

HOST COUNTRY LANGUAGE ACQUISITION AMONG FIRST-GENERATION YAGLIDERE IMMIGRANTS IN THE USA AND THE MAINTENANCE OF THE TURKISH LANGUAGE IN SUCCESSIVE GENERATIONS VIA SOCIAL NETWORKS*

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Abstract: This article investigated the effect of the social networks of Yaglidere Turkish immigrants on language acquisition and the maintenance of heritage languages by successive generations in the USA. The study was conducted in the cities of Patterson and Burlington between January 2018 and July 2018. This research used qualitative research methods to analyze ethnographic interviews and participant observations. Data were collected using participant observation and informal talks with immigrants conducted in different informal settings such as participants' houses, their restaurants, and other cafes in Burlington and Paterson. The interviews lasted from 40 to 90 minutes. Questions were open-ended and focused on the role of social networks in the acquisition of English language skills. In order to analyze the resulting data, the audio recordings were transcribed and translated into English. The interviews were first transcribed into Microsoft Word files and then imported into Maxqda, a software program for qualitative analysis, where the data were coded for study. The results indicated that even though social networks have destructive effects among first-generation immigrants, they have undeniable constructive effects on language maintenance in other generations. So, what is destructive for the first generation turns into constructive for the other generations.

Keywords: Migration, Turkish people in the United States, Yaglidere Turkish immigrants, social networks, Turkish language, host country language acquisition, language maintenance.

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ABD'deki Birinci Nesil Yağlıdere Türk Göçmenlerinin Ülke Dili Edinimi ve Diğer Nesillerde Sosyal Ağlar Yoluyla Türk Dilinin Devam Ettirilmesi

Öz: Bu makale, ABD'de Yağlıdere Türk göçmenlerinin sosyal ağlarının dil edinimi ve miras dillerin gelecek nesillere aktarılması üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmaktadır. Araştırma, Ocak 2018 ile Temmuz 2018 tarihleri arasında Patterson ve Burlington şehirlerinde gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırmada, nitel araştırma yöntemleri kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada kullanılan başlıca veri toplama yöntemleri, etnografik görüşmeler ve katılımcı gözlemleridir. Veriler, Burlington ve Paterson'daki katılımcıların evleri, restoranları ve kafeleri gibi farklı gayri resmi ortamlarda göçmenlerle gerçekleştirilen katılımcı gözlem ve gayri resmi görüşmeler kullanılarak toplanmıştır. Görüşmeler, 40 ile 90 dakika arasında sürmüş ve İngilizce dil becerilerinin kazanılmasında sosyal ağların rolüne odaklanan açık uçlu sorular kullanılmıştır.

Verilerin analiz edilebilmesi için ses kayıtları yazıya dökülerek İngilizceye çevrilmiştir. Görüşmeler, önce Microsoft Word dosyalarına daha sonra nitel analiz için yazılım programı olan Maxqda'ya aktarılmış ve burada veriler, çalışma için kodlanmıştır. Sonuçlar, sosyal ağların birinci nesil göçmenler arasında yıkıcı etkileri olmasına rağmen diğer nesillerde dilin sürdürülmesinde yadsınamaz yapıcı etkileri olduğunu göstermektedir. Böylece ilk nesil için yıkıcı olan şey, diğer nesiller için yapıcı olabilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Göç, Amerika Birleşik Devletlerindeki Türkler, Yağlıdere Türk göçmenler, sosyal ağlar, Türk dili, ev sahibi ülkenin dil edinimi, dilin devam ettirilmesi.

Language is one of the most important facets of individual identity and a key factor in determining immigrant integration within host societies. Fluency in the host country's language increases job opportunities and facilitates social, economic, and political participation. Evans (1986, p. 226) writes that “language proficiency has important consequences for self-identity, social networks, socio-economic attainments and children’ school performance.” Indeed, “individuals’ linguistic behaviors are highly correlated with the degree of integration into the network: in situations where linguistic variations are present in the community, the more integrated an individual is into the community, the less variation (s)he has, and the better (s)he conforms to the speech norm of the community” (Ke and et al, 2008, p. 936). In other words, without host language ability, you cannot express yourself in a proper way, and in a sense you do not exist in society.

