



Heritage Language Acquisition and Maintenance of Turkish in The United States: Challenges to Teaching Turkish as a Heritage Language

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Submitted: 11.06.2022
Revision Requested: 22.08.2022
Last Revision Received: 29.08.2022
Accepted: 29.08.2022

Citation: Coskun Kunduz, A (2022). "Heritage language acquisition and maintenance of Turkish in the United States: Challenges to teaching Turkish as a heritage language". *Dilbilim Dergisi - Journal of Linguistics*, 38, 41-60. <https://doi.org/10.26650/jol.2022.1129254>

ABSTRACT

Compared to an extensive amount of research on Turkish heritage speakers in Europe, the heritage language acquisition and maintenance of Turkish in the United States has only recently received scholarly attention. This article discusses the heritage language status of Turkish in the United States from an educational perspective with an emphasis on current challenges to teaching Turkish within this context. The educational needs of Turkish-American learners are contextualized within a brief history of Turkish immigration in the United States. Opportunities for learning Turkish in an institutional setting include attending community-based Turkish heritage language schools in early years or Turkish language programs in American universities in later years. Some of the challenges observed in both educational settings include, but are not limited to, a lack of qualified teachers and relevant educational resources as well as generational conflicts in attitudes towards learning Turkish as a heritage language. The article concludes with a discussion on how these challenges may influence the maintenance of Turkish language and culture in the future in a society where English-only language policies are mandated.

Keywords: Heritage language learners, Turkish-American, Language maintenance, Turkish language teaching

1. Introduction

The United States is a multicultural and multilingual country that is home to millions of people of different races, nationalities and ancestries. The 2020 Census indicates that the total population of the United States is over 300 million, and 22% (around 68 million) of the population speaks a language other than English at home. Among these are heritage speakers (i.e., second-generation immigrants), the children of first-generation immigrants, who were born in a bilingual setting and exposed to the family (i.e., heritage) language at home from birth as a first language (L1) along with the majority language, English (García, 2002, 2005; Montrul, 2016, in press; Potowski, 2010; Valdés, 1995, 2001). According to Carreira and Kagan (2018), one in five (23%) children in the United States is a heritage speaker who is exposed to a language other than English at home. These children are often monolingual or more dominant in their heritage language in the early years of language development. However, they show a dramatic shift in their dominance, which usually begins at around age five, when they are schooled exclusively in English, primarily due to English-only ideologies, attitudes and politics in the United States (Coşkun Kunduz & Montrul, 2021, 2022a, b; Montrul, in press; Yağmur & Çolak-Bostancı, 2015). Since extensive exposure to the majority language starts in childhood, heritage speakers are exposed to less input in their native language (the heritage language) than a typical monolingual child. They may also be exposed to qualitatively different input because they are growing up in a language contact situation (Coşkun Kunduz & Montrul, 2022a). As a result, child and adult heritage speakers in the United States often show variable degrees of command of their heritage language (Montrul, 2016; Montrul & Polinsky, 2021). Therefore, for the preservation of their heritage language and culture, these speakers often need continuing parental as well as external support from their communities and the mainstream society.

Since the early work of Guadalupe Valdés on Spanish as a heritage language in the United States in the 1970s, the immigrant population in the United States has dramatically increased along with the community and language needs of this population (Beaudrie, Ducar, & Potowski, 2014; Leeman, 2015; Zyzik, 2016). Many immigrant communities have founded organizations such as community-based heritage language schools for the preservation of their heritage languages and cultures, and scholars have begun to investigate the effects of instruction given in these schools and in post-secondary levels on heritage language development and maintenance (Bowles, 2018; Montrul & Bowles, 2017; Sanz & Torres, 2018 among others). However, the number of studies on the heritage language acquisition and maintenance of Turkish in the United States is scarce even today, particularly compared to the volume of similar research on Turkish in the European context (Coşkun Kunduz & Montrul, 2022b; Yağmur & Çolak-Bostancı, 2015). This could be partly due to the somewhat smaller size of

the Turkish community in the United States with a total population of 212,489¹ (United States Census Bureau, 2019) in comparison to certain countries in Europe such as Germany, where the number of Turkish immigrants reaches 2.5 million, making the Turkish community the largest immigrant group in this context (Bayram & Wright, 2018).

