

Extended Abstract**Social Construction of Syrian Refugees in Daily Speech in Turkey: Interpretative Repertoires and Social Media**Sümeyye Yıldırım^a, Göklem Tekdemir Yurttaş^b**Abstract**

In this study, various ways of describing Syrian refugees as used by a specific group of social media users who identify themselves as “dictionary writers” have been studied through critical discursive psychology and interpretative repertoires. Ekşi and Uludağ collaborative dictionaries, which are the most popular online dictionary sites in Turkey, were used as a database in the process of collecting data, giving the opportunity to reach various discursive repertoires. One hundred web pages from Ekşi Dictionary (10 entries per page, a total of 1000 entries) were analyzed. Fourteen web pages from Uludağ Dictionary (25 entries per page except for five entries on the last page, a total of 330 entries) were also analyzed. When quoting extracts from the collaborative dictionaries, the page count was taken into consideration, thus more extracts were taken from Ekşi Dictionary. Extracts were analyzed using the critical discursive approach. As a result of this research, seven different repertoires were defined. First of all is the repertoire of “threat,” in which Syrian asylum seekers are constructed as a threat in two forms: while the asylum seeker is the primary threat in its first form, they are seen as the tool of the primary threat in its second form. According to the repertoire of “othering,” Syrian asylum seekers are “otherized” through subjection to humiliation, marginalization, and dehumanization. In the repertoire of “Muslim,” Syrian asylum seekers are defined with a supra-identity as a Muslim beyond national identities, positioning the dictionary writer on similar ground with the asylum seeker. In the repertoire of “empathy,” the refugees are the subject of statements regarding humanity as the common ground. In the repertoire of “normative refugee” an absolute refugee frame is sketched, discussing whether a Syrian refugee fills this frame or not and how they fit in. According to the repertoire of “administration problem,” the inadequate policies of government in relation to the current situation are held responsible and the refugees are identified as victims of governmental policies. Finally, in the seventh repertoire, which can be referred to as “economic burden,” the refugees are described as a burden on the economic system; they are given shelter and care but are also unwanted by the Turkish people.

Keywords:

Critical Discursive Psychology • Interpretative repertoires • Social media • Asylum seeker

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“The foreigner is not one who comes today and goes tomorrow, the foreigner is one who comes today and does not leave tomorrow,” (Simmel, 1908). This quote explains one understanding of refugees, who are defined in various ways, as “foreigner.” It is related to the anxiety of the asylum seeker who has identified a sense of unease with foreign concepts such as will they leave again or will they share the residents’ space long-term. Here it is not a situation of being a foreigner of one’s free will but a situation of being a foreigner as a result of forced conditions. Namely, it is a question of the case of asylum. Asylum is born from the necessity of migrants beyond economic and cultural factors, and as a consequence has an important place. Because the ethical concerns of refugees are more easily accepted compared to other immigrants, asylum is seen to appear out of control (Tolay, 2011). Asylum seekers are considered to be illegal immigrants, for they have often left their own countries through informal ways and this situation leads to chaos. This situation in Western Europe, in spite of the matter of asylum seekers in Turkey, has not been discussed in political circles or in public opinion before the civil war in Syria (Tolay, 2011). In fact, Turkey faced the phenomenon of asylum seekers from the beginning because of the civil war that had emerged in Syria. Therefore, the problems of status faced by refugees and asylum seekers have emerged in Western Europe similarly as they have in Turkey, too.

A conceptual agreement has not been reached for the victims of the war coming from Syria. Therefore, because the Disaster and Emergency Management Chairmanship (AFAD) for the Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey accepts people coming from Syria to Turkey seeking asylum as “Syrian asylum seekers,” this status has been used in the current study. However, some studies and newspaper articles have referred to people from Syria seeking asylum in Turkey in the form of “Syrian refugees.” Therefore, the concept of Syrian refugee will be used in data quoted from these sources, as appropriate to the original study or article (İçişleri Bakanlığına bağlı Göç İdaresi Genel Müdürlüğü, 2013).

Background

The Syrian Civil War and the Right to Asylum

The existence of external political forces along with high unemployment, growing social inequities, corruption, the regime’s denial and violation of basic human rights, a decline in buying power, and other economic and political reasons have all been identified within the background of the Arab Spring.

The Syrian Civil War, being a part of this movement, started on March 15, 2011. Since 1963 in general, opponents have demanded the Baath Party (since 1970 and later the Assad family in particular) be removed from power. In line with these demands, 15 children in the Syrian city of Dera were tortured on the grounds they

had written anti-regime slogans on the walls and this situation subsequently triggered the emergence of street protests by the people (Özekin & Akkaş, 2014). The Syrian government's intervention using violence on the street demonstrations increased the public response, leading to demonstrations across the whole country, and turned into a bloody war following these events. The demonstrations spread to Damascus and all of Syria after Dera (Güçtürk, 2014).

