Functions of Turkish complementary schools in the UK: Official vs. Insider discourses

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Complementary schools in the United Kingdom (UK) are community organised schools with the general aim of teaching younger generations their 'native' languages and cultures. However, the aims and practices of these schools are predominantly dependent on changes in the social and political contexts both in the host country (in this case the UK) as well as in the respective 'home' countries of these children. This study focuses on one such Turkish complementary school in London, aiming to describe and analyse the functions of these schools more broadly, by means of a variety of perspectives and using a social constructivist approach. Data collected from official documents, participant observations, as well as interviews with parents, teachers, students and organisers of the schools, were analysed, focusing on the emerging themes in relation to the functions and practices of the schools. The analysis revealed that the official discourses, which stress the issue of underachievement amongst young people from Turkish speaking backgrounds in the UK, differ strikingly from the participants' perceptions of the functions of the school, as well as the actual teaching and learning practices found there. This discrepancy is attributed to trends in current neo-liberal educational discourses and the discourses surrounding ethnically-oriented educational provisions in the UK.

Keywords: complementary schools, ethnic minority education, neoliberalism, Turkish schools

Introduction

In today's globalizing world, ethnically oriented educational organisations take different forms in different contexts. In some cases, such as the five private Turkish schools currently providing educational services to young people in South Africa (Kanbolat, 2010; Özkan & Akgün, 2010), schools are set up within the mainstream system. These schools usually state that they focus on "the excellent academic performance of their learners" (Mohamed, 2007:553), and they compete with other mainstream schools, both public and private. In other cases, schools may remain optional community schools that aim to maintain specific linguistic and cultural practices among the second (sometimes third or further) generations in a foreign country. Complementary schools in a UK context are examples of the second category, where ethnically oriented education is provided at the weekends or in the afternoon. The emergence of these schools, as Black supplementary schools, dates back to 1960s, when black parents set up afternoon or Saturday schools to provide extra tutorials for their children, because of the "failure of state schooling to provide 'proper' education for Black children" (Dove, 1993:434-435). The Black supplementary schools movement was characterised by its focus on Black heritage and history as a way of raising children's self-esteem, which, according to Black parents, was undermined in mainstream schools through racist practices. These schools were also credited for their power in giving parents a great deal of say in what and how their children were being taught (Reay & Mirza, 1997). Thus, the dominant mainstream discourses of uninterested and ignorant parents as sources of young people's underachievement opposed the very notion of schools being established based on parental demand and interest (Reay & Mirza, 1997). These schools were hardly ever funded by Local Authorities (LAs), and sometimes funding was even avoided to prevent an imposition of values, content and systems by funders (Reay & Mirza, 1997). Following this movement and discussions on multicultural education (Du Preez & Roux, 2010), different ethnic groups, starting with Muslim and South Asian communities in the UK, started setting up their own schools, focusing on religious and language education. These were followed by an increase in the number of alternative schools set up by different minority groups, providing instruction in their own community languages (Wei, 2006). According to Wei (2006:78), the main reason behind the establishment of these schools was the "response to the failure of the mainstream education system to meet the needs of the ethnic minority children and their communities – a fact that is often deliberately ignored by various UK governments".

Over time, the terminology used to refer to these schools has become as varied as the schools themselves. Initially, the term 'Black supplementary schools' was used. Later, 'mother-tongue schools' and 'community language schools' were introduced to define schools with alternative educational provisions (Sneddon, 2008; Francis, Archer & Mau, 2009). Currently, the term 'complementary' has been adopted for these schools by many researchers (Creese, Baraç, Bhatt, Blackledge, Hamid, Wei, Lytra, Martin, Wu & Yağcıoğlu-Ali, 2008). Martin, Creese and Bhatt (2003:1) explain that this term "stresses the positive complementary function for those who teach or learn in them." Recent studies on complementary schools use slightly varying definitions, in terms of the functions of these schools and what they may represent.

One of the overarching aims of these schools, no matter the minority community organising the school, seems to be linguistic and cultural 'maintenance' (Wei, 2006). Although these schools appear to be independent in their establishment and organisation, it remains that social, economic and political changes both in their 'home' countries and in the 'host' country inevitably influence the way that they provide and configure educational progammes. In the British context, claims of linguistic and cultural maintenance in the complementary school appear to be interwoven with claims that this raises achievement in the mainstream school. These are claims which can sometimes be found to contradict one another. This study focuses on one such community school, namely a Turkish complementary school, which will be referred to as Tulip Turkish School[1] (TTS), arguing that although the Turkish complementary schools in general, and TTS in particular, claim to provide various educational services that lead to achieving certain goals with young people, in practice, there appears to be limitations to such claims. Moreover, this study demonstrates that while TTS provides various invaluable educational and cultural services to the community and to young people, tensions arise due to mismatches between what is expected from the school, what the school claims to be doing, and what is actually done in the school.