The small size of the population as well as the scarcity of heritage language research on Turkish has implications for the preservation of the Turkish language, identity and culture among Turkish immigrants in the United States, particularly in the second-generation heritage language speakers. The goal of this article is to provide a comprehensive overview of heritage language acquisition and maintenance of Turkish in the United States with an emphasis on current challenges to teaching Turkish in this context. Some of these challenges include, but are not limited to, English-only policies within the mainstream education, a paucity of qualified teachers and educational resources that are tailored to the specific needs of heritage language learners as well as conflicts between parents and children in their attitudes towards learning the heritage language.

To better understand the characteristics of this group, the next section presents a brief history of Turkish immigration to the United States, which is then followed by research on the heritage language acquisition and maintenance of Turkish in the United States as compared to the European context. Finally, heritage language teaching of Turkish in elementary and post-secondary levels in the United States is briefly introduced in Section 4. Section 5 discusses challenges to teaching Turkish in this context, and the last section presents concluding remarks and future directions.

2. Turkish immigration to the United States

Historically, three major waves of Turkish immigration to the United States have been identified in the literature (Baştuğ, 2016; Karpat, 2006, 2008; Kaya, 2004, 2005, 2007). The first wave, also called *the wave of peasants*, occurred between the early 1800s and the 1920s, and mostly included non-Muslim Ottoman citizens carrying Ottoman passports such as Armenians, Greeks and Jews (Akçapar, 2006, 2009, 2012; Akçapar & Gökçe, 2009; Kaya, 2004). Muslim Turks are estimated to constitute only around 25% (around 45,000) of this group (Ahmed, 1986; Karpat, 2008). These Muslim Turks mostly consisted of male Ottoman peasants seeking to eventually return to their home country after saving enough money, especially after the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (Halman, 1980; Karpat, 1995). The small number of Turkish migrants who stayed in the United States were assimilated into American society.

After World War II, the second wave, *the wave of professionals*, occurred between the years 1950 and 1980. This wave was “more of a ‘brain drain’ than a mass movement” and included

1 Kaya (2009) argues that there are more Turkish immigrants in the United States than reported including undocumented immigrants and gives an approximate range from 300,000 to 500,000.

highly educated professionals such as physicians, academicians and engineers who identified themselves based on their nationalist and secular identities rather than their religion (Karpas, 2006, p. 171). Therefore, despite the lower number of immigrants in this wave (around 30,000) compared to the first wave, the wave of professionals was more impactful; they founded influential Turkish American organizations such as the Turkish American Cultural Alliance in Chicago (TACA), the Federation of Turkish American Associations (FTAA) and the Assembly of Turkish American Associations (ATAA), which still act as a venue for gathering and practicing Turkish culture for Turkish-Americans today (Kaya, 2013). Given their good language skills in English and highly educated profiles, the immigrants in this wave were able to integrate into the larger American culture and eventually settled permanently in the United States.

The third wave, between the years 1980 and the early 2000s, is called *a mixed wave* as it involves not only professionals and students but also semi-skilled and unskilled workers immigrating to the United States as a result of globalization attempts of the Turkish state (Kaya, 2005, 2013). While the educated immigrants stayed in the United States permanently, the blue-collar workers were similar to the immigrants in the first wave in that they returned to Turkey after saving enough money to buy houses and lands in Turkey (Dağdelen, 2020).

Today, Turkish immigrants are concentrated in large urban areas such as New York City, Chicago, New Jersey and Los Angeles (Kaya, 2013). Compared to Turkish immigrants in Europe, Turkish-Americans are better educated and more integrated into the larger society (Akinci, 2002; Angin, 2003; Karpas, 1995; Kaya, 2005). In fact, Turkish immigrants in the United States have better educational and professional profiles than the mainstream American population. As shown in Table 1 (US Census Bureau, 2019), the majority of Turkish-Americans (60.7%) have a bachelor, graduate or professional degree, which is almost twice that of native-born Americans with similar educational backgrounds (33.1%) (Kaya, 2005; U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). In contrast, 66.9% of Americans hold some college degree or less, while the figure for Turkish immigrants is only 39.3%.

