Repertoires, characters and scenes: Sociolinguistic difference in Turkish−German comedy

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Abstract

This paper examines representations of sociolinguistic difference in a German 'ethnic comedy' as a means to contribute to a framework for the sociolinguistic study of film. Three levels of analysis of sociolinguistic difference in film are distinguished: repertoire analysis reconstructs the entirety of codes used in a film and their assignment to characters; character analysis looks at how different ways of speaking contribute to characterisation; scene analysis examines how choices of and encounters between different codes within a scene may draw on language-ideological assumptions to contribute to the dramatic development of film narrative, and how relationships or changes in footing among characters are indexed by stylistic variation. This framework is applied to the analysis of 'Süperseks', a comedy set in the urban milieu of Hamburg's Turkish community. The findings suggest that the characters' linguistic repertoires differ by their narrative importance, gender and generation. In scenes with bilingual dialogue, code choice and code-switching are found to contextualise conflictual relations among major characters. Süperseks relies heavily on stereotypical assumptions about language and ethnicity, class, gender and generation, by which stereotypical relations between sociolinguistic difference and narrative evaluation or importance are sustained.

Keywords: multilingualism; repertoire; characterisation; cinematic indexicality; Turkish−German cinema.

1. Introduction

This paper outlines a framework for the analysis of sociolinguistic difference in film and illustrates its use with the example of a Turkish−German film. In the context of cinematic discourse, the notion of *sociolinguistic difference* refers to any difference in cinematically staged ways of

speaking, within as well as across languages, that can be perceived as indexing social traits of and relations among characters. A prototypical example would be a film with some characters speaking a regional dialect and others the standard variety, with that difference being meaningful in terms of characterisation and/or setting. This paper focuses on sociolinguistic difference as a resource for character styling, i.e. the more or less strategic design of character speech by the script author. It argues that sociolinguistic difference in film is not a straightforward transfer of social meanings of ordinary language use but an outcome of their recontextualisation within the constraints of cinematic discourse. Therefore, understanding sociolinguistic difference in film cannot be restricted to a mere identification of language varieties and linguistic variables that is detached from the film's narrative. On the contrary, it requires engaging with the social action represented in a film.

The organisation of the paper is as follows: in the next section I introduce the notion of cinematic indexicality and distinguish various aspects of indexical meaning that sociolinguistic difference can articulate in film discourse. Three levels of sociolinguistic film analysis (repertoire, character and scene analysis) are then introduced, followed by a brief discussion of Turkish−German cinema. Against this backdrop, the case study of one Turkish−German comedy, *Süperseks*, demonstrates the analytic framework proposed in this paper and offers an insight into the representation of language and society in this film.

2. Sociolinguistic difference and cinematic indexicalities

I use the notion of 'cinematic indexicalities' as a cover term for the various layers of indexical meaning that sociolinguistic difference can articulate in film. For me, this concept is part of a broader attempt to transcend an approach that examines language in film (or other fictional discourse) primarily in relation to an assumed 'authentic' usage (cf. Androutsopoulos 2010a). I argue against an approach that would reduce the study of sociolinguistic difference to a 'fidelity check' against an 'original', which is itself discursively constructed as 'authentic'. My view builds on critical scrutiny of the notion of authenticity in sociolinguistics, which problematises the epistemological and methodological conditions as well as implications of how authentic dialect speakers have been theorised (see Bucholtz 2003 and other papers in the same special issue of the *Journal of Sociolinguistics*). The concept of cinematic indexicalities implies that the meanings of sociolinguistic difference in film rely on the indexical orders (Blommaert 2007) of everyday life, but are recontextualised in cinematic narrative. They are shaped by the 'double articulation' of cinematic discourse and open to different interpretations, or 'read-

ings', by audiences (see also Bednarek and the Introduction to this issue). That said, comparing the fictional representation of a particular dialect to its independently attested usage in a speech community can yield fruitful insights (Mesthrie 2005). For example, the use of undocumented vernacular features (or combinations thereof) can point to stylisation in character speech (see Higgins & Furukawa, and Tsiplakou & Iordanidou, this issue); different fictional representations of the same dialect can index varying degrees of dialect competence on the part of the authors (Mesthrie 2005); and comparing an artist's dialect usage in performance to their dialect usage in other genres can be useful in studying stylistic variation. The point, therefore, is not to avoid any comparison of fictional to non-fictional linguistic data, but to integrate such comparison into an inclusive approach to sociolinguistic difference in film and fictional discourse generally.

I suggest that such an approach ought to include a focus on relations between sociolinguistic difference, language ideologies and characterisation, and an examination of how different aspects of cinematic discourse may favour or inhibit particular uses of sociolinguistic difference in film. Though predominantly applied to non-fiction discourse, a language ideology approach can be used to study the explicit and implicit assumptions that underlie the linguistic styling of fictional characters in popular culture texts (cf. Ensslin 2010; Milani & Johnson 2010). Cinematic language indexes language-ideological assumptions about how certain social groups or types, which are represented in film by particular characters, use language. Linguistic character styling relies on popular perceptions of language and society: how producers and scriptwriters think, for the sake of imagined audiences, that representatives of social types are expected to speak.

Fictional characters and character relations are often structured in binaries, which entail contrasting and conflicting actions and qualities (Georgakopoulou 2000; Berghahn 2009). This creates a base for iconisation processes (Irvine & Gal 2000), in which sociolinguistic difference epitomises contrasting qualities and relations. For example, good and bad characters can be differentiated by, among other things, their language choices, which in turn evoke collective perceptions of 'good' and 'bad' types of language. Sociolinguistic difference can also be deployed to create a setting for narrative action. For instance, dialect use in the speech of minor characters or a minority language in the linguistic landscape are resources for providing local flavour and contributing to the creation of a sociocultural context that serves as a backdrop to the main narrative.