With the onset of events, Syrians without tangible opportunity could not leave the region they were in. Those who could first immigrated to areas of the country without war. As a result of war spreading country-wide, food and other staples for living decreased and gangs of thieves were selling these goods at inflated prices. For this reason Syrian people were forced to leave the country (Ortadoğu Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi [ORSAM], 2013). People who were victims of the unusual situation of Friday, April 29, 2011, have claimed asylum in Turkey. Immigration in Turkey, which had started with 252 individuals, today is estimated to number 265,000 refugees staying at the outdoor camp in Suruç, while the number of refugees living outside these camps is estimated to be 1,622,839 according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees [UNHCR], 2015).

The Middle East and Syrian Asylum Seekers in Turkish Affairs

The topic of the Civil War has been on Turkey's agenda for a long time due to Turkey and Syria sharing a border as well as references to changing foreign policy (with the motto "axis shift") and the extent of humanitarian aid.

The Arab Republic of Syria exists within the borders of the Middle East and is Turkey's greatest bordering neighbor. The decisions made by the Turkish government which reflect upon the civil war were brought together with a set of rhetoric relating to foreign policy change along with criticisms about the overly familiar situation in the Middle East and the oft repeated question of "what does the Middle East mean to us?" (Türkiye Stratejik Araştırma Enstitüsü, 2010; Tüysüzoğlu, 2012).

A number of newspapers and alternative news blogs have stated that Turkey, considering its imperial objectives, is involved in the region in reference to the mission of establishing order (Fuat, 2013). Some of them indicate that being in the vicinity, the fire will jump to Turkey, that the Assad regime needs to leave as soon as possible to minimize the damage, and that Turkey is producing a foreign policy in this direction (Çelik, 2013).

Dağlıoğlu (2014), from the authors of *Agos* gazette tried to understand the status of Syrian refugees left in the shadow of these reviews and policies by posing questions about the topic to experts. The issues discussed in the text via the questions "What

is a guest?” “What is a refugee?” and “What is an asylum seeker?” indicated that the people from Syria should be recognized as refugees under international law.

We can talk about the rhetoric of racism with two differences being the new and the old type. The old style of racism is defined as cases which support discrimination and separatist violence, one race based on another being biologically inferior, and the assumption of a distance that exists between races (Henry & Sears, 2002). The concept of modern racism emerged after the 1970s because the occurrence of racism in the community is no longer welcome and considered to be politically incorrect. Modern racism is defined implicitly as a form of harboring negative thoughts of racism against minorities together with having a view that advocates racial equality (Gaertner & Dovidio, 2005).

The “other” who had previously been exposed to direct discriminatory behavior is now exposed to implicit exclusion. A study conducted in England on this manner examined whether or not the behavior of discrimination or prejudice had occurred against Gypsies in a discussion that took place on a social networking site (Goodman & Rowe, 2013). On the social network sites used in the study, Gypsies were described as immoral, tending to be criminal, and inhuman. Therefore, writers who had entered comments like this on the social networking site contrived justifications like this to legitimize violence or discriminatory behavior against Gypsies, as well as their exclusion from the community (Goodman & Rowe, 2013).

According to another study (Doherty & Augoustinos, 2008), the Tampa Incident, where a group of refugees was rescued by Norwegian shipping vessels and not taken to Australia, was analyzed in Australian printed media as a legitimization in public discourse. The main focus of analysis via national rhetoric is the presentation format of asylum seekers in the media together with the rhetoric of the nation. The analytical focus in a critical discourse study is how the minority is marginalized by nationalist rhetoric. One of the interesting aspects of the study is how in the press, people who come with the request for asylum are reflected as “boat people” rather than expressed as “refugees” or “asylum seekers.”

Geographically, Israel’s deportation of Africans is more closely affiliated with Turkey. Owing to Israel’s exclusion policy, Sheen (2014), an independent journalist and filmmaker, tried to make an analogy of being a refugee clear in his essay entitled “African refugees in Israel: The plight of non-Jews in the Zionist state.”

Another study examined the problems of Palestinian refugees living in refugee camps in Lebanon. Ibrahim (2008) indicated that Palestinian refugee camps established in Lebanon during the 1948 Arab-Israel Wars had the worst living conditions for a refugee camp; it denotes that Palestinians in the camps did not have citizenship and this excluded them from Lebanese society.

In the study performed by Baklacioğlu (2008), during the era when less refugees were being brought in compared to current numbers, under the theme of “the process of ‘otherizing’ the social sphere of refugees,” a majority of refugees coming from Somalia and Iraq were identified as a generally easy but hopeless people who were ethically incompatible, choosing full-paid work, being lazy, noisy, having no habits of cleanliness, and unable to sustain themselves. They were identified by officials in local government and staff at charitable organizations as being “an indigent domestic social burden sharing insufficient resources.”

