


## Language Learning of Immigrant Students from the Teacher's Perspective: Challenges and Barriers

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### **Abstract:**

*Proficiency in language not only fosters amicable social interactions but also cultivates harmonious relations within the school milieu. The primary objective of this study is to assess the impediments hindering the language learning process among immigrant students, as perceived by educators, and to scrutinize the challenges stemming from linguistic inadequacies within educational settings. We utilized a phenomenological approach to examine the views of middle school teachers with at least one foreign-nationality student in their classes regarding the language factor in the adaptation process. The research was conducted with eight middle school teachers in Istanbul, specifically in the districts of Bağcılar and Zeytinburnu, all of whom have at least one immigrant student in their classes. The Semi-Structured Interview Technique was utilized to collect data. Data analysis was performed using inductive coding and following Creswell's Data Analysis Steps. This study's findings underscore the distinct challenges confronting immigrant students concerning language insufficiency during their adaptation to the school environment. Teachers believe that the language differences of immigrant students impact peer relationships, academic achievements, and their own teaching practices. Teachers also identify barriers hindering the language learning process of immigrant students, such as low student motivation, insufficient family support, class size, and inadequacies in overarching policies. Ultimately, the study emphasizes the necessity for immigrant students to undergo language learning to adapt to the education system. In this regard, it is crucial for families to participate actively in the language learning process, and the government should involve families in language learning processes through effective and widespread projects.*

**Keywords:** *Adaptation, language learning, immigrant students, teacher, language barrier.*

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## INTRODUCTION

Throughout human history, narratives abound of individuals whose birthplaces diverged from their eventual dwelling. This enduring notion, as ancient as human civilization, persists as a mere act of relocation. The International Organization for Migration<sup>1</sup> defines migration as movements involving a change of residence, whether crossing national borders or staying within a state, regardless of the duration, structure, or reason for such displacement (IOM, 2013). The concept of migration merits a comprehensive evaluation beyond individual transformations, acknowledging its universal nature encompassing multifaceted origins and ramifications. While individually conducted migrations are not expected to have a multidimensional impact due to their inherent nature, collective migration movements triggered by societal changes emerge as a phenomenon affecting entire societies in both receiving and sending countries (Castles & Miller, 2008). Although people have migrated for various reasons throughout history, negative factors such as war and terrorism in the Middle East in recent years have positioned neighboring countries as recipients of migration. For instance, the crisis that began in Syria in 2011 has led to a migration movement affecting the demographic structure of neighboring countries. Following the conflicts that erupted in Syria, borders were opened with the "open-door" policy after thousands of people fleeing the turmoil amassed at the borders of Turkey. At the current stage, Turkey has become the country receiving the most migration in the region, both due to its geopolitical position and the migration policies it has pursued. This situation has brought the discussion of the integration of migrants in Turkey to the forefront of debates.

According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM, 2021), the social integration of migrants is critically important for the social and cultural integrity as well as the economic growth of host countries. The Turkish Language Association (TDK) defines "integration" as "suitability, harmony among the parts of a whole." In contrast to integration and assimilation, the concepts of "unity" and "solidarity" come to the forefront in the process of adaptation (Demireva, 2019). In essence, within the adaptation trajectory, immigrant communities are anticipated to cohabit with the host nation while safeguarding their distinct cultural identities. Turkey, in this trajectory, has prioritized the social and cultural adaptation of migrants rather than enforcing migration strategies like integration or assimilation. This approach stems from the initial premise that migrants were not considered permanent residents upon the commencement of the migration surge (Aykaç & Karakaş, 2022).

Several factors influence the adaptation process of immigrants to the host country. Factors such as the educational level of immigrants, the duration of stay in the destination country, age, gender, social identity, and language emerge as elements that can positively or negatively affect the adaptation process (Saygın & Hasta, 2018). One of the most crucial factors to be addressed at this point is the language learning process of immigrants. Li (2013) defined language as the most crucial tool for facilitating refugees' adaptation to the host country. Recent studies also demonstrate that the language learning process is an integral part of the migration culture and adaptation process (Yüksel & Yüksel, 2022; Turan & Fansa, 2021; Eckert, 2018; Forrest, Benson & Siciliano, 2018). The collective findings of these studies underscore a direct correlation between immigrants' holistic adaptation to their migrated locales and their comprehension of both the language and culture prevalent in those environments. Specifically,

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<sup>1</sup> For detailed information about IOM, see [www.iom.int](http://www.iom.int)

a pronounced emphasis should be directed toward language acquisition to facilitate day-to-day functionality and to grasp the societal thought patterns. Proficiency in the language stands as a fundamental tool for immigrants, enabling seamless integration into society by facilitating accessible information, interaction with diverse community stakeholders, and fostering effective communication. Learning a foreign language is not just about learning sentence structures and grammar of that language; it also provides an opportunity to get to know cultures beyond one's own, compare these two cultures, and develop oneself accordingly (Ünal, Taşkaya & Ersoy, 2018). Schumann (1986) also emphasizes a tight relationship between immigrants' general success in adapting to the sociological climate of the destination and acculturation and their language proficiency.

An additional facet within the discourse on language and adaptation pertains to immigrant students who integrate into the educational system of the host country. According to the current data from the Presidency of Migration Management, there are 1,100,163 school-age migrant children in Turkey in the year 2023. These children constitute one of the most sensitive groups among immigrant communities (Özer, Komsuoglu & Ateşok, 2016). Therefore, educating immigrant children is one of the crucial issues that needs to be carefully addressed in the adaptation process. Language learning is a strategic point for the adaptation of immigrant children because their success in school and life depends on proficiency in both their mother tongue and the language of instruction (Yüksel, 2022; McBrien, 2005). For example, according to a study conducted by Tezcan (2000), migrant children forced to migrate during compulsory education age may not thoroughly learn either their mother tongue or the language of the destination, leading to academic failure. In addition to academic failure, school adaptation problems experienced by refugee students can lead to school dropout (Ereş, 2015). Considering these adverse outcomes, teachers, among the most essential stakeholders in education, have several responsibilities (Pumariega et al., 2005). The language learning process, fostered within the social and cultural milieu, is significantly shaped by teaching methodologies within the school environment. Simultaneously, this learning process reciprocally influences teaching practices.

The relevant literature reveals studies examining the thoughts of teachers working with refugee students regarding the language factor in the adaptation process (Kayacık, 2020; Kardeş & Akman, 2018; Human Rights Watch, 2015). In a study investigating teachers' opinions on the education of Syrian migrants, it is stated that students experience difficulties in learning Turkish and adapting to school (Kardeş & Akman, 2018). Human Rights Watch<sup>2</sup> has also noted that refugee students cannot communicate with their teachers in the classroom. Another study by Kayacık (2020) focuses on the language problems experienced by migrant students in the school environment.

