

Do heritage speakers talk more formally?

A case study on lexical choice in formal registers

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BACKGROUND

Heritage speakers display more noncanonical patterns in **informal registers** in their majority language compared to monolinguals (e.g., Wiese & Müller 2018, Wiese & Rehbein 2016). But do heritage-speakers also differ in the way they mark **formal registers** and if so, why? In pursue of these questions, I focus on the lexical domain in formal registers in the RUEG corpus:

Do heritage speakers and monolinguals differ in marking formal registers with respect to lexical choice ?

DATA

RUEG-DE 0.3.0: 205 maj-speakers (64 mono, 32 h-Greek, 48 h-Russian, 49 h-Turkish), 12 h-German (USA)

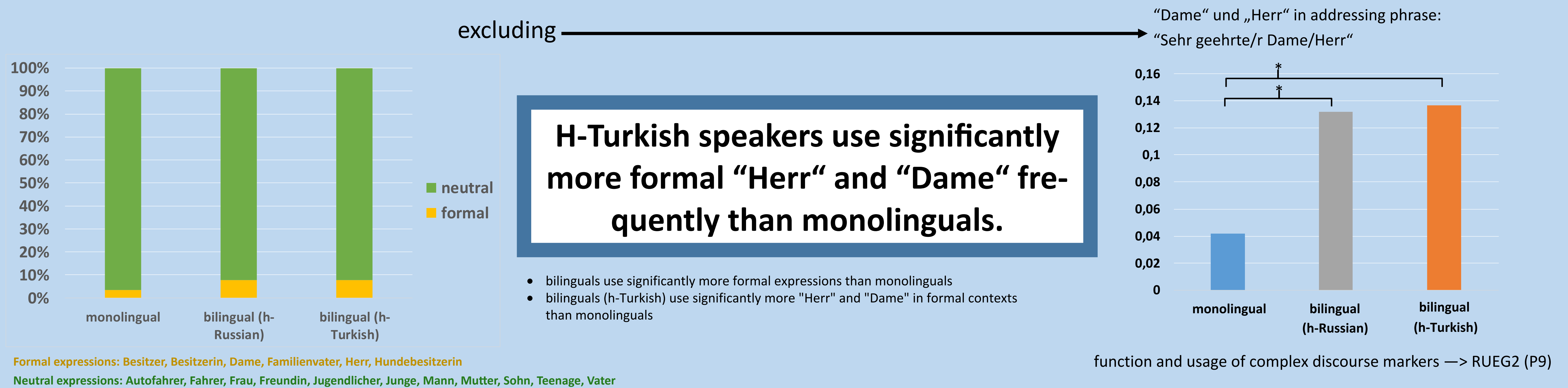
RUEG-TR 0.4.0: 64 maj-speakers (64 mono), 122 h-speakers (64 h-Turkish Germany, 58 h-Turkish USA)

METHODS

Corpus study:

frequency analysis of all nouns in all registers for the German data (items with $x < 3$ occurrences and $x < 2$ speakers were excluded); comparison with frequencies of particular lexical items (equivalents of "Herr" and "Dame") in Turkish (monolinguals and bilinguals) to determine potential cross-linguistic influences.

FINDINGS



Are there parallels in Turkish?

formal Bey, beyefendi, bay	Bayan, hanımefendi, bay
neutral adam	kadın

Influence of Turkish is highly unlikely.

- formal expressions** are very infrequently used
- formal bey, bay, beyefendi** also occur in **informal contexts** in maj-speakers
- formal hanımefendi** exclusively occurs in **formal language** in h-speakers and maj-speakers
- h-Turkish speakers in Germany use **formal bayan** in formal Turkish only (→ influence from German?); maj-Turkish speakers also use it in informal contexts

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION

The data above indicate that Turkish heritage speakers behave linguistically more formal in formal contexts in German. However, bilinguals are also known to be innovative in informal contexts. Do heritage speakers mark registers more clearly than monolinguals? What are the reasons for this difference in lexical choice?



FURTHER RESEARCH

Do we find differences in other linguistic domains (syntax, morphology, phonology, semantics)?
Do we find the same effect in in majority languages in countries with similar language ideologies (e.g., maj-English in the U.S.), and different effects in countries with a more multilingual habitus (e.g., Namibia)?

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Language ideology and monolingual bias and habitus in Germany

- strong standard language ideology (see Mattheier 1991, Davies 2012)
- strong monolingual bias (see Kachru 1994, Cook 1997) with monolingual habitus (see Gogolin 1994, 2002) leads to strong negative opinions towards varieties and multilingualism --> devaluation of non-standard varieties and their speakers (see Wiese 2015)
- particularly true for speakers with a low-prestige h-language (e.g., Turkish)

>> Back to poster <<

Strong register awareness of Kiezdeutsch speakers (see Bunk & Pohle 2019)

- Kiezdeutsch speakers are aware of and reproduce negative attitudes and stereotypes towards Kiezdeutsch and Kiezdeutsch speakers.
- Kiezdeutsch speakers are highly sensitive to detect and apply linguistic differences in particular registers.
- Kiezdeutsch speakers see Kiezdeutsch as one of many registers in their repertoire, side by side with standard German.

>> Back to poster <<

Majority Language Anxiety

- Language anxiety is reported for heritage language use (Heritage Language Anxiety, Tallon 2011) and language teaching settings (foreign language anxiety, second language anxiety).
- Speakers might feel "that the variety they use is somehow inferior, ugly or bad" (Meyerhoff, 2006: 292).
- Majority Language Anxiety (Senvinç & Dewaele 2018): "language anxiety experienced by immigrant or minority community members in the language of the majority of the population in a national context."
- Evidence for majority language anxiety in h-Turkish speakers in the Netherlands (Senvinç & Dewaele 2018): Turkish h-speakers showed anxiety of the heritage language and majority language in different social contexts, e.g., when speaking majority Dutch to a monolingual native speaker.
- In the context of Dutch of h-Turkish speakers, second and third-generation speakers experience more majority language anxiety than third-generation speakers, who, in turn, experience more heritage language anxiety (Sevinç 2018, Senvinç & Dewaele 2018).

>> Back to poster <<