Cultural Diversity in Cross-Cultural Settings

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A Global Approach

Edited by

Tamilla Mammadova

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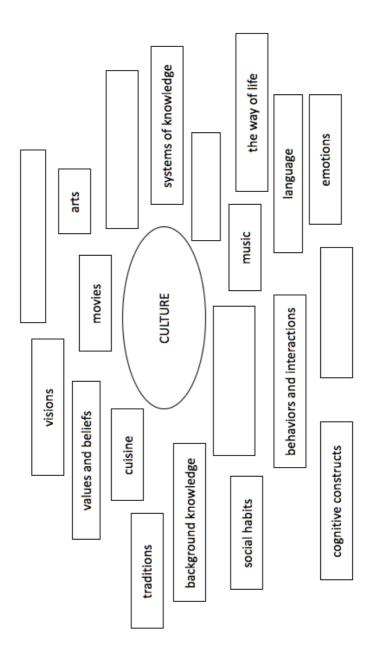
INTRODUCTION

TAMILLA MAMMADOVA

Cross-cultural interaction is an increasingly common aspect of human experience (Korne et al., 2007), the study of which traces back to the 1940s (Piller, 2011). As the world is made up of people who have different cultural backgrounds (Owete & Olusakin, 2016, p.239), cross-cultural interaction occurs between people of different cultures and involves a "minimum of two people from different cultures" (Neuliep, 2012, p.24). In this regard, Owete and Olusakin (2016, p.239) define intercultural personhood, that is the one who acknowledges other cultures and learns to know them by using the eyeglasses of the cultures and not his own. But, what is the culture? And, what do we mean by saying "culture"? I will probably avoid any popular terms and definitions advocated by a large body of studies, suggesting that culture constitutes the way people greet, eat, dress, view the world (Owete & Olusakin, 2016, p.340), and even speak. In turn, the graph below compiled from the most popular studies in the cultural and cross-cultural domain will leave some gaps to reflect on what we could add to or delete from the notion of "culture".

CULTURE

- systems of knowledge
- arts
- the way of life
- language
- emotions
- music
- movies
- visions
- values and beliefs
- cuisine
- behaviors and interactions
- cognitive constructs
- traditions
- background knowledge
- social habits

In other words, having defined the notion of "culture" peculiar to a certain social environment, one may agree that cross-cultural (intercultural) interaction begins and ends with differences; new places, new behavior, often a new language (Korne et al., 2007, p.305). However, this is not a universal model or a fixed pattern, but a universal motion of balancing between two cultures, being near and far, being different and accepted (Korne et al., 2007, p.305). Besides, Samovar et al. (2012) enumerate some limits to cross-cultural communication among which are the interaction between people who share the same culture, withdrawal from the world community, anxiety associated with the unknown. Yet, as the scholars maintain, all these should be repaired with the increase of awareness of cross-cultural communication peculiarities. In this vein, the current collection made an attempt to approach cross-cultural interaction from various perspectives. Culture being a social phenomenon, it surrounds us everywhere including everyday life, politics, education, medicine, and many others. This is how the current collection gives count to cross-cultural interaction within a number of fields migration, language phenomena, political discourse, and education being in a focal point.

Within the last decades, the intensity of the cross-cultural interaction is determined by the process of globalization which takes roots in active movement among people. In line with the mass migration of individuals who are in search of a better life, international mobility exchange programs, as well as study abroad programs, turned into the main factor of cross-cultural interaction and communication. These programs allow students, teachers, and administrators to learn about other cultures for cultivating cross-cultural awareness and cross-cultural collaborative skills (Altbach & Knight, 2007). This, in turn, brings to the notion of *translanguaging* which refers broadly to how bilingual individuals communicate and make meaning by drawing on and intermingling linguistic features from different languages (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Despite the unprecedented role of proficiency English communicative facility or cultural authenticity which become ultimate skills for many mobile people (Piller, 2011), language integration, which is mostly seen as an L1, remains a key constituent of cross-cultural communication. In light of this, the first part of the book studies the bonds cross-cultural communication has with language integration and translanguaging. In the paper entitled *Translanguaging, identity negotiations and cross-cultural communication: The Kiezdeutsch community in Germany and second generations in Northern Italy*, **Sabrina Bertollo** juxtaposes two different patterns of inter- and cross-cultural communication which are modeled through language. Having conducted the study among the second generation migrant both in Germany and Italy,

