Plurilingual practices in Lx Turkish learning: A case study from an online summer intensive program

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Abstract

Drawing on a case study in a beginner-level intensive program held online by a US university, this article examines when and how learners sought out plurilingual and pluricultural connections relevant to Turkish learning. Compared to a monolingual orientation, a plurilingual approach to Lx learning encourages learners to draw upon diverse languages, cultural knowledge, and experiences in approaching the target language. Learners of less commonly taught languages often have unique motivations for learning (Dörnyei & Al-Hoorie, 2017), and prior experiences in language learning, making them particularly poised to mobilize diverse resources and benefit from a plurilingual approach (Wei & Ho, 2018). Data collection included a language history questionnaire, pre- and post-program plurilingual and pluricultural competence measures, semi-structured interviews, and classroom

recordings. Findings reveal the activation of plurilingual practices is not limited to occurrences of lexical and cultural overlap and emphasize the centrality of the instructor in drawing upon plurilingual resources.

Introduction

This study examines the varied plurilingual practices used by
both the students and the instructor in a beginner-level
university Turkish class, which met exclusively in an online
format on Zoom for eight weeks during an intensive summer
program. The participants' plurilingual practices are looked at
from the following sources: Zoom class recordings, a
language history questionnaire, pre- and post- plurilingual and
pluricultural competence (PPC) surveys, and one-on-one
interviews. Participants' classroom discourse is triangulated
with their reflections when presented with specific moments
from class (based on a stimulated recall method), as well as
researcher mediation as external to the roles of student and
instructor in semi-structured interviews. This integrated look
at a Turkish classroom adds to our understanding of how
participants may draw upon plurilingual backgrounds in
different ways when learning a less commonly taught
language (LCTL), and how an instructor's plurilingual and
pluricultural positionality can influence the plurilingual

practices in the classroom. This approach extends second language acquisition research in two important ways. First, the study goes beyond a traditional focus on L2 acquisition that may engage only the target language (TL) such as in an immersion model or the TL through the learners' L1 or lingua franca in the classroom. Second, by including the instructor as a full participant in data collection, this study calls multiple perspectives to the classroom, not only learners' perspectives.

Moving beyond a monolingual approach to classroom learning can be seen as encompassing a variety of practices as outlined in Galante (2022): code-switching, translanguaging (fluid and flexible use of language), plurilanguaging (use of different linguistic and semiotic resources), translating among languages, intercomprehension among related languages, and intercultural communication. While a plurilingual approach to TL development has become increasingly popular, at least as the protagonist in the momentum to revise the long-accepted monolingual approach, how its practices are nurtured and

critically engaged with is a continuous area of growth. For
example, translanguaging should move us towards practices
that are more complex than simply alternating between a
student's L1 and the L2; rather, as Garcia and Wei (2014, p. 3)
emphasize, there is transformative potential in generating
"new configurations of language practices and education,"
extending even to "cognitive and social structures." Such
generative practices are multilingual, multimodal, and
multisemiotic (Wei & Ho, 2018) and build upon life
experiences and prior language learning strategies. The
plurilingual frame taken up in this study builds upon
scholarship in translanguaging (Garcia & Wei, 2014), while
highlighting plurilingual competence (Galante, 2022) as the
conceptualization of *pluri*-lingual reaches beyond just the L1
and TL of each participant in an effort to engage their
plurilingual self. By engaging both learners and the instructor
of a Turkish language program, this study contributes a look
at how a plurilingual approach can be taken up holistically in a
LCTL classroom. Thus, the article will begin by positioning

Turkish as a foreign language taught at the university level within the US context.

Turkish as a less commonly taught language

Research in Turkish language acquisition in the US is an under-explored field, with even less representation in study abroad programs. As pedagogical recommendations are not a one-size-fits-all application with languages situated within vastly different cultural contexts, global statuses, and linguistic distance from learners' known languages, scholars have called for further research to be conducted with (and not just applied to) LCTLs (see Dörnyei and Al-Hoorie, 2017, and Ushioda, 2017). Such research is likely to be qualitative, as Turkish classes are small. The typical class size during the academic year for beginner Turkish is seven undergraduate students and one graduate student, with numbers dropping down with each level of increasing proficiency (Ergül, 2021).

Plurilingual practices

There are three lines of inquiry that the current study focuses

on: a) The role of the plurilingual and pluricultural

backgrounds of learners in b) pursuing Turkish, in its

characteristics as a LCTL in the US, and c) the attitudes of

both   students   and   the   instructor   towards

plurilingualism-as-resource. Plurilingual practice is not a novel

concept in multilingualism, yet its application to learners of

LCTLs (and more broadly, to languages other than English)

in the literature is limited. In recognizing the unique status of

English and the limits to generalizing findings to other

languages (Ushioda, 2017), the impetus of this study is

strengthened, and also seeks to understand the overlap, if any,

with the literature that does focus on English as a TL.

Among the studies that focus on English as a TL,

Galante's work in Montreal, Canada is noteworthy for its

recency and thorough exploration of a variety of variables in

instruction that incorporate plurilingual practices: teaching

materials and exercises that involved multiple languages,

code-switching, or multiple communication styles (and many other activities, see Galante, 2022, pp. 322-333). Gabryś-Barker and Otwinowska (2012) also focused on multilingual learners of English. They solicited retrospective narratives on additional language learning experiences from L1 Polish, advanced L2 English, L3 French speakers, of which there were two groups: beginner-level or advanced-level L3 French. The two groups exhibited a "huge discrepancy" on learner strategies based on L3 proficiency level: advanced L3 French students engaged in cross-linguistic comparison and found additional language knowledge facilitative, whereas elementary L3 French students did not display metalinguistic awareness and commented on the interfering nature of an additional language (such as false friends). They drew upon the threshold hypothesis in concluding that plurilingual practices (such as cross-linguistic comparison across all three languages) are not activated below a certain level of L3 proficiency.

