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**The process of acquiring the heritage or home
language by children in immigrant families
(A case study of Iranian migrant
families to Georgia)**

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ABSTRACT

In this study, we are researching the impact of immigration on acquiring the heritage language in Iranian immigrant families to Georgia whose children age was between 3 to 15 years. The methodology used in this research is a survey study in the Iranian community, and the results methodology is questionnaires. According to the answers and the independent variable which is immigration, the result has shown that Iranian immigrant families to Georgia try to keep their heritage language even though some families were multinational. People are immigrating in the 21st century more than ever. This result is that people are being separated from their mother tongue and joining a new world and language. One of the challenges people face is how to preserve their heritage language while it faces a variety of obstacles that may be lost by its speakers. In this research, we study the effects of immigration on language knowledge from each side in addition to find out how the immigrant family's children acquire languages.

Keywords: *heritage language. Immigration. Language acquisition. Mother tongue.*

The aim of writing this article is to figure out how immigration can affect languages.

People are immigrating in the 21th century more than ever. The result of this is that people are being separated from their mother tongue and joining a new world and language. One of the challenges people face is how to preserve their heritage language while it faces a variety of obstacles that maybe lost by its speakers. In this research, we

study the effects of immigration on language knowledge from each side in addition to find out how the immigrant family's children acquire languages.

Mother tongue is very significant and is concerned to the honor of one's cultural heritage and language identity; a device in the transmission of thought that distinguishes human beings from so many other beings, the United Nations designates February 21st as World Mother Language Day. Around half of the languages in the world are endangered. The death of every language means the extinction of a set of cultures, histories, and customs of a group of people on earth. Heritage speakers are bilingual, concurrent, or sequential, who have been raised in homes where they have spoken a language other than the dominant language of the wider community (Valdés, 2000). The mother tongue is often known as the first language learned by an infant. If a language is spoken at home or otherwise readily accessible to young children, a language qualifies as a heritage language and this language is essentially not the dominant language of a larger national community (Rothman, 2009). Immigrant children and children of ethnic groups or even minority-born religions do not usually study or do not master their mother tongue, as well as the host country's language and the ruling ethnic community. In other words, in human life, the mother tongue is not always the most important language that remains and plays a role (Bateni, 2006). Complete bilingualism in itself cannot be perfect bilingualism unless the social, political, and cultural conditions of the region where he lives are also suitable for him. Some bilinguals are not complete. "That is, one of their languages dominates the other, the reasons for which must search in society" (Narcissians, 2006). Heritage languages are increasingly used in bilingualism debates and with good reason that few instances of bilingualism are fully balanced, with the supremacy of both languages being equivalent. Instead, due to the changing focus that emerges from shifting sociolinguistic situations, one language sometimes wins out over the other. The inheritance language, the weaker language of a bilingual dyad, results in this asymmetric bilingualism (Polinsky and Scontras, 2019).

Nowadays, migration to developed countries increased as people are looking for a better life, having a better job position, economic issues, and beneficiary of human rights, enjoyment of commonwealth and welfare and many other reasons. Meanwhile,

there will be some difficulties for children, those who are born in these families in a foreign country. They will face two different languages or even in some countries with three languages. International migration is one of the main factors that harm languages. Language as the most important means of communication and messaging between people is the first concern of immigrants. By knowing the host language, one can more easily integrate into the new community and work towards one's goals (Olumi, 2020). The heritage language, which is spoken at home by parents, assured is quite different from the host country's language. Among a diversity of cultural subjects, language has an essential role, from the policymaker's point of view in migrant matters. Immigrants have to have an acceptable level of language skill and embrace the culture of the receptive country. Therefore the immigrants end up with a set of cultural and linguistic change (Juszyk, 1997).