This line of analysis is complicated by two additional factors: the range of readings of a film and the relation between sociolinguistic dif-

ference and imagined audience. As generally accepted in cultural and media studies, any cultural production is open to a multiplicity of readings by diverse audiences (see, e.g., Hall 1997a). With regard to sociolinguistic difference, this means that audiences may 'hear' a range of social meanings in characters' speech depending on their background knowledge, the cinematic literacy they bring to bear on reception, not least the situated conditions of reception and interpretation. For example, audiences may focus on actors or genres rather than characters, comparing an actor's capability to voice accents and dialects across films, or comparing the use of sociolinguistic difference within or across genres.[1] For instance, Brad Pitt's Southern accent as Lt. Aldo Raine in *Inglourious Basterds* (dir. Quentin Tarantino, 2009) might be compared to Pitt's movie accents in other roles. Viewers may of course recognise the Southern accent but 'read' its indexical value across fictional narratives, as it were, rather than within one narrative. In other cases sociolinguistic difference in fiction may not be noticed at all, for example when films are screened to audiences with different sociolinguistic backgrounds, when knowledge of the original language is limited or unavailable, and of course when films are dubbed, thereby distorting the indexical order of the original (see Queen 2004 and Petrucci, this issue).

A further layer of cinematic indexicality concerns the relation of sociolinguistic difference in a film to the audience and market niche targeted by the producers of that film. We can think of this along the lines of audience design theory (e.g. Bell 2001), whereby the default language style of a news output indexes an imagined target audience on the assumption that this audience will find this particular style acceptable and attractive within certain genre constraints. In film, whether its producers imagine their target audience as a mono- or bilingual, majority or minority one, will have an impact on how they deal with multilingual resources and which languages they mobilise to style character contrasts. Bleichenbacher (2008) suggests that in Hollywood movies, the degree of linguistic diversity is designed in such a way as to anticipate comprehension by a monolingual mass audience. Strategies of evocation and comprehension such as subtitling or repetitions of narratively relevant content in the majority language can be understood in this light. By contrast, an experimental film targeting an urban multilingual milieu may break with such strategies, exposing its imagined audience to multilingual dialogue and also working with alternative representations of sociolinguistic difference.

3. A three-level framework for sociolinguistic film analysis

Against this theoretical background, the remainder of this paper proposes and demonstrates a descriptive framework for the analysis of so-

ciolinguistic difference in film. Its three levels, i.e. repertoire, character and scene analysis, draw on and integrate elements from previous sociolinguistic work on fictional representation (particularly Lippi-Green 1997 and Bleichenbacher 2008). Their presentation in this section proceeds from the sociolinguistic repertoire of an entire film (or series) to the micro context of a single scene.

Repertoire analysis draws on the notion of repertoire in sociolinguistics (Pütz 2004). Linguistic repertoires can be studied at individual and community level. In analogy, we can think of the linguistic repertoire of a character as the sum of their different ways of speaking in the film, and of the repertoire of an entire film as the sum of all codes used in that film. In line with the term's usage in code-switching studies, 'code' is used here as a bracket term for all ways of speaking which can form pragmatically meaningful contrasts in film narrative; it thus includes languages, dialects or social styles of speech. Both character and film repertoires come about through the allocation of codes to characters, which is determined in the film script and embodied (voiced) by a film's personnel.

Repertoire analysis in film is more than a distributional exercise. It entails an understanding of the film narrative (the plot), including the socio-demographic and narrative traits of its characters. A useful descriptive grid for the reconstruction of character repertoires is developed by Bleichenbacher (2008). It distinguishes four categories: linguistic repertoires, socio-demographics (occupation, nationality/ethnicity, and sex), narrative importance (protagonist, secondary or minor character) and narrative evaluation (positive, negative, mixed, neutral). These categories are operationalised by Bleichenbacher and applied to the analysis of 16 movies. In addition, analysis can determine each character's main or 'ordinary' code against which other, less often selected codes gain their pragmatic significance. On this basis, a film's sociolinguistic repertoire, including the allocation of codes to (types of) characters with different narrative importance and socio-demographic traits, can be reconstructed. The case study below shows how the Turkish−German protagonist is allocated a different repertoire, and a different main code, than other characters from the same ethnic group, in a pattern not different from that of *Alladin* and other Disney films studied by Lippi-Green (1997).

Repertoire analysis identifies characters that are assigned two or more ways of speaking. On that basis, character-level analysis can focus on what particular characters do with 'their' codes, and what these codes 'do' to them, i.e. how linguistic choices help to construct the characters who deploy them. A first pattern of character styling is the allocation of two or more codes to a character, resulting in different code-choices

across scenes or code-switching within a scene. A second pattern of character styling works with stylistic variation in the variationist sense of the term, i.e. the variable realisation of particular sociolinguistic variables within or across scenes. Researchers such as Lippi-Green and Bleichenbacher focus on code allocation to particular (types of) characters, while Queen (2004) offers evidence for stylistic variation within and across characters from the same (fictional) community. In this paper I focus on character repertoires and the contrasts between codes allocated to particular characters. In the film analysed below, the narratively important contrasts are between codes rather than between frequencies of individual variables. In methodological terms, if we assume that fictional representation entails reduction and/or suppression of sociolinguistic variability (cf. Mesthrie 2005), we may expect that contrasts between clearly distinct ways of speaking are more useful to the dramatic economy of film than the subtle patterns of stylistic variation usually studied in quantitative sociolinguistics.

'Reading' sociolinguistic difference in character speech presupposes sociolinguistic knowledge (Culpeper 2001; Richardson 2010), which target audiences are expected to bring along and draw on in order to answer interpretive questions such as: where is this type of language socially situated? What is its status in 'real' life, and how does it fit to its use in this particular narrative? Character-level analysis can therefore offer insights into socially typified ways of speaking, filtered through genre conventions. Analysis at character level may further examine what motivates a particular character's stylistic choices in the fictional context, how these choices unfold through the narrative, to what extent do they represent recipient design, and so on. Character analysis can also attend to stylisation within styling, i.e. instances where a character momentarily adopts a voice that is obviously not 'their own' (Coupland 2001). In stylisation, speakers evoke images of 'typical' members of social groups, thereby relying on the cultural knowledge they assume they share with their audiences. Recontextualised within film narrative, stylisation may occur at critical moments of the narrative and serve particular dramatic purposes. In all cases, a sociolinguistic film analysis is likely to focus on major roles (i.e. protagonists and secondary characters), because their speech is styled in more detail and contributes to a larger or smaller extent to their characterisation. However, all characters do language-ideological work, even minor ones whose linguistic choices primarily contribute to local colour rather than characterisation.