According to Oikonomidoy (2010), language is a fundamental problem in refugee students' education process. The aim of this study is to examine the opinions of middle school teachers who have at least one refugee child in their class regarding the language factor in the adaptation process of refugee children. Exploring the linguistic challenges encountered by Syrian refugee students holds pivotal significance in devising remedies and bolstering the adaptation trajectory. The Ministry of National Education also lists language problems, peer conflicts, placement of students in an age-inappropriate class, family loss, economic problems, communication issues due to language barriers, and teacher attitudes among the risk factors

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<sup>2</sup> For detailed information HRW, see [www.hrw.org](http://www.hrw.org).

hindering children's school adaptation (2014b). Therefore, it is believed that the study will contribute to the literature by identifying subsets of problems caused by language barriers and generating solutions for them. Within this scope, the subsequent research inquiries have been addressed:

1. What are the perceptions of middle school teachers regarding the language barriers experienced by refugee children in the adaptation process?
2. According to middle school teachers, what barriers hinder the language learning of refugee children?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Migration and Adaptation*

Migration not only involves human mobility but also encompasses cultural exchange; in this sense, migration can be considered as the encounter of settled groups with newly arrived groups (Faist, 2018). This exchange also signifies a connection between the native and the migrant. The established connection and the harmonious and coherent construction process to be created indicate the interconnectedness of migration and adaptation.

Harmony, in its literal sense, denotes the congruity and appropriateness observed among the constituent parts composing a unified entity (TDK, 2023). The reason why the term “sosyal uyum” (social harmony) is more preferred in Turkish literature as the equivalent of the concept “social cohesion” lies in its inclusive and equalizing connotation. The most commonly used definition related to the concept of harmony comes from the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees<sup>3</sup> (UNHCR), which presents it from a perspective of reciprocity (2023). According to this definition, harmony is acknowledged as a dynamic, multidimensional, and bilateral process with three interconnected dimensions: legal, economic, and socio-cultural. It is defined as a process that enables individuals to establish a healthy relationship with the society they are part of without losing their own characteristics (Saridoğan, 2019). Moreover, it is underscored as a pivotal factor fostering an environment wherein individuals can achieve self-realization and enhance their productivity (Demirtaş-Zorbaz, 2016).

The reason for the inability to establish a consensus framework on the issue of integration is considered to stem from the fact that each country shapes its migration and integration practices along with its internal dynamics. Therefore, the host society's approaches to immigrants, or more accurately, the level of social acceptance, constitute the primary factor in integration (Erdoğan, 2021). Factors governing the degree of social acceptance revolve around both host society members and immigrants. When viewed from the standpoint of host society members, several considerations influence the level of acceptance. These concerns are more often economic and cultural in nature, such as concerns related to demographic changes, narrowing employment opportunities, and housing issues (Sapancalı, 2005). On the other hand, demographic variables of immigrants, such as language, age, and gender, also determine the level of acceptance (Saygın & Hasta, 2018). In this context, it can be observed that there is a relationship between the level of social acceptance and the increase in integration problems.

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<sup>3</sup> For detailed information about UNCHR, see [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org)

### ***Language as a Factor Influencing the Integration Process***

Language and culture are fundamental to immigrants' integration into the host society. Communication and social interaction, education and employment, social participation, cultural interaction and belonging, and rapid adaptation to the education system are factors that open the door to social acceptance. Simultaneously, there exists a belief that immigrants' capacity to engage with the host society via language will diminish the challenges they might confront in their social interactions and daily routines (De Jong, 2000).

During the decision-making process regarding migration, schools represent the primary institutional arenas where immigrant children initially engage with the host society. The school environment, language, culture, social environment, interaction, and communication pose challenges to the adaptation processes of immigrant children, affecting their social integration. Studies indicate that common difficulties faced by immigrant children in their educational processes include language barriers, lack of appropriate learning environments, insufficient family support, economic concerns, cultural differences, and lack of motivation (Telsaç & Telsaç, 2022; Duman, 2019; Moralı, 2018; Levent & Çayak, 2017). All these factors collectively impact the lives of refugee students along with the adaptation process. For example, language barriers of immigrant students negatively affect their relationships with their peers. A study conducted in Gaziantep focuses on the negative experiences of migrant students with their local peers. When the reasons for this are examined, communication inadequacy due to language barriers, the biased attitude of Turkish families towards migrants, and the adjustment problems of migrant students are considered (Karataştan & Akcan, 2023). In research conducted in Bursa to reveal the preferences of primary school students in playing games, it was observed that local students preferred to play games with other local students, while foreign national students preferred to play games with other foreign national students (Sinan, 2019).

The acquisition of the host country's local language often poses challenges for immigrants. Studies highlighting deficiencies in motivation toward language learning suggest plausible connections to familial support and the inherent characteristics of the child. Furthermore, these factors might intertwine with the correlation between children's eagerness to learn a second language and the encounters of certain adolescence-related difficulties (Tomlinson, 1982). A comprehensive study conducted by the U.S. Department of Education on supporting bilingualism and biculturalism highlighted the significant influence of family, teachers, school environment, and school staff on the adaptation of immigrant children to school (Office of Bilingual Bicultural Education California State Department of Education, 1984). Therefore, considering Turkey's sociological position as a country hosting multiple cultures and the role of schools in the language learning process, examining the difficulties and challenges immigrant students face in Turkey due to language barriers would contribute to the literature

## **METHOD**

### ***Research Design***

This study employs a qualitative research design known as phenomenology, focusing on the views of middle school teachers who have at least one foreign national student in their classes regarding the language factor in the adaptation process of foreign national students. According to Creswell (2021), phenomenology is a research design that focuses on the shared meanings created by individuals who experience the same phenomenon. In this research design, the researcher carefully defines and analyses the participants' experiences (Flick, 2009). Throughout the analysis phase, particular consideration is dedicated to identifying the shared

experiences among participants who encounter similar phenomena (Merriam, 2009). The main goal of the researcher is to focus on, describe, and reduce these shared experiences to a phenomenon (Hatch, 2017).

### **Study Group**

The data for the research were collected from participants selected through purposive sampling, which is one of the appropriate sampling methods. In this context, Bağcılar and Zeytinburnu, which host the highest refugee population on the European side of Istanbul according to the Migration Administration data, were determined as the sample. Subsequently, we visited the District National Education Directorates of these districts, and a list of middle schools with refugee students in their structure was requested. Visits were made to the middle schools listed; wherein preliminary interviews were carried out with middle school teachers. During the preliminary interview, some questions were directed towards the number of immigrant students in the classrooms, the relationships between immigrant students and their peers, their language acquisition processes, willingness to learn the language, and academic achievements. Additionally, questions were asked about the attitudes of local students towards their immigrant friends. These initial interviews sought to identify educators meeting the criteria of instructing at least one foreign national student. Subsequently, interviews were conducted with a total of eight middle school teachers who fulfilled the study's objectives.

Table 1 shows the characteristics of the study group.

