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

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Introduction

According to the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the total number of Turkish people living abroad exceeds 7.5 million, with approximately 6 million residing in Western European countries. When considering the estimated 3 million individuals who have previously returned to Türkiye, the Turkish international migration phenomenon encompasses a population of roughly 10.5 million worldwide (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Foreign Affairs, n.d.).

The Turkish diaspora represents one of the largest and most established migrant communities in Western Europe, originating largely from post-war bilateral recruitment agreements (Abadan-Unat, 2011; Extra & Yağmur, 2004). Unlike many other immigrant groups, Turkish migration to Western European countries was shaped by bilateral agreements that facilitated recruitment, family reunification, and, over time, increasing integration and institutional support (Abadan-Unat, 2011; Akgündüz, 2008). As a result, the language practices, maintenance, and identity formation of Turkish communities in countries such as Germany, the Netherlands, and France have been extensively studied within the context of large, concentrated populations and well-established community infrastructures (Akıncı, 1996; Extra & Yağmur, 2004; Yağmur & Akıncı, 2003; Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012; Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2022)

In sharp contrast, the Turkish community in Hungary presents a markedly different migration trajectory and contemporary profile. Turkish migration to Hungary has not been driven by large-scale recruitment or coordinated state policies, but rather by smaller-scale, individually-timed migration events (Labancz, 2015; Gürses & Bátyi, 2022). This has resulted in a relatively small, scattered population with no defined neighborhoods or institutional frameworks for cultural or linguistic support, either from the host country or Turkey itself (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2026; Gürses & Bátyi, 2022). Unlike the concentrated Turkish communities of Western Europe, Turks in Hungary are geographically dispersed, most commonly residing in Budapest, and do not benefit from official minority status or dedicated community institutions (Dobos, 2025).

A further distinguishing feature is the high rate of exogamous (mixed) marriages with Hungarians found among Turks in Hungary, which is a pattern not typically observed in larger Turkish diaspora populations (Gürses & Bátyi, 2022). In Western European countries, such as France and the Netherlands, research has shown that Turkish migrants tend to marry within their own community, with low rates of intermarriage. For example, based on 2002 data from the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS), the majority of first-generation Turkish men and women in the Netherlands marry partners from the same ethnic background, a pattern that also holds for the second generation (Huschek, de Valk, & Liefbroer, 2012). This trend is closely linked to the size and cohesion of the Turkish population, as larger ethnic communities provide more opportunities and social reinforcement for endogamous unions (Blau, 1994; Lieberson & Waters, 1988). In contrast, the small

and dispersed nature of the Turkish community in Hungary, combined with the prevalence of mixed marriages, raises important questions about language transmission, cultural continuity, and the negotiation of identity and belonging within this unique context.

The historical relationship between Hungary and the Turkish-speaking world, shaped by 150 years of Ottoman rule in the immediate region of historical Hungary (Bartha & Borbély, 2006), adds further complexity to questions of language, identity, and cultural orientation among Turkish migrants today. Despite sharing linguistic roots with their counterparts in Western Europe, the scattered settlement, lack of community institutions, and absence of official minority status in Hungary create conditions that may foster different language ideologies and outcomes regarding language maintenance and shift (Yagmur, 2016; Extra & Yagmur, 2004). Existing scholarship on Turkish diaspora communities often overlooking smaller and more recent communities in Central and Eastern Europe. While a few recent studies have begun to document these smaller cohorts (see, e.g., Andrejuk, 2019, on Poland; Uysal et al., 2025, on the Czech Republic), the Turkish presence in Hungary remains markedly underrepresented in the sociolinguistic literature (Örkény & Székelyi, 2010; Várhalmi, 2013). As such, there is a significant gap in understanding how first-generation Turkish migrants in Hungary negotiate language use, cultural orientation, and identity construction in the absence of collective infrastructure and amidst high levels of integration with the majority society.

This study seeks to address this gap by investigating the language ideologies underpinning language practices, the processes of identity construction, and the acculturation orientations among first-generation Turkish migrants in Hungary. By situating the Hungarian Turkish community within both the broader European context and the unique historical relationship between Hungary and Turkey, this research aims to provide insights into the dynamics of language and identity in small, dispersed migrant communities

Research aims and questions

The aim of this study is to provide an in-depth understanding of language ideologies, practices, and identity construction among first-generation Turkish migrants in Hungary. Specifically, the research seeks to explore the language ideologies held by Turkish speakers, examine how these ideologies are reflected in their everyday language practices, investigate the linguistic and cultural dimensions of their identity construction, and reveal the ways in which language maintenance is enacted within the community.To address these aims, the following research questions guide the study:

1. What are the language ideologies of first-generation Turkish speakers living in Hungary?
2. What extralinguistic factors shape their language ideologies?
3. What are the underlying language beliefs and ideologies behind different types of language socialization practices in families with a Turkish background?

4. To what extent does marital status (exogamous or endogamous) contribute to language maintenance or shift?
5. How do Turkish speakers in Hungary put their language ideologies into practice ?
6. Which acculturation strategies (assimilation, integration, separation, marginalization) characterize first-generation Turkish immigrants in Hungary at a global level?
7. How do acculturation orientations vary across different life domains?

Literature Review

Language maintenance and loss are central concerns in the study of migration. Migration brings individuals into new linguistic environments, often requiring the acquisition of a dominant language for participation in social and economic life. This process, however, frequently reduces the use of the mother tongue and may lead to its gradual loss. It is therefore important to distinguish between language shift, a group-level process, and language loss, which refers to individual decline in linguistic proficiency (Fase, Jaspaert, & Kroon, 1992). Understanding these processes requires attention to both macro- and micro-level influences. At the macro level, language policies, institutional support, and broader sociolinguistic ideologies shape the conditions under which languages are maintained or lost. At the micro level, individual characteristics such as age, gender, education, and motivation for migration further influence linguistic outcomes (Kipp et al., 1995; Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012).

To systematically investigate these maintenance and shift dynamics, sociolinguistic research relies heavily on Fishman's foundational Language Maintenance and Language Shift (LMLS) framework. Fishman (1972) demonstrated that language choice is neither random nor entirely idiosyncratic. Instead, speech varieties are allocated to institutionalized social spheres or domains, such as family, neighborhood, religion, workplace, and education, where specific and socially regulated patterns of language use emerge. Maintenance depends on preserving distinct boundaries where the heritage language remains the habitual, normative choice (Fishman, 1972). However, Fishman's macro-societal approach underemphasizes individual agency and subjective language ideologies (Kroskrity, 2000). A community does not maintain or shift away from a language solely through external institutional pressures; outcomes are actively shaped by individuals' personal language practices, beliefs, and acculturative orientations.

To capture this micro-level base, this study integrates Fishman's framework with Spolsky's (2004) language policy model and Berry's (1997) bidimensional acculturation model, while adopting a domain-specific perspective (Arends-Tóth & Van de Vijver, 2006). In this way, Fishman delineates where communicative varieties are functionally distributed; Spolsky accounts for individual practices, beliefs, and management; and the domain-specific acculturation model captures how

personal attitudes toward heritage retention versus host-society participation unfold within specific, everyday contexts. This integrated framework is particularly well-suited for investigating the sociolinguistic realities of Turkish migrants in Hungary.

Spolsky argues that language policy does not exist solely in statutory documents; rather, it is constituted by three interrelated components: language beliefs or ideologies, language practices, and language management. In Spolsky's (2004, 2007) model, language ideology is conceptualized as the "beliefs" component of policy. These beliefs represent cultural systems of ideas loaded with political, social, and moral investments (Irvine, 2012), encompassing metalinguistic evaluations of language quality, purity, communicative utility, and ownership (Silverstein, 1976; Kroskrity, 2001; Blommaert, 2006). Language practices refer to the actual, observable communicative choices and linguistic varieties that speakers deploy in everyday life (Spolsky, 2004). Language management constitutes the action-oriented pillar of Spolsky's (2004) framework and represents any deliberate, conscious effort to manipulate, regulate, or modify linguistic behavior (Spolsky, 2004, 2009). To analyze where and how different language practices occur, Spolsky (2004, 2009) directly incorporates Fishman's (1972) concept of domains into his model.

Identity should be conceptualized as dynamic and context-dependent rather than static. During acculturation, individuals may renegotiate their self-identification, including decisions about whether to adopt the host-country label, retain their ethnic label, or combine both (Liebkind, 2006). Language plays a central role in this process, serving as a key resource through which identities are constructed and negotiated. Speakers actively use linguistic resources to define themselves and others in interaction (Lytra, 2016). As De Fina (2006) notes, identities are not pre-existing entities but are discursively mediated and emerge through social interaction. As Yağmur and van de Vijver (2022) argue, immigrants' ethnic and national identities, as well as their adaptation processes, emerge through the interaction between personal attitudes and the responses of the receiving society.

Rather than viewing acculturation as a unidimensional where adopting a host culture necessitates abandoning one's heritage language and culture, Berry (1990, 1997, 2005) conceptualized it as a bidimensional process. Berry (1997) established that cultural adaptation is shaped by two conceptually independent orientations: maintaining heritage culture and identity, and seeking relationships with the larger host society. Their intersection produces four acculturation strategies: integration, assimilation, separation, and marginalization. Complementing this relational perspective, Arends-Tóth and Van de Vijver (2006) supported a domain-specific approach, recognizing that migrants rarely adopt a single acculturation stance across all areas of daily life. They showed that individuals often favor adaptation to the mainstream culture in public, functional, and utilitarian spheres, while sustaining heritage language and cultural adherence within private, affective domains.

Building further on this contextual view, van der Zee and van Oudenhoven (2022) argue that acculturation should also be understood through concrete, situational interactions.

Turkish migration to Europe has been strongly shaped by post-war labor migration, driven by European economic growth and industrial labor shortages (Akgündüz, 2012). Turkish language education and media have supported language maintenance and strengthened the connection between Turkish and cultural and ethnic identity (Islam & Bozdağ, 2021; Bozdağ, 2014; Extra & Yağmur, 2004). However, while first-generation immigrants predominantly use Turkish, younger generations increasingly favor the host language in educational and social contexts (Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012). The Turkish community in the Netherlands shows a strong commitment to maintaining their native language, particularly in the home and neighborhood domains (Eversteijn, 2011; Extra & Yağmur, 2010; Yağmur & Jacobs, 2015). Comparative research shows that Dutch Turks retain Turkish most strongly, German Turks use Turkish and the host language equally, and French Turks adopt the host language most (Ersanilli & Koopmans, 2007).

Hungary provides a distinct context for examining these processes. Hungary's language policy mainly protects officially recognised minorities. The Act LXXVII of 1993 recognised 13 national minorities based on historical, linguistic, and cultural criteria, while the Act CLXXIX of 2011 tightened the criteria for recognising new minorities (Dobos, 2025). The Turkish population in Hungary is not recognised as a national minority under Hungarian legislation. According to the 2022 Census, 2,452 Turkish nationals lived in Hungary, with 66% male, 70% under forty, and 91% speaking Turkish (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, 2026).

Unlike recognised minorities, the Turkish community receives no institutionalised support for heritage language maintenance and falls under general migration and integration policies. Institutional initiatives supporting Turkish language, culture, and identity remain comparatively recent and fragmented. This limited support is reflected in empirical findings. According to the Bevándorlók Magyarországon (Migrants in Hungary) survey, only around 28-29% of Turkish respondents reported speaking Hungarian at a fluent or native-like level, with some variation across age groups (Örkény & Székelyi, 2010). At the same time, language learning orientations among Turkish migrants are not uniformly negative. Among those who did not speak Hungarian fluently, approximately 57% reported that improving their Hungarian language skills was at least somewhat important (Örkény & Székelyi, 2010).

The study of language is particularly significant for Turks in Hungary, who receive little institutional support for maintaining their native language. Language functions not only as communication but also as a marker of cultural identity, social belonging, and integration. Language ideologies influence language use, the importance given to learning Hungarian, and how individuals position themselves between their country of origin and the host society. Identity construction reveals

how Turkish migrants negotiate self and group belonging, while acculturation orientations show how they balance maintaining their linguistic and cultural background with adapting to Hungarian society.

Method

This study employed a qualitative research design, complemented by quantitative analysis of language use and acculturation orientation, to examine language ideology, language practices, and identity construction among Turks in Hungary.

Participants

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the 50 participants included in the study (31 men and 19 women). All participants are first-generation migrants, born in Turkey migrated to Hungary as adults, with a mean age of immigration (AOI) of 26.22 years. Participants were recruited from diverse educational, marital, and occupational backgrounds in order to reflect the heterogeneity of the Turkish migrant community in Hungary. The majority of participants were recruited in Budapest, particularly in social spaces such as teahouses, restaurants, and small businesses where members of the Turkish community regularly gather. Snowball sampling was also employed to expand the participant pool; however, care was taken to maintain diversity within the sample and to avoid overrepresentation of specific social networks.

Overall, the final sample reflects a diverse range of migration trajectories and social backgrounds. Their mean length of residence (LOR) in Hungary was 21.32 years. However, it is important to note that there is a large variability in both AOI and LOR. Regarding marital status, exogamous relationships were markedly more common than endogamous ones. Twenty-nine participants (58%) were in exogamous marriages or partnerships, including 20 of the 31 men. 28 of these exogamous relationships were with Hungarian spouses. Fourteen participants (28%) were in endogamous relationships with Turkish partners, and seven (14%) were single at the time of data collection. Overall, the data suggest that exogamy is notably more prevalent among first-generation Turkish migrants in this sample. Most participants (33 individuals, 66%) had at least one child. Educational background was classified according to the ISCED-2011 framework. Two participants (4%) had completed primary education (ISCED 1), and nineteen (38%) had completed lower or upper secondary schooling (ISCED 2-3). The majority held tertiary qualifications (ISCED 6-8): fourteen (28%) had a bachelor's degree, thirteen (26%) a master's degree, and one participant (2%) had completed a doctorate. An additional participant (2%) had begun but not completed tertiary studies. Overall, more than half of the sample possessed higher-education qualifications, particularly among women, indicating a comparatively well-educated group.

The sample in this study aligns with the latest official data from the 2022 Hungarian census, particularly in terms of gender distribution and the generally high levels of educational attainment observed among individuals of Turkish background. However, the study intentionally focuses on

participants with a longer length of residence in Hungary in order to examine patterns of language use, cultural engagement, and acculturation among earlier migrant cohorts.

Table 1. Participant demographics

	Mean	SD	Min	Max
Age (years)	46.27	11.85	28	78
Age at immigration (years)	26.22	8.05	6	50
Length of residence (years)	21.32	9.38	7	44

Note: SD = standard deviation.

Data collection instrument

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, preceded by a short demographic questionnaire covering age, gender, length of residence, education, and marital status. Interviews were conducted primarily in Turkish, allowing participants to code-switch where necessary. The interview protocol was aligned with the research questions, refined through expert review, and piloted with five members of the target community to ensure clarity, cultural appropriateness, and relevance. Following Rubin and Rubin (2012), interviews began with an informal warm-up and broad "tour questions" before addressing language use across family, workplace, friendships, literacy, and media domains. Participants with children were also asked about intergenerational language transmission. Each interview lasted 45–60 minutes and was audio-recorded with informed consent, or documented through detailed notes when recording was declined. Ethical approval was granted by the University of Pannonia Ethical Committee (KEB 13/2026 (03.16.)). Participants were informed of the study's aims and procedures, voluntary participation and withdrawal rights, and the anonymity and confidentiality of their responses

Data analyses procedure

Data analysis proceeded through data preparation, qualitative thematic coding, and the integration of structured acculturation orientations. Audio recordings were transcribed using noScribe (Dröge, 2023), with all transcripts checked against the original recordings to correct speaker labels and language switches. Interview excerpts were translated from Turkish into English by the researcher. Transcripts and field notes were then imported into MAXQDA for coding.

Thematic analysis followed Braun and Clarke (2006), combining inductive coding with initial and focused coding informed by grounded theory principles (Charmaz, 2006). Analytic memos documented significant patterns across participants' migration trajectories, while intercoder

agreement (ICR) was calculated to assess consistency in applying the coding frame (O'Connor & Joffe, 2020).

A structured coding scheme was subsequently developed to operationalise acculturation across domains. Participants reported the frequency of Turkish and Hungarian use on a 0–4 scale, ranging from mostly Hungarian/no Turkish use (0) to mostly Turkish (4). The framework was informed by Berry's (1990, 1997) bidimensional acculturation model, distinguishing heritage-culture (Turkish) and host-culture (Hungarian) orientations, with English/global orientation included as a complementary communicative resource. Dimensions were assessed across domains including family language use, literacy, community participation, social networks, and identity. Descriptive statistics summarised these patterns, while multiple regression examined demographic predictors of heritage orientation and chi-square tests assessed associations between categorical variables such as partner nationality and acculturation strategy (Jasp, 2026).

Findings

Societal factors strongly influence individual and family language ideologies, making immigrant groups' life experiences important for understanding their language practices. The analysis identified three key areas: experiences of Turkish immigrants, integration and associated challenges, and community connections and perceived attitudes of Hungarians.. Overall, participants shared a broadly positive evaluation of life in Hungary, particularly emphasizing safety and tranquility.

"Peace, absolutely peace. There's incredible easy and comfortable, we go around freely. People aren't that aggressive, or maybe I don't deal with them. It feels more peaceful to me. But in Turkey I saw people are extremely aggressive" (female, 48, married to a Turkish husband).

Regarding integration and belonging, participants largely described their experiences positively, while emphasizing adaptation to the social norms and expectations of the host society. Many participants also reported that attempts to speak Hungarian were met with appreciation and supportive responses, reinforcing a sense of inclusion. They are illustrated below:

"[life is] very good [here], I think. Hungarians predominantly like Turks. They like proper people who come here. Proper people who come here can also hold on here. As long as you don't do anything bad, there won't be a problem in this country (male, 54, single)."

"Everywhere they praise me for how well I speak Hungarian. How did I learn so quickly, …I would put the word that should be at the beginning at the end. Or I used the wrong case ending. But they still somehow understood me. They laughed and said how cute I was, [they were saying] "at least you were trying, Others wouldn't even bother learning" (female, 32, married to a Hungarian husband).

Language ideologies reflected a strong emotional and symbolic attachment to Turkish alongside an understanding of Hungarian as essential for participation in Hungarian society. Across all

demographic groups, participants emphasised a strong emotional and symbolic attachment to Turkish. As one participant stated:

“I think your native language always forms mental images more effectively. Other languages are secondary. No matter how fluent you become, they never form the same kind of imagery in your mind. So I think your native language has a special place” (male, 38, single).

At the same time, Hungarian is widely regarded as essential for practical engagement, social integration, education, and work. Participants linked Hungarian competence to social integration, agency, and interpersonal acceptance, framing proficiency as a resource for everyday interaction and participation in Hungarian society.

“I think it’s important, because to make local friends you definitely need to know Hungarian. To be part of any friend group or a family, or for serious relationships like marriage, I think Hungarian is absolutely necessary” (male, 37, in an exogamous relationship).

Thus, participants generally viewed multilingualism positively, with Turkish associated particularly with identity and emotional affiliation, Hungarian with participation in the host society, and English with professional and international communication.

While language ideologies are enacted across family, social, professional, and multimodal contexts, language choice varies according to context, interlocutor, and communicative purpose. Although the primary focus was on Turkish and Hungarian, English also emerged as a salient third language, particularly in professional and transnational contexts. While participants living alone reported flexible practices involving Hungarian and/or English, endogamous couples consistently maintained Turkish as the primary home language. As one participant stated: “ My spouse is Turkish; our home language is Turkish" (female, 58).

In contrast, exogamous couples displayed greater use of Hungarian in daily spousal communication, although Turkish and English remained part of some couples’ repertoires.

One participant explained:

“I think I directly think in Hungarian now… My partner is Hungarian, so all my affectionate words are in Hungarian as well” (female, 36).

Another noted:

“Yes. We [with the husband] dropped English a long time ago. I speak Hungarian with his family and everyone around” (female, 49).