the author contends that the first group of migrants use ethnolects to detach themselves from mainstream culture and identify themselves with a smaller community with clear identity traits, while the second group of migrants seeks for inclusion and acceptance. This is mainly achieved by the use of language repertoire of German and Italian which are under the current study. The author mentions *Kiezdeutsch* as a means of communication within a community that shares the same identity values. Building on the subject of translanguaging, the paper *Multilingual discourse: the creativity and flexibility of translanguaging practices* authored by **Chiara Facciani** examines the verbal translanguaging practices of multilingual migrant speakers at the *Centro Intercultural MoviMenti* which actively supports migrants in their integration process into the Italian Community. The speakers of various native languages are exposed to verbal exchange bringing together their histories, heritages, biographies, and linguistic backgrounds. The chapter highlights the way translanguaging reveals the potential to engage in the interaction by using their entire semiotic repertoire. The author argues that the creation of a safe space for interaction through translanguaging will help migrants to quickly migrate into the local community.

Language carries a key function of conveying interaction between people and peoples. As Allard et al. (2011) put, in earlier stages of acquiring a second or foreign language (L2), learners are especially prone to making errors because of skills transfer stemming from knowledge of their native language (L1), or possibly another previously acquired language, i.e. a phenomenon known as interference. And often, errors resulted from the speakers' L1 are of a cultural nature. If these errors are not adequately addressed, they can lead to the development of habits that run contrary to target language expectations, and potentially cause mutual misunderstanding (Allard et al., 2011) among the users of the same intermediate language coming from the different cultural background. Hereby, in her chapter *Discourse particles as cultural phenomena of intercultural communication breakdown,* **Tamilla Mammadova** argues that emotions being cultural phenomena, the linguistic elements to express them vary from culture to culture. In other words, when intercultural communication happens, it may often become problematic, as the way people convey their emotions is quite diverse. This is how the paper addressed the negative emotions and their expression in four European languages to see whether the speakers of these languages would equally exploit the emotions in the same contextual setting. The paper suggests that ELF speakers having different lingua-cultural backgrounds will need to adapt to unpredictable circumstances while achieving mutual comprehension. Going beyond the studies of

English as a Lingua Franca, authors **Jung-ah Choi, Yoshinori Nishijima, Sumi Yoon, and Dongling Zhao** investigate the influence of C1 (mother culture) on the use of agreement among the speakers of Chinese, Japanese and Korean during the cross-cultural interaction. In their paper *Cultural differences in disagreement: a contrastive analysis of Japanese, Chinese, and Korean* the authors contend that intercultural communication is often challenging, particularly when speakers of various L1 give preference to certain linguistic patterns and expressions peculiar to their mother tongue. The authors reveal the ways speakers of Chinese, Japanese, and Korean use for disagreement. Based on the general classification for agreement/ disagreement, the paper discusses both explicit and implicit disagreement, the two having their own types and the usage mode. The chapter also mentions that for reaching an agreement in conversation, one should go through four types of utterances: statement of opinion, contrastive implicit disagreement, contrastive implicit defending disagreement, and explicit disagreement. This will mainly help the speakers of three languages come to a common ground during the cross-cultural conversation. In this vein, present-day language education often acknowledges the crucial importance of culture in relation to language learning (Allard et al., 2011).

The importance of language in a cross-cultural setting is also witnessed in political discourse. It has been a while that the cross-cultural approach is adopted to examine strategies used by speakers for positioning in interaction in political or/and parliamentary discourse (Stewart, 2012). Turning to the question of globalization and the integration of political figures into the intersectional political arena, the language used in diplomatic meetings and debates needs a careful investigation. In his paper *Cross-cultural Media Interaction in Political Discourse: U.S.-Iraqi Case*, **Mostafa Boieblan** defines discursive mechanisms capable of assessing potential ways to reconcile culturally-prejudiced written records bringing examples from the American and Iraqi political discourse. Leaning to the three main stages of discourse, i.e. *setting, catalyst, and resolution*, where each one hinges on specific conceptual frames and narratives, the chapter identifies the roots that cause cross-cultural miscommunication across discourses. Producing the conceptual frames of *good* and *evil,* and juxtaposing them through the narrative of the political discourse, the chapter demonstrates how the cultural adaptation of one and the same concept may bring to disunity and miscommunication.

