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Plurilingual and Pluricultural Practices in Turkish Study Abroad: The Intersection of Identity and Lx Community
Pratiques plurilingues et pluriculturelles dans les études turques à l'étranger : l'intersection de l'identité et de la communauté Lx

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Résumé de l'article

Bien que la pratique d'acquérir une seconde langue adopte de plus en plus la tendance multilingue, la recherche sur les études à l'étranger part souvent du principe que les apprenants s'en vont étudier au sein de sociétés d'accueil monolingues. Alors que le profil et les préférences des étudiants visiteurs se diversifient, que les choix de destination deviennent plus cosmopolites et que les schémas de migration mondiale modifient la composition démographique des communautés, les modèles traditionnels ne sont plus représentatifs des études à l'étranger. Cet article présente les perceptions et expériences d'apprenants étrangers turcs en matière de pratiques plurilingues et pluriculturelles. Grâce à l'analyse de journaux intimes hebdomadaires, ces pratiques sont examinées comme source potentielles de ressources et de contraintes. Les résultats confirment le rôle central de la prise de conscience dans la pratique plurilingue et éclairent davantage la manière dont l'identité plurilingue et pluriculturelle peut mieux soutenir l'interaction de la langue cible que la recherche de "locuteurs natifs". Cette étude apporte une contribution unique au lien entre l'identité et l'apprentissage des langues à l'étranger, et confirme la nécessité de démanteler la prééminence du "locuteur natif" en tant qu'interlocuteur cible dans le cadre d'études à l'étranger.

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Abstract
Whereas second language acquisition has embraced the multilingual turn, study abroad (SA) research often assumes that learners are situated in monolingual host societies. As the profile and preferences of the sojourner diversify, destination sites become more cosmopolitan, and global migration patterns change the demographic makeup of communities, traditional models are no longer representative of SA. This article presents Turkish SA learners' perceptions and experience of plurilingual and pluricultural practices. Through analysis of weekly journals, these practices are examined as a potential resource and constraint. Findings confirm the centrality of awareness in plurilingual practice, and shed further light on how plurilingual and pluricultural identity can support target language (TL) interaction more than seeking out "native speakers." This study offers a unique contribution to the link between identity and language learning in SA, providing further support for the need to dismantle the preeminence of the "native speaker" as the target interlocutor in study abroad.

Résumé
Bien que la pratique d'acquérir une seconde langue adopte de plus en plus la tendance multilingue, la recherche sur les études à l'étranger part souvent du principe que les apprenants s'en vont étudier au sein de sociétés d'accueil monolingues. Alors que le profil et les préférences des étudiants visiteurs se diversifient, que les choix de destination deviennent plus cosmopolites et que les schémas de migration mondiale modifient la composition démographique des communautés, les modèles traditionnels ne sont plus représentatifs des études à l'étranger. Cet article présente les perceptions et expériences d'apprenants étrangers turcs en matière de pratiques plurilingues et pluriculturelles. Grâce à l'analyse de journaux intimes hebdomadaires, ces pratiques sont examinées comme source potentielles de ressources et de contraintes. Les résultats confirment le rôle central de la prise de conscience dans la pratique plurilingue et éclairent davantage la manière dont l'identité plurilingue et pluriculturelle peut mieux soutenir l'interaction de la langue cible que la recherche de "locuteurs natifs". Cette étude apporte une contribution unique au lien entre l'identité et l'apprentissage des langues à l'étranger, et confirme la nécessité de démanteler la prééminence du "locuteur natif" en tant qu'interlocuteur cible dans le cadre d'études à l'étranger.

Keywords: study abroad, Turkish learning, less commonly taught languages, plurilingual practices
Mots clés : études à l'étranger, apprentissage du turc, langues moins couramment enseignées, pratiques plurilingues

Introduction

Study abroad (SA) is regarded as a distinct opportunity in language learning to access cultural and linguistic immersion, authentic input, and opportunities for interaction (see Pérez-Vidal, 2017; McManus et al., 2021; Juan-Garau, 2014; DeKeyser, 2007; Collentine, 2009; Freed, 1995; Allen, 2010; Davidson, 2007). While perceptions of SA may be based on assumptions that students will encounter more "legitimate" members of the target language (TL) community abroad (Holliday, 2006), so-called "native speakers" (NSs) who provide superior input (Timmis, 2002), the accessibility to interaction is increasingly interrogated (Mitchell et al., 2017). This shift, which reflects the larger multilingual turn in the field of second language acquisition, is particularly suited to SA, a subfield in a paradoxical position both promising monolingual-style immersion, while offering rich, multilingual, and multicultural resources that support TL development.