Tolay (2011) indicated that the topic of refugees in Turkey was not a subject that had been discussed in political circles or among the public before the civil war in Syria. Tolay has identified six different discourses which sought answers to the following questions of how are refugees are perceived and how do perceptions in this direction influence policy. In this study, the concepts of refugee, asylum seeker, and immigrant were often used in place of each other. Therefore, these words should be assessed within this context as discourses, not for the semantic parsing of the words. “Hospitality rhetoric,” in order to be hospitable in terms of the nature of kindness, is credited to the attribute of the temporariness of a guest, which while positive, constitutes a negative situation. “Pity rhetoric” emphasizes the suffering and unjust situations of refugees. “Multiculturalism rhetoric” is envisaged as an historical source discourse. The concepts of tolerance and multiculturalism, aside from being believed to be remnants of the Ottoman period, are often times seen to be incongruous with real life. The national rhetoric of Turkey belongs to Turks and it is assumed that foreigners operate against Turkey. The “why here” rhetoric has been constructed on Turkey’s inability and lack of self-sufficiency. The rhetoric of “economic conditions” is constructed on damage to the economy and the way it raises unemployment; compared to other discourses, this one is less emotional and more from a materialistic framework. “Security” rhetoric is discussed from what is rarely encountered when compared to the West. “Rights” rhetoric, as only mentioned through the voice of experts, is described as being a human right, a right for refugees seeking asylum.

In Turkey, discourses during the time in which the *foreigner who doesn’t leave* (another name for asylum seeker or refugee) is not enrolled, while having the same aspects, acquire a different character, albeit partially, even if it is a reflex or a reaction.

In a study addressing the level of Turkey’s social acceptance on the issue of Syrians, a public opinion survey was conducted (Erdoğan, 2014). Through the survey, the “Syrians are our brothers” rhetoric was found to not be a sustainable situation for living with Syrians. Turkish community, while placing a cultural distance between themselves with Syrians, is said to have not withdrawn from granting them immediate citizenship. However, Turkish society is mostly opposed to the premise of sending

Syrians back because of the ongoing war. On the subject of Syrians, the brotherhood and sisterhood of religion, neighborliness, and the idea of supporting escape from persecution have been interpreted as a high level of social acceptance.

While a high level of social acceptance is mentioned, refugees, asylum seekers, and minorities have been subjected to similar problems in Turkey as have been experienced in many parts of the world.

In the report from the Human Rights Association (İnsan Hakları Derneği, 2013), when considering studies about Syrian asylum seekers, Circassian, Roman, and Christian communities were stated to have hesitations with respect to Syrians staying in camps. Some of the asylum seekers staying outside of the camps had been exposed to discrimination and social exclusion. Asylum seekers who can't speak Turkish also experience problems in arranging access to public services and social relationships.

In the Female Asylum Seekers Living Outside of Camps Report (İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar için Dayanışma Derneği, 2014), The Society of Interdependence for Human Rights and the Oppressed (MAZLUMDER), while indicating that according to socio-economic status some asylum seekers living outside of the camp are in very good conditions, another part is stated to live in conditions quite far removed from human needs.

In terms of gender, studies which examine the intersection of the situation of ethnic refugees and female identity (Crenshaw et al., 1991 as cited in Pittaway & Bartolomei, 2001) describe through case studies the discrimination that female refugees have been exposed to.

Despite the claim of refugees as threats, according to data from the Department of Public Security's General Directorate of Security (Anadolu Ajansı, 2013), Syrian refugees were seen involved at a rate of 33 in 1000 criminal events. Authorities indicated these were not of a nature that would threaten general public security.

The actions of asylum seekers for the most part are recognized as a problem of "security" and from this framework are subject to assessment (Kolukırık, 2009). The press, and some politicians and social welfare institutions, have similarly expressed crisis and danger are inherent to the situation. The press's submission format, intermediary to the reflection of the arrival process of asylum seekers to society, tries to make clear in the eye of the public what kind of threat asylum seekers pose (Kolukırık, 2009).

In Turkey, the notions of the widespread use of cyberspace dictionaries, which offer points of view and sharing opportunities similar to social networking sites, and "collaborative dictionaries," which result from forum mergers distinct from the classic dictionary, emphasize that concepts are not limited by technical meanings

written in books, but are reshaped by those who use and speak them (Sönmez, 2009). The contributor with the most users and first from the dictionaries is Ekşi Sözlük (Sour Dictionary). During its founding it started with 20 people, then after periodically recruiting writers it now has approximately 700,000 contributors. This period is known as the first generation of authors. The information entered into the dictionary does not have to be accurate or objective. The difference in generations, which had at first been an indication of hierarchy, was abolished as of 2010.