On the flip side, languages are perceived to be one of the key features of cultural identity (Cenoz et al., 2011, p.85). Identity, in turn, has static issues that are historical and dynamic aspects that are social (Cenoz et al., 2011),

and currently, many scholars investigate the impact that contact between cultures has on cultural identity and belonging. Despite the general difficulty to define cultural identity as cultural identification in the context of cross-cultural interaction which is varied and ambiguous, encompassing difference belonging, and the balanced tension in between, chapters six and seven strive to shape the concept of "new identity" with the emphasis on international students during the mobility period. The paper entitled *International students in the UK and a sketch of their Englishscapes* authored by **Hieu Kieu** explains the vast popularity of English universities among international students pointing to reasons why these students are not domiciled in the UK but detached and non-integrated community of the country. Emphasizing the role of the landscapes of English, the author contends that the Englishscape is capable of influencing the ways of being and the sense of belonging of international students in the UK. In other words, the paper argues that language and culture are crucial in shaping a "new identity". **Covadonga Lamar Prieto** and **Alvaro González Alba** have conducted the study among students who identified themselves as Hispanic or Latinos(as) during their short stay in Spain. The chapter named *Perception of Cultural Values on Display on Instagram: A Case study of Study Abroad for Heritage Spanish Speakers* discusses the perception of cultural values by international students during the mobility period. The authors refer to the Instagram posts about traditions, historical locations, family and friends, and cultural representation that encompass the transversal idea of cultural values. This, in turn, defines students' perception of their own identity in response to new cultural realities, some complexities, and dynamics of unfamiliar cultural context.

In the light of the above-mentioned, we may summarize that interaction among the people of the world through migration, travel, the media, and the like have brought to the realization that there are many diverse cultures the world over and they should be learned (Owete & Olusakin, 2016, p.241). This is why, despite being the last section of the book, part five constitutes the core of the collection. The last four chapters of the collection, from eight to eleven, emphasize the significance of the cross-cultural concept and its integration into the language study programs, with the emphasis on EFL materials and classes. Dubreil (2006) explains that until the 1960s, culture in L2 education was essentially presented in the form of literature found in textbooks. Educators were gradually urged to move beyond what was considered Culture – with a big "C" which manifested itself through a civilization's accomplishments in literature, the fine arts, history, geography, politics, and other social institutions, and to embrace culture – with a small "c" as expressed in lifestyles, or the patterns and habits of daily living.

Besides, due to the extensive study abroad programs students are exposed to culturally rich opportunities that would enhance students' intercultural awareness. In other words, study abroad programs impact global awareness, heighten cross-cultural sensitivity and enhance self-awareness. And, when confronted with the cultural challenges of a foreign environment it is not surprising that some students experience a "cultural shock" (Cubillos & Ilvento, 2018, p. 251). Thus, according to the *National Standards for Language Learning,* published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (1999), cultural knowledge can be gained through examining cultural practices, products, and perspectives. Practices refer to daily-life behaviors and patterns of social interactions. Products refer to various cultural achievements; and perspectives refer to meanings, values, and ideas. This highlights the strong ties between cross-culturalism and education. In the paper, *Exploring Cultural Availability in EFL Textbooks* **Meretguly Gurbanov** investigates the existence of cultural and moral values in EFL textbooks. Having defined culture as the norm and values of life established by society through its experience, the author contends that there are very close ties between culture and language which may be compared to two sides of the coin, and at no point can teaching of language go without the teaching of its culture. However, English being an L1 for many people around the globe, at some point it makes us wonder whose culture should be learned. In this respect, the author compares and contrasts culture learning opportunities that range from the learner's culture up to the culture of the global community. This made it possible to reveal the presence of a cultural approach in modern EFL textbooks, advocating for the necessity of culturally friendly EFL course books and materials. In their paper *Prototypical associations in EFL textbooks: representation of multilingual cultures in reading comprehension activities*, **Jaqueline Mora Guarín** and **María Daniela Cifone Ponte** contend that prototypical associations play an important role in the vocabulary input of the reading comprehension activities in EFL textbooks. Having selected the most frequent textbooks for EFL teaching, the author analyzes the input of prototypical elements within the textbook content and the cultural associations this content evokes. It is believed that the selection of basic-level and subordinate-level concepts is fundamental in the context of any EFL textbooks, particularly via reading comprehension activities. This, in turn, may enrich the learner's vocabulary and activate new links for understanding the specific meaning of words with a liaison to the learner's cultural background.

