

Belonging to both, but belonging to neither

Bilingualism and identity construction among Dutch people with a Turkish background



Photo sent to me by Belma, 14 April 2021.

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background

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Introduction

“What is left of the little Turkish girl that climbed the cherry tree? Basically everything. I still climb without fears, I still enjoy reaching the high branches. Not only much is left, but also much has been added. I can now climb in two countries, two languages, two cultures, two worlds that come together as one in me.”¹

Nilgün Yerli moved from Turkey to the Netherlands when she was 10 years old. She wrote a book about her story called *De Garnalenpelster*, The Shrimp Peeler (Yerli 2005). This story is about how Yerli constructs her daily life with two cultural backgrounds: a Turkish one and a Dutch one. She discusses how she experienced her move to the Netherlands, what she thinks of the Netherlands compared to Turkey and her experiences in learning the Dutch language. Beside Yerli, there are over 400.000 people living in the Netherlands who were either born in Turkey or who have at least one parent that migrated from Turkey (CBS 2021). People who have two cultural backgrounds, in this case a Turkish one and a Dutch one, can be called bicultural individuals as they “have been exposed to and have internalized two cultures” (Huynh et al. 2011, 828). As language constitutes part of a cultural system, bicultural individuals are likely to be competent in the two languages that are intertwined in the two cultural systems they have internalized, which makes them bilinguals (Thompson 2003, Chomsky in Wald 1974). Language is an important part of our lives, whether spoken, written, heard or read. It is the way we give meaning to the world, and the way we communicate with other people. Languages can also influence the way we construct our identities, as we can conceptualize ourselves through language (Fuller 2007, Joseph 2004). This thesis studies the relation between biculturalism, bilingualism and identity, projected onto Dutch people with a Turkish background. People with a Turkish background living in the Netherlands generally came to the country in the 1960s as guestworkers (Shadid 2006, Vijf Eeuwen Migratie n.d.). At the moment there are about three generations of Dutch people with a Turkish background in the Netherlands (Sevinç 2016). To study the relation between the three previously mentioned concepts projected onto the research population, the following research question has been constructed:

In what way does bilingualism influence the identity construction of Dutch people with a Turkish background?

¹ Yerli 2005, 8. Own translations from Dutch to English.

As the amount of Dutch people with a Turkish background is quite large, it is relevant to gain better insight into the way that the Dutch and the Turkish language are intertwined in the lives of the participants of this research. Furthermore, in this thesis I argue in what ways bilingualism affects identity construction, and multiple participants have explained how they perceive their double cultural background and their bilingualism to be predominantly beneficial in their daily lives. This experience can then gain a better insight into bilingualism. Subsequently, from what I have found, not much research has been done on the relation between the three main concepts of this research projected onto Dutch adolescents with a Turkish background. This may thus lead to a better understanding of the research population and possibly other bilinguals in the Netherlands. However, the type of research and the amount of participants do not invite for generalisations among all Dutch people with a Turkish background. Thus, more extensive research into this subject would be beneficial as will be discussed at the end of this thesis in the Discussion chapter.

Methods

For a period of 10 weeks I have conducted fieldwork in the Netherlands, for which I used qualitative research methods. The research was conducted between 8 February and 16 April 2021. This fieldwork was predominantly online, due to the COVID-19 measures. Fortunately, I was able to conduct part of the fieldwork physically. The main research method was conducting semi structured interviews. These types of interviews are, as the name says, somewhat structured, but also still give the interviewer space to go into depth (Leech 2002). With this type of interviewing, the interviewer brings a list with questions whereby all relevant topics can be discussed (DeWalt and DeWalt 2011). I have conducted 15 interviews with 14 participants, as I did a follow-up interview with one participant. All but one interview took place online. With this research method I was able to go into depth about the thoughts and beliefs of the participants. Where necessary, I was able to ask follow-up questions or the participant could introduce me to a relevant new topic because of the semi-structured type of interviews I conducted.

Furthermore, I have done one focus group with six participants. This focus group took place offline. The beneficial part of it, compared to interviews with individuals, was that the participants could react to each others' answers which has led to a more complete discussion. Besides, the six individuals already knew each other beforehand, which may have led them feeling more comfortable during the focus group which then leads to more extensive results as well.

Another method that was used during fieldwork was informal conversations. Most of these conversations consist of conversations in order to for me to get to know the participants and for them to get to know me. I did however have one informal conversation with a staff member from a mosque that was combined with a tour through the mosque.

The next research method is photo voice, where participants sent me pictures that are related to the three main concepts. Visual data has led to new insights into the experiences of the participants concerning the research topics.

The last research method that was used consists of participant observation. I have applied this method in several Turkish supermarkets, and during one reading that was organised by one of the Turkish Islamic groups that I was in contact with. However, due to the COVID-19 measures I was not able to extensively perform participant observation. This may have led to a different result in this research, as I have now mostly directly interacted with participants whereas participant observation signifies more another way of interpretation from the researcher.

Ethics

The relation between the participants and I was based on the American Anthropological Association's code of ethics (AAA n.d.). In order to prevent deceiving or harming participants, I tried to be as clear as possible about the intentions, the goal, and the expectations of the participants concerning this research. Furthermore, to make sure the participants knew what was expected from them and knew they were free to refuse any question or stop at any moment, I orally asked for consent. Lastly, the participants are given random pseudonyms in this research to ensure their privacy, anonymity and safety.

During the fieldwork period an ethical issue occurred. As a result of the COVID-19 measures, I sometimes struggled deciding whether I should meet with a participant physically or online. Most of the interviews took place online, but most of the informal conversations took place offline. Anytime I did physically meet a participant, I made sure to have discussed the measures and that the participant was definitely fine with me meeting them offline.

Positionality

The aim of this research is to get a better insight into the relation between bilingualism and biculturalism, and in what way this influences the identity construction of Dutch people with a Turkish background. I have not internalised two cultural backgrounds myself. My parents and I were born in the Netherlands, and we only speak Dutch at home. I also speak Dutch with most

of my friends, except for a few that I speak English with. At this moment, my English is at a significant level, but I feel I cannot compare this at all with the bilingualism that the participants I spoke with experience. Mainly because my competence in the English language is not intertwined with another cultural system I have internalised. As bilingualism and biculturalism is not something I have experienced the way this research' participants experience it, this may affect the research's results. However, whenever I felt I did not fully understand a participant's answer during an interview or during the focus group, I asked them if they could further explain themselves to try to understand their experiences as well as possible. Furthermore, several participants stated that they felt comfortable answering questions during interviews and the focus group, which might have led to a more complete view on their experiences.

Thesis structure

Chapter 1 consists of the theoretical framework. In this chapter the three main concepts of this research will be defined and related to each other. The chapter begins with an introduction into the field of linguistic anthropology where three paradigms within linguistic anthropology are discussed. In the next section this thesis' the perspective of identity will be discussed, which is to perceive identity as a construct that is dynamic, context-dependent and temporal. The section includes Anderson's idea of Imagined Communities and the social identity theory. The section that follows defines the concepts of biculturalism and bilingualism. Different factors that influence bicultural and bilingual individuals' lives will be discussed as well. Lastly, the influence that biculturalism and bilingualism have on identity construction will be reviewed. Thus, the three main concepts that were previously discussed separately are related to each other in the last section of the theoretical framework.

Chapter 2 consists of the context of this thesis. The research population will be discussed and bilingualism among Dutch people with a Turkish background will be reviewed in this chapter.

Chapters 3, 4, and 5 discuss the empirical data conducted during the fieldwork period and this data will be connected to theory from the theoretical framework and the context. Each chapter focuses on one of the main concepts of this thesis. The first empirical chapter focuses on the role that biculturalism plays in the lives of the participants. It is discussed that some participants change their behaviour depending on their current sociocultural environment, while others do not. Furthermore, the topic of boundaries is discussed, where it is reviewed how participants can feel both a part of and an outsider from the Dutch and Turkish cultural systems. It is also reviewed how participants have dealt with discrimination and racism throughout their

lives. The next empirical chapter elaborates the manner in which bilingualism is present in the participants' lives. In this chapter it is discussed how participants mix their languages and what languages different generations prefer. Additionally, the process of improving either their Dutch or their Turkish language competence is discussed as well as the other languages participant are competent in. Then, the last empirical chapter elaborates on how the participants' identity is constructed and how this identity has changed over time.

After the empirical chapters there is a concluding chapter and a discussion chapter. The conclusion aims to answer the central question of this research. It is argued that although the participants do have two cultural backgrounds, this does not mean that these cultural backgrounds are perfectly balanced and static in their lives. The manner in which these cultural backgrounds change and influence their identities can vary over time. This also applied to their competence in the Dutch and the Turkish language. In the discussion the shortcomings are discussed, as well as suggestions for future research.

The thesis ends with a Dutch summary. As the fieldwork was conducted in Dutch, with a Dutch summary the participants are able to read the content and results of the research in the language of fieldwork.

1. Theoretical framework

This theoretical framework focuses on discussing and connecting the major concepts of this present research. As the aim of this research is to investigate the influence of bilingualism on the construction of identity of Dutch adolescents with a Turkish background, this theoretical framework will be introduced by discussing the developments within the field of linguistic anthropology. This section includes an important theoretical insight within the field, which is the idea of linguistic relativity. In the next section this thesis's perspective with regard to identity, which is to view identity as a construct, will be discussed. The section that follows will discuss biculturalism and bilingualism, to then end the theoretical framework with connecting all these concepts.

Linguistic Anthropology

Over the decades, there have been different perspectives on linguistic anthropology regarding the main goals, the main theoretical insights, and the meaning of the field itself (Duranti 2003). Three different paradigms will be described in this section to discuss these different perspectives. The works of important linguistic anthropologists will be discussed as well.

The first paradigm has its origins in the end of the 19th century. Boas is an important anthropologist in this paradigm as he “documented Native American languages and cultural traditions” (Duranti 2003, 324). He argued that languages were important for conducting fieldwork as well as for studying culture, which led to this paradigm's perspective on linguistics as “a tool for cultural (or historical) analysis” (Duranti 2003, 324). A way to analyse languages was to describe and classify them, especially Native American ones, which was a common technique during this period (Duranti 2003).

An important theoretical insight from this paradigm is the idea of linguistic relativity, or the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (Duranti 2003). Linguistic relativists believe that “the particular language we speak influences the way we think about reality” (Lucy 1997, 291), which therefore also influences our behaviour (Duranti 2003). Sapir and Whorf are both major linguistic anthropologists, and Sapir argued how “no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.” (Sapir in Hill and Mannheim 1992, 385). This quote thus suggests that different societies that use different languages not only use different words for different aspects and phenomena, but these societies also interpret these aspects and phenomena differently.

Whereas the first paradigm focused more on the languages themselves, the second one focused more on the speakers of the languages (Duranti 2003). This second paradigm started in the 1960s and its perspective on linguistic anthropology was that “it is anthropology’s task to coordinate knowledge about language from the viewpoint of *man*” (Hymes in Duranti 2003, 327). Furthermore, linguistic anthropologists studied the differences between speakers and activities, rather than the interpretations of reality caused by the use of different languages as was done in the first paradigm.