**Table1.** Characteristics of the study group

District	School	Teacher	Gender	Age	Subject
Bağcılar	S1	T1	M	50	Science
		T2	W	44	Religious Culture and Ethics
	S2	T3	W	38	Math
		T4	W	32	Science
Zeytinburnu	S3	T5	M	33	Turkish
		T6	M	30	Turkish
	S4	T7	W	26	Science
		T8	W	34	Religious Culture and Ethics

Table 1 shows that four participants were reached from each school in the Bağcılar district. Teachers working in Zeytinburnu district are employed in three different schools. Three of the participants are male teachers, while five are female. These teachers work in various subjects such as Religious Culture and Ethics, Mathematics, Turkish and Science.

### **Data Collection Tools**

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015), collecting data through the “Interview Technique” is a necessary step in situations where researchers cannot observe the phenomenon. Moustakas (1994), on the other hand, considers the interview to be the primary data collection strategy for qualitative studies. In phenomenological studies, researchers are expected to conduct in-depth interviews with participants who share similar experiences (Patton, 2002).

In this study, the Semi-Structured Interview Technique was employed to examine teachers' views on the language factor in the adaptation process of refugee children. To prepare the interview questions, relevant literature was reviewed, examining scientific publications on the

adaptation process of immigrant students, language learning processes, and teacher perspectives. Draft interview questions were prepared as a result of this review. These draft questions were sent to an academic with expertise in education and migration policies, as well as to a middle school teacher with experience working with migrant children, to obtain expert opinions. Based on expert opinions and the scope of the study, the interview questions were revised again to their final form.

The semi-structured interview form, which was developed during the preliminary interviews and tailored to the study's inclusion criteria, was later administered to the teachers who met these criteria and participated in the study. Prior to the implementation, appointments were scheduled with the teachers for suitable dates and times. The interviews were conducted in a quiet classroom or teachers' room to avoid distractions. All interviews were recorded for documentation purposes, and the process was completed. On average, each interview lasted between 20-30 minutes.

### ***Data Analysis***

Creswell's Data Analysis Stages were followed for the analysis of qualitative data. According to Creswell (2021), qualitative data analysis consists of six stages, and the third stage involves inductive/open coding.

1. In this stage, the audio recordings collected from 8 teachers were transcribed.
2. In the second stage, the transcribed data was read several times to extract a general meaning regarding the teachers' views. Another goal of this stage is to ensure the researcher's familiarity with the dataset.
3. In this stage, the data was coded using inductive coding. Within the constructivist approach of inductive coding, researchers code data units such as paragraphs, sentences, or words without being tied to any theory, framework, or structure (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). On the other hand, ensuring data reliability in qualitative research is a crucial step. Therefore, inter-coder agreement was attempted to be achieved during the coding process. Inter-coder agreement is defined as consensus among multiple coders analyzing a dataset (Creswell, 2007). In this study, two researchers independently conducted the coding process. During the inductive coding by both researchers, an iterative process was followed. In the second stage, codes were reviewed again, and codes that lacked a solid foundation or were unrelated to the purpose of the study were identified and eliminated. In the third stage, codes were reviewed again, and codes presenting the same theme were merged. Then, the codes of the two coders were compared to see if they had significant differences. Codes that were significantly different were discussed, and consensus was reached.
4. The identified codes were arranged in the next stage, and related codes were merged to form themes.
5. According to Creswell (2007), themes can be presented in written form, shape, table, visual, or any other format. In this stage, themes were presented in a written format.
6. In the final stage, themes were discussed.

### ***Ethics Committee Approval***

This research was conducted with the permission obtained by the decision of the Ethics Committee of Istanbul University, dated 18/08/2022 and numbered 1157072.

## FINDINGS

Following the analysis, two primary themes have surfaced, aimed at addressing the research inquiries. These main themes are teachers' perceptions of the problems posed by language differences and barriers to refugee children's language learning, according to teachers. Each theme and the codes underneath have been thoroughly explained. Figure 1 illustrates the themes and sub-themes.

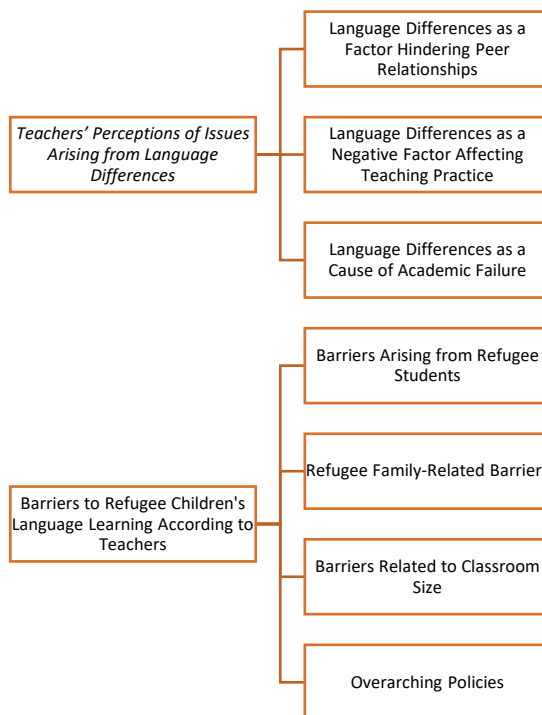


Figure 1. Themes and sub-themes

### ***Theme 1: Teachers' Perceptions of Issues Arising from Language Differences***

During the interviews, most participants discussed their perceptions of issues from language differences. These problems were generally grouped around subcategories such as peer relationships, teaching practice and academic failure.

#### Language Differences as a Factor Hindering Peer Relationships

While discussing the role of language in the social adaptation process of refugee children, teachers have mentioned that this language difference is a fundamental factor hindering peer integration. For example, T1 expressed this issue as follows:

*“Many immigrant students left school because they couldn't adapt. Because everyone speaks Turkish in the classroom. Immigrant students still can't speak; it's like they came from a desert environment. When they can't speak Turkish and enter this environment, there is no mingling with peers, no cultural assimilation. (T1)”*

Other teachers' views related to this sub-theme are as follows:



*“There are many points where they don’t understand each other in the classroom. So, actually, most students have learned the language, but a few refugee students haven’t learned it yet. This makes communication with their peers difficult. There are linguistic challenges. (T5)”*

T3 emphasized that language barriers can lead to misunderstandings and conflicts in peer relationships, disrupting the peaceful atmosphere in the classroom.