The third level of analysis is that of individual scenes. Film consists of and is analysable in scenes, i.e. units of action defined by a particular setting and participant configuration. From a sociolinguistic perspective, the task here is to identify the scenes and dialogues that foreground

sociolinguistic difference in terms of salient code contrasts or metalinguistic discourse. The language-ideological assumptions on which character styling is predicated are often exposed when characters 'engage in antagonistic, conflictual interactions' (Georgakopoulou 2000: 125). In commercial film, scenes of dissent and conflict are common sites for the dramatic use of metalanguage and/or code-switching. Bleichenbacher's (2008) study includes several examples for multilingual encounters in intercultural and transnational settings, from historical drama like *Elisabeth* to comedy like *Just Married*, which draw on metalanguage in dialogue in order to underscore alliance or conflict.

   In dramatically loaded scenes, metalanguage can be used to accentuate and epitomise character differences, in ways that can be described as iconisation (Irvine & Gal 2000; Ensslin 2010; Androutsopoulos 2010b). An example from *Kebab Connection*, a 2004 Turkish−German comedy, seems useful at this point. In one scene, the young protagonist and his Turkish father are in conflict over the son's relation to a German woman. As in other Turkish−German films, the father speaks 'Interlanguage German' (explained below) and Turkish, the son native German. In this scene, the father holds against his son that because of his interethnic marriage, his children 'will not be able to speak your language' and thus will not call him, i.e. his son, *Baba*. When his son addresses him in the next turn as *Vater*, Father immediately switches into Turkish. We see here not only how film dialogue appropriates a common discourse function of conversational code-switching, i.e. indexing dissent, but also how the dramatic deployment of linguistic difference can become iconic to some dimension of narrative difference among characters. Here, the difference between German *Vater* and Turkish *Baba* (both for 'father') becomes iconic of the interlocutors' differing views on interethnic marriage in a migration context.

4. Turkish−German cinema: Ethnic stereotypes and erasure of language

The film analysed in the case study below is a comedy situated in the Turkish milieu of Hamburg. Its broader context of cultural production, i.e. Turkish−German cinema, has met with considerable interest in German film studies and is considered an important site of minority cinema in continental Europe (Berghahn 2009; Burns 2006; Göktürk 2002). Turkish immigrants are the largest immigration group in Germany, making around one quarter of the country's foreign citizens with an additional number of naturalised citizens of Turkish background (Statistisches Bundesamt 2006).

   Berghahn discusses the development of Turkish−German cinema towards 'destabilization and critical investigation of ethnic stereotypes

of "the Turk", or rather, the Turkish−German migrant' (Berghahn 2009:
55). In the 1980s, representations of Turkish immigrants centred on 'the
stereotype of the oppressive Turkish patriarch' (ibid.: 55). In the 1990s,
this was complemented and partially replaced by stereotypes of criminal-
ised youths of Turkish background, which prevail until today. For a
considerable time, then, the 'stereotype Turk' in German film has been
'the Turk who is either a victim or a social problem' (ibid.: 55). But
since the 1990s, a younger generation of Turkish and Turkish−German
directors have emerged, 'motivated by a common desire to break with
the dominant image … of the Turk as victim' (Burns 2006: 133). Their
films introduce new character types such as 'the nurturing Turkish fa-
ther' or the Turkish gay performer; represent both Turkish and German
social norms as problematic; or avoid representations of ethnic alterity
altogether and underplay interethnic relations in contemporary urban
Germany (Burns 2006: 141).

Film studies scholars focus on these films both as migrant cultural
productions and as representations of ethnic stereotypes. Certain film-
analytic approaches share remarkable similarities to a critical discourse
studies approach, where stereotyping is seen to work through the con-
struction of binary oppositions between 'us' and 'them' (see, e.g., van
Dijk 1998). Berghahn points out that such binarisms underpinned earlier
depictions of Turkish−German culture on German screens in the 1970s
and 1980s. However, film-analytic discussions of Turkish−German cin-
ema generally blend out its sociolinguistic aspects in character styling.
Representations of Turkish-background delinquent youth are regularly
cast in distinct sociolinguistic styles, which draw on ideologies of linguis-
tic difference and deficit that circulate in German society (Androutso-
poulos 2007, 2010b). An example is the film *Kanak Attack* (2000), whose
young protagonist is cast as using German with Turkish chunks and
code-switching into Turkish. This film represents bilingual talk as part
of everyday life in the migrant community, and uses language choice to
index generational differences and emotional outbursts − thus younger
protagonists speak non-standard German whereas the older generation
sticks to Turkish.

Some of these representations exploit the difference between character
speech and what is implied as 'normal' German as a resource to iconise
the speaker's distance from 'normal' society. In *Wut* (2005), a film dis-
cussed in detail by Berghahn (2009: 64−67), the opposed life-worlds of
the two teenage protagonists are iconised through their speech styles.
Working-class, Turkish-background kid, Can, is given a style of German
that is clearly marked as non-native and non-standard, whereas middle-
class German kid, Felix, speaks inconspicuous standard German. In a
confrontation scene between Can and Felix's father, the gap between the

two is metalinguistically iconised over their lexical choice for the verb 'to talk', with the father choosing a neutral lexical variant, *reden*, as opposed to Can's colloquial/youth language variant, *labern*. The fact that this film casts a critical light on middle-class German social norms does not prevent it from reproducing sociolinguistic stereotypes in the representation of migrant-background youth.

It is important to point out that other strategies of dealing with multilingualism do occur in Turkish−German cinema. For example, films by the acclaimed Turkish−German director Fatih Akin engage with multilingual diversity through cinematic techniques such as subtitling. The point is, however, that films from Turkish−German cinema make narratively motivated choices that contribute to characterisation and character contrasts and represent social heteroglossia in ways that reproduce sociolinguistic stereotypes.