One of the main difficulties that immigrants encounter in host countries is the lack of a tractable pathway to language acquisition. Language incompetence is a major limitation in “the broadening of bridging contacts, particularly with the local population and, by extension, to access to employment in the wider labor market” (Knight, et al., 2017, p. 62). Stoessel (2002, p. 95) notes that social networks are both very influential in shaping language acquisition and cultural socialization. However, whereas many studies have examined the effect of language acquisition on immigrant integration, few have studied the connection

between social networks and language acquisition. This study has two aims: to examine the effects of social networks on language acquisition and to assess their effects on the maintenance of heritage languages for the next generations.

Theoretical Background

Immigrants in immigrant-receiving countries such as the USA, Canada, and of the European Union are expected to acquire fluency in the host country's language over time. The possession of linguistic skills enhances immigrants' success both economically and socially. Most research on language proficiency has focused on the effect of individual characteristics such as education, duration of residence, and linguistic exposure before the migration on host country language acquisition. Studies generally find that more education, longer durations of residence in the receiving country, and greater linguistic exposure before migration yield higher rates of fluency in host country languages (Chiswick and Miller, 1994, p. 128).

In addition to the effects of individual characteristics, however, contextual influences on language acquisition cannot be ignored, since "group effects may alter the costs of, and benefit to, language acquisition, and thus affect fluency rates" (Chiswick and Miller, 1996, p. 20). The existence of a large of immigrant community may create enclave economies in which immigrants have fewer incentives to acquire the host country's language. As Chiswick and Miller (1996, p. 20) note, "for inhabitants of the Los Angeles area, the presence of a sizeable, Spanish-speaking community could reduce the incentive for Hispanic immigrants to acquire English-language skills." In his study of postwar Australia, Clyne and Kipp (2006, p. 13) found that chain immigration from countries such as Italy, Greece, and Turkey caused immigrants not to acquire English language abilities, noting that "Italian speakers were the largest single group to arrive in Australia postwar, and for several decades the Italian-born and their descendants have been the largest non-English speaking group. Greek-born and their descendants the second largest non-English speaking group nationally".

By creating enclave communities, these immigrants were able to live as they did at home and did not need to acquire dominance and were not motivated to acquire it. For immigrants with limited skills in the host country's language, it is hard to break out of linguistically isolated social networks. In addition, economic factors inevitably influence the process of language acquisition and fluency, given that "those who anticipate greater economic returns from dominant language fluency are more likely to be fluent" (Chiswick and Miller, 1994, p. 121). Chiswick and Miller (1996, p. 25) argue that when faced with two linguistic options, immigrants will choose to gain fluency in the language from which they expect the greatest economic profit.

Milroy's (1987, p. 103) study of Belfast emphasized the important influence of strong ties within social networks in maintaining a group's linguistic heritage and the effect of weak ties in helping to spread language behavior. Matsumoto and Brian (2009, p. 22) applied Milroy's social network approach to study language maintenance and change in the Republic of Palau and concluded that strong ties reinforced the use of Japanese and facilitated resistance to outside norms and influences. Thus the stronger the ties within an ethnic group, the greater the resistance will be to using the host country language.

Method

Setting

This study considers the linguistic experience of Turkish migrants from Giresun, Yaglidere to the U.S. state of New Jersey. Giresun is a province in the Black Sea region of northeastern Turkey and Yaglidere is a small town and district within Giresun. The district encompasses the Giresun Mountains, which are characterized by difficult living conditions and often compel people to migrate to earn a livelihood. It is an agricultural district and its economy mostly depends on hazelnuts. Due to the lack of agricultural diversity, the town has an unstable economic structure, which forces people to move elsewhere in search of economic opportunities. Some migrate to larger industrial cities in Turkey whereas others prefer to migrate to developed countries such as the United States and various European nations.

I chose two different cities in New Jersey for study -Paterson and Burlington-with the objective of maximizing the diversity of the migrant characteristics. Both are cities of intense Yaglidere settlement. Paterson is the largest Yaglidere settlement in New Jersey and since it is close to New York, it has a very high population density. It is also a major destination for Hispanic immigrants and other immigrants from Muslim nations. Indeed, it is known for having the second-largest Muslim population in the United States. Besides having migrants from Yaglidere, Patterson also houses many migrants from other parts of Turkey. In contrast, Burlington is not a very large city and unlike Paterson, it is located in the southern portion of New Jersey, closer to Philadelphia. Nonetheless, it also includes many immigrants from different parts of the world.