At the same time, some households maintained highly mixed repertoires:

“I told you, 45% Hungarian. With my wife too, my own wife… She’s an English teacher, so she knows English. At home, sometimes my wife speaks English, I answer in Turkish, or we speak Hungarian. But generally, let me say, in my work and in my normal life it’s 45% Hungarian, 40% Turkish, 15% English” (male, 40)

In a small number of households (4 out of 50), limited Hungarian proficiency influenced language dynamics, with English functioning as a mediating language when Turkish was not mutually understood. As one participant derscribed:
“He hasn’t learned Turkish and he doesn’t have such intention either. That is why I pass that part. Since he lived abroad for so long. His English practice is much better, but this is something we keep in our agenda [indicating speaking in Hungarian]. We consciously try to integrate more into our daily life. We’re in a period where we’re talking about how to increase his speaking Hungarian with me over time.” (female, 37).

In households with children, family language practices differed clearly according to parental language background. In endogamous households, Turkish remained the primary language of intra-family communication. Across the dataset, all endogamous families reported using Turkish in family interactions, including communication between parents and children. This continuity was maintained even when children attended Hungarian-medium schools and developed strong Hungarian outside the home. One participant explained:

“At home, we always speak Turkish with the children. My husband is very fluent in Hungarian, but to avoid the possibility of influencing our child’s accent, he doesn’t speak it at home. My child started Hungarian preschool at age three, and at the beginning, she didn’t know any Hungarian. Within three months, her teachers reported her progress, and within six months, she was speaking Hungarian at a very good level. Her Hungarian is excellent. In our home, we only use Turkish; she uses Turkish with her sibling as well” (female, 35).

Another participant described a clear domain distinction:

“Sometimes they ask me something in Hungarian. I explain it, and they say, ‘Ah, okay, got it.’ …[Children’s language use] It depends on the setting: in the schoolyard, Hungarian; at home or in the restaurant, Turkish” (male, 46).

Thus, Hungarian was strongly associated with schooling and the wider environment, while Turkish remained the default language of family interaction.

Exogamous households with children showed a more complex distribution of languages. None of the English-dominant exogamous families in the sample had children, limiting comparison within this subgroup. Among exogamous households with children, Turkish was reported in parent-child communication by 17 participants, while 8 reported mostly Hungarian, 5 reported Hungarian more often than Turkish or English, 2 reported equal Hungarian and Turkish, and 1 reported more Turkish or English than Hungarian. These patterns indicate that Turkish could remain an important parent-child language even where Hungarian dominated other family interactions. In some households, this reflected deliberate family language management. One participant explained:

"I don't speak Turkish with my wife, and I forbade her from speaking Turkish with the children… I said, you speak your language, I speak mine… I speak solely in Turkish [with the kids]… this way they speak very good Turkish" (male, 68).

At the same time, Hungarian could be explicitly constructed as the children's mother tongue: "They mostly use Hungarian… since Hungarian is their mother tongue, they speak that" (male, 42).

The distinction between parental and broader family interaction was also evident when parents addressed children in Turkish but found that Hungarian became dominant in extended communication:

"I address them in Turkish… but when you go deeper, Hungarian… he understands sixty percent… but Hungarian dominates" (male, 61).

Environmental exposure further reinforced this pattern: "[they speak] Mostly Hungarian, because everyone speaks Hungarian… only the grandparents [in Turkiye] speak Turkish… when I get angry or repeat something, then I speak Turkish" (female, 31).

Social language practices were similarly dynamic and context-dependent. Turkish and Hungarian were the most common languages in social interaction, while English sometimes functioned as a lingua franca, particularly when participants had limited Hungarian proficiency. Fourteen participants reported Hungarian as their main social language, especially when their friends, relatives, colleagues, or peers were Hungarian. One participant stated:

"Mostly in Hungarian. My friends here are Hungarian, my circle is mostly Hungarian" (male, 54, single).

Nine participants described more balanced or mixed Turkish-Hungarian social networks. As one participant explained:

“For me, it’s about equal. I have as many Hungarian friends as Turkish ones. ... With Hungarians, we discuss different topics ... With Turks, it’s more about history and traditional conversation” (male, 46, married to a Turkish wife).

Turkish networks therefore supported continued Turkish use, while Hungarian networks increased reliance on Hungarian. Some participants also described English as compensatory in international social environments. As the account illustrate:

“Of course, English. After all, we are in a foreign country. I have Turkish friends here whom I see, but I meet them once a week. The remaining five or six days are usually spent with foreigners. English is more dominant; I speak it more” (male, 38, in an exagaomous relationship).

Workplace practices further demonstrated the contextual distribution of languages. In white-collar and international workplaces, English was often the main working language, while Hungarian was used informally with colleagues. One participant explained:

“Yes, normally English. But at work, my colleagues sometimes speak Hungarian on purpose, just for me. When I don’t understand something, they translate it for me, thankfully. Our work language is English, but when we go out for lunch, grab coffee, or gossip, they switch to Hungarian” (female, 42, residing in Hungary for 14 years).

Among longer-term residents working mainly with Hungarians, Hungarian became more prominent, while English remained an additional resource. One participant stated:

“My English is very good too. But for example, I’ve never felt as comfortable expressing myself in English as I do in Hungarian. I think I’d have to live in an English-speaking place for a long time to feel that way. I don’t use it daily because of my job. I’m a psychologist, I usually work with Hungarians” (female, 32, residing in Hungary for 26 years).

Turkish remained particularly important for
emotional expression, reflecting its strong affective role: One participant explained:

“Turkish. Definitely. … I always tell him (the husband) that I’m limited in Hungarian emotionally. … We Turks are much more emotional as a society. We have far more words related to feelings, we can express ourselves much more richly in that sense.” (female, 32, married to a Hungarian husband).

Beyond spoken communication, participants’ multilingual practices extended across reading, writing, digital communication, and media consumption. These multimodal practices reveal how language preferences were shaped not only by proficiency, but also by personal attachment, social networks, accessibility, and the communicative context. Turkish remained particularly important in participants’ leisure and personal literacy practices, while Hungarian and English were more closely associated with institutional, educational, and professional domains.

Reading was one of the clearest areas in which participants actively maintained their Turkish. One participant explained:

“I usually read in Turkish. I bring them from Turkey when I have time. But if something comes to me in Hungarian, if it gets through, if it’s something I like, something I’m interested in, then I read it in Hungarian. But generally, for example, I always try to read in Turkish. The main reason for that was that I already live in Hungary. I always speak Hungarian. So at least I wanted to keep my Turkish somewhere. So that it would always stay with me. I had something like that. Generally I read Turkish books.” (female, 32).

For this participant, reading in Turkish was a conscious way of maintaining her linguistic identity in a Hungarian-dominant environment. However, limited access , as reported, to Turkish-language books in Hungary meant that some participants turned to English when Turkish materials were unavailable. As it is depicted below:

“Since I can’t find Turkish books here, I usually read in English. I read entirely in English. But even so, there aren’t many options to find books here, so it’s mostly English.” (female, 42).

The pattern was different in professional and educational reading and writing. English was particularly prominent in academic contexts, while Hungarian was more closely associated with local institutions and professional life. One participant, for example, described using English extensively during her postgraduate studies:

“I used English regularly during my master’s and PhD, reading and writing articles. Other than that, I rarely use it.” (female, 32).

Writing practices followed a similar pattern. Turkish remained common in personal communication, including informal messages and correspondence with Turkish-speaking relatives and friends, whereas Hungarian and English were more frequently used for formal, educational, and professional purposes. Language choice in digital communication was particularly responsive to the intended audience. Social media provided an important space for maintaining Turkish-language networks and transnational relationships. One participant explained:

"Turkish. Because most of my friends on social media are Turkish. If I'm commenting on a foreign friend's photo, then of course I write in English. But when I post or share a story myself, it's usually in Turkish. It doesn't exceed about 10-15% of my followers are non-Turkish, so there's no point posting in English unless it's something that involves them." (male, 38).

As another participant put it succinctly:

"Depends on the person. If it's a Hungarian, I write in Hungarian. If it's a Turk, in Turkish." (male, 50).

Media consumption further demonstrated this flexibility. Participants continued to engage with Turkish through television, YouTube, and other online media, particularly when consuming Turkish-language content. At the same time, preferences for films and series were influenced by genre, platform, and perceptions of translation or dubbing quality. One participant described using Turkish almost exclusively on YouTube, while preferring Hungarian dubbing for foreign films and series:

"If on YouTube, I use Turkish 100%. But for series or films on Netflix, I definitely prefer Hungarian, I mean for foreign series and movies. Dubs are excellent, like *Family Guy*, *South Park*. I love watching them in Hungarian; they are so, so good. Turkish dubbing is so artificial. For Turkish series, of course, I watch in Turkish." (male, 36).

Code-switching was also common and context-dependent, involving Turkish, Hungarian, and English. As one participant explained: "If the person I'm talking to is Hungarian and I can't find the English word, I might say it in Hungarian. … But Turkish slips in unconsciously very often" (female, 39). Although code-switching reflected multilingual flexibility rather than language loss (Yilmaz & Schmid, 2017), some participants reported Turkish attrition due to reduced use in Hungarian- and English-dominant environments (Schmid & Köpke, 2004). As one participant reflected:

"I have really started to have a lot of deficiencies in speaking the Turkish language. I mean I have about a 20% loss, forgetting things, not being able to pronounce them, or pronouncing them

incorrectly. These are happening, they have happened. This is a deficiency. Especially in someone like me who has received education, when this happens, in other cases the situation is even more." (male, 70, residining in Hungary for 21 years).

Intergenerational transmission was strongly connected to family language policy, particularly parental ideology, management, and everyday practice (Lanza & Lomeu Gomes, 2020). These findings are based on in-depth interviews with first-generation Turkish immigrant parents; children were not directly observed or tested, so the findings reflect parental perceptions rather than children's perspectives or the full complexity of family language dynamics (Curdt-Christiansen & Huang, 2020). In endogamous families, Turkish was generally maintained as the primary home language and was closely connected to cultural continuity and heritage identity. However, children's school languages shaped their wider repertoires. In English-medium schools, children often developed strong English alongside Turkish, with some mixing the two languages. One parent reported:

"They never learned Hungarian. And now they mix up their Turkish with English as well" (female, 42, married to Turkish husband).

In exogamous families, Hungarian generally dominated both home and school contexts, which could restrict children's productive Turkish proficiency and motivation. One participant explained:

"As a father, I always wanted my kids to know Turkish, but their mother didn't want them to learn it. At home, we spoke Hungarian, and because of that, they couldn't even communicate with my parents" (male, 72, married to Hungarian wife).

Another participant stated:

"He understands and responds well to Turkish, despite hearing mostly Hungarian, like 80-90%, at home and in programs. For now, I support Turkish through music, speaking, and play, but will take action if his skills decline" (female, 32, married to Hungarian husband).

A recurring challenge reported by parent across family types concerns children's difficulties with Turkish writing and vocabulary. This is commonly attributed to limited reading in Turkish and the lack of formal instruction in the language. One mother remarked:

“His spoken Turkish is not bad, but he’s not confident with written Turkish. He finished 4th grade when he came here, and he's still not sure about his writing skills” (female, 41, married to Hungarian husband).

Language and identity were closely connected. Turkish remained a central marker of ethnic identity, cultural continuity, belonging, and emotional attachment, particularly in endogamous families. One participant described Turkish use with family as non-negotiable:

“Turkish with our families and without any accent. This has always been non-negotiable for me” (female, 58, married to Turkish husband).

At the same time, identity was layered and situational. Participants could experience a strong sense of belonging in Hungary while continuing to identify primarily as Turkish. One participant explained: “I feel completely like I belong here… I even feel kind of half Hungarian… But still, at the end of the day… I’m Turkish after all” (female, 36, married to Hungarian husband).

Hungarian proficiency could also become an important part of participants’ sense of belonging and linguistic identity. One participant stated, “I speak Hungarian better than Turkish. No one hears a foreign accent from me” (male, 58, married to Hungarian wife).

For others, maintaining a Turkish accent was understood as part of their identity:

“I wouldn’t really care [speaking Hungarian with an accent]. I don’t bother with it, because there’s no need. I’m Turkish, this is my accent. This is how I’ll speak. Right. It wouldn’t suit me to speak like a Hungarian” (male, 57, married to Hungarian wife).

The acculturation findings further demonstrate that participants’ orientations differed across domains. Overall, the Host Orientation Score (HOS) was M=2.39, while the Heritage Orientation Score (HoOS) was M=1.57. Partner nationality was the only significant predictor of HOS in the regression model (B=1.03, p<.001). The full model, including length of residence, partner nationality, gender, date and place of birth, parental status, and education, explained a substantial proportion of variance in heritage orientation (R^2 = .46, adjusted R^2 = .36). The overall model was statistically significant, $F(7, 38) = 4.63$, $p < .001$.

Among the predictors, partner nationality emerged as the only significant predictor of heritage orientation. Having a Turkish partner was associated with significantly higher HOS scores ($B = 1.03$, $p < .001$), indicating stronger heritage orientation compared to participants with Hungarian partners.

None of the other demographic variables, including length of residence, gender, education, or parental status, reached statistical significance.

These patterns should be understood alongside the domain-specific findings rather than as a uniform orientation across participants. Family orientation, for example, could be strongly connected to Hungarian life. In the family domain, host orientation slightly exceeded heritage orientation (HoOS: M = 1.99, SD = 1.69; HOS: M = 1.67, SD = 1.65). As it stated:

"[Hungarian is the most important]…Because my family is Hungarian, I'm married here. My children are here too" (male, 42, married to Hungarian wife).

The domain scores further illustrate this selective pattern. Social life showed a stronger host orientation (HoOS: M = 2.41, SD = 0.97; HOS: M = 1.87, SD = 1.14), whereas literacy remained more heritage-oriented (HOS = 2.38; HoOS = 1.21, SD = 0.94). The strongest divergence appeared in the identity domain. Heritage identity was consistently high and homogeneous (M = 3.88, SD = 0.39), while host-oriented identity remained low (M = 0.54, SD = 0.99). Media and social practices also showed variation (HOS: M = 2.11, SD = 1.21). Participants' accounts similarly demonstrated that everyday life could be predominantly Hungarian because of work and social networks, while Turkish remained important in heritage-oriented domains.

These quantitative patterns are also reflected in participants' qualitative accounts, as illustrated by their everyday language practices across different domains.

Discussion

Integrating the empirical findings with relevant theoretical frameworks provides a deeper understanding of language ideologies, daily practices, and identity construction among first-generation Turkish migrants in Hungary. The findings suggest that participants' language ideologies were shaped by practical, emotional, and identity-related considerations. Turkish was associated with family, heritage, and identity; Hungarian with daily life and local institutions; and English with career and global communication. This supports Spolsky's (2004) view that language beliefs depend on social context and the value speakers assign to different languages. Participants showed strong emotional and symbolic attachment to Turkish, linking it to identity, cultural continuity, and belonging (Duchêne & Heller, 2012; Extra et al., 2004; Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012). Hungarian, by contrast, was primarily valued for its practical role in work, education, institutions, and communication with the host society.