Method
Research Questions and Design
Data presented here was collected as part of a larger ethnographic project,[2] which aimed to describe the experiences of young people of Turkish Cypriot descent, who were attending these schools at the time of the study. The following research questions guided the current analysis:

1. How do people from Turkish Cypriot backgrounds interpret the purposes and practices of the Turkish complementary schools in London?
2. What are the main arguments in the participants' discourses in relation to the functions of the Turkish schools?
3. What is actually happening in these schools in terms of teaching and learning practices?
4. What are the main arguments in the official discourses in relation to the functions of the Turkish schools?
5. In what ways are these arguments (official claims) and actual practices (according to the participants' discourses as well as observations of what is being done) similar/ different from one another?
6. How can these phenomena best be understood within a diasporic framework?

These questions examine the nature of the subjective experiences of a certain group in relation to a specific social phenomenon in a given context. In trying to understand such social phenomena, Hammersley and Atkinson (1995:8) explain that a qualitative (naturalist) approach to be of more use than a quantitative (positivist) approach, which is usually concerned with finding causal relationships between controllable variables under controlled circumstances:

> […] because people's behaviour is not caused in a mechanical way, it is not amenable to the sort of causal analysis and manipulation of variables that are characteristic of the quantitative research inspired by positivism. Any hope of discovering 'laws' of human behaviour is misplaced, it is suggested [by the naturalists], since human behaviour is continually constructed, and reconstructed, on the basis of people's interpretations of the situations they are in.

This perspective also suggests that the social world is fluid and that social meanings, which change from person to person as much as for the same person at different times, govern here-and-now meaning. A qualitative research design was employed with the aim of understanding personal experiences and meanings attached to these experiences, and to compare these to the arguments in the official documents in a specific context with a discursive perspective. In addition, a micro-ethnographic perspective was also adopted, which involved focusing on the meanings people attach to things, events and other people in their natural setting (Patton, 2002; Punch, 2005).

Data Collection and Analysis
As part of the overarching study, 13 months of participant observation was carried out. In addition to the ethnographic fieldnotes, a total of 20 in-depth conversational interviews were conducted with: young people who were attending the school at the time of data collection, their parents, ex-students, teachers, and the head-teacher of the school. The criteria for selecting young participants were age (above 10 years old) and ethnic background (at least one parent from a Turkish Cypriot background).[3] Written consent of all the participants was obtained individually. For young people who were under 18 years of age, written consent of their parents was also obtained. Four young participants' interactions were also recorded as they spent their day at the school using radio microphones, which were then analysed using micro-discourse analysis. Finally, artefacts such as: teaching materials used in the classroom, list of performances for ceremonies, information letters sent to parents throughout the academic year, young people's drawings, as well as official documents such as annual reports of the school, were collected and analysed as a triangulation of data collected through other means. Results presented here were primarily generated using a qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews with young people and their teachers, as well as of official documents that were collected throughout the course of the study.

One of the most common criticisms of a qualitative approach, especially in employing ethnographic methods such as participant observation, is that it is no different from common sense, offering no more than what an ordinary person might routinely observe in a given setting (Sacks, 1992, as cited in Silverman, 2005; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1995). The main problem with such an argument is that it ignores the cultivated analytical perspective that the researcher brings to the field. An ordinary person can indeed observe the surroundings and record certain actions or events particularly relevant to their interest. However, an ordinary person is not interested in analysing what he/she has just observed in a systematic way so as to report it to others towards a deepened understanding of the social world. A qualitative researcher with an ethnographic perspective, on the other hand, comes to the field with an awareness of his/her arguments about a given phenomena of interest. The fact that the researcher has to be accountable for all these, i.e. the research design, the processes of data collection and analysis, along with the reported results, adds to the rigour of the research and analysis process. In this respect, two analytical tools were employed by means of which to analyse and interpret the data presented here. The first of these was discursive formations, which result from mobilising a specific discourse to construct a certain topic in a particular way, as described by Foucault (Dreyfus & Rabinow, 1983). The second analytical tool that was used was different types of capital, where Bourdieu's conceptualisation of the term (Bourdieu, 1986), i.e. social space, is

structured around possessions of different types of capital, which have the capability of "conferring strength, power and consequently profit to their holder" (Skeggs, 1997:8).

