İKİNCİ DİL EDİNİMİNİN SOSYAL YÖNÜ: ARAPÇADAN TÜRKÇEYE DOĞRU (ADANA ÖRNEKLEMİ)

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Özet

Bu çalışma, Türkiye ortamında yetişkinler tarafından konuşulan Arapçadan Türkçeye geçişi ve ikinci dil ediniminin sosyal yönünü incelemeyi hedeflemekte ve ikinci dil ediniminin daha geç bir yaşta oluşabileceğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çocukların bir dili daha kolay ve mükemmel şekilde öğrenebileceği genel savı, yetişkinlerin de ikinci bir dili çocuklarınkine benzer yeterlikte öğrenebileceği fikriyle eleştirilmiştir. Çalışmanın yöntemi budunbetimsel ve açımlayıcıdır. Katılımcılar Türkiye'de yerleşimi 11.yüzyıla kadar dayanan Suriye kökenli Türk vatandaşlardır ve bu Suriyeli kökenli Türkiye vatandaşlarının bazıları 19. Yüzyılın sonunda Suriye'den Türkiye'ye göç etmiştir. Türkçeyi daha geç bir dönemde öğrenen katılımcılar Türkiye'nin güneyinde bulunan Adana şehrinde yaşamakta olup 1930-40 yılları arasında doğmuşlardır. Katılımcıların gündelik dili bir ses kayıt cihazına kaydedilmiştir. Katılımcılar hem Arapça hem de Türkçe konuşmaktaydılar ve Türkçeyi çocuklarından ya da torunlarından öğrenmişlerdi. Bu bulgu, dilin saf bir şekilde biyolojik olamayacağını fakat öncelikle doğası gereği sosyal nitelikte olabileceğini göstermektedir. Katılımcıların Türkçede bazı çekim eklerini kullanmama eğiliminde olmasına rağmen, iletişimi sağlarken oldukça akıcı oldukları görülmüştür. Bu durum çekim eklerinin ikinci dil ediniminde ikincil önemde olduğunu ima etmektedir. Katılımcılar, Türkçeyi üretici ve yeterli düzeyde konuşabilmekteydiler. Bu sonuçlar, sosyal ortamlar yetişkinin ihtiyaçlarına yönelik uygun olduğunda, ikinci dil ediniminin geç bir yaşta bile başarabileceğini göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *İkinci dil edinimi, sosyal yön, Arapça, Türkçe*

THE SOCIAL ASPECT OF SECOND LANGUAGE ACQUISITION: FROM ARABIC TO TURKISH

(ADANA SAMPLE)

Abstract

This study aims to examine the social aspect of language acquisition and the transition from Arabic to Turkish spoken the adults in Turkey setting and intends to indicate that second language acquisition can take place at a later age. The general assumption that children acquire a language easily and perfectly is challenged by the idea that a second language can be acquired at a late age as well. The methodology of the study was ethnographic and exploratory. The participants were originally Syrians, whose origin dates back to 11th century and some of whom moved to Turkey in the 19th century. The participants who later acquired Turkish were born between 1930-40s in the city of Adana located in

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the south of Turkey. The daily language of the participants was recorded. The participants spoke both Arabic and Turkish. The participants learned Turkish from their children or grandchildren. This finding shows that language might not be not purely biological but also social in nature. Although the participants tended to omit some inflections in Turkish, they were quite fluent while establishing the communication, which implies that inflections are secondary in second language acquisition. The results of the study showed that although the participants omitted Turkish inflections, they could speak Turkish productively and competently. This result shows that second language acquisition can be reached even at a later age when social settings are suited to adults' needs.

Keywords: *Second language acquisition, social aspect, Arabic, Turkish*

INTRODUCTION

Sociocultural theory of language has been prevalent and dominant in recent decades (Moore, 2008; Schecter & Bayley, 2004; Vygotsky, 1962). According to this theory, interaction and communication in a certain authentic community enable adults to acquire a second language. In this sense, language learning is grounded in authentic social settings. There are certain main frameworks in second language studies. Table 1 summarizes these three mainstreams (Saville-Troike, 2012).

