

EXPLORING IMMIGRANT CHILDREN'S COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS WITH THEIR GRANDMOTHERS DUE TO LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL LOSS

GÖÇMEN ÇOCUKLARIN DİL VE KÜLTÜR KAYBI NEDENİYLE BÜYÜKANNELERİ İLE YAŞADIKLARI İLETİŞİM SORUNLARININ İNCELENMESİ

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Abstract: The purpose of this study is to examine the communication issues that monolingual English-speaking Mexican American children face to communicate with their monolingual Spanish-speaking Mexican grandmothers due to language and cultural loss. The study was designed as a qualitative study and depicted 20 first-generation monolingual Spanish-speaking Mexican grandmothers' perceptions and reflections of language and cultural loss for their third-generation monolingual English-speaking grandchildren. Interview questions were prepared as semi-structured and focused on grandmothers' attitudes, beliefs, and thoughts related to language and cultural loss and the implications of such on the intergenerational relationship. An inductive analysis was applied to analyze data, which was collected in Spanish then translated to English to prevent loss of significant information. In the coding scheme, CLL (cultural loss: language), CLC (cultural loss: celebrations), CLV (cultural loss: values), RLL (relationship: language as a barrier), RLP (relationships: role of parent's attitudes) were used. Results indicate grandmothers are concerned about their relationships which are inevitably affected by the language barrier and have caused cultural and language loss throughout generations with their grandchildren.

Keywords: language loss, *cultural loss*, *immigrant children*, *communication problems*

Özet: Bu çalışmanın amacı, sadece İngilizce konuşan Amerika'da doğmuş Meksikalı çocukların, sadece İspanyolca konuşan Meksikalı büyükanneleriyle dil ve kültür kaybından dolayı oluşan iletişim sorunlarını incelemektir. Bu araştırma nitel bir çalışma olarak düzenlenmiş olup, 20 tane birinci nesil sadece İspanyolca konuşan Meksikalı büyükannelerin üçüncü nesil sadece İngilizce konuşan torunlarının dil ve kültür kaybına ilişkin algılarını ve yansımalarını tasvir ediyor. Görüşme soruları yarı yapılandırılmış olarak hazırlanmış olup, büyükannelerin dil ve kültürel kayıpla ilgili tutum, inanç ve düşüncelerine ve bunların kuşaklar arası büyükanne ve torun ilişkileri üzerindeki etkilerine odaklanmıştır. Tümevarım yöntemi ile analiz edilen veriler önemli bilgi kaybını engellemek adına İspanyolca toplanmış olup sonrasında İngilizceye çevrilmiştir. Analiz sürecindeki kodlama şemasında CLL (kültürel kayıp: dil), CLC (kültürel kayıp: kutlamalar), CLV (kültürel kayıp: değerler), RLL (ilişkiler: dil bariyeri) ve RLP (ilişkiler: aile tutumunun rolü) kodları kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, büyükannelerin torunlarıyla dil bariyeri nedeniyle kaçınılmaz bir şekilde etkilenen ve nesiller boyunca kültür ve dil kaybına neden olan ilişkilerinden endişe duyduklarını göstermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *dil kaybı*, *kültür kaybı*, *göçmen çocuklar*, *iletişim problemleri*

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Introduction

Many people have emigrated from their native countries due to poor living conditions such as violence and armed conflicts, economic problems, and the huge gap between the countries (Federal Office for Immigration, 2019). Currently, over 175 million people are living far from their native countries in the United States, and the data shows that the biggest immigrant population is from Mexico with 60,48 million immigrants (Office of Immigration Statics, 2019). Petras (2006) indicates that there are several explanations for why the U.S hosts immigrants mainly from Mexico, but he says that the most significant reason is the shared border between Mexico and the U.S. On the other hand, while the rate of immigrant people has been increasing the rate of people speaking their mother language has been decreasing (U. S. Census Bureau, 2010). For instance, many first-generation Hispanic immigrants speak only Spanish while second-generation Hispanic immigrants tend to be bilingual, speaking Spanish at home and with family, and speaking English at school, at work, and with friends. This rate decreased from 35% to 17% for the third-generation Hispanic with three or four foreign-born grandparents.

Many immigrants who migrate to another country for a better life are at risk of assimilation. Er (2011) defined assimilation as a minority group that has been emulated by a different and dominant culture, or a minority group that has dissolved itself and resembles another dominant culture. During the assimilation process, many immigrants lose their language, culture, and identity. Most of the time, immigrants do not want to resemble another society. Unfortunately, language tends to be the first aspect that is lost because people need to communicate with others to survive in other countries. Even though they try to protect their languages the results of the U.S. Census Bureau (2010) indicate that immigrants are losing their language through generations, and this loss leads to many other losses, such as culture, customs, traditions, and various social rituals. Today, Latino families in the U.S. are under the threat of language loss during the assimilation and acculturation process as they are losing their language and culture (Dettlaff and Rycraft, 2006).