*“For example, just the other day, two girls were talking among themselves, saying, ‘Teacher.’ I don’t remember exactly their nationality. Two girls were talking among themselves, ‘Are they talking about me? What are they talking about? I didn’t understand; they laughed,’ and so on. She felt uncomfortable. Then I called those girls, ‘What did you talk about?’ I confronted them, you know. Such things happen. Yes, there should be a common language. Otherwise, sensitivities, misunderstandings, conflicts, and problems can arise. (T3)”*

Teachers T4, T6, and T7 have expressed that language problems lead to peer bullying and aggressive behaviors:

*“You know, the communication part is already a bit problematic. Because there are many situations of fighting with classmates in the class due to lack of communication, unfortunately, there is a process going towards bullying (T4).”*

*“A child who doesn’t know the language definitely becomes aggressive. Because when you don’t know something, a situation arises for misunderstandings. Maybe you’re saying something good, but when you can’t express yourself, people become aggressive when it’s not understood. There can also be fights in the class (T6).”*

*“They have a problem with language. For example, in my class, there are students who don’t know Turkish at all. When they can’t get along with other children in this environment, problems and fights can break out (T7).”*

T2 also mentioned that immigrant students often speak their native languages in the classroom or during breaks, and this situation causes a reaction among local students. T8, on the other hand, pointed out that refugee students who do not know the language form their own groups of friends:

*“In my class, the refugee child talks excessively. We say to him that other [local] friends don’t know your language. You’re talking too fast for the friend next to you, how much Arabic knowledge does he have? Don’t speak Arabic. I mean, we say let your Turkish progress by speaking Turkish with your friends. Anyway, they never speak Turkish, especially during breaks. Sometimes they can get upset when you warn them. Of course, let them speak in their home, but when they speak in class, it becomes a problem with other children (T2).”*

*“The biggest problem we encounter is, once, the language problem. Children somehow learn either at school, or if they cannot learn, they are already spending time with their peers of the same ethnicity. I mean, we see that a foreign student is friends with a Turkish student, we see it as 50-50, but if they can’t learn the language, they only hang out with Arabs. Well, this certainly creates a*

*problem in language learning. They don't talk to Turkish children, and friendship doesn't progress (T8)."*

#### Language Difference as a Factor Negatively Impacting Teaching Practice

During the interviews, some teachers mentioned that having non-Turkish-speaking refugee students negatively affects their teaching practices.

*"Explaining the Science lesson to someone who doesn't know Turkish is a big problem. I have to write on the board constantly for them to put it in their notebooks. This leads to the lesson progressing more slowly, and we are falling behind other classes. It takes up a lot of my time (T1)."*

T2 also mentioned that the low participation rate of non-Turkish-speaking refugee students in class reduces professional efficiency.

*"There is a language problem. I can't tolerate them being disinterested. I feel uncomfortable for my own professional competence. I want every student to participate in my class, to enjoy my class. The child cannot participate because he/she does not know the language, and it bothers me that he/she feels so bored. It makes me uncomfortable; I become unhappy personally (T2)."*

Other teachers' challenges related to teaching practices are outlined below:

*"One of the fundamental tools we use in our education, perhaps the most important one, is language. Some of the children in the class know Turkish. After all, they were born here, so they have already integrated. But those who come later face significant problems with language. As a result, various problems arise. I have difficulty teaching because some immigrants do not understand (T4)."*

T3 mentioned the PIKTES (Promoting Inclusive Education for Kids in the Turkish Education System) project implemented in schools to support the language learning of migrant students. However, he emphasized the low participation of foreign students in these courses and the students' low motivation to learn the language:

*"Some of them are already very good at language education. For example, PIKTES is being implemented in schools for this purpose. But Syrian students are not showing the necessary interest in PIKTES and are not coming. I mean our job is to teach. Yes, they do have a spoken language, but very few students can use it academically. When they are unwilling and do not know the language, the teacher has difficulty teaching other subjects (T3)."*

T8 highlighted the negative impact of the number of students who do not know the language in classes on teaching practices. T7, while emphasizing the impact of the language barrier on teaching practices, mentioned that he believed migrant students deliberately did not speak Turkish:

*"As long as they know the Turkish language, it doesn't matter if there are twenty Syrian students in the class or just one. When a single student experiences difficulty with the language, the teacher's attention is always focused there. Attention is distracted in class. But there may be twenty students. But if they really speak fluent Turkish and understand the lesson, then you don't notice. As*

*long as there are no language problems, you cannot distinguish between a Syrian or a Turkish student during the lesson. But the number is crucial if there is a language problem (T8)."*

*"In my opinion, not speaking [Turkish] definitely affects [teaching practices]. I don't know, maybe they are hiding what they have learned. I feel that way now. In general, I think they are hiding. Otherwise, what can I teach in class to someone who doesn't know Turkish? I'm struggling (T7)."*

T6 expressed disapproval of migrant students being included in the education system without knowing the language and stated that this leads to a decrease in the effectiveness of the lesson. T5 drew attention to the difficulty of teaching subject lessons to migrant students who do not know the language:

*"I think the system should be changed. First of all, these children have to learn Turkish. They have to know it with its grammar, know how to write. Then you will take all of these, provide a good primary, middle school, high school education. You will ensure their adaptation. In a separate place. They come to my class without knowing any Turkish. Should I teach them Turkish, or should I explain the lesson? I'm also puzzled. The lesson doesn't go well (T6)."*

*"First of all, they don't know how to read and write. But they say teach science, teach math. I mean, this is impossible. Some of them know how to read and write. For example, you look at them. They have done very well in exams, but generally, those who can't write or read are in the majority. Because he doesn't know how to read and write, even if he understands what is said to him, he cannot express himself. How can I teach now? (T5)"*

#### Language Differences as a Cause of Academic Failure

During the interviews, one of the focal points for teachers was the academic failure experienced by refugee children due to language differences. These teachers emphasized a relationship between language barriers and academic failure. While T3 pointed to the connection between language learning and academic success in subject courses, T4 and T5 drew attention to the difference in academic performance between foreign students who have learned the language and those who have not:

*"Many of these children have a very low academic level. We need to solve the language issue. These children enter the math class without knowing Turkish. It's a pity for that child. (T3)"*

*"You know, I'm sure primary school teachers probably face more difficulties.. They all knew Turkish. They spoke and wrote. I only had a problem with one migrant student, and that was because he insisted on it. I had only one Syrian student who couldn't read or write. We have unsuccessful students because they don't study. I attribute it to language. (T4)"*

*"Or high-achieving students don't experience discipline problems because they adapt more to the lesson. They are weak in Turkish and just attend school, so they tend to be more prone to violence, mainly because of their lower educational level and family structure. (T5)"*

T6 stated that the main reason for the academic failure of foreign students is their lack of language proficiency, while T7 and T8 mentioned that language-communication-academic success support each other:

*“But generally, their success is not high. If I generalize, they are not successful because they need to adapt to the language. After adapting to the language, they need to adapt to what is given in that language. There is also implicit learning where we unconsciously learn something. But these are absent. They are involved in a new situation, but you can't explain it. (T6)”*

*“They need to learn the language first. After learning the language, they need to establish communication, understand what the teacher says, express themselves; a child who cannot express themselves, how successful can they be? I think it's a debatable issue. Therefore, they are unsuccessful. (T7)”*

*“In fact, students with very low academic success are more like those who cannot communicate, make friends, or speak very little Turkish. (T8).”*

Some teachers have also focused on the consequences of academic failure, such as dropping out of school. For example, T1 expressed it as follows:

*“They are really experiencing a lot of difficulties. Younger children are luckier because they quickly learn Turkish. But many students who cannot learn Turkish, left school because they could not adapt. They are working. (...) For example, there are students in my school who do not know Turkish, and I don't think they understand any of the lessons. What happens then? They will pass the class somehow. Is there any benefit? None. They just come and go. They don't learn anything as a lesson. (T1)”*

T2 mentioned that language problems and the resulting academic failure led the child to escape from school and start working:

*“As far as I can see, when they are not good in Turkish, they cannot adapt. The child finds an excuse and dedicates himself to work. The child sees work as a solution to escape from school because they are unsuccessful at school. (T2)”*

## ***Theme 2: Barriers to Refugee Children's Language Learning According to Teachers***

During the interviews, teachers were asked about the barriers that hinder the language learning of refugee students in Turkish. The responses provided by the teachers were categorized into four sub-themes: barriers originating from refugee students, barriers originating from refugee families, barriers related to class size, and barriers related to top-level policies.