Table 1. Perspectives, Foci and Frameworks

Perpectives	Focus	Framework
Linguistic	Internal	Generative grammar
	External	Functionalism
	Languages and the brain	Neurolinguistics
Psychological	Learning processes	Information processing, connectionism
	Individual differences	Humanistic models
Social	Microsocial	Variation, acculturation and socio-cultural theory
	Macrosocial	Acculturation theory, enculturation and social psychology

According to acculturation model (Schumann, 1978)'a person's acculturation to a certain community plays a critical role in acquiring the target language. Acculturation is defined as the social and psychological taxonomy of factors, which are believed to be important in the process of SLA in natural contexts. The major aim of the model is that acculturation, a cluster of social-psychological factors, is the major cause of SLA (Schumann, 1978). Schumann states that any learner can be placed on a continuum ranging from social-psychological distance to social-psychological proximity with the speakers of the target language. The degree of language acquisition would correlate with the degree of the learner's proximity to the target group. Schumann (1978) assumes that the degree of acquisition depends on the degree of acculturation and that social factors may have a direct effect on second language acquisition.

CRITICAL PERIOD HYPOTHESIS (CPD)

Critical period hypothesis acknowledges that language acquisition takes place in a limited time. After a certain age, the strong degree of language acquisition, whether L1, L2 or L3, declines. After puberty, it is hard to acquire L1 or L2 because until puberty language is acquired automatically since language acquisition skill is determined by biological factors. After puberty, language can be acquired consciously through explicit teaching. Several criticisms have been brought to this theory because some adults in different communities have been able to acquire

L2 at a late age with some exceptions such as their accents owing to phonetic categories that may not be perceived by adults on account of neurological or motor skill constraints. Some researchers (Johnson and Newport, 1989; Birdsong, 1999) often aimed to find a linear relationship between language acquisition and age. They support the idea 'the younger the better' because the tests they applied to different participants at different ages showed that the younger outperformed the older.

Johnson and Newport (1991) also tried to find evidence regarding universal grammar according to age linearity and found that language acquisition competence declined as the age increased. The participants aged 14-16 showed a sharp decline in L2 acquisition. However, White and Genesee (1996) found opposite results indicating that even postpubescent learners can reach native competence. In general, three main disadvantages such as age, length of stay and processing difficulties have been stressed. The reasons why adults cannot reach L1 competence have been assigned to several factors below:

-A loss of Universal Grammar

- Loss of neural plasticitiy

- Maladaptive gain of processing/memory capacity

- L1 inhibits L2 learning

These hypotheses are open to challenges because affective, input and current- cognitive explanations for the reduced ability are inadequate. Marionova-Todd, Marshall and Snow (2000) support the idea that if adults become highly motivated, spend enough time and receive support from the community they are in, then they might have the chance to challenge L2 acquisition studies that show a strong tendency towards linearity.

METHODOLOGY

This study was carried out with five participants from Arabic community who learned Turkish at a later age from their children and grandchildren. The age of the participants ranged from 72 to 93. The participants were exposed to little or no education in Turkish school. They were all illiterate. The participants spoke Arabic with their peers and children. However, they spoke Turkish with their grandchildren and outsiders because the third generation cannot speak Arabic generatively at all except a few fixed expressions, although they can understand some Arabic. Outsiders in this study refer to any person from different backgrounds, Turkish or Kurdish or others who sell or exchange products in the region.

DATA COLLECTION

Each participant was visited and recorded once a week for one hour. In total a 9 hour spoken data was collected. The participants talked about any topic spontaneously. They were not directed to talk about a certain topic.

RESULTS

The results showed that each participant acquired Turkish at near-native competence since they can communicate fluently with their grandchildren and outsiders. While speaking Turkish, the participants showed some differences compared to their children and grandchildren. The participants tended to omit first and second subject pronoun inflection. The word order differed from each other.

Table 2. Participants and Total Sentences

Background Information	N
Participants	5
Average sentence per minute	20
Sentences uttered in total	11000

Table 3. Specific Constructions of Turkish of Arabic Speakers

N	Specific Constructions	F	%
	Subject pronoun omission	135	1.2
	Sentences with adjective/possesive pronoun omission	65	0.5
	Sentences with different word order	35	0.3
	Sentences with different grammatical collocation choice	25	0.2
	Sentences with past tense omission	10	0.09
	Sentences with passive omission	5	0.045
	Sentences with participle omission	5	0.045

CONCLUSION

This study showed that the adults at a later age have the ability to acquire another language as long as acculturation conditions in terms of social and psychological proximity are convenient. Language should not be reduced to merely psychological, cognitive or neurological constraints. Language can be composed of multi-layers emerging with certain and different construction dissimilar to the original one. The acquired constructions by adults should not be perceived and evaluated as naive, short or inadequate. Rather, it should be interpreted as perceptions and acquisitions of adults producing different constructions and variations.

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