Maintaining Heritage Language: The Role of Schooling

In the United States, Latino parents provide opportunities for their children to maintain and learn the Spanish language. However, the reduction in the Spanish-speaking rate is noticeable, as data from the Census Bureau reveals. According to Shorris (2001), Latino families in the U.S. are trying

to ensure their children's English proficiency to help them survive and obtain successful schooling and employment. Although according to John Boehner, the chairman of the Committee on Education and the Workforce, The No Child Left behind Act of 2002 concentrates more efficiently on the needs of language-minority students, both parents and children have some dilemmas and challenges are derived from living conditions in the U.S. While parents try to maintain bilingualism in their children, the younger generation is still losing their Spanish language.

There are several reasons why some parents may struggle with the decision to place their children in bilingual classrooms. A major concern for parents is the immediate need for children to speak English if they are to be successful in school. Another reason is the push from educators for children to learn English for standardized testing. For example, the Revised Texas Prekindergarten Guidelines (2008) state that under Texas Education Code §28.005, the state's arrangement is to guarantee the dominance of English by all understudies, explicitly in circumstances in which bilingual guidance is important to guarantee understudies' sensible capability in the English language and capacity to make scholarly progress. It also claims that all students shall develop mastery of language skills; this, unfortunately, creates limitations for bilingual development for these students. Another issue is accountability for students in a bilingual program; Cortez and Johnson (2008) say that there are still concerns about the impact of bilingualism on students' performance on school and district ratings because some students from accountability systems lessen their performance on school and district ratings.

Additionally, many Latino families do not want to take their children to bilingual pre-school programs. Winsler, Diaz, Espinosa, and Rodriguez (1999) claim parents believe their children can be affected negatively in their first language development. However, the study shows both children who remained at home and those who attended bilingual pre-school can improve their English and Spanish language skills (Winsler et al, 1999). These results amazed many people who were thinking differently, as many people believe that learning a second language may have a negative effect on the native language. All of these issues create limitations for parents who want to raise their children bilingually but also need their children to be successful in English. When all of these reasons are considered, there may indeed be valid motivations for Latino parents to teach their children only English.

As mentioned earlier, despite an attempt to protect their language and their culture, many immigrants are losing their language and culture after they immigrate to the U.S. (Census Bureau, 2010). This loss may cause many problems including communication problems between first and third generations who are not speaking the same language. However, the loss of the native Spanish inevitably has a negative influence on the relationship between Latino grandmothers and grandchildren and does not allow them to share and teach their culture in a natural setting. This causes many inter-generational problems that affect both grandmothers and grandchildren because “cultural values and scripts have a significant role in shaping thoughts and behaviors” (Ruiz, 2005, p.37).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the communication issues and loss of cultural capital that monolingual English-speaking Latino children face when they are unable to communicate with their monolingual Spanish-speaking grandmothers due to language loss. This study will focus on the following questions:

1. Do first-generation monolingual Spanish-speaking Mexican grandmothers perceive that there is a loss of cultural capital when they are not able to communicate with their third generation monolingual English-speaking Mexican-American grandchildren? If so, to what extent?
2. In what ways do first-generation monolingual Spanish-speaking Mexican grandmothers perceive that their relationship with their third-generation monolingual English-speaking Mexican-American grandchildren has been affected by their grandchildren’s loss of the Spanish language?

Literature Review

Culture and Language

Since the very beginning, American society has had a multi-ethnic, multicultural and multilingual character, and most ethnic groups have identified the United States as their home. This variety in society contributes to different cultures, values, and rich diversity. Although the language is one of the significant tools to share, teach and understand these values, beliefs, and customs immigrants

or minority groups in a society begin to lose their culture by first losing their language. Lazear (1995) states that at the point when a general public has an extremely vast dominant part of people from one culture, people from minority gatherings will be acclimatized all the more rapidly. Absorption is more outlandish when a worker's local culture and language is comprehensively addressed in a foreigner's new country; minority groups are obligated to adapt to majority groups to be able to communicate and survive and to do that, they have to start with learning the majority groups' language to become a competent person in the society.

Culture is transferred through generations by using language as a tool. As Shaver (2006) indicates “language conveys culture, and culture defines language” (p.15), but losing the language affects this cultural transfer because losing language stops communication through generations, and miscommunication stops cultural transition. As Brown (1994) states a language is a piece of a culture, and culture is a piece of the language; the two are unpredictably interlaced so one can't separate the two without losing the meaning of one or the other language or culture. Given the demographics, this loss is alarming and speaks to the need for language maintenance because America incorporates many different cultures and languages.