	Total in the United States	Turkish immigrants
Population 25 years and over	224,898,568	101,196
Less than high school diploma	11.5%	9.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	26.9%	16.9%
College or associate degree	28.5%	13%
Bachelor's degree	20.3%	28.8%
Graduate or professional degree	12.8%	31.9%

Although the majority of Turkish immigrants in the United States are first-generation, the number of American-born Turkish Americans (second-generation immigrants) is increasing every day. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), while the number of foreign-born

(first-generation) Turkish immigrant residents in the United States amounts to 115,341 (with approximately equal numbers of naturalized and alien immigrants), there are 94,148 second-generation Turkish immigrants (heritage speakers) who were born and raised in the United States. Despite their growing number, little is known regarding the maintenance of the heritage language of this population. Therefore, a brief overview of previous research on the Turkish skills in Turkish heritage speakers in the United States as compared to those in Europe is presented in the following section before a discussion on heritage language teaching of Turkish in the United States is introduced.

3. Heritage Language Maintenance of Turkish in the United States and Europe

In contrast to rather extensive analyses of Turkish as a minority language in the European context, the linguistic abilities of Turkish immigrants in the United States have only recently received scholarly attention (Coşkun Kunduz & Montrul, 2022a, b). In Europe, studies on Turkish immigrant communities have revealed a high degree of language maintenance in first-generation immigrants as well as in the younger generations (Backus, 2004; Pfaff, 1999). Overall, Turkish heritage children have been found to follow developmental patterns similar to those of their monolingual peers (Akinci, 2001; Pfaff, 1991, 1993, 1994, 1997; Van der Heijden & Verhoeven, 1994). The high degree of maintenance of Turkish in Europe has often been attributed to such factors as endogamous marriages as well as to opportunities for exposure to and experience with Turkish through frequent visits to Turkey, access to Turkish media, an abundance of Turkish organizations and a high density of social networks (Akinci & Yağmur, 2003). Given that Turkish immigrants in the United States are better educated, have stronger English skills, maintain less contact with Turkey and comprise a smaller community than their counterparts in Europe, one might predict that the development and maintenance of Turkish in the United States would be less successful (Backus, 2004).

Today, it is reported that in the majority of Turkish households in the United States, a language other than English is spoken at home. However, only 36% speak only English, as is displayed in Table 2 (U.S. Census Bureau, 2019). This clearly shows that Turkish-Americans are bilingual and that heritage speakers are exposed to a certain amount of Turkish at home in the early years of heritage language development (Otçu, 2009, 2010). However, as indicated by a small number of linguistic studies investigating the Turkish skills of Turkish-Americans, Turkish is not preserved in second-generation immigrants to the same extent that it is in first-generation immigrants, and Turkish-American children are more dominant and fluent in English than in Turkish (Coşkun Kunduz & Montrul, 2021, 2022a, b; Evcen, 2020). This confirms the prediction stated above.

Table 2: Language spoken at home

	Total in the United States	Turkish immigrants
Population 5 years and over	308,834,688	197,059
Speak only English	78%	35.9%
Speak a language other than English	22%	64.1%
Speak English less than “very well”	8.3%	21%

These findings have crucial importance in better understanding the learner profiles of these speakers and in tailoring both current and future Turkish language programs and curricula according to their needs (Kagan & Dillon, 2008). One question that follows these findings is whether receiving instruction in Turkish helps these speakers maintain and improve their heritage language (Carreira & Kagan, 2018; Montrul & Bowles, 2017; Potowski, Jegerski, & Morgan-Short, 2009 among others). The next section discusses this question as well as potential factors that may affect the overall effectiveness of instructed heritage language acquisition within the context of Turkish-Americans.