By focusing on the plurilingual backgrounds of learners, or perhaps activating those backgrounds in learning an additional language, metalinguistic awareness should be involved more than it is during acquisition of the first additional language (Jessner, 2008). In an investigation of grammar learning strategies among multilinguals varying from having two to twenty languages, Kemp (2007) found a positive relationship between languages known, number of grammar strategies used, and frequency of strategy use. Much more research focusing on how metalinguistic awareness functions in multilingual additional language acquisition is called for, as Jung (2013) observes that most research in multilingualism continues to look at each language as distinct, e.g., the impact of the L1 and L2 on the L3. A dynamic systems approach (Herdina & Jessner, 2002), however, shifts the framework to the individual multilingual system, in which languages are not viewed as distinct but integrated.

The study

The study took place in a large public university in a mid-size city in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. The context was an eight-week domestic Summer Language Program, which will be referred to as the SLP. The Turkish program is typically offered as an in-person experience but was moved online in 2022 to accommodate participant preferences. Class time followed an intensive schedule, with four-hour class sessions Monday through Friday. Online classes were held over the Zoom platform, and included the instruction of new content, activities, and student presentation of homework. While the proficiency levels of students varied, the class covered beginner-level Turkish content, and the use of only the target language in the classroom was highly encouraged.

This paper takes a case study approach using semi-structured interviews employing stimulated recall (Gass & Mackey, 2016), and Zoom-recorded classroom observations as the primary tools for data collection. This

study contributes to the growing research on how plurilingual
practices are used in classroom learning, while exploring the
Turkish as a LCTL classroom and centering both instructor
and student perspectives. Moreover, the setting of the study
in a domestic summer program also draws learners who may
be non-traditional students, with non-linear language learning
histories and a matrix of personal and professional
experiences that would be considered atypical for a traditional
undergraduate student. Such an environment is particularly
well-suited to a plurilingual approach, as participants' learning
and teaching processes may be supported with even greater
flexibility and fluidity. The study has two questions: 1) What
are instructor and student attitudes towards plurilingual and
pluricultural practices in learning Turkish? and 2) How can
students utilize their multi-semiotic resources and experiences
in learning Turkish?

Participants
After explaining the IRB-approved research project to the
Turkish class in the SLP in an email, the instructor and two

students voluntarily consented to participate and completed all tasks. Only the instructor was physically present at the host university, and we met in person on a number of occasions. The students were in their homes across three different time zones in the US. The L1 of the participants in this study included English, Turkish, and Bulgarian, and knowledge of additional languages included English, Turkish, Serbian, Arabic, Persian, Macedonian, Japanese, and Mandarin Chinese. On the language history questionnaire, participants indicated only one L1 each, and so the number of additional languages known indicates a significant amount of language learning experience and is a key consideration in this study. See Table 1 for language breakdown by participant.

Table 1. Participants' language backgrounds, L1-L4 listed in order of

acquisition

Participant	Age	Sex	Education	Country of Origin	Country of Residence	L1	L2	L3	L4
Kaia	20	Female	College (Bachelor)	United States	United States	English	Arabic	Turkish	Mandarin Chinese
Burcu	35	Female	Graduate school (Master)	Turkey	Turkey	Turkish	English	Persian	N/A
Elena	40	Female	Graduate school (Doctor)	Bulgaria	United States	Bulgarian	Serbian	Macedonian	English

Motivation for taking part in the summer program for

students included research expectations for future PhD work,

and a desire to do something new during the summer. There was also already familiarity with the SLP, as the instructor had taught at the SLP in previous years, and one participant had studied a different language at the SLP the year before.

Methodology and Analysis
In Week 3 of the program participants completed a language history questionnaire (LHQ) (Li, P. et al, 2019, see Appendix B) to fill out the participant profiles regarding age, languages known, language learning experiences, general educational background, international stays, and self-perceived level of accentedness and proficiency in languages known. Upon completing the LHQ, participants were directed to complete the PPC Scale (Galante, 2022), which contained 24 items that measured participants' attitudes towards plurilingual practices such as translanguaging and language as mediation for cultural distance. The Turkish instructor generously provided me with the Zoom class recordings[1] from Weeks 1 and 7,

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[1] All Zoom class meetings had been recorded for the students' reference, apart from the current study.

specific classroom meetings I had requested for two reasons:

1) The time points represented the beginning and final weeks

of the SLP, and 2) As two out of the three students in the

class consented to participate in the study, classes where only

the two consenting students were present were observed.

These classes will be referred to as Class 1 and Class 2 in the

text.

Each recorded class session was viewed and coded

according to themes that emerged from the data, without

relying on a priori categories. Themes were identified

according to frequency of occurrence, amount of class time

devoted to them, and how they influenced Turkish learning.

Once these themes emerged, an interview worksheet was

created in preparation for stimulated recall with the

participant, including the following components:

a) A transcription of each event, b) The context of the

moments proceeding and following (e.g., "when you were

completing the in-class Google maps activity…", and c)

Relevant related events (e.g., if the focus was on lexical search, examples of previous lexical searches). In Week 4 of the program, and the week following the end of the program ("Week 9"), I set up one-on-one interviews with all three participants over Zoom, where I shared these events with the participant via screen-share of the interview worksheet. When presented with this stimulus, the participant was then invited to explain what they were thinking regarding each moment. This method was chosen over replaying the video in the interest of interview time—each interview was 30 minutes long, and the interview worksheet allowed for the discussion of many more events of interest. The PPC Scale was administered for the second time following the second interview. Participants were compensated 60 USD.

Findings
Case study 1: Elena

> Training in another language is already a skill. Your mindset…you learn how to reset your mind for a different language. (Elena, Interview 1)

Elena is an example of an experienced language learner with a mindset already linguistically and culturally curious by virtue of family background. Born and raised in Bulgaria and identifying as Bulgarian, she also lived in the UK for one year, and moved to the US at 26 years old. She considers English a second language, and her fourth language in order of acquisition. At the time of the study she was 40 years old and preparing to enter a PhD program in the fall, where she would be using Ottoman Turkish as a research language. She began to have exposure at home and in her social networks to Serbian and Macedonian at 20 years old, and completed a Serbian language course at the SLP the year prior. That course was held in person, unlike the Turkish course, and Elena's in-person experience there may have influenced her expectations with the Turkish course. Self-ratings of speaking proficiency would categorize Elena as a balanced plurilingual across Bulgarian, Serbian, Macedonian, and English, with the exception of writing skills, which are self-rated as strongest in Bulgarian and English. As expected of an L1 Bulgarian

speaker who completed tertiary education in English, the context in which Elena feels most comfortable with her languages changes from preferring English in academic and work domains, to a preference for Bulgarian in non-academic and non-professional contexts. With friends, she regularly mixes languages "since we are all bilingual" (LHQ, included in Appendix 1).