Each language, speech, and special phrase which includes a few words lose their meanings and create new meanings reflect the culture that owns the language. Therefore, immigrant people attempt to retain their old customs and speak their language to bequeath new generations their heritage in other countries even if they feel comfortable speaking other languages because people's culture, environment, values illustrate their mother language in the way they show and express their feelings (Shaver, 2006). When immigrants lose their mother language in new generations, as language is the best way to express people's feelings, some problems may appear the ability to convey showing feelings especially between grandparents and grandchildren who want to see more attention and love from others. Miscommunications can cause deficiencies in many things during daily life, and after time, this may convert into big losses, such as values, beliefs, and customs.

Jiang (2000) illustrates the connection that cannot be thought of separately between culture and language. He states language is like flesh and culture is blood, and when they gather, a living organism occurs, and he explains his example with his statement as follows “without culture, language would be dead; without language, culture would have no shape” (p.328). Also, Jiang

illustrates that language is a vehicle, culture is a traffic light and transportation is communication (Jiang, 2000). This means that people cannot transfer through generations without culture, and language helps communication to be faster and easier. On the other hand, “culture regulates, sometimes promotes and sometimes hinders communication” (Jiang, 2000 p. 329).

The Loss of Language

Language is not only a communication tool but also a reflection of identity which is directly related to culture as Rehman (2012) states “the central elements of any culture or civilization are language and religion” (Rehman, 2012, p. 7). Besides, Boroditsky (2009) states that language is the way of how we see, how we hear, and how we think. Therefore, it has a significant role for all people. Fillmore (2000) states that most immigrant children who are attending American schools are at risk of losing their primary languages even though they are trying to keep their mother languages. As they became assimilated, English replaces their first language. Fillmore proves that how new generations are losing their mother language, and English becoming their first language by saying in the course of recent years, this cycle of sped up language misfortune in worker kids and families has been recorded more than once. Although first-generation Latino immigrants have tried to protect their mother language their children have started to lose Spanish. Fillmore (2000) also illustrated how immigrant children lose their mother language and how it affects their relationships with their grandmothers. In one of her studies, there is an immigrant child whose own language was Cantonese in the U.S. She said that “when his grandmother tried to speak to him, he either ignored her or would mutter a response in English that she did not understand, and when pushed, he would stop speaking” (p.204). When he was 10 years old, until this time, he spent most of his time with his friends who spoke only English and did not understand Cantonese anymore.

Children’s Relationships with Their Grandmothers

According to Barnett, Mills-Koonce, Gustafsson, and Cox (2012), grandmothers caring for grandchildren are increasing in multigenerational households; however, the influence of grandmothers’ parenting on grandchildren’s social development remains largely unexplored in these three-generation households. Parents who are working full-time jobs and have low-income prefer to live with their parents. According to data given by Pew Research Center analysis of census data (2010), 49 million Americans, or 16.1 % of the total U.S. population lived in a family

household including at least two adult generations or grandparents, and at least one other generation.

Barnett et al. (2012) also claim that the relationships between family members influence and are affected by these members' other relationships. Mueller and Elder (2003) said that the grandparent-parent relationships influence grandparent-grandchildren relationships. Thusly, the nature of grandparent-parent connections adds to the nature of grandparent-grandchild connections (Barnett, Scaramella, Neppl, Ontai, & Conger, 2010; C. C. Goodman, 2007). At this point, mothers can be determined as a bridge in the relationship between grandmothers and grandchildren. In addition to that, not only language affect the relationships between grandmothers and grandchildren but also parents' attitudes are significant as Mueller and Elder (2003) claims that parent-grandparent relationship has an important role in the relationships between grandchildren and grandparents because children, especially in the young ages, observe their parents and imitate whatever they do. Grandparents have a significant role in their grandchildren's development as Dunifon and Bajracharya (2012) mentioned grandparents may directly influence their grandchildren by being role models.

Consequently, negative relationships or non-relationships between grandchildren and grandmothers may negatively influence their existing relationships. This situation unfortunately is seen frequently with Latino immigrants. According to data by the U.S. Census Bureau (2010), most grandmothers do not speak in the same language as their grandchildren even if they live in close proximity. This inevitably has a negative effect on their relationships and grandchildren's development. In addition, this not only affects their relationships and grandchildren's development but also cultural translation directly since they cannot share traditions, values, or beliefs.

Methods

Research Design

As indicated by Denzin and Lincoln (2005), to get a profundity comprehension of human conduct, perspectives, and their reasons the most valuable strategy is the qualitative research method, which is utilized for various scholarly trains, particularly in sociologies. To lead subjective examination, the analyst constructs a mind-boggling, all-encompassing picture, dissects words, reports point-by-point perspectives on sources, and directs the investigation in a characteristic setting to investigate

and clarify a social issue (Creswell, 1998). Therefore, the qualitative method is appropriate for exploring the communication and relationship problems between first generations monolingual Spanish-speaking grandmothers and their monolingual English-speaking grandchildren due to language and cultural loss in this study.