Results and Discussion
Official Discourses around Complementary Schools in the UK
As mentioned earlier, due to the diasporic nature of the complementary schools, the relation of discourses to their functions are highly dependent on the educational, cultural and national discourses within the 'host' and the 'home' countries. Hence, it is necessary to describe the current educational context within which complementary schools currently operate in the British context. In this respect, Creese (2009:para. 1), who has carried out a comprehensive project on complementary schools in four different communities in the UK, argues that the term 'community languages' in the UK has been coined to refer to "all languages in use other than the 'official' or dominant language of the state". These languages usually belong to linguistic and ethnic minorities, and are taught in complementary schools (Sneddon, 2008). Recently, official documents such as those authored by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES, 2007) and Ofsted (2008), highlight the value of these languages, which are identified as other than the traditional Modern Foreign Languages (French, German, Irish, Welsh and Spanish) in the UK context (Sneddon, 2008). Moreover, arguments are made in favour of funding and support for complementary schools which are currently filling in the existing void of teaching of these languages (Zulawski, 2012). For example, in Ofsted's 'Every Language Matters' report (2008), it is argued that despite the lack of trained teachers in community languages and the limited provision of GCSE[4] preparation in mainstream schools, GCSE results in community languages prove to be consistently high. Thus, the official documents highlight that complementary schools are providers of instruction in these languages, together with the issue of differences of quality of teaching in these schools (Ofsted, 2008; DfES, 2007). In the DfES (later the Department for Children, Schools and Families – DCSF, and currently the Department for Education – DfE), "Languages Review," these languages were described as "a national asset, to which more thought needs to be given in terms of national policy" (DfES, 2007:16). On 'Teachernet', the DCSF website for teachers and school managers, supplementary schools are described as "increasingly important features of many communities" (Teachernet, 2008:para.5) and the need for mutual understanding and collaboration between these schools and mainstream schools are highlighted as a necessity.

As the importance of complementary schools becomes increasingly emphasised through research and government reports, support units are being set up and official documents invoke discourses around the 'raising of standards' and 'equality of opportunity' when referring to complementary schools. In 2006, the Resource Unit for Supplementary and Mother Tongue Schools was merged with 'ContinYou', "a national organisation that supports and promotes many aspects of community learning," to form the National Resource Centre for Supplementary Education funded by the DCSF (Teachernet, 2008:para.12). The main aims of this unit are listed as follows, to: "raise standards in supplementary education; raise the profile of supplementary schools; [and to] raise funds" (National Resource Centre, 2009:2).

In the face of these reports and changes in policies, there is a noticeable change in terms of official discourses regarding the UK government approach towards complementary schools and their practices, as well as in complementary schools' responses to government policies. While early 'supplementary' schools avoided government funding and highlighted deficiencies in mainstream education, the current government documents refer to these organisations as providers of 'national assets'. Furthermore, partnerships with parents and community schools are highlighted as part of good school governance (Brown & Duku, 2008). These policies reflect the wider educational discourses that are largely informed by neoliberalism, within which education became an instrument for gaining credentials to be used in a free market system to increase an individuals' employability. This economic and political discourse currently appears to be dominating the educational landscape of debate in the UK (Olssen & Peters, 2005; Francis, 2006; Gordon & Whitty, 1997). Harber and Mncube (2011) describe a similar discourse in South Africa, where provision for educational services was reconfigured in the post-apartheid period to meet the needs of the global marketplace. This discourse proposes a free market system and commodification of educational services to match its discourses of 'rational optimiser' individuals, who will be flexible enough to cope with any unexpected changes to the job market (Olssen & Peters, 2005). The responsibility of success and failure is placed on individuals, rather than on social or economic structures (Francis, 2006). Thus, educational institutions are positioned as places to focus on helping children achieve certain credentials by means of which their achievement can be measured in a competitive job market. Francis (2006:190) further explains that "Faith in the logic of human capital theory, where a highly qualified, flexible workforce is seen as security in a competitive global marketplace, has resulted in a policy obsession with achievement". As a result, "obsession with academic achievement" as resulting from the rise of the "competition state" is created within and by the system (Mahony, 1998, as cited in Francis, 2006:190). In addition, at the policy level, statements of 'excellence' and 'standards' dominate policy documents, which lead to marketisation of educational services (Giroux, 2002; Gordon & Whitty, 1997). While in the past, complementary schools would be defined by their community orientation and detachment from any governmental connections such as the Black supplementary schools movement (Reay & Mirza, 1997), these schools seem presently to compete for funding from the government (House of Commons Daily Debates, 2008) as they mobilise discourses of academic achievement and raising standards. So, within this distinctly neoliberal context, where do Turkish complementary schools stand?