One of the most distinctive features of Elena's classroom participation was her practice of lexical guessing. In the first classroom recording, which took place in Week 1 of the program, Burcu begins going over a vocabulary list in the first unit and Elena offers a guess that she already knows some of the vocabulary:

> Burcu: And you can try to find out their meanings in English or in like, say, Bulgarian, however is more comfortable for you okay try to learn these words, we will need these words, it is important.
>
> Elena: I think I know some already ah.

Burcu: Perfect! That is very good Elena.

Elena: *Eski* is it old?

Burcu: *Evet evet.* (Yes yes.)[2]

Elena: Okay *fabrika* (factory)
of course it's the same...then *deniz* we
learned yesterday it's uh it's uh, sea.
Jeton is it the uh coin.

Burcu: *Evet!* (Yes!)

Elena: *Masa* is table. *Oda* is room.

Burcu: *Evet çok güzel.* (Yes very good.)

Elena: Turkish part I know *radyo* is radio, uh
şeker is sugar.

Burcu: *Evet.* (Yes.)

Elena: Uh *tamam.* (Uh okay.)

Burcu: ...is okay.

Elena: Oh my gosh I thought it was *taman*...
'n'

Burcu: *Tamammm,* is okay.

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[2] When a translation in English is not offered in the dialogue itself, the English translation
will follow the relevant words in parentheses.

Already in the first week of the program, Elena discovers considerable lexical overlap between Bulgarian and Turkish, and becomes emboldened to hazard guesses based on her vocabulary knowledge in her L1. Of particular interest is the clarification that *tamam* (okay) is pronounced with a final 'm' in Turkish. Later in the class, Elena returns to the topic and explains that *taman* with final 'n' is used in colloquial Bulgarian.

Elena: So I just asked my mom cause cause, as I said in Bulgaria, we use it a lot. But we say *taman* with 'n' at the end.

Burcu: I see.

Elena: So I just noticed that some words actually went through some transformation and 'm's become 'n' at the end.

Burcu: Perfect yeah it is gonna be helpful for you to learn it easier, I guess.

Elena: And *merhaba* (hello) in Bulgarian, I mean like not in Bulgarian. In Bulgaria, we say *meraba*. We don't pronounce the 'h'.

Burcu: I see *merhaba*, *meraba*, you can say
                meraba in Turkish as well.

Elena: Oh you do.

Burcu: Yeah, it is true, it is also true, but the
                correct pronunciation is *merhaba*, but
                people say *meraba* as well.

Here Elena is not only actively participating in class, initiating guesses at new lexical items, but is also utilizing other resources such as calling family to verify something about colloquial language use in Bulgaria. The instructor notes how colloquial Bulgarian may be an asset in Turkish learning. Elena then applies the new morphological 'rule' she has discovered to *merhaba*, the Turkish word for hello. In the above excerpt the instructor explains, "…people say *meraba* as well," confirming when spoken quickly, Turkish speakers often elide the vowels in the first two syllables, *mer-a-ba*, so that the 'h' is not pronounced. In the student's orienting to shared colloquial items in Bulgarian and Turkish, the instructor is able to focus on colloquial language in the lesson that may not have been in the original lesson plan (see

Eskildsen and Majlesi, 2018, for a discussion on
learnables/teachables as "that which is made interactionally
relevant as objects of incipient understanding, learning,
and/or teaching," p. 5). There are frequent examples of
Elena's self-initiated lexical guessing, informed by her
linguistic knowledge in Bulgarian. At times she also makes
connections with her other languages. In the example below
from Class 2, *buyurun* (here you go/go ahead) has a variety of
pragmatic functions (similar to the Italian *prego*).

> Elena: *Buyurun*...what's the root of the word,
>   and does it mean like go ahead or
>   more
>   like please? They use it in Macedonian
>   and Bulgarian–I heard it for the first
>   time in Bulgarian context.

This curiosity and comfort that Elena demonstrates in
bringing up such questions in class may serve to deepen her
lexical understanding of target items.

Case study II: Kaia

> I have to go to the other languages when English
> doesn't have something…it makes it easier to grasp.
> (Kaia, Interview 1)

At 20 years old and a current undergraduate student, Kaia
was the youngest of the participants. Her relative youth
combined with a reserved personality made her the quietest
in the classroom, slower to contribute both in discussions as
well as interviews. Although she agreed to be interviewed
one-on-one twice, her degree of reservedness might have
been complemented by another form of data collection, such
as a written journal. Kaia identified as Caucasian and
American, born and raised in the US. Kaia grew up in South
Carolina in a monolingual English household, but had
extraordinary access to foreign languages from a young age.
This detail is highlighted as early access to and family
investment in foreign languages for monolingual English
speakers in the US is typically associated with cultural capital
(Kaia's parents' highest educational level attained was high
school); Kaia's pursuit of foreign languages and decision to
major in Asian Studies and minor in Chinese may strike a

contrast with the preferences and profiles of her childhood peers.

The first additional language Kaia started learning was Arabic at age 13 through a middle school STARTALK program. Such programs are administered for K-14 students by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages for languages deemed 'critical' by the National Security Agency, who is the managing and funding body. The format is an intensive summer school offered for free or for very low fees and is application-based often with no beginning proficiency required. The following year Kaia pursued Turkish through another STARTALK program. She then began taking private lessons in Japanese throughout high school, and upon entering college, took classes in Mandarin Chinese. Given the variety of languages in Kaia's background, the interaction of all the languages serves to be a point of interest. Atypical of classroom-instructed language learners yet typical of learners of languages of considerable

orthographic distance (e.g., L2 Chinese for an L1 English speaker), Kaia's self-ratings of language-specific skills have wide variance. For example, functional years of use of both languages are the same for Turkish and Mandarin Chinese (two intensive summer programs are equivalent to two academic years of study), self-rated proficiency in listening and writing was better in Turkish than in Chinese, and accent in Chinese is very good (no foreign accent), while in her Turkish, Kaia perceives a very strong foreign accent. Kaia has not visited a country in which either language is spoken as a majority language.

