

Greek and Turkish linguistic nationalism in the light of language instruction
handbooks: A comparative study.

Konstantinos Sampanis - Boğaziçi University

Dilara Akarcesme - University of Vienna

Most comparative studies on nationalism in Greece and Turkey (e.g. Özkırımlı and Sofos: 2008; Fortna et al.: 2012) cover a large number of historical and sociological topics. However, language nationalism has been largely ignored. Both countries share a past of enforcing linguistic homogenization policies (several prohibitions in Greece, cf. e.g. Empeirikos et al. 2001 - The “Citizen, Speak Turkish!”) campagne in Turkey, cf. e.g. Aslan: 2007). Yet, nationalistic narratives with respect to the history of each language significantly differ in these countries. In Greece, approaches on the diachrony of the national language emphasize the idea of Greeks being a “brotherless nation” (Krimpas and Sampanis: forthc.), an idea that seems to be invigorated by the scarcity of references to the Indo-European linguistic family in the handbooks used for Greek language lessons (cf. Sampanis and Karantzola 2018). In Turkey on the the other hand, especially in the first years of the Republic, there was a systematic attempt not only to underscore the unity of the Turkic-speaking world but also to formulate a theory of Turkish being the protolanguage of humanity (“Sun-Language Theory”, cf. Lewis 1999; Laut 2000). In the latter case the pseudolinguistic narrative was partially encouraged by the state educational policy. In both cases, linguistic pseudotheories (e.g. “Pelagism” and denial of the Indo-European theory in Greece, “Panturanism” and acceptance of the -largely contested- Ural-Altaic theory in Turkey) further fuel nationalistic sentiments.

Our paper comprises two interrelated issues:

- a. We propose that, notwithstanding their similarities, the Greek and the Turkish linguistic nationalism differ from each other in the way its national language is perceived with respect to other languages or linguistic families. In particular, we suggest that the Greek case can be described as an *introvert linguistic nationalism*, according to which exceptionalism is the main desideratum while on the contrary the Turkish case could rather be designated as an *extrovert linguistic nationalism* which aims at underscoring the (established, potential or fictive) association of Turkish with several Eurasiatic languages. This division between introvert and extrovert linguistic nationalism does not only explain popular attitudes towards the language in each state but also reflects aspects of cultural self-perception and geostrategical orientation.
- b. We present a study of the language course books used today (and in the recent past) in Greece and Turkey. The corpus of this research is comprised by the editions of the official institutions that issue the educational books on language and history instruction, namely 1. the Educative Book Publishing Organization (OEΔB - OEDB) in Greece and 2. the Ministry of National Education Publishing Organization (MEB Yayınları) in Turkey.

Our investigation indicates that in both countries, the inclusion of historical linguistics findings in education books is inadequate and definitely not able to disperse well-established linguistic pseudotheories.

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