Official vs. Insider Discourses around Turkish Complementary Schools
When the Turkish schools first emerged in 1950s, it was because the community members were "worried that their children were growing up under the influence of the English/British culture and if this continued future generations would be assimilated and would lose their identities completely" (TLCEC of UK, 2006:2). Furthermore, "the unwavering central goal" since then has been explained as "the teaching of Turkish language and culture" (E. Mehmet, personal communication, November 18, 2007, author's translation). However, since studies focusing on the underachievement of minority youth in the UK seem to suggest young people of Turkish/Turkish Cypriot backgrounds have been the lowest achieving minority group since the 1970s (see Little, 1975; Mehmet Ali, 2001, 2006; Taylor, 1988), Turkish complementary schools in the UK in general and TTS in particular appear to have taken on the challenge of "tackling underachievement" of Turkish Speaking

(TS) youth in mainstream schools (Sonyel, 2005). In this respect, the main objectives of the Turkish Language, Culture and Education Consortium[5] (TLCEC) of the UK's business plan refers to creating "a cohesive approach to contributing towards supplementary schools' role in raising achievement," while improving and standardising "qualitative practices and measures" amongst its members, and engaging and informing "parents of the important contribution they make to raise achievement" (Sonyel, 2005:5). It is worth noting how the terms used in these aims match with the neoliberal educational discourses previously described (Francis, 2006; Gordon & Whitty, 1997).

In the TLCEC of UK's business plan, a number of issues are also raised in relation to what Turkish schools in general can do for the youth and their families. First, Turkish schools are portrayed as places where underachievement can be tackled by raising standards for young people through extra tuition in subjects other than the Turkish language, such as support classes in Maths, English and Science. Second, parents are portrayed as lacking information about and involvement in their children's education, so efforts to raise their awareness in these terms are highlighted. Third, success in standardised tests, such as the GCSE in the Turkish language, is described as an important form of capital that young people gain by attending Turkish schools. It is also argued that this success has a spill-over effect, where young people gain in confidence and strive to do their best in other subjects in their mainstream schools as well. In the following sections, I will consider how each of these claims are mobilised, how people operating in each respond to/are positioned, and how they are in tension with other discourses, such as maintaining Turkish language and culture, both in discourse and in practice.

Raising (Under)Achievement

In the TLCEC's five-year business plan, member schools are encouraged to "provide supplementary booster classes in English, Maths and Science in KS 2, 3 and 4" (Sonyel, 2005:9). Sonyel (2005:16) claims that "these courses have provided young people with a significant advantage" in their mainstream learning by increasing their self-esteem, and these classes were highlighted as the core of the education that the Turkish schools provided to help raise young people's achievement levels in the mainstream (Sonyel, 2005). TTS's Annual Report[6] (2007–2008:16) also claimed that the afterschool Homework Club (HC) helped "remedy problems arising from homework and general schoolwork as well as building on additional subject areas that the students feel weakened from". This discourse argues the 'need' for TTS, where 'extra and necessary' help in mainstream subjects can be provided for TS young people, who are continuously underachieving. In terms of the practices of TTS, in my interviews with young people who attended the HC, they mentioned how helpful the HC was for them. Their discussion of the Turkish school did not involve statements of 'underachievement', but rather focused on 'getting help' with their mainstream subjects. Atakan, a 12-year-old boy, described how he received higher marks in Maths in his mainstream school due to his attendance at TTS: *to become ... better at Maths I already got my highest mark* [in Maths] *in English school because of* [coming] *here* [sic].