### **Barriers Arising from Refugee Students**

When the barriers arising from refugee students are examined, teachers generally emphasize that refugee students are reluctant to learn the language. T1 and T2 have stated the following in this regard:

*“Some refugee students show no interest [in learning Turkish]. There are PIKTES classes, but they don't attend; they are indifferent (T1).”*

*“We assign homework. For example, I want to give them a reading assignment to learn Turkish. But they don't work on it, they are not interested. That's my observation (T2).”*

On the other hand, there are teachers in the language learning process who focus not only on speaking but also on writing. In this regard, T3 and T4 emphasized that refugee students still cannot write in Turkish:

*“There is still a Turkish problem. Some cannot speak and write. Some students in the class don't even know how to read and write Turkish, and they don't participate in the class. Because they are indifferent (T3).”*

*“The language they learn to communicate with people is the daily language. They cannot learn the write because they don't need it, at most, they'll sign something. So, that's why the written language is quite problematic, but the spoken language, the language of communication, is very good; the children are quick in that. However, they are not diligent in the written language (T4).”*

In relation to this issue, T5 stated that refugee children can read Turkish but, in the writing stage, they use Arabic letters:

*“For example, they have learned Turkish and can read, but we still encounter students who try to express themselves by writing in Arabic letters instead of writing in Turkish. If they try to write in Turkish, they will learn (T5).”*

*“For example, there is a Palestinian student in my colleague's class who speaks fluent English. A smart child, but he/she just sits there like an ineffective figure. His/her aunt is an English teacher; he/she also lives here with him. I don't know what kind of education he/she received, but speaks fluent English. However, he/she hasn't made an effort to learn Turkish (T6).”*

Finally, T7 emphasized that children speaking the same language befriending each other hinders language learning:

*“So, the biggest problem we encounter is the language issue. Children somehow either learn at school, or if they cannot learn, they spend time with their compatriots. We see that a foreign student befriends a Turkish student, like 50-50, but if they cannot learn the language, they entirely hang out with Arabs. Well, this, of course, creates difficulties in language learning (T7).”*

### Refugee Family-Related Barriers

During the interviews, a prominent language learning barrier that emerged is related to barriers originating from refugee families. Some teachers emphasized that the failure of refugee families to learn Turkish hinders the language learning of refugee students.

*“These people [refugee families] need to learn enough to sustain their lives easily, whether they work in a shop, at the market, in a government office, or when they go to a hospital, or at least to communicate at a basic level in social*

*life. I absolutely advocate for this from seven to seventy. But when they don't learn, they don't communicate with the child either (T1)."*

T2 pointed out that families use their children as interpreters because they do not know Turkish. Moreover, T2 believes that the lack of support from families in the language learning process negatively affects the child's language learning journey:

*"Students are forced to learn Turkish, but no situation requires their [refugee families'] learning of Turkish. Because their neighbor is already Syrian. There is a Syrian interpreter at the hospital; they come to school, their student is communicating through an intermediary. For example, I went to the hairdresser. They had brought their child there too. They take their child to places where should speak Turkish. It also negatively affects the child afterward (T2)."*

T3 expressed the belief that families do not contribute much to the language learning process, and this, in turn, affects the child's motivation to learn the language:

*"I probably think that Turkish is not spoken much within the family. Otherwise, I have a Syrian student I've been teaching for two years. He refuses to speak Turkish. I think it might be because Turkish is not spoken much within his family. He either doesn't pay attention to the environment or finds it difficult. He might be shy (T3)."*

*"Sometimes, there are many points where we cannot communicate. I mean, we try to communicate with body language. Most students have actually learned the language, but a few students have not learned yet. Also, when parents don't speak Turkish at home, it can be challenging. Language is always a problem (T8)."*

T4, on the other hand, mentioned making suggestions to refugee families to support the refugee student's language learning process:

*"Imagine going to a place where you don't know their language, not understanding what they say; you become mute. When immigrant families come, we tell them this: Take this child to a literacy course, enroll them. It doesn't work when they start school directly without knowing Turkish. The family needs to provide pre-education (T4)."*

Some teachers have mentioned that Turkish is not spoken in the family environment, and the fact that only Turkish is spoken at school negatively affects language learning:

*"Some families don't know Turkish at all. Especially I ask. They come here, speak Arabic, and ask if you have an interpreter. I say no. Well, if the family doesn't know, the child can't learn only at school (T5)."*

*"Families still haven't learned Turkish. They don't speak Turkish at home with the child. They expect us to have an interpreter. I say no. I ask how many years they have been living in Turkey. They say seven years. They haven't learned any Turkish. There is no effort (T6)."*

*“Parents know very little Turkish. But grandparents, grandmothers don't know at all. I have communicated with people who know Turkish. You know, the student provides communication in between. My student does the translation himself as much as his language allows. I think the whole family needs to learn. Only then can it be fully learned (T7).”*

### Barriers Related to Classroom Size

During the interviews, T4 and T6 expressed similar opinions, emphasizing the impact of class size on the language acquisition process. T4 argued that having a small class size accelerates the language-learning process, while T6 stated that a large class size slows down the language-learning process.

*“In our class, there are few Syrian students. This low number of students breaks that herd psychology. Syrians have to learn Turkish faster. It's a necessity. (T4).”*

*“I had worked in Bağcılar before. There were fewer Syrian students who didn't know Turkish there. Here, there are more because there is a lot of settlement. Now, for example, when they go to the market, they don't have to use Turkish. Everything is in Arabic at the market, in this area. Because they don't feel the need, they don't have the enthusiasm to learn. When the number of immigrants increases, they speak Arabic among themselves. They don't have to speak Turkish (T6).”*

### Overarching Policies

While discussing language learning barriers, some teachers have critically approached higher-level policies and practices. For instance, T3 expressed dissatisfaction with the projects implemented for language learning:

*“The state or the ministry tries to take steps for this with various projects, but it is not sufficient. And these children, I am sure, will not be beneficial to society in 5 to 10 years, it will be harmful. Many of them work in textiles or something. There should have been more projects because the numbers are too high (T3).”*

T1, T4, and T7 have assessed the enrollment processes and promotion statuses of refugee students.

