

**Kutlay Yagmur and Fons J. R. van de Vijver: Multidisciplinary Perspectives on Acculturation in Turkish Immigrant's Identity, Language and Education Across Generations**

(Switzerland: Springer International Publishing, 2022. 162 p.)

Written by a well-known educational linguist and a cross-cultural psychologist, the book presents the incorporated works of different research projects pertinent to language maintenance and shift, acculturation orientations, family language policy, school achievement, and bilingualism in Turkish-speaking communities in different immigration contexts. The book is divided into seven chapters combining psychological, sociolinguistic, and ethnographic perspectives to present a detailed and systematic investigation of Turkish immigrants' identity, language, and acculturation orientation.

The first chapter broadly provides insight into the term 'acculturation' and the relationship between the term language maintenance and family language policy and the sphere of influence of acculturation in the students' educational achievement. The authors disagree with the categorization by Berry (1997), who proposes four possible outcomes of acculturation outcomes of immigrant adaptation: adaptation, assimilation, integration, separation, and marginalization. They argue that it is impossible for such a complex social and cultural process to result in only four outcomes. They highlight the need for interdependent investigation of each factor in the multi-layered nature of adaptation in acculturation conditions, orientation, and outcomes. Since language maintenance or shift is related to both linguistic and cultural contact, the linguistic outcome is affected by the interaction between the majority and minority language speakers. In this respect, there is also a need to conduct research in actual places of intergroup contact to reflect on acculturation attitudes and orientations of the host society members regarding the cultural adaptation of the new groups. Undervalued or prohibited mother tongues in restrictive school environments might barricade children's cognitive skills and even identity development. A segregated education system induces limited exposure to the mainstream language leading to a restricted involvement of most parents due to the lack of proficiency in the mainstream language.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to the history of immigration of Turkish immigrants and the situation of their heritage language in five different European contexts; France, Germany, the Netherlands, Australia and the United States of America. The chapter informs the reader that the immigration flow of labour began in the 1950s and 60s, down to the bilateral agreements between Western European and Turkish governments. Initially called 'guest workers', they settled down after being reunited with their families and the 'European Turks' identity emerged. The situation has changed in the last decades because almost the entire population is blue-collar workers, and in-group marriage tendency is very likely in Australia, Germany, and the Netherlands. Media and sources in the heritage language are available in the

major immigrant contexts (Australia, Germany, and the Netherlands). The age distribution is relatively young compared to the mainstream population. The analysis of Turkish acculturation orientations in the four contexts by Yagmur and van de Vijver (2012) showed a close connection between the degree of acculturation and the integration ideology of the receiving societies with stronger negative correlations between mainstream and Turkish identity in less pluralistic countries. Identification with the host society was lowest in Germany while highest in the United States and Australia. Turkish immigrant groups have very diverse profiles in their linguistic practices. A small group, the younger generations, shift to the host language and use almost only the societal language. Yagmur and Akinci (2003) found that Turkish is used in the domestic domain and the neighbourhood of other Turkish immigrants in France.

In Chapter 3, Turkish acculturation orientations are presented by examining the relationship between the degree of acculturation and the integration ideology of the receiving societies: Australia, the USA, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. Turkish immigrants in Australia and the USA displayed better higher orientation towards the mainstream society due to the higher educational profiles of Turkish immigrants and the long history of immigration. In contrast, they exhibit higher in-group orientations with language maintenance in European contexts except for France.

Chapter 4 investigates the factors influencing family language policy by comparing two national settings, Turkish-Dutch and Turkish-Australian families, where the state policies are respectively exclusive and pluralistic. Regardless of the state policies, both groups show higher levels of language maintenance, even in the third generation. High value is attributed to the language as an inseparable part of the culture and identity. However, the mainstream language is equally valuable as a part of their linguistic repertoires. Translanguaging exists as the actual mode of language use in most immigrant homes. Despite the hesitation in raising bilingual kids in the Dutch context due to the schools and teachers' idea that acquiring Dutch first is better, Turkish-Australian and Turkish-Dutch parents still prefer dual language proficiency instead of monolingualism.