Atakan said that this was the main reason he attended the Turkish school, and intimated that learning Turkish language almost held a secondary importance for him. On a similar note, Meryem, an 11-year-old girl, explained that she felt more confident and comfortable in her mainstream school because she had studied certain topics in TTS before:

> sometimes like they give you like a little secret way of doing things .. [...] yeah so I learn things from Turkish school before I go to English school so I know it better and th- I think it's quite good because we doing division at the moment and I did loads of division cause I had to I had loads of pages in my book to do with division for the Turkish school so I did that and I found it easy to do now.

Meryem also described the way in which she would get help with specific Maths subjects when she mentioned to her teachers at TTS that she needed help in her mainstream school. Through these responses, young people claim that the extra teaching that they receive from TTS has helped them both in increasing their self-confidence and self- esteem, and also in getting better results by receiving individualised instruction on relevant topics.

Based on these claims and similar arguments in official documents, one would expect that the provision of support classes in mainstream subjects might be a priority in many Turkish schools, including in TTS. Interestingly, this was not the case in TTS, where the HC was claimed to be a key provision in tackling the persistent problems that TS students had in their mainstream subjects but it was not in demand. Among my informants, four out of seven attended the HC at TTS, whereas out of approximately 110 students at the school, only 20-25 students attended the HC. There were a number of reasons for the low rate of attendance in the HC. First of all, the HC was offered as an optional class at extra tuition for those who wished to attend and was not a part of the practices of the Turkish complementary school per se. Thus, if parents wanted their children to get this extra help, they were required to pay an extra fee. Second, the HC was offered in the afternoons, following the morning classes, which focused on Turkish language teaching and learning. Hence, in their own words, many young people found attending the HC exhausting. For instance, Meryem described her weekends at TTS as a "very long day", because she attended the Turkish school in the morning and the HC in the afternoon. Third, the HC was not the only activity that was offered in the afternoon; there were competing activities, such as folk dancing, and modern dance. Thus, if a student wanted to get help with his/her mainstream subjects as well as be involved in a cultural activity, he/she needed to halve the time spent in the HC. Consequently, although in the official documents TTS seemed to be prioritising "raising achievement levels in the mainstream", its actual practices signalled a tension between the two main discourses within the school, namely raising achievement and cultural maintenance.

Although underachievement now appears to be a real and pressing issue within Turkish Speaking Communities of the UK (Mehmet Ali, 2001, 2006; Sonyel, 2005), it seems that there is a mismatch between the discourse of 'raising academic achievement' and 'maintaining language and culture,' which was the central reason for the establishment of Turkish complementary schools. When the current official documents are examined closely, however, underachievement of young people seems to be the central focus. The reason for this shift in the officially stated aims might be that a space is thereby provided for visibility for the Turkish community in educational debates, and may enable them to access various resources available for minorities within the UK. In the case of TTS, for example, the school received approximately £19,000 each year during the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years from the local council within which it operated. This was because it was the only such

organisation serving the Turkish community in this particular area. The school receives separate funding for the morning classes and for the afternoon HC. This is the third highest contribution made to a voluntary organisation in this council area, following a Muslim women's association and a complementary school for Yoruba speakers. Thus, by making a case for tackling underachievement, the school was able to increase the amount of funding it received from the council. This is a good example of mobilising the neoliberal political discourses, specifically those in the UK that are concerned with achievement levels and exam results, in order to gain funding for a school.

Educating Parents

In addition to the issue of underachievement, another function of TTS that emerged from my analysis was the 'educating parents.' In Creese et al.'s (2008) study of complementary schools in four communities in the UK, it is explained that due to their longstanding histories of underachievement in mainstream education, parents from Bangladeshi and Turkish communities are offered support from complementary schools to assist them in understanding "the values and practices of primary and secondary state schools" through parental meetings and translation services (Creese et al., 2008:14). This argument is supported by the claims that the Consortium and its members (Turkish complementary schools) are working towards tackling the language problems that some Turkish speaking parents experience when contacting mainstream schools:

> The Consortium will organise a number of conferences across London to highlight the findings of the report and the benefits of parental involvement [...] The Consortium will organise conferences to provide parents with information on the UK education system, how they can help their children along with sources of further information. The consortium will also draft and publish information sheets for parents with poor English language (Sonyel, 2005:17).

Moreover, on the Consortium's website, the benefits of attending Turkish schools are listed as follows: "Turkish Schools are proven route to raising standards among Turkish children. By raising educational standards we provide children with equality of opportunities. By encouraging parent to take their children to Turkish schools will reduce underachievement of our children" [sic] (TLCEC in UK, 2009). Thus, informing and educating parents emerges as another function of Turkish schools, from the Consortium's point of view. In this respect, the schools are positioned as places that can educate parents about their children's educational options.