4. Heritage Language Teaching of Turkish in the United States

In a recent meta-analysis, Bowles and Torres (2021) present a systematic review of eight studies that examine the effects of instruction on heritage language development in different languages (Spanish, Korean and Inuktitut) and at different educational levels (elementary and college) using different teaching methods (language arts, explicit and implicit teaching). The data analysis shows that heritage language speakers do indeed benefit from instruction, particularly in early childhood (i.e., in elementary school) when language arts instruction with an emphasis on the four language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) is used as the teaching method. The findings also point to an increased achievement in the dominant language (Beaudrie, 2021; Potowski, 2021), to academic success (Cummins, 1993; Jang & Brutt-Griffler, 2019; Krashen, Tse & McQuillan, 1998), and to the positive development of heritage identity and self-esteem (Li & Duff, 2008). Overall, these findings indicate that the benefits of heritage language teaching go beyond the linguistic aspects and significantly contribute to heritage speakers' academic performance at school, connectedness to their heritage identities and the preservation of the heritage culture as well (Kupisch & Rothman, 2016; Rothman, Tsimpli & Pascual y Cabo, 2016). However, a number of factors play a role in the effectiveness of teaching a heritage language, which include, but are not limited to, the quantity and quality of institutions providing heritage language instruction, teacher qualifications, availability of educational resources as well as parents' and learners' own attitudes towards receiving instruction in the heritage language.

In the case of Turkish, heritage language children are often exposed to Turkish starting from birth and are dominant in Turkish until around age five when they start schooling exclusively in English as there are no dual immersion schools that teach Turkish and English in the United States (Coşkun Kunduz & Montrul, 2022a). In many cases, the main input source for

second-generation Turkish immigrants in the United States is restricted to parents (Uludağ, 2011). Opportunities to receive instruction in an institutional setting are available through community-based heritage language schools (Çolak Bostancı, 2014; Otçu, 2009, 2010) or Turkish language programs across universities in the United States (Dolunay, 2007). The following sections describe each institutional setting and discuss the factors that may play a role in the preservation of the Turkish language and culture in these settings.

4.1. Turkish Community-Based Heritage Language Schools in the United States

Community-based heritage schools (CHLs), also known as Saturday or Sunday schools, are considered as supplemental programs that occur outside the mainstream schooling in the host country and are supported by immigrant communities who wish to preserve their heritage languages and cultures (Creese et al., 2006; Lee & Chen-Wu, 2021; Nordstorm, 2016). Although these schools play a vital role in helping heritage language children maintain and strengthen their cultural identities and heritage language abilities, they have an unofficial status in the United States, and therefore there are no official records documenting their number or characteristics (Fishman, 1980, 2001).

As for Turkish, only two CHLs are documented in the Heritage Language Programs in the United States survey on the website of the National Coalition of Community-Based Heritage Language Schools today, one in California and another in Connecticut. However, we know from a small number of studies that there are also Turkish CHLs in other cities with large Turkish communities such as New York and Chicago.

In one such study, Otçu-Grillman (2016) investigated the role of a Turkish CHL in New York in maintaining Turkish language and culture in the United States. The school operated only on Saturdays to teach Turkish language and literacy to elementary grade students using a secular content-based curriculum and textbooks imported from Turkey. Using methods of linguistic ethnography such as participant observation and semi-structured interviews, Otçu-Grillman collected data from students, parents, teachers and school administrators for over eight months. The analyses of the data revealed that the school served as a bridge in building a Turkish identity for the community which was reflected through the use of Turkish language. The parents and teachers indicated that most of the children were English dominant. Therefore, giving them instruction in Turkish was necessary to improve the children's oral and literacy skills in Turkish. The teachers used traditional pedagogical techniques, including recitation, dictation and reading aloud in the classroom, which are arguably not the most effective methods to use with heritage language learners (Bowles & Torres, 2021). The children, on the other hand, preferred using Turkish with adults but English with their peers, showing fluid bilingual language practices (Tarim, 2011).

Işık-Ercan (2012) also conducted ethnographic interviews with 18 parents and 15 children (aged 7–13) who attended a Sunday school that offered classes on the Turkish language and the

Qur'an. The classes were taught by volunteers who were the mothers of some of the children at the school. Similar to Otçu-Grillman (2016), Işık-Ercan found that the school played an important role in not only supporting the maintenance and development of the Turkish language but also constructing Turkish-American identities in the children. In addition to language instruction, the school organized events to celebrate Turkish national and religious holidays which fostered the children's ethnic identities and a sense of belonging in the Turkish community. Işık-Ercan also reported that by attending the Sunday school, the children benefited from an increase in their overall academic skills and self-confidence.