Today, with the excessive use of technology in classes, implementation of cross-cultural online collaborative learning should serve several functions:

(1) take the social interaction and cultural interaction as the basis for collaboration and set collaborative topics that overlap the knowledge base of both sides; (2) consider teacher's task model as a tool for teachers to implement cross-cultural online collaborative learning; (3) provide bilingual language resources; and, (4) pay attention to culture's influence on the collaborative learning process. Following these ideas, **Dana Di Pardo Léon-Henri** takes the scholarship of cross-culturalism and education forward by conducting her research through the educational platform. The paper entitled *The Faux Pas: A Practical Tool for Teaching Intercultural Communication* promotes a socially and ethically responsible didactic approach to teaching cross-cultural awareness and communication skills for non-specialists of English at the undergraduate level. The author illustrates French "faux pas" as one of the most comprehensible examples to provoke misunderstanding among people of various cultures. In line with several definitions and explanations of "faux pas" elaborated from the most sophisticated scholarly theory, the paper applies diverse tools to test the usage and understanding of "faux pas" in cross-cultural settings among present-day university students. Having defined the "faux pas" as a pragmatic instrument to promote intercultural awareness, the study encourages the incorporation of the elements akin into the language study programs. Diving into the *Teaching ESP as the Process of Socialization into Disciplinary Culture*, **Evgueniya Lyu** contends that communication differs from one culture to another and that neglecting the cultural background of one's interlocutor will result in miscommunication. Therefore, in the process of student professionalization, it appears crucial to sensitize future specialists to the disciplinary and professional cultures of the communities they will communicate, or to which they will belong. The author advocates that whenever teaching ESP is regarded as the process of socialization of disciplinary and professional cultures, to ensure efficient socialization, ESP practitioners need to understand the cultures into which they will socialize their students. With this in mind, the paper examines the ways disciplinary and professional cultures can manifest themselves and how an ESP practitioner can benefit from this knowledge based on the principles of American psychologists and their cultures. Additionally, several sample activities have been designed to see how Belgian students socialize into the disciplinary and professional cultures of American psychologists.

To conclude, the collection consists of five parts and eleven chapters. Of course, there are many more dimensions and settings to study cross-cultural interaction; so, we believe that we can elaborate on it in the future due to the readers' criticism and constructive feedback.

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PART I:

CROSS-CULTURALISM, LANGUAGE INTEGRATION AND TRANSLANGUAGING

CHAPTER 1

TRANSLANGUAGING, IDENTITY NEGOTIATIONS AND CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION: THE *KIEZDEUTSCH* COMMUNITY IN GERMANY AND SECOND GENERATIONS IN NORTHERN ITALY

SABRINA BERTOLLO

Abstract

This chapter investigates two case studies which involve second generations in Germany and Northern Italy: the *Kiezdeutsch* community in Berlin and second generation migrants living in the Veneto. A core question which will be addressed is what role the language plays in building self-identity, creating otherness or, on the contrary, establishing a positive relationship with the main culture of the country in which these young people live. It will turn out that, despite an evident asymmetry in the approach adopted by the two communities and the diverse goals which are pursued by the two groups through their attitude towards the others, the language is a key-factor for these young people to find their own dimension in the society. Consequently, it will also be explored to what extent the mastering of more than one language and therefore deliberate translanguaging impacts on cross-, inter- and even intracultural communication, with different results for the two case studies.

Keywords: cross-cultural communication, identity negotiations, *Kiezdeutsch*, translanguaging, Venetan

1. Introduction

Verbal communication is an intrinsic feature of human beings, which distinguishes them from any other living beings. There are some biological features which limit the range of variability of language, so that, despite the poverty of stimulus, in a limited span of time every child acquires their first language. However, we are constantly faced with a huge degree of inter- and intrapersonal linguistic variation, which induces to think Babel has no boundaries. Nevertheless, Babel is bounded (Moro, 2008): linguistic variation follows certain patterns and not everything is subject to change, in other words, biologically, we all speak the same language (Moro, 2019, p.1). According to Chomsky (2005, p.1) the language faculty is designed as it is, because of genetic endowment, experience, and the so called "third factor", which is claimed to be "principles that are independent of language and even the organism." This implies that certain mechanisms such as syntactic hierarchy are common to all languages because their absence would be incompatible with the biological evidence about the way in which the language faculty works. As Moro (2008) underlines, if we know this, it is because of the meeting between two worlds, i.e. two cultures: neurolinguistics and cognition on the one side and theoretical linguistics on the other. This encounter was definitely not easy and each part looked at the other with a certain suspicion, there have been many *cultural* clashes and much work still needs to be carried out to widen our knowledge and win the skepsis of one part over the other. Despite the ongoing difficulties, this encounter brought and is bound to bring its fruits. If the cross-cultural dialogue between disciplines with different identities decidedly contributed to shape linguistics as we know it, in this chapter we will deal with other kinds of encounters which are nonetheless not always smooth and peaceful. We will in fact cope with (inter- or) cross-cultural communication in its traditional meaning. To do it, we will focus on two case studies which will be critically addressed and can hopefully shed some light on the diverse impacts that language and cultural contact can have both on the host society and non-native people. The two case studies which will be taken under consideration will be juxtaposed to highlight the relevant aspects of the sociolinguistic and cultural dynamics observed in these two specific contexts. It would be impossible to draw an actual comparison between the two case studies and there is no claim to consider them paradigmatic for the integration models of their respective countries. The investigation will be of qualitative nature and strictly refers to the two specific groups.