In practice, however, I observed that there were problems with achieving the goal of 'educating parents' at TTS. Sevgi, the head teacher and the organiser of the school, seemed to be the only person who worked hard to inform parents about their children's educational opportunities. I observed Sevgi talking to parents of students several times both in the school and on the phone about how they might carry out the registration process for the GCSE exams, for example. I also saw her advise parents on sending their children to specific colleges following their graduation from high school. In this respect, Sevgi did practise her role as the 'educator' of parents in her school. Other than her, however, I did not witness any teachers guiding parents in terms of the educational routes their children might take. I believe that this was due to the fact that many of the teachers in TTS were contract teachers from Turkey and Northern Cyprus, who did not have as detailed practical knowledge about the

education system in the UK as someone who might have had the experience of studying in the system. From this perspective, this lack of experience presents a tension between the way in which the official documents construct the function of the school as a place where parents will be educated about educational opportunities and the system, as well as what is actually available in the school in terms of assistance.

In my interviews with teachers at the TTS on the other hand, it emerged that many of the parents whose children attended Turkish complementary schools or Turkish language classes in their mainstream schools, indeed seemed to be uninvolved and/or not interested in their children's education *per se*. In other words, even those parents who sent their children to these schools were perceived as 'indifferent' by the teachers at the TTS. Tarık, a contract teacher from Turkey, explained that many parents did not follow up on their children's learning at home:

> we cannot teach children much here we can only direct them we can only guide them if parents do not focus on that and they [children] don't continue [their learning] at home we gave all of them books but how many of their parents open those books and make their children read or read together with them I don't think so I mean had children have read [at home] they would have learned [more than they seem to have learned].

Claiming that parents expect their children to learn Turkish language and culture and be successful just by sending their children to TTS, Tarık also blamed the parents for what he called their children's "failure to learn." Many of the teachers I talked to claimed that, among parents who sent their children to TTS, only very few actually followed up on their learning at home and got involved in the school's activities. By characterising parents in this way, teachers were compartmentalising the responsibility of teaching and learning, and were blaming parents for not doing their part within the family. This stands in contrast to the claims made in the Consortium's official documents, where it was asserted by the Consortium that **once** parents send their children to Turkish schools, they would be interested in and educated about their children's education. From the teachers' view however, it was claimed that even if parents sent their children to the school, they could still be indifferent about their educational achievements. On the other hand, many parents expected the school to provide their children with various skills that they could not provide at home (Archer & Francis, 2007; Kajee, 2011). I believe that this mismatch in expectations on the part of the contract teachers, parents and governing bodies is due to different understandings of what complementary schools are for, as well as what roles teachers and parents play in children's education. The result of this mismatch again causes tensions between what is claimed to be achieved and what is actually done in the school.

Building Capitals

Many adults, students and teachers described TTS as an academic support mechanism for mainstream education, discussion about which overlaps with the current dominant official discourses surrounding Turkish schools in general. This function was also intertwined with the provision of instruction in Turkish language and culture. The TTS's Annual Report (2007-2008:9-10) described "a remarkably high success rate, with many students gaining the top grades" in GCSE and A-level exams and claimed to have "the best GCSE and A-level results among all other Turkish weekend schools within the UK." It

also extensively discussed how these results would lead to an increased "incentive to work harder in other subjects and continue their success in higher education" on the part of the students, and noted how they also "prove to be a bonus and of great help, getting into colleges and universities" (TTS Annual Report, 2007-2008:10). These claims were then related to increased self-esteem and confidence in young people regarding their future academic and personal lives. All these arguments were used to make a case for: (a) the school's contribution to young people's cultural and economic capital development; (b) creating a demand for the school's activities, hence attracting more students by focusing on good results and high standards; and (c) increasing the school's competitive edge for possible funders. Yet, in each of these cases, tensions arise between competing discursive formations.

Learning the Turkish language and obtaining relevant certifications for this linguistic competency was an important function of TTS, according to both the official documents as well as the users of the school themselves. In these ways, the school would be developing the cultural capital of its youth, which they would later be able to capitalise on in various ways, such as taking a Turkish GCSE, which would then increase their options for employability as a translator, and turn their linguistic capital into economic capital. In some cases, these arguments were intertwined with gender specific discourses. For example, Ayşe, a contract teacher from North Cyprus, claimed that, especially for girls, knowing Turkish and attaining certifications for their knowledge, i.e. Turkish GCSE and A-level certificates, would eventually help their financial security by enabling them to work as translators:

> for example when I think about the girls when they know English very well and when they know Turkish very well too, without even going to work they can earn money by doing translations at home and going to councils once a week they can manage themselves so in that sense it is important.