Collaborative dictionaries are designed for open discussion, continuance of the discussion, and conclusion in a suitable structure through consensus or dissociation. Collaborative dictionaries create an alternative media domain while also enabling discourses that cannot find a place in mainstream media to come to light. Nevertheless, the structure of cyberspace naturally mitigates the likelihood of encountering different ideas from the ideas held by the people who use it. More precisely, it shows that a person with one statement, being a member of a site with similar ideas, usually tends to read those pages. While writing comments, a conservative will be a member of a similar site, a liberal of a liberal site, and a Marxist of a Marxist site. This situation inevitably leads to polarization (Sunstein, 2007).

The main objective of this study is to see which descriptive repertoires are used while conversations in Turkey on “Syrian asylum seekers” are being formed. Therefore, cases discussed in little-censored or uncensored format from the dictionaries Ekşi Sözlük (Sour Dictionary) and Uludağ Sözlük (Uludag Dictionary) were preferred as they are widely used by participants in Turkey. As mentioned, while the collaborative dictionary authors are speaking of Syrian asylum seekers, the versions characterizing these will be discussed in the framework of the interpretive repertoires that took place using the critical discursive psychology approach.

Method and Analytical Framework

Analytical Method

From the traditional standpoint of discourse studies, a discriminating post embeds language or rhetoric to the center of analysis. One form of critical discourse studies is critical discursive psychology, which performs analyses on three basic concepts. The approach of critical discursive psychology has the objective of investigating the subject position of the formed discourse, the ideological dilemmas, and which interpretive repertoires were used as well as how accessible these interpretive repertoires (linguistic resources) were if they did exist (Arkonaç, 2013).

The focus of this study will include “interpretive repertoire” as imported to the concept of social psychology. Potter and Wetherell (1987), in their book *Discourse*

and Social Psychology, define the concept of interpretive repertoire as “a system of repeatedly-used expressions that are used for defining and interpreting an activity, case, or event.” In a sense, events are a way to understand a situation or objective within the same history that has been experienced or continues to be experienced. When looked at it from this direction, the language offered for constructing an object or event supplies diversity and ways of understanding to the speaker. One is forced to make a choice from the ways of interpreting the world due as one way will be more powerful compared to any other format for linguistic speakers. Thus, while one portion of construct shapes can be more accessible, other construct shapes would be difficult to access (Edley, 2001). From the repertoires, the main one constantly changes and transforms these constructs that entered into the process of mutual speech. Analysis of the construct that occurred during this ongoing transformation, as it is not universal, will not pass beyond local interpretation. In other words, it has been built within a context, and it is specific to that context.

On the methodological plane, if discourse studies are differentiated from traditional social psychology, they will also vary in sample selection. They give significance to meeting with people that represent different discourses by determining likely discourses rather than reaching many people (Çoker, 2012).

This approach, in contrast to the unfeasible nature of neutrality, paves the way for the formation of an interview environment that enables confrontation. Therefore, it prepares groundwork that will trigger repertoires or language resources that the participants will bring to the moment of interaction (Potter, 2012).

Data Collection Technique

The study data was obtained from Ekşi Sözlük and Uludağ Sözlük, the most-used collaborative dictionaries in Turkey, allowing access to different discourse repertoires whose opening title was relative to “Syrian asylum seekers.” In total, 1000 comments were read from Ekşi Sözlük with 100 internet pages and 10 comments on every page. These pages corresponded to 216 pages when transferred to size A4 sheets. Fourteen pages were read from Uludağ Sözlük for a total of 330 comments, with 25 comments per page except for the last page which only had 5 comments. When converted to A4 format, these pages total 59 sheets. More comments were cited from Ekşi Sözlük based on the page-to-page ratio for the dictionaries. Comments that were cited will be discussed within the framework of the interpretive repertoires that received analytical focus, so as to identify other versions that are in the sub-heading of critical discursive psychology.

Analysis Results

When analyzing the data from the citations obtained from the dictionaries, seven different interpretive repertoires were encountered. From the first repertoire of “threat,” two different forms of threats were identified for Syrian asylum seekers. In assembling the first one, asylum seekers were identified as the primary threat, and in the second one, asylum seekers were an intermediary of the primary threat. If several strategies were used, it was marginalized into the “other” repertoire. In the “Muslim” repertoire, the asylum seeker has been identified beyond the national identity, and is assessed on the same footing as the author of the collaborative dictionary using their Muslim identity being the supra-identity; for the “empathy” repertoire, asylum seekers are defined by considering the common ground of humanity. The “normative refugee” repertoire discusses depictions of an absolute refugee framework and where these asylum seekers are to be contained. Another method discusses asylum seekers over “internal displacement” or “non-internal displacement” as another immigrant or refugee. In the “problematic administration” repertoire, asylum seekers are discussed in the framework of victimization due to the ruling party’s improper policies that are inappropriate for the situation of these Syrian asylum seekers. In the last repertoire of “economic burden” the asylum seeker is defined as a person who is considered to be a burden that Turks don’t want to look after and is damaging to the economy.

