

## **1. Please provide a brief outline of your training and scientific activity.**

The Istanbul of my childhood was extremely multilingual, and so to become a linguist was perhaps pre-ordained for me. At home, I was exposed to German, French, Russian and Yiddish, in addition to the Greek of my nanny and of many neighbors. I grew up speaking those languages, but, unfortunately, my family stopped speaking Russian at some point, and so the little Russian that I knew as a child disappeared quickly. My Greek stuck with me a bit longer, and I can still understand some basic Greek. Obviously, I picked up Turkish, as well, and going to a Turkish primary school solidified my native competence in the language.

After graduating from the German High School (where, in addition to Turkish and German, we had classes in English every day), I went to Heidelberg University, where I studied German and English literature on an academic exchange scholarship. I had to take an introductory linguistics course where we were told about a new approach to study and analyze languages, called Generative Grammar. We read parts of *Syntactic Structures* and of *Aspects*. It still took me some time to find my way to formal linguistics, however. In Germany, our lecturers in linguistics were sympathetic towards Generative Grammar, but they didn't understand it very well and thus couldn't really teach it. I was attracted to it, but there was nobody to explain it all to me in clear terms. Shortly thereafter, I met Bob Lees, who had founded a Department of Linguistics at Tel Aviv University and invited me to stay and study formal linguistics, although it was the middle of the semester. The courses at Tel Aviv, and in particular Lees' introductory linguistics course, which was a wonderful introduction to linguistics and got me totally hooked, persuaded me to become an academic, and a professional linguist. Lees suggested that I should continue towards a PhD in linguistics, and that I should do so in the US. This is how I ended up at Harvard, as a doctoral student in theoretical linguistics.

One of the great things about studying at Harvard is the ability to take classes at MIT for credit, and to include MIT faculty in one's doctoral committee. I was lucky enough to take classes from Ken Hale and Noam Chomsky, to write papers for them and receive wonderful feedback, and to have Chomsky be part of my committee. The many visitors at MIT likewise contributed to my education in theoretical linguistics.

Since then, I have been teaching at Syracuse University, and have continued my research in theoretical syntax, specializing in Turkish and Turkic, although I have also continued to be interested in German and Germanic.

## **2. Please state your reasons for choosing Venice and the Department for your research and teaching stay.**

My main reason is the research strength and focus of that research at the Department. All of the faculty members are involved in theoretical linguistics, and most of them work within a generative approach which is empirically based. The cartographic approach to (morpho-)syntax used by many of the members of the

Department has been very productive so far and promises to be successful with respect to future work, as well. I am excited to participate in this type of research via my upcoming stay, and I look forward to teaching the talented students that the Department attracts. This will be my second longer visit to the Department; my first visit was a one-month stay in 1998, during which I gave four lectures, and interacted with faculty members. Those lectures formed the basis of later articles, and I benefited immensely from the feedback I received from the Department's members; informal meetings beyond those lectures were very constructive, as well. Since then, I have visited the Department on a few additional occasions (albeit for very brief periods each time); the talks I gave on those occasions all benefited from further feedback by departmental members. I am certain that my upcoming longer stay will yield similar benefits.

**3. Have you ever had a research collaboration with the teaching staff of the Department of Linguistics and Comparative Cultural Studies in the past?**

I have not (yet) had a *direct* research collaboration with any of the members of the Department. However, I have participated in some research-related projects led by the Department's teaching staff; for example, I contributed an article to a Festschrift honoring Professor Guglielmo Cinque—a volume co-edited by some other departmental members. More recently, I presented a talk (co-authored with a colleague in Germany) at a workshop organized by Professor Giuliana Giusti, as part of a larger, international research project; Professor Giusti will be editing a proceedings volume based on that workshop, and my co-author and myself will contribute to that volume. I do hope that some more direct research collaboration with departmental members will result from my upcoming research and teaching stay.