2. Methodological foreword

2.1 Cross-cultural or intercultural communication?

Before delving into the presentation and analysis of the two case studies, it can be of help to make clear what we mean by *cross-cultural* and *intercultural communication* so that the labels can be appropriately applied to the case studies under investigation. At times, the two terms are used interchangeably, and the facets of the questions are various depending on the disciplinary perspective which is adopted. It is needless to point out that the subject has drawn the attention of many disciplines such as psychology, anthropology, sociology, and that each of them effectively contributes as a mosaic tile to build a picture of the phenomenon. In what follows, we will concentrate on the linguistic aspects of communication between different groups. We will refer to *cross-* or *intercultural* communication under the definitions provided by Gudykunst (2003), who draws a distinction between the two. On the one side, he assumes that cross-cultural communication involves communication *across* cultures and *within* cultures and includes communication across ethnic groups within cultures (Gudykunst, 2003, pp. 1-2). The process of building and negotiations of identities is part of this process. On the other side, he maintains that intercultural communication conceptualises "communication between people from different cultures" (Gudykunst, 2003). The boundaries between the two concepts are not clearly cut nor are they mutually exclusive, nevertheless we will try to outline, to what extent our two cases instantiate cross- or intercultural communication processes. An interesting question which will be addressed is the role of linguistic diversity and the perception of linguistic ownership. Who is entitled to change the autochthonous language? Is it always a decay when a language changes because of external factors? What does the choice of using a language and of creating a new one reveals on the relationship with the hosting country (provided it is still perceived as a host and not their own)? It will be shown that the answers the two case studies provide to these questions are not identical, and so is perception of native-born people. Both cases involve misperception and the necessity to re-assess and partly reset power relationships, to avoid the risk of social devaluation.

2.2 Rationale for the selection of the case studies

The case studies which have been selected for our investigation are: (i) a group of adolescents living in Berlin, whose most evident identity trait is

the fact that they speak *Kiezdeutsch*[1], an ethnolectal variety of German; (ii) second generation adolescents with non-native born parents living in the Veneto (Northeast Italy). The criterion which has guided the selection of the two cases is the purpose to provide an up-to-date analysis of two instances of communication between cultures which have some important variables in common such as age of the target group, age of onset for the second language (born in the host country or at least schooled there), similar level of wealth of the geographical regions, both part of the European Union, but simultaneously exhibit striking output differences together with more subtle commonalities. While the *Kiezdeutsch* community has been thoroughly investigated in the literature[2] and has gained the attention also of non-specialist audiences, especially because of their ethnolect, second generation adolescents of the Veneto region have not deserved international attention because of their apparent linguistic mastering and the attempt of most of them to disguise as Italians as if their inclusion in the Italian society were fully completed. Nevertheless, together with first generation immigrants, whose integration difficulties are more visible, they have been the object of regional and national projects of the Italian government.

3. The first case study: *Kiezdeutsch* speakers in Berlin

3.1 Subject of investigation

The subject of investigation for the first case study is the *Kiezdeutsch* group of speakers who live in Berlin. The group comprises adolescents with different ethnic backgrounds, although Turkey is the origin country of most of them.

Young people belonging to this group are second or in some cases even third generation migrants, who have attended school in Germany and have regular contacts with German monolingual peers. They live in the metropolitan area of Berlin, in which many ethnicities coexist and having foreign roots is not the exception. According to the German Statistical Office, in 2019 26%[3] of German people had a migration background, which officially means that at least one parent did not hold German citizenship when they were born. Turkey is at a national level the most represented

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[1] *Kiezdeutsch* is a label introduced in Wiese (2006).
[2] For an overview, see Wiese (2014) and references cited therein.
[3] Source for the data: Statistisches Bundesamt (Destatis) 2021,
https://www.destatis.de/DE/Themen/Gesellschaft-Umwelt/Bevoelkerung/_
Grafik/_Interaktiv/auslaendische-bevoelkerung-top10.html (Retrieved 12.02.2021).

origin country, which makes the composition of the *Kiezdeutsch* speaker ethnic group not too different from the national data about migration. Interestingly, *Kiezdeutsch* is not only spoken by people with a migration background, by it is also spoken as an urban ethnolect by young monolingual German speakers, who identify themselves with this community. Significantly, *Kiezdeutsch* is expanding also beyond the boundaries of the city of Berlin and reaches other metropolitan areas of Germany, as well as smaller cities such as Saarbrücken.