The variation in specific skills is particularly relevant when Kaia experiences transfer from Chinese into her Turkish pronunciation. When asked about other occasions of transfer, for example, lexical transfer from Arabic to Turkish, Kaia does not recall any examples. In Kaia's case, the 'alinearity' of the plurilingual practices she uses may point back towards the strength of affiliation with the imagined

community she has constructed for L2 Chinese.[3] According to the LHQ, the strength of her affiliation with Chinese sometimes surpasses English, her L1. In response to the question "Which cultures/languages do you identify with more strongly," the strength of connection was stronger for Chinese in all categories besides cities/towns.

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[3] The usage here of imagined community draws upon Norton's (2001) concept that language learners' investment in their learning is guided by the communities they see (imagine) themselves belonging to. Norton's concept builds on Anderson's (1991) formulation of the term as applied to political science.

Table 4. Cultural identity, Kaia

Culture/Language	Way of life	Food	Music	Art	Cities/Towns	Sports teams
English	6	4	4	4	7	1
Mandarin Chinese	7	5	5	4	3	1

Kaia's strong identity with Chinese is in line with Ueno's (2005) analysis of LCTLs learner's motivation, as "students who continue to study the target language seem to develop attitudes towards language learning on a personal level. They have found ways to integrate their language learning into their personal lives and have modified their long-term goals and personal beliefs" (p. 63). It is unsurprising then, that Kaia might speak more about linguistic connections between Chinese and Turkish rather than other language pairings in her repertoire (such as Arabic,

which is closer to Turkish culturally and lexically, but with
which she identifies less strongly).

> Kaia: With a lot of phrases, a lot of them can
>   be switched exactly.
>
> Interviewer: What are some examples?
>
> Kaia: *Doğru mu? Dui ma? Deska?* ("Is it
>   correct?" in Turkish, Chinese,
>   Japanese)
>   So I have to go to the other languages
>   for that–English doesn't have that, it
>   makes it easier to grasp.

Of the L2 Chinese in L2 Turkish interference, she says:

> Kaia: Chinese was easier for me to grasp,
>   tones and sounds. I struggle a lot with
>   pronunciation with Turkish. Like 'ç' I
>   know I'm not saying it right. Chinese
>   is interfering–'chi'...The first day of
>   class I was saying everything with
>   tones, this sounds Chinese, so I had to
>   learn my way around that.

Kaia is referring to the 'chrr' sound in Mandarin Chinese,
written above in its Hanyu Pinyin romanization as 'chi'. As a
learner of Mandarin Chinese and Turkish myself and sharing

Kaia's L1, I have not come across learner accounts in my
personal acquaintances (albeit a small pool) describing how
Chinese tones were easier to acquire than Turkish
pronunciation. The novelty of such a transfer was captured
with positive affect in our conversation. As Kaia registered
my surprise, she smiled and seemed to be amused by the
situation of transfer herself. Absent from her explanation was
any hint of embarrassment or frustration at not being able to
pronounce certain Turkish sounds. Although in our interview
I did not specifically ask her to reflect on her emotional
experience of the Chinese pronunciation transfer into
Turkish, I would like to note that while inhabiting an L2
Chinese user identity, acknowledging an L2 Turkish
'deficiency' did not seem to be emotionally loaded. In
Interview 1, Kaia shared:

> Kaia: Chinese pops up first all the time, I
> was scared that Chinese would pop up
> first and then finish the rest of the
> sentence in Turkish. When I think to
> myself I think in Chinese and then

> insert a random Turkish word that I
> don't know in Chinese. Has this kind
> of mixed sentence occurred in class?
> No, I've been really careful and so it
> hasn't.

Kaia's strict separation of languages was reflected further on
the PPC Scale (see Q9 in Appendix A).

Although Kaia feels that she is the slowest to make
progress in the class, she positively views the plurilingual
practices of both her peers and the instructor. From
Interview 1:

> Kaia: [Burcu] *Hoca* (teacher) definitely
>   involves more languages more than
>   previous
>   languages   [teachers].   [It's]
>   positive…because you also learn your
>   way around the Turkish language by
>   the other cultures.

And in Interview 2,

> Kaia: I feel I was the slowest at internalizing
>   all the information and using it
>   because the other two have similar
>   backgrounds to Turkish.

Kaia recognizes that plurilingualism has benefits that may be conferred to the learning of an additional language, yet she fails to see these benefits in her own matrix of languages. Here, similarly to Gabryś-Barker and Otwinowska's (2012) findings, threshold level may explain why she does not make connections between Arabic and Turkish. Instead, plurilingualism-as-advantage for Kaia seems to be qualified by the *similarity* of languages. Kaia does not make a distinction between grammatical similarity, language family, script/literacy, etc. In contrast, Elena's familiarity with Turkish lexical items does not come from grammatical similarity nor shared language family, but from Elena's fluency in Bulgarian colloquial language which uses many old Turkish words, as well as her metalinguistic awareness and curiosity.

Case study III: Burcu

> I'm just focusing on their native language, the way
> they're asking is like they're not aware of it. Think
> about it in a student's foreign language? Maybe that
> helps, I have never done it. The personality of the
> students, it matters a lot in these situations. (Burcu,
> Interview 2)

Burcu was the instructor in the Turkish class, and generously spoke with me on a number of occasions when I had questions about the details of Turkish SLP classes. Ahead of the summer program commencing, Burcu spent time sharing with me how the Turkish course had run in the past, as she had taught at the SLP prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, and was contracted to also teach in 2021, though the program ended up not running due to insufficient enrollment.

Having been born and raised in Turkey, Burcu identified as Turkish and was both a full-time Turkish instructor at a university in Istanbul, as well as a PhD candidate at a different university in Turkey. Consistent with a foreign language experience in Turkish schools, Burcu began learning English at the age of 12, and went on to study in English for her undergraduate degree. She also began informally learning Persian at 33 years old (at the time of the study Burcu was 35 years old). While Burcu has a low level of Persian exposure in her social networks, estimating about

10% of her friends speak Persian, she has a high affinity in identifying with Persian in cultural areas (music, art, cities), higher than even in her L1, Turkish.