And lastly, the third paradigm has started in the late 1980s (Duranti 2003). One of the focuses during this paradigm has been the construction of (gender) identities, which are seen as “invented, improvised”, and “culture-specific” (Duranti 2003, 332). The perspective of viewing identity as a construct will be elaborated on in the next paragraph. Furthermore, linguistic anthropology incorporated the concept of symbolic domination into its field of study. The relation between power and gender was studied, with “power redefined as symbolic domination” (Gal 2012, 174). Through “dominant linguistic practices”, people influence other people’s perspectives on different aspects of the world (Gal 2012, 174), such as dominant gender ideas and values. It is then through “linguistic resistance”, among other types of resistance, that gender dominance can be counteracted (Gal 2012, 174).

Generally, in the third paradigm there has been an interest in trying to understand social and cultural phenomena through language. Therefore language is not studied in itself, as was the case with the first paradigm, but it is perceived “as an instrument for gaining access to complex social processes” (Duranti 2003, 332). An example of a research into the effect of language on a social phenomenon is Anderson’s *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (2016). Anderson is an influential anthropologist that included language as an important part of his argument. He relied on “language in modelling the cultural phenomenology of nationalism” (Silverstein 2000, 85). His argument will be further explained in the last section of this theoretical framework.

This paragraph has functioned as an introduction to the field of linguistic anthropology, including some major anthropologists and developments within the field. We have already seen that identities, and social phenomena in general, can be influenced by language. Furthermore, it was said that in the third paradigm the perspective on identity was for it to be a flexible concept, which will be further discussed in the next section.

Identity as a Construct

The idea of identity as a construct is discussed in this paragraph. Furthermore, the relation of individual identity and group identity is discussed. This will be done by introducing the social identity theory and the concept of imagined communities. At the end, this theory and this concept will be connected to each other.

Identity defined

Identity is not a concept to define easily. Many disciplines and many scholars have expressed their thoughts on the concept (Peele-Eady 2011). One of the ways to view identity is to perceive it as a social construct (Campbell 2000, Norton 2006, Joseph 2004, Peele-Eady 2011). Socially constructed identities are dynamic, context-specific, and temporal (Peele-Eady 2011, 57). They are even called fictions, as they are not natural, but constructed by humans (Joseph 2004, 6). Another way of perceiving the concept of identity is by expressing that identity “constitutes an unbroken thread running through the long and varied tapestry of one’s life” (Edwards 2009, 19). From the perspective of perceiving identity as a social construct, this definition is not in line with the present research. I understand this quote to argue that one’s life changes around an individual, but that the identity of the individual does not change with the life of this certain individual. The present research aims, on the contrary, at perceiving the identity of an individual as changing through time and space.

When looking at constructed identities, scholars often speak of ‘social’, ‘cultural’, or both (Norton 2006, Campbell 2000). Social identity can be seen as the relation between “the individual and the larger social world”, whereas cultural identity can be defined as the relation between “an individual and members of a particular ethnic group” (Norton 2006, 2). With both concepts we can see a relation between an individual and a group. Furthermore, social and cultural identities have become more similar over the years. Identity can thus be seen as a sociocultural construct (Norton 2006). The relation between an individual and the group will be discussed in the section below.

Individual identity and group identity

Individual identity can be seen as a combination of multiple group identities (Joseph 2004, 5). A theory which shows the relation between an individual and a social group, is the social identity theory.

The social identity theory was introduced by social psychologists Tajfel and Turner in the 1970s (Ellemers and Haslam 2011, Taylor and Moghaddam 1994). The

theory aims to “understand and explain how people can come to adapt and behave in terms of such social (rather than personal) identities” (Ellemers and Haslam 2011, 381). “Such social identities” refers to Tajfel’s definition of social identity as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel in Ellemers and Haslam 2011, 380-381). The theory thus aims to understand the relation between individuals and social groups, and in order to do that there are four main concepts proposed within the theory (Ellemers and Haslam 2011, Taylor and Moghaddam 1994). These concepts are social identity, social categorization, social comparison, and psychological group distinctiveness (Ellemers and Haslam 2011, Taylor and Moghaddam 1994). Social identity has already been defined above. Secondly, within social categorization people categorize and organise themselves and others into different social groups. Thirdly, people interpret and value the different social groups in the process of social comparison. The social status of their own social group and of other social groups is considered. Lastly, within psychological group distinctiveness people aspire their social group to be positively valued compared to other groups, and distinct from other groups (Ellemers and Haslam 2011, Taylor and Moghaddam 1994).

This theory thus shows how individuals experience being part of a social group and how the relations between different social groups are constructed. Another interesting example that shows the relation between individuals and social groups is discussed in the work of anthropologist Benedict Anderson, where he discusses his concept of ‘imagined communities’ (2016).

Imagined communities

“Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism” is a book by Anderson, in which he explains his concept of imagined communities (2016). There is a strong relation between the nation and imagined communities, as Anderson defines the nation to be “an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign” (2016, 6). He discusses his perspective on the terms imagined, limited, sovereign and community. An imagined community is considered to be imagined, because “the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion.” (Anderson 2016, 6). However, this imagined community is limited, because no nation is infinite. For every nation there are “boundaries, beyond

which lie other nations.” (Anderson 2016, 7). Besides being limited, the nation is perceived as sovereign as well, because it is free and autonomous. And lastly, the nation is considered to be a community because of its “deep, horizontal comradeship” (Anderson 2016, 7).

These imagined communities are political groups that people feel connected to. With the social identity theory we have also seen that people can identify themselves as being part of a social group. Even though the social identity theory concerns social groups and the idea of imagined communities concerns political groups, in both cases we can see how individuals relate themselves to larger groups. Furthermore, the social identity theory emphasizes how people categorize their own and other groups, which is in line with Anderson stating how imagined communities are limited. He discusses how there is, within a nation, the awareness of where the nation ends and where another one starts.

What is not discussed in this paragraph regarding Anderson’s work, but what is relevant to the present research is the relation between imagined communities and language. This topic will be discussed in the last paragraph of this literature review, where the three main concepts of this research will be related to each other. The next paragraph discusses biculturalism and bilingualism, two of the main concepts of this research.

Biculturalism and Bilingualism

In this paragraph, the concepts of biculturalism and bilingualism will be discussed, and the relation between the two concepts will be reviewed. Firstly the definition of biculturalism will be discussed to then move on to different important aspects of the concept. Secondly, the definition of bilingualism will be discussed as well. Finally, the concept of code-switching will be introduced, which is a topic within bilingualism.

Bicultural individuals can be perceived as “those who have been exposed to and have internalized two cultures” (Huynh et al. 2011, 828). Bicultural individuals have a double cultural background and are able to “interact competently in two cultural systems” (Thompson 2003, 101). Biculturalism can emerge from a certain sociocultural context and/or from parents’ efforts. Parents can influence their children’s position toward one or both of the cultural systems in the children’s environment. Parents’ efforts and the sociocultural context can either complement or contradict each other concerning biculturalism (Schwartz & Unger 2010). In the text below multiple perspectives on the concept are discussed as different scholars have suggested different requirements or characteristics as to when an individual is perceived as

bicultural. Besides, the concept of biculturalism relates to multiple other concepts, of which I will discuss a few.

Acculturation

Firstly, psychologist Berry has conducted research into acculturation, which he perceives as the cultural and psychological processes and outcomes of intercultural contact (Berry 1997, 8). He has proposed four strategies of acculturation from the perspective of “non-dominant groups”. Each strategy encompasses another perspective on whether to value maintaining a group’s “original culture” and whether to value being in contact with other cultural groups. Integration is one of the four strategies, and it both values maintaining the original culture as well as maintaining relations with other cultural groups. This strategy thus closely relates to biculturalism, as with both concepts an individual is in contact with two cultural systems. However, Berry’s theoretical insights are not fully in line with the aim of this thesis. Berry’s research is part of the field of cross-cultural psychology, and an important question within this field is: “What happens to individuals, who have developed in one cultural context, when they attempt to live in a new cultural context?” (Berry 1997, 6). This question suggests a focus on first generation migrants, whereas the individuals that participated in this present research were all, except one, born in the Netherlands with either their parents and/or their grandparents being born in Turkey. They thus developed themselves within two cultural contexts, they did not develop in one cultural context only to come into contact with another one later on in their lives.

Ethnicity

Besides one’s original culture and other groups’ cultures, ethnicity is another factor that can be connected to biculturalism. Individuals that identify both with mainstream and with ethnic cultural backgrounds may experience contradictions between the two cultures. It may then be easier to (temporarily) choose one of the cultures than to be both at once (Benet-Martínez et. al 2002). On the other hand, as everyone has a different, personal experience when it comes to bicultural identity, there are also individuals who identify with mainstream and ethnic cultural backgrounds that do not experience contradictions between these two cultures (Benet-Martínez et. al 2002). Within this thesis, ethnicity and culture are seen as two concepts with separate meanings. Ethnicity is a concept that indicates a biological factor, whereas culture is socially constructed (Rata 2005). However, to define an ethnic group we use social boundaries (Barth 1969). The socially constructed boundaries of an ethnic group, or a cultural one, indicate who belongs within the group and who does not (Barth 1969, Babadzan 2000, Dayal 1996). Because

ethnicity concerns a biological factor and culture does not, ethnic groups and cultural groups do not necessarily coincide (Rata 2005).

Boundaries

On the boundaries of a culture, a “new culture” can be formed or in other words, a “third culture” (Paulston 2005, 280). You could therefore say that: “true biculturalism involves synthesizing the heritage and receiving cultures into a unique and personalized blend. From this perspective, the bicultural individual selects aspects from the heritage and receiving cultures and integrates them into an individualized ‘culture’ that is not directly reducible to either the heritage or receiving cultural streams” (Schwartz and Unger 2010, 27). Although I do agree with the argument of the citation, I do not agree with “true biculturalism”. As indicated above, the point of view concerning bicultural identity within this thesis is that all bicultural individuals can experience their bicultural identity differently and that this identity is not fixed. The citation suggests that individuals who do not construct their own “individualized culture” are not “true biculturals”, which is not in line with the position held in this thesis. Furthermore, when an individual identifies with two cultural backgrounds, this person might have a sense of a “simultaneous awareness of oneself as being a member and an alien of two or more cultures” (LaFromboise et. al 1993, 395). They thus feel that they partially belong within the boundaries of a culture, but on the other hand that they do not fully fit in with the socially constructed boundaries of that specific group. This experience can lead to cultural frame switching, as a person might have “two ways of thinking about the self that can guide behavior depending on the social context” (Brannon et. al 2015, 587).

Cultural frame switching

Cultural frame switching is a process in which a bicultural individual switches between two cultural systems or contexts (Huynh et al. 2011, Nguyen and Benet-Martínez 2007). The ease with which a bicultural individual can practice cultural frame switching can differ from person to person, depending on the extent to which the person identifies as being bicultural (Huynh et al. 2011). Bicultural individuals can have two separate cultural frames in their minds, belonging to the two cultural backgrounds they have internalized (Luna et. al 2008, Hong et. al 2000). Within these two cultural frames not only the cultural systems differ from each other, but also languages, values, behaviour, worldviews and identity (Luna et. al 2008). Thus, bicultural individuals may switch their behaviour depending on sociocultural cues in the environment (Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martínez 2015, Ramírez-Esparza et. al 2006, Cheng et. al 2006, Luna et. al 2008, Hong et. al 2000). Beside a change of behaviour, bicultural individuals’

identity and personality can also change due to a specific sociocultural context (Ramírez-Esparza et. al 2006, Luna et. al 2008). Furthermore, Hong and colleagues, all social scientists and/or psychologists, say that: “many bicultural individuals report that the two internalized cultures take turns in guiding their thoughts and feelings.” (2000, 710). Bicultural individuals are thus guided by their cultural backgrounds in their daily lives. Hong and colleagues continue by suggesting that bicultural individuals’ “internalized cultures are not necessarily blended”, which can be argued because of the idea of cultural frame switching (Hong et. al 2000, 710).