*“If the child starts primary school here, they learn the language. But if they haven't been to school at all, and they're already 10 years old, this child is not accepted into primary school, they come to us (middle school). When they come to us, this child will be registered as a 5th grader, but the child doesn't know anything. They don't even know how to read or write. Ideally, they shouldn't be registered with us. There should be different regulations (T7).”*

*“This should be more challenging, especially regarding their (immigrant families) language learning. Conditions should be imposed, maybe even on the families. I mean, no enrollment should be allowed without knowing the language (T1).”*

*“There are still students who don't know Turkish, and they are in middle school. They somehow pass the grades. It would actually be better if they didn't pass without learning Turkish (T4).”*

## DISCUSSION

An examination of the educational backgrounds of refugees in Turkey reveals a series of initiatives undertaken since 2011. Presently, concerted endeavors are incorporate approximately 1.5 million migrant students into the Turkish education system. The shift from the idea that Syrian refugees will one day return to their countries has given way to the concept of integrating this school-age population into society through schools. Temporary Education Centers have been closed for this purpose and refugee students receiving education there have been transferred to state schools. It is a natural and expected outcome that this situation brings some adaptation problems. The problems affecting the adjustment process, such as language barriers and the resulting sub-issues, appear to be interrelated.

Learning a language is an essential aspect for the initial adaptation of immigrant children to school and their future success, a point agreed upon by both educators and social scientists. Studies emphasize the importance of immigrant students fully integrating into the education system, seizing opportunities, and initiating language learning at an early age for academic and social achievements (Dönder et al., 2012). According to teachers working with immigrant students, one of the factors that negatively affects students' adaptation processes is language differences. Language differences can lead to various sub-problems, such as communication deficiency in the classroom, negative peer relationships, adverse teacher-student relationships, and academic failure. Since teachers are stakeholders affected by language differences, evaluating the inclusion of immigrant students in the national education system solely based on the adaptation processes between immigrant and local students would be incomplete. Therefore, in this study, the language factor in the adaptation process of refugee children was examined based on the opinions of middle school teachers. The results of the recent research indicate that when examining the language factor, teachers generally focus on problems arising from language differences and barriers hindering the language learning of immigrant students.

Participant teachers generally emphasized language differences as a factor negatively affecting peer relationships. Similarly, a study conducted by Bubolar (2020) indicated that immigrant students who cannot express themselves in Turkish are excluded from their Turkish peers. Findings from a similar study also show that immigrant students experience difficulties expressing themselves, participating in games, and forming friendships in peer relationships (Solak & Çelik, 2018). In research conducted in primary schools where Syrian students in Ankara-Altındağ receive education, more than half of the participants Syrian students claimed to be marginalized, excluded, and subjected to bullying by their peers. The same study, including teacher perspectives, suggested that this situation is related to communication problems stemming from language differences (Olgun, 2019). The negative experiences of immigrant students with their peers due to language differences are emphasized in the current study as well. Coping with peer relationships and bullying behaviors is among the reasons for dropping out of school. Dropping out of school is considered the most undesirable outcome during the process of adapting to school for immigrant students.



Additionally, teachers have pointed out that language differences with refugee students negatively affect their teaching practices. They have expressed the difficulty of explaining numerical/verbal lessons to refugee students who do not speak Turkish, indicating that it adversely impacts their professional competence and diminishes the effectiveness of the lessons. Establishing classroom order is one of the teaching practices, and it is known that teachers struggle when refugee students who cannot express themselves in Turkish create discipline problems in the class (Poyraz, 2022). In their studies, Takır and Özeren (2019/1) stated that immigrant students struggle to adhere to school and class rules, in addition to having communication problems and difficulty following lessons. This situation necessitates the implementation of different teaching practices for the adaptation and participation of students with different languages in the class and school rules. In this regard, the development of teachers' professional skills should start from the basics, and teacher training programs should address this issue. In a study conducted by Roh (2015) among teacher candidates, although teacher candidates have positive attitudes towards teaching students from different cultures, they perceive themselves as moderately competent in teaching skills. In the current study, teachers have mentioned the challenges they face regarding teaching practices, but they have not elaborated on the different teaching methods and techniques they use to overcome this situation. They mainly express their experience in this process.

In addition to the abovementioned findings, teachers attribute language differences as a cause of academic failure in refugee students. While some teachers suggest that the inability to adapt to the language results in academic failure, others argue that this situation leads refugee students to drop out of school. Similarly, Bubolar (2020) pointed out that refugee students who do not speak Turkish face difficulties focusing on Turkish language verbal courses and experience detachment. The academic struggles due to language barriers in the adaptation processes of immigrant students are considered a natural outcome. To ensure academic success in schools, it is crucial to provide language support, familiarize the child with the school environment, and promote integration with native students through various activities and projects conducted by educators and administrators (Börü & Boyacı, 2016). Güngör and Şenel's research (2018) in Eskişehir with immigrant students in a primary school revealed that these students face communication problems with the school environment, classmates, and teachers due to language barriers, resulting in a decline in academic achievements. Another study examining the adaptation processes and academic success motivation of immigrant students emphasizes that immigrant students, as a vulnerable group, experience social exclusion in schools. The challenges immigrant students face in schools push them towards absenteeism and indifference to academic success (Ersoy & Turan, 2019). The negative experiences of immigrant students in their adaptation processes often lead to school dropout or reluctance to start school (Ereş, 2015). In this context, the results of the current study support the existing literature.

In the study, while examining the language factor, the second issue teachers emphasized as a barrier to the language learning of refugee children is highlighted. Primarily, teachers expressed that refugee students cannot learn Turkish due to their lack of enthusiasm and low motivation. Another qualitative study among teachers supports this finding. According to the results of this study, based on teachers' opinions, it is revealed that immigrant students experience motivation problems in language learning and behave reluctantly in terms of language acquisition (Yurdakul & Tok, 2018). Another study, indicating that the motivation of immigrant students to attend classes is shallow due to the language barrier, attributes this lack of motivation to differences in priorities (Topaloğlu & Özdemir, 2020). Telsaç (2022) addresses the observed lack of motivation in immigrant students by attributing it to the weakening of the sense of

belonging due to change. All these findings, along with the results of the current study, indicate that low motivation among immigrant students should be seriously considered as a barrier to language learning.

Secondly, teachers have identified the lack of Turkish language skills and the absence of Turkish spoken at home by refugee families as a barrier hindering the language learning process of refugee students. Saritaş and colleagues (2016) also emphasized the necessity for families to participate in language courses, supporting the same point. Another study emphasizing that collaboration between the family and school would support the language learning of immigrant students, underscores the positive contribution of creating a Turkish-speaking environment at home to this process (Moralı, 2018). These findings align with the results of our study. However, studies indicate that immigrant families may be unwilling or resistant to learning the language. The researcher suggests that this reluctance may stem from the fear of immigrants forgetting their native languages (Saklan & Karakütük, 2022).