These resources create an important context to the development of plurilingual and pluricultural competence (PPC), "the ability to use languages for the purposes of communication and to take part in intercultural interaction, where a person, viewed as a social actor has proficiency, of varying degrees, in several languages and experience of several cultures" (Coste et al., 2009). In line with this description, this study embraces the dynamic systems approach to languages (Jessner, 2008), and does not subscribe to a dichotomic conceptualization of language competence as either present or absent. Moreover, as the acquisition of languages tends not to be linear nor sequential, instead of "second language" (L2) or "third language" (L3), this study will make use of the term "target language" (TL) to refer to the language that a participant is focusing on acquiring, and additional language (Lx) to refer to situations where a language is not spoken as a first language.

This study understands plurilingualism as the communicative competence calling upon all linguistic resources of an individual and describes societies and environments as multilingual. Although plurilingualism and multilingualism are sometimes used interchangeably, the Common European Framework describes plurilingualism as a "counter-concept" to multilingualism: "While multilingualism is characterized by a coexistence of languages ... plurilingualism emphasizes the cooperation of languages and cultural experiences" (Vetter, 2012, p. 352). However, following Marshall and Moore's (2018) caution about a "supposed static social-individual binary" (p. 23), I understand an individual's PPC as manifesting in its practice—what Canagarajah referred to as "performative competence, that is, what helps achieve meaning and success in communication is our ability to align semiotic resources with social and environmental affordances" (2013, p. 32).

Much of the research on plurilingualism has involved English as a TL, or draws from the European context (Flores, 2013; Jenkins et al., 2011). This study offers a new perspective by exploring Turkish as a TL with primarily U.S.-based university students. Specifically, this study focuses on how plurilingual and pluricultural practices (PPP) show up in a traditional, "monolingual" SA program, described as such as the program did not explicitly include dialects, minority languages, or a lingua franca other than the participants' first language (L1) (English). In this regard, the study offers a framework for observing PPP as is naturally occurring in SA destinations in which PPP are not built into the SA design. Journals and interviews are analyzed through an emic perspective by focusing on what participants notice about who they are interacting with and what languages and identities may be informing those interactions. The research questions are as follows:

RQ1 How do learners perceive plurilingual and pluricultural practices (PPP) while studying abroad in Turkey?

RQ2 How do plurilingual practices support access to TL communities in study abroad?

In the following section, PPP in SA literature is reviewed to situate the present study.

Literature Review
Plurilingualism and Identity
Language awareness is a key component of plurilingual identity. When researchers have explored levels of awareness of a construct that has awareness at its core, the plurilingualism of their participants tends to increase. Oliveira and Ançã (2009) reported such a finding in their study, where life narratives were solicited from two plurilingual participants through a series of semi-structured, narrative interviews. They observed the interview process itself as formative in allowing the individual to develop greater awareness of their plurilingual identities, through comparing the grammatical structure of their different languages, the contexts in which these linguistic repertoires developed, and how the macro sociopolitical context influenced positive/negative affect towards their languages. Their participants' plurilingual identities had the following four features: general positive perception on plurilingualism, could identify their languages and competencies in each language, could compare their languages, and engaged in some translanguaging. Where there was room for development was in greater awareness of the macro sociopolitical context shaping communicative choices and deconstructing NS ideologies.

Bono and Stratilaki (2009) also examined how learners perceive plurilingualism, operationalized in their study as how formal instruction in a L3 was perceived as an asset for further language learning and use in a school context. Their conceptualization of plurilingualism holds that the new language both increases language knowledge as well as the metalinguistic strategies "that operate across languages and beyond them" (p. 211). Such a conceptualization renders plurilingualism not as a plural extension of bilingualism, i.e., not cumulative, but a new thing altogether. They studied learners who were secondary school students in France and Germany and university students in France. Informal interviews included trigger questions such as, "It is easier to learn a third language than a second language" (p. 215) to solicit learners' perspectives on plurilingualism as an asset. Their findings emphasize that learners were most aware of their enhanced plurilingual competence in being able to understand others and make themselves understood. Indeed, "the capacity to enter into relations with others and new situations" is part of the definition of pluricultural competence by the Council of Europe (Coste et al., 2009, p. 12).

Tang and Calafato (2022) investigated Chinese university students' PPC, among other variables, as one aspect of multilingualism. Their findings also support the centrality of the *pluri-*component of plurilingualism. Participants who indicated knowing more languages on a questionnaire had greater PPC. Of particular relevance to their study context is the contradictory climate of personal multilingual identity and politically dominant languages. Through an open-ended question targeting identity, they found participants who were not of full Han ethnicity were more resistant to conforming to linguistic norms (in China).

The relationship between language use and identity was also examined in Galante and dela Cruz (2021), who used a plurilingual questionnaire and found a positive correlation among age, number of languages, and PPC. These findings confirm how language and culture are inextricably linked, as are the components of identity, i.e., age is a predictor of PPC because there is more time to learn and use languages. In their survey, qualitative descriptions were also collected offering explanations for response behaviour. Participants described the second most common reason for identifying as plurilingual and pluricultural as "lived experience," including travel, relationships, and living, working, and studying in diverse places. Described in this way, lived experience overlaps with the character of study abroad, which will be focused on in the next section.