Bilingualism

One way to view bilingualism is as a “necessary prerequisite for biculturalism” (Thompson 2003, 102). The two concepts relate to each other rather strongly, only biculturalism is more broad. As language is a part of a cultural structure, bilingualism is part of biculturalism.

Linguistic anthropologists have approached the concept of bilingualism in multiple ways (Heller 2006). One way of approaching the concept is done by linguistic anthropologist Noam Chomsky. In his study concerning bilingualism he differentiated between linguistic competence and linguistic performance. He defines linguistic competence in a given language as an individual having the “ability to produce and understand utterances of that language” (Chomsky in Wald 1974, 303). A bilingualist then is an individual who is competent in two languages (Wald 1974).

The ways in which a bilingual learns the two languages can differ from person to person. According to Huynh et al., there are two ways to distinguish: coordinate bilinguals and compound bilinguals (2011). The former indicates that a person learns two languages more separately, they learn one after another and in two different contexts. With the latter on the other hand, there is more of an interaction between the languages. The languages are learnt at the same time and in the same context (Huynh et al. 2011, 837).

In the last part of this paragraph, code-switching will be discussed. This is a concept that resembles cultural frame switching, but then the ‘bilingualism version’. The concept can be defined as “the use of features of both languages in the same utterance.” (Wald 1974, 302). It is thus described how code-switching occurs in a specific context. Furthermore, code-switching can also happen between two individuals. One person may talk in a certain language to another person, and this other person may respond in another language (Fuller 2007).

In this paragraph the concepts of biculturalism and bilingualism were discussed, which means that, along with identity, all three main concepts of this research have been discussed. In the next paragraph these concepts will be related to each other.

Influence of biculturalism and bilingualism on identity construction

In this last paragraph of the theoretical framework the concepts of biculturalism and bilingualism will be related to the formation of identity. Bilingualism is a “necessary prerequisite for biculturalism” (Thompson 2003, 102), and they both can influence one’s identity. A lot of different aspects can influence one’s identity, as is shown in the concerned paragraph, and biculturalism and bilingualism can influence one’s identity in multiple ways. Some of the most interesting and relevant ways are discussed down below.

Language and identity

Language is an important aspect within the construction of identity (Fuller 2007). The relation can be seen in a way that “language abstracts the world of experience into words (...) this enables us to form a conception of self rather than simply *being* ourselves” (Joseph 2004, 11). These words show how an individual can construct their own identity through language. Furthermore, as was already mentioned in the first paragraph, the interpretations that proceed from a language are not universally the same. Instead, they are separate, context-dependent, and constructed (Lucy 1997, Duranti 2003). Emerging from this idea, is the idea that also the beliefs we have about the relation between language and identity, are not universal or neutral (Heller 2006, 166-167; Hill and Mannheim 1992).

Bicultural individuals

In this second part of this paragraph, four different types of bicultural individuals will be discussed (Nguyen and Benet-Martínez 2007, Huynh et al. 2011). There are variations among bicultural individuals, as not all bicultural individuals are influenced the same way by two cultures or engage in the same cultural contexts (Huynh et al. 2011). Birman, professor of educational and psychological studies, distinguishes blended, instrumental, explorer, and integrated bicultural individuals. A blended bicultural individual understands and acts within both cultural contexts. He or she identifies with both as well (Nguyen and Benet-Martínez 2007, Huynh et al. 2011). An instrumental bicultural also understands and acts in both cultural contexts, but identifies with neither of them (Nguyen and Benet-Martínez 2007, Huynh et al. 2011). An integrated bicultural individual, then, also understands and acts in both cultural contexts, but identifies with “only their ethnic culture”. Lastly, an explorer bicultural individual

understands and acts only in the dominant culture, and also identifies with “only their ethnic culture” (Nguyen and Benet-Martínez 2007, 106). There are different ways of acting and different experiences regarding biculturalism, and these types are part of the relation between biculturalism and identity. Whether the experiences of a bicultural individual are similar to or nothing like the previously explained types, biculturalism influences the construction of identity of individuals (Nguyen and Benet-Martínez 2007, Huynh et al., 2011).

Role of language in imagined communities

In the second paragraph of this literature review, Anderson’s work regarding the idea of imagined communities has been discussed. He argues how nations are limited and sovereign imagined communities (2016). Anderson also argues how language can contribute to the feeling of connectedness to an imagined community. This relation between language and imagined communities started in the 1500s and involves “print-capitalism” (Anderson 2016, 39). Due to the newly widespread printed documents, such as newspapers and Luther’s theses, a feeling of national consciousness could arise (Anderson 2016). These printed documents were written in “print-languages” (Anderson 2016, 43). Before different documents were printed and then widely spread, there was a big amount of different languages being spoken by people all over the world. In order for print-capitalism to become as big as it became, a lot of people needed to understand the printed documents. This started in Europe, with the spoken languages “being assembled, within definite limits, into print-languages far fewer in number” (Anderson 2016, 43). Through print-capitalism and print-languages, people became conscious of what happened in other locations and other times, within reach of their print-language. This is one of the aspects that contributes to people feeling connected to an imagined community. We can thus see that language can connect people to each other, language can make individuals feel connected to a group. People can then also identify as being part of that group.

In this paragraph a few relevant relations between biculturalism, bilingualism and identity have been discussed, which ends the theoretical framework of this research. Throughout this theoretical framework the three main concepts of this thesis, biculturalism, bilingualism, and identity construction, have been defined and related to each other. The next chapter discusses the context of this research. The research population of Dutch people with a Turkish background will be introduced.

2. Context

In the previous part of this literature review, different concepts and scholars relevant to the research subject are discussed. In this part of the literature review, the theoretical framework will be projected onto the research population. To be able to connect the research population to relevant concepts, there will first be given some statistical information about the Netherlands regarding migration and about Dutch people with a Turkish background in the Netherlands.

Dutch people with a Turkish background

The CBS (*Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek*, Central Office for Statistics) declares that in 2020, 24 percent of the Dutch population has a migration background (2020). This includes first as well as second generation migrants. CBS states that the former entails people born in another country, and the latter means people born in the Netherlands but at least one of the parents was an immigrant (2020). Of this percentage, there are 199,000 first generation and 222,078 second generation Turkish people in the Netherlands (CBS 2020).

After the second World War, a strong economic growth occurred in the Netherlands (Shadid 2006). Due to this occurrence, the Netherlands reached out to Turkey, among other countries, to recruit guestworkers (Shadid 2006, Sevinç 2016, Vijf Eeuwen Migratie n.d.). Turkey and the Netherlands reached a recruitment agreement in 1964, with the result of 65,000 Turkish people coming to the Netherlands in the next decade (Shadid 2006, Vijf Eeuwen Migratie n.d.). CBS, however, declares that there are 199,000 first generation Turkish people in the Netherlands at the moment (2020). They only state that they understand first generation to be the group of people that was born outside of the Netherlands, they do not mention anything about the amount of guest workers within that number.

The Netherlands was planning on the Turkish guest workers to only stay in the Netherlands for a few years, however, this did not become reality (Vijf Eeuwen Migratie n.d., Sevinç 2016). Turkish guest workers in the Netherlands with a family in Turkey decided to bring their spouses and children to the Netherlands (Sevinç 2016, Vijf Eeuwen Migratie n.d.). Or if a man was not married yet, it could also happen that he would marry a woman from Turkey and bring her to the Netherlands (Vijf Eeuwen Migratie n.d.). Presently, there are roughly three generations of Dutch people with a Turkish background in the Netherlands, with the third generation generally reaching adulthood now (Sevinç 2016). Not all Dutch people with a Turkish background in the Netherlands have come to the Netherlands as a result of the labour

recruitment from the 1960s and 1970s, it is however the largest group of Dutch people with a Turkish background.

Bilingualism among Dutch people with a Turkish background

In this second paragraph of the context, the research population will be discussed regarding the major concepts of this research. More specifically, the role of bilingualism among Dutch people with a Turkish background will be reviewed in this paragraph, where concepts from the theoretical framework will be connected to the research population.

Sevinç discusses in his article how there is a difference of language use between four generations migrants (2016). He declares that the “first generation is bilingual with a strong dominance of the mother tongue, the second generation is bilingual with a dominance of one language or with a balanced situation, the third language is bilingual with a dominance of ML, and the fourth generation only masters the ML.” ML here refers to majority language (Sevinç 2016, 82). Second generation Dutch bilinguals with a Turkish background generally start learning Dutch at school. This language usually ends in becoming their dominant language, which can cause friction in multigenerational bicultural families in the Netherlands. There can occur disagreement within a family about the extent to which the languages are used (Sevinç 2016). Furthermore, second or third generation Dutch people with a Turkish background can experience friction between the use of language within the family and in other social contexts (Sevinç 2016). These variations in sociocultural contexts and variations in uses of language can be seen as cultural frame switching (Huynh et al. 2011; Nguyen and Benet-Martínez 2007) and as code-switching (Wald 1974).

Lastly, bilingualism and the use of language can strongly influence one’s identity construction regarding the Dutch-Turkish context (Sevinç and Backus 2017). Dutch people with a Turkish background can feel excluded or foreign when they are in Turkey, unless they speak Turkish fluently (Sevinç and Backus 2017). Language thus plays an important role in the “Turkish identity” of Dutch people with a Turkish background (Sevinç and Backus 2017, 720). Although nothing was said about relating to a Dutch identity, the people mentioned above did declare to not fully identify with a ‘Turkish identity’ unless they fluently speak the Turkish language.

3. Biculturalism

In front of me there is a one-floored building with blinds on every window. Someone walks out of the front door and after Alay sees me, he makes a welcoming gesture with his hand. We greet each other, he walks back into the building and I walk behind him. There is a small entrance hall with a door on the left and on the right side. At the end of the entrance hall is a corridor, and after we walk through a door on the left end of the corridor we arrive at a hall with a bar on our right side and tables with chairs in the middle. In two of the four walls of the room there are windows, but we cannot see through them as the blinds are closed. Alay later tells me the building is not used that often at the moment because of the COVID-19 restrictions, and I assume that is why the blinds are closed. Alay offers me a drink, takes one himself too, and we sit down at one of the tables.