Nevertheless, what is expected from families during the language learning process is to create a suitable environment at home to support the student's language skills (Aşçı & Güneyli, 2020). Families can contribute by assisting with the student's homework, speaking Turkish at home to accelerate the language learning process, exposing the child to Turkish cartoons on television, thus encouraging learning, and providing indirect support. All these results indicate that the language learning process of refugee children cannot be considered independently of the family, and therefore, language development programs should focus on the school-student-home triangle (Üstün & Alimcan, 2021). These practices will indirectly support the language learning of the family and the refugee child.

Ultimately, certain educators have voiced criticisms concerning overarching policies and procedures regarding the inclusion of middle school-level refugee students lacking proficiency in Turkish. As per teachers' perspectives, factors such as the promotion of refugee students to subsequent grades without adequate Turkish language skills and their enrollment in middle school without requisite language proficiency impede their language acquisition process. Some teachers have expressed the need to teach Turkish to non-Turkish-speaking refugee students through pre-education. A literature review reveals that many steps have been taken to support the language learning of Syrian refugee students in adapting to the Turkish National Education system and classroom culture (Biçer & Özaltun, 2020). For example, in previous years, with the closure of Temporary Education Centers where Syrian refugee students received education, integrating these students into the National Education system began. Refugee students were placed in state schools based on their place of residence, and a significant majority of them did not speak Turkish. Therefore, the Project on Promoting Integration of Syrian Kids into the Turkish Education System (PIKTES), implemented by the Ministry of National Education (MEB) and UNICEF, is a concrete step in this process. The project includes the creation of programs for social adaptation and guidance activities, training for administrative staff, preparation of language learning sets, informational efforts directed towards foreign national families, and components to support the educational rights of migrant students, such as Turkish language education, remedial education, transportation services, awareness support, educational materials, stationery aid, staff training (awareness training for administrators, teachers, and other educational personnel), security and cleaning staff assistance (UNICEF, 2022). In this context, adaptation classes have been established for primary and secondary school students with insufficient proficiency in the Turkish language. Remedial education in adaptation classes is provided outside of basic education hours. With intensive Turkish

language education and remedial lessons in adaptation classes, efforts have been made to support the language learning processes of migrant students. However, teachers have emphasized that despite this, few students attend adaptation classes, and the necessary effectiveness is not achieved in these classes. Similarly, another study emphasizes the same point in schools where the PIKTES project is implemented in Bursa. In this study, teachers expressed that the motivation of children to learn Turkish is very low, and the participation and efficiency decrease because students are employed in income-generating jobs after primary education (Turan & Solak, 2023). In another study, teachers similarly emphasized that participation in these courses should be mandatory to accelerate language learning (Özdemir & Aloklaç, 2022). Despite some criticisms of the functioning of the project, teachers generally highlight and support the contributions of the Project (Ustun & Alimcan, 2021). Some teachers in our study even suggest that the project should be expanded to include younger students (Ulukuş & Tümtaş, 2023). On the other hand, some teachers in our current study have also mentioned that refugee students do not participate in PIKTES lessons and are reluctant to do so. This result may indicate that for the Turkish language learning of refugee students, it is not sufficient to rely solely on government-supported or private projects, and the motivation and psychological conditions of migrant students should also be considered in their adaptation process.

The PIKTES project indicates that the Ministry of National Education acknowledges the integration problems in schools and has taken action to address them. Some also view the project as a step towards the social integration of migrants (Tanrıku, 2018). However, there is a need to increase projects that support the language-learning aspect of the adaptation processes. Providing awareness training in all educational institutions, especially in schools with Syrian students, will help reduce conflict environments arising from prejudices and encourage the participation of local students in the process (Akpınar, 2017). Projects addressing migration and education should be created and developed to benefit not only migrants but also the host country's residents. It should be remembered that the lack of support for adaptation processes with specific policy measures can lead to security problems for the host country in the long run.

## **CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS**

In conclusion, the proficiency of migrant students in Turkish during the education process should be considered a crucial factor in terms of their academic success, peer relationships, and social adaptation. Teachers have predominantly associated the lack of Turkish proficiency among migrant students with academic failure and have emphasized this issue. Academic failure also leads to these children becoming disconnected from the education system. On the other hand, peer relationships, one of the most important factors in social adaptation, are also negatively affected. Migrant children feeling socially isolated in the classroom experience are negatively affected in terms of their socio-emotional well-being throughout their educational lives.

Furthermore, despite spending many years in Turkey and enrolling in the middle stages of education, the reasons why the Turkish proficiency of migrant children is not sufficient should be examined. More comprehensive and content-rich materials should be developed to facilitate language acquisition. According to the teachers in the current study, some factors related to migrant students negatively impact this process. Especially for the development of peer relationships, activities/events that promote integration between local and immigrant students

can be introduced in classrooms/schools. Despite the tangible steps taken by the government, the reluctance of children is a significant factor. The government should diversify projects like PIKTES, involve parents, and popularize these courses. The training and employment of the education staff who will take part in these courses will also reduce the burden of teachers working in schools. Despite concrete steps taken by the state, children's unwillingness is a significant factor. In addition to this, the most emphasized reason by teachers is that migrant families do not speak Turkish. Considering that home and school are considered integral and that what is learned at school should be supported at home, not speaking Turkish at home may slow the learning process. Therefore, projects designed for the Turkish language learning of migrant children should be approached comprehensively, and migrant families should be included in the process.

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## GENİŞLETİLMİŞ ÖZET

### Giriş

Uluslararası Göç Örgütü'ne göre göç, süresi, yapısı ve nedeni ne olursa olsun ülke sınırını geçerek veya Devlet içinde kalarak yapılan yer değiştirme hareketleri olarak tanımlamaktadır (IOM, 2013). Örneğin, 2011 yılında Suriye'de başlayan kriz, komşu ülkelerdeki demografik yapıyı etkileyecek bir göç hareketine neden olmuştur. Türkiye ise hem jeopolitik konumu hem de "açık kapı" politikası sebebiyle en çok etkilenen ülkelerden biri olmuştur. Bu durum ülkemize gelen göçmenlerin sosyal ve kültürel uyumunu da tartışmaların odak noktası haline getirmiştir.

Göçmenlerin ev sahibi ülkeye uyum sürecini etkileyen en önemli faktörlerden biri göçmenlerin dil edinim süreçleridir. Dil ve uyum tartışmalarının bir başka boyutu da ev sahibi ülkenin eğitim sistemine dahil olan göçmen öğrencilerdir. Göç İdaresi Başkanlığı'nın güncel verilerine göre 2023 yılında Türkiye'de 1.100.163 okul çağındaki göçmen çocuk bulunmaktadır. Bu nedenle göçmen çocukların eğitimi, uyum sürecinde dikkatlice ele alınması gereken konuların başında gelmektedir. Bu çalışmanın amacı, sınıfında en az bir göçmen çocuk bulunan ortaokul öğretmenlerinin, göçmen çocukların uyum sürecinde dil faktörüne yönelik görüşlerinin incelenmesidir. Bu kapsamda aşağıdaki araştırma sorularına yanıt aranmıştır.