Plurilingualism in Study Abroad

When SA reports on involving a language other than the learners' L1 and TL (both through formal instruction and through informal contact), most prevalent are studies where (a) learners sojourn in European cities, and when (b) English is the TL. Relevant to both contexts is the Erasmus mobility programme, which has been investigated by numerous researchers (Hessel, 2019; Borràs & Llanes, 2022; Martin-Rubió & Cots, 2016; Baten, 2020). In these studies, English is the TL, students' L1s are European languages, and the additional language present is another European language. Whereas U.S. students are usually well-represented in the SA literature, plurilingual SA shifts from a U.S.-student to a European-student context. Part of this Eurocentric representation is based on terminology—Piccardo (2019) noted that although "plurilingualism" as a term has been widely used for the last 30 years, "multilingualism" has remained the term most used in English-medium academic literature. Yet "multilingual" tends to be used widely to refer to any forms of linguistic plurality, including bilingualism, in an effort to capture different dimensions of the complexity of additional language acquisition and cultural competence (Piccardo, 2019). Such studies where students' experiences were described as multilingual, but only their L1 and the TL were discussed are not included here (such as McGregor, 2016), as the focus of this study is on plurilingualism involving three or more languages, a construct that influences learning processes dissimilar from L2 acquisition (Moore & Gajo, 2009).

A key advantage of a plurilingual approach to SA is the expansion of potential sites beyond naturalistic settings in which the TL is spoken by the majority of the local population. Rather, the TL can be supported by meaningful interactions within an international student community and spoken as a lingua franca by local students and community members. Kaypak and Ortaçtepe's (2014) participants reported fearing making mistakes and being "hindered in English" while interacting with NSs, a problem that didn't exist when they interacted with other international friends (p. 361). Köylü and Tracy-Ventura (2022) reported that interactions with other international students helped develop their Erasmus students' English, while feedback from NSs tended to be "demoralizing" (p. 20). Plurilingual interlocutors tended to be more comprehensible, empathetic, sensitive to a diversity of accents, and non-judgmental of errors, qualities which aid in decreasing anxiety in interactions.

Plurilingual practices also encompass meaningful contact with languages and cultures outside of the TL and SA participant's own L1. Kimura's (2019) Japanese university student was studying English in Bangkok, and at the beginning of his sojourn had no interest in Thai language. As his sojourn continued, however, he began to actively ask about Thailand and use a few Thai words to "maintain the conversation and attract his friends' attention" (Kimura, 2019, p. 85). These "friends" were a group of speakers that he admired for their "extremely clear" and "native-like" English (p. 85). Although he was very influenced by NS ideologies, he understood that a plurilingual repertoire could achieve more rapport and serve to extend the duration of the conversation, more than could be achieved by staying in English alone.

In addition to Kimura's (2019) study, Tanabe (2019), Borràs and Llanes (2022), and Baten (2020) also reported on their participants' use of another language in addition to their L1 and TL. This does not mean that PPP did not occur in other studies that took place in multilingual societies (such as in Mori & Sanuth, 2018; Sung, 2014), Erasmus exchanges (Hessel, 2019; Fidan & Karatepe, 2019; Köylü & Tracy-Ventura, 2022; Martin-Rubió & Cots, 2016; Kaypak & Ortaçtepe, 2014), and TL as lingua franca sites (Glaser, 2017; Martin-Rubió & Cots, 2018; Thon & Nicoletti, 2018; Virkkula & Nikula, 2010). Rather, the focus is broadened from the individual learner's own

engagement with a L3 to the PPP observed across the host society, dominant discourses in the program, and the linguistic makeup of the interlocutors available to the learners.

Current Study
The plurilingual framework for the current study is based on the summary point as noted in the previous section. As PPP need not be oral production from the learners, i.e., SA participants speaking more than one learned language, PPP are also construed as contact with other plurilingual individuals, language awareness, and the presence of other languages and cultures in either the social network, homestay family, or larger society in which the sojourning student is residing. In a deliberate move away from the dominance of English as a TL (e.g., TESOL programs) and English as a lingua franca in European contexts, this study takes up a plurilingual framework to expand the traditional contexts where plurilingual pedagogies are employed and plurilingual practices are expected.

Method
Participants and Context
Ten intermediate and advanced learners of Turkish enrolled in an intensive summer program at a university in Istanbul participated in this study (see Table 1). All names are pseudonyms; four participants provided their own pseudonyms, and the rest are fictional names that, where relevant, retain cultural similarity to the real names.