Threat Repertoire

In this citation, asylum seekers are criticized as threats in two different ways. The first version constructs asylum seekers themselves as the personal threat; in the second one, the asylum seeker has been constructed in nature as inert, feeble-minded, and the tool of violence.

Active Threat: Is the situation of eliminating or reducing the possible likelihood of threats that are made to “the ability to make plans peacefully for the future.” Syrian asylum seekers, having been placed in southern provinces, are constructed as the threat themselves, not knowing the “why” they are in Turkey. In order for “a peaceful future” to occur on behalf of an “unknown purpose,” the physical settlements in Hatay province that are suitable for being terrorist structures have been imagined as a state of concern by one writer of *Ekşi Sözlük*. The discourse strategy of “the enemy among us” (Lynn & Lea, 2003) coincides with the construction of a threat that is present.

Disposed Threat:

“For Turkey to pass to the level of a religious state, they are the brainless sheep that have been imported in order to provide potential votes to the government.

edit: I should add, it is not only the potential votes. At the same time in the moment

of regime change, these fundamentalist rabid dogs will probably arm and swing over the secularists.” (Excerpt 2: 26.10.2013 / Ekşi Sözlük)

In this comment, the threat that is differentiated from other comments has not been constructed about simply one that threatens or one that is being threatened. In this one, the threat is constructed over three separate elements: that which threatens, that which is being threatened, and the vehicle of the threat. The author from Ekşi Sözlük has stressed that the actual threat is to be found in the government, and that the ones being threatened are the secularists and the Republic of Turkey’s current regime. Syrian asylum seekers have been made feeble-minded, being the “brainless sheep brought in” as in the phrase of brainless sheep brought in for the purpose of providing potential votes to the government. In other words, the buyers and sellers are objectified as the threat. Thus emerging from the element of actual threat, this process of being brought in is positioned as the intermediary tool of the threat.

Other Repertoire

Participant dictionary writers have marginalized asylum seeker by using various strategies. The first of these is to humiliate them by endowing them with negative qualities and dehumanizing them, thus preparing the ground for them to be deserving of ill-treatment. The second is “otherizing” by marginalizing them through fiction with negative differences. Another form of “otherizing” is shaped to be constructed as punishment; the internal “other” fictionalizes as it negatively assimilates with the external “other;” namely, at the same time as the internal other is at the forefront with the negative characteristics of the asylum seeker.

The catchphrase “don’t f%\$#ing come, you bear!” from the movie *Feyzo, the Polite One* (1978), was used by one of Ekşi’s authors. It is a sentence that an urbanite said to Feyzo in the movie directed by Atif Yılmaz. Therefore, the author has co-substantiated the “other” against the more modern and democratic Turkey via the character reference in the previous sentence. Feyzo had migrated from his village to the city and “couldn’t know” what was necessary in the city. The conditions for being a refugee have been taken from the refugees’ hands with the phrase “pathetic display,” devalued with the expression “war victims,” dehumanized with the expression “vermin swarm,” deemed unqualified with the expression “unemployed,” and fictionalized that they are prone to crime with the expression “criminal case.”

Muslim Repertoire

In this repertoire, refugees are defined through the supra-identity of Muslim, namely, a more inclusive understanding of nation. Again, an internal “other” was fictionalized in a similar way to the “other” repertoire.

“under the heading of Fascists of the Turkish Left, Eklemettinci recalls that Muslims are my brothers and sisters.” (Excerpt 6: 07/13/2014, Ekşi Sözlük).

The author defines himself and asylum seekers through the concept of Muslim and brotherhood; people who have equal rights through the fictionalization of an internal other in the “Fascists of the Turkish Left” quote.

“Of course we will stand beside the oppressed; we will be ‘Ansar’ but the state must take measures. It will not like this.” (Excerpt 7: 04/25/2015, Uludağ Sözlük).

“Ansar” is used in this quote to describe the people who became Ansar (the people of Medina) and shared their belongings with the ones who came during the migration from Mecca to Medina in the first days of Islam. In this last quote, it has been emphasized that assistance should not be anticipated from only the public, as was the case of Mecca and Medina, but also from the state.

Empathy Repertoire

Collaborative dictionary writers have been looking for a common denominator by inviting other authors to the ground of “humanity” and questioning what their position would be if a civil war like in Syria was experienced in Turkey.

“The speaker’s head is apparently scrambled. Let me remind you that they are human!