5. An example: *Süperseks*

5.1 The film

Süperseks was produced in Hamburg by a local production company and released in 2004 in mainstream distribution. A self-labelled 'multicultural hood comedy', *Süperseks* was part of a trend in urban multiethnic film narratives, which became popular not least due to the success of Hamburg-based director Fatih Akin.[2] *Süperseks* is directed by Torsten Wecker, a German director specialising in television series and commercials, and features Denis Moschitto, a young actor of Italian−Turkish background who has also starred in other Hamburg-based multi-ethnic films. A commercial comedy with an 'easy' story and a happy end, *Süperseks* is neither representative of Turkish−German cinema, which focuses on social-realist genres (Göktürk 2002: 248), nor the type of film usually discussed in Turkish−German cinema studies. However, its approach to 'multiculturalism' ties in well with Göktürk's (2004) brief discussion of a genre and audience shift in Turkish−German cinema during the 2000s, with new films targeting audiences who are familiar with urban multilingual situations, and celebrating multiculturalism in witty, satirical ways. Its main setting is Hamburg's *Schanze* district, a traditional immigrant and recently trendy neighbourhood, and therefore a place where the Turkish community is factually situated and which also appeals to a young, multicultural audience.[3]

A user comment on *Internet Movie Data Base* offers the following synopsis:

A young Turkish guy, born and raised in Hamburg, needs 50000 Euro to save his mother's house in Turkey. So he founds the first Turkish

telephone sex hotline in Germany without letting his family know. This leads to ludicrous scenes. At the same time he wants to win the heart of a beautiful dance teacher, who, without knowing the real boss, starts working at the sex hotline.

The 'young Turkish guy', Elviz, and the 'beautiful dance teacher', Anna, are the film's protagonists, and their romance makes up one main thread of the narrative. The other is the rise and fall of the Turkish sex hotline, which is Deniz's business idea in order to raise the money he owes to his evil uncle, who threatens to dispossess Elviz's mother of her house in Turkey. Narrative sidelines include the relation between Elviz and his older brother, Tarik; the latter's complicated relationship with his wife; and the doings of Hamburg's Turkish community. The film is remarkable for the ample space it allocates to the Turkish community in terms of both personnel and diversity. As in other recent Turkish−German films (cf. Burns 2006), German characters feature only in passing. Elviz's best friend, Olaf, is the only ethnically German character of narrative importance. Turkish characters are widely different from each other in terms of gender, generation and class. In the DVD bonus material, film director and actors claim that *Süperseks* features 'authentic' stories and roles. One actor, Hilmi Sözer, demonstrates how he styles his character by shifting in and out of stylised immigrant German.

Based on the framework outlined above, the analysis is guided by three questions: How does sociolinguistic difference contribute to the representation of the urban Turkish milieu? What language ideologies are indexed by characters' stylistic choices? And how are the film's character contrasts iconised by code choices?

5.2 The film's sociolinguistic repertoire

The film's repertoire includes four codes which are unevenly distributed to characters: 'native' German; 'near-native' German; 'interlanguage' German; and Turkish. In line with the theoretical background proposed earlier, these labels do not claim 'any direct correspondence to empirically attested language varieties. Rather, they identify four codes whose distinct indexical orders (cf. Blommaert 2007) are recontextualised in the filmic narrative. The allocation of these codes to characters is displayed in table 1 below. First, a brief description is given.

− *'Native German'* (abbreviated NG) stands for character speech that shares the phonology and grammar of colloquial Standard German, but differs in lexicon and discourse markers depending on character. For example, the German spoken by Elviz and Olaf (see excerpt [1]

below) features slang lexis and discourse markers. The speech of 'Porno Schneyder', a minor character with a single appearance, is colloquial Northern German peppered with business jargon. In the speech of the hotline girls, native German is interspersed with switches into Turkish. Different as they may be, these speech styles index native fluency in German across ethnic boundaries.

− *'Near-native German'* (NNG) refers to a style of colloquial German that is native-like in grammar and lexicon, fluently delivered, but features a slight non-native accent. Only two middle-aged characters, Anna's father and Nilüfer, the hotline trainer, speak NNG. The respective actors are both L1 speakers of Turkish.

− *'Interlanguage German'* (IG) is non-native and imperfectly acquired German. It is characterised by a lack of fluent and idiomatic delivery as well as by phonological and grammatical features that are widely recognised as 'non-native' in Germany, including vowel epenthesis (schwa insertion into consonant clusters), reduced vowel length, omission of articles and/or prepositions, and errors in word order and grammatical gender. In character speech, IG co-occurs with Turkish discourse markers and/or code-switches into Turkish.

− *'Turkish'* (T) occurs both in the form of discourse markers inserted into German and as a base language of interaction, where it is always subtitled. Around ten scenes with short Turkish dialogues are spread across the film, including stereotypical settings (in the mosque, at the barber's, at a game of backgammon) and a few dramatically relevant dialogues (as when the evil uncle requests by phone that the house of Elviz's mother be demolished).

None of these codes is entirely homogeneous in its representation across characters and scenes. NG and IG show individual differences by character, but this follows from the varying amount of dialogue allocated to characters and does not necessarily reflect intentional character styling. However, these differences do not seem to carry narrative importance, and the four codes remain distinct enough throughout the narrative to enable indexical contrasts.

'Interlanguage German' is probably the most interesting aspect of the film's repertoire, both in its orientation to widely circulating stereotypes of immigrant speech and in its indexical polysemy in the film. Clearly modelled after stereotypes of *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* (cf. Barbour & Stevenson 1990), and reminiscent of what might be called 'stylized immigrant German', IG works both as a naturalistic code and evocation technique. It is naturalistic at a descriptive level, as its features are attested for interlanguage varieties of German, and at a language-ideological level, in that it responds to expectations of how immigrant characters may be

Table 1. *Sociolinguistic repertoire of 'Süperseks'.*

Character	G	Age	Occupation	Narrative Importance	Narrative Evaluation	Assigned codes
Elviz	M	young	Entre-preneur	prot	pos	NG / IG / (T)
Anna	F	young	Dance teacher	prot	pos	NG / T
Olaf	M	young	IT expert	sec	pos	NG
Elviz' uncle	M	old	Crook	sec	neg	IG / T
Elviz' brother	M	middle	Bakery	sec	mxd	IG / T
Anna's father	M	middle	Doctor	sec	mxd	NNG / T
Nilüfer	F	middle	Hotline trainer	sec	pos	NNG / T
Turkish women	F	young	Hotline workers	min	pos	NG / T
Turkish men	M	middle	Various manual	min	mxd	IG / T

represented in popular fiction. It is a resource for evocation (in the sense of Bleichenbacher 2008) when it occurs in scenes where Turkish would have been expected. For example, a couple of conversations among Turkish minor characters start in Turkish and then switch into IG for no apparent reason other than for the audience to get the point without resorting to subtitling. In some of these scenes IG is legitimised by the fact that Elviz is portrayed as a non-speaker of Turkish, with others converging to him. This creates the conditions for styling differences within the Turkish community by means of different codes, i.e. NG as opposed to IG.

