of the family. The findings mirror Bezcioglu-Göktolga and Yağmur (2002) in which beliefs about the language preferences of the family were the only subcategory with a significant intergenerational language preference.

The difference is also reflected in the speech of a first-generation father in the semi-structured interviews.

When you come together with your family or close relatives, speaking in German is nonsense but this is what happens. My brother visits us with his kids. We sit in the same living room. As parents, we always communicate in Turkish but our kids use mostly German. (Interviewee 1, First-generation father)

Language ideologies	Birth	N	M	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Beliefs about language preferences of family	Türkiye	54	4.05	.836	3.59	.001*
	Germany	48	3.48	.760		
Beliefs about children's use of German	Türkiye	54	3.12	1.251	.004	.997
	Germany	48	3.12	1.006		
Beliefs about children's use of Turkish	Türkiye	54	3.58	.934	.814	.414
	Germany	48	3.42	1.054		
Beliefs about language use in the family	Türkiye	54	2.94	.954	.800	.100
	Germany	48	2.64	.922		
School's attitude towards Turkish	Türkiye	54	3.32	.789	.027	.979
	Germany	48	3.32	.818		
Society's attitude towards Turkish	Türkiye	54	2.70	.938	-	.558
	Germany	48	2.79	.742		
Language ideologies	Birth	N	M	SD	<i>Z</i>	<i>p</i>
Beliefs on bilingualism	Türkiye	54	4.04	.852	-	.093
	Germany	48	3.81	.905		
Beliefs on school achievement – reversed	Türkiye	54	3.84	.633	-	.234
	Germany	48	3.63	.824		
Language importance	Türkiye	54	2.27	.570	-	.880
	Germany	48	2.23	.484		
Reason for language maintenance	Türkiye	54	4.19	.622	-	.433
	Germany	48	4.17	.946		

*Note.* Higher German use is represented by values below 3, whereas higher Turkish use, values, customs, and so on are indicated by values over 3.

**Table 2.** Findings of the “Language Ideologies” category

The mean scores concerning the beliefs about language use in the family indicate that although the first generation has higher means, their score is still slightly under the value of three which indicates equal importance for Turkish and German. According to the mean scores of the beliefs about bilingualism subcategory, it seems that both first and second-generation parents desire their kids to be bilingual German-Turkish speakers, and the mean score of the first-generation (MFG) (4.04, SD = .852) is higher than the mean score of the second-generation (MFG) (3.81, SD = .905) mirroring Larsson’s study (2002), in which parents expressed their appreciation for bilingualism, too. A closer look at the items in this category shows that parents from both generations think that their children should hear both languages (MFG = 4.24, sd: 930; MSG = 4.04, SD = 1.071), interact with both language speakers in sufficient amount (MFG = 4.22, SD = 925; MSG = 3.92, SD = 1.164), know enough lexical items in both languages (MFG = 4.26, SD = .935; MSG = 4.02, SD = 1.101), master Turkish before going to school (MFG = 4.17, SD = .986; MSG = 4.08, SD = 1.108) and start learning Turkish from infancy (MFG = 3.35, SD = 1.456; MSG = 3.02, SD = 1.263).

In the semi-structured interviews, it was observed that though both first and second-generation parents are aware of the prominence of bilingualism and highly support it, they dissent in terms of the onset of the exposure to German.

We did not talk German to our kids. On the contrary, we used only Turkish in the family.

We thought they would eventually learn German when they start school, even when they start kindergarten. (Interviewee 3, First-generation mother.)

I spoke only Turkish with my son up until he was two and a half years old. He could understand me and he started to talk Turkish first. But after he was two and a half, I started to talk to her in German, too because I was going to send him to kindergarten and I didn’t want him to face difficulty at school. (Interviewee 5, Second-generation mother)

The findings of the language importance subcategory reveal more favorable attitudes toward German rather than Turkish (MFG = 2.27, SD = .570; MSG = 2.23, SD =.484) because only the items about being accepted by Turkish people (MFG = 3.28, SD =.811; MSG = 3.17, SD =.930) and having a conversation with them (MFG = 3.31, sd: .948; MSG = 3.17, SD =.761) had a mean score above three (signifying equal value for Turkish and German) for both generations. For the rest of the items some of which are making money (MFG = 2.07, sd: .696; MSG = 2.04, sd: .683), getting a job (MFG = 1.93, SD = .723; MSG = 1.85, SD = .684), having a good education (MFG = 1.81, SD = .779; MSG = 1.79, SD = .743) and having a say in German society (MFG = 1.83, SD = .771; MSG = 1.77, SD = .692); participants in both groups believe that German is more important than Turkish. A first-generation father summarizes the issue as follows:

In Germany, you can do without Turkish but if you don’t know German you are nothing.