3.2 Building the otherness

It is re-known that the last years have seen an increased tendency for people to perceive the foreigner as a threaten to the solidity of the country and the national identity. A survey conducted among Germans in 2020[4] reveals that one German out of four believes that their identity is endangered by migrants. The percentage is even higher if only answers from East-Germany are considered.

Provided that this representation of the other as a potential danger for local people and society involves immigration as a phenomenon and migrants as a whole, there are some factors which distinguish the perception of migrants in general and our case study. Various factors affect the relation between this group and the rest of society and contribute to the shaping of an out-group perception and of otherness, which are not common to other migrant communities. In the first place, the *Kiezdeutsch* group builds a segregation based on its generation: it comprises young people in school age, who also because of their age, approach the school, free time and the relation with the others in a different way with respect to previous generations. The key factor, however, is the language: *Kiezdeutsch* is not a heritage language of migrants, who are not capable or not willing to learn the language of the hosting country, i.e. German. It is instead a new language or, as is called, "hood German". We will now delve into the details of these core aspects, with a special attention for the linguistic side and its direct impact on communication and the identity creation.

3.2.1 Social behaviour and gender

Some social behaviours are allegedly common features of *Kiezdeutsch* speakers as a part of a community or of a subculture. Snuszka (2011) describes

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[4] Source: https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/562601/umfrage/umfrage-zur-auslaenderfeindlichkeit-in-deutschland/ (Retrieved 12.02.2021).

this group's preference for some specific brands of clothes sold in Berlin, a particular way to wear jeans and jackets, the so-called boxer haircut. As far as music is concerned, a singer whom the *Kiezdeutsch* group loves and takes inspiration from is Kushido, who shares with most of them a migration background (he is of Tunisian origin), although he was born in Berlin. The lyrics of his songs are very provocative and have run the risk to be censored, since they deal with violence, crimes and are politically incorrect. They express anger towards the world and even racism and nationalism, which is only apparently surprising for people with a migration backgrounds, who often revenge their being different from newcomers and simultaneously do not accept the world they live in. This trait of violence and rage is often considered by the German native population to be typical of the whole *Kiezdeutsch* group and negatively affects their perception and the representation of their role in the society. They are typically depicted as people who are bound to discredit Germany and to disrupt its values. As *Kiezdeutsch* speakers are young, the impression that violence will override the solid social values which rule Germany is even more cogent: the new generations are allegedly bound to be overwhelmed by this minority group. Interestingly there is not only a behavioural prejudice, but also a gender prejudice. Rudeness and violence in the common imaginary are typically associated with young males coming from a problematic sociocultural background, who go into trouble. Girls are somehow spared as if they were ontologically incapable of being so overtly and outrageously against the rules.

3.2.2 Kiezdeutsch: *a dialect, an ethnolect or the decay of a language?*

Although non-verbal communication certainly plays an important role in the (mis)perception of ethnic groups, a crucial point in the building of an identity, in self-perception and in the relationship with the other is the language. Typically, if we exclude an "us vs them" dichotomy based on visible physical characteristics such as skin colour, what distinguishes the membership in a community, which is sometimes also geographically identified, is the language. People who perfectly master the language of the place are "less foreigner" than people who do not. This is particularly true for migrants who do not learn the language of the place in which they have settled and cannot be fully integrated in the society because of linguistic barriers which do not allow them to effectively communicate. To avoid this kind of segregation, Germany has invested a lot on linguistic programmes which aim at teaching German also to newcomers and refugees. However, this is not the case for German *Kiezdeutsch* speakers and gives rise to a new mechanism, which detaches from the common path.