Table 1 displays the allocation of these codes to seven individual and two groups of minor characters.[4] Following Bleichenbacher (2008), each character is coded for gender, age group (young, middle and old), occupation, narrative importance (protagonist, secondary, minor) and narrative evaluation (positive/good, negative/bad, and mixed).

The overview suggests that the film's sociolinguistic repertoire is structured by configurations of language, narrative characteristics and sociodemographic features. A first observation is that both protagonists are given NG, in a pattern that is reminiscent of Hollywood conventions (Lippi-Green 1997; Bleichenbacher 2008 and this issue). Elviz has the largest repertoire, even though the bulk of his talk is in NG. He is portrayed as a passive bilingual with regard to Turkish, and the few instances of his active use of Turkish are limited to discourse chunks. At the same time, he is cast as capable styliser (see excerpts [4] and [5]).

Anna is represented as active bilingual. She is fluent in Turkish, selecting it towards her father (see excerpt 3) as well as on the hotline job. Her Turkish is part of a homology of lifestyle choices, including oriental dance, which she teaches and is passionate about.

Secondary characters are differentiated by narrative evaluation, class and gender. Olaf is the only monolingual. Cengiz (Elviz's uncle) and Tarik (Elviz's older brother) are given the same repertoire and are quite similar in their linguistic performances, including an amount of accommodating code-switching. Anna's father, a successful doctor, stands apart from other middle-aged Turkish characters both in his mastery of German at near-native level and his explicit preference for German (excerpt [3]). His styling draws on and evokes the ideological link between majority language competence and successful integration, and his few lapses into Turkish (see excerpt [5]) are no less predicated on the link between first language and the spontaneous expression of emotions. These excerpts are two out of only four appearances of Anna's father in the film, yet they manage to portray him in a way that alludes to language-ideological expectations, distinguishes him from other immigrant Turkish men and sharpens his contrast to his main relative in the plot, his daughter. The last secondary role is Nilüfer, a housewife who is hired as hotline trainer. She uses her fluent German to train the hotline personnel and is later shown to perform bilingualism at the hotline, casting herself with self-confidence as both a Turkish and a German woman. Her language skills are characteristic for the communicative competence that all female members of the Turkish community are portrayed as sharing.

Female and male minor characters represent the wider Turkish milieu and are part in the film's heteroglossic 'tapestry', a term I borrow from Georgakopoulou (2000). Their dialogue, spread across several scenes, contributes to the film's multilingual character and at the same time indexes gender and generation differences. We see several recognisable Turkish men in a couple of appearances each. They all have stereotypical working-class migrant jobs − barber, imam, baker, grocer, corner shop owner − and mainly use Turkish among themselves and interlanguage German with the protagonist and in a few turns among themselves. These characters remain undifferentiated (or 'flat' in literary theory terminology: see Culpeper 2001), and their fairly homogenous linguistic performance constructs a base sociolinguistic style for the male Turkish community. Interestingly, their appearances are mostly set in the linguistic landscape of Hamburg's multi-ethnic district. Female Turkish minor characters are more differentiated in their occupational roles and sharply different from male characters in their higher level of German competence. The young Turkish women working at the hotline are fleetingly

shown as bilingual talkers who fluently switch between and mix native German and Turkish. Other female minor roles (not charted in table 1) include Elviz's niece and Olaf's Turkish girlfriend who have the same native-like style of German as the protagonists (but much shorter appearances); Tarik's wife, who is portrayed as NG/T bilingual, thereby contrasting her husband's IG/T repertoire; and their mother who visits from Turkey and is cast as IG speaker similar to the male community members.

We may also ask to what extent these sociolinguistic differences are part of the film's diegetic frame, i.e. the fictional reality that is narrated on-screen (Hayward 2003: 84−86). Metalanguage and code-switching are devices that anchor sociolinguistic diversity in the fictional narrative. The film's few moments of metalinguistic discourse and code-choice negotiation (excerpts [3−5] below) turn social aspects of language into a part of the plot, and when secondary and minor characters accommodate Elviz by switching into German, the audience can infer that these distinct language choices are part of the community's multilingual experience. On the other hand, the subtitles for Turkish are an obvious non-diegetic device, an assistance offered to an audience imagined as non-competent in Turkish.

5.3 Character and code contrasts in selected scenes

Based on a selection of excerpts (table 2), I now consider how language choices shape character contrasts in the film's scripted interactions. All excerpts occur in the first half of the film (which is 92 minutes long), in which the main character contrasts are established. For each excerpt, I discuss how codes are linguistically constituted and what kind of character relation they contextualise. For reasons of space, all excerpts are translated into English. In excerpts (2−6), a label for code choice precedes each turn:

Table 2. *Overview of selected scenes.*

Nr.	Min.	Character and codes (in brackets)
1	1.23− 2.29	Elviz, Olaf, Djana (Elviz's niece), Anna (all NG)
2	3.41− 4.50	Elviz (NG) and evil uncle (IG)
3	9.10−10.06	Anna (T, NG) and her father (NNG)
4	14.25−15.21	Anna (G) and Elviz (IG)
5	30.44−32.21	Anna (NG, T), Anna's father (NNG) and Elviz (T, IG, NG)
6	36.30−37.40	Elviz (NG), Nilüfer (NNG) and her husband (IG)

5.3.1 Opening scene: Protagonists' default speech styles

In the opening scene, Elviz and Olaf are shown on the rooftop of a landmark building in Hamburg St. Pauli, a multicultural district in the inner city. During Elviz's narrative in turns 6−12, the camera shifts between the scene of the telling and that of reported speech, i.e. the training hall where he sees Anna for the first time:

(1) Elviz and Olaf (1.23−2.29)

  1. Elviz: Mate, I got to know a lady.
  2. Olaf: Oh really ((short pause)) and? Pretty?
  3. Elviz: Pretty? Mate would I have told you if I had just met a pretty lady?
  4. Olaf: Well, sensational, crazy, outrageous, massive.
  5. Elviz: Among other things. ((5 sec pause))
  6. Elviz: That's the way it went:

    ((Change of scene to a training hall.))

               I pick up Djana from her belly dance course.

    ((12 sec. pause, Elviz staring at Anna training.))

