

**LANGUAGE AS A SOCIAL BEHAVIORIST AND
STRUCTURE: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF THE
EVERYDAY LANGUAGE**

Sosyal Davranışçı ve Yapısı Olarak Dil: Günlük Dile Dair

Bilimsel Bir Çalışma

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Abstract

Culture and cultural identity can be defined within geographical borders and beyond geographical borders. Cultural belonging stem from histories of the community and the factors that make up the structure of the societies. Therefore, within western and eastern culture “nation, race, democracy, republic, multi culturalism” concepts were perceived and assessed differently. Although the concept of integration in terms of Turks living in Germany is accepted by the community, with the relative language used by politicians the concepts of “Integration” and “Assimilation” did not identified with each other and no solutions with regard to adaptation to the later developed concepts of “ guest worker (Gastarbeiter), Germaner, Turkish Deutch (Türkendeutsch)” was brought. Relative language stems from the difference between said and meant and the idea of differentiating people/masses by drawing them to different directions. Therefore, in relative language synthetical propositions are not allowed and characteristics-that do not actually exist- of the ideas and behaviors of the speaker are determined. At this point, the power of the speaker rather than the power of language is revealed. People who communicate are to determine the link between real and unreal by using linguistic strategy. This thinking style in postmodern literature has been discussed from various aspects. Thanks differentiated cultural elements discussed in postmodern literature, metaphysical values that makes up the sources of life are not made (or made) unfruitful. In postmodern literature human beings have “self-centered” positioning and demolished reality by making çığırkanlığı of reality. Human beings who sieze themselves with a materialist phonemenon are linked to materials via relative language and in this way create a cosmoplit and ucube language culture. The focus point of this paper will be: What is relative language and culture? How do/should we understand it?

Key Words: Culture, cultural aidiyet, cultural characteristics, relative culture, relative language, postmodern literature.

Özet

Kültür ve kültürel kimliğin ülkelerin coğrafi sınırları içerisinde tanımlanabildiği gibi coğrafi sınırların dışında da betimlenebilir. Kültürel aidiyet bilinci toplumların tarih ve o toplumların devlet yapısını oluşturan etmenlerden (kriterlerden) kaynaklanmaktadır. Bu nedenledir ki Batı ve Doğu kültürü içerisinde “millet, ırk, demokrasi, cumhuriyet, çok kültürlülük” kavramları farklı algılanmış ve değerlendirilmiştir. Almanya’da yaşayan Türkler açısından (Integration) uyum kavramı toplum tarafından kabul görmesine rağmen politikacıların kullandıkları göreceli dil ile “Integration, Assimilation” kavramları birbiriyle özdeşleşmemiş olup daha sonra kullanılan “ misafir işçi (Gastarbeiter), Alamancı, Türk Almanı (Türkendeutsch)” gibi kavramlarla uyum konusuna bugüne kadar bir çözüm getirilememiştir. Göreceli dil ise söylenen ve kastedilen arasındaki farklılığın kişileri / kitleleri farklı yönlere çekerek farklılaştırma düşüncesinden kaynaklanmaktadır. Bunun nedeni ki göreceli dil kullanımında sentetik önermelere yer verilmemekte vekonuşmacının düşünce ve davranışlarındaki “gerçekte var olmayan” özellikleri saptanmaktadır. Bu noktada dilin gücünden ziyade konuşmanın gücü ortaya çıkmaktadır. İletişime ortak olan kişiler dilsel strateji yolu ile var olangerçek ve var olmayan gerçek arasındaki bağıntıyı saptaması gerekir. Postmodern edebiyatta bu düşünce tarzı farklı yönleriyle irdelenmiştir. Postmodern edebiyatta ele alınan farklılaştırılmış kültürel unsurlar sayesinde hayatın kaynaklarını oluşturan metafizik değerler verimsiz hale getirilmemiş/getirilmiş olur. Postmodern edebiyatta insan kendini “ben merkezli” konumlandırmakta ve hakikat çığırkanlığı yaparak hakikati yok etmektedir. Maddeci bir olgu ile kendinikuşatan insan göreceli dil aracılığıyla maddeye bağlanır ve bu şekilde kozmopolit, ucube bir dil kültürü oluşturabilir. Göreceli dil ve kültür nedir, nasıl anılır ve nasıl algılır/algılamalıyız konusu bu yazının odak noktasını oluşturacaktır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Kültür, kültürel aidiyet, kültürel özellikler, nisbi kültür, göreceli dil, postmodern edebiyat.