During my field research, I spent a lot of time in both places, providing me with a chance to observe Yaglidere Turks in their life spaces. In Paterson, life conditions are more challenging owing to its closeness to New York and people force themselves to work and produce more. Paterson has become a hub for Turkish people and walking around on the street, you feel like you are in any city of Turkey. It is common to see Turkish shops such as barbers, restaurants, bakeries, tailors, markets, etc. with Turkish signs on them. Even though it is hard to find traditional coffee shops in most cities of Turkey, you can come across

them frequently in Paterson. These coffee shops are a part of Turkish culture in which Turkish males gather to play traditional plays such as okey, backgammon, and card games, which cause networks between Turkish immigrants to grow stronger.

Procedure

Qualitative research methods were used for this research because, being more flexible than the other methods, they are particularly well suited to the study the immigrant societies. They are more effective in seeking to understand a community's behaviors and attitudes, which are more difficult to study using quantitative methods and produce a deeper understanding of the social context. Qualitative data enable me to focus on the social determinants of migration (Garip and Asad, 2016, p. 1178); and as Massey et al. (1987, p. 187) argue, qualitative research enables one to examine how immigrant networks function as well as how they form. Ethnographic interviews and participant observations were the major data collection methods used in the study. While the data were being collected, I participated actively in the life of the Turkish community in both cities. Interviewees in the study were chosen as first-generation immigrants who migrated from Yaglidere the earliest and emigrated to the U.S. as adults. Data were collected using participant observation and informal talks with immigrants conducted in different informal settings such as participants' houses, their restaurants, and other cafes in Burlington and Paterson.

Most Yaglidere immigrants own hazelnut fields back in their hometown, and almost every year they go back to Turkey during hazelnut harvest season. To secure contacts before arrival in the United States in January 2018, I visited Yaglidere in the summer of 2017 where I met several Yaglidere immigrants from the U.S. who had returned to Turkey to visit their homeland and relatives. I undertook short interviews and told townspeople about the study, which enabled me to get to know some people and their social networks, which allowed me to identify several potential contacts in the United States.

Upon arrival in New Jersey, I called those Yaglidere immigrants I had met during the summer and used both purposive and snowball sampling techniques to identify other respondents. It was purposive in the sense that I selected participants who were first generation immigrants from Yaglidere. It was a snowball sample in the sense that these initial participants were then used to recruit the new respondents who were relatives and friends of the original contacts. Through this technique, I was able to locate and interview 22 Yaglidere first-generation immigrants in three months. I spent time in both Paterson and Burlington before beginning data collection, so most of the participants were familiar with me before the formal interviews started. By visiting Yaglidere in the summer and spending time in the Turkish communities of Paterson and

Burlington, I was able to gain the trust and confidence of immigrants, which made the interview process easier.

The interviews lasted from 40 to 90 minutes. With each respondent's permission, the interviews were audiotaped to enable later transcription. The resulting conversations were in-depth and semi-structured. Questions were open-ended and focused on the role of social networks in the acquisition of English language skills. Before beginning the interviews, I tried to make clear about what I meant when referring to "social networks." I wanted them to feel free to talk about their networks of relatives, friends, and neighbors in both Turkey and in the United States and tried not to interfere while they were answering my questions. In order to analyze the resulting data, I transcribed the audio recordings and translated them into English. The interviews were first transcribed into Microsoft Word files and then imported into Maxqda, a software program for qualitative analysis, where the data were coded for study.

Findings

Ethnic Networks and Language Acquisition in the First Generation

Some Yaglidere Turkish immigrants came to the USA legally by getting a visa, but others were smuggled in with the help of snakeheads who run the illegal business of smuggling people into the United States as undocumented persons (Zhang, 2012, p. 215). Upon arrival, they settled in neighborhoods inhabited by migrants who came earlier and took up the same sorts of jobs held by their Turkish relatives and friends. The only practical way for a Yaglidere migrant to become a U.S. citizen was to marry someone who already held U.S. citizenship. After becoming citizens, Yaglidere immigrants would over time apply for legal immigration papers on behalf of other family members within their extended network of relatives and neighbors from Yaglidere. It often took years to bring the whole family together in their new land. One of the respondents was 58 years old, male, married, had two children and managed a diner whose owner is Turkish and from Yaglidere. He reported that to get citizenship he also made self-sacrifice, he left his family behind and did not see for years.