- Ortaokul öğretmenlerinin göçmen çocukların uyum sürecinde yaşadıkları dil bariyeri algıları nelerdir?
- Ortaokul öğretmenlerine göre göçmen çocukların dil öğrenimini engelleyen bariyerler nelerdir?

"Social cohesion" kavramının karşılığı olarak Türkçe literatürde daha çok sosyal uyumun tercih edilmesinin sebebi de kapsayıcı ve eşitleyici bir anlam taşımastandır. Sosyal uyum sürecinde rol oynayan en etkili anahtarlardan biri göçmenlerin dil edinimidir çünkü dil ve kültür göçmenlerin geldikleri toplumla bütünleşmesinin anahtarıdır. Fakat göçmenlerin, göç ettikleri misafir ülkenin yerel dilini öğrenmesi her zaman kolay bir süreç değildir. Dil edinimi konusunda motivasyon eksikliğinin altını çizen çalışmalar, bunun aile desteği ve çocuğun kişisel özellikleriyle de ilişkili olabileceğini göstermektedir. Bu faktörlerin ayrıca çocukların ikinci dil edinimi isteklilikleri ile birtakım ergenlik problemleri yaşamaları arasındaki ilişkiyle bağlantılı olabileceği de vurgulanmıştır (Tomlinson, 1982, 650).

### Yöntem

Bu çalışma da nitel araştırma desenlerinden biri olan olgubilim kullanılmıştır. Araştırmanın verileri, amaçlı örneklem yöntemlerinden biri olan uygun örneklem ile seçilen katılımcılardan toplanmıştır. Bu bağlamda, İstanbul ili Bağcılar ve Zeytinburnu ilçeleri örneklem olarak belirlenmiştir. Çalışmanın amacına uyan 8 ortaokul öğretmeni ile görüşme gerçekleştirilmiştir. Veri toplama yöntemi olarak Yarı Yapılandırılmış Görüşme Tekniği kullanılmıştır.

Veri analizinde Creswell'in Veri Analizi Aşamaları takip edilmiştir. Kodlama aşamasında ise tümevarımsal kodlama yapılarak herhangi bir teorik çerçeveye bağlı olmaksızın veri birimleri iki araştırmacı tarafından bağımsız olarak kodlanmıştır. Daha sonra kodlayıcılar arasında tartışılarak görüş birliğine varılmıştır.

## **Bulgular**

Yapılan analiz sonucu araştırma sorularını yanıtlamaya yönelik iki ana tema ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu ana temalar, öğretmenlerin dil farklılığının oluşturduğu sorunlara yönelik algıları ve öğretmenlere göre göçmen çocukların dil edinimini engelleyen bariyerlerdir. Dil farklılığının oluşturduğu sorunlara yönelik öğretmenler genel olarak olumsuz akran ilişkisi, öğretmenlik uygulamasının olumsuz etkilenmesi ve akademik başarısızlıktan bahsetmiştir. Dil edinim bariyeri olarak öğretmenlerin verdiği cevaplar dört alt tema etrafında toplanmıştır. Bu alt temalar göçmen öğrenci kaynaklı bariyerler, göçmen aile kaynaklı bariyerler, sınıf mevcudu ile ilgili bariyerler ve üst düzey politikalar ile ilgili bariyerlerdir.

## **Tartışma**

Güncel araştırmanın sonuçları, dil faktörü irdelenirken öğretmenlerin genel olarak dil farklılığından kaynaklı sorunlara ve göçmen öğrencilerin dil öğrenimini engelleyen bariyerlere odaklandığını göstermektedir. Katılımcılar, dil farklılığının oluşturduğu sorunlara odaklanırken genel olarak bu durumu akran ilişkisini olumsuz etkileyen bir faktör olarak belirtmiştir. Benzer çalışmalar da göçmen öğrencilerin yerli öğrenciler tarafından dışlanabildiğini (Bubolar, 2020) veya arkadaşlık kurmada zorlandığını (Solak ve Çelik, 2018) vurgulamışlardır. Diğer yandan dil farklılığı öğretmenlik uygulamasını olumsuz etkilemektedir. Bu bulgu literatürdeki benzer çalışmaların bulgularıyla örtüşmektedir (Poyraz, 2022; Takır ve Özeren, 2019). Üstteki bulgulara ek olarak öğretmenler mülteci öğrencilerin akademik başarısızlığının sebebi olarak dil farkını öne sürmektedir. Bazı öğretmenler dile adapte olamamanın akademik başarısızlığa sebep olduğunu belirtirken diğer öğretmenler bu durumun göçmen öğrencilerin okulu bırakmalarına sebep olduğundan bahsetmiştir.

Çalışmada dil faktörü irdelenirken öğretmenlerin üzerinde durduğu ikinci konu göçmen çocukların dil öğrenimini engelleyen bariyerlerdir. Öncelikli olarak öğretmenler göçmen öğrencilerin isteksiz olması ve motivasyon düşüklüğü gibi sebeplerden ötürü Türkçeyi öğrenemediklerini ifade etmişlerdir. Öğretmenler arasında yapılmış olan bir başka çalışma bu bulguyu destekler niteliktedir (Yurdakul ve Tok, 2018). Bu süreçte göçmen ailelerin dil bilmemesi de önemli bir bariyer olarak algılanmıştır. Morali (2018) da bu süreçte ailenin okul ile iş birliği yapmasını vurgulamaktadır. Son olarak bazı öğretmenler ortaokul düzeyinde Türkçe bilmeyen göçmen öğrenci bulunmasıyla ilgili üst düzey politikaları ve uygulamaları eleştirmiştir. Öğretmenlere göre göçmen öğrencilerin sınıfta kalmadan geçmesi, Türkçe bilmeden ortaokula kaydolabilmesi gibi etmenler onların Türkçe öğrenmesini engellemektedir. Bazı öğretmenler ise Türkçe bilmeyen göçmen öğrencilere ön eğitim ile Türkçe öğretilmesi gerektiğini ifade etmiştir.

## **Sonuç ve Öneriler**

Sonuç olarak, göçmen öğrencilerin eğitim sürecinde Türkçe bilme seviyeleri, onların akademik başarı, akran ilişkileri ve sosyal uyumları açısından önemli bir etmen olarak ele alınmalıdır. Diğer yandan göçmen çocukların Türkiye’de geçirdikleri uzun yıllara ve eğitimin orta kademesine kaydolmalarına rağmen neden Türkçe seviyelerinin yeterli olmadığı da irdelenmelidir.



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