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1. Introduction

The view that there is a deep-rooted bond as well as a close interaction between language and thought still holds true today. In addition to this idea of Whorf, Wilhelm von Humboldt stated that *“the language of a society is its spirit and its spirit is its language”* further concretizing the matter at this point. All features and characteristics of nations can be relieved from their languages, parallel to this, Humboldt expresses that the world view of societies is clearly seen in their languages. (Ünalın 2010: 19) However, the desire on the part of societies to grow economically led languages to lose their spirit and their cultural heritage to undergo changes. Thus, a manner of thinking which we can call relative language and culture has emerged.

2. On Culture and Identity

Culture is defined by investigating it from different perspectives. Herder has an important Role on the development of the concept “culture”. He defines the culture as a life style of a society and a community. (Aksan, 2003: 156) In its simplest sense, we can say that a society’s lifestyle and way of thinking is its culture. Cultural identity, on the other hand, involves new cultural characteristics that distinguish one society from others or develop under the influence of dominant cultures.

It is believed that cultural difference was first defined in the Sami language with reference to sunrise and sunset, and Arabic word “maghrip” is probably related to this definition. (see. Braque 2012: 14) Therefore, a definition involving Oriental and Occidental cultures (Orient und Okzident) was made. (for further information, see. Ibid. p.19) However, geographical borders could not be drawn with this definition. Perhaps (it is highly likely that) a distinction was made between Muslim and Christian societies and cultures. Other Asian and African cultures were not included.

Another definition concerns the awareness and feeling of belonging to economy, politics, society, art, literature and history of communities. Definition of cultures on the basis of content rather than geographical borders is an important issue which also determines identities of societies. In a way, the borders of belonging to eastern or western cultures were not revealed in a clean-cut manner. (for further information, see Ibid. p.16-17) Although Turkey is located in the Middle-Eastern region geographically, it has adopted the western culture.

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There are various factors that determine the sense of cultural belonging. I would like to explain these factors determining the sense of belonging by citing some prominent countries in the western culture as examples: Before the unification of the two Germanies, the German identity was an idea based on an awareness of German ethnicity, language and culture. For example: the statement “Wir sind ein Volk” (We are one nation) was one aimed at unification of the two. (Teetzmann 2001: 80) The idea of having national and a political awareness enabled to be a Culture society dedicated to the principle of justice and disciplined statism. (see. ibid; Wiedmann 1996: 246-247)

The English identity, on the other hand, is based on the internalization of the monarchic order by Aristocrats and citizens who think politically with an understanding of class

consciousness called "Tradition der civic culture" (tradition of civic culture) (Teetzmann 2001: 82).

The French identity is based on the principle of consensus of opinion. They see love and dedication to their language as a tool for creating a good future (Ibid.p. 83).

In the case of Switzerland, on the other hand, the country, which has a long democratic past, has not been influenced by monarchic ideas; instead, it has always turned its face towards principles of Republic (Ibid.p. 89).

In contrast to European countries, Turkey has a specific cultural identity based on a historical consciousness. Principles of charitableness and tolerance possessed by our people, who have been a product of multicultural mosaic as a legacy of the Ottoman past and the tolerance of Islam, are at an exemplary level among European cultures.

3. Relative Language and Culture

If people didn't live in a society, they wouldn't need language, if the language didn't exist; people couldn't live together, communicate with others and constitute a society. It's the language, through which a person or individual can actually exist and in the absence of language, a society cannot be imagined. Wilhelm Humboldt claims that the culture and world view of a nation can be determined by its language and the language is in any case the appearance of the spirit of these nations (Aksan, 2000: 64-65).

The use of relative language involves separation of man from metaphysical feelings and ideas by deviating from (absolute/true) different ideas. In this way, a self-styled cultural formation emerges. Efforts aimed at turning the world into a small village culturally arise from dominant powers' economy-based ideas. Thus, we can argue that people or societies move from a status of subject to a status of object. In other words, we may state that cultures that are in the position of objects adjust to dominant (subject) cultures and in time that culture begins to disappear. It would be appropriate to describe such a change as "relative cultural change" (degeneration/decay). We can approach and analyse the subject from different perspectives:

I would like to present the first example regarding a lack of connection between language and reality. Evaluating the matter at hand as "subject" (I), let's have a look at what kind of a change it may undergo: The concept of "I" is brought under control in both written and oral messages and communication is established through rules of tact. However, "I" usually moves to become "ego" (Ichheit) in communication, at which time changes in ideas begin to take place because the concept of "I" is a manifestation of a desire to be a dominant power. This change spreads through society and is adopted by it. For example, the concept of "integration", which has been mentioned by politicians and scientists in Germany for years has also been adopted by Turks living in Germany but somehow no solution has been reached in this regard yet, because if you regard them only as workforce and disregard other humanitarian dimensions (education, accommodation and contribution to their religious life), you can not bring a solution to the concept of "integration". At this point, it should be conceded that politics plays an effective part here. If politics is the art of reconciliation, where reconciliation ends and where surrender begins needs to be known and determined.