In the Week 1 class recording, there were a number of examples in which Burcu supported students' plurilingual practices, both in explicitly creating opportunities to utilize languages other than the TL and the class lingua franca (LF) (English), as well as supporting students' varied cultural interests. In describing motivations for choosing to learn Turkish as part of her self-introduction, Elena reveals that she will eventually be reading Ottoman texts. Burcu responds, "I'm also interested in Ottoman and I know the language. And I know also Persian" (Class 1). Burcu shared with me that Kaia frequently refers back to Chinese in class, a language that she exhibits the strongest cultural identity with. When asked about Kaia's interest in Chinese, Burcu responded, "When I notice that a student is interested in something, that is valuable, I try to provide more

information, more related content like films, and cultural activities" (Interview 1).

Opportunities to involve languages other than the TL and the class LF were offered by the instructor in certain class activities. One such example was a lexical activity in which participants were instructed to use "their own alphabets" and write one Turkish word that starts with each letter. Traditional versions of this activity might have used the Turkish alphabet, or if the focus was to gamify beginning-level instruction, it could have solicited Turkish vocabulary words against an English alphabet. By opening up the activity to involve other alphabets, Turkish could be situated in a more flexible plurilingual context. Of other lexical activities, Burcu again emphasized in Class 1 that other languages were to be called upon as resources in learning Turkish:

> Burcu: And you can try to find out their
>   meanings in English or in like say
>   Bulgarian,

> however is more comfortable for you
> okay try to learn these words, we will
> need these words, it is important.

With the acknowledgement of other languages and culturally-situated ideas that learners may choose not to translate, Burcu legitimizes translanguaging in the class by employing students' own language in informal, warm-up conversation:

Burcu: *Dunden beri neler yaptın?* (What all have you done since yesterday?)

Kaia: *Um süt içtim.* (Um I drank milk.)

Burcu: *mm hmm.*

Kaia: *Ben uh noodle yedim.* (I uh ate noodles.)

Burcu: *Çok güzel. Noodle, neyli? Tavuklu, etli mi, sebzeli, nasıl noodle? Neyli noodle?*
                (Very good. What kind of noodles? Noodles with chicken, meat, vegetables, how were your noodles? What did they have with it?)

Kaia: *Um...domates?* (Tomatoes?)

Burcu: *Domates...li.* (With tomatoes.)

Kaia: *Domatesli.* (With tomatoes.)

Burcu: *Domatesli noodle. Güzel mi?* (Noodles with tomatoes. Were they good?)

Kaia: *Um güzel.* (Um good.)

Burcu: *Güzel. Afiyet olsun.* (Nice. I hope you enjoyed them.)

Kaia: *Teşekkür ederim.* (Thank you.)

Although the Turkish word *makarna* could be used to describe noodles, or pasta, the instructor chose not to recast the word 'noodle' that Kaia supplied, and instead used 'noodle' in her follow-up questions. When asked about this choice in Interview 2, Burcu explained that she wants to encourage as much talk as possible, and tries not to supply vocabulary words when they are not the immediate focus:

Burcu: If they are in the beginning level, I am literally not correcting anything. I am listening, trying to make them feel relaxed. I'm not trying to correct them at all. But if I am trying to teach vocabulary before a reading section, then I will introduce new vocabulary.

Burcu's stated approach models established L2 reading
practices of orienting students to new vocabulary to increase
reading comprehension. And although not explicitly rooting
her approach in translanguaging, this excerpt demonstrates
effective student expansion of the topic, facilitated by the
instructor's legitimation of student-supplied word choices.
There may also be a subtle recognition that *noodle* is not
adequately represented by *makarna,* and is served best in its
cultural identity by remaining *noodle* regardless of the language
of the words surrounding it

Discussion
Learning a LCTL such as Turkish may draw non-traditional
learners with diverse language learning backgrounds, unique
motivations, and atypical learning styles to the classroom.
This article focuses on two students and their instructor in an
intensive, eight-week, beginner Turkish program offered
during the summer term at a large public university in the US.
While part of the framing of this setting is that it is a
domestic study *away* as compared to a study *abroad,* logistical

demands and participant preferences moved the program completely online for the entirety of instruction. Its relevant themes and analysis may be limited in their applicability to in-person contexts, but they do provide an interesting contribution to online classroom research.

While the participants were not embarking on a project of socialization with the target language and culture in their online Turkish program, the concept of imagined communities was still relevant for understanding how participants aligned themselves with Turkish, particularly within the network of additional languages known. Kaia's LHQ was revealing in that her cultural alignment with Mandarin Chinese was stronger than Turkish, stronger even than English (see Table 4). Here, identification and engagement with imagined communities is useful (Anderson, 1991; Wenger, 1998), as is its application within the framework of investment (Norton, 2000). Such communities are 'imagined' as the members do not actually know or

interact with one another, and represent possible selves and
attainment of resources and desired forms of capital for
language learners. Kaia's investment in the imagined
community of Mandarin Chinese speakers is represented by
her expressed cultural identity (Table 4), as well as how she
regularly approaches Turkish from the standpoint of a
Chinese speaker. At her undergraduate institution Kaia is
minoring in Asian Studies and Chinese, but chose to pursue
Turkish over the summer to do something both "new" and
"familiar" (Interview 1). As Kaia studied Turkish for a
summer while in high school, she noted that "returning" to
Turkish was facilitated also by the ease of reading the Turkish
alphabet, written in Latin letters, a perspective afforded by
her subsequent experience learning Chinese.

While we did not speak at length of Kaia's Turkish
learning experience during the one summer in high school, it
is notable that Kaia was approaching Turkish in the current
study as a plurilingual, observed from her frequent references

to Mandarin Chinese, an additional language. Her appreciation for the Turkish alphabet is another example of her Chinese identity, as Kaia was referencing the lack of an alphabet in Chinese. The Turkish alphabet consists of 29 letters, seven of which are specific to Turkish and do not exist in English.[4] These additional letters are often sources of difficulty for L1 English learners of Turkish, who are more predisposed to complain about the   Turkish   alphabet, rather than note its ease of uptake.