(Interviewee 1, First-generation father)

In line with Bezciöglu-Göktolga and Yağmur (2022), the highest mean scores in the category of *language ideologies* belong to the subcategory of *reasons for language maintenance* (MFG = 4.19, SD = .622, MSG = 4.17, SD = .946). For both groups, maintaining Turkish in Germany is considered to be closely related to preserving their Turkish identity, culture, mother tongue, and religion as well as having better communication with Turks living in both Türkiye and Germany. The findings mirror the

study of Larson (2022) as the participants in her study view language and culture as part of their identity, as well. The mean scores of items regarding this subcategory are presented in Table 3.

The semi-structured interviews displayed a clear distinction between the first and second-generation parents in terms of their ideas about culture and identity because while the first-generation parents reject it, the second-generation parents opt for a dual identity.

“I am a hundred percent Turkish. I am not German at all.” (Interviewee 1, First-generation father)

“No matter how much we live here we have Turkish identity, not the German identity. (Interviewees 3 and 4, First-generation father and mother)

“Well, I think I am both German and Turkish. In the end, I was born and grew up here (Germany). I feel Turkish and relate to my ancestors when I go to Türkiye, but in the end, I miss here and want to come back to Germany. I feel like a German citizen here. But I must say most of my friends don’t think like me. They think I am *Germanized*, assimilated you know.” (Interviewee 5, Second-generation father)

Reasons for HL Maintenance	Birth	N	M	SD
We can preserve our identity	Türkiye	54	4.22	.816
	Germany	48	4.13	1.003
We can preserve our mother tongue	Türkiye	54	4.33	.673
	Germany	48	4.23	1.016
We can establish better contact with Türkiye	Türkiye	54	4.26	.678
	Germany	48	4.29	.988
We can contact other Turkish speakers in Germany	Türkiye	54	4.02	.835
	Germany	48	3.88	1.123
We can preserve Turkish culture	Türkiye	54	4.28	.656
	Germany	48	4.27	.984
We can preserve our religion	Türkiye	54	4.07	.949
	Germany	48	4.23	1.115

Note. M is the average on a 5-point scale, where 1 represents *do not agree at all* and 5 represents *totally agree*.

**Table 3.** Findings of the subcategory “Reasons for HL Maintenance”

As we live in Germany, I think we start to think like them, we learn their culture, too. But we also try to teach our culture and religion to our kids. (Interviewee 7, Second-generation father)

I don't mind if he (talking about her son) adopts a German identity, I want him to feel like a complete German in Germany, but I don't want her to forget Turkish. I feel sorry for him if he doesn't speak Turkish at all. Most Turkish families think that we are foreigners here, but I don't think so. I think that I am from here. Of course, I am not German, but I can say that I am fifty percent German at least. (Interviewee 6, Second-generation mother)

Turkish means family and elderly to me. It is a part of my identity. (Interviewee 8, Second-generation mother)

As aforementioned, language ideologies are the main motives shaping the language practices in a family and they are influenced by the social and educational concerns of the family members (Curt-Christiansen, 2023; Nandi et al., 2022; Schipbach, 2009).

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Table 4 indicates that both first and second-generation Turks have similar ideas regarding the schools' and German society's attitudes toward Turkish. Therefore, having a closer look at the subcategories of schools and society's attitudes toward Turkish can shed light on parents' preferences for one language over the other.

According to the mean scores presented in Table 4, both generations think that although schools allow parents to talk to their kids or other parents in Turkish in schools, and value bilingualism; they stay undecided when it comes to schools' permission to let the students speak their HL in the schoolyards. What is more, both generations believe that German society does not appreciate the Turkish language and culture plus German authorities and media do not support Turkish maintenance which is again in compliance with the findings of Bezcioglu-Goktolga and Yagmur (2022).