As has been said, *Kiezdeutsch* is not a heritage language, their speakers are not immigrants who did not learn German and use a pidgin form, or broken German. *Kiezdeutsch* is a language, with its rules, its grammar and a communicative power which is generationally connotated and overtly in conflict with standard linguistic and social rules. It is a non-standardized variety which has emerged spontaneously based on the contact of German and the heritage languages, although most features are of the former. The status of *Kiezdeutsch* as a language or dialect has been proved and scientifically discussed also outside the academic community by Heike Wiese, the most prominent expert of the field, who has received personal attacks for trying to convince people that there is no reason for being scared of *Kiezdeutsch*, which displays the typical features of a contact language.

3.2.3 Kiezdeutsch *in the eye of the others*

Heritage languages such as Turkish, Arabic, or Polish are typologically different from German and are therefore perceived as something completely separate from the German culture and way of speaking, although there is a scalar cultural and linguistic difference, which makes the barriers higher or lower. The impossibility of mutual understanding - if one of the two interlocutors does not use the language of the other or a lingua franca such as English - automatically creates a power-relationship in the country, where one assumes the role of the host and the other one the role of the guest. This was the basis of the re-known *Gastarbeiter* immigration model, which has characterized Germany since the Seventies. With *Kiezdeutsch* this model is linguistically and therefore also culturally challenged. Second and third generation immigrants are born in Germany, have attended schools in Germany, sometimes are even German monolingual or balanced bilinguals, and despite all of this, they deliberately choose to use a different linguistic code, which does not correspond to any national language and heavily resembles German. Are they entitled to alter German as they like and go against the rules? This is one of questions which emerged in the public debate about *Kiezdeutsch*, which, especially in the years between 2012 and 2014, was particularly lively. Some comments which readers of newspaper articles on the topic have left are illuminating. A paradigmatic one, which represents the negative attitude towards *Kiezdeutsch* is the following:

> It cannot be denied that a society cannot only be damaged by planting bombs
> or by poisoning drinking water. Insidious damage to society, also promoted
> by interest groups through omission, can result from a deliberate mess of
> speech. The taxpayer bears the costs of the repair. As a result, this Southeast

> European / Arabic language cacophony could also be described as a subtle
> form of terrorism[5] (RP-online 22.04.12).

The author of the comment compares the damage caused to the society by
Kiezdeutsch to bombs or water poisoning. He also evokes conspirations
embodied by interest groups, with negative consequences not only at a
cultural level, but also for taxpayers, i.e. it even affects the financial wealth
of the country. *Kiezdeutsch* is also claimed to be a form of terrorism, which
is nowadays one of the biggest threatens on Europe.

A quantitative analysis[6] conducted on the KidKo/E corpus, a collection of
comments left by newspaper readers on the discussion topic *Kiezdeutsch*,
reveals that among the most frequently used nouns are *Sprache (language)*,
*Jugendliche (young people), Schule (school), Problem (problem), Kultur
(culture), Integration (integration), Grammatik (grammar).* This clearly
shows that beside hateful speech, what really concerns people who left their
comment is the alleged existence of a problem, which is connected with the
language and therefore grammar and should be solved at school, which has
been incapable to preserve pure German. Interestingly, the most frequent
adjectives are *neu (new), richtig (right)* and *ander (other).* The concept of
right or wrong emerges (*falsch* – "false" follows at short distance), as well
as the idea of "otherness".

Strikingly, there is no single voice of *Kiezdeutsch* speakers who enters the
debate on language, or try to let people understand why their prejudice is
unfair and should not exist. Apparently, they do not look for a confrontation,
probably because they do not feel the need to justify who they are and what
they do. Basically, all data gathered on *Kiezdeutsch* as a language are the
result of recordings collected for research projects (see Wiese's corpus
KidKo) in which spontaneous speech has been transcribed or can be directly
listened to. Moreover, people happen to hear *Kiezdeutsch* on the street, in
the schoolyard, at the park, but there is no actual intercultural dialogue.
Kiezdeutsch is therefore no field of communication between two distinct
groups, but rather a means of communication within a community who
shares the same identity values.

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[5] My translation of the German original. Source: KIDKO/E
https://www.kiezdeutschkorpus.de/kidko-e-corpus-on-attitudes.html   (Retrieved:
27.03.21), which reports a comment to be found at: http://www.rp-online.de/
kultur/kiezdeutsch-ist-kein-dialekt-1.2801115 Author: Lothar Schröder.

[6] The software used for the quantitative analysis is "Sketch engine".