  7. Djana
     (to Elviz): Hey, still alive?
  8. Olaf: Then?
  9. Elviz: I go cool to her, she looks at me with her stunning eyes, and doesn't say a word.
  10. Olaf: And then?
  11. Elviz: Well I don't say a word either, I just give her our dance contest flyer, she looks at it, smiles at me and asks:
  12. Anna
      (to Djana): Why doesn't your uncle ask me directly?

Visually, this scene consists of multiple shifts between outdoor location and training hall interior. Narratively, it introduces the protagonists and the beginning of their romance. Stylistically, it sets a default speech style for the two protagonists. All young members of the Turkish community shown here are given NG as their unmarked speech style. In addition, Elviz and Olaf are characterised as young urban men by their use of discourse markers (*Alter* 'mate'), slang categorisations (turns 1, 3: *Braut* 'a stunner, scorcher'); and slang evaluative adjectives (line 4). The representation of urban friendship offered here is ethnically diverse, but stylistically homogenous.

5.3.2 Elviz in Hamburg's Turkish milieu

A couple of minutes later, this portrait is juxtaposed to a first impression of the 'traditional' Turkish community. Excerpt (2) features the first dialogue between Elviz and his mean uncle, Cengiz, whose importance in the Turkish community is contextualized in turns 1−3 by scenery and music. One of his villains stops Elviz who is riding by on his bicycle, and a short dialogue between Cengiz and Elviz follows.

(2)   Elviz and his evil uncle Cengiz (3.41−4.50)

((Cengiz exits the barbershop and is being helped into his coat; he gives money to the barber, who refuses to take it.))

1.	Barber:	[*T*] I can't accept that
2.	Barber:	[*T*] Cengiz, please
3.	Cengiz:	[*T*] thanks

((Elviz approaches on bicycle, is forced to stop by a Turkish man in a parked car who opens his door in front of him.))

4.	Cengiz:	[*IG*] Well, got new girlfriend? Where you get those ladies![5]
5.	Elviz:	[*NG*] Jealous, uncle?
6.	Cengiz:	[*IG*] I've heard you're doing tonight dance contest?
7.	Elviz:	[*NG*] Yeah
8.	Cengiz:	[*IG*] Why don't I know anything about it?
9.	Elviz:	[*NG*] Because it's still my place?
10.	Cengiz:	[*IG*] Do you have my money rate?
11.	Elviz:	[*NG*] Tomorrow at ten was arranged
12.	Cengiz:	[*IG*] Ten o'clock, be on time, yes?
13.	Turkish man:	[*T*] Hello. What is this?

This scene introduces Turkish males in stereotypical immigrant looks and jobs who speak Turkish among themselves. The uncle switches to IG for his dialogue with Elviz, and a minor character later in this scene does the same. The scene establishes the combination of T and IG as the leitmotif for the migrant milieu. The protagonist does not style-shift to accommodate to his uncle or other community members, though he is cast as being able to understand Turkish, e.g. by replying, in German, to the question in turn 13.

5.3.3 Language choices and conflicting aspirations

The representation of the Turkish community is diversified further as we meet Anna's father, a successful doctor and fluent near-native speaker

of German. In excerpt (3), he exerts pressure on Anna to stop working as a dance trainer, which she resists. Later in this scene, he arranges a meeting between her and a young German doctor, the son of a colleague of his, at a medical charity event (see excerpt [5]):

(3)   Anna enters her father's office (9.10−10.06)

1.   Father: [*NNG*] Have a seat.
2.   Anna: [*T*] Good to see you.
3.   Father: [*NNG*] Speak German to me.
4.   Anna: [*T*] Why? Don't you speak Turkish?
5.   Father: ((Shows Anna a newspaper clip.))
              [*NNG*] A patient gave this to me. She wanted to know if this is my daughter.
6.   Anna: [*NG*] And you surely said no.
7.   Father: [*NNG*] I thought my daughter was intelligent, would set her targets, she would study, take the state exam, take up an assistant post, and then she would
8.   Anna: [*NG*] − take over my surgery.
9.   Father: [*NNG*] At some point you'll be 50, Anna. Will you still want to work as a dance teacher?

This is the first instance of explicit metalanguage in this film: a language choice negotiation in turns 1−4, with the daughter selecting Turkish and her father (surprisingly, perhaps) insisting on German. Their linguistic choices index their conflictual relationship, which will not be resolved until the end of the movie. The daughter is fully fluent in German, and Turkish is a self-conscious part of her identity choices, as is oriental dance. The father, even though conservative enough to initiate what can be understood as a marriage arrangement, is also status-conscious enough to go for German, a choice that echoes the notion that rejecting your own minority community, iconised here by language choice, might be the price of upward mobility.

5.3.4 The 'real' Turk: Stylisation as a romantic strategy

A second instance of metalinguistic talk occurs four minutes later at the first personal encounter between Elviz and Anna. Elviz sneaks into the training hall and overhears Anna talking on the phone about her intention to pull a trick on her father's arrangement by escorting herself by 'a real Turk'. He leaves the hall and returns shortly as a stylised 'real Turk', complete with unbuttoned shirt, expressive gesturing and interlanguage German. Anna is obviously pleased to meet him, and the viewer

easily infers that she will invite him to escort her to the meeting arranged by her father.

(4)   Anna & Elviz (14.25−15.21)

((Elviz enters the training hall and overhears Anna's conversation, then sneaks out.))

1. Anna (on the phone):	[*NG*] Right, he should finally get it that he can't do this with me ((long pause)) no I need a real Turk, one whose German is not that good, you know? That will drive him crazy. No, I'll find one; I'll pay him if I have to. OK, see you, bye.

((Elviz re-enters the hall and walks towards Anna.))

2. Elviz:	[*IG/T*] Hallo, my name Elviz, the uncle of Djana. I have a question. Djana, how dance, she dance good, yeah? Cause cost much money, *para yok*. (('no money'))
3. Anna:	[*NG*] Yeah, yeah, Djana is great. Hi, I'm Anna, sorry I couldn't make it yesterday to your dance contest.
4. Elviz:	[*IG/T*] Ah, *yok yok yok* (('no no no')) … no problem, eh?

