



Dialogues / Dialoglar

Language, memory, history

a panel discussion

Participants

Athena Farrokhzad, Poet

Helena Bani-Shoraka, Sociolinguist

Yasemin Çongar, Co-founder and director of P24

Tolga Cora, Historian

Moderated by **Ingela Nilsson**, director of the SRII

12 November 2020, 19:00 TRT (17:00 CET)

To receive a zoom admission code, register at event@sri.org.tr

Language, memory, history

With this panel discussion, we'd like to offer a discussion of languages as communicative tools, but also as ideological, aesthetic and emotional components of human life.

Languages, in both a linguistic and a semiotic sense, do not merely convey information and messages from one individual to another, but also signal belonging and collective identity, with exclusion and rejection following in its trail. So what does language mean in times of social and political instability, when clear communication is essential? Why do we think and speak so much in terms of 'we' and 'them', when it seems more important that ever to focus on what we have in common? And why is multilingualism by some seen as a problem, when it is also the prerequisite for crucial cultural and political exchange?

Istanbul is a place that, less than a century ago, was highly polyglot and where it was customary to know at least the basics of a handful of different languages in order to communicate with each other. It was never free of friction, but it still had a high tolerance for ambiguity of a kind that seems to have become rare in most modern societies. With this place and these ideas as a point of departure, we invite you to a discussion of language, memory and history in contemporary literature, linguistics, historiography and journalism.



Consulate General of Sweden
Istanbul



DIALOGUES / DIALOGLAR is a series of interdisciplinary talks, panels and presentations organized as a collaboration between the General Consulate in Istanbul and the Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul.

Bios

Tolga Cora is a historian who focuses on the social and cultural lives of Christians in the last century of the Ottoman Empire. One of his main fields of interests is the memoirs by Christian Ottomans, as he studies inter-ethnic relations depicted in them. Dr. Cora translated some memoirs and excerpts into Turkish.

Helena Bani-Shoraka is a sociolinguist with a special interest in multilingualism. She has worked on patterns and functions of language choice and code-switching in cross-generational interactions among Azeri speaking families in Tehran. For a number of years now she has been involved in research and development projects focusing on newly arrivals in the Swedish school system.

Athena Farrokhzad is a poet who lives in Stockholm. She works as a literary critic, playwright and teacher of creative writing. Her debut collection *Vitsvit (White Blight)*, published in 2013 has been translated into fifteen languages. In 2016 it was followed by *Trado*, written together with the Romanian poet Svetalan Cârstea. Her latest book is *I rörelse* from 2019.

Yasemin Çongar is co-founder and director of P24, a non-profit platform for independent journalism in Istanbul. She is also the founder of Turkey's online literary review K24 and the Istanbul Literature House. An essayist and translator, Çongar is the author of four books in Turkish.

The discussion will be moderated by **Ingela Nilsson**, director of the SRII and professor of Greek at Uppsala University.