"I came here 30 years ago alone. I left my wife and two sons in Turkey... It took nine years for me to get together with my family in the USA. During these nine years, I did not see them because Yaglidere was a small undeveloped village in a small city.... So there was no way to communicate with my family... Those were really hard times."

Another respondent was 64 year-old male, married, had four children, and worked as a painting worker also reported that to become an American citizen, he had to marry someone who had already held U.S. citizenship, left his family behind and it took many years to bring the whole family together in the new land.

“Twenty-four years ago I came to the US with the heartening discourses of my friends and relatives who immigrated earlier. After arriving here, in three months I married an American woman to become an American citizen... I was very happy because It was a success to marry in such a short time. I thought that I was going to reach my aim, of bringing my whole family together, in a few years. In those days fake marriages were common and someone who knew me told the woman I married that he did not love you and would divorce after getting the citizenship... So, she demanded a lot of money and we had to divorce before getting the citizenship. It was upsetting for me because I have been here for 24 years and still do not have citizenship. After the divorce, many years later I had a green card request from the diner I was working for so now I have a green card but still do not have citizenship. Apart from one of my sons who married a Turkish American girl, none of my family members are here. Furthermore, I have not seen them for 20 years. One of my sons was four when I left Turkey. He does not know me as a father. He never calls me, I call him and send money. Once he told me not to force him to say father. It was very upsetting. I could not manage to bring my whole family together in 24 years.”

Drever and Hoffmeister (2008, p. 433) stated in their study that inter-network mutual trust, cooperation, and information flow are easier because immigrant networks share reliable information with each other and are easily punished if social norms are violated. When Yağlıdere Turkish immigrants immigrated to the U.S., they generally followed ethnic networks of relatives, friends, and neighbors in search of better job opportunities. They preferred to live where Yağlıdere immigrants had already settled. Since Yağlıdere is a rural area with very limited opportunities for schooling, most arrived with no knowledge of English and a limited education. Among my interviewees, 14 were primary school graduates, three were secondary school graduates, two were high school graduates, one was a primary school dropout, and two were secondary school dropouts. One of the respondents, a 40-year-old female housewife with a primary school education who came to the U.S. 17 years ago explained that she was not even able to write Turkish even though she was 23 years old, which explains why he chose to live where Yağlıdere immigrants had already settled. that he could not write Turkish properly.

“Aside from English, it is difficult to read and write even the Turkish language for me. It was years before I read a book... I even do not remember when I wrote something for the last time. I think I wrote a letter 10 years ago. I could not speak English and to be honest I did not even try to learn. I have a lot of friends here and I do not need to speak English.”

Another respondent a 52-year-old female who was a primary school dropout said that education did not mean anything to her. He also expressed that even though she could not speak English, she could do anything thanks to his Turkish social networks.

“I am 52 years old and still do not know what education means for people. For instance, I do not comprehend why you do such a study, or why you came to the U.S for this aim. They all come to me meaningless. In our village, it was not something good for girls to go to school. Instead, we went to the mosque to learn the Koran. People blame the girls for going to the school. Now, in the U.S. I do not let my grandchildren go to American public schools after elementary school, they are going to religious schools where they can learn the Koran and our religion. I still do not know how to write and read Turkish and I have never felt the lack of it. When I visited my relatives in Turkey, they asked me how I went on my life in the U.S. without speaking English, I replied that I had a lot of Turkish friends so I did not need to speak English.”

Many studies have examined the use of the dominant language fluently and effectively and deduced that it is related to the rate of use of the dominant language. Chiswik and Miller (1994, p. 127) pointed out that one of the factors that affects the effective and fluent use of the dominant language is economic factors. In cases where using the language effectively has an economic benefit for the immigrant, a positive increase is observed in the desire to acquire the dominant language. Migrating from a rural area with limited education, Yaglidere immigrants experienced many difficulties in adjusting to life in the United States. In the light of it; One male respondent who was 71 years old came to the U.S. 46 years ago and began working as a dishwasher and now runs his own diner reported that he had also had very difficult times because of not being able to speak English.

“When I came here with the help of earlier Yaglidere immigrants, I did not know any English. I started to work as a dishwasher in a Greek diner because my main aim was to earn money and go back to my country. In a short time, I comprehended that I had to learn the language because otherwise, I could not move forward. So I started to do my best to learn English. Since I worked in a Greek diner, I almost learned Greek, too. I worked at the same diner for 15 years.”

Just like the one above, another respondent was a 42-year-old male who began working as a cleaner at a firm, did many different jobs to earn his life in time, and now worked as a waiter. He reported that it took a lot of time for him to have a proper job and life because of not speak English.

“I migrated to the U.S. with the help of my elder brother 24 years ago. When I came here I had just graduated from high school. Since then I have worked in different kinds of jobs such as; cleaner, gasoline attendant, painter, etc. I have been working as a waiter for almost 15 years. Since I did not know English, it took me years to learn it and work in a proper job. Even though sometimes people tell me that you have been here for years but still work as a waiter. But you cannot tell them that being a waiter also requires some features like knowing a language, being good at communication with people, etc. and you could not tell them the difficulties encountered while trying to adjust to life here.”

People from Yağlıdere were entering a country that was different from their homeland socially, culturally, and technologically. One of the respondents, a 54-year-old male, who immigrated 29 years ago and started work as a gasoline station attendant and now owns a painting firm reported this hard process because of lack of technology by the following words:

“After immigrating to the USA in 1989, it took me 11 eleven years to come together with my family. Furthermore, it was impossible to communicate with them. There was no technology in Yağlıdere at that time. I got news about my family from my relatives or friends who immigrated after me. When I left my motherland, I had a newborn by 3 months old. After 11 years when I went back to Turkey, I couldn't recognize him. When they told me “he is your son,” I had unspeakable feelings.”

Having disconnected themselves from their homeland, Yağlıdere people who were determined to stay in the United States quickly sought to find better opportunities. Since they were uneducated and lacked English skills, they had to settle wherever their social networks took them where they would be with neighbors, relatives, and friends from the same hometown. As a result, almost all Yağlıdere Turkish immigrants are familiar with and interact primarily with each other, reflecting their social and cultural traditions in their new land. In the communities where they live, there are Turkish bakers, tailors, food markets, restaurants, and other sources of daily necessities. As one of the respondents who was 40 year-old housewife with three children who had migrated 20 years ago reported how they built a new life in the new land where you can reach almost anything you reach in Turkey. She stated that living in the USA is not much different from living in Turkey anymore.

“Sometimes I forget I live in the USA because I can find anything I need from Turkey. There are Turkish markets and Turkish bakeries, and in addition to this Turkish women prepare and sell traditional Turkish food like baklava, sarma, yufka, etc., anything which may come to your mind. Since I am a housewife and do everything all by myself I do not need to buy it, but most of the working women give orders for them. Briefly, living in the USA is not much different from living in Turkey. It is just like living in our hometown in Yağlıdere.”

As Evans (1986) stated in his study; immigrant groups or communities with enclave markets do not need to use the dominant language fluently to express themselves and survive. Just like the respondent above, another other respondent, a 38-year-old, housewife with three children who had migrated 17 years ago reported that as Yağlıdere women, they had very close relationships with each other and continued their own culture, so they did not need to learn English.

“We, as Yağlıdere women have very good relations with each other. We meet for breakfast once a week in one of our houses. In addition, we have some special days called ‘gun’ in Turkish culture once a month. These days every woman prepares cultural food and we collect money for the homeowner... Of course, I

miss my country. If my husband decides to return back to Turkey I will not even think about it for a moment, but what I want to say is that here in the USA, we are also in the union and try to keep our values.”

Social networks cause new immigrants to migrate to a certain point by being a source of information about the place they will migrate to, by helping them minimize their economic costs, and by minimizing language deficiency problems. All 22 of the respondents reported similar network effects on their acquisition of English, reporting that being enmeshed within social networks harmed language acquisition. In the opinion of one respondent, a 48-year-old male who runs his own painting company stated that since there were a lot of people speaking Turkish you did not have a chance to practice the hometown language and you could survive by not speaking any English.

“Social networks’ effect on English language acquisition is negative. Because of the social networks either you do not speak English or you minimize speaking English. I can move on in my life without speaking English. There are a lot of people living in this community without knowing English because there are a great number of Turkish people and they are friends with them. Therefore, they do not need to speak English. I suppose a family speaking Turkish migrated to a town in California where Turkish wasn’t spoken by anybody. These people were forced to speak English to move on with their lives there. But here the situation is the opposite: there is no need to speak a new language since the Turkish population is extremely numerous here. If you do not need anything, you will not make an effort to reach it. In short, I can definitely say that social networks have an obstructive effect on the improvement of English”

Likewise, another respondent who is 40 years old and a housewife also paid attention to the same issue. She pointed out the destructive effects of strict social networks, which did not let them practice the dominant language in the host country. In light of this, Veltman (1983, p. 253) says that social networks have a negative effect on immigrants' ability to use English effectively and fluently.

“Certainly, social networks have destructive effects on dominant language acquisition because I have a lot of friends all of whom are Turkish and most of them do not know English, so it is impossible to speak English with them. I always talk Turkish and I have never needed to speak English since I first came here. Besides, one of the other reasons why we speak Turkish and not to try to learn English is because we want to maintain our own culture and language here. In other words, we try to keep our customs and traditions here too.”

Likewise, a 45-year-old female respondent with 5 children talked about the negative effects of social networks on English language acquisition. But, she pointed out a different point; she stated that when you mispronounce a word, they mocked, which caused you to lose your self-confidence.

“I think that social networks have destructive effects on English language acquisition. When you mispronounce a word, they either mock or laugh at you. So, instead of making you motivated to learn English, they demoralize you. That is why I think they have destructive effects. For instance, sometimes I say something in English, they immediately criticize me so I am demoralized. I do not want to speak English anymore because I am shy about it. Besides, since as Turkish people we are almost always together, we do not have much chance to speak and practice English.”

A 50-year-old male with three children respondent reported that:

“Social networks have destructive effects on English language acquisition because we, as Turkish people, speak Turkish among ourselves. We only speak English with Americans when we need it.”

Transmission of Heritage Language to the Next Generations

Apart from the effects of social networks on language acquisition, a second aim of the study was to find out what the first-generation Yaglidere immigrants think about the future of the Turkish language among the next generations. Since the Yaglidere immigrant families in my study lived in cities that were made up of diverse ethnic groups, most of the children went to school with mostly non-Turkish children, offering them few opportunities to socialize with Turkish children. In some cases, a child was an extreme outlier, being the only Turkish student in the whole class or school. These children spend most of their time at school speaking English and have best friends from other ethnic groups. Since they are exposed to English more than Turkish, their shift into the dominant language becomes inevitable.

In his study on Chinese children and their language acquisition, Zhang (2009, p. 208) found out that children acquire any language as a result of exposure to individuals who speak that language in their natural environment. Even though Yaglidere immigrant parents are insistent on maintaining their linguistic heritage for the next generation, most of them agreed that the Turkish language future would not last long in the American context. One of the respondents, a 40-year-old housewife with three children talked about his experiments and concluded that it would not last long.

“To be honest, I cannot speak English and my children cannot speak Turkish fluently. They do not like to speak Turkish among themselves and while they are talking with their father. Since I cannot speak English, in a way they are forced to speak Turkish with me but not very clearly. When they are excited and angry they cannot express themselves in Turkish and in these situations, most of the time I do not understand what they mean. So, there is poor communication between us. Even though; they are exposed to Turkish, they cannot speak it fluently, which means they are not going to speak Turkish with their children. Therefore, I cannot see a future for the Turkish language for the next generations”.

The respondent introduced earlier who started to work in a gasoline station as a gasoline station attendant and now owns a painting firm and three gasoline stations reported that even though both his wife and himself tried to speak Turkish with their children a lot at home, they could not speak fluently. Furthermore, they could neither write nor read.

“As first-generation immigrants, we learned Turkish in Turkey and after that came to the USA. It is our mother tongue. The individuals born in the USA cannot speak Turkish as we can. That is why I think in time the usage of spoken Turkish is going to decrease day by day and one day nobody will speak Turkish. The usage of Turkish will completely end after the third generation. We, as parents, speak Turkish at home since we do not want our children to forget Turkish. At least, we want them to speak Turkish with their relatives when they visit them in Turkey... Even though I and my wife struggle a lot, my children cannot read and write Turkish properly.”

The respondent introduced earlier who worked as a manager in a Turkish diner had also the same views as the others. He thought that after the third generation, Turkish children would not be able to speak English.

“I think that after the third generation, none of the Turkish American children are going to speak Turkish. We, as parents, speak Turkish at home and until the children start to go to school they can speak Turkish. However, after they start to go to school they speak more English than Turkish. So in a few years, they prefer speaking English with their Turkish friends, sisters, and brothers. They watch cartoons or films in English. Sometimes we force our grandchildren to watch Turkish channels but they reject it. Even though I am against children watching Turkish series, I allow my grandchildren to watch some to be exposed to Turkish. Whatever you do, you cannot stop it. Because even though Turkish is our mother tongue, their mother tongue is not Turkish exactly. They can express themselves better in English.”

Likewise, another respondent who was a 57-year-old man and ran his own trucking company stated his own pessimistic opinions about the future of Turkish language transmission into the next generations.

“I am pessimistic about the future of Turkish language transmission into the next generations. We, as first-generation Turkish immigrants, intensely speak Turkish at home with our children so they are exposed to Turkish. Even though our children cannot read and write very well, most of them can speak Turkish more or less. At least they can express themselves when they visit their relatives in Turkey. But the main question that should be asked is that if they can transmit Turkish to the next generations. At this point, unfortunately, they will not because it is almost impossible to transmit a language that you cannot read and write very well and speak fluently to the next generations.”

Yaglidere immigrant children attend public schools and are exposed more to English than Turkish. Even though Turkish parents generally communicate in Turkish, their children typically respond in English, or sometimes in mixed Turkish and English. Parents try their best to transfer their heritage language to their children and try to find solutions for poor communication between themselves and their children.

A 47-year-old mother with four children expressed her efforts to make her children use Turkish and he also expressed Turkish mothers' attempts to encourage their children to use Turkish. However, he stated that none of them are helpful in making the children speak Turkish when they are not with their families. The children prefer speaking English to express themselves.

“Believe me, I am about to go mad. I am trying to do my best for my children to speak Turkish but it is useless. Since I force them and get angry with them when they speak English, they speak Turkish with me but they don't when I am not around among themselves. When they don't have school we, as Turkish mothers, come together for them to speak Turkish. We think that it can be a solution. We don't let them speak English. I know they do not speak Turkish in the future but at least they can express themselves.”

Since most of the Turkish mothers in the study come from a poor educational background they had little understanding of their children's school lives and couldn't provide learning support to them. Even sometimes they could not understand the importance of acquiring the dominant language of the host country. In light of this, a 46-year-old male respondent with 5 children told about the difficulties due to his wife's not speaking English. Moreover, he also expressed how he was in an awkward position. He stated his experiences as follows:

“I have been here for almost 25 years. My wife cannot speak English and she doesn't want to speak either. All of my children were born in the U.S. Therefore, in fact, their mother tongue is English but I cannot explain it to my wife. She always blames our children for not speaking Turkish. Almost every day they argue and when I come home after work I spend a lot of time listening to her complaints about my children. She behaves as if they weren't her children since they speak English. It is really hard to express what I live. At last, I found a solution, I talked with my children and told them, if they do not speak English at home, I will give more pocket money for them. After this solution, we are a happier family.”

Because of the Turkish mothers' inability to speak English, Turkish was commonly used at home. However, the children's Turkish was at the basic level that functioned merely to keep the minimum communication between the parents and the children going, whereas the more complex and meaningful conversations disappeared among them. Because of this poor communication between mothers

and children, a 48 year-old female with secondary school education respondent with two children expressed her feelings about it as follows:

“I want my children to speak Turkish because I am worried that one day we cannot understand ourselves and help them. Poor communication between parents and children is horrible. It can cause big harm to the children. Not to experience such a problem, we had to take precautions. Thus, we made a common decision with children: not to speak English at home and I almost every day tell about my own childhood memories or others’. I talk about Turkey in general such as its food, places they should see, the relations between the people, etc.”

