

Dear Guests , Musafires Keridos,

Komo muestra kerido maestro Eliezer mos ambezo a ser kreativos en este kurso de Ladino, vo a karistrear(mezklar) Ladino un poko con Ingles, porke evidentemente dos semanas de lisiones no eran suficiente para avlar Ladino fluente. Yo so un ijo djudio de comunidad sephardi de estambul , ama maalesef yo avlo solamente un poko de djudeo espanyol, porke Ladino fue la lingua de mi nonas y nonos , ama ellos an deshado de avlar Ladino con migo. El unico refran que yo me recuerdo de mi nono era “ kaminando i avlando” , ama dinguno me avlo en Ladino dispues de su muerte.

Well, when i received that e-mail about Ladino course here at Bilgi Universitesi organized jointly by Ben Gurion University, Cervantes Institute and Sephardic Cultural Research Center in İstanbul, i didn't hesitate a moment to join it, because it was like a good news about an heritage inherited from my grandfather brought to me by a guy called Eliezer. I was quite exited and a bit nervous, when i entered the first class, because i didn't know whether i was good enough to take that heritage.

In fact, when Eliezer started to speak in Ladino and posing questions like “De ke mahalle de Istambul tu sos?”, for a short moment i couldn't understand what he was telling even though he was using turkish words that i perfectly know. I think it was the picture in my mind that confused me because Djudio Espanyol was to me a language only spoken by old people and doomed to be death soon. Our grandparents used to use it only when they were playing cards, or paying the bills but they avoided to speak in Ladino to us, sothat we could have a proper turkish accent while speaking turkish. BUT, Elizer showed us in a single sentence, that young people as well can speak Ladino fluently without spoiling their proper Turkish accent. So i got two crucial messages in the first instance of the class which totally changed the wrong picture in my mind.

In the following days, the lectures were like a rich mixed salad as the Ladino itself. Since there were two heterogenous groups in the class, the isrealis who already had the introduction course and have a beter knowledge of Ladino grammer, and us, the turkish students who have a Ladino flavour, but no clue about grammar. Our poor professor had to find the balance by mixing grammar with Ladino proverbs and short stories. His enthusiasm and dynamic way of teaching kept our attention awake. The lectures were enriched by our

guest Speakers like Pablo Martin Asuero (Director de instituto Cervantes), el Sinyor Yusuf Altintas and Hahambası Rav Haleva and muestra kerida Karen Gerşon Şarhon who explained us different aspects of Ladino culture. Karen also taught us how to sing kantigas djudias en ladino. And creative presentations of the isreali students made the classes even more interactive.

At the end of the summer school, i was fascinated by the rich heritage brought in form of Djudeo Espanyol that reflected the sephardic jewish philosopy, wisdom,humor, emotions, basically the way of sephardic living of my antecedents in its songs, stories, jokes. All these are a major part of my present identity. After the course, my attitude towards Ladino totally changed; this language somehow looked down in the past, actually is the best evidence that shows jewish flexibility to adapt new conditions, openness to integration without losing its essence and preserving its identity. Therefore, it should be maintained both as a vertical link among generations and as an horizontal link among sephardic communities at a point in time.

Bueno, Este curso de Ladino es la primera kandelika ke Eliezer mos trusho. Ahora esta en muestras manos de ensenderla. A veces un chispa (kıvılcım) es suficiente para azer un yangın. Las palavaras son insuficientes para deskriver la emosion ke tengo kuando Karen kanta kantigas como “ocho kandelikas” i ahoro dispues de este curso yo entiendo todas las palavaras ke ella kanta, i kero ke mis ijos tambien sientan lo mismo...i yo no kero ke les kede solamente la palavra “vasio” como el simbolo de Ladino.