<b>School's attitudes toward Turkish</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Children are allowed to speak Turkish among each other in the schoolyard.	Türkiye	54	2.98	1.236
	Germany	48	2.90	1.276
Parents are allowed to speak Turkish among each other in the schoolyard.	Türkiye	54	3.52	1.059
	Germany	48	3.48	1.304
Parents are allowed to speak Turkish to their children in the schoolyard.	Türkiye	54	3.52	1.145
	Germany	48	3.40	1.284
Teachers value the bilingualism of Turkish children at school.	Türkiye	54	3.37	1.069
	Germany	48	3.75	.887
Teachers appreciate the role of Turkish in learning Dutch	Türkiye	54	3.31	1.210
	Germany	48	3.31	1.014
<b>Society's attitudes toward Turkish</b>	<b>Birth</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>M</b>	<b>SD</b>
Healthcare centers appreciate the use of Turkish in the family.	Türkiye	54	3.11	1.223
	Germany	48	3.19	1.197
Common public opinion respects the Turkish language.	Türkiye	54	2.72	1.106
	Germany	48	2.60	.917
German authorities value the use of Turkish at home.	Türkiye	54	2.72	1.140
	Germany	48	2.96	.988
German authorities support Turkish maintenance.	Türkiye	54	2.44	1.040
	Germany	48	2.83	.930
German society respects Turkish culture.	Türkiye	54	2.87	1.082
	Germany	48	2.79	.944
The media supports the use of Turkish at home.	Türkiye	54	2.33	1.009
	Germany	48	2.44	.895

*Note.* M is the average on a 5-point scale, where 1 represents *do not agree at all* and 5 represents *totally agree*.

**Table 4.** Findings of the subcategories "Schools' and Society's Attitudes Toward Turkish"

Concerning society's attitudes toward Turkish and minority languages in general Interviewee 6 who is a teacher at Realschule says:

In my school, there are a lot of students from different nationalities but though it doesn't have students with undesirable habits or the academic profile of the students isn't bad,

I hear that German parents avoid registering their kids at our school. (Interviewee 6, Second-generation mother)

Well, I think the teacher makes the difference at schools. I mean there are some teachers advising parents to talk in their mother tongue at home and some encourage the sole use of German at home and school. (Interviewee 2, first-generation mother)

### Language Practices

Data concerning the *Language practices* of the participants were collected through five subscales in the questionnaire and the findings are compiled in Table 5.

It is clear that except for the subscale questioning the children's language preferences before and after they start school, in all categories, there is a statistically significant difference between the first and second generations' language practices. However, unlike the insignificant difference between the groups, comparisons within each group yield a significant result concerning the language choice of children before and after school in both groups as is seen in Table 6 which is parallel to the findings of Little (2020), Schwartz (2008, 2010), and Mirvahedi and Hosseini (2023). In other words, both first and second-generation parents state that their children's language use after school statistically differs from their choices before school in favor of German. The findings are parallel to the findings of Bezciöglu-Göktolga and Yağmur (2022) which demonstrated a significant difference between the language practices of first and second-generation parents in all categories.

Language Practices	Birth	N	Mean	SD	t	p
Language choice of the parents	Türkiye	54	4.25	.702	5.44	.000*
	Germany	48	3.52	.652		
Language choice of the children	Türkiye	54	3.73	.806	2.22	.029*
	Germany	48	3.33	1.004		
Language choice of the children before/after school	Türkiye	54	3.92	.881	1.50	.136
	Germany	48	3.66	.853		
Language dominance	Türkiye	54	4.09	.672	5.98	.000*
	Germany	48	3.22	.773		
Language use – social media	Türkiye	54	4.13	.755	6.28	.000*
	Germany	48	3.17	.786		

*Note.* Higher German use is represented by values below three, whereas higher Turkish use, values, customs, and so on are indicated by values over three.

#### Table 5. Findings of the “Language Practices” category

Concerning the language choice of their kids, the semi-structured interviews indicated that starting school, be it formal compulsory education or kindergarten, not only shapes the language choices of the children starting school but the language of the siblings who are not old enough to go to school or kindergarten, yet.

Although he (speaking of his son) was using both Turkish and German before going to school, after that he accepted only German. Now, even if I talk to him in Turkish, he responds to me in German. What is more, he gets angry with me when I speak Turkish to his baby brother. My elder son knew only Turkish when he was the same age as his baby brother. But my younger one understands both German and Turkish because his elder brother always talks to him in German. (Interviewee 5, Second-generation father)

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My son was four years old when my daughter was born. He had been going to kindergarten for a year when she was born. At that time, we were talking more in German with my son because we wanted him to close the gap in German with his friends. Hence, although I spoke first Turkish with my daughter when she was born, she heard more German than Turkish in the family. She started kindergarten at the age of two, earlier than his brother. I can say that my sons' mother tongue is Turkish but my daughter's is definitely German. (Interviewee 8, Second-generation mother)

Birth		N	M	SD	df	t	p
Türkiye	Language choice of children before-after school	54	1.407	1.157	53	8.933	.000*
Germany	Language choice of children before-after school	48	1.125	1.084	47	7.189	.000*

Note. Higher German use is represented by values below three, whereas higher Turkish use, values, customs, and so on are indicated by values over three.

**Table 6.** One sample T-test scores of “Children’s Language Use Before and After School”

This is in accordance with the findings of İstanbullu (2020) who succinctly recapitulates the children’s role in family language policies stating “They choose freely where to position themselves instead of only following what their parents or other adults want, and the adults follow them” (p. 475). However, this does not align with Zheng (2015) in which parents with disciplinary house rules that forbid kids code-switching or mixing and entail the use of heritage language (English) in Northern Cyprus, children grew up with bilingual English-Turkish speakers.

The language choice of the parents subscale asks the participants their language choices while they are talking to their fathers, mothers, siblings, spouses, the eldest child, the youngest child, their relatives living in Germany, Turkish friends in general, Turkish friends in their neighborhood, Turks at the workplace and Turks on the phone. The findings indicated a dominant Turkish preference while talking to the above-mentioned people among the first-generation. Although the second-generation parents dominantly use Turkish while talking to their fathers (MSG = 4.38, SD = .761) and mothers (MSG = 4.31, SD = .903), they are inclined to talk both in Turkish and German to their siblings (MSG = 3.44, SD = .824), Turkish friends in general (MSG = 3.29, SD = .874) and Turkish friends in their neighborhood (MSG = 3.33, SD = .859). Moreover, while the first-generation parents are inclined to use Turkish more with their eldest (MFG = 3.96, SD = .889) and youngest children (4.02, SD = .921), the second-generation exhibits a more bilingual tendency (MSG eldest child: 3.35, SD = 1.069, MSG youngest child: 3.42, SD = 1.069). Semi-structured interviews reveal the same inclination, as well.

When I’m with Turks, I speak Turkish. (Interviewee 3, First-generation father)

We are four siblings. I use Turkish and German with my spouse and siblings but Turkish with my parents. My eldest sibling always uses German at home because his wife knows only a little Turkish although she is Turkish. My second eldest sibling is the one who talks most Turkish, I guess, but my youngest sibling never speaks Turkish.

(Interviewee 6, Second-generation mother)

The language choice of second-generation parents may also be shaped by their level of Turkish proficiency as the semi-structured interviews illustrated.

I don't read books in Turkish because it is difficult for me to understand them. The book should be easy enough for me to understand. Otherwise, I need to read and reread the sentences. So, I don't read Turkish books. In general, I express my feelings better in German. When I get angry, I speak German; but when I love my children, I use Turkish more. Probably because I am exposed to that language in Turkish because you don't hear such things from Germans. (Interviewee 6, Second-generation mother)

Language choice of children indicates that the children of both first-generation (MFG = 4.52, SD = .637) and second-generation (MSG = 4.02, SD = 1.062) almost always use Turkish while talking to their grandparents. Besides, children of second-generation parents tend to use German more while conversing with their parents (MSG = 3.06, SD = 1.192), and especially with their siblings (MSG = 2.90, SD = 1.153) compared to children of first-generation (MFG parent: 3.87, SD = .870; MSG sibling: 3.11, SD = 1.254).

According to the results of the subscale measuring the participants' language use in social media, first-generation dominantly use Turkish on the pages they follow (MFG = 4.02, SD = .921), in online conversations with their friends (MFG = 4.20, SD = .833) and relatives (MFG = 4.50, SD = .637) while second-generation use both languages for the same activities (MSG = 3.27, SD = .939; MSG = 3.29, SD = .967; MSG = 3.69, SD = .803; respectively). Yet, when they want to search for information on the Internet, the first generation tends to use both languages (MFG = 3.89, SD = .947) whereas the second generation chooses German more (MSG = 2.69, SD = .803).

### Language Management

Language management for Turkish and German is a subscale in the questionnaire and asks the parents how often they read (picture) books to their children; watch TV, listen to music in either language; what kind of activities they do to support their children's Turkish and German; whether they teach their children how to read and write in their HL, correct their children's Turkish or German if they utter wrong words or mispronounce one; if they participate in parent-teacher meetings and monitor their children's homework or school progress. Findings related to this subcategory are summarized in Table 7.

The mean score of the Turkish and German language management activities shows that there is not a statistically significant difference between the first and second-generation parents' language management activities neither in Turkish (.359,  $p > .05$ ) nor in German (.202,  $p > .05$ ) unlike Bezcioglu-Göktolga and Yağmur's (2022) study which demonstrated a significant difference between the parents' management strategies in Turkish but not in Dutch.

Language Management		Birth	N	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Language management for Turkish	Türkiye	54	3.39	.861	-.922	.359	
	Germany	48	3.51	1.003			
Language management for German	Türkiye	54	3.28	.907	-	.202	
	Germany	48	3.51	.928			

Note. M is the average on a 5-point scale, where 1 represents *do not agree at all* and 5 represents *totally agree*.

**Table 7.** Language Management for Turkish and German

The analysis of the items in this section illustrated that the most frequently used management strategies for Turkish for both generations were correcting the kids when they mispronounce a word in Turkish (MFG = 3.69, SD = 1.113; MSG = 3.92, SD = 1.164), listening to songs in Turkish (MFG = 3.70, SD = 1.002; MSG = 4.00, SD = 1.011), and watching Turkish TV channels (MFG = 3.93, SD = 1.007; MSG = 3.85, 1.304). However; reading Turkish books to the kids (MFG = 2.89, SD = 1.093; MSG = 3.17, SD = 1.098), and researching on the Internet to improve kids' Turkish skills (MFG = 3.02, SD = 1.236; MSG = 2.90, SD = 1.433) were the least frequently used management strategies for both groups. Interestingly, the findings revealed that the most frequently used activities for Turkish maintenance in this study were also the most frequently used activities in Bezcioglu-Goktolga and Yagmur (2022).

Concerning reading books to children in Turkish, a second-generation mother draws attention to children's role as active agents (Little, 2020; Mirvahedi and Hosseini, 2023; Schwartz, 2010; 2008) in language preference:

We have children's books, picture books in Turkish but whenever I tried to read him those books, he refused to listen to me. He did not pay attention. So, I gave up. (Interviewee 6, Second-generation mother)

As for German management strategies, the findings illuminated that attending parent-teacher meetings (MFG = 4.11, SD = 1.093; MSG = 4.50, SD = .968), *following kids' school progress* (MFG = 4.09, SD = 1.028; MSG = 4.40, SD = .823), and correcting them when they pronounce a word wrongly (MFG = 3.50, SD = 1.143; MSG = 4.10, SD = 1.115) are the most frequently used activities whereas listening to songs in German with kids (MFG = 2.83, SD = 1.161; MSG = 2.98, SD = 1.246) is the least resorted strategy to support children's German. In Bezcioglu-Goktolga and Yagmur (2022), the most frequently used Dutch maintenance activities were helping children with their Dutch homework, correcting them when they mispronounce a Dutch word, and teaching them how to read and write. Although the activities used for the target language maintenance differ in both studies, it should be noted that they focus on the school achievement of the children indicating once again parents' concerns about their children's educational trajectories (King and Fogle, 2006).

Families' educational concerns for their kids seem to have an important effect on their German management strategies. A second-generation mother comments on her daughters' not speaking Turkish as follows:

Well, for now, I don't feel upset because she cannot speak Turkish. On the contrary, I am happy that her German is good. We had faced difficulties with German with my son. He wasn't competent in German up until 6. As we live in here (Germany), her learning German is more important for me than Turkish. (Interviewee 8, Second-generation mother)

First-generation parents feel sorer about the less and less use of Turkish in families and among their grandchildren.

I feel really sorry about my grandchildren because they do not speak Turkish at all especially after they started school. I urge my son and daughter-in-law to speak only Turkish at home. But as my daughter-in-law feels more comfortable in German even if she utters one or two sentences in Turkish, she shifts to German unconsciously. So what can you expect from her children? Of course, they will speak German. (Interviewee 1, First-generation mother.)

Yet, another first-generation father calls attention to the future of Turkish in Germany and seeks governmental support from Türkiye.

If you ask me what the fate of the Turks in Germany will be fifty years from now, I think there won't be many Turkish speakers left. I think I have given the Turkishness in me to my children, but how much my children will give it to their children is a mystery. I think Türkiye as a state, or I don't know, the Turkish Ministry of National Education should take measures to increase the consciousness of the families here (Germany). I have no idea about how they can manage this, tough. Otherwise, the loss of our language is inevitable. I think families alone are not enough. (Interviewee 1, First-generation father.)

The mismatch between the ideas and practices also appears during the interviews because although parents value Turkish and accept it as part of their identity; social, economic, and educational concerns or previous experiences gain more prominence leading to the dominance of German at the expense of little or no Turkish competence. This is reflected in the following excerpt:

Now is the time for us to start speaking Turkish to protect our mother tongue. Doctors suggest the use of the mother tongue in the family environment. That's why I spoke Turkish to my son when he was born. But he had difficulty in learning German till the age of six. I decided to talk German to my daughter earlier than my son but this time she ended up not speaking Turkish. She understands Turkish but cannot speak it. In fact, this is a difficult situation for me. I have my son to take Turkish classes at school but many Turkish parents don't because they think German is more important. But if we prioritize Turkish at home, our kids can learn it better and they can teach it to their kids. If my kids don't know Turkish, they won't use it with their kids and Turkish will disappear for them. (Interviewee 8, Second-generation mother) *(Note the dilemma in which the interviewee is in because the same interviewee had stated that she was happy because her daughter's German is better than her son's)*

The survey has also a subcategory investigating whether mothers or fathers spend more time with language management activities. The findings summarized in Table 8 illustrate that for both generations mothers take more responsibility for language management activities for both languages mirroring the study of Bezcioglu-Göktolga (2019) which also indicates that mothers are more involved in language management strategies in both HL and TL.

Father and Mother's Language Management	Birth	N	M	SD
Language management activities by fathers and mothers	Türkiye	54	2.61	.792
	Germany	48	2.43	.758

*Note.* Higher mother involvement use is represented by values below three, whereas higher father involvement is indicated by values over three.

**Table 8.** *Language Management Activities by Fathers and Mothers*

**Conclusion and Suggestions**

The current article aimed to see the differences in the family language policies of the first and second-generation Turks living in Germany under three main categories defined by Spolsky (2012) as language ideologies, language practices, and language management. The survey findings concerning the language ideologies demonstrated that first-generation parents feel more comfortable in their mother tongue and think that

children and spouses should use Turkish in the family while second-generation parents use both German and Turkish with their siblings and Turkish friends although they also use Turkish dominantly with their parents. The analysis of the data indicated that both generations support bilingualism, yet the semi-structured interviews highlighted the difference concerning the onset of exposure to the target language. While first-generation parents believe that Turkish should be dominantly used in the family environment as kids will eventually learn German when they start school or kindergarten and as they live in German society, second-generation parents think that children should be exposed to German before starting kindergarten/school lest they have difficulties. This is in congruence with the findings of Zu Hua and Li Wei (2016), and Curt-Christiansen and Sun (2022) which illustrate the impact of personal experiences of parents on their family language policies. Both generations think that mainstream German society does not appreciate Turkish although they are more mild concerning the schools' attitudes toward Turkish. The semi-structured interviews illustrated that instead of a unanimous attitude, teachers' personal views are influential because whereas some teachers strongly oppose the use of Turkish in the family, some others believe that bilingual children should use their mother tongue at home. Both generations think that maintaining Turkish is important because it is a part of their identity and it ensures cultural continuity by contacting them to their homeland and the highest mean scores belong to this category, reasons for language management, in the language ideologies category. However, as discussed before, the ideologies are not free from the influence of social, educational, and economic factors and there is a mismatch between parents' ideologies and actual practices as both generations forefront German when it comes to making a living, receiving education and having a say in German society although they are aware of the connection among identity, culture and mother tongue.

The difference between the family language policies of first and second-generation parents becomes more apparent and significant in their language practices. The survey analysis supported by the semi-structured interviews indicated that first-generation parents dominantly use Turkish with their kids, spouses, friends, and parents while second-generation parents manifest a Turkish-German bilingual language use. The language practices of the children starting kindergarten or school were found to have a transformative impact on the language used in the family. The survey findings indicated that there is a significant difference in the use of Turkish and German between and after school. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews highlighted the role of kids as active agents influencing the language used in the family as children going to kindergarten or school were reported to start speaking German dominantly, answer their parents in German even if the parents address them in Turkish, and influence the language development of their siblings by exposing them to German and thereby fostering their bilingual language development. This agentive role of children in the family language policies of families dovetails with the findings of Curt-Christiansen (2014, 2016) and Kheirkhah and Cekaite (2015). The semi-structured interviews also highlighted families' dilemmas because on one hand, they would like their kids to learn Turkish but on the other hand they surrender under socioeconomic and educational pressures. However, not only these concerns but also the Turkish proficiency level of second-generation may be influential in their bilingual language use as the semi-structured interviews and survey analysis demonstrated that they feel more comfortable in German. Similarly, Dekeyser

and Stevens (2019) found that parents' language proficiency in their HL has a strong influence on their FLPs.

As for the last category, language management, the findings showed that there is not a significant intergenerational difference in participants' Turkish and German management activities. Yet, while the most frequently used activities for Turkish are the ones about exposing the children to more Turkish such as watching Turkish TV channels and listening to Turkish songs; the activities related to the school success of the children like attending parent-teacher meetings and monitoring their performances at school were the most employed ones for German management. Furthermore, the semi-structured interviews revealed both generations' concerns about the future of Turkish in Germany. Second-generation mothers stated that they, as parents, should use more Turkish in the family to ensure their children's and grandchildren's use of Turkish and thereby the existence of Turkish in the future in Germany (though in practice, socio-economic and educational trajectories they foresee for the future of their children seems more decisive). A first-generation father also called for intervention from the Turkish government thinking that parents alone cannot exert enough influence to safeguard the permanence of Turkish in Germany. Finally, the survey results indicated that mothers are more involved in the management activities in both languages and generations.

In short, the ideologies, practices, and management strategies of a family are in constant flux and under the influence of various external factors, and children as well as the parents have an agentive role in determining the language use in the family or the maintenance activities. What is more; with their inconsistencies in their ideologies and practices, concerns about their children's educational and economic trajectories together with their lack of competencies in their HL, the second-generation parents seem to prioritize the majority language in their family policies

As a suggestion, though this article provides insights into the family language policies of first and second-generation Turks living in Germany, as the sample size in the study was not large enough to draw general conclusions, future studies with a bigger sample can be conducted to (dis)confirm the findings of the current study and even comparing family language policies of three generations can contribute the literature filling the gap in this area.

#### *Compliance with Ethical Standards*

The authors attest that ethical approval was received from the institution of the researchers. (Approval Date: 29/12/2023).

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## Appendices

### *Appendix A*

The questionnaire can be accessed through the following link:

[Family Language Policy among Second-Generation Turkish Families in the Netherlands — Tilburg University Research Portal](#)

### *Appendix B*

#### *Semi-structured Interview Questions*

1. Which language did your family use when you were growing up, Turkish or German?
2. When you had your first child, did you choose to use a certain language (German and Turkish) with him/her?
3. Did you discuss with your partner the language you would use in the family?
4. When did your children start learning Turkish/German? How did they start?
5. Why was it important for your children to learn Turkish/German first?
6. Which languages are spoken in your family? Are you satisfied with current language practices and why?
7. Do you make any special efforts to change your children's preferred language?
8. Do you think your children's Turkish language skills are as you would like them to be? If not, would you like to change this? What are your goals?
9. How do your partner and children react to your language goals/practices in the family?
10. With whom do you speak only German, Turkish or Turkish/German?
11. Is it easy or difficult for you to express yourself in Turkish? On which topics?
12. What does speaking Turkish mean to you?
13. What does it mean to you to use Turkish well?
14. Do you read, watch or listen to Turkish? When? When?