Data Collection

Since the aim is to explore the communication issues that monolingual English-speaking Mexican American children face to communicate with their monolingual Spanish-speaking Mexican grandmothers due to language and cultural loss through grandmothers' experiences interviewing was used as a data collection tool. The interview for this examination was planned as semi-structured and open-ended in light of the fact that semi-structured interviews can utilize the information creating possibilities of exchanges by permitting substantially more room for circling back to whatever points are considered significant by the interviewee (Brinkmann, 2013). The interview consisted of two parts: demographic information and the participant's response.

Participants

For the study, a convenience sample of 20 monolingual first-generation Spanish-speaking Mexican grandmothers (50-75 years old) was selected from the research from a large city in the Southwest U.S. The grandparents who have monolingual English-speaking Mexican American grandchildren aged 3-9 years were selected from the. All 20 participants for this study were conducted in semi-structured interviews.

Data Analysis

Mertler (2012) shows that the examination of subjective information includes a cycle of inductive investigation. As needs be, to dissect the information, the inductive analysis was applied. An inductive examination was utilized for the investigation of this contextual analysis to diminish the volume of data gathered. The first step was the reduction of the large amounts of narrative data such as the information that was given by grandmothers, explanations of the other factors affecting their relationships, as well as cultural and language loss in the form of interview notes. Then, data was collected and eliminated from narrative information, and then, data was coded based on a coding scheme. In the coding scheme, CLL (cultural loss: language), CLC (cultural loss: celebrations), CLV (cultural loss: values), RLL (relationship: language as a barrier), RLP

(relationships: role of parent's attitudes) were used. Finally, data was interpreted by examining the representation within the coded categories into a word document.

Findings

Cultural Loss: Language

When asked about the learning and speaking of the Spanish language, all of the participants agreed that the major issue was the language barrier between grandmothers and grandchildren, and their negative impact on relationships, communications, and daily-life routines. Participants focused on the inability of their grandchildren to speak Spanish and the inability to share information with each other. For example, Grandmother #5 expressed her frustration by saying "I cannot ask my grandchildren even basic questions such as how she is, or how her school was."

These language barriers inevitably have a negative effect on their relationship, because not sharing common experiences or ideas minimizes children's interests in their grandmothers. This may ultimately lead to their lack of desire to spend time or share something about their lives with their grandmothers. Interestingly, some participants said that they understood their grandchildren's situations and their rationale for not wanting to communicate with them. This is exemplified in the response by Grandmother #13.

I could understand why my younger grandchildren do not want to contact me or spend time with me because they cannot talk to me that they are getting bored. They need to share and learn new things by playing or doing activities, but I am not able to do that-as I cannot speak to them.

Participant responses reflect the Census Bureau data (2010) illuminating the decrease of Spanish-speaking Latinos throughout generations, and all of the Spanish-speaking Mexican grandmothers in this study agree with the data given by Census Bureau that Latino people are losing their Spanish language through the generations. Although some of these grandmothers are caregivers of their grandchildren, unfortunately, they are also not able to communicate with their grandchildren who cannot speak Spanish. For instance, Grandmother #17 who is the caregiver of their grandchildren expressed as follows:

I always have to ask to translate my older grandchildren who can speak both languages

what I am saying or what my younger grandchildren are saying because we cannot understand each other; and if there is not somebody who can speak both languages we have to use different communication methods such as 'finger language.

Another participant discussed her inability to discipline her grandchildren or raise them as she deemed appropriate as revealed in the following comment “*Although I am taking care of my grandchild, he was not able to understand mostly when he asked me to go outside for playing.*” (Grandmother #11)

She discussed the significance of the situation because it prevents her from understanding how she is supposed to interact with her grandchildren. Furthermore, she is unable to understand what her grandchildren can and cannot do. One of the grandmothers who is also a caregiver of her grandchildren states that although she had many challenging circumstances to communicate with her grandchildren, and to teach basic skills such as eating, washing hands, brushing, she had more trouble expressing her feelings to her grandchildren. She said that

Even though I cannot communicate and share anything with my grandchildren I love them so much, but I could not show my love as they do not understand what I am saying. Of course, I am trying to express my feelings with my caring behaviors, but they are not as effective as words. (Grandmother # 16)

Thirty percent of grandmothers in this study said that although they live in the same house with their children and grandchildren, parents prefer to speak in and teach English with their children. Participants discussed the complex nature of the issue when revealing that even though their children could speak two languages, they do not want to teach their grandchildren Spanish. Grandmother #8 expresses this issue.