3.2.4 Kiezdeutsch *linguistic features: what worries the Germans*

Why is this German-like language so hateful to the ears of the natives? It is a widespread opinion that *Kiezdeutsch*, and consequently their speakers, are basic. *Kiezdeutsch* is claimed to be broken German, i.e. an oversimplified version of standard German spoken by migrants who do not fully master the complexity of German. Some supporters of the German right party *Alternative für Deutschland* (Alternative for Germany) have even described it as a language for dummies, or *leichte Sprache* (literally: easy language), a term used to refer to the version of the language directed to people with special needs or learning disorders. In their opinion it is deemed to make people stupid[7]. We will now delve into these alleged simplifications, which are instead different parametrisations of linguistic structures that *Kiezdeutsch* has in common with many other natural languages.

Some evident features of *Kiezdeutsch* concern the syntax, which overtly violates the mandatory second position of the verb, which is a core rule of German. Moreover, at a morphological level, case assignment does not follow the rules of the standard, the copula can be dropped, as well as many prepositions. A sentence which is typically cited in the *Kiezdeutsch* debate is "Morgen ich gehe Schule" which literally means "tomorrow I go school" and double violates the rules of standard German in that the verb does not occupy the second position and the noun *school* is not governed by a preposition such as *in die*. The lack of preposition extends to a number of contexts and is a distinctive feature of this variety. This is interpreted by pure German defenders as detrimental, an impoverishment and therefore a decay of the language. As *Kiezdeutsch* is a spoken variety, its pragmatic tools are of great interest: among them a shift in the use of *so* (Jannedy, 2010) which becomes a focus marker, and the combination of typical German modal particles with new forms such as *ischwör* (literally: I swear) and *lassma* (let us). Especially for interjections, there are words of Turkish and Arabic origins, sometimes associated with the Islamic religion: *Wallah* is an example for it, as it means "and Allah". This lexical mixing and the encoding of words coming from the heritage languages of some of its speakers are typically perceived as detrimental for the standard language. If

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[7] German original: „Das sogenannte Kiezdeutsch ist in saarländischen Schulen bereits angekommen und wird nicht als Problem, sondern als Chance angesehen nach offiziellen Angaben des Bildungsministeriums?! Die „Leichte Sprache" wird nun salonfähig gemacht, ebenso ein Beitrag zur schleichenden Verblödung". Source: https://afd.saarland/aktuelles/2017/08/schuetzt-unsere-sprache/ (Retrieved: 16.02.21).

we regard the perception that *Kiezdeutsch* speakers have on the way older people or Germans with no migration background look at them, they declare that they feel uncomfortable and discriminated because of their origins, as Krauter (2016) points out on the basis of her fieldwork.

3.3 Turkfacing and Biodeutsch

It is often assumed in the public debate that *Kiezdeutsch* speakers cannot master standard German. However, it has been demonstrated in the literature that most of them can deliberately activate code-switching or translanguaging[8] and adapt their talk to their interlocutor (Amine, 2019). *Kiezdeutsch* cannot therefore be the result of unintentional interference with the heritage language, but of an aware choice. This is all true if we consider that some German monolingual speakers use *Kiezdeutsch.* Apparently, this point is not convincing, since the influential journalist M. Heine[9] maintains there are two possibilities for Germans with no migration background speaking *Kiezdeutsch*: (i) They are Germans coming from culturally deprived social classes or (ii) they put on their linguistic make-up as if they were a Turk, to make some points of humor among their *bio-German* friends. This last phenomenon is known as *turkfacing* which is used in analogy to *blackfacing*, an evident parody of the ethnic group. What is linguistically and (inter)culturally even more interesting is the use of the term *bio-German, Bio-Deutsche*[10] in the original, to refer to the fact that those people do not have foreign origins. The word, which is a neologism, has a clearly derogatory value for all "non-bio-Germans" and, frighteningly, it linguistically revitalizes racist ideas, which have nothing to do with biology, the concept bio-German being scientifically meaningless. There was much debate in Germany among people who perceived it as ironic and people who were shocked and felt ashamed about it[11].

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[8] For a discussion on the conceptualisation of *translanguaging* see Lewis at al. (2012).
[9] For the German original, see https://www.diepresse.com/3831031/man-schminkt-sich-sprachlich-als-turke-und-lacht (Retrieved 28.02.21).
[10] The first DWDS-corpus finding of the word *Bio-Deutsch* dates back to 2008. In the vocabulary DUDEN the lemma was inserted in 2017.
[11] For an idea on the debate see the newspaper article "Ist biodeutsch rassistisch?" https://www.bild.de/politik/inland/bild-ombudsmann/ist-biodeutsch-rassistisch-54100602.bild.html (Retrieved 20.02.21).