Tomorrow, tanks and vessels may come to the place where you eat sunflower seeds and drink beer, to the roads where you walk with your lover, and they may bomb there. Then you would become a ‘parasite’ in another country. Let’s see if you would think the same thing.

To hell with your conscience!” (Excerpt 8: 09/26/2013, Ekşi Sözlük)

This author has drawn asylum seekers and people from Turkey to the same ground together by reminding the person who the author was referring to with the quote “The speaker’s head is apparently scrambled” that asylum seekers are also human. The author describes a normal situation in the city and emphasizes that it would be impossible for Turks, doing the things that are expected of them in war, to be thought of as asylum seekers who have been shoved out, as normative refugees, as marginalized, or being menaced on the online dictionary. The author does this by appreciating the realization of a situation in Turkey similar to the war in Syria. The attitude that asylum seekers don’t belong to this region is emphasized by other authors while writing “parasite” in the online dictionary in quotation marks, reminding the reader of this each time they fictionalize another expression by using parasite rather than asylum seeker.

Normative Refugee

In the “normative refugee” repertoire, a refugee is signified by how they are defined through requirements or while displaying what they have become; Syrian asylum seekers have been referred to by the perception of what they have become.

“They are a group I can’t make sense of. I’m thinking now, if I go to a country as a refugee because of problems in my country, hell, I’d be a bit embarrassed! I would try to live inconspicuously in a corner. Consider the psychology of guests. Look at them. I see they are more relaxed than us, roaming around, shouting and disturbing people without hesitation.” (Excerpt 9: 06/08/2014 Ekşi Sözlük).

The author has constructed the criteria for being a refugee as being slightly embarrassed and living invisibly some place without drawing any attention. Hence, “to be a guest” can be defined as sitting at home in the room reserved for them, using the available space with the landlord’s permission, and standing in permitted spaces when possible.

Administration Problem

In the “administration problem” repertoire, collaborative dictionary writers describe the governmental immigration policy as deficient, putting asylum seekers in the position of the victim. This repertoire is only found on Ekşi Dictionary.

“The government is a shame of humanity. You can’t help people inside the border while receiving this number of asylum seekers. Shoot, the arrogance, leaving them to fight for their life on the streets and in parks. As a last written note, these people can be living in the streets blind and lame, but the winter months are ahead of us. In short, it is your shame, my shame, and Turkey’s shame to leave these families with children and babies to their death.” (Excerpt 11: 07/17/2014, Ekşi Sözlük).

The author refers to the struggle for survival on the streets as an administration problem, representing the problem not as living in the streets, but because the state took in this number of refugees, quoting “you can’t help people inside the border.” The author expressed that the problem will grow with winter, creating a conflicting situation by noting that to leave these people to their death is a shame for the country. It is conflicting because both cases of receiving and not receiving asylum seekers results in leaving them to their deaths. Finally, asylum seekers have been described here as victims of the government’s immigration policy.

Economic Burden

In this repertoire, which can be described as an economic burden or problem, Turks are faced with the situation of their relatively good opportunities worsening with the

influx of asylum seekers, and this comes across as a story of Turkey's opportunities being extorted.

“252. They are people who damage Turkey's economy every day. 1.5 million people have come. Come on, friend! I'm also a people person, but refugees like them cause my people to lose their jobs because they get hired so cheaply, as if the food they take is not enough,” (Excerpt 12: 10/05/2014, Uludağ Sözlük)

In this excerpt, the responsibility of being hired cheaply has been placed on asylum seekers. They have to work in this case because of adverse conditions that were brought on by the war. The sentence “refugees like this cause my people to lose their jobs because they get hired so cheaply,” which takes responsibility away from the employers who are hiring cheaply. Therefore, responsibility for these problems belongs to the workers who have been forced to work cheaply, not the employer. This definition of asylum seeker takes the form of “one who damages the economy.”

Results and Discussion

In this study, seven different repertoires were mentioned in constructing conversations in Turkey related to Syrian asylum seekers. Firstly, Ekşi Sözlük authors identified two forms for the “threat” repertoire to justify why Syrian asylum seekers should not be in Turkey. In the first situation, asylum seekers are constructed as the threat itself, while in the second threat element, the asylum seeker is constructed as an object of the threat. Syrian asylum seekers have been constructed as the source of the threat through the “caste” dimension, whereas they have been constructed as tool for a government that has the danger of bringing a “sharia regime” through the dimension of “ancient fear.”