Data Analysis
Participants completed weekly journals (*n* = 7) hosted in Google documents and shared with the researcher in real time. This allowed the researcher to interact with the journal through the comments function, an asynchronous relationship which provided space for clarifying questions, reactions, and general engagement. PPP were specifically solicited in the journals on two occasions: In weeks 3 and 4, the following prompt appeared, "Any other interesting interactions, in any language, to note down from this past week?" This sub-prompt was nested under a recurring prompt (in every week's journal), "Think of your Turkish interactions over this past week. High-point / Low-point." Other than this solicitation, participants' noticing of PPP was their own. One in-person interview in Istanbul and one Zoom interview at the end of the program allowed for member checking (Potter & Hepburn, 2005), to check the researcher's understanding of the journal data with the participants. One month after the program's end, six participants completed the third interview, while four participants answered questions by email as they were travelling and unavailable to schedule an interview. In the interviews, participants were asked to expand on details recorded in their journals and were also asked about their use/contact with the other languages that they had recorded on the language background questionnaire and language learner history in the beginning of the study.
For RQ1, journal analysis followed grounded theory (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) to explore the *a priori* variable of plurilingual and pluricultural practices. First, PPP were operationalized as mentions of languages other than Turkish and English. These excerpts were then reviewed for any further subthemes, and the following categories emerged: occasions when the use of L3s (languages other than the L1 and TL) were a resource or barrier, and when Lx speakers of Turkish (included in PPP for their own plurilingual backgrounds) were a resource or barrier. These categories served to shed light on RQ2. Next, PPP was operationalized as participant awareness of multiple aspects of self- and interlocutor identity as becoming relevant to interaction. Categories that emerged as participant-relevant were ethnic, religious, and nationality labels. These journal

excerpts were then triangulated with data from the interviews, language background questionnaire, and language learner history.

Table 1

Participant Background Information

Participant	Age	Gender	Ethno-racial background*; Nationality	L1	Learned languages intermediate proficiency and above	Level of study	Field of study	Study purpose	Turkish class level
Alisa	23	Female	White; Russian	Russian	2 - English, Mandarin Chinese	Master's	Islamic Art	Master's archival research	Lower intermediate
Leon	28	Male	White; USA/Canadian	English	2 - Spanish, French	Rising senior, undergraduate	Creative Writing	Translating Turkish literature into English	Lower intermediate
Lea	28	Female	Asian; USA	Mandarin Chinese, English	2 - Arabic, Persian	PhD	Islamic Art History	PhD archival research; perceives Turkish fluency as more feasible than Arabic and Persian	Upper intermediate
Marco	30	Male	Asian, White, Hispanic; USA	English	4 - German, Spanish, Mandarin Chinese, French	PhD	Art History	PhD research on Turkish-German migration	Upper intermediate
Filiz	21	Female	Turkish, Hispanic; USA	English	1 - Spanish	Rising senior, undergraduate	Psychology	Heritage speaker	Upper intermediate
Emily	37	Female	White; USA	English	3 - Arabic, Persian, French	PhD obtained, professor	Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures, Arabic	Relationship (L1 of long-time partner)	Upper intermediate
Katherine	20	Female	White; USA	English	1 - German	Rising junior, undergraduate	International Relations	Exposure to Turkish through SA in Germany – relevant language to Germany	Lower advanced
Sam	24	Male	White; USA	English	1 - German	Master's	International Development	Interest in Middle East	Advanced speaking
Adrian	27	Male	Black; USA	English	3 - Spanish, French, Italian	PhD	Spanish Linguistics	L1 of acquaintances, linguist by trade	Advanced speaking
Dael	22	Male	Ashkenazi; USA	English	5 - Yiddish, Uyghur, Spanish, Japanese, Hebrew	Recently graduated, BA	Linguistics	Specializing in Turkey and migration for professional fellowship	Advanced speaking

*Participants were given choices of ethnic and racial categories, as well as the option to provide their own category.

Results
RQ1
The first research question explored how learners perceive PPP while studying abroad in Istanbul, Turkey. In general, participants perceived PPP as a resource for developing a Turkish-speaking plurilingual identity, with mixed perspectives regarding PPP and Turkish proficiency. These perspectives will be discussed in the two main contexts in which they occurred: (1) interactions with program peers, and (2) travelling outside of Istanbul and encountering other languages relevant to Turkey and accents other than Istanbul Turkish.

Peer Interactions. With peers, plurilingual backgrounds functioned as social cohesion in helping participants discover shared experiences and connections. These overlapping linguistic backgrounds also served to enrich the linguistic resources that participants provided to one another, as they observed similarities and differences across languages, a conversation that did not often occur in the classroom. Participants recorded the following entries in their journals:

> **Adrian, Week 1**
> I found out that a few other people in the program also speak Spanish and French so I got to practice those a bit, which was fun.

> **Lea, Week 3**
> I was excited to speak with them in Arabic because I haven't spoken it in a while … I am actually quite surprised by how much I remembered.

> **Leon, Week 4**
> I have one friend in the program I neglected to mention during our interview. He's two classes above me, and quite good. Very good. Also speaks Yiddish, which is a language I'm quite interested in.