Another example concerns adjustment to the demands and expectations of others. When we communicate in our social life, we internalize the expectations of the other individual without expressing them, and the other individual identifies them with his own expectation and thus we develop a language strategy. In this communication, to what extent an idea is real or fictive is debated. This kind of language and speech strategy is usually seen in political language.

Sample speeches by Süleyman Demirel

Example 1

In the 1990s, late politician Süleyman Demirel made his speeches during election campaigns in the following manner: “Oh you people of Aydın and its square, come on, let’s look at the future in confidence, let’s make our country’s future bright, bury this period and open a new and bright future. Wouldn’t you like it?”

Example 2

Follow those who will lead this country to salvation and well-being! That is who we are, if anyone else can claim this, follow them. Yet, ask them a question; “Mate, what have you done so far, what good have you performed?”!

Demirel: Do you want to get rid of unemployment?

People: Yes!

Demirel: Then, follow us!

Demirel: Do you want national and spiritual values to protected?

Halk: Yes!

Demirel: Then, follow us! (*Süleyman Demirel’in Hitabeti, online*)

In discourses made through empathy lies the desire to see the other person not as a “subject”, but as an object of conflict- in accordance with his expectations (interests). Features such as “discovering” or “making up” something “which does not exist in reality” are seen in the ideas and behaviors of a speaker who empathizes. When active and passive ideas are assessed here, we can determine that ideas expressed through empathizing are directed to third parties. The linguistic phenomenon, which is represented in the third persons, is directly related to the weakness of the empathizing person and it is relative knowledge and cultural accumulation that are revealed on the basis of virtual assumptions. (This is the accumulation itself). At this point, third persons may determine realities by evaluating diachronic events or exhibit emotional attitudes or behaviors due to ideological affiliation or belonging to a certain group. According to this phenomenon, which is referred to as “Theory of Mind” in literature, “Typisierung von Narration” emerges as a typical form of narration. Reduction of the topic at hand to a specific point by third subjects or persons can be regarded as (Die Typisierung der Theory of Mind), i.e. empathy or empathy with a different expression. (Breithaupt 2012: 217)

Since it is impossible to determine the universality of the concepts used in speeches, which are an indication of habituality, individuals use different linguistic strategies:

When the teacher asks his student why he is late and when he responds

-“I got ill, sir!” or “I was sill!”

This is the concretization of a relative cultural accumulation. When the student is late to school, is he always ill? Rather than regarding this idea as right or wrong, it is seen as stereotypical thinking, which leads to cultural degeneration and hence formation of a relative culture and therefore it should be considered among topics that need to be handled in terms of socio-linguistics.

Another example is “If I were not ill, I would definitely come to visit you”. The fact that the subject (I) is under absolute pressure to express himself indicates that this is a highly unlikely situation. The word “absolute” should be regarded within the scope of apologizing. If the subject is under pressure, a linguistic strategy should be developed to eliminate this pressure or one needs to apologize straightforwardly because if we consider the emergence of relative language and culture from a philosophical perspective, we can perceive it as demonstration of something as true by attaching it to absolute truth although it does not exist in reality. In this context, we regard a product of Postmodern Literature as relative culture. Here, I would like to analyze and concretize the issue with examples from Postmodern Literature: What is dramatic in postmodern societies is that objects have totally engulfed people. With this lifestyle imposed on people, they draw borders around themselves made of objects and values of the metaphysical world such as friendship and solidarity, which constitute sources of life, become invalid. This way of thinking is defined by English literary critic Lucy as the pleasure man derives from a motive of inferiority (see: İlkhan, 2012:114; Lucy 2003: 324-325):

“You buy furniture and you say to yourself that this is the last furniture you need. After you have bought the furniture, you remain satisfied for a few years as you have solved the furniture problem this way or that way. Then, a suitable set of cutlery and crockery. Then the most beautiful bed. Curtains. Carpets. Then you are entrapped in your beautiful house, and your possessions beging to posses you.” (Bernhard 2008: 44)

4. Conclusion

If language is a determiner of identity and people’s sense of belonging, then formation of relative language and culture reflects lifestyles of societies. Historical experiences of a society, the events that they live through and traumas form the social and behaviorist cultural structure which determines the lingual reflex.

In everyday language use, we witness the reformation (just like the orientalist) of language culture and distortion of language culture which we call ‘ours’ but in fact which doesn’t belong to us in political language experiences and throughout our lives. Relative language shows a society’s self-confidence and the weakening or the annihilation of the basis within the memory of a society and the basis within their search for future. Relative language structures that are formed within the societies fills in the meaning of components of different values and processes and the meaning of “social memory” (as we call it) and thus we become alienated to ourselves in our own culture.

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