This is the first time we meet. Alay tells me something about the organisation that he is part of. The secular organisation is based in a city in the south of the Netherlands, there are multiple other organisations in other cities of the country that are similar to Alay's one, and there is also one overarching national organisation. This specific organisation was created in the 1980s by Alay's grandfather and a few friends of his to bring young Turkish people together. Alay explains: "Well, my grandfather was a guestworker here, together with his friends they were guestworkers. And they could barely speak Dutch, so there were definitely culture clashes at that moment. So I think it was created because people started looking for each other, Turkish guest workers started looking for each other."²

Alay tells me that it is a Turkish organisation, but it is not solely for Turkish people. Everyone is welcome to come, which is often misunderstood by people outside the organisation, according to Alay. A few years ago the organisation moved to a new building in another neighbourhood. People living around this building did not agree, they were protesting against the move and they even filed complaints with the municipality of the city. As they were long searching for a new (bigger) building, Alay and the rest of the organisation were happy the municipality still allowed them to move there. Luckily, the neighbours have changed their minds by now: "(...) they thought we had a completely different perspective, that we were actually a criminal organisation, that really is the idea they had, but well, it is a lack of

² Informal conversation with Alay 26 March 2021. All interviews and informal conversations were held in Dutch, all quotes were translated by me from Dutch to English.

knowledge, they don't know. And I don't blame them, because it's normal, you don't trust it."³ This change of perspective of the neighbours did not happen by accident, as the organisation actively tried to inform the neighbourhood about themselves. They handed out flyers and they organised an open day with multiple activities, which is a yearly event now. Through inviting the neighbours surrounding their building and through being open to everyone, the organisation tries to contribute to closing the gap between people with a Turkish background and people with other backgrounds (who may have negative ideas about them).

Even though Alay stated that the organisation was firstly created for Turkish people to meet each other, he said that their current primary goal is to keep young people off the streets. Young people could end up anywhere if they are hanging out at outside places, but now they can spend their free time in the organisation's building. However, the organisation is not only open for after school activities, as young people can also do their homework there. Additionally, not only young people come there, but also adults and children. Where Alay previously stated that the organisation is for everyone, he said states that most of the visitors do have a Turkish background.

In this vignette Alay explains how the organisation he is a member of is constructed, and the role it plays in his life. He discusses culture clashes between the Dutch cultural system and the Turkish one, and he discusses how mostly people with a Turkish background come to the organisation which is based in the Netherlands. In this first empirical chapter I explain how the participants of this research experience being bicultural. Firstly, an overview is given of how both the Dutch and the Turkish cultural background are reflected in participants' lives. It is then discussed how participants either change their behaviour due to a specific sociocultural environment, or they do not. Secondly, the way cultural systems have boundaries and how this affects the participants' lives is discussed. The chapter ends with a conclusion which includes the main arguments of the chapter.

All participants, except two, identify as having two cultural backgrounds. How this is reflected in their lives, and how the two participants identify will be explained in the last empirical chapter about identity, but I intended to establish this factor before moving on to the rest of this chapter.

³ Informal conversation with Alay, 26 March 2021.

Change of behaviour

Many participants have explained how their Dutch cultural background mainly plays a role at school or at work and their Turkish one at home. Ela, a 23 year old student who was born in Turkey, but moved to the Netherlands at age 9, went to a primary school in Turkey for about 3 years and then went to an international school in the Netherlands. At this international school she learnt the Dutch language and came into contact with other parts of the Dutch cultural system. She for example remembers singing ‘*Sinterklaas*’⁴ songs in class. As she went to an international school, there were also children with other backgrounds, such as Moroccan and Polish. Ela did not know any Dutch people when transitioning from primary to secondary school, except for her teacher and one other pupil. She explains how this transition went: “And then I went to secondary school and I got to know Dutch children. Well, that was a bit of a culture shock. It’s very different, and I don’t mean this in a negative or a positive sense, it is just very different. How people behave, how they talk. And I think I was a bit more quite back then, but later I became more comfortable again.”⁵ Ela’s situation shows us how she came into contact with the Dutch cultural system when attending an international school, but that this contact became more extensive when going to a Dutch secondary school. As Ela is the only participant that was born in Turkey rather than in the Netherlands, for the other participants the Dutch cultural background played a greater role at home during childhood. The extent to which the Dutch cultural system is present at home differed and differs from participant to participant. One of the main indicators of this ‘cultural presence’ is language, a subject which will be elaborated on in the second empirical chapter.

The Turkish cultural system is present in all participants’ homes, because almost all parents or grandparents of participants were born in Turkey. In line with Hong and colleagues (2000, 710), I argue that the two cultural backgrounds of a bicultural individual are not always blended. In the section above I discussed how the Dutch cultural background is mostly present at participants’ schools or at work and their Turkish cultural background at home. However, that does not mean that the Turkish background is not also present at participants’ schools or at work, and the Dutch one at home. It differs from participant to participant how exactly the cultural backgrounds are reflected in their daily lives, but I argue that one background cannot easily be forgotten in a specific cultural situation that is more connected to the other cultural background. Still, a change of behaviour may occur when an individual is in a specific situation.

⁴ *Sinterklaas* is an annual Dutch children’s holiday.

⁵ Interview with Ela, 18 March 2021.

Ozan, a 23 year old student, explains how he changes his behaviour when he is with his Turkish family, compared to when he is in a Dutch sociocultural environment. He illustrated, as an example, how there is a habit of standing up for an elder family member when this family member stands up. This is a form of respect: “if my grandpa is standing, I’m not going to sit”.⁶ This is in contrast with Dutch cultural habits, where standing up for an elder family member is not usually done. This change of behaviour is an example of cultural frame switching, as discussed in the theoretical overview (Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martínez 2015, Ramírez-Esparza et. al 2006, Cheng et. al 2006, Luna et. al 2008, Hong et. al 2000). This is because Ozan, among other participants, changes his behaviour depending on his sociocultural environment. However, Ozan’s explanation below shows how he only changes his behaviour when he is in a Turkish sociocultural environment:

(...) Do I also do that when I’m in a Dutch situation? No, because that is my standard situation, do you get what I mean? I’m not Turkish in a way that I think: ‘I’m in a Dutch situation now, so I have to adjust my behaviour’, because that is how I usually behave. It is the other way around, when I am in a Turkish situation, that I change my behaviour and a switch occurs. And if I’m not in a situation like that, I act normal again, so to speak. And that is corresponding to the Dutch cultural system. (...) For me there is only a switch to normal, which is Dutch, or the Turkish situation. I have never been like: ‘This is a Dutch situation, so I have to act like this’, no, that is just my standard situation, I don’t even think about that. It only stands out when there is a Turkish situation, at such a moment I think: ‘well, that is different’.⁷

It is quite striking how Ozan explains he changes his behaviour only in a Turkish sociocultural environment, because the Dutch one on the other hand is his standard one which is not a situation he consciously thinks about. Gamze, a 16 year old secondary school student, also experiences cultural frame switching, but only in Turkey. She explained that you cannot sit with your legs crossed in Turkey. It is seen as rude, and her parents correct her if she does it. They would, however, not get mad, because they know that Gamze is used to it as she lives in the Netherlands (as her parents do too) where it is accepted. On the other hand, if Gamze crosses her legs in the Netherlands, her parents do not correct her: “For example when I cross my legs here, my parents don’t say anything about it, because they know, everyone kind of adheres to

⁶ Interview with Ozan, 22 February 2021.

⁷ Interview with Ozan, 22 February 2021.

the Western culture and there is not really any pressure. So, fortunately, I don't have to change my behaviour here, no.”⁸ Gamze and Ozan thus both experience cultural frame switching in a Turkish cultural environment, but not in a Dutch one.

Contrary to Ozan and Gamze's experiences are the experiences of the participants who do not feel that they change their behaviour depending on their current sociocultural environments. On the contrary, they stated that they are both Dutch and Turkish in every situation. Busra, a 29 year old student, explained: “I am everywhere just me. My behaviour does not change depending on where I am for example. I have participated in multiple projects in the municipality, and I was myself there too. I mean, what I show there is a part of me, and that part is what I am at home too.”⁹ Yeliz, a 23 year old student, has, unlike the other participants, a Dutch mother and a Turkish father. Her whole family on her father's side lives in Turkey, and she explains how she experiences behaving with her two cultural backgrounds: “Well, I just am both, I am just one person divided by two identities, so to speak. And I don't feel like I need to be one person in the Turkish world and one in the Dutch one. I am just one and the same person with different outside worlds or something, you know, I don't think I necessarily act differently around my family [in Turkey] than I do in my daily life here.”¹⁰

Yeliz's quote does not only relate to cultural frame switching, or actually a lack thereof, but it also relates to identity construction. She indicates she *is* one and the same person, but with two different cultural systems. Therefore, her two cultural backgrounds influence how she constructs her (cultural) identity, which is a subject that will be elaborated on in the third empirical chapter. In the next section of this empirical chapter, however, a similar subject will be discussed. In the section above we have seen that cultural habits of one cultural system are sometimes applied in the other cultural system. Boundaries play an important role in this matter, as participants take the differences and similarities of the two cultural systems into consideration, and how they behave according to this information. In the next section the role of boundaries will be discussed.

Boundaries

During my fieldwork I have noticed that many participants are dealing with the question of: “Who belongs within the group and who does not?”, either directly or indirectly. I argue that this question is reflected upon their daily lives in two ways. Firstly, it is a matter of how some

⁸ Interview with Gamze, 27 March 2021.

⁹ Interview with Busra, 8 March 2021.

¹⁰ Interview with Yeliz, 25 February 2021.

of the participants were treated during the course of their lives. Unfortunately, multiple participants have stated to have experienced discrimination and/or racism. Secondly, in line with LaFromboise, Coleman and Gerton I argue that a part of the participants of this research have a sense of a “simultaneous awareness of oneself as being a member and an alien of two or more cultures” (1993, 395).

The participants that took part in this research all have a Dutch and a Turkish cultural background, which has resulted in experiencing friction in the Dutch society for some participants. During a focus group that I had with six girls, all aged between 14 and 23, this subject was discussed. Neylan for example said: “I’m afraid they think differently or that they look at me weirdly like: ‘what is she saying’, or ‘what kind of culture does she have’.”¹¹ Neylan and Esin both stated they have experienced racism in school. Esin said that teachers have used “certain words and sentences that you understand to be racist, but the rest of the class does not notice.”¹² She also explained how she feels pressure to behave well. “Because we do have an image, us as the Turks, the Muslims in society, and we are an example of, well, the entire society, the entire Turkish and Muslim society. And I feel pressure and responsibility to behave well, and to be an example, and to break down the prejudice people have.”¹³ We can see here that culture and ethnicity overlap here, as Neylan and Esin speak about their culture, but also about “us as the Turks”. In line with Benet-Martínez and colleagues, this fieldwork proves that bicultural individuals can experience contradictions between their two cultural backgrounds (2002). Because the topic of experiencing discrimination and racism overlaps the three main concepts of this thesis, this topic will be discussed in the third empirical chapters about identity as well. The section above focuses on the relation between boundaries and discrimination/ racism, while the section in the third empirical chapter focuses on the relation between identity, language, and discrimination/ racism.

It may be partly due to the negative way that they were treated that some participants stated that they feel like a Turkish person when in the Netherlands, but like a Dutch person when in Turkey. Whether it is due to negative experiences or not, I argue that it is caused by two different cultural systems and two ethnic identities within the lives of participants. To illustrate, the piece below is part of the interview I had with Yeliz:

¹¹ Focus group including Neylan, 24 February 2021.

¹² Focus group including Esin, 24 February 2021.

¹³ Focus group including Esin, 24 February 2021.