More recently, Evcen (2020) conducted a similar study in a Turkish CHL in Chicago. She collected data from 40 students (aged 5–12) as well as from parents, teachers and school administrators using classroom observations and interviews. The findings were once again similar to those in previous studies in that the school served not only as a language school but also as a community identity building center for the children. Through activities and ceremonies, the children were immersed in the Turkish language and culture. However, Evcen also noted several factors that might have adversely affected the overall effectiveness of Turkish language instruction in this school, including teacher-centered pedagogical methods, lack of qualified teachers and educational resources, as well as curricula based on monolingual ideologies.

Overall, even though none of the studies above directly tested the effects of receiving instruction in Turkish on heritage language development and maintenance of Turkish, their findings indicate that Turkish CHLs are effective in constructing cultural identities of Turkish heritage children in the United States and supporting the maintenance of the Turkish language in this group to a certain extent. However, for better maintenance and the development of Turkish, several factors including teacher qualifications, as well as the curricula and textbooks used in these schools need to be considered. Before these factors are discussed in more detail, the next section describes Turkish heritage language instruction at post-secondary level in the United States.

4.2. Post-Secondary Turkish Language Programs in the United States

As compared to CHLs, research on heritage language teaching of Turkish at post-secondary level in the United States is even more scant. According to the American Association of Teachers of Turkic Languages (AATT), a total of 43 academic institutions in the United States are currently offering Turkish language instruction.

Recently, Elbasan Özdoğan and Özer Griffin (2019) designed a survey and shared it with Turkish instructors from the universities in the United States using AATT's list circulation to investigate linguistic profiles, goals, and attitudes of college-level heritage language learners of Turkish across the United States. Twenty-one instructors completed a survey that consisted of four parts: general institutional information, including the language program itself, general profiles of heritage learners in their classes, departmental practices and challenges, and professional

development opportunities surrounding the program. The findings revealed that the majority of instructors had five or fewer heritage language learners in their classes, being 10% or less of the total number of students in the classes, and that there was a sudden drop in enrollment numbers in the fourth-year language courses suggesting that students did not pursue Turkish in their senior year. The instructors also indicated that they targeted all four language skills using a combination of mechanical drills, audio-visual materials such as videos, movies and songs as well as reading and communicative materials including newspapers, short stories and role-plays. Twelve instructors (57%) had received no training in heritage language teaching, while only two instructors (9.5%) had attended workshops focusing specifically on heritage language teaching. Lastly, the main concerns of the instructors included low enrollment and poor student retention, inadequate or meager course options and pedagogical materials for heritage language learners, inadequate teacher training and placement tools as well as lack of research on teaching Turkish as a heritage language (Uludağ, 2011).

The above findings suggest that although opportunities are available for Turkish heritage speakers at post-secondary level in the United States to improve their Turkish language skills and reconnect with their heritage, Turkish language programs in higher education also face similar challenges to those of CHLs. The next section briefly discusses some of these concerns.

5. Challenges for Teaching Turkish as a Heritage Language in the United States

This section presents a brief summary of some of the major challenges faced by those teaching Turkish as a heritage language in the United States, including lack of qualified teachers and educational resources as well as generational conflicts in attitudes towards learning Turkish.

5.1. Teacher Qualifications

One of the major challenges that most heritage language teaching programs face in the United States is the lack of qualified teachers who have received proper training in teaching heritage languages (Carreira & Kagan, 2018; Liu, Musica et al., 2011; Potowski, 2021, Wang, 2017). In the case of Turkish, particularly in the CHLs, parents often volunteer to teach Turkish as the schools do not have sufficient fundings to hire qualified teachers externally (Evcen, 2020). This is reflected in an interview with one of the administrators in a CHL in Chicago (Evcen, 2020, p. 136):

“... This year we have had only one teacher that has a background in teaching Turkish. The others are PhD students and one master degree teacher. Currently we do not have any teacher who has a teaching degree [in Turkish]. It is not easy. It is really hard to find people like that. All these are volunteers. We only give them gas money. That’s all.”

The lack of training on how to work with heritage speakers often results in teachers using teacher-centered activities in the classroom including drills, reciting and memorizing, which

are seen as too rigid by heritage language learners who are engaged in more communicative activities in mainstream schooling (Carreira & Kagan, 2018; Curdt-Christiansen, 2006; Potowski & Carreira, 2004). This, in turn, may negatively affect students' attitudes towards learning the Turkish language and culture (Potowski & Carreira, 2004). However, lack of qualified heritage language teachers is hardly a problem for Turkish only. For instance, Potowski (2020) recently reported that out of 33 universities in Illinois that license Spanish teachers, only one university offered a course on heritage language teaching, suggesting that even the largest heritage language population in the United States is suffering from a lack of trained teachers.