Anna's categorisation in turn 1 bluntly links ethnic authenticity to (lack of) competence in the majority language ('one whose German is not that good'), and Elviz's stylised use of IG and Turkish phrases overshoots the Turkish men's speech style. In turns 2 and 4, he uses generalised feminine gender, a well-attested feature of *Gastarbeiterdeutsch* (*meine name, die onkel, keine problem*); his syntax is reduced to a series of unconnected phrases (original line 2: *djana, wie tanzen, tanzen sie gut, ja?*), and he produces an ungrammatical construction that is nonetheless understood in context (line 2: *ich sie ein fragen*: 'I you a question'). In a sense, Elviz gets grammatically wrong whatever could be done wrong here, and even though there is nothing specifically 'Turkish' in his IG, in the comical economy of the film his delivery is taken as a token of ethnic authenticity.

This narrative thread continues at the medical school event where Anna's arranged meeting is about to take place. This scene (excerpt [5]) begins with her father, the German couple and their son waiting for Anna. She and Elviz arrive stylised as a traditional Turkish couple, her wearing a headscarf, him with old-fashioned suit, unbuttoned shirt and oily hair. This leads to Anna being thrown out by her father. As they

walk away, Elviz surprises Anna by disclosing his 'real' language compe-
tence.

(5)   At the medical school event (30.44−32.21)

1.   Father: [*NNG*] I'm now wondering where she is
2.   German man: [*NG*] Well we look forward to seeing how the intern-
                       ship developed
3.   Father: [*NNG*] I'm very proud of her

    ((Anna and Elviz enter the scene.))

4.   Anna: [*T*] Hallo *baba* … *Merhaba* Dr Rüdiger
5.   Elviz
     (to father):   [*T*] *Baba!*
6.   Anna: [*NG*] Hello … This is Hassan, my fiancé
7.   Elviz
     (to group):   [*T*] *Salaamu Alaykum*
8.   Anna: [*NG*] Hassan is a lovely man … and he loves my
                       börek
9.   Elviz: [*IG*] I want many many children yeah, many children
                       with power of bull
10. Father
     (to Anna):   [*T*] Shame on you
11. Anna: [*NG*] We can't decide whether to have six or eight
12. Elviz: [*IG*] Of boys at least four, and two girls, and next
                       year, we celebrate marriage, you all come, you all
                       ((…))

    ((Father drags Anna to the exit.))

13. Father: [*NNG*] Who are you that you dare to do this?
14. Anna: [*NG*] Your daughter!
15. Father: [*NNG*] Not anymore! [*T*] Get out!
16. Elviz
     (to couple):   [*NG*] Well then, until summer next year.

    ((Change of scene, Anna and Elviz walking away from the event
    site.))

17. Elviz: [*NG*] Would you prefer me to go now?
18. Anna: [*NG*] You can speak correct German!
19. Elviz: [*NG*] Anything wrong with that?
20. Anna: [*NG*] Why are you pretending not to?

21. Elviz: [*NG*] Would you have taken me along if you knew
                      that my German is better than yours?
22. Anna: [*NG*] You asshole!

Besides dress, the stylisation of the traditional Turkish couple includes
Turkish salutations and terms of address (turns 4, 5, 7). Features of
interlanguage German in Elviz's delivery include vowel epenthesis into
the consonant cluster of *Stier* 'bull' (turn 9), missing articles and preposi-
tions, and pronominal errors (turn 12: *ihre alle* 'you all'). Anna's father
uses a Turkish expression of disapproval (turn 10) and then a Turkish
exclamation (turn 15). In turn 16, Elviz's delivery shifts to NG as he
drops the stylised persona just before leaving the event. After the change
of scene, another instance of explicit language-ideological discourse oc-
curs as Anna qualifies Elviz's default style as 'correct German' (*richtig
Deutsch*).

   Excerpts (3) and (5) are the only instances of stylisation-within-styling
in this film. They both draw on IG and T and share a joint indexicality,
in that the stylisation constructs a traditionalist Turkish *persona*; how-
ever, Elviz engages in stylisation in order to approach Anna, while her
aim is to resist her father.

5.3.5 Gendered language skills

Gender differences in the Turkish community are staged in the second
part of the film, which centres on the bilingual sex hotline set up by
Elviz. Its premises are in a warehouse behind his brother's bakery. A few
days before opening, women from the community cue up to apply for a
'call centre' job, not knowing its true purpose. The film shows three
interviews, excerpt (6) being the first one, in which the female applicants
are escorted by their husband or brother:

(6) Job interview (36.30−37.40)

1. Elviz: [*NG*] We work internationally. Have collaborations
                     with overseas, are active in mobiles, customer service,
                     imports, exports, telecommunication.
2. Turkish man: [*IG*] My wife also always much telephone, yes? At
                     home
3. Elviz: [*NG*] Yeah, that is a very good precondition
                     ((to Nilüfer)) Do you already have experience?
4. Turkish man: [*IG*] Yeah, does have a lot of experience. Has worked
                     four years operator, you know, talk, lot of talk …
                     Where is workspace, eh?

5. Elviz: [*NG*] The call centre, it's there at the back

((Husband leaves the interview desk to check the call centre space.))

6. Nilüfer: [*NNG*] I've worked for five years with *Beate Uhse*
((adult entertainment company)) in live services and
as operator. With telecommunication.

In this and the other two interviews, the husband or male relative speaks on behalf of the female character who remains silent. I read these scenes as parodies of ethnicised gender stereotypes. They iterate and thereby expose a stereotypical German assumption that 'traditional' Turkish women must remain silent in the presence of unknown men. But the stereotype is challenged within this scene. While Nilüfer's husband does the talking in interlanguage German and she remains silent in his presence, in turn 6 she discloses in fluent German to Elviz her previous work experience and contextualises her new, knowledgeable footing by repeating Elviz' earlier keyword, 'telecommunication'. Later in the film, Nilüfen is portrayed as a skilful communicator who teaches the girls how to do successful 'lip service' at the hotline.

6. Discussion and conclusions

Before returning to the framework proposed and demonstrated here, a brief discussion of the sociolinguistic choices of *Süperseks* and their language-ideological underpinnings is in order. In the approach developed here, asking whether *Süperseks* offers 'authentic' representations of language use in Hamburg's German−Turkish community would miss the point. As I have tried to show, cinematic indexicalities may well rely on empirically evidenced indexical orders, but recontextualise them in the conditions and for the requirements of cinematic discourse. Consider for instance, this film's bilingual performances that involve interlanguage German. They can be read in part as an evocation of the Turkish language that would normally have been used, but also as a reflection of empirically attested bilingual practices in urban migrant communities.

Within the constraints of a commercial comedy, *Süperseks* offers both stereotypical and nuanced representations of sociolinguistic difference in an urban ethnic minority setting. These representations are nuanced insofar as they draw on a repertoire of codes, which are allocated to a repertoire of characters. They are stereotypical in that they rely on binary contrasts (between good/bad and major/minor characters) which are equipped with, and supported by, linguistic choices that are predictable from the viewpoint of mainstream society. An obvious example is

the allocation of IG to minor characters and baddies (especially Elviz's uncle), whereas the protagonists are given NG. Remarkably, these binary contrasts are entirely acted out within the Turkish community rather than in intercultural encounters between German and Turkish characters. This results in a differentiated representation of this community within the limits of the film's comical framing.

In carving out these representations, *Süperseks* relies heavily on mainstream ideologies of language and ethnicity, class, generation and gender. In Anna's and Elviz's metalanguage (excerpts [4] and [5]), 'authentic' ethnicity is iconised through the lack of competence in the majority language. The contrast between Anna's father and other characters of his generation works on the assumption of a reciprocal relation between standard language skills and upward mobility among migrants: thus near-native German and denial of Turkish suit the white collar professional just as working-class Turkish people are 'naturally' speakers of interlanguage German and Turkish. As in other Turkish−German films, generational differences are part of the picture, with so-called second or third generation speakers being represented as linguistically assimilated, as with Elviz and his little niece who virtually speak no Turkish. *Süperseks* further draws on mainstream language and gender ideologies which ascribe better communicative and linguistic skills to women than men, and uses these assumptions as a backbone to the entire plot, i.e. Elviz's business idea of a Turkish-language sex hotline, in which Turkish women from the community eventually pay lip service to their husbands. The romance of the protagonists reproduces a gendered ideology of language as well, with Elviz skilfully using stylised language as a tool to conquer Anna, while she draws on stylisation in order to refute her father's marriage arrangement.

In scenes involving code-switching or divergent code choices, the community's heteroglossia is differentiated by narrative relevance. With secondary and minor characters, their choices of Turkish and interlanguage German are accommodating. For example, the Turkish barber speaks Turkish to other Turkish men, but interlanguage German in the presence of Elviz's German mate. Language choices are staged as conflictual in the relationship between Anna and her father. Elviz draws on style-shifting to construct the stylised ethnic persona he puts on to achieve his romantic aims. Overall, *Süperseks* represents the heteroglossic tensions and processes of change in a German−Turkish community (cf. Georgakopoulou 2000). As noted above (section 5.1), this film is not characteristic of Turkish−German cinema in its entirety. It sets its romantic and interpersonal stories in a peaceful Turkish community, blending out discrimination and other social issues experienced by migrant people in Germany. This can be linked either to the trend of urban multi-ethnic

films that avoid the explicit problematisation of ethnic difference (see Burns 2006 and section 4) or to this film's mainstream orientation, to which its German director and production company also contribute. However, this doesn't automatically lead to an affirmation of ethnic stereotypes. By virtue of the differences it paints within the Turkish community, *Süperseks* certainly goes against crude stereotypes of 'the Turk'. In the reading of some film reviewers (e.g. by Beatrice Willis on filmszene.de), the film 'wallows with delight' in ethnic clichés, though without exploiting them or disgracing its characters. This leads to a sociolinguistic reading of *Süperseks* as playfully exposing rather than endorsing the stereotypical language-ideological assumptions it operates with. However, films are open to a range of readings, which cannot be preempted by textual analysis alone.

Focusing on the cinematic text as opposed to its production and consumption processes, the analytic framework proposed in this paper aims at contributing to the sociolinguistic study of film and other audio-visual fiction by integrating levels of analysis (repertoires, characters and scenes) that have been separately treated in previous research. However, it requires further development with regard to genre and multimodality in their relation to the representation of sociolinguistic difference. It is clear that comedy both constrains and facilitates particular representations of sociolinguistic difference, including the film's playful endorsement of clichés and its emphasis on verbal performance and linguistic humour, to which multilingualism and code-switching no doubt contribute. Future analyses are needed to clarify the extent to which sociolinguistic difference in Turkish−German cinema differs by genre. Multimodality was considered in this analysis to some extent, notably in the detailed examination of scenes, but there is ample space for a more consistent integration of visual analysis into this tripartite framework. While this research can be viewed as a counterweight to the emphasis on the visual and the erasure of indexical aspects of language in film studies, linguists will also need to question the relevance of language in the multimodal meaning-making system of film. Language style is only part of a complex set of characterisation devices (Culpeper 2001), and more research is needed to understand its place in cinema's toolkit of identity resources.[6] In extract (5), for example, the stylisation of a traditional couple by Anna and Elviz is constituted visually before they even start talking, and the audience knows that their verbal performance in this scene will diverge from their default speech styles. Here, not only do visual and verbal means of stylisation co-occur, but the latter are determined by the former. Extending sociolinguistic studies of styling and stylisation to audio-visual performances requires incorporating multimodal aspects of meaning-making into existing frameworks, and

the three levels of analysis proposed here can be developed towards this aim.

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Notes

1. For an anecdotal example of a discussion on movie accents, see: http://blog.movie-fone.com/2009/08/26/worst-movie-accents/
2. Another Turkish−German comedy from the same year, *Kebab Connection*, was marketed as 'culture-clash comedy' (see www.kebabconnection.de). These and all later translations are by the author.
3. Information on *Süperseks* is available on the film's website, www.sueperseks.de, and in the relevant entries on the Internet Movie Data Base (in English: www.imdb.com/title/tt0384576/, in German: www.imdb.de/title/tt0384576/). Film reviews can be found on portals such as filmszene.de or kino.de, and a few excerpts are available on *YouTube*.
4. This includes the majority of the cast (sleeve listing: 12 individuals, Wikipedia entry: ca. 25 names). In addition, the cast includes: one policeman (NG); one hotline businessman (NG); Elviz's mother (IG/T), Elviz's niece (NG), Tarik's wife (NG/T).
5. Turn 4 refers to a little lamb that Elviz is carrying around in his rucksack in order to offer it as a price at the dance context he is organising.
6. I am indebted to Crispin Thurlow for emphasising this point.

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