When I asked my daughter to teach her children Spanish, she has refused by asserting that she had many problems in her daily life in learning the English process, thus she does not want her children to face the same problems.

Another participant (Grandmother # 20) reiterated the complex nature of language loss,

I cannot get angry at my grandchildren as they are not speaking Spanish because my daughter did not teach them, however, I cannot also get angry at my daughter as I know

what I faced when I came to the U.S., and what she faced while she was growing up.

This inevitably causes many communication problems during daily interactions and routines. Not being capable of speaking the same language creates a barrier between grandchildren and grandmothers to have a better relationship as they cannot communicate the results show that grandmothers who are babysitters of their grandchildren have difficulty in taking care of them and expressing their feelings. This affects not only the relationships between them but also cultural capital which needs to be transferred through generations since grandmothers are not able to explain or teach their cultures, values, beliefs, and religions.

Cultural Loss: Traditional Celebrations

When asked about the transmission of cultural traditions and celebrations all of the participants agreed that their grandchildren were not learning the most basic elements of their culture. Many expressed their frustration with their inability to communicate their histories and experiences with the younger generation. These frustrations were marked by elements related to identities, habits, and celebrations. Eighty percent of grandmothers said that they are proud of their culture, language, and identity, and they were happy in their country even if they were poor and living in war-torn countries. However, they also said that even though their grandchildren have many opportunities and rich living conditions, they are not satisfied with their lives because their grandchildren are losing their language, culture, and identities. Grandmother #18 illustrated her grandchildren's situation with the following:

When we were in Mexico, although we were poor and we did not have any opportunity we were happy because we knew who we were, however, now our grandchildren are unhappy even they have whatever they want since they are not aware of their identity.

These grandmothers say that losing culture has started with their children, in other words, second-generations Latinos started to lose their language and culture because of difficult living conditions. Unfortunately, their children had to spend much time learning English. Thus, they were not able to celebrate their traditional and special days such as the Day of the Dead. Grandmother #13 utters her worries with the following statement:

If I could speak English for only two minutes, I would like to teach my grandchildren Independence Day which is very important for Mexicans because it is proof that shows our

difficult past life and symbolizes our freedom.

Grandmother # 18 mentioned that Mexican culture has various cultural events such as the Easter traditions. In this period (of 8 weeks) they do not eat meat, cook lots of seafood, and she added that although these are significant days for Mexican culture, her grandchildren do not want to maintain these cultural traditions. She added, “..... Young generation Latinos are not eager to attend church or celebrate quinciñeras (fifteenth birthday celebrations), or Thanksgiving Day.

All of the Mexican grandmothers (100%) who were interviewed stated that because they cannot communicate with their grandchildren, they are not able to teach and pursue their Latino culture in the U.S, and the inability to transfer cultural traditions and celebrations to the young generation weighed on these participants as they witnessed the cultural loss within their own families. This cultural loss was most evident as participants discussed their concerns related to the loss of cultural values.

Cultural Loss: Values

When asked about the loss of their Mexican values the majority of the participants agreed that their grandchildren were losing the most basic elements of their cultural values. Many expressed their frustration with their inability to communicate their histories and experiences with the younger generation. These frustrations were marked by elements related to family life, religion, and behaviors. These grandmothers said that they are worried about their grandchildren because their grandchildren are also losing their Mexican values and becoming American. They believe that their grandchildren should know and pursue their Mexican values instead of America’s because of the differences between the two. Grandmother #4 expressed this concern, “while American values and Mexican values can be thought of as similar, there are some distinguished differences about religion, family life, connectedness, and working life.” For this grandmother, these differences between the Mexican and American ways of life cause a valid concern for her grandchildren’s well-being as they move into adulthood.

Secondly, Grandmother # 9 said that the lifestyle of parents is also different in these two nations. For instance, Mexicans are closer to each other and love to visit parents, grandparents, and neighbors regularly, compared to Americans who are more individualistic, and prefer to live alone, and prefer to live individually. In addition, she states that:

Our children also do not want to keep the Hispanic culture, and when our grandchildren become 18, their parents will ask our grandchildren to leave from home to survive alone, and we believe that this is an American cultural value.

She said that this causes new perspectives in their children and grandchildren as individuality becomes more significant than the family as a whole, and this directly affects the relationships between family members negatively.

Another important concern for these participants was the religious aspect of their children's lives. For example, Grandmother # 6 mentioned that although they are sharing a common religion "Christianity", Latinos are predominantly Catholic, and they prefer to go to church regularly, on the other hand, she added that most American parents show tolerance about religion to their children, and have much more open-minded attitudes than Mexican families. Then, she added that

My grandchildren do not want to go to church with me because their American friends do not go regularly, and they took their friends as a model, however, I believe that religion is a big part of people's values, and unfortunately, my grandchildren are losing that.