Syrian asylum seekers have been constructed as ones who eliminate the “possibility to make plans for the future in a peaceful way,” set up as inherently outside of the norm, “continually starting trouble,” “with the potential to start trouble,” and as an external threat in the line of a “vague objective.” They are a threat in and of themselves. Asylum seekers, who have been made feeble-minded and have been objectified, have also been made instrumental in a few different ways for achieving the objectives of the ruling party by the collaborative dictionary writers. On one hand, asylum seekers have been fictionalized as the main source of threats in Turkey. On the other hand, they have been fictionalized as ones who speed up the process of “Arab-ization,” as well as a group that the ruling party uses for a tool in disrupting the country's internal dynamics and demographic chemistry in order to Islamize it.

Aside from these, the new racism has been constructed as a threat by creating a context that is a negation of the “other,” a form of racism that is a new version made about the “other” (Cashmore, 2004). Pointing out the comments that have been made about asylum seekers shows the framework of racism and how asylum seekers have been turned into a threat in various ways. Thus, collaborative dictionary writers who direct negative claims like this against asylum seekers form justifiable grounds and offer reasonable justifications.

The new racism discourse “highlights the differences of others,” and these differences are mostly negative (Cashmore, 2004). Collaborative dictionary writers have been “otherizing” asylum seekers through humiliation, marginalizing them by negating their differences, making them appear feeble-minded as in *imported brainless sheep*, excluding their human qualities with expressions like *rabid dogs*, and placing them in an inferior position. In the construction of the “other,” differences were highlighted by forming a distance to all Arabs in the region through the use of the Arab identity, their greater identity beyond being Syrian.

The “other” description was constructed by emphasizing that asylum seekers do not have the appropriate qualifications for adapting to this environment they have joined. The self-identification of the collaborative dictionary writer as a non-villager appealed to others with the expression “Don’t f%\$#ing come, you bear!” which was used in the movie *Feyzo, the Polite One* (1978) during a conversation between a city dweller and one who had come from a village. The expression “A more modern, more democratic Turkey” explains the qualities that urbanites are able to experience; it comes from the comment shared by a dictionary author. In another excerpt, “they are trying to be like us” was defined. The author constructed “we” for accessibility here, as well as using the description of the other. In a sense, this usage can be understood to mean “they (Syrian asylum seekers) can’t be us.”

Another common factor in the threat construct is that by creating an “other” inside these quotations from the authors, it defines the Syrian asylum seekers as this “other.” The other created inside these comments places the asylum seeker against the anti-asylum seeker; the stance of others in support of asylum seekers is highlighted as having an “ox mentality.” Consequently, as one with an “ox mentality” will make decisions considerably removed from reason, it becomes necessary to not rely on their word. In this direction, “ox mentality” is constructed in the form of pro-government; namely, its meaning is equipped with characteristics such as incapable. In this way, these people will not have jobs that require skills. Inside this, the author, who himself is against Syrian asylum seekers, accepts the “other” and the “ox mentality” as unqualified. In this situation, due to a lack of social security, Syrian refugees have no other choice but to accept low wages, which seizes the internal “other’s” work

and constructs them as “unqualified staff.” Established in this train of logic is the conclusion that supports the power of the author’s decisions: because of the votes of unskilled voters, workers will lose their jobs. From this equation, it is understood that when the author changed the subject, the result stands out that he will not be the one who pays the cost, because the decision given by the qualified one is “true.” As a result, the “other has been constructed into a discriminatory discourse.

Asylum seekers in the “Muslim” repertoire are defined in accordance with the attitude that forces one to take the side of asylum seekers, using concepts that belong to the terminology of Islamic history, or through the identity of being Muslim, the inclusive identity. The authors in the previous “other” repertoire distanced themselves from the asylum seeker through the construct of the inner other; the authors of the “Muslim” repertoire have approximated themselves to the asylum seeker through an inner “other” identity construct. “Muslim” identity was not directly used; however, the word “Ansar,” which belongs to the terminology of Islamic history, again points to the same identity. The word “Ansar” indicates that “we” as Muslims should stop where we are and see what sort of attitude is inside. The concept of “Ansar” which was used in the comments can occur under the same identity without the need to fictionalize any other internal “other.”

In the “empathy” repertoire, authors who constructed for Turkey a civil war resembling the one in Syria still bring queries that are not applicable to what is required; the other authors have imposed “otherization,” threatening and marginalizing Syrians as asylum seekers.

With the words “people first,” we encounter an approach based on the right to life, bringing every indication that ethnicity is not what matters. The common ground of being created human is brought forward a little above national identity.

Another conceptualization of this repertoire changes place with the concept of asylum seeker as a “parasite.” Its use for people was deemed unnecessary and this unwanted concept was referred for mediation to other reviewers. In this context, the author, who had previously commented “consider a war like this in Turkey,” proposes thinking as if they were the refugees seeking asylum. This concept is also about considering what the Syrian asylum seekers are exposed to as opposed to holding an attitude against the asylum seeker. Accordingly, the author wanted the other authors who had written negative comments to see the facts of asylum as well as their own attitudes.