When imagined communities are a focal construct, researchers are typically looking for the role they play with the TL, e.g., imagined communities of English speakers when English is the TL (as in Murphey et al., 2004). In the current study, the imagined community of Mandarin Chinese speakers was more salient to Kaia than an imagined community of Turkish speakers. Such plurilingual relationships among the TL and additional languages should not be unexpected;

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[4] Ç, Ş, Ğ, I, İ, Ö, Ü

moreover, a distinct value of a plurilingual approach can be in
not forcing relationships between the participant and TL but
in observing how the TL shows up in the participant's
repertoire. Burcu noticed how Kaia responded well to
activities that activated her plurilingual identity, notably in a
flashcard assignment where Kaia included nine different
translations of the Turkish word for 'engineer'. In that activity
Kaia sought out languages that she had little knowledge of
but was interested in (e.g., Vietnamese), centering her
plurilingual identity not on traditional measures of
proficiency, but on the strength of association with the
imagined communities she sought membership with. By
activating Kaia's investment in imagined communities of
Chinese and other languages, Kaia's interest in the TL could
also benefit.

The instructor's pluricultural orientation was also
influential in encouraging Elena's linguistic connections to
Bulgarian, and for activating cultural connections with Elena's
historical knowledge of the Ottoman Empire. Burcu was

teaching herself Persian at the time, a resource which extended her familiarity with the Ottoman Empire beyond a Turkish-centric interpretation. For example, in Class 1, Elena noticed that Murat I, an Ottoman ruler, was married to a Bulgarian princess. She observed, "Wow, now I see the influence of the Ottoman rule." Encouraged by historical intersections between Bulgaria and Turkey, Elena continued to ask questions probing cultural context, such as about male names in Turkish: "The names that are specifically male, are they only from the Quran or from Persia or Arabic language and that's why they can only be used for male?" (Class 1). Even in a beginner-level class, and especially in a beginner-level class, students' interest can be cultivated across cultural histories they are familiar with.

Despite differences in study design and the use of monolingual control groups (i.e., two groups consisting of monolingual vs. plurilingual instruction), the current study confirms other studies' findings (Galante, 2022) that link plurilingual practices with increased plurilingual and

pluricultural (PPC) levels. All three participants' PPC levels in

the current study increased from the first to second

administration of the survey, without any explicit focus on the

survey items themselves (the survey was used only as a data

collection tool, and not as a pedagogical resource). This study

takes a broad view of plurilingual practices, as is seen in other

studies (Galante, 2022), where student production of a

language other than the L1 or TL is not necessary. Rather, a

broad view of plurilingual practices allows students to realize

plurilingual identities within their existing and emerging

language identity construction. It also supports instructors in

making space for and recognizing relationships among

languages familiar to the students that do not prioritize

L1-TL or LF-TL connections. Such an open and flexible

disposition   encourages   students   to   disassociate

plurilingualism from proficiency, and to explore the imagined

communities they seek to belong in.

Limitations and future directions

As a case study, this article does not seek to generalize to Turkish learners across US universities. However, at the same time, two students in a study away program that went fully online as a late-stage contingency may not be wholly unrepresentative of Turkish classrooms. According to an online survey conducted by the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (Ergül, 2021), in 2021 Turkish was taught at 28 institutions in the US and Canada.[5] Of these 28 institutions, 13 offered a minor focusing on Turkish, and four institutions offered a certificate. Opportunities to enroll in formal Turkish instruction in the US, particularly in a cohesive university program with sequenced courses, is limited.

The nature of the online format of an intensive summer course is an opportunity for further research. In the current study, the Turkish program shifted online as an

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[5] The actual number is expected to be slightly higher, as 10 institutions did not participate in the survey.

accommodation, but future research projects could develop
instruments specifically designed for online experiences.
While computer-mediated L2 development is not a new field,
intensive programs delivered online are less common. When
intensive programs such as domestic study away or study
abroad programs integrate technological affordances, it is
usually as an accompaniment to the core program delivered in
person. Such affordances can include online journaling (see
Schenker, 2021) usage of commercial apps such as Duolingo
and Busuu (see Sockett, 2022), ongoing remote mentorship
(McGregor, 2020), and social media posts, e-portfolios, and
online blogging (McGregor, 2020; Tanabe, 2019). However,
fully-online summer intensive courses are not common and
present an interesting opportunity for a future research focus.

For plurilingual participants, an expanded version of
the LHQ should be administered. Elena does not even list
Turkish as a language on her LHQ, as the online
questionnaire offers space for a maximum of four languages.
Elena answered using 1) Bulgarian, 2) Serbian, 3)

Macedonian, and 4) English as her languages, thus we do not learn anything for Turkish from questions that could have captured ratings for how Elena might identify with a language. See Figure 1 below:

Figure 1. Screenshot from LHQ, language use in various activities[6]

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[6] Outside of the pane of this screenshot, to the right of 'Arithmetic' there are three more categories: Remembering / Numbers / Praying. The full questionnaire is found in Appendix B.

In the case of plurilingual learners with more thanfour languages, they can be asked to include the TL as one of the four languages, and then provide further information about the other languages known in an open response section. Alternatively, for beginner-level learners, the instrument might be administered at the end of the study, or in a pre-post-design, to better target TL use and TL identity questions.

Finally, an interesting point about motivation came up in the second interview with Burcu, regarding the use of filler words (presented in Elena's section). Burcu shares (Interview 2):

> Burcu: When I learn a language, those filler items are actually the words I want to learn first, you start to feel comfortable as you are producing something in the language. The teacher feels more motivated as well - someone laughs…They don't want to use that cultural aspect of the language. I always reminded them, I usually write them on the board while they were speaking. It was a demotivation for me as well.

Burcu observed that the students' lack of uptake, and at times resistance to cultural expressions such as filler words was demotivating for her. Understanding how student behavior affects instructor motivation can be a promising line of research, particularly in contexts where instructor identity and language status present strong influences on the learning environment.