Finally, most grandmothers claimed that their grandchildren do not respect them, and this makes grandmothers very upset because in the Mexican culture respect for elders reflects a person's characteristic feature, but younger generations are also losing this value. Grandmother # 11 states that "I do not expect to spend much time or share everything with my grandchildren because I am aware of the language barrier; I just want to see that they respect me, but they do not." The inability to teach cultural values to the younger generation creates new and different expectations and experiences according to the majority of the participants. They also claim that this situation creates vulnerability for both their families and other families who are rooted in Mexico, and this unfortunately, affects their relationships.

Relationships: Language as a Barrier

When asked about their relationships which are affected by the language barrier all of the participants agreed that their grandchildren were not able to have a good relationship with their grandmothers. According to the results, since grandmothers and grandchildren do not speak a common language, they cannot communicate, and this inevitably affects their relationship in a negative way. Even though some of them live in the same home, or take care of their grandchildren,

they do not spend time together or share meaningful communication. In fact, one of the grandmothers (Grandmother # 8) said “Even though I am a caretaker of my grandchildren and we live in the same home, unfortunately, I have dinner at a different table as I cannot speak English.”

All of the grandmothers in this study agree that their relationships have been affected by the language barrier. Thus, according to grandmothers, grandchildren do not want to spend time with their grandmothers because they cannot talk and share ideas or thoughts. Grandchildren say that they get bored. Grandmothers state that this makes them very upset. One of the grandmothers claims that even though she spends time with her grandchildren because she is a caregiver since she does not speak in English, her grandchildren get angry with her (Grandmother 18). Another grandmother said that

My children cannot cook most of the Mexican food thus my grandchildren visit me only when they want to eat some traditional food or throw a party. This is the only time we share, and I am not satisfied with this. (Grandmother 15)

As found in the work of Minuchin (1985), the quality of these relationships influences children’s social, linguistic, and cultural development as these aspects are developed by interacting with others. If the relationships are not of high quality or do not exist between generations, this may cause various problems such as cultural or language loss. Then, this loss creates a virtual circle, and irretrievable relationship problems may occur.

Relationships: Role of Parents’ Attitudes

Although culture, values, beliefs, and religion are transferred usually from grandparents to grandchildren parents also have a significant role in this transmission because children are first educated by their mothers. However, eighty percent of grandmothers agree with the idea that parents are not eager to teach their children to speak Spanish or to encourage them to pursue the Latino culture. Adding to this loss was the belief that grandchildren did not have respect for elders as Bulcroft, Carmody, and Bulcroft (1996) state that traditionally, elders do not expect youth to rebel as they are in Western cultures. In fact, respect, which is determined by grandmothers to be a basic cultural capital, is not taught by parents. Grandmother #14 expresses her concern,

When I asked my daughter to teach my grandchildren the Mexican language and culture, she said that my children do not want to learn them, and even I am the caregiver of my grandchildren, my daughter said that I should not demand it from them.

In addition, grandmother 20 states that her children do not encourage her grandchildren to have a better relationship with her-

As mentioned above, the loss of the language and culture begins with the second generation. Due to the difficult process of assimilation, many parents choose to focus on the development of English and follow the American way of life. These beliefs influence parents' attitudes about their children's language, values, and culture, and the relationship between grandmothers and grandchildren correspondingly.-Even though at first glance, the problem is seen as the new generations (reflecting grandchildren in this study), according to results, this is a mistake on the part of the parents as they do not encourage their children to learn the Spanish language and Hispanic culture. In addition, parents are often viewed by participants as inadequate to support children's development of a good relationship with their grandmothers. Using people's mother language and culture has the capacity to make people closer and attached to each other, especially through generations. It is significant for youth to learn and develop their identity because families are fundamental elements of society, and people who have strong relationships with their parents are able to be more successful in society.

Implications for Early Childhood Teachers

Although students' language, culture, and values seem to be characteristic features, they are part of students' identity. Early childhood teachers need to make sure they are recognizing every Latino student's native language and culture. One way would be to have students bring in artifacts, pictures of their family, or things from home to showcase different cultures, beliefs, traditions, and values. If a student sees that the Mexican culture and Spanish language are recognized at school, they may be more inclined to accept those teachings from their grandmothers.