Regarding the second research question, the findings reveal an interplay of personal, social, and structural factors shaping language ideologies. Perceived societal receptivity in Hungary encouraged pragmatic and open linguistic orientations. As Lambert et al. (2013) argue, constructive intergroup

relations can support psychological security and belonging. Age at arrival and length of residence also influenced linguistic self-efficacy, with earlier arrivals reporting greater ease in Hungarian. Educational attainment was similarly associated with favorable attitudes toward multilingual development, heritage-language transmission, and socio-economic integration, consistent with Altınkamış and Ağırdağ (2014). Regarding the third research question, parental language practices reflected three main orientations: an affective-symbolic ideology of heritage continuity, a pragmatic-integrative ideology focused on local inclusion, and an instrumental ideology centered on global mobility (Spolsky, 2004). These orientations are consistent with family language policy research showing that parents negotiate heritage-language maintenance, integration, and the economic and educational value of languages (Curdt-Christiansen, 2009, 2014). In endogamous households, Turkish was viewed as important for cultural identity, emotional intimacy, and intergenerational continuity. In exogamous households, this commitment competed with the practical importance of Hungarian for family cohesion and host-society belonging. School choices were also influenced by parents' socioeconomic considerations of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991).

The fourth research question examined how marital configuration contributes to language maintenance or shift. In endogamous households, shared linguistic and cultural backgrounds supported Turkish maintenance. Among couples without children, Turkish was consistently the primary language of communication. This is consistent with Yağmur and Akinci (2003), who found that in-group marriage among Turkish migrants was associated with maintaining Turkish as the primary home language. Among families with children, however, institutional schooling created obstacles to heritage-language maintenance. Children in local state schools rapidly developed Hungarian as their dominant language, while children in international schools were primarily socialized through English. In exogamous households, out-group marriage contributed to language shift toward Hungarian. Children often showed limited motivation to speak Turkish and preferred Hungarian, sometimes displaying receptive bilingualism by understanding Turkish but responding in Hungarian. The fifth research question showed that language ideologies did not produce one consistent pattern of language choice. Instead, participants differentiated their use of Turkish, Hungarian, and English across home, social, professional, emotional, literacy, and digital domains. Language choice depended on interlocutor, communicative purpose, social network, and institutional context (Yağmur & Akinci, 2003; Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012). Hungarian generally dominated locally oriented workplaces and interactions with Hungarian-speaking colleagues, customers, and institutions, while English was important in international and corporate environments. Workplace multilingualism therefore reflected the functional allocation of linguistic resources according to context (Piller, 2016). Although Hungarian increasingly dominated many face-to-face interactions, Turkish remained present through reading, television, social media, online content, and digitally

mediated communication. This is consistent with research identifying Turkish-language media and transnational connections as resources for heritage-language engagement (Yağmur & Akinci, 2003; Yağmur et al., 2009). Participants also moved flexibly between Turkish, Hungarian, and English. Code-switching was related to interlocutor, topic, communicative purpose, and linguistic accessibility. Rather than indicating deficient competence, such alternation can be understood as an ordinary feature of multilingual interaction (Auer, 1998; Li Wei, 1998; Gardner-Chloros, 2009). Thus, multilingual practices involved the flexible allocation of linguistic resources rather than a simple replacement of Turkish by Hungarian.

Drawing on Berry's (1997, 2005) model, the findings predominantly indicate an integration orientation. Participants maintained strong attachments to Turkish language, culture, and identity while developing functional relationships with Hungarian society. The findings therefore do not suggest a straightforward movement toward assimilation. However, this orientation varied across domains. The greater prominence of Hungarian in social and professional contexts can be interpreted as a stronger host-society orientation rather than simply linguistic shift, consistent with Arends-Tóth and van de Vijver (2004).

The findings further indicate that first-generation Turkish immigrants in Hungary maintain a strong symbolic and emotional attachment to Turkish identity while adapting to Hungarian social and institutional life. This supports Fishman's (1989, 1999) view of language as cultural continuity and Edwards' (2009) distinction between its communicative and symbolic functions. Participants also negotiated identity across contexts, consistent with the dynamic perspective of Pavlenko and Blackledge (2004). The importance attached to "Türkiye Turkish" and linguistic authenticity further highlights Turkish's symbolic role in sustaining heritage identity (Yağmur & Akıncı, 2003; Extra & Yağmur, 2010; Yağmur & van de Vijver, 2012). Participants generally distinguished Turkish ethnic identity from religious affiliation, defining Turkishness through language, customs, and shared cultural practices. The findings also have implications for language and cultural policy in Hungary. Participants emphasized Turkish literacy and language opportunities for their children, suggesting that intergenerational maintenance cannot depend solely on family efforts. Weekend or after-school Turkish classes could provide additional opportunities for children to learn and use Turkish. Given the relatively small and geographically dispersed Turkish population, flexible provision, including digital and hybrid classes, may be particularly appropriate. Participants also expressed interest in a dedicated Turkish cultural centre that could provide language classes, learning materials, cultural activities, and opportunities for social connection.

Overall, the findings suggest that heritage-language policy for Turkish migrants in Hungary should consider the community's size, geographical distribution, and institutional circumstances. Rather than directly adopting models developed for larger Turkish communities in Western Europe, support could

focus on flexible language education, literacy resources, community activities, and digital provision. Such measures could support Turkish language and cultural continuity while allowing migrants to remain engaged in Hungarian society.

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