When PPP was perceived as a barrier, it was when some participants expressed either the cognitive burden of suppressing one of their additional languages to access Turkish or had difficulty suppressing Turkish to access a different additional language.

> **Lea, Week 3**
> I am trying to stop speaking Arabic with other Arabic speakers.

> **Katherine, Week 7**
> I was speaking to a fellow student in German and noticed Turkish was the default language coming to my brain.

Participants also noticed increased linguistic entropy as the summer went on, which provided positive proof of Turkish development:

> **Marco, Week 3**
> At the start of my week, I felt like my Turkish skills were steadily improving. I felt an uncanny sense that Turkish had somehow slipped into my brain and replaced German as my second/most readily available foreign language.

and underlined the value of a TL peer community:

> **Adrian, post-program**
> Turkish was VERY active when I was speaking these two languages (Valencian and Spanish). I had to fight the urge to say phrases like çok yaşa (*bless you*), kolay gelsin (*may your work come*

easy) and geçmiş olsun (*feel better*) so often! In the instances where I realized that it would be awkward if I uttered these phrases, I found myself missing my Turkish learner friends and Istanbul.

Diversity Outside of Istanbul and Istanbul Turkish. Travelling outside of Istanbul offered participants the opportunity to hear other prominent languages in Turkey such as Kurdish and Persian, as well as Turkish accents that differed from Istanbul Turkish (the "standard" dialect). Such exposure was regarded positively, both as further evidence of developing Turkish proficiency—participants were able to ascertain that what they were hearing was not Turkish—as well as deepening understanding of Turkish society.

Sam, Week 1
As part of the bayram (*holiday*), a friend and I traveled to Armenia for four days, and being in a country where I had literally no knowledge of the language or alphabet made me realize how much Turkish I actually know, and in the few days since then I have been much more confident about speaking.

Emily, Week 6
[My partner] was excited to show me a few shows and some short clips featuring speakers with Adana accents who pronounce their k like Arabic or Persian q or gh. Although neither he nor his parents speak with a heavy accent he both finds the accent very funny and I think feels attached to it.

Lea, Week 6
In Van, I thought the range of languages spoken there was very interesting. There was a lot of Persian spoken because there were many tourists from Iran. Also, it was my first time hearing Kurdish in real time which I thought was very cool.

One participant also recounted an encounter with a speaker of another Turkic language, Uzbek, which boosted his confidence due to the participant's relatively higher proficiency. As this student was the most advanced student in the most advanced class, this interaction offered modus of comparison between those of program peers and NSs.

Dael, Week 4
Met an Uzbek guy who just moved to Istanbul. My Turkish is better than his, and I noticed that I felt much more fluent and relaxed when talking to him because of that.

On one occasion, however, a participant recorded some frustration with an unfamiliar accent during a service encounter:

Lea, Week 4
we chatted for a long time with our waiter, Ali, from Tajikistan. I spoke in Persian with him but honestly I find it quite tricky to understand the Tajik accent—it sounds a lot like Russian to me.

Although this journal entry could be construed as a negative perception of plurilingualism—a manifestation of frustration while using an additional language—one of Lea's stated goals for the summer was continuing to invest in Persian. Interactions such as this one were helpful not only for activating her Persian while in Turkey, but also for expanding her familiarity with the Persian-speaking world.

RQ 2

The second research question asked how plurilingual and pluricultural practices support access to TL communities in SA. Of the 10 participants, three were critically cognizant of how their plurilingual and pluricultural identities influenced their access to Turkish interactions.

Marco. Marco and Lea regularly accessed non-Turkish communities during their time in Istanbul. Both of their community connections were forged through doctoral projects. Marco had preexisting connections to an extended world of artists, art critics, and art historians, for which Istanbul was the epicenter of relevancy. As Marco's art history dissertation focused on Turkish-German narratives, and his program spanned residencies both in Europe and in the U.S., his networks within the art world focusing on Turkey were extensive, plurilingual, and mobile. The cosmopolitan nature of this world was such that English was a strong lingua franca—the level of proficiency was very high, as members published, presented, and created in English. This proficiency translated easily into social meetings, and despite the emergence of another lingua franca (Turkish), Marco strongly dis-preferred using Turkish with Turkish speakers in this world; his professional identity was already established in English. This tension between an established identity in one language and an emerging identity in another language was articulated in his week 3 journal. Marco had to miss a few days of class to attend a conference in Greece. While there, he didn't use any Turkish, even when the opportunity presented itself:

> In Greece, I was actually around several Turkish people, but I didn't feel confident enough to have conversations with them in Turkish, even while they were struggling to communicate with me in English. (I think this normally wouldn't be the case, but the social contexts of the work situation—an important work opportunity among many prominent artists—prevented me from using my Turkish, out of a fear of making mistakes and "looking bad.")

