Language Ideologies, Language Practices, and Identity Construction among Turkish People Living in Hungary

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Doctoral Defence Committee Member's Evaluation

This mixed-methods study analyses language ideologies, language practices and identity construction among first-generation Turks in Hungary. It relies on semi-structured interviews conducted with 50 adults. The many fascinating findings include the Turkish language symbolising a personal bond, national heritage and cultural continuity, especially in the private sphere, with Hungarian used primarily for public life, integration and work and English serving as a practical resource not linked to identity. It is a fascinating, well-written study that shows clear signs of originality and diligence. The author has clearly implemented the substantive changes that I urged her to make in the otherwise very good first draft.

The dissertation begins with a well-crafted introduction which demonstrates how the study fills a gap in the literature on Turkish diaspora communities in terms of language and identity. Chap. 2 is a thorough, well-organised literature review, rounded out generously since the earlier draft with far more salient detail and nuance. The situation of Turkish speakers in a Hungarian legal context that only recognises certain minority languages from the broader region, such as German and Ruthenian, is particularly fascinating as well as the resultant (limited) cultural and linguistic options for the Turkish community in Hungary. This chapter also suitably contextualizes the Turkish community in Hungary with respect to the Turkish diaspora more generally and other Turkish communities elsewhere. The detailed discussion of additive and subtractive bilingualism is likewise welcome. In addition, the chapter provides an apt justification for the study's reliance on Fishman, Spolsky and Berry's theoretical frameworks, including recognition of their application to the special status of Turkish in Hungary (i.e., as a minority language that lacks institutional support in the relevant Hungarian legislation).

Chap. 3 is a clear, thorough report on the methodology for optimum reproducibility, which duly addresses my earlier concerns about the interview and translation procedures. Chap. 4 is sensibly divided into thematic sections. The data extracts are fitting illustrations of the author's key points. However, a few of these translation issues I raised have still not been resolved. For example, "There's incredible easy and comfortable, we go around freely [*sic*]" in sample 4. Does this mean "It's incredibly easy and convenient, we go around freely"? The reader should be consistently provided with unambiguous translations. Following this chapter, the results have been further developed in Chap. 5 for an even more in-depth understanding of the truly interesting findings, complete with a helpful summary at the end. The discussion in Chap. 6 recalls each research question and answers it succinctly with an eye to the relevant literature. The conclusion in Chap. 7 summarizes the dissertation and offers limitations and possibilities for further study. The dissertation makes effective use of tables and figures throughout, and the appendices are

well designed with all the appropriate supplementary information. The language is very good overall, though a few occasional errors can still be found (e.g. sentence fragments), which is understandable given the thorough and thus highly commendable re-working of many parts of the text.

This is ultimately a strong piece of scholarship and an important contribution to the field. I thus recommend that the dissertation be approved for the defence stage and passed.

I would ask the author three interconnected questions about her study:

(1) Your findings suggest that Turkish remains a strong marker of ethnic identity and emotional belonging, even among participants whose everyday language practices have shifted considerably towards Hungarian, particularly in exogamous families. Do you think it is possible for Turkish identity to remain strong across generations even if the Turkish language is gradually lost? If so, what might become the principal markers of Turkish identity for the second and third generations in Hungary?

(2) One of the particularly fascinating findings is that participants appear to integrate successfully into Hungarian society while maintaining a strong attachment to Turkish identity. You also show that language practices and acculturation orientations vary considerably across different domains of life. Does this suggest that successful integration and heritage-language maintenance are genuinely complementary processes or might there be a point at which the demands of integration, particularly in mixed-marriage households, begin to undermine the transmission of Turkish? How would you envisage addressing this tension through language policy?

(3) Your dissertation demonstrates that Turkish language maintenance in Hungary depends heavily on individual choices, family language policies, informal networks and increasingly digital resources, rather than established institutional support. Looking twenty or thirty years ahead, what do you consider the most realistic scenario for the Turkish language in Hungary? Do you envisage the emergence of a more organised Turkish-speaking community or a gradual transformation toward a community in which Turkish becomes primarily a symbolic and identity-related resource rather than a language of everyday communication? What interventions might change that trajectory?

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