Asylum seekers, according to the absolute definition of asylum seeker in the “requirements” repertoire, have been defined as either being the effort to comply with the criteria for the absolute asylum seeker, or relatively as “what they are.” The author constructs existence as being absolute by locating the subject through the

definition of “requirements.” This construct does not fit the mold of Syrian asylum seekers, nor can it. With the other form of “requirements,” instructions for asylum are constructed on others outside of the Syrian asylum seeker.

The statement “guest psychology” in the “requirements” repertoire emphasizes that they will never have the same rights as the locals, and how long they will stay and what attitude they exhibit needs to be determined together.

One of the striking aspects of this repertoire, while the struggle to “be together” is appreciated, the recognition of Syrian asylum seekers’ “right” to be here is not appreciated enough. We did not leave our country in the War of Independence. This makes it impossible to understand those who left their country in the Syrian civil war, distancing us from appreciation. This is the kind of attitude that is exhibited here. No matter what, the situation of the Syrian asylum seekers will not mean a thing, because they have already lost coming here.

In the repertoire of “Administration Problem,” asylum seekers are constructed as victims of immigration policy and the ruling party. The authors in this repertoire express that the ruling party cannot cope with the number of asylum seekers received in the country, and providing opportunities for them would create hardship. Therefore, this is a situation of being left to die. However, to not receive asylum seekers in Turkey creates the conflicting understanding in practice is equally related to leaving them to die. This is because, taking the case in Turkey, death is inevitable for the ones who are in war (there is no where to flee to). In both cases, it would be relatively good in terms of accepting asylum seekers who have already claimed asylum, though hosting them is a disadvantage. The ruling party’s behavior has been interpreted through the higher concept of “shame of humanity.” Additionally, examination of “bringing the sharia regime” and “unfavorable conditions of asylum seekers” on the same plane is problematic and should be a separate discussion.

In the “economic burden” repertoire, the author indicates that his concerns are not unfounded, and he has constructed this repertoire against asylum seekers by offering reasonable grounds to protect the rationale of his position. The author has rejected racism with this attitude, achieving a number of social, economic and political gains (Billig, 1988 as cited in Every & Augoustionos, 2007). The author is able to distance himself from the guilt of “prejudice” that could be directed at a party.

Gender roles give direction to the participation of women (housework, the more passive areas) and men (outside, more active areas) in the social division of labor (Çıtak, 2008). When looked at from this point of view, women are the ones who are more passive and less able to fight. For women, the elderly, and children to be placed in a position of being unable to fight removes them as a threat. Therefore, the fear that is a source of the

desire to construct an identity and lean towards escape from anxiety puts the young man in a position that he should not be in by making him a threat (Langman, 1998 as cited in Howard, 2000). Thus, the identity of the young male is polarized through the identities in Turkey and is brought forth as a threat to the existence and continuity of the author's own identity. Except for this, the right to be impartial towards the young man pushed out of his drawn environment has been deprived.

Yücebaş (2015) states that the Syrian identity has been highlighted in events hosted negatively in the local news situated in Gaziantep, one of the border provinces where Syrian asylum seekers have been living; the cause and subject of violent events that have happened are ambiguous. As is seen in the proverb "neither Damascus' sugar nor an Arab's face," the right-brained information that feeds the hatred of Syrians is quite apparent. Ekinci (2015) has summarized being Arab in the average nationalist perception as follows: "one who struggles in the darkness of the Medieval Age and is always doomed to remain historically behind modernization;" he also specified that there is enough material already present in society for feeding the hatred of Arabs.

The results from the findings show that support, whether for asylum seekers or for war victims, has been discussed through the intersection of identity posed by the political motivations of the asylum seeker rather than the individual (Langman, 1998 as cited in Howard, 2000). Therefore, the assessment of the issue of the person shows the effects of political attitudes. However, when viewed this way, discourses on foreign policy retain wide coverage. For this reason, an interdisciplinary study is needed. The limitation of this study is that it only focused on two different platforms on social media. It certainly needs a larger database.

When the findings are looked at from another perspective, asylum seekers are put inside a negative frame; they are in a sense constructed as bad. According to Islam, a person can reach the same level as an angel or fall down to the same level as an animal. In Chinese philosophy, a person is considered as one who hosts opposite poles inside themselves according to yin-yang. In this context, people are offered the opportunity to host good and evil inside themselves. In these findings, neither the "other" nor the asylum seeker who is a threat is given the opportunity to host these opposites or to choose. In other words, they are innately bad. Even if some collaborative dictionary writers permitted baptism, it would not be possible for some to be cured. In this manner, the relation between being inherently bad with the construct of bad, the treatment that those who are bad deserve, and discrimination under the heading of refugee can all be topics for future studies.

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