Y Well, I feel more Turkish around Dutch people and more Dutch around Turkish people. I never really belong anywhere. (...) Because you are both, but not entirely. So you are, around Turkish people you're an outsider, because you're Dutch. And I do feel more Dutch when I'm around Turkish people than I feel Turkish around Dutch people. But for example with an average white, Dutch family, I feel like: 'alright, I am not fully this either', you know. Even though I associate with that more, I think. But with a Turkish family I do not feel like: 'this is completely what I am'. I don't know, just, you are both, but also not. But I feel more, I think, a bit more distance from Turkish culture than from the Dutch one.

JL And do you still experience the same feeling when you are around other Dutch people with a Turkish background, because they have a similar situation?

Y Yes, because I am half Dutch. And most Turkish people have two Turkish parents. I don't know anyone who's also half [Dutch and Turkish]. (...)

JL Alright. But do you feel different around people living in the Netherlands who also have a Turkish background compared to people who do not have a Turkish background at all?

Y Yes, I feel kind of connected to Turkish people here.¹⁴

As we can see, Yeliz is connecting her feeling to both a difference in culture as well as ethnicity. She feels more distant from the Turkish culture than from the Dutch one and she does not fully identify with the average white Dutch family, and neither with a Turkish one.

As discussed in the theoretical framework, there is a difference between ethnicity and culture. Ethnicity carries a biological factor while culture is socially constructed. The boundaries of both are, however, socially constructed (Rata 2005, Barth 1969). Through these boundaries it is determined who belongs within the group and who does not (Barth 1969, Babadzan 2000, Dayal 1996). The example of the focus group as well as the piece of the interview with Yeliz shows us how these boundaries are constructed and how they play a part in society with regard to this specific research. Esin explained how she did not feel comfortable with certain things her teacher said, while the other students in her class did not notice these negative connotations. She connected this to racism. Yeliz did not discuss whether she feels accepted or not, but rather discussed her own personal struggles regarding her two cultural backgrounds. She feels part of both societies, but at the same time she does not, hence, she has

¹⁴ Interview with Yeliz, 25 February 2021.

a “simultaneous awareness of oneself as being a member and an alien of two or more cultures” (LaFromboise et. al 1993, 395).

Furthermore, Yeliz said she feels connected to Turkish people when she is in the Netherlands. Interestingly, she was not the only one of the participants to say this. This is in line with Anderson’s idea of “imagined communities”, where members of a nation feel connected to each other without necessarily having met all members (2016, 6). Anderson (2016, 7) argues that imagined communities are limited, because they are defined by boundaries. Clearly, the Dutch and the Turkish societies are defined by however flexible boundaries, through which the participants of this research are trying to navigate.

In short, this first empirical chapter discussed how the participants of this research experience being bicultural. Part of the group has applied cultural frame switching during their daily lives, but the other part has not. furthermore, cultural systems and ethnic groups are limited by boundaries, which can result in being treated a certain way or constructing your position in society a certain way. A factor which plays a major role in any cultural system is language, which will be discussed in the next empirical chapter.

4. Bilingualism

“One who speaks only one language is one person, but one who speaks two languages is two people.”¹⁵

This Turkish proverb shows us that one’s identity depends on which and how many languages one speaks. Ela taught me the proverb during fieldwork:

E In Turkish there is a proverb: one language one person, so if you speak two languages, you are two people.

JL What exactly does that mean?

E I wouldn’t know, but my mother uses it quite often.

JL Really?

E And then, if you speak English, you’re three people! I think that you would be a well functioning person both in Turkey and in the Netherlands. If you only speak Turkish, you can only function in Turkey. Or for example English is universal, so you can do things in multiple countries, studying, working.¹⁶

The aim of this second empirical chapter is to discuss the role bilingualism plays in the lives of this research’s participants. Firstly, the age and context in which participants learnt Dutch and Turkish is briefly discussed. Secondly, the mixing of both languages as well as how this is reflected in participants’ lives is discussed. The focus of the third section is to show the preferences participants have concerning speaking either Dutch or Turkish to different age groups. In the fourth section, it is discussed how participants try to improve either their Dutch or their Turkish language skills. The chapter ends with a discussion of the role of other languages, English and Arabic, which also play a major part in participants’ lives.

Language acquisition

As all participants of this study are competent in Dutch and Turkish, I view them as bilinguals as defined by Chomsky, discussed in the literature study. They all have the ability to produce

¹⁵ Turkish proverb. <https://www.lewisu.edu/academics/foreignlang/proverbs.htm> accessed 8 June 2021.

¹⁶ Interview with Ela, 18 March 2021.

and understand both Dutch and Turkish, which makes them bilinguals (Chomsky in Wald 1974, 303). In the literature study it was also discussed that bilinguals can learn the two languages in multiple ways. The participants of this research all learned the languages at a rather young age. Most participants' parents taught their children Dutch and Turkish at the same time, from their birth on. Ela, however, is the one participant that was born in Turkey and only spoke Turkish until she was 9 years old, which is the age she moved to the Netherlands. She then immediately went to an international school where the spoken language was Dutch. She is fluent in both languages now, at age 23. Furthermore, Ela is not the only participant that did not learn both languages at the same time at an early age. Ozan for example explained that his parents taught him Turkish at first, and then he learned Dutch when he started going to kindergarten. On the other hand, his younger brother did not learn Turkish as early as Ozan did, which has now resulted in Ozan's brother not being too competent in the Turkish language. There were several other participants who had situations similar to Ozan's, which also influences in which languages they speak to whom. The results of this fieldwork prove to agree with the distinction of coordinate and compound bilinguals that was discussed in the theoretical framework. Both Ozan and his brother can be seen as coordinate bilinguals, as they learnt the languages more separately (Huynh et al. 2011, 837). The next section discusses the mixing of the languages, which occurs quite often among the Dutch people with a Turkish background that participated in this study.

Mixing Dutch and Turkish

Participants indicated that they mostly use a mix of the two languages when speaking at home to their parents and siblings. The example above illustrates a difference in language competence between Ozan and his brother. Besides, Ozan's father is fluent in Turkish. He is also competent in Dutch, but using that language is more difficult for him. This has resulted in Ozan's brother speaking Dutch to his father, and his father responding in Turkish at home. The rest of the family members usually use a mix of the two languages when speaking to each other too. Busra introduced me to a word which signifies this mix of the two languages: "*Nurks*", which is a combination of *Nederlands* (Dutch) and *Turks* (Turkish). *Nurks* is spoken between people who speak both Dutch and Turkish, explains Busra. The words that are used depends on the content of the conversation. For Busra there is usually a word in one of the two languages that comes to mind first, and that is then the word she uses in her sentence. She views this being able to mix between two languages as a benefit of being bilingual, because she can hereby express herself very well. On the other hand, it also comes with disadvantages as it can be hard to switch

to just speaking Dutch or just speaking Turkish, because a mix between both languages is spoken that often. Busra experiences this when she visits Turkey, she then has a hard time speaking just Turkish because she is so used to speaking in a mix of the two languages.¹⁷ Yeliz also experiences this phenomenon of having to switch to speaking just Turkish. “Yes, because of course when you are in the Netherlands you speak Dutch more often, so my competence in that language [Turkish] decreases. Besides, I use a lot of English in my study programme now, so then it decreases even more. And then I arrive there [Turkey], and then I have to switch and then I’m really tired and then I really, well, then I really have to find my way in that language again, but by the time I leave I’m pretty fluent.”¹⁸ The manner in which the previously discussed participants switch using Dutch and Turkish in one situation can be seen as codeswitching as they use “features of both languages in the same utterance” (Wald 1974, 302). Most cases I heard of were about two or more people talking in both Dutch and Turkish at the same time, but in Ozan’s case for example, he explained that his father speaks in Turkish to Ozan’s brother and Ozan’s brother responds in Dutch. Both cases are examples of codeswitching. Busra and Yeliz both indicate to struggle with speaking only Turkish, because Busra mixes Dutch and Turkish often and Yeliz uses a lot of Dutch and English when she is not in Turkey. In the part below it is discussed how some participants feel that mixing the languages is not good, because it has negative consequences.

Several participants said that they believe the mixing of the languages is not good for their competence in both languages. Mouna for example, a 19 year old student, said that she and her family do mix Dutch and Turkish, but that she feels it is really bad to do that. “It influences your competence in the Dutch language, and therefore your competence in Dutch vocabulary or in grammar decreases, for example *‘de/ het’* [the two definite articles in Dutch]. If you mix Dutch and Turkish, the structure of your sentences is not good. So we don’t really do that, we tried to avoid it as much as possible too, but there are still things we mix, it does happen. Or maybe something is said in Dutch and I momentarily forgot the Dutch word, so I say it in Turkish.”¹⁹ Sedef, a 21 year old student explained her view on mixing the languages too: “It is actually not very good, because it is better to speak in just one language. But some words or sentences, you rather say them in Turkish than in Dutch for example. That process is completely random, I feel. There are just certain sayings that are specific to that language and thus those

¹⁷ Interview with Busra, 8 March 2021.

¹⁸ Interview with Yeliz, 25 February 2021.

¹⁹ Interview with Mouna, 7 April 2021.

come to mind faster, I think.”²⁰ My literature study does not show that codeswitching negatively influences the competence of individuals in a specific language. Sedef speaks in both Dutch and Turkish with her parents, but her parents have a slight preference for Turkish as they are more fluent in that language. With her brothers and Turkish Dutch friends she predominantly talks Dutch, but occasionally a Turkish word or sentence is included. Sedef’s parents preferring to talk in Turkish while she predominantly talks in Dutch with peers is not uncommon. In the next section the difference in language preference with regard to age is discussed.

Differences in language preference between generations

The coordinator of a Turkish mosque in a city in the south of the Netherlands, Sadik, and I discussed the topic of language when I met him in the mosque.²¹ He explained to me that there is a difference between generations concerning the specific language they usually speak. According to Sadik, the first generation of Turkish people in the Netherlands barely speaks Dutch. The second one speaks both, and the third generation barely speaks Turkish. This can result in negative consequences, as some children are now having a hard time speaking with their grandparents or they do not speak to them at all because of the language barrier. This is partly in line with Sevinç as discussed in the context (2016). According to Sevinç, the first, second, and third generations of Turkish people in the Netherlands are all bilingual, except the first generation would have a strong dominance of Turkish and the third would have a dominance of Dutch. The second generation either has a balanced situation, in line with Sadik’s statement, or they have a dominance of either Dutch or Turkish. Sevinç also indicates that friction within multigenerational bilingual families is likely to happen, which is what Sadik said as well (Sevinç 2016, 82).

As an example, Kiraz, a 40 year old second generation municipality employee, is competent in both languages. She mostly speaks Turkish with peers, and Dutch with younger people at work (also if they share her Turkish background). As discussed in the previous section, Mouna uses a mix of Dutch and Turkish when talking with her parents at home. Her grandparents moved to the Netherlands when her parents were still really young, but later her grandparents moved back to Turkey while her parents stayed in the Netherlands. Because they live in Turkey now, their competence in Dutch is not good, and therefore Mouna speaks Turkish

²⁰ Interview with Sedef, 8 April 2021.

²¹ 16 February 2021.

to them. She also said she talks Turkish to older people in her mosque, but Dutch to younger people.