Conclusion
In summary, this study thus has two key contributions: 1) While English-speaking, US-based university students are well-represented in the study abroad literature, their plurilingual competencies and pursuit of LCTLs are less researched. The participants in this study are US-based university students with diverse L1s (English and Bulgarian), and the study also includes the instructor (L1 Turkish) in all data collection methods. 2) In examining plurilingual competencies, the literature often focuses on English as a TL, and how participants incorporate minoritized or home languages in their learning. This study decenters English as a

TL. A case study methodology was employed, where data collection included a language history questionnaire, online class recording observations, interviews, and a pre- and post-program administration of a relatively new survey to measure plurilingual and pluricultural competence. Case study methodology and qualitative analysis of data was well-suited to the study's goals and procedures and to the number of participants (n=3).

To address the questions: 1) What are instructor and student attitudes towards plurilingual and pluricultural practices in learning Turkish? and 2) How can students utilize their multi-semiotic resources and experiences in learning Turkish?, a priori interests in data analysis centered the plurilingual practices of the Turkish students and instructor; all other themes in the data emerged emically. Results for RQ1 demonstrated that a) student attitudes towards their own plurilingual practice may be influenced by how strongly they identify with each of their languages, and b) the

instructor's own plurilingual disposition was central to encouraging students' plurilingual connections in class. Assignments such as translation tasks gave students the opportunity to make connections among any of the languages they were familiar with and the TL, not presupposing a certain proficiency level or a preference for the L1 in these tasks. Classroom discourse, too, embraced translanguaging, a practice that also preserves cultural embodiment in the lexicon and does not force artificial translations where conceptual mapping would lose integrity.

In regards to RQ2, in the class recordings, all participants were found to make connections between the TL and diverse languages represented in the participant group. Importantly, there was no linear reliance on the class lingua franca, English, in explaining concepts, definitions, and cultural items. Moreover, there were no patterns of relying on an L1, or even relying on a culturally-related language in TL development. One participant had Turkish and Arabic

language background, but made more connections with
another additional language, Mandarin Chinese, comparing
Chinese and Turkish grammar. Another participant frequently
made lexical and cultural connections between her L1,
Bulgarian, and Turkish. These connections were focused on
in classroom discussions to the extent that a visitor to the
class might come away thinking that Bulgarian and Turkish
are closely related language systems. The two languages are
not closely related; instead, colloquial language use in Bulgaria
still bears the influence of the Ottoman Empire, showing up
in lexical items typically taught in beginner-level Turkish as
well as in cultural expressions.

As the study context straddles multiple language
learning environments–study away, university classrooms,
distance learning–pedagogical implications are not limited to
a specific setting. This overlap also evidences the challenge of
categorizing language programs without creating artificial
boundaries that could hinder application. As an exploratory

case study, this study lends empirical support to seeking out and supporting plurilingual practices for US-based university students. Instruments such as a LHQ can probe a student's full language learning history, including languages that can be considered as marginal to their profile or of little to no proficiency, yet which show up in how students approach the TL. Instructors can be encouraged to introduce their own language backgrounds to their students, as their positionality as language learners and engagement with students' full repertoires leads to the development of individualized classroom experiences, as was the case for Kaia and Elena.

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Appendix A

PPC Scale *(created and administered on Qualtrics)*

_____

Please adjust the slider to represent to what extent you

    disagree or agree with the following statements.

    Sliding all the way to the left indicates "Strongly

    disagree," and sliding all the way to the right

    indicates "Strongly agree."

Strongly	_____	**Strongly**
disagree	__50_____	**agree**
	_____	

1. When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, I feel comfortable switching between one language to another language

2. It's difficult for me to accept cultural differences when talking to people from different cultural backgrounds

3. When speaking English, it's easy for me to use an expression or a word in another language for a concept or a word that doesn't exist in English

4. It's easy for me to make adjustments in my communication style if the person I am talking to comes from a different cultural background

5. I don't try to understand a conversation when people are speaking in a language I don't know, even if they speak very slowly

6. When communicating with people from another cultural background, it is important that I am aware of communication styles and make necessary adjustments when talking to them

7. In addition to the languages I listed on the Background Questionnaire, I also know words and expressions in other languages

8. It's difficult for me to explain stereotypical ideas from my cultural background when interacting with people from other cultural backgrounds

9. When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, using two languages at the same time in a conversation is not right. Languages should be used separately

10. I don't intend to learn more about other cultures (besides Turkish culture) in the future

11. When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, it is difficult for me to respond if they switch from one language to another language.

12. I understand there are differences between cultures and that what can be considered 'strange' to one person may be considered 'normal' to another.

13. The more languages I know, the better I can understand the global community.

14. It is easy for me to talk to people from other cultural backgrounds, and discuss similarities and differences in points of view.

15. When talking to someone who knows the same languages as I do, in order to keep a conversation going some people interact in two (or more) languages, but I find it difficult to do so myself.

16. The fact that I already know about at least two cultures (or more) doesn't make it easier for me to learn about a new culture.

17. I understand that in the future, the languages I now speak can become more or less fluent depending on the experiences I have and how I use these languages.

18. I need to have similar values and beliefs as a person from another cultural background so we can understand each other.

19. The fact that I already know at least two languages (or more) doesn't make it easier for me to learn a new language.

20. When communicating with people from other cultural backgrounds, it's difficult for me to explain misunderstandings and misinterpretations.

21. I am able to recognize some languages other people speak if they are similar to my first language (e.g., same language family).

22. In order to have a good understanding of the global community, it is important that I learn about similarities and differences between cultures.

23. If I am working on a task with someone who can speak the same languages I do, we should both speak in one language only and not switch to another language.

24. I know there are differences in communication between cultures so it's important for me to adjust my behaviors accordingly so I am not misinterpreted.

Appendix B

Language history questionnaire

Language history questionnaire (LHQ). Go to https://blclab.org/lhq3/ to use the online version and for reference

(1) Participant ID number			(2) Age	
(3) Gender	☐ Male	☐ Female	☐ Non-binary	☐ Non-relevant
(4) Education	☐ Graduate school (Doctor)	☐ Graduate school (Master)		☐ College (Bachelor)
	☐ High school	☐ Middle school	☐ Elementary school	☐ Other
(5) Parents' Education	Father	☐ Graduate school (Doctor)	☐ Graduate school (Master)	☐ College (Bachelor)
		☐ High school	☐ Middle school	☐ Elementary school	☐ Other
	Mother	☐ Graduate school (Doctor)	☐ Graduate school (Master)	☐ College (Bachelor)
		☐ High school	☐ Middle school	☐ Elementary school	☐ Other
(6) Handedness	☐ Right-handed	☐ Left-handed		☐ Ambidextrous

(7) Indicate your native language(s) and any other languages you have studied or learned, the age at which you started using each language in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing, and the total number of years you have spent using each language.