When Turkish friends Marco knew from contexts outside of Turkey gathered in Istanbul, a similar phenomenon occurred:

> perhaps one was the strangeness of being the English speaker in a Turkish-speaking friend group—whereby everyone feels obliged to speak English … This was something I experienced with my Turkish friend and his friends while he was visiting … and also something I know from Berlin, when I see how non-German speakers and German speakers interact. On the one hand, it is an inclusive gesture for Turkish speakers in English, as it would be too difficult for me to really contribute to a conversation with native speakers talking at full speed in Turkish, yet on the other hand, it feels counterproductive somehow (especially when trying to learn the language …).

In the excerpt above, Marco reflected on a restrictive language environment he has been conditioned to in Berlin. This environment came up in his language background questionnaire as well: "I speak mostly only English with my German and Turkish friends, as I notice that social groups in Berlin are largely divided by native speakers." Marco had considerable access to diverse speakers of Turkish, yet the social-professional identity of the community was one that was forged in English and offered little in terms of further developing his own Turkish speaking identity.

Lea. Like Marco, Lea had access to diverse networks of Turkish speakers, and was also working towards a PhD in art history. Lea's networks, however, included both Turkish scholars as well as learners of Turkish. In her week 5 journal, she mentioned meeting some friends who were researchers from U.S./U.K. institutions and were enrolled in modern Turkish or Ottoman language courses that summer. Lea's academic subfield focused on Islamic art, and as such, her networks were populated with concurrently learning/speaking/using Arabic, Persian, and Turkish researchers (like Lea herself). Unlike Marco's contemporary art history world, which assumed

fluency in Turkish and German language/culture/history as a prerequisite, Lea's art history world was steeped in archives, and engaged language learning as part of the professionalization process of membership. Even a researcher who came to Lea's field with proficiency in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish might be expected to invest in studying Ottoman Turkish.

In our third interview, Lea described planning to develop further connections within the Persian-speaking community in Istanbul. She found much greater ease in moving into these communities that speak Turkish as an Lx, as in her experience Turkish L1 social circles are much more closed, not looking for further connections. In line with many other participants' accounts, she did not use her Arabic skills while in Turkey. She mentioned an anecdote in which people were stopped on the streets of Istanbul at night for speaking Arabic, as the police assumed they are Syrian and would like to know the business they were about. "I'd rather not speak Arabic … I don't know what the consequences are." On the other hand, the Persian-speaking community is generally looked upon positively. "They bring business," Lea recounted.

Lea's networks espoused a very different ideology towards language and culture than that of Marco's world. Her network included learners of Turkish who were also learners of her other languages, which contributed to a shared discipline-specific identity. Her network also included L1 speakers of additional languages prominent in Turkey and relevant to her academic field. Both communities offered social support, as well as lingua-cultural affinity in navigating a Turkish-learning identity.

Dael. Among a strongly plurilingual group, Dael was the most prolific of students in terms of autonomous language learning ability and repertoire of learned languages. He tested into the highest level of the program via self-study and was frequently referred to by peers as the most proficient student in that level. One participant referred to him as a "language monster," and a classmate of his same level mentioned being able to be the primary speaker in a mixed group only one time when Dael had been "running on 2 hours of sleep."

Turkish was not the first language that Dael had taught himself. "Yiddish learned itself—the grammar was rarely, if ever, challenging, I had no cultural barriers to overcome, and I was extremely motivated." Yiddish and Hebrew words made their way into his household English growing up, and trips to Israel and Hebrew-speaking family boosted Dael's proficiency enough to be able to speak with minimal foreign accentedness. With Hebrew, too, Dael described an ease of acquisition: "My ability in the language doesn't fully feel learned—I'm not really sure how to classify it."

Such a mind is well-poised to take full advantage of naturalistic learning opportunities. Dael does not need speaking practice in order to solidify grammar knowledge—reading a textbook accomplishes this for him. Dael pursues speaking opportunities to understand extralinguistic cues that inform him about the speakers of the language and the culture the language conveys. After just one week of instruction, this excerpt from a journal illustrates his communicative competence:

> Turkish continuing apace. I feel like learning a language is like learning to fly a plane. For a long time, you're learning where all the buttons are and what you can and can't do with them, and only after lots of work do you get to fly. I've had life-changing conversations in this language, but lately I've been a little impatient and want to get to the point of total comfort.

As an advanced speaker, Dael could access much more in-depth conversations in Turkish than other participants, and particularly enjoyed engaging locals in cultural comparisons. These discussions often began in comparing the U.S. and Turkey, and as Dael identified as Ashkenazi Jewish, he felt this minority identity connected with minority ethnic groups in Turkey. In Interview

2, Dael realized that most of his extended, serendipitous interactions in Turkish were with Kurdish Turks, an ethnicity that is also politicized in modern-day Turkey. To provide an illustration of his increased comfort level with Kurds than with Turks, he recounted an episode at the barber:

> I always felt more comfortable around Alevis and Kurds than I did just normal Turks. Like I told this barber—this barber and I were talking, he was giving me lessons on like local profanity, like the Sivas dialect. Which is kind of weird, like, I don't think this is the guy I would normally be friends with. And then we were talking about our names, and I told him I was Jewish, and he just like, got a lot less talkative.