Ayşe suggested that if girls had qualifications in Turkish, they would be able to support themselves financially even if they got married and had children, by working from home as freelance translators. In other words, she believed that young girls could capitalise on their knowledge of Turkish economically. She highlighted this point as an important function of the Turkish school, while at the same time, mobilising a gender discourse where women were portrayed as potential mothers with a potential need for financial support (Yuval-Davis, Anthias & Kofman, 2005). Regardless of their social class backgrounds and time spent in the UK, similar views were expressed by my young participants, where they recognised the value of getting GCSE and A-level exams in Turkish because they believed that they could possibly capitalise on these qualifications later. For example, Mustafa, who was 11 and who seemed to be the most reluctant of the group in terms of school attendance and learning, mentioned that he was learning Turkish so

> then I can get like like if I go Cyprus or to get a job or something and live there yeah so then I can like sw- when people talk to me like proper Turkish so then I can understand them and other stuff.

In other words, the Turkish school provided a means by which to cater for the need to learn and to maintain Turkish language and culture for specific social and economic agendas. Francis et al. (2009) argue that one of the main functions of the Chinese schools in their study emerged in the formulation of 'language as capital,' where young people aimed to learn Chinese to facilitate their employability in the current job market, as well as their advancement in social class terms. They introduce the term 'ethnic capital', arguing that:

> Hence these pupils might be seen to be utilising an 'ethnic capital' to benefit their saleability in the global labour market, interestingly refusing the discursive 'Othering' of their minority ethnic language as irrelevant in western culture and rather reinvesting this language skill as currency in the neo-liberal marketplace. We use the term 'ethnic capital' tentatively, but feel that it encapsulates a valid distinction between the mobilisation of a minoritised 'community language' (as in the case of Cantonese Chinese in Britain), and the mobilisation of foreign languages as capital more generally (for example, the case of White pupils learning Putonghua in public or maintained school) (Francis et al., 2009:527).

In this respect, TTS has created a demand among the community members to earn qualifications for their knowledge of Turkish language and culture, which supports the idea of language learning as a means of developing social and cultural capital (Francis et al., 2009; Archer & Francis, 2006). In the interviews, the issue of achieving a qualification in order to prove language competency arose when they talked about their possible future plans. For example, Atakan mentioned that he would probably take the GCSE to help him enter into "a good school," which would then help him to get "a good job." Selim (11-year old boy) explained to me that he came to TTS to learn about "grammar" and writing in Turkish, which would be useful when he took Turkish "GCSE and maybe A-level".

These statements indicate how young people envisage the function of TTS as helping them build on their existing capital in order to achieve their academic, social, economic and personal goals, rather than maintaining language and culture for their own sake. These expectations seem to be in tension with the actual teaching activities in the school, which focus on Turkish language and culture as ends in themselves. My analysis of their references to TTS showed that young people did not come to TTS to learn the Turkish language and culture as an identity project, but in order to learn them as transferrable capitals that can be instrumentalised (capitalised) when needed in the marketplace. Six out of seven of the young participants pointed out in their interviews that they were attending TTS to learn Turkish (i) in order to take Turkish GCSE exams; (ii) as a resource to be used when looking for jobs; and (iii) as a tool to communicate with people when they travel to Cyprus or Turkey. Hence, while the school organisers, parents and teachers mentioned several times that the school's primary aim was to teach young people their language and culture, the same discourse was absent in young people's responses. Young people's understandings of the functions of TTS are primarily to do with building transferable capitals to quantify for the job markets they occupy in future, while, as discussed previously, the organisers and governing bodies, such as the Consortium, claim equally that the school's function is to maintain linguistic and cultural identities.