Bayram et al. (2016) argue that in addition to having training in teaching, qualified heritage language teachers must also have a sociolinguistic awareness of heritage language status in the majority context as well as strong metalinguistic skills that would allow them to reflect more accurately on their students' linguistic behaviors and help their students gain some level of metalinguistic knowledge in the heritage language (Beaudrie et al., 2014; Schwartz, 2014). For an agglutinative language like Turkish, this may suggest that teachers must have a metalinguistic understanding of Turkish morphology and awareness of previous research on which morphemes are particularly challenging for heritage speakers of Turkish (Coşkun Kunduz & Montrul, 2021, 2022a, b; Even, 2020). Given the multifunctional nature of Turkish morphemes, each function and use of the same morpheme may be emphasized and exemplified while teaching. Teachers may then engage students in meaningful and interactive activities that would draw their attention to these form-meaning mappings and have them practice these both in spoken and written productions (Coşkun Kunduz, 2018; Coşkun Kunduz & Gürel, 2018; DeKeyser, 2005).

Overall, finding qualified teachers is one of the biggest challenges that heritage language teaching programs face today. In the case of Turkish, parents with no training in language teaching often volunteer to teach in CHLs, which may not always result in a positive attitude towards learning Turkish in children. However, some attempts at heritage language teacher training have been made, and these include an online workshop sponsored by the STARTALK and the National Heritage Language Resource Center (NHLRC) for all languages from K-16 programs and CHLs, including Turkish. Participants are expected to complete online assignments for a five-day period on topics such as linguistic gaps in heritage grammars, differentiated teaching, and pedagogical strategies for meeting the ensuing challenges. This is a promising attempt at developing language teachers who will be leaders and mentors in the field of heritage language and help develop and maintain less-commonly taught heritage languages such as Turkish.

5.2. Educational Resources

Another factor that may affect the success of teaching Turkish as a heritage language in the United States is the lack of appropriate curricula and educational materials for heritage language learners (Carreira & Kagan, 2018; García, Zakharia & Otçu, 2013). There are discrepancies in this respect between the two educational settings, namely Turkish CHLs and

post-secondary Turkish language programs, and even between different classrooms within a single educational setting.

Research on Turkish CHLs has shown that the curricula and the materials used in these schools are mostly monolingual-biased. For instance, Otçu (2009, 2010) reports that in a CHL in New York the Turkish elementary school curriculum is followed and textbooks are imported from Turkey. Since the curriculum is content-based, language and culture topics often overlap. For instance, children learn new vocabulary and basic sentence structures in Turkish through exposure to texts or songs that are about Atatürk, the founder of the Turkish Republic, as well as national and religious holidays (Otçu, 2010). This helps the CHL achieve its goal in exposing children not only to the Turkish language but also to the Turkish culture, eventually connecting the children to their heritage (García et al., 2013; Otçu-Grillman, 2016). However, the imported textbooks often include a large number of long texts and writing activities that challenge heritage learners with little or no literacy skills in Turkish. One student expressed frustration at the amount of writing tasks students are assigned in class by saying (Otçu, 2010, p. 279):

“I don’t like Turkish [the lesson] because we write a lot there in Turkish.”

Similar concerns were raised by a student in another CHL in Chicago whose teacher also used imported textbooks in class (Evcen, 2020, p. 127):

“... I mean there are fun pictures in [the textbook] but the texts are too long and I get bored until I finish reading them. Also, I do not understand everything in the texts so I got unhappy.”

In this particular CHL, however, each teacher makes their own decision as to which materials to use in the classroom depending on their educational background, experience in teaching languages and exposure to the heritage language learners (Evcen, 2020). While some teachers follow a textbook that is imported from Turkey, others use external materials that they consider to be appropriate for their learners. This suggests that although the general tendency is to follow monolingual norms in Turkish CHLs in the United States, there is no standard in terms of pedagogical materials that are used or the curriculum that is followed even within a single CHL.