In the same interview, Dael went on:

> But anyway, yeah, it's like with Turks, it's like, I love Turks. But then, also, I don't know when you're interacting with people who, you know, are probably right-wing and don't like Kurds and might not like me if they knew more about me. I don't know. There was always that subtext that was like, maybe there? But with Kurds and Alevis, I don't know, I have a lot of respect for what they're going through. It was also cool to be like, when you're an American like, they're really willing to open up to you about their situation, cause they know that it's like a lot less. It's just safer to talk about, and I don't think they would talk about this with a random Turk.

For similar reasons, Dael found his trip to the southeast of Turkey, a region where many Kurdish and Alevi communities live, host to some of the richest interactions he had over the summer. Among the diverse interlocutors encountered, he mentioned specifically a communist Kurdish poet, an Assyrian winemaker, and a Kurdish seatmate on the plane. Notably, in all his journals, Dael mentioned a culture other than Turkish (Uzbek, Uyghur, Armenian, in addition to Kurdish and Alevi).

Dael's capacity to go more deeply into the pluricultural nature of his Turkish interactions seems to arise from awareness of his own minority identity. All the minority communities he encountered in Turkey speak Turkish to a high level of proficiency, as a second L1. His is not a narrative of engaging in the TL as a lingua franca with diverse communities, but of understanding ethno-political positionality in style of discourse. There isn't a scaffolding mechanism at play, easing Dael's access into TL interactions. Instead, shared minority identity acts as an interactional lubricant, creating affinity where none may be apparent.

Discussion and Conclusion

Every language exists in an ecology of plurality, and NS ideologies, particularly entrenched in SA, often prevent learners from accessing available resources in a more productive pursuit of the TL. Moreover, the conception of SA as exposure to NS linguaculture in a naturalistic setting is no longer fitting for our globalized condition. Increasingly, SA participants will encounter multilingual and multicultural communities that are an authentic representation of the TL and culture. Students unprepared for such diversity may dis-prefer interacting with certain individuals, limiting their opportunities for TL development. A shift in expectation and plurilingual preparation could help SA students benefit from and even seek out these multi-resourced communities and speakers. Instead of preparing students for a monolingual immersion experience, where the expected contact zone is between culture A and culture B, language instructors and SA administrators would do well to expand the notion of SA to be contact between any number of potential cultures as well as diverse expressions of those cultures and the identities learners themselves embody.

When the Turkish learners in this study perceived plurilingual and pluricultural practices as an asset it was mostly in informing metalinguistic awareness, particularly in understanding the

complexity of identity of their interlocutors and themselves. PPP also tended to add an element of interest and shared affinity in terms of overlapping language and cultural repertoires. Participants viewed PPP negatively when considering cross-linguistic transfer, and the increased cognitive load of accessing an additional language. Plurilingualism was not a part of their SA program, nor was there any intervention or pedagogical treatment in this study; rather, their plurilingual backgrounds and multilingual context of Istanbul as a host site motivated the research interest to explore participants' own perceptions of PPP.

Dael was also able to hone his pragmatic understanding of language, recognizing extralinguistic cues as to when further divulsion of his personal details would not be welcome in a conversation and, conversely, when to forefront certain aspects of his identity to garner affinity with his interlocutor. In line with the CEFR's description of PPP, Dael was able to exploit his preexisting pragmatic competence, developing a more complex competency that refined his capacity in new social interactions (Coste et al., 2009). Although SA is often linked to extralinguistic gains such as the development of intercultural competence, some sojourns may function to decrease participants' intercultural sensitivity (Çiftçi & Gürbüz, 2019). Indeed, negative interlocutor response to Dael's pluricultural identity, such as expressing unfavourable attitudes towards the Jewish community, could have reinforced stereotypes or resulted in heightened xenophobia.

Lea was conscious about her choice to use her Lx Persian, and sometimes not to use Lx Arabic, informed by sociopolitical contexts. Sociopolitical context also influenced how Dael found affiliation with pluricultural communities, rather than monocultural Turkish communities. This awareness is emphasized by Oliveira and Ançã (2009), who observed the political, historical, and social context influencing their participants' language use, and identified increased understanding of this macro context as critical for further developing awareness in PPC. Galante and dela Cruz (2021) also reported on basic participant awareness of similarities and differences among cultural groups on a local level, but without further articulation of differences in the communities. It's possible their findings are explained by the historical context of Canadian English and French communities; the authors did not describe characteristics of this particular respondent, so it is not known of which community they belong to.