*Notes For "Years of use", you may have learned a language, stopped using it, and then started using it again. Please give the total number of years

Language	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing	Years of use*

(8) Country of origin	
(9) Country of residence	

(10) If you have lived or traveled in countries other than your country of residence for three months or more, then indicate the name of the country, your length of stay (in Months), the language you used, and the frequency of your use of the language for each country.

* You may have been to the country on multiple occasions, each for a different length of time. Add all the trips together

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Regularly	Often	Usually	Always
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Country	Length of stay (in Months)*	Language	Frequency of use
			☐ 1, ☐ 2, ☐ 3, ☐ 4, ☐ 5, ☐ 6, ☐ 7.
			☐ 1, ☐ 2, ☐ 3, ☐ 4, ☐ 5, ☐ 6, ☐ 7.
			☐ 1, ☐ 2, ☐ 3, ☐ 4, ☐ 5, ☐ 6, ☐ 7.
			☐ 1, ☐ 2, ☐ 3, ☐ 4, ☐ 5, ☐ 6, ☐ 7.

(11) Indicate the way you learned or acquired your non-native language(s). Check one or more boxes that apply.

* e.g., Immigrating to another country where the dominant language is different from your native language so you learn this language through immersion in the language environment.

Non-native Language	Immersion*	Classroom instruction	Self-learning
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐
	☐	☐	☐

(12) Indicate the age at which you started using each of the languages you have studied or learned in the following environments (Including native language).

Language	At home	With friends	At school	At work	Language software	Online games

(13) Indicate the language used by your teachers for instruction at each educational level. If the instructional language switched during any educational level, then also indicate the "Switched to" language. If you had a bilingual education at any educational level, then simply check the box under "Both Languages".

Environment	Language	(Switched to)	Both Language
Elementary school			☐
Middle school			☐
High school			☐
College (Bachelor)			☐
Graduate school (Master)			☐
Graduate school (Doctor)			☐

(14) Rate your language learning skill. In other words, how good do you feel you are at learning new languages, relative to your friends or other people you know?

Very poor	Poor	Limited	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
☐ 1	☐ 2	☐ 3	☐ 4	☐ 5	☐ 6	☐ 7

(15) Rate your current ability in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in each of the languages you have studied or learned (including the native language).

Very poor	Poor	Limited	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Language	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing

(16) Rate the strength of your foreign accent for each of the languages you have studied or learned.

None	Very weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very strong	Extreme
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Language	Accent
	☐ 1, ☐ 2, ☐ 3, ☐ 4, ☐ 5, ☐ 6, ☐ 7.
	☐ 1, ☐ 2, ☐ 3, ☐ 4, ☐ 5, ☐ 6, ☐ 7.
	☐ 1, ☐ 2, ☐ 3, ☐ 4, ☐ 5, ☐ 6, ☐ 7.
	☐ 1, ☐ 2, ☐ 3, ☐ 4, ☐ 5, ☐ 6, ☐ 7.

(17) If you have taken any standardized language proficiency tests (e.g., TOEFL, IELTS, TOEIC, etc.), then indicate the name of the test, the language assessed, and the score you received for each. If you do not remember the exact score, then indicate an "Approximate score" instead.

Test	Year taken	Language	Score	Approximate score

(18) Estimate how many hours per day you spend engaged in the following activities in each of the languages you have studied or learned (including the native language).

Language	Watching television	Listening to radio	Reading for fun	Reading for school/work	Using social media and Internet	Writing for school/work

(19) Estimate how many hours per day you spend speaking with the following groups of people in each of the languages you have studied or learned (including the native language).

Note *include significant others in this category if you did not include them as family members (e.g., married partners)
**include anyone in the work environment in this category (e.g. if you are a teacher, include students as co-workers).

Language	Family members	Friends*	Classmates	Others (co-workers**, roommates, etc.)

(20) If you use mixed language in daily life, please indicate the languages that you mix and estimate the frequency of mixing in normal conversation with the following groups of people.

Note *include significant others in this category if you did not include them as family members (e.g., married partners)
**include anyone in the work environment in this category (e.g. if you are a teacher, include students as co-workers).

None	Very weak	Weak	Moderate	Strong	Very strong	Extreme
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

	Language 1	Language 2	Frequency of mixing
Family members			
Friends			
Classmates			
Others (co-workers, roommates, etc.)			

(21) In which language do you communicate best or feel most comfortable in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in each of the following environments? You may be selecting the same language for all or some of the fields below.

	Listening	Speaking	Reading	Writing
At Home				
At school				
At work				
With friends				

(22) How often do you use each of the languages you have studied or learned for the following activities? (including the native language)

Note*This includes shouting, cursing, showing affection, etc.
**This includes counting, calculating tips, etc.
***This includes telephone numbers, ID numbers, etc.

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Regularly	Often	Usually	Always	
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Language	Thinking	Talking to yourself	Expressing emotion*	Dreaming	Arithmetic**	Remembering numbers***	Praying	

(23) What percentage of your friends speaks each of the languages you have studied or learned? (including the native language)

Language	Percentage
	%
	%
	%
	%

(24) Which cultures/languages do you identify with more strongly? Rate the strength of your connection in the following categories for each culture/language.

	Very poor	Poor	Limited	Average	Good	Very good	Excellent
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Culture/Language	Way of life	Food	Music	Art	Cities/Towns	Sports teams	

(25) Use the comment box below to indicate any additional answers to any of the questions above that you feel better describe your language background or usage.

Search documents and file names for text

(26) Use the comment box below to provide any other information about your language background or usage.

(27) Do you also speak/use any dialects of the languages you know? Please indicate the name(s) of the dialect and the degree you use them.