Teachers who have students from a variety of nations and cultures should help families be actively involved in the early learning program as stated in NAEYC (2009) "ties to the community, respectful relationships with families, and encouragement of active, culturally meaningful family involvement are essential" (p.1). To do that, teachers can explain what the advantages are of

speaking two languages and provide them with strategies to support, maintain, and preserve home language learning. In addition, teachers should let them know their own cultures and values are honored. On the other hand, teachers also should help these children to be sure that “children remain cognitively, linguistically, and emotionally connected to their home language and culture” (NAEYC, 2009 p.1). NAEYC (2009) also suggests that teachers should support children in improving their mother language and tie it to their own culture to contribute to their English acquisition.

Discussion and Conclusion

According to interview results, all the participants agreed with Ruiz (2005) that “cultural values and scripts have a significant role in shaping thoughts and behaviors” (p.37). While grandmothers were concerned with the loss of language, culture, and values and wanted to maintain them within their family, their inability to communicate or develop relationships with their grandchildren hinders their efforts. The interview had several factors related to this question. The first one considered the loss of culture that occurred when new generations stopped communicating in Spanish. The majority of grandmothers agree that culture is one of the significant factors that inhibit grandmother-grandchildren relationships, but Mexican people in the U.S. are losing their culture, especially younger generations such as their grandchildren that are not speaking Spanish.

They gave similar examples of cultural loss such as respect for elders, not participating in cultural events, leaving from home when children become 18 years old, and ignoring the Latino culture. Suina (2004) also mentioned that losing language cause cultural loss through generations. Grandmothers are concerned that their younger generations are turning away from their cultural and linguistic heritage, and this will affect their relationships, values, and identities as they move into adulthood. This brought the grandchildren’s views into perspective for the grandmothers. Grandmothers did not accuse their grandchildren but instead asserted that the responsibility falls upon parents. Therefore, they claimed that parents should teach the Spanish language and Hispanic culture to positively enhance their relationships.

Besides, the majority of grandmothers agreed with the idea that their relationships with their grandchildren are negatively affected by a language barrier. They claimed that they could not share anything even if some of them are caregivers of their grandchildren, they could not be able to

communicate with them to meet their grandchildren's basic needs during daily life. They also mentioned their children do not want to teach their mother language to their children since they have faced numerous problems during their academic and social life as Guardado (2006) stressed parents prefer to use English at home to ensure their children experience any difficulties, which immigrants are struggling. The results from this study mirror those of others reflecting a loss of the Spanish language and culture for many Latinos. This fact inevitably affects the relationship between grandmothers and grandchildren and prevents the development of a quality relationship between them. Then, this loss creates a virtual circle, and negative relationship problems may occur. Unfortunately, this creates assimilation as Fillmore (1991) stated and immigrants lose all their cultural diversity due to language loss.

Both participants and this researcher agree that culture and language serve as the identity of a person, and as new generations are losing their identity it will prevent them to be more powerful across other people. On the other hand, I believe that people learn new things socially from others who have more knowledge. In the words of Vygotsky (1962) "speaking the same language with elders is a significant opportunity to learn in the life". As a result, parents and grandparents must be diligent in their efforts to maintain their native language and their culture if they expect younger generations to do the same.

As was mentioned above people's languages and cultures are people's identities, and people's identities make them more powerful. In addition, our differences are our properties. This could be likened to a world including only one color. Thus, people should prevent their language and their culture from existing in the world forever. When the results of this study are considered there is seen Mexican cultural and language loss in the U.S., and this inevitably affects the relationships between generations.

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Geniş Özet

Giriş

Şiddet ve silahlı çatışmalar gibi kötü yaşam koşulları, ekonomik sorunlar ve ülkeler arasındaki büyük uçurum nedeniyle birçok insan kendi ülkelerinden göç etmiştir (Federal Office for Immigration, 2019). Şu anda Amerika Birleşik Devletleri'nde 175 milyondan fazla insan kendi ülkelerinden uzakta yaşıyor ve en büyük göçmen nüfusu da 60,48 milyon göçmen sayısı ile Meksika'dandır (Office of Immigration Statics, 2019). Petras (2006), ABD'nin neden ağırlıklı olarak Meksika'dan gelen göçmenlere ev sahipliği yaptığına dair çeşitli açıklamalar olduğunu belirtirken, en önemli nedenin Meksika ile ABD arasındaki ortak sınır olduğunu söylüyor. Bunun yanı sıra artan göçmen popülasyonuna karşın kendi ana dilini konuşan göçmenlerin oranı giderek azalmaktadır (US Census Bureau, 2010). Örneğin, birinci nesil Meksika göçmenlerinin çoğu yalnızca İspanyolca konuşurken, ikinci nesil Meksika göçmenleri iki dilli olup, evde aileleriyle İspanyolca konuşurken okulda ve işte İngilizce konuşma eğilimindedir. Bu oran, üçüncü nesle gelindiğinde ise %17'ye kadar düşmektedir.