A few participants indicated that they sometimes consciously consider which language is best to speak to a given person. Ani, a 23 year old customer service employee: “with elder aunts that live here in the Netherlands but are retired, and therefore don’t speak Dutch too often, you speak Turkish with them. So I switch between: who can speak Dutch and who cannot?”²² Belma, a 20 year old student: “I usually know in what language to speak to whom”.²³

Language skills

There is a variation in competence in listening, speaking, reading and writing in Dutch and Turkish between the different participants of this research. Some of the participants said they want to improve their skills in one of the languages and are actively trying to achieve this improvement. They have different reasons for this. Izzet for example, a 17 year old student, noticed his competence in the Turkish language had decreased and therefore wanted to improve it: “Turkish went very well until I went to primary school, because I then started to speak Dutch every day. So until group 8 [last year of primary school] my competence in the Turkish language decreased a lot, and then I started to read books and watch many Turkish films and watch Turkish readings. This increased my competence in the language again.”²⁴ Ani explained how she starts doubting herself when she is in Turkey and talks to a “real Turkish person”. She said she is competent enough to respond to a Turkish person in Turkey, but that she is afraid she will say something wrongly. She is improving her language in order to prevent a similar situation in the future: “Well, how I solve that is to watch many Turkish series. I really want to improve myself, but not for them. Just for me, because it is important to me too. And to appear more confident. Because if I do ever go to Turkey for a longer period of time, I do not want to appear insecure when I ask where the eggs are in the supermarket. I do not want them to know: ‘oh, she must be from Europe.’ Because that is the description they give me then, you know.”²⁵

Besides improving their Turkish language skills, some participants have also improved their Dutch language skills. During the focus group, the young women who participated in the event discussed their experiences with speech therapy. Reyhan, a 17 year old, explained why she went to speech therapy: “I was struggling with grammar, vocabulary, and sentence

²² Interview with Ani, 21 February 2021.

²³ Interview with Belma, 20 February 2021.

²⁴ Interview with Izzet, 1 April 2021.

²⁵ Interview with Ani, 21 February 2021.

structures. That is partly because of the Turkish language, because from a young age on, birth, I learned Turkish too, so that has strongly influenced me (...). But I think it is like that for most foreigners, for the children, because a lot of children also go to speech therapy.”²⁶ Esin agreed with Reyhan:

“I think it is mostly because of the parents, if your parents are not too competent in the Dutch language. I see that with my aunts as well, they are both somewhat competent in Dutch, but not too fluent and this has a negative influence on the children. My nephew for example, he only speaks Turkish. And of course he goes to school, but school is only for a few hours and then he comes home and cannot speak Dutch with his parents. So it is a delay. And because of that, he went to speech therapy for a couple of months.”²⁷

Neylan also went to speech therapy. Her father explained to her that he wanted her to know the Turkish culture and be competent in the Turkish language before learning the Dutch language. This resulted in the little competence in Dutch she used to have, and therefore she went to speech therapy. The young women told me that this speech therapy included both pronunciation of the language as well as grammar. Besides being competent in or improving their competence in Dutch and Turkish, most participants are also competent in other languages, which is what will be discussed in the next section.

Other languages

Dutch and Turkish are not the only two languages that play a role in the lives of participants. In this part only English and Arabic are discussed, but participants also indicated to be (somewhat) competent in French, German and Spanish. These latter languages however play less of a role in the participants’ lives and are therefore not discussed.

English is a language that many participants said to be fluent in. Ani stated she even thinks in English. Some participants became competent because they learned the language at secondary school, and continued using the language during their studies. Other participants watch films and series or play videogames causing their English competence to increase.

The Arabic language is also a language that plays a role in some of the participants’ lives. This is closely connected to the Islam as the Quran is originally written in Arabic, and the Arabic language is present in written form in mosques quite often. Many Islamic people with a

²⁶ Focus group including Reyhan, 24 February 2021.

²⁷ Focus group including Esin, 24 February 2021.

Turkish background in the Netherlands come into contact with the Arabic language at an early age. Gamze explained that many Turkish children with Islamic parents go to the mosque at an early age to learn Arabic in order to read the Quran. She said she can read, write and pronounce the language now, but she cannot exactly understand it. Because she wants to understand it and she wants to be able to converse with someone in Arabic, she is planning on starting a course in Arabic soon²⁸. Busra told me about reading and understanding the Arabic language: “You have two different types: you can either read the Quran or you can read and understand it. So it is possible that you can read Arabic without being competent in the language. That is what you call Quran Arabic. And if you use spoken Arabic, so you can speak and understand it, then that of course differs from Quran Arabic, well, not in general, but there are different types or Arabic spoken languages and dialects.”²⁹ Ela explained how this is reflected upon her life: “I understand the chapters I memorised, but I do not understand it when I read a new part. I would have to study it in order to understand it.”³⁰

At the beginning of this chapter I argued all participants to be bilinguals concerning Dutch and Turkish. Even though some participants value Arabic greatly, this does not mean that they are competent in the language as well. The participants were not as competent in Arabic as they were in Dutch and Turkish. According to Chomsky an individual is competent in a language when that person has the “ability to produce and understand” a language (Chomsky in Wald, 1974, 303), which is not the case with Gamze and Ela for example. Therefore they are not competent in the Arabic language, but they do have skills - to a certain extent - in the language. Besides the participants’ competence in Dutch and Turkish, their striving for the improvement of their competence was discussed in this chapter as well. Furthermore, the differences in language preference was discussed, as well as the role of the English and Arabic languages. My fieldwork has shown that Arabic is strongly related to the Islam in the way it is reflected upon participants’ lives. They come into contact with Arabic through their Islamic beliefs, which then influences their identities. In the next empirical chapter it will be discussed how participants construct their identities, of which their religious and Islamic identity is a part.

²⁸ Interview with Gamze, 27 March 2021.

²⁹ Interview with Busra, 8 March 2021.

³⁰ Interview with Ela, 18 March 2021.

5. Identity

Earlier in the empirical part of this thesis the concept of identity was already briefly discussed with regard to the participants' bicultural identity. This will be elaborated upon, as will the changing of identity over time. Furthermore, an overview of the role of participants' religious will be given. Lastly, the topic of discrimination and racism will be related to identity and language. Thus, this chapter focuses on the manner in which participants of this research construct their identities and how this changes through time and space.

How the identity of participants is constructed

The fieldwork for this research has shown that participants construct their identity partly by themselves, but also partly as a result of how others see them. In this section these two types of identity construction will be discussed.

As stated before, only two of the participants do not directly identify as someone with two cultural backgrounds. Emre, a 41 year old teacher rather identifies as a humanist. "I identify as a humanist, I am not focused on identities. [I am] someone that believes in universal values that connect us."³¹ When I asked him what it means to not focus on identity, he said that people did not choose to be born as a Muslim, a Christian, a Jew, or a Turk for example. "I cannot judge people on the things they did not choose to be, they were ascribed to it. I look at it that way, and then a lot of prejudices and stereotypes disappear, because they simply did not choose for it."³² Kiraz has similar ideas concerning universal values. She also does not identify as someone with two cultural backgrounds, but as a cosmopolitan. Because of her job at the municipality she comes into contact with a lot of different cultures, and she implements the best parts into her own life. Furthermore, according to Kiraz the basis of every culture is the same, only the role it plays in society may differ. For example respect, the way respect is expressed or the perspective on respect can differ per culture.³³ The way Emre and Kiraz identify is quite similar. Besides, they are the eldest two participants of this study that I interviewed, the younger participants all do identify as someone with two cultural backgrounds. It is quite notable, however, as my literature study does not show a difference like this between younger and older people regarding how they identify. My fieldwork proves there does seem a link between identity construction and age or generation.

³¹ Interview with Emre, 2 April 2021.

³² Interview with Emre, 2 April 2021.

³³ Interview with Kiraz, 7 April 2021.

The other 11 individuals I interviewed and the 6 young women I had a focus group with identify as someone with two cultural backgrounds: a Dutch one and a Turkish one. However, the situation is rarely as binary as the concept of biculturalism might suggest. Participants indicated that they do not simply identify as just Dutch and Turkish, but that there are other factors that weigh in as well. Gamze and Busra for example stated they first identify as Muslim, and then as Dutch, Turkish, or something else. Busra: “What I always find important, both for the Dutch and the Turkish culture, is to not assume anything that goes against my religion’s guidelines. So I try to live in both cultures with my religion in the back of my mind.”³⁴ Gamze:

“I used to feel really Turkish, until about age 14/15, I really valued Turkish culture. But then I started to explore the Islam more and I started to identify as a Muslim first and as a Turk second, and I still feel that way. Also, within the Islam it actually is not encouraged to distinguish between: ‘you are a Turkish Muslim, you are a Moroccan Muslim, you are an Afghan Muslim’, you are Muslim or you’re not, that is how the distinction is made. So for that matter I identify as a Muslim first and as a Turk second, but of course I won’t avoid it. I am Turkish, but I would rather identify with: ‘I am a Muslim’ than with: ‘I am a Turk’.”³⁵

Later in this chapter the religious identity of participants will be elaborated upon.

Another factor that influences participants’ identity construction was that they feel more Turkish in the Netherlands and more Dutch in Turkey. Also, several participants stated they feel connected to Turkish people in the Netherlands or in other countries outside of Turkey. Gamze explained it as such: “Here in the Netherlands I feel more Turkish than Dutch, but in Turkey I feel more Dutch than Turkish. I’m actually seen as a foreigner in both countries, so here I’m seen as a Turk, because my father was born in Turkey [her mom is born in the Netherlands, but her mom’s parents in Turkey]. And in Turkey I’m seen as a Dutch person, because this is the place I was born and raised.”³⁶ Busra has quite similar feelings: “I have both identities, I have the Dutch nationality and the Turkish nationality. But when I go to Turkey for example, I rather feel like I’m a Dutch visitor than feeling like: ‘I’m in my homeland.’”³⁷ I asked her if arriving in Turkey then also does not feel like coming home and she said: “No, because this is my home.”³⁸ Yeliz also has different feelings towards the Netherlands compared to her

³⁴ Interview with Busra, 8 March 2021.

³⁵ Interview with Gamze, 27 March 2021.

³⁶ Interview with Gamze, 27 March 2021.

³⁷ Interview with Busra, 8 March 2021.

³⁸ Interview with Busra, 8 March 2021.

feelings toward Turkey. She explained that she feels slightly more Dutch than Turkish, because she lives in the Netherlands. With her thinking out loud, Mouna showed me how conflicting it can be to have both a Dutch and a Turkish cultural background and to live in the Netherlands. She was saying something suggesting she is a foreigner, so I asked her if she feels like a foreigner and she responded with: “Yes, I think, yes, I actually am, no, yes, it is such a hard question, because I’m born in the Netherlands, so I am Dutch, but I’m also Turkish, so yes, I am a foreigner.”³⁹

A reason for feeling more Turkish than Dutch in the Netherlands can be because as someone with a Turkish background you share the same norms and values with other Turkish people in the Netherlands. This is something that Esin and Neylan discussed⁴⁰. It then depends on the person whether you share the same cultural or the same religious norms and values with the other person, or maybe a combination of both.