Considering that the statements about the school's functions are made within the discourse focused on the building of capitals for young people, it is not difficult to see how TTS positions itself in the official documents as a centre that can provide the necessary circumstances to help young people develop their academic qualifications both in and outside mainstream schools, i.e. to develop their cultural capital, and also to assist them in developing their self-esteem. Thus, these refe-

rences to exam results make the success story of the school tangible; if a complementary school is not only teaching young people about their 'cultural roots', but also helping them raise their attainment levels, then that school is considered to be worth funding. In a system where neoliberal discourses centred on the raising of achievement and standards, where performance measures are prioritised (Francis, 2006), claims such schools as having "the best GCSE and A-level results among all other Turkish weekend schools within the UK", the TTS is in a relatively good position in the competition for funding from various sources. References to higher education in the participants' discourses, where Turkish GCSEs are described as "a bonus" for those who try to enter a university, imply that TTS provides young people with the social and cultural capitals necessary to advance academically as well as socially.

Conclusion

The tensions within TTS described here signals a change in wider social and educational discourses with regard to the status of complementary schools in the UK, also reported by İssa and Williams (2009). The analysis presented here showed that these tensions emerged because the TTS was visible within a neo-liberal discourse where high standards, good results and excellent track records are important to the system of accessing funding. The increasing interest on the government's part in supporting those complementary schools, which have good relations with mainstream schools, is a sign of the danger of complementary schools losing their independent status within the education system. By mobilising the discourses that centre on the 'raising of standards', they are giving way to government intervention as well as to the possibility of losing their status as the providers of the "culturally embedded supplementary education" (House of Commons Daily Debates, 2008). Recognising this danger, the Consortium's five-year business plan states that the member Turkish schools will aim:

>   4.24   To ensure that supplementary schools remain the primary provider of Turkish language teaching.
>   4.24.1 Turkish supplementary schools have a proven record of providing quality Turkish language teaching. Each year hundreds of its pupils attain exceptional grades in GCSE, AS and A Levels.
>   4.24.2 The Consortium would welcome the introduction of Turkish as a new modern language in mainstream education. The challenge for member schools will be to embrace such developments while recognising that the added value they provide will ensure that community schools will remain as the primary provider of language classes. We will follow the Government's proposals closely and push for a fair share of any additional resources. We will need to enhance our partnership with those school members who already have good relationships to help advance our just demands (Sonyel, 2005:16).

These statements refer to the possible challenge that if Turkish becomes a widely taught language in British mainstream schools, there may no longer be a need for Turkish complementary schools to teach the Turkish language. In this respect, the approach of such schools, is to develop positive relations with the governmental organisations, which the Consortium refers to as external stakeholders, to maintain their status as the "primary provider of Turkish language teaching", at the expense of losing their status as community schools (Sonyel, 2005).

These competitive discursive formations result in an emphasis on the need for these schools to "enter into meaningful and mutually productive partnership with mainstream schools" (Sonyel, 2005:9). This objective, together with the references to the Education Act of 2002 and Children's Act of 2004, requiring schools to adopt "procedures and practices that mirror mainstream schools" (Sonyel, 2005:13), are significantly different from the rhetoric used by the Black supplementary school movement when it first started. In this respect, Turkish complementary schools are being discursively 're-formed' in the current educational space in the UK and various factors, such as competition for funds, cause them to become part of discourses that they initially (and deliberately) did not participate in. This inevitable participation in the current system, however, causes several points of tension within Turkish complementary schools, in terms of their proposed functions, the expectations they fulfil in the community, and their activities. Finally, tensions surrounding the functions and practices of the Turkish complementary schools in the UK have implications for other Turkish schools around the world, including the ones in South Africa, as the neo-liberal educational policies previously discussed seem to be at work in many developing countries (Harber & Mncube, 2011). Although studies focusing on the philosophy of some of these schools exist (e.g. Mohamed, 2007), there seems to be a dearth of the kind of ethnographic studies that describe the actual practices within these institutions. In this respect, it is suggested that further research should be conducted on the discourses surrounding educational services provided by the Turkish schools within the South African context.

Notes

1   All names referring to the research site and the participants are pseudonyms.
2   The data and results presented here largely comes from the author's own PhD work.
3   These criteria were set based on the aims of the main project, where the experiences of young people of Turkish Cypriot descent who were attending Turkish complementary schools in London were the focus.
4   General Certificate of Secondary Education
5   The TLCEC of the UK is an umbrella organisation formed by the participation of "approximately 90% of all Turkish speaking supplementary schools, which currently cater to [sic] around 3,000 pupils" (Sonyel, 2005: 6).
6   In order to preserve the identities of the research participants and the research site and keep the researcher's promise of anonymity, reference to this document will be kept confidential.

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