In some families, both parents can speak English, but much they try to speak Turkish at home it is inevitable to explain to their children what they do not understand in English. To prevent it some parents think that the best way to force their children to speak Turkish is to have grandparents co-residing in the family, especially for the oral proficiency of the children. One of the female respondents with four children reported the case in their house:

“Both my husband and I can speak English so even though we speak Turkish at home when our children don’t understand us we have to explain it in English. We thought with my husband on it a lot and found a solution. We thought that if their grandparents resided with us they were forced to speak Turkish because they cannot speak and understand English anyway. They often played Turkish games with their grandmother.”

The Yaglidereli Turkish immigrants have strong ethnic networks in the host society, as well as the grandparents and the ties in the home country, could help Yaglidere Turkish immigrants’ children compensate the lack of social networks and their positive effect on acquiring language in the host country. A 67-year-old female respondent reported:

“I am looking after my grandson. He is just four years old. His parents want me to teach him Turkish. They themselves speak Turkish at home, too. Every day I make him talk with his aunts, their children, or other relatives via Skype. So he can have a chance to practice Turkish more.”

Besides the individual efforts of parents to transfer their heritage language to their children, non-governmental organizations like associations also try to help maintain the Turkish language for the next generations. A president of the Giresun Yaglidere Association reported:

“I was president of Giresun Yaglidere Association a few years ago and we thought that it would be better to bring a teacher from Turkey to teach Turkish to our children here. After a lot of struggles, we managed it. Teachers started to give Turkish lessons three days a week but unfortunately, it wasn’t long-lasting.”

To make a brief implication of the findings would make the study clearer. People from Yaglidere were entering a country that was different from their homeland socially, culturally, and technologically. Migrating from a rural area with limited education, Yaglidere immigrants experienced many difficulties. Having disconnected themselves from their homeland, Yaglidere people who were determined to stay in the United States quickly sought to find better opportunities. Since they were uneducated and lacked English skills, they had to settle wherever their social networks took them where they would be with neighbors, relatives, and friends from the same hometown. As a result, almost all Yaglidere Turkish immigrants are familiar with and interact primarily with each other, reflecting their social and cultural traditions in their new land. What makes them have such close relationships with each other is their lack of knowledge of their hometown language, which hurts English language acquisition. Apart from the effects of social networks on language acquisition, the first-generation Yaglidere immigrants think that their close social networks have a positive effect on transmitting the heritage language to the next generations.

Conclusion

Even though many studies have been done on immigrants' language acquisition, little attention has been paid to the impact of social networks on language acquisition and their effects on the maintenance of heritage languages in the next generation. The findings from this article highlight how social networks have an effect on Yaglidere Turkish immigrants' language acquisition and what the effects are on the intergenerational maintenance of heritage languages. Almost all of the migrants interviewed in the study started their time in the U.S. with a social network of bounded contacts. Almost all of them do not have enough English acquisition and have limited education. In the literature, most of the researches studied on language acquisition and transmission show that migrated people prefer living close to their social networks because since they are less qualified and can not speak the host country' language fluently, they feel more confident. Drever and Hoffmeister, Zhang's works mentioned throughout this study also support this claim. In light of it, since the migrants in this study had limited education and English skills, they were forced to settle where they would be with their neighbors, relatives, and friends from the same hometown, too. So it was difficult for those migrants to break out of the networks that had been built by small groups of other Turkish migrants.

In his study, Veltman says that social networks harm immigrants' ability to use English effectively and fluently. In connection with this deduction, the findings of this article indicate that social networks have a negative effect on dominant language acquisition in the host country. Most of the respondents shared common opinions about the destructive effect of social networks on the first generations. They expressed that they could move on with their lives without English language

proficiency with the help of social networks: the earlier arrived immigrants helped them to find a job and they did not need any American friends because they lived near to each other, they had Turkish markets, barbers, bakery, etc. Therefore; they did not feel the lack of English language acquisition. This study also offers an illuminating explanation of the relationship between social networks and language maintenance in the other generations. The first-generation Yaglidere Turkish immigrants think that the existence of strong ethnic networks helps their children acquire their heritage language. This article indicates that even though social networks have destructive effects on first-generation immigrants, they have undeniable constructive effects on language maintenance for the next generation. Thanks to social networks, they can preserve the ethnic language and transfer it from generation to generation. Moreover, the children are more exposed to the heritage language and have a chance to speak more fluently.

So, what is destructive for the first generation turns out to be constructive for the later generations.

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