In contrast to CHLs, instructional materials and curricula that are used at post-secondary level are often indistinguishable from those used in second language (L2) classes (Carreira, 2016; Kagan & Dillon, 2008; Schwartz, 2014). This is because heritage learners are often placed in mixed-language classes that may also include L2 learners or first-generation immigrants with a wide range of abilities, goals and attitudes towards the Turkish language. In their survey, Elbasan Özdoğan and Özer Griffin (2019) report that 81% of Turkish language programs in the United States are mixed, while only 19% include only heritage language learners, and that 62% of the instructors use commercial textbooks designed for L2 learners of Turkish in their classes with activities and instructions that focus on form. However, these textbooks may not

necessarily be appropriate for Turkish heritage language learners whose primary focus is on communication rather than form (Carreira & Kagan, 2018).

Overall, educational resources used in heritage language teaching of Turkish in the United States show differences across different educational settings as well as teachers within the same educational setting. While monolingual norms are often followed in CHLs, educational resources targeting L2 learners are used in post-secondary Turkish language programs, which in turn potentially contribute to variable heritage language outcomes in this population. One solution that was proposed by Carreira and Kagan (2018) is for heritage language teachers to collaborate on creating their own materials that are tailored into the particular language, educational setting and proficiency level, which could then be supported by the Center for Open Educational Resources and Language Learning (COERLL), a National Foreign Language Resource Center funded by the U.S. Department of Education. However, the implementation of this proposal would first require training qualified heritage language teachers.

5.3. Generational Conflicts in Attitudes Towards Turkish

Kaya (2009) indicates that there are important differences between the first- and second-generation Turkish immigrants in the United States regarding their acceptance of Turkish and American identities. Although the higher educational qualifications of first-generation immigrants give them a certain degree of freedom of movement and opportunity, they still prefer being more isolated and are less reluctant to accept their American identities, whereas American-born (second-generation) immigrants assert both their Turkish and American identities and participate more in the larger American society (Otçu, 2009, 2010). First-generation immigrants often face uncertainties about whether they should stay in the United States or return to Turkey, as clearly expressed by one such immigrant in Kaya (2009, p. 621)'s study, who stated:

“I decided not to go back to Turkey after that visit, but there is another thing. You don't feel [you] belong here, but the worse thing is that you don't feel you belong to Turkey either. You are somewhere in between but you don't know where you are at. You are confused. There is not much similarity between the U.S. and Turkey. Both are totally different. You are much lonelier here. You talk to mirrors more often. What other people do or don't do does not interest you much here but it does in Turkey. I think in Turkey you are more social and in the U.S. you are more individual and lonely. Both have things that you like and things that you don't like. It is a dilemma. I want to be in both places. I want to go to Turkey four or five times a year. My best dream is to conduct business that would connect me to both Turkey and the United States.”

Second-generation immigrants (heritage speakers), on the other hand, are more fluent in English and more aware of their American identity with a Turkish heritage (Kaya, 2009; Otçu, 2010; Otçu-Grillman, 2016; Yağmur & Çolak-Bostancı, 2015). However, they often struggle with conflicting values and expectations from their Turkish parents and the larger American society and display fluid and hybrid identities (Işık-Ercan, 2012).

This divergence in the attitudes of first- and second-generation immigrants towards the Turkish language and identity is also reflected in the expectations of the two parties in instructional settings. In a recent study, Çolak Bostancı (2014) compared the language choices, attitudes, and ethnic linguistic viability of first- and second-generation Turkish immigrants residing in New Jersey. One hundred and twenty-nine first-generation and 41 second-generation immigrants completed a questionnaire including questions about the amount of language use, language choice in different contexts (e.g., public, media, education and business) as well as attitudes towards Turkish and English. The findings revealed a generational difference in the use of Turkish. Accordingly, the amount of Turkish use significantly decreased in the second-generation immigrants as compared to the first-generation immigrants. However, both groups attached less importance to Turkish than to English in every domain and restricted the use of Turkish mostly to family and friendship relationships.

Similar findings were observed in Otçu-Grilmann (2016)'s study in a Turkish community school in New York (see also Section 4.1). Even though adults' expectation of their children was: "Speak Turkish!", the children's perception was: "Speak Turkish to adults!" (Garcia, 2009; Otçu-Grilmann, 2016, p. 177). Therefore, as opposed to their parents, the children were mainly English dominant and preferred using English with their peers. Although the parents indicated that they would like their children to consider themselves as primarily Turkish, all the children defined themselves as bicultural. By taking their children to the Turkish community school every weekend, the parents hoped that the children's familiarity with their roots and ancestral language would increase, and that they would be predominantly Turkish.