Dael's account demonstrates the erosion of a NS as the idealized target for learners. Instead, Dael aligned himself with marginalized TL speakers of Turkish, as those who identified as ethnic minorities were much more likely to embrace Dael's own identity, which contributed to a greater ease of rapport and TL practice. Such agency is in line with Piccardo's (2019) description of "being comfortable with the complex and ever-changing linguistic and cultural identities of oneself and others" (p. 188). In deconstructing expectations for ideal interlocutors and settings for SA, an emphasis on pluriculturality can help reimagine the "legitimate speaker" of the TL. Sung (2014) observed, "it cannot be taken for granted that an L1 identity is necessarily a desirable part of L2 learners' identities in ELF [English as a lingua franca] communication" (p. 38). If a replica of a NS is no longer the goal (Ke & Cahyani, 2014), learners can choose diverse individuals who represent more accessible target speakers, which helps learners already see their own selves as legitimate speakers of the TL.

Lea's professional network supported her developing Turkish-speaking identity in a way that was absent from Marco's network. Here, the experiences of sojourners who found Lx environments supportive for their emerging Lx language use (Kaypak & Ortaçtepe, 2014; Köylü & Tracy-Ventura, 2022) offer an explanation for this difference. Marco's network, with rich linguistic repertoires and life experiences in diverse contexts, was not actively using Turkish as an

Lx. Lea's network was using Turkish as an Lx, and so even though English as a lingua franca was also readily available, Turkish as an Lx offered social cohesion and an Lx in common. Although knowledge of German gave Marco another language with which to make connections and build awareness, the social experience of (not) speaking German in Berlin influenced a barrier in speaking Turkish as well.

This complexity, while not disputing the generally accepted correlation between number of languages and plurilingual identity, calls for a critical look at the potential vs. realization of PPP. Participants' experiences of PPP supporting access to TL communities tended to differ depending on the social context. Bono and Stratilaki (2009) emphasized the role of social context in the realization of plurilingualism as an asset. One of their participant groups did not have their plurilingual competences noticed at school, and they were only able to build their competences outside the classroom "even in spite of the classroom learning experience" (p. 217). Marco demonstrated the potential of his plurilingualism as he made connections among language roots in his week 7 journal:

> Random, but—I have been taking more of an active interest in the etymology of Turkish words. It's pretty clear when a word is borrowed from Arabic, Persian, French, or Italian. However, I have occasionally looked up words that don't instinctually "sound Turkish" to me (a problematic notion, I know—I'm defining this largely by combinations of consonants that don't sound so common to me). Two examples: "yakamoz"—from Greek, however this word does not exist in standard modern Greek spoken in Greece, according to my Greek friends; and "pancar," which is from Armenian :).

Unfortunately, this potential was inhibited by the social contexts he was in, and Marco wasn't able to utilize his plurilingual repertoire in interaction.

One explanation of these uneven experiences of PPP can be the specific matrix of the participants' plurilingual backgrounds. Turkish as the TL for L1 speakers of English calls up NS ideology, but in two prominent ways: As Turkish-speaking interlocutors viewed participants through the lens of English NS status, the barriers to be able to use the TL increase, as interlocutors both have English proficiency and are motivated to practise their English. Secondly, the culture of Turkish spoken as an Lx is not nearly as developed as English as an Lx. As such, incorporating Turkish into majority English conversations, or discovering hybrid Turkish+ identities were not ready-made contexts for either the participants or their interlocutors. Kaypak and Ortaçtepe (2014) explained how their Turkish participants' attitudes towards communicating in English while on Erasmus differed from European students because of how English education in Turkey is built around a NS model. In a parallel way, the lack of Turkish as a lingua franca community and practice can explain Marco's inability to use Turkish even in situations where English was insufficient to facilitate conversation.

There are two implications to Marco's experience. If English as a lingua franca has experienced success in the European context as a plurilingual experience (Jenkins, et al., 2011), the plurilingual experience should now extend to learners of European languages. When Marco described his discomfort with using Turkish, he also reflected upon the restrictive language practices he encountered in Berlin, and how using German was similarly difficult. Such an approach to language departs from Piccardo's (2019) description of plurilingualism as "a holistic, linguistic/cultural stock that is available for use, dependent on the circumstances and one's life trajectory" (p. 193). The dominance of English in understanding plurilingualism was a concern raised by Kubota (2016) and Flores (2013) of a neoliberal multiculturalism. Increasing

understanding about plurilingualism in contexts other than those that centre English as a TL can further increase our understanding of plurilingualism as an affordance decoupled from English.

Limitations and Future Directions

As a journal study, interpreting participant experiences relies on their self-reports, and does not tie their experiences to proficiency measures. Future studies can utilize additional instruments, particularly those that capture naturalistic data, to further shed light on how participants' perceptions of plurilingualism manifest in their practices. For RQ2, the discussion is limited to three participants. This small number limits the findings as specific to this study's context and not generalizable. Finally, this study observed plurilingual and pluricultural practices in a SA program that did not have any modification, intervention, or explicitly plurilingual element. Future research can look at how plurilingualism can be incorporated into the structure of SA programs, so that plurilingualism as a variable can be studied.

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