Besides constructing their own identities, participants also stated to be given certain identities by others. During the interview with Ozan, he said to identify as someone with two cultural backgrounds and I asked him how this is reflected upon his daily life. He answered with:

“It is reflected in a way that other people of course identify you as such. So people indicate that you, well, have another cultural background. And sometimes people act like you do not have a Dutch background, but a Turkish one. (...) And, well, you see cultural differences, in a positive as well as a negative sense. [And how do people indicate that they think or believe that you do not have a Dutch background?] Well, it is not always negative, it is in a positive as well as a negative sense, people ask questions out of curiosity, people make jokes, sometimes positive sometimes negative, so people are aware that you are not Dutch, or at least not completely, and, well, that is how people from the outside world make clear that you are not, that you at least have two, come from a different culture.”⁴¹

Mouna said that her last name already shows that she has two cultural backgrounds.

Participants are not only ascribed a certain identity by people in the Netherlands, but also in Turkey. Ani, like several other participants, explained that people in Turkey know that

³⁹ Interview with Mouna, 7 April 2021.

⁴⁰ Focus group including Esin and Neylan, 24 February 2021.

⁴¹ Interview with Ozan, 22 February 2021.

she is not from there. “If you are talking with a real Turkish person, they know I am not fluent in the Turkish language. Even though my pronunciation, my accent and everything is just right, they still know I’m not Turkish. (...) If you are in Turkey I really feel different [compared to being in the Netherlands], because they see me as a Dutch Turk, even though I am really Turkish, both of my parents are Turkish too, but they just know I am not completely Turkish.”⁴²

The changing of identity over time

In the section above it is discussed how participants construct their identities, where the focus mostly lies on their cultural and social identity. It is discussed how they identify themselves and how others identify them, but as discussed in the theoretical framework, identity is a concept that is viewed as dynamic and temporal in this thesis. Thus, the identity that participants construct for themselves changes over time and place (Campbell 2000, Norton 2006, Joseph 2004, Peele-Eady 2011). We already saw this with Gamze as she first mostly identified as Turkish but later on she started focusing on her Islamic identity. This section discusses a few cases of how participants changed their identity over time and/or place, but these are not all the cases of participants’ changing their identities during the courses of their lives. Firstly, Yeliz started feeling more Turkish as she grew older.

“Of course we learn about it in school [cultural history]. For example with courses about society or history, you learn about the Dutch history and well, it is all pretty nationalistic and well, you maybe develop more of a connection with that compared to when you come into contact with the history at a later age. (...) School plays a really big part in that. With education you learn certain things from your culture and maybe you develop pride in your culture, in Turkey they raise the flag in the mornings and they sing the national anthem. And then you maybe learn the cultural values from the inside, I didn’t really have that. I only learned it at a later age.”⁴³

Furthermore, Turkey also plays a role in Yeliz’s life as a source of inspiration for her academic career. Mouna experiences the same for her study in fashion: “Turkish culture entails a lot of shapes and colours, but it is also who I am as a person. Turkish people usually have characteristics such as kindness, partying, being positive, and being together and that is who I am as well. (...) So I think that is a way I act or something? I look at it in a positive perspective,

⁴² Interview with Ani, 21 Februari 2021.

⁴³ Interview with Yeliz, 25 February 2021.

at everything.”⁴⁴ Yeliz’s explanation about the relation between school and identity construction is more in line with the dynamic factor of identity construction, while the relation between their cultural background being a source of inspiration for their academic career and their identity construction is more in line with the context-specific factor of identity construction. Another example of this context-specific factor of identity construction is something that Alay told me.

“Sometimes I feel more Turkish than Dutch. For example, simply a game Turkey – The Netherlands [football], (...) I feel completely Turkish then. [Oh, you feel completely Turkish then?] Yes! After Turkey won 4 – 2, I texted all my Dutch friends. At that moment I was really proud to be Turkish. But well, the world championships for example, Turkey hasn’t gone there in years, and then I’m really proud to be Dutch, I then also celebrate in an orange shirt. [Besides during a Turkish football game, do you not feel Turkish and not proud, or is it less present then?] I am always proud to be Turkish, I am always proud to be Dutch, yes, I am proud to be a Turkish Dutch person. I have never felt ashamed to be Turkish, I have never felt ashamed to be Dutch in Turkey for example. So yes, I have actually always been proud. Only in certain cases I’m more proud to be Turkish than Dutch.”⁴⁵

Thus, Alay’s feeling toward relating to either of his cultural backgrounds can depend on the context he is in.

Religious identity

As I open the door I find not only Belma in the room behind the door, but surprisingly also Sila, Nisa, and Neylan. I had texted Belma prior to this moment, because I wanted to thank her for her help regarding my research. We agreed upon



Figure 1. Ramadan decorations in mosque’s classroom.

meeting in one of the classrooms of the mosque where her group always meets. The entrance door of the classroom is on the left side of the main entrance of the mosque. In the middle of the room are about fifteen tables and chairs placed in a wide circle. The whole classroom is

⁴⁴ Interview with Mouna, 7 April 2021.

⁴⁵ Interview with Alay, 29 March 2021.

decorated for the Ramadan, which would start the next day. There are self-made decorations on the walls, as well as self-made garlands from wall to wall. They are brightly coloured with either drawings on them or the text “*Hoş geldin Ramazan*” (Welcome Ramadan).

After greeting each other one of the girls asked whether I wanted to see other decorated classrooms, which I did. It was Neylan who asked me, who was also really excited to show me the classroom she decorated with the children she teaches. We walked through the door which leads to the entrance hall, where the enormous chandelier really stands out. Opposite from the main entrance door of the mosque there are doors that lead to the men’s praying room. On the left and right side of the main entrance door there are stairs which lead to the women’s praying room. We move on and the girls show me three more classrooms, all differently, but brightly decorated.

Belma, Sila, Nisa, and Neylan are, together with Esin and Reyhan, the six young women I had a focus group with and met with a couple of times after the focus group. The vignette takes place in their mosque, which they do not only use for religious, but also for social purposes. In this section the relevance of the Islam with regard to the influence of bilingualism on identity construction is discussed.

It became clear during my fieldwork that the Islam plays a major role in a lot of the participants’ lives. The focus in this section is on the relation between the Islam and the mosque and how this is relevant for my thesis. The mosque of course has a religious purpose for Muslims, as it is a place where they can perform their prayers and they can there share their thoughts, feelings and beliefs with other people. However, I have found there to be a strong social purpose for the religious participants of this study as well. The girls’ group of which the previously mentioned six girls are part of and which is connected to their mosque organise religious readings as well as other activities such as movie nights, game nights and eating pizza together. Whereas this group aims to attract young girls to the mosque in order for them to not end up in a bad place, the group Mouna is part of even has a social aim. Mouna is part of a girls’ group in another mosque in another city in the Netherlands and she explained that her groups’ goal is to involve young women in their group in order for them to be able to socialize and to engage in their religion at the same time. However, the activities they organise are rather similar to the other girls’ group, as they both organise religious and social activities.

With Sadik I talked about the different languages that are spoken in his mosque, which is the same mosque as the girls’ group I firstly mentioned above go to. Sadik explained that the

spoken language is generally Dutch as not only Turkish Muslims but also Muslims with other backgrounds come to the mosque. However, as it is a Turkish mosque, Turkish is used a lot too. Besides, prayers are in Arabic, and sermons are in Turkish. Lastly, the inside of the mosque is decorated with Arabic texts. The use of all these different languages influences the way the users of them perceive the world and construct their identities.

Discrimination

This last section of the last empirical chapter focuses on the manners in which participants have experienced discrimination. As discrimination is not one of the main focuses of this thesis, it is not a concept that was discussed in the theoretical framework. However, the fieldwork proves it to be a relevant topic and therefore it is discussed here. Participants all described their experiences reviewed in this section as either discrimination or racism themselves.

The first empirical chapter discusses this topic as well and we see how Esin has experienced racism in class. She said that teachers have used “certain words and sentences that you understand to be racist, but the rest of the class does not notice.”⁴⁶ I argue that this is a form of dominant linguistic practices as mentioned by Gal (2012). In the theoretical framework I explain that certain uses of language can affect worldviews of individuals. Esin is quite certain that her teachers know what kind of effect they cause with their words. She said they choose their words wisely in order for the other children not to notice, because if they do the teachers risk losing their jobs. Gal argues how one can counter these dominant linguistic practices by using linguistic resistance (2012, 174). It can be said that Neylan, who has similar experiences to Esin’s, uses a form of linguistic resistance. “If I do not like it or if I think they go too far, I clearly state this opinion.”⁴⁷ She tries to go against what her teachers say to her if she does not like it. On the contrary, Esin does not usually do this. “Unless it is too extreme, I do not intervene. That is something my parents taught me, especially my dad, he says: ‘Just stay out of it, let them say what they want to say’, because he is afraid I get discriminated against and get bad grades or even have to leave school. He is afraid of that, so he usually says to me: ‘Just act like you did not hear it.’”⁴⁸ Another dominant linguistic practice is experienced by Medya, a 22 year old student. She explained that she was sometimes with Turkish friends at school and that several of her teachers made remarks about her group such as: “Well, that is de group Turks”.⁴⁹ She never really understood why they said it. “In a way it is true what they said, but

⁴⁶ Esin, 24 February 2021.

⁴⁷ Focus group including Neylan, 24 February 2021.

⁴⁸ Focus group including Esin, 24 February 2021.

⁴⁹ Interview with Medya, 15 March 2021.

it was not really necessary.”⁵⁰ Medya confronted her teachers with these remarks, together with her friends, and tried to discuss what they heard. The teachers then did not really know what to say anymore. I interpret this as a dominant linguistic practice, because the teachers apparently felt they could say it and with that I argue they made the position that Medya and her friends were in clear. Furthermore, by hearing remarks like this one or similar ones your identity and your self-image is likely to change.

A similar coping strategy to the one Esin performs, which is usually not performing linguistic resistance, is Gamze’s coping strategy. Gamze explained that her perspective on discrimination is to learn how to live with it. According to her you can say all you want to people who think in a discriminative or racist manner, but as long as they do not change their ideas, nothing changes. Thus, you have to learn to live with it, because if you let it bother you it does not get you anywhere.⁵¹

The examples I have given in this section can be connected to the social identity theory as discussed in the theoretical framework (Ellemers and Haslam 2011, Taylor and Moghaddam 1994). This theory argues that people tend to identify, categorise, compare and distinguish themselves and others in a social situation. I argue this to be in line with what I found with multiple participants of this study. As we have seen, it was mostly teachers that performed dominant linguistic practices toward their students. In this process they identified and categorised the concerning students and then compared them, either consciously or not, to themselves. This resulted in the teachers valuing their own group of non-Turks more positively than that of the participants and thus they distinguished themselves from them by using their dominant linguistic practices.

This third and last empirical chapters focused on the identity construction of this research’s participants. It was discussed how it is constructed, including a review of the changing of identity through time and place. Furthermore, the religious identity of some participants was discussed and lastly, the topics of discrimination and racism was reviewed. As the most important concepts have been defined and related to each other in the theoretical overview and the fieldwork results were analysed in the empirical chapters, the next chapter combines these two factors into answering the research question.

⁵⁰ Interview with Medya, 15 March 2021.

⁵¹ Interview with Gamze, 27 March 2021.

Conclusion

For this thesis I conducted research into the way in which bilingualism influences the construction of identity of Dutch people with a Turkish background. The main concepts that played a role in this thesis were biculturalism, bilingualism, and identity. To better understand these concepts and the relations between them at large, I discussed them in my theoretical framework. Subsequently, in the context, the second chapter, I firstly introduced the research population, to then project the three main concepts onto this research population of Dutch people with a Turkish background specifically. In the three empirical chapters that followed the results of my fieldwork were discussed, relating this to the three main concepts, which was then connected to the literature at large. In this concluding chapter the main results of this research, including both the literature review and the fieldwork period, are discussed, aiming to answer the central question of this thesis.

The influence biculturalism and bilingualism have on the identity construction of the participants of this study is not as binary as the concepts may suggest. Both concepts indicate that the definition has two factors in them; for biculturalism these two factors being two cultural systems and for bilingualism these two factors are two languages. However, this thesis tries to argue that the Dutch and the Turkish cultural system and the Dutch and the Turkish language are not in perfect balance in the lives of the participants, because the extent to which all these four factors are present in the participants' lives are dependent on time and space. Additionally, participants experience cultural systems beyond the Dutch and the Turkish one, and participants have come into contact with languages beyond the Dutch and the Turkish one which cannot be overlooked. This is because this diversity and context dependency of the previously mentioned four factors influence the manner in which participants construct their identities through time and space.

As argued above, the role that their bicultural background has in the lives of the participants is not static and the Dutch and Turkish cultural systems are not the only two cultural systems that play a role in their lives. Participants sometimes indicated a change of behaviour dependent on a specific sociocultural context. This is in line with the theory, as I argued how this change of behaviour can be seen as cultural frame switching (Van Oudenhoven and Benet-Martínez 2015, Ramírez-Esparza et. al 2006, Cheng et. al 2006, Luna et. al 2008, Hong et. al 2000). On the other hand, not all participants explained that they change their behaviours, because some feel that they are both Dutch and Turkish in every situation. They bring their

bicultural backgrounds into every situation. Furthermore, we saw how there was a matter of who belongs in the group and who does not. Participants explained how they can feel both “member and alien” of the both the Dutch and the Turkish cultural system (LaFromboise et. al 1993, 395). This experience may differ over time and space and therefore change how they make sense of their identities.

Then, the role that being competent in both the Dutch and the Turkish language has on the participants’ lives is complex as well, as this is also dependent on time and space and varies between the participants. In the second empirical chapter, it was discussed how most participants learned Dutch and Turkish at a young age, however, not always in the same context. Some participants had their parents teach both languages at home, while others learned Turkish at home and Dutch at school. The competence in both languages also differed between participants and several participants actively tried to improve their competence in either of the languages. Besides, many participants explained how they often mix their languages, which I argued to relate to codeswitching (Wald 1974). And lastly, multiple participants are competent in languages other than Dutch and Turkish, which influences their worldview and their identity construction. The two most important languages besides Dutch and Turkish were English and Arabic.

As I argued in this thesis how someone’s identity is socially constructed and fluid through time and space (Campbell 2000, Norton 2006, Joseph 2004, Peele-Eady 2011), in the third empirical chapter I focused on the manner in which participants identified and how this has changed over time. Almost all participants identify as someone with two cultural backgrounds, except for two. One identifies as a humanist and one as a cosmopolitan. Furthermore, participants identified themselves also beyond their Dutch and Turkish cultural identification, as they explained the importance of their religious identity and how they are identified by others. Some also explained that they feel more Dutch in Turkey and more Turkish in the Netherlands. This can be related to the previously mentioned feeling of being both a “member and alien” (LaFromboise et. al 1993, 395), because the participants did not deny still feeling Dutch in the Netherlands, they only emphasized to feeling more Turkish in the Netherlands and vice versa. The last part that was discussed with regard to identity construction was the experiences with discrimination and racism that some participants had. I related this to dominant linguistic practices, linguistic resistance, and the social identity theory (Gal 2012, Ellemers and Haslam 2011, Taylor and Moghaddam 1994).

Biculturalism, bilingualism and identity construction are three concepts closely relating to Dutch people with a Turkish background. The three concepts are also intertwined with each other and mutually interdependent. For example, in the empirical chapter about language it was discussed that Izzet improved his competence in the Turkish language after he noticed it had decreased. He states that this improvement influenced his identity: “Ever since I started reading more Turkish, I started identifying more as Turkish, but I always already had that identity. But, when you are spending more time on your Turkish language or you are more active in the mosque, then your Turkish identity increases. But I never experienced not feeling Dutch, and I never experienced not feeling Turkish either, it is not like that.”⁵² This is a clear example of how bilingualism can influence one’s identity construction. It is also an example of how participants’ use of the languages and the role of their two cultural backgrounds changes through time and space.

⁵² Interview with Izzet, 1 April 2021.

Discussion

This research aims to add to a better understanding of how the relation between bilingualism and the construction of identity manifests itself in the lives of Dutch people with a Turkish background, on both a social and a scientific level. Concluding from the discussion about discrimination and racism in this thesis, there seems to be a public opinion among some Dutch people concerning Dutch people with a Turkish background. This thesis aims to take part in closing the gap between these two seemingly conflicting groups of people. Furthermore, I have not found literature that related the concepts of biculturalism, bilingualism and identity projected onto Dutch people with a Turkish background. Thus, this thesis also aims to add to this scientific field.

The manner in which the influence of bilingualism on the participants' lives was researched, was through qualitative research methods. Through mainly interviewing, a focus group, and informal conversations the research data was gained. I find these qualitative methods to be fitting well with the aims of the research, as a deep and extensive understanding of the participants could now be achieved. However, with quantitative research methods the results are likely to differ at least somewhat. Quantitative research methods often allow for a bigger amount of participants, which could be beneficial as well in a possible future research.

Furthermore, as was made clear, the COVID-19 measures had a certain effect on the feasibility of the research methods. As a possible future research, interesting results may occur without all the restrictions that COVID-19 entailed.

And lastly, in the future a focus could be on topics that could not be given much space in this research, due to other more relevant topics. Topics such as other languages but Dutch and Turkish, differences between generations, and religion. These topics could then be related to biculturalism, bilingualism, and identity construction regarding Dutch people with a Turkish background.

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Attachments

1. Samenvatting in het Nederlands

In deze thesis heb ik onderzocht op welke manier tweetaligheid invloed heeft op de identiteitsconstructie van Nederlanders met een Turkse achtergrond. Ik heb daarvoor eerst een literatuuronderzoek en vervolgens veldwerkonderzoek uitgevoerd. Binnen het onderzoek staan drie concepten centraal, namelijk *biculturalism*, tweetaligheid en identiteitsconstructie. Deze concepten zijn gedefinieerd en tot elkaar gerelateerd in het literatuuronderzoek. In de empirische hoofdstukken heb ik vervolgens de resultaten van mijn veldwerk gekoppeld aan de drie concepten.

Biculturele individuen kunnen worden gezien als “zij die zijn blootgesteld aan twee culturen en deze hebben geïnternaliseerd”⁵³ (Huynh et al. 2011, 828). De biculturele participanten van dit onderzoek hebben een Nederlandse en een Turkse culturele achtergrond. Naast twee culturele achtergronden zijn de participanten ook bekwaam in zowel de Nederlandse als de Turkse taal. Iemand is bekwaam in een taal als diegene “zichzelf in de taal kan uiten en als diegene de taal kan begrijpen” (Chomsky in Wald 1974, 303). Iemand kan dus worden gezien als tweetalig als desbetreffende persoon bekwaam is in twee talen. Naast *biculturalism* en tweetaligheid is identiteit ook een kernconcept binnen deze thesis. Identiteit wordt binnen deze thesis gezien als een dynamisch, tijdelijk en contextafhankelijk sociaal construct (Campbell 2000, Norton 2006, Joseph 2004, Peele-Eady 2011). Identiteit wordt gezien als een sociaal construct omdat het wordt geconstrueerd door mensen, mensen geven betekenis aan het concept identiteit.

Na het bespreken van de belangrijkste concepten binnen dit onderzoek kwamen de drie empirische hoofdstukken aan bod waarin ik de resultaten van het veldwerk per kernconcept heb besproken. Het eerste empirische hoofdstuk ging in op de manier waarop *biculturalism* een rol speelt in het leven van de participanten van dit onderzoek. Daarbij werd gekeken naar de gedragsverandering van participanten, afhankelijk van de socioculturele omgeving waar zij zich op een specifiek moment in bevinden. Daarentegen gaven sommige participanten aan dat zij niet hun gedrag veranderen naar socioculturele omgeving, maar dat zij over hun dubbele culturele achtergrond met zich meebrengen en op die manier handelen. Vervolgens werd gekeken naar de relaties tussen *biculturalism* en grenzen. Participanten zijn namelijk in contact gekomen met grenzen tussen de Nederlandse en Turkse culturele achtergronden en er is daarom

⁵³ Alle quotes in deze samenvatting zijn door mij vertaald van het Engels naar het Nederlands.

besproken hoe zij hiermee omgaan. De focus van het tweede empirische hoofdstuk lag op de rol die tweetaligheid speelt in het leven van de participanten van dit onderzoek. Uit het veldwerkonderzoek bleek dat veel participanten gebruik maken van een mix van Nederlands en Turks. Verder bleek dat er verschil zit tussen generaties Nederlanders met een Turkse achtergrond met betrekking tot de taal die zij prefereren. Daarnaast werd er nog ingegaan op de manieren waarop participanten proberen om hun vaardigheid in het Nederlands of het Turks te verbeteren en de rol van de Engelse en de Arabische taal werd besproken. Het laatste empirische hoofdstuk ging in op de manier waarop participanten hun identiteit construeren. Hierbij bleek dat participanten zowel zelf hun identiteit construeren als dat zij het gevoel hebben een identiteit te worden toegeschreven. De geconstrueerde identiteit blijkt bij participanten te veranderen door tijd en ruimte, zoals ook in het theoretisch kader werd beargumenteerd. Verder werd er ook aandacht besteed aan de religieuze identiteit die een aantal participanten aannemen. Als laatste werden de onderwerpen discriminatie en racisme besproken. Helaas hebben een aantal participanten aangegeven discriminatie of racisme meegemaakt te hebben en deze ervaringen zijn in dit laatste deel besproken.

Aan de hand van een combinatie van de drie empirische hoofdstukken en de theorie is een antwoord op het centrale vraagstuk van deze thesis samengesteld. *Biculturalism*, tweetaligheid en identiteitsconstructie hangen allemaal samen in het leven van de participanten. Als je het projecteert op de constructie van identiteit lijken de concepten *biculturalism* alleen over twee culturele achtergronden en tweetaligheid alleen over twee talen te gaan. Echter, zoals uit dit onderzoek blijkt komt er meer bij kijken dan twee culturele systemen en twee talen. De manier waarop de twee culturele achtergronden een rol spelen in het leven van participanten is namelijk niet gelijkmatig verdeeld. Daarnaast construeren participanten hun culturele identiteit nog op andere manieren dan alleen met de Turkse en de Nederlandse. Verder zijn ook de Turkse en de Nederlandse taal niet volledig gelijkmatig verdeeld in het leven van de participanten. En deze twee talen zijn niet de enige twee talen waar de participanten vaardig in zijn en dus invloed hebben op hun identiteit.