Even (2020) also made similar observations in a Turkish community school in Chicago. She noted that the parents wanted their children to have strong Turkish identities and language skills and believed that sending their children to a Turkish CHL would help them achieve these goals. However, the children were predominantly bicultural and wanted to use English all the time, especially with their peers. They switched to Turkish only when an adult reminded them to do so, as shown below (p. 100):

Father: Türkçe konuş Türkçe! Buraya gelme sebebini unutma!

Speak Turkish! Don't forget why you come here!

Child: Arkadaşım ile konuşuyorum ama

But I'm speaking with my friend."

To summarize, the majority of first-generation Turkish immigrant parents in the United States identify themselves as Turkish regardless of how long they have been living there. By sending their children to CHLs, they hope that their children will know and accept their *original* roots, Turkish heritage and language. However, children show more fluid and hybrid identities, not conforming to the Turkish identities pre-given by their parents. They prefer using English with peers and only use Turkish when an adult reminds them to do so (Otçu, 2010). Although these conflicts between the two generations lead to confusion on the part of children at times,

parents believe that learning about their original roots and language positions their children in a healthier way in American society.

6. Conclusions and Future Directions

Acquisition and maintenance of heritage languages and cultures in an environment where the societal language and culture are different present challenges for minority communities. Particularly in the United States, where the focus of public bilingual education lies in transitioning students to mainstream English-medium schooling as soon as possible, heritage language speakers become dominant in English as early as five years of age, when they start schooling (Garcia et al., 2013; Potowski, 2021). Without any governmental funding, minority communities in the United States resort to establishing their own institutions and schools for preserving their heritage language, customs and values. Heritage language learners in the United States, particularly of those languages that are less commonly taught such as Turkish, are often exposed to their heritage language in a formal setting for the first time in such community-based heritage language schools. Some of these learners also attend post-secondary language programs, such as Turkish language programs that are currently offered in 43 academic institutions in the United States, to reconnect with their linguistic and cultural heritage. Although studies show that receiving instruction in Turkish in these settings helps maintain Turkish language and culture to a certain extent (Işık-Ercan, 2012; Otçu-Grillman, 2016), both types of institutional settings experience similar challenges in heritage language teaching of Turkish that include, but are not limited to, a lack of qualified teachers, insufficient educational resources that are tailored to the specific needs of heritage language learners, and conflicts between parents and children in their attitudes towards learning the heritage language.

Despite all these challenges, research has shown that continuing parental and communal efforts may help maintain heritage language (Fishman, 2001; Kupisch & Rothman, 2016; Park & Sarkar, 2008). Positive correlations have been reported between children's experience with the heritage language and overall development and maintenance of the language. Accordingly, those children whose dominant home language is the heritage language, who visit the home country on a regular basis and whose parents immerse them in input through books, stories and songs show better lexical development and more accurate use of inflectional morphology in the heritage language (Evcen, 2020; Williard et al., 2015).

Acceptance of children's bicultural identities by parents and minority communities instead of forcing them to adopt a core heritage identity is yet another way to contribute to the preservation of heritage languages and cultures. In the case of Turkish immigrants in the United States, Turkish heritage children have strong American identities and consider English to be an important part of their linguistic repertoire. By acknowledging their Turkish-American identities, parents and heritage language teachers may benefit from their English in a more productive way by constructing bilingual proficiency in these children.

Heritage speakers are the key factors in building a multilingual identity for the United States (Beaudrie, 2021). However, the current U.S. language policies do not recognize the importance of bilingualism in today's global world and stigmatize and minoritize the efforts of heritage language communities, often resulting in a progressive loss of heritage languages and identities within three generations. Therefore, it is crucial that community efforts are supported by future research on the Turkish diaspora in the United States to gain more recognition and to have a stronger voice in a society where English-only language policies are mandated.

Peer-review: Externally peer-reviewed.

Conflict of Interest: The author has no conflict of interest to declare.

Grant Support: The author declared that this study has received no financial support.

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