In Chapter 5, Turkish immigrant students' educational achievement differences in reading and mathematics are investigated with the PISA data (Programme for International Student Assessment). Since the factors leading to the underachievement of Turkish immigrant students at school are multifaceted and interrelated, the results are analysed with a focus on achievement differences, the role of socioeconomic backgrounds, and the impact of mainstream language proficiency. It presents a disparity in academic performance between the two groups. Yet, when the economic, social, and cultural status is controlled, the difference in performance becomes less. The students with higher scores on the economic, social, and cultural status index performed better in reading and mathematics. Based on the positive correlation found, socioeconomic status enabling cultural and educational resources at home is assumed to impact

achievement positively. The performance of immigrant children in mathematics tests is as good as that of mainstream students. Higher reading performance in PISA is observed in the countries with higher MIPEX (The Migrant Integration Policy Index) results and a more inclusive integration policy.

Chapter 6 presents the investigation of the possible relationship between the first and second language skills of Turkish students in France, Germany, and the Netherlands with the standardized tests (PISA and PIRLS) with 119 students at the age of 10 and 122 students at the age of 15. Both age groups had much higher reading comprehension skills in the languages of the mainstream compared to their heritage language. Therefore, Turkish is not the ‘first language’ of Turkish bilinguals growing up in these countries. Turkish bilinguals, who display high performance in Turkish reading tests, get equally high scores in the host languages despite the lack of prediction in the opposite direction. The proficiency levels achieved in the first language will benefit their mainstream language skills, and hence not achieving proficiency in the first language leads to underachievement in the mainstream language and, consequently, at schools. The data confirmed Cumin’s hypothesis that claims not reaching the first threshold in either of the language has serious detrimental effects on the linguistic and even cognitive skills of bilingual children.

Chapter 7 presents the overall conclusion. The adaptation process, either culturally or linguistically, is affected by political discourse as the language in these countries is still exclusive rather than inclusive. The political correctness of the terms used in acculturation research is suggested to be gone through for future research. Turkish immigrants in France show strong identification with the Turkish group as opposed to the linguistic assimilation they get through. In Germany, likewise, they exhibit a high level of ethnic identity with a much lower level of mainstream identity. On the contrary, there is a high level of identification with the mainstream culture in Australia and the USA. The different acculturation orientations of Turkish immigrants in the USA might be led by predominantly mainstream language use, choice, and preference, even in first-generation informants, unlike the European contexts. In the Dutch context, the Turkish language is highly valued and identified with the mainstream and the in-group. Based on the theory of Cummins (1979), it is concluded that lower school achievement of Turkish immigrant children might be a possible outcome of the delays in first language development with little societal and institutional support and negative attitudes to immigrant children’s bilingualism, excluding high-status languages, in the European context. Turkish children obtain the same scores as mainstream students in mathematics tests yet lower in language skills. The empirical evidence in the book presented the complex relationship between integration policies of immigrant-receiving societies and the language maintenance and acculturation orientations of immigrant groups.

## References

- Berry, J. W.** (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 46, 5–34. doi: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/026999497378467>
- Cummins, J.** (1979). Linguistic interdependence and the educational development of bilingual children. *Review of Educational Research*, 49(2), 222-255. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00346543049002222>
- Rudmin, F., Wang, B., & de Castro, J.** (2017). Acculturation research critiques and alternative research designs. In S. J. Schwartz & J. B. Unger (Eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Acculturation and Health* (pp.75–95). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Yagmur, K., & Akinci, M. A.** (2003). Language use, choice, maintenance, and ethnolinguistic vitality of Turkish speakers in France: Intergenerational differences. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 164, 107–128. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1515/ijsl.2003.050>
- Yagmur, K., & van de Vijver, F.** (2012). Acculturation and language orientations of Turkish immigrants in Australia, France, Germany, and the Netherlands. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 43(7), 1110–1130. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022022111420145>

BEYZA NUR GÜRSES  
University of Pannonia  
Multilingualism Doctoral School  
b.nurgurses@gmail.com