The human language is used to share one's thoughts and ideas to his/her community. The units are words, the materials are the limited form of sounds from which they are developed, and the mixes are the sentences into which they can be collected. According to the multifaceted nature of this system, it appears to be doubtful that only children could find its basic structure and use it to communicate. However, most do with eagerness and no difficulty, all within the first few years of life (Saffran, Aslin, Newport, 1996). By merging the statistical regularities of reasonably pointless acoustic occasions, newborn children can quickly structure etymological contributions to significant and eventual meaningful units (Aslin and others, 1998). Finding the expressions of a language and what they mean in the world is just the first step for the language learner. Children must discover how the circulation of these components, including syntactic endings and capacity words, pass on the further combinatorial significance of an expression. The parsing cycle is consequently a fundamental part of the language understanding gadget since it permits kids to collect a series of components to register significantly, and even novel, relational conceptions of the world (Saffran, Aslin, Newport, 1999). Before infants can start to plan words onto objects, they should figure out which sound sequences are words. To do so, newborn children should reveal probably a portion of the units that belong to their native language from a great consistent stream of sounds in which words

are only occasionally encircled by pauses (Saffran, Griepentrog, 2001). Language acquisition is a cycle that can happen at any time in one's life. In the sense of first language obtaining, notwithstanding, it alludes to the procurement of oblivious learning of one's native language or dialects on account of bilinguals during the initial 6 or 7 years of one's life, generally from birth to the time of the beginning of one's school life (Nordquist, 2020). The first language acquisition is an instinct, very rapid, complete, and does not require instruction. For the most part, the capacity to procure a language with native speaker ability decreases severely around pubescence. The obtaining is done in the main long stretches of adolescence and prompts oblivious information on one's local language that is practically indelible. Learning a second language acquired later is characterized by imperfection and the likelihood of being misremembered. Learning leads to conscious knowledge. Bi-and multilingualism this is the learning in early childhood of two or more languages from birth or, at least, together. It is difficult to find the optimal situation where all languages are equally represented in the child's setting and where the child has an unbiased relationship with each one, such that one is bound to be dominant in two or more languages., Different second language learning models reflect how learners acquire knowledge of the new language, either in a similar way to their native language, the identity hypothesis or the intervention hypothesis against the context of this. Some models emphasize how the monitor model is produced in a second language or stress the role of external discourse factors and acculturation models (Nordquist, 2020).

Language is the most vital communicational tool and the first-turn issue to deal with for the people who decide to immigrate to other countries. Having a background about the language for the aimed country, those immigrants can improve and promote as much as possible, so people strive to learn the new language and the fact is that they prefer their children to learn the language which is spoken in society. The impact of the quantity of input on heritage language results has been recorded in several studies (Unsworth, 2016). More exposure to the heritage language over a more extended period contributes to more integrated bilingualism, to sum up, the general findings. Besides, the recurrence of that exposure seems to play a crucial role: both accumulated

lifelong exposure and current everyday life exposure are predictive of grammatical outcomes (Unsworth, 2015).

Results

According to research and interviews conducted in Tbilisi, the results are as follows: except for one case, all children of Iranian families are fully acquainted with their mother tongue in the listening and speaking sections and have also learned their mother tongue as their first language. The second result of the research shows that all families are very inclined to choose English as their second language. Due to the learning Georgian language difficulty and not being one of international languages concerning other languages in other countries, people have not made much effort to learn the language "completely". Also, having the heritage language as a priority in Iranian immigrant families is the ability to understand and comprehend everything, emotive, emotionally, and in terms of ease of expression. They believe that emotions can be fully and accurately expressed only by their mother tongue. One of the reasons immigrant children in Georgia do not know the official language of Georgia is their restriction on entering Georgian public schools.

Questionnaires

How good is the child in speaking the Georgian language?

How does the child acquire the Georgian language?

What is the school language thought? (Which school does the child attend?)

Where do you usually use the Georgian language?

How often are you in contact with Iranian-speaking people? Which language or languages do you speak at home?

Do you use Georgian words at home, by any chance?

Do you imitate or follow any of Georgian cultures or ceremonies or celebrate any of their festivals?

Do you celebrate Iranian ceremonies?

How much is your business depends on knowing the Georgian language?

Do you have multi nationalities?

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