Daha iyi bir yaşam için başka bir ülkeye göç eden birçok göçmen asimilasyon riski altındadır. Er (2011), asimilasyonu farklı ve baskın bir kültür tarafından taklit edilen bir azınlık grubu ya da kendi kendini çözen ve başka bir baskın kültüre benzeyen bir azınlık grubu olarak tanımlamıştır. Asimilasyon sürecinde birçok göçmen dilini, kültürünü ve kimliğini kaybetmektedir. Göçmenler çoğu zaman başka bir topluma benzemek istemezler. Ne yazık ki dil kaybedilen ilk unsur olma eğilimindedir, çünkü insanlar başka ülkelerde hayatta kalabilmek için başkalarıyla iletişim

kurmaya ihtiyaç duyarlar. ABD Nüfus Sayım Bürosu'nun (2010) sonuçları, dillerini korumaya çalışsalar da göçmenlerin nesiller boyu dillerini kaybettiğini ve bu kaybın kültür, gelenek, görenek ve çeşitli sosyal ritüeller gibi birçok başka kayba yol açtığını gösteriyor. Bugün ABD'deki Latin kökenli aileler, dillerini ve kültürlerini kaybederek asimilasyon ve kültürleşme sürecinde dil kaybı tehdidi altındadır (Dettlaff ve Rycraft, 2006).

Çalışmanın Amacı

Bu çalışmanın amacı İngilizce konuşan tek dilli Latin çocukların İspanyolca konuşan tek dilli büyükanneleriyle dil kaybı nedeniyle iletişim kuramadıklarında karşılaştıkları iletişim sorunlarını ve kültürel kaybını incelemektir. Bu çalışma aşağıdaki sorulara odaklanacaktır:

1. Birinci nesil tek dilli İspanyolca konuşan Meksikalı büyükanneler, üçüncü nesil tek dilli İngilizce konuşan Meksikalı-Amerikalı torunlarıyla iletişim kuramadıklarında kültür kaybı olduğunu düşünüyorlar mı? Eğer evetse, nasıl?
2. Birinci nesil tek dilli İspanyolca konuşan Meksikalı büyükanneler üçüncü nesil tek dilli İngilizce konuşan Meksikalı-Amerikalı torunlarıyla olan ilişkilerinin, torunlarının İspanyolca dilini kaybetmesinden etkilendiğini düşünüyorlar mı?

Metot

Nitel yöntem, bu çalışmada birinci kuşak tek dilli İspanyolca konuşan büyükanneler ile onların tek dilli İngilizce konuşan torunları arasındaki dil ve kültür kayıplarından kaynaklanan iletişim ve ilişki sorunlarını araştırmak için uygundur. Amaç, İngilizce konuşan tek dilli Meksikalı-Amerikalı çocukların dil ve kültür kaybı nedeniyle İspanyolca konuşan tek dilli Meksikalı büyükanneleriyle iletişim kurarken karşılaştıkları iletişim sorunlarını, büyükannelerin deneyimleri aracılığıyla araştırmak olduğundan veri toplama aracı olarak görüşme yöntemi belirlenmiştir.

Çalışmanın amaçları doğrultusunda, ABD'deki büyük bir şehirden, tek dilli, İspanyolca konuşan ilk nesil 20 Meksikalı büyükannenin (50-75 yaşlarında) uygun bir örnekleme seçilmiştir. 20 katılımcının tamamı ile yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Mertler (2012) öznel bilginin incelenmesinin bir tümevarımsal araştırma döngüsünü içerdiğini göstermektedir. Bu nedenle verileri analiz etmek için tümevarımsal analiz uygulandı.

Sonuç ve Tartışma

Görüşme sonuçlarına göre, tüm katılımcılar “kültürel değerlerin ve yazıların düşünce ve davranışların şekillenmesinde önemli bir rolü olduğu” (s.37) konusunda Ruiz (2005) ile hemfikirdir. Büyükkanneler dil, kültür ve değerlerle ilgilenip bunları aile içinde sürdürmek isterken, torunlarıyla iletişim kuramamaları veya ilişki geliştirememeleri büyükkannelerin bu çabalarını engellemektedir. Büyükkanneler görüşmelerde ilk olarak, torunlarının İspanyolca iletişim kurmayı bıraktığında meydana gelen kültür kayıplarını ele aldı. Büyükkannelerin çoğu, kültürün torunlarıyla ilişkilerini etkileyen önemli faktörlerden biri olduğunu; fakat ABD'deki Meksikalıların, özellikle torunları gibi İspanyolca konuşmayan genç nesillerin, kültürlerini kaybettiklerini vurgulamışlardır.

Katılımcıların tamamı büyüklere saygı duymama, kültürel etkinliklere katılmama, 18 yaşına gelindiğinde evden ayrılma, Latin kültürünü görmezden gelme gibi kültürel kayