

THE ATTITUDE OF TURKISH PEOPLE TOWARDS THE USE OF FOREIGN WORDS IN LL (TURKISH) CONTEXT

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Abstract : One of the reasons which leads to change in vocabulary is social and human psychology. This change is related to human/social psychology and individual language use. According to Herman (1972) human psychology is indexed in the choice of language use and behavior. Levin (1951) points out the role of relative proficiency and emotional attachment to a particular language in multiplying the number of foreign elements in L1 discourse. In the same line of thought, Speech Accommodation Theory refers to individual's language convergence which stems from imitation and is related to the human psychology (Thakerar, Giles and Chesire,1982). Similar to SAT, the central issue in Social Identity Theory is psychological distinctiveness and self-satisfaction (Abrams,1994). Finally, according to the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory, the individual alters his language use radically in order to dismiss the pressure of the dominating group in the society. In this study, in light of these theories the issue of psychological resistance of the Turkish people will be investigated.

Key Words : Psychological Resistance, Foreign Words, Human Psychology, Change, Quantitative Borrowing, Qualitative Borrowing.

I. SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY OF LANGUAGE USE

Language is not used homogeneously by the members of the society. This is so because language itself is not homogeneous since it is made up of various dialects and patios (Chambers and Trudgill 1989). Thus , taking this fact into consideration , we cannot expect to

hear every individual in the same way. Every speaker of the same X language use it differently reflecting its language choice by means of his background, group identification, education and other peculiarities. Above all, the speaker has a right to show his preferences through his language use. In other words, the speaker can decide about what kind of words, patterns and also the degree of formality in the language he uses for communication. And this aspect of choice is directly linked with the state of mind (Maccoby and Mercy; Newcomer and Hartly 1958). In the same line of thought, Herman (1972) states how the aspect of social psychology or in other words human psychology is indexed in the choice of language and behavior. Herman (1972:493) points out three issues of influence in individual's language choice:

- i). personal needs;
- ii). background;
- iii). immediate situation;

When the focus of attention is on personal needs, Levin's (1951:271) point of view about the issue is as follows:

personal variables such as relative proficiency in languages, emotional attachment to a particular language, level of aspiration in regard to use of languages.

According to Levin, the variables do play a significant role in person's language choice and language use. At this point, it is worthwhile to mention the language use of former president of Turkey ,Mr. Ozal. As is known, he was very much engaged in foreign relations and as a result of this, he was in direct contact with his foreign counterparts. And the use of foreign words in a Turkish context started with him. The following examples are taken from his language use:

Dostum presidan [president] Bush ile fevkalade prodaktif [productive] bir görüşme yaptım. Ona ekonomik yardıım deđil mor treyid [more, trade] dedim.

[I had a very productive/fruitful meeting with my friend President Bush. What I asked him was more trade not economic aid]

Bütün arsenali [arsenal] kim satıyor du ?

[Who was selling all these arsenal ?]

Sanki bu rezerveybinlar [reservations] yokmuđ gibi konuđuyorlar....

They are taking as if these reservations are not present !]

These examples from his speech can be explained through Levin's principles , like personal desires, emotional attachment and so on. The most striking point in these examples is that although all the foreign words in sentences have their equivalent counterparts in Turkish, the

former president preferred to use the foreign ones reflecting his personal variables (Levin 1951:272) and personal needs (Herman,1972).

When we return to the issues like i) personal needs and desire, ii) background, and iii) immediate situation put forward by Herman (1972:495), the real reasons behind using L2 words in a specific language as in our language, Turkish, can be well understood.

For instance, in Herman's point of view, personal needs and desires are related " with the norms of his group, which may demand him the use of another language " or more specifically the words (1972:493). In his point of view, the speaker needs to stick to his group and the only way to show his loyalty is related to his language use. This point is very important because by being loyal to his group, he also asserts power upon other groups and this is reflected through his language use. The background issue also plays a significant role in persons' speech. In Herman and Schild study (1960), the reflection of background issue was observed in the following situation:

- i) When the activity takes place in a public rather than private setting;
- ii) When the behavior in the situation may be interpreted as providing cues to group identifications (social status) or conformity to group identifications;
- iii) When the person involved in the activity wishes to identify (or to be identified) with particular group or to be dissociated from it , or desires (or feels obliged) to conform to the norms of a reference group (1972:495).

Again when the the previous examples are focussed on in the study, it can be noted that the conditions which are related to the background issue are behind the reasons of using foreign words in a Turkish context. In the language use of politicians and other important figures, the background issue clearly reflects its significance [before we continue, it is necessary to state that since background issue and immediate situation overlap we shall not focus on the latter]. But what happens if the peasant or illiterate begins to use the foreign words which are not of his vocabulary stock ? How could this be explained ? The answer to this question has various dimensions. For instance, in the framework of Optimal Distinctiveness Theory (ODT), the peasant or the illiterate feels the need of associating himself with groups that are dominant or in superior position (Hinkle and Brown 1990; Sachedev and Bourhis 1990). In other words, the illiterate or peasant feels the social and psychological influence and pressure of the higher strata. In order to escape or dismiss this pressure and influence, he starts to use the specific words and expressions of those dominating social groups thinking of becoming a member of it. In Brewer's point of view (1991), the person at that point, in fact, wishes to be assimilated by the dominating social group and become part of it. In other words, this social psychology based answer refers back to the social strata changing process of Trudgill (1992). In Steiner's point of view (1979), there is only one answer to the question; that is imitation. Penycook (1994) like Steiner explains the fact by referring back to the effect of fashion and imitation. And finally Stern(1983) says empathy, which is also a social psychology based answer.

1.1 Speech Accommodation Theory and Language Use

The question put forward earlier can also be answered within the Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) put forward by Giles and Powlsland and Social Identity Theory (S I T) put forward by Tajfel.

First, the focus of attention will be on SAT. According to Giles' theory:

the more people desire another's
approval, the more they will converge
their speech towards the other, to an
optimal level (Hildebrat and Giles 1980:65).

In Giles' point of view, the theory makes use of four psychological processes namely i) similarity attraction, ii) social exchange, iii) casual attribution and iv) social identifiýcation (Thakerar, Giles, Chesire 1982:213). By means of these processes, Giles and Powlsland try to explain the motivations and social consequences which underlie interpersonal shifts in speech style (1975).

The processes that are mentioned above are regarded as individual theories which make up the Speech Accommodation Theory (Bryne 1969). For this reason, the study is going to refer to those processes as theories. For instance, in Bryne's understanding the Similarity Attraction Theory proposes that:

the more similar our attitudes ,
beliefs and valued characteristics
are those of other individuals, the
more likely it is that we will be
attracted to them (1969:212).

Wolfram (1973:11) adds the aspect of power to Bryne's understanding of the Similarity Attraction Theory. In Wolfram's point of view, the main cause of Similarity Attraction Theory has got a direct link with the issue of power. In his understanding, the power dimension of the S A T is the most crucial element, and for supporting this view, he gives the example of Puerto Ricans language use. The Puerto Ricans assimilate the language of blacks in New York city since the blacks are powerful (1973). In addition to this, Wolfram points out the reason of English being a powerful lingua franca.

Again it is possible to answer the question put forward earlier with Bryne's insight (1969) and Wolfram's power dimension (1973), both of which play a significant role in changing the speech styles of individuals.

The other theory which makes up the SAT is Social Exchange Theory. Homans explains this theory as follows:

we attempt to assess rewards and
costs of alternate modes of behavior
and then choose that which
maximizes the possibility of
unpleasant ones (1961:133).

Like the Social Exchange Theory (SET), the other two theories/processes- Casual Attribution Theory -(CAT) and Social Identification Theory (SIT)- support the aspect of change in language use very significantly. Here it is necessary to point out that Speech Accommodation Theory (SAT) has direct links with the process of changing social strata. Trudgil (1984) also points out how social strata and language use are interdependent.

In this study, the use of foreign words is a specific issue which clearly has its roots tied up to language-culture relations, social psychology and class movements.

1.2 Social Identity Theory (SIT)

The fourth process/theory in SAT is Tajfel's Social Identity Theory (Hilderbrant and Giles 1980:68). As pointed out earlier, language use in any community, society is not homogeneous since there is a continuum of social classification. Tajfel's theory helps to provide an explanation for divergence which occurs in a society. Tajfel builds up his theory on four issues. These are :

social categorization;

social comparison;

psychological distinctiveness;

cognitive alternatives (1978:222).

In the light of SIT, the aspect of variation in language use and attitudes toward others, the possibility of moving from one strata to another can be explained. For instance, the process of social categorization involves the issue of membership in a specific group. People with the same thought, likes, dislikes, manners, value judgments and language use classify themselves in the same social category. By means of this social categorization, groups or members of groups gain their social identity.

People belonging to the same social group, in other words, having the same social peculiarities tend to compare their social identity with the groups who have much higher statues in the society. What is central in the issue of comparison is *self satisfaction* which gives way to obtain positive social characteristics and have a particular distinction from other

social categories. This is called a process of *psychological distinction* (Tajfel 1978; Simon and Rethringrew 1990; Abrams,1994).

On the basis of language use, it is clear that the Social Identity Theory of Tajfel (1974) and the Speech Accommodation Theory of Giles and Powsland (1975) significantly explain the question of foreign lexis usage in L1 context.

1.3 The Attitudinal Factor in Language Use

Language attitude is related to individual's preference, personality as well as his social milieu (Cüceloğlu and Slobin, 1980). Preston (1989:50), Giles and Hildebrandt (1980:72) and Nader (1972) add the issues like ethnicity, nationalism, gender, class, role and age in language attitudes. Eiser and Pencer (1979) and Der Plight, Martijn and Schie (1994) classify the basic feelings such as like and dislike within the issue of language attitudes. They state that having any kind of attitude to anything is related to human and social psychology. In their point of view, the reinforcement to the attitude change has got a direct link with the aspect of willingness or motivation if the attitude change will be beneficial in terms of being evaluated by others. Giles and Hildebrandt classifies attitudinal motive like i) integrative orientation and ii) instrumental

orientation. Both integrative and instrumental orientations refer to social changes that the individual tries to achieve. As pointed out earlier, by means of language use human being is able to become part of a group which he takes as example, or on the other hand, he may differentiate himself from the other groups. The behavior mentioned above depends on the language attitude. For instance, in Korea although English is neither a national nor an official language, it is considered to be the most important language (Shim 1994:225). English has been treated as highly prestigious and because of this treatment it has gained posts in education, commerce and life style as well (Kim 1993:61).

What is happening in Korea is due to the attitude of people towards English language (Baik 1993;1992). In Baik's point of view, Koreans desire to modify their identities give way to many loan words from English. In brief, the attitudinal factor plays a significant role in accepting or rejecting foreign words in a specific language and culture. In the Korean situation, the attitudinal tendency is positive about the use of foreign words. As a result, they do not show psychological resistance to the English elements appearing in the Korean language (Baik 1993).

The situation in Japanese is not really like the Korean situation; however, people use English and Dutch words without showing great resistance toward them (Miura 1979; Ywasaki 1994). When the focus of attention is directed to Russian language, a large number of English words appearing in Russian context can be observed. The frequency of English words is very high; therefore, this indicates the insignificance of resistance.

The Chinese language also contains a large body of foreign words (English) in its vocabulary stock. According to Baik (1993), the use of these words are free in context. Again this refers to the insignificance of the psychological resistance toward foreign elements. There is one

important point in Chinese situation; that is the Chinese are very loyal to their customs, but even their customs have not been able to establish a barrier toward the foreign elements.

The English language is one of the famous languages hosting foreign words from all over the languages. According to Schiller, the greatness of a language is related to the elements that absorbs and makes use of it rather than rejecting them (in Berns 1994). In Kachru's point of view, the reason of the greatness or diaspora of English has direct relation with its vocabulary stock; that is English contains words from all the world languages (in Berns 1994). In brief, the British people has no psychological resistance toward the foreign words .

However, the attitudinal scale also has a negative pole. Germans, for instance, show a very high degree of psychological resistance toward any kind of foreign elements appearing in German (Berns 1994). In Berns' point of view, this psychological resistance has its roots in German Nationalism. In Berns' line of thought, the German Nationalism has lost its degree of effectiveness, but its effect upon German language remains the same. According to Berns, the clear reflection of the effect of Nationalism on German is the distinction between borrowed words (Lehnwörter) and foreign words (Fremdwörter). The treatment of borrowed words is positive whereas for foreign words it is not . The tendency is not to use any kind of foreign words in a German context. That shows a very high degree of resistance toward the foreign words.

Finally, when the study looks at the attitude of French people, it can be seen that their resistance is not as strong as the Germans. In France, the foreign words are not used in official communication; however, people tend to use foreign words in their speech (Filipovic' 1996).

In conclusion, it can be said that different nations have different historical background and understanding, and as a consequence of this, they show different kinds of attitudes toward the use of foreign words in an L1 context.

2. DATA COLLECTION

In this study the starting point in data collection has been Kirbik's point that is, "the concrete utterances which represent the realisation of the linguistic competence of speakers who know language can be observed" (1977, Milroy 1990:2). Taking Kirbik's point into consideration, daily programs on TV channels were observed and the authentic utterances were written down as in the form of a complete statement. Since the focus of attention in the study was the use of foreign words in a Turkish context, only those utterances containing foreign words were taken into consideration. It is important to mention here that the term "foreign word(s)" in this study refers to the words of western origin like English, French, German and others.

In order to enlarge the data, besides daily Tv programs (reality shows, talk shows, political discussion panels, news and others), three daily newspapers namely, Milliyet, Hürriyet and Sabah were scanned, too. In this way, both spoken and written forms of Turkish were analyzed. The process of data collection has started in 1990, and terminated in 1996.

2.1 Subjects

In this study, sampling universe has been given the utmost importance. According to Sankoff (1980), good data is not useful without good sampling. In Sankoff's point of view, the notion of representativeness needs to cover different types of community members. In her point of view, the social class and gender play a significant role in language attitude and language use. And finally, she points out the importance of sampling size.

In this study, the university students were chosen as subjects. The main reason behind this decision was the notion of "representativeness" of the different social classes. In the light of the figures at Turkish Statistical Institute records (DÝE), universities in Turkey clearly represent the social structure of the country. For this reason, in the study five different universities were chosen for sampling universe. The universities in this study are located in different geographical parts of Turkey. In the Aegean region Ege University, in the Marmara region Ýstanbul Teknik University, in the Mediterranean region Mersin University, in the Southeastern region Atatürk University, and in the Central Anatolian region Middle East Technical University were selected for the conduct of the study.

In this study, the sampling size was fixed with 500 participants. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 38. In other words, the students were at different levels of their higher education -preparatory classes, freshman sophomore, junior and senior -. As for the field of study, students were members of different faculties majoring in different branches such as environmental engineering., mechanical eng., mining eng., aeronautical eng., history, arts and crafts, arts and music, philosophy, mathematics, statistics, biology, international relations, and general education.

One of the important points to be mentioned is the medium of instruction in those five universities selected for the study. Except in the Middle East Technical University, the means of education in four of the universities is Turkish. METU in this study was selected for the purpose of reflecting the attitude and feelings of those students who are carrying out their education in L2. And also to compare the results of L1 medium universities with the results of L2 medium university. This would give a very reliable spectrum about the degree of psychological resistance stemming from L1 and L2 usage in the higher education.

2.2 The Questionnaire

According to Oppenheim (1992) and Fishbein and Icek (1975), questionnaire design is one of the crucial stages in survey studies. In their point of view, the primary function of a questionnaire is to test the hypotheses put forward at the initial stages of the research. Therefore, the questionnaire is to be designed according to the type of the hypotheses. In Oppenheim's view (1992), questionnaire planning should be done very carefully and wording of the questionnaire, the design of the attitude statements, scaling system of the statements, data processing and the procedure in statistical analysis are to be given the utmost attention for the safety of the study. Having taken into consideration the points mentioned above, a questionnaire which would verify the aspects of belief, attitude, intention and behavior was designed.

The questionnaire of this research was composed of five parts (a,b,c,d,and e). In part A, the background information about the respondents and their parents was aimed at. This part contained twelve items. As is known, the background information plays a significant role in language-society relation, as well as language use and behavior. For this reason, by using twelve items in this part, we wanted to get the maximum background information from the respondents.

Part B was composed of twenty items. All of the items were related to:

- appropriate language use;
- the causes of the spread of L2 words in L1 context;
- participants' opinion and attitude about the use of L2 words in L1 discourse;
- the evaluation of L1 capacity on the basis of lexis and communication;

These four points were almost always reflected in the questionnaire items. The organization of the items were carried out by means of Fishbein and Icek method. In other words, the items were presented on bi-polar bi-regional scale where respondents' answers could be measured equally on the scale. By means of bi-polar, bi-regional scale, the researcher was able to evaluate each item equally whatsoever the respondent's choice was. In brief, the purpose of section B was to find out the belief and attitude of respondents/participants about changes observed in Turkish lexicon.

In part C of the questionnaire, twenty five western origin words-written according to Turkish sound system- were asked to the participants. The participants were to indicate whether they knew the meaning of these words or not.

How were these twenty five words chosen? In 1996 March and August, two questionnaires were delivered and the results were evaluated by means of Fischer Transformation Methodology. The words which received $P < 0.00001$ value were found appropriate for this study and used in this main questionnaire. The P value reflected the degree of significance on the basis of use, recognition and acceptance by the society members. In brief, the purpose of Part C was to find out whether the participants knew the meaning of those twentyfive words context free or not.

In Part D, the same words were asked to be rated by the respondents on the basis of frequency of hearing in L1. The degree of frequency was ranked as very frequently, sometimes and never heard. The main aim of this part was to justify the degree of relation between hearing and knowing. The outcome of "hearing-knowing" indicates the intention and behavior of the respondent.

In the final part, E, ten foreign words from the previous list were presented in a context. The respondents were asked to find the equivalent meaning of the statement which contained the specific L2 word. To choose the equivalent statement-in meaning- ,the respondents were provided with two statements.

The main purpose of this part was, first of all, to find out whether the foreign words created any sort of communication barrier or not. Secondly, to evaluate the attitude and behavior of the respondents toward the use of L2 words in L1 context by looking at the ratio between the correct and incorrect answers.

2.3 Procedure /Methodology

The final product, the questionnaire, was the outcome of the first draft which was delivered to 100 university students twice. After each delivery, the necessary modifications related to wording and data processing were done. Since in the data processing and evaluation SPSS statistical was going to be used, all the items on section B (bi-polar, bi-regional scale), the scale numbers were recoded and defined twice for the validity and reliability of the calculations.

3. EVALUATION

For the first main item (*Do you pay attention to the foreign words while reading a newspaper?*) %33 percent of the respondents indicated value Ederim +2 (Yes I Do) with a value label 6.00 which meant Turkish people are not happy with the foreign words appearing in Turkish discourse. According to the figures, the degree of resistance is significantly high. For the second item (*While you are speaking or writing do you feel the need of using foreign words?*) %26.4 percent of the participants indicated value label Duyarým +1 (Yes I felt the need of using FWs) with a value of 5.00. The figure we obtained here is very important because the weak tendency towards the use of foreign words is a clear indication of hidden resistance. In the third main item (*Are you against the use of foreign words in L1 context?*) %31 percent of the participants showed their strong resistance by marking the value label Karşıyım +3 (I am against) with a value of 7.00. This figure indicates a very significant and a strong resistance of the participants against the use of foreign words in Turkish context. In the fourth main item (*Do you pay attention while using your mother tongue?*) %42.6 percent of the respondents indicated their strong resistance by marking the value label Ederim +3 (I pay maximum attention) with a value of 7.00. This significant figure also approves the degree of resistance that the Turkish people showed so far in the previous items. In the 5th item (*Do you think Turkish vocabulary is insufficient for communication?*) %89.9 percent of the participants indicated that the Turkish vocabulary is sufficient by marking value label +3 Yeterlidir (sufficient) with a value of 7.00. In the 6th item (*Do you think that foreign words will be eliminated in the Turkish vocabulary stock?*) %97.5 percent of the participants pointed out the impossibility of elimination by marking value label -2 Hayır (No it won't) with a value of 6.00. In the 7th main item (*How do you view your L1?*) %79.7 percent of the participants indicated the richness of Turkish by marking the value label +3 Zengin (Rich) with a value of 7.00. In the 8th main item (*Do you think Turkish needs to borrow many foreign words for its vocabulary stock?*) %50.9 percent of the participants rejected the idea of borrowing by marking the value label -3 Hayır (No) with a value of 7.00. The sub items of the questionnaire, which were used as cross examining the results of the main items, also gave us the similar results indicating the validity and reliability of the results obtained. Above all the presence of the psychological resistance of the Turkish people was supported by the sub items, too.

CONCLUSION

When we compare the statistical results by giving reference to Speech Accommodation Theory, Social Identity Theory and the Optimal Distinctiveness Theory, it can be said that these theories did not show any significant effect upon the Turkish participants of the study. However, when we go through the data the significant effect of these theories can be seen. What this means is that the eminent figures, politicians and popular figures are in the fashion of using foreign words very frequently (Fishmann calls this spread from the top). In other words, these people assert the issue of power, as pointed out by Wolfram (1973), on the rest of the society members and distinguish themselves from the others. In our case, the introduction and the use of foreign words in Turkish cannot be regarded as a real danger for the language because the degree of resistance according to the results is very significant and this functions as a natural filter for foreign words before getting accepted and used by the members of the society. In short, it can be put forward that all these foreign elements which are said to be in free circulation in Turkish is the indication of Quantitative Borrowing (Osam 1996). In the case of lack of psychological resistance Qualitative Borrowing functions and the result is language change in depth as was observed in the case of Ottoman language.

In the light of statistical results, it is possible to come to the conclusion that the attitude of Turkish people towards the use of foreign words is not *nationalistic* nor *racist*. What they reflect as *psychological resistance* is *rational resistance*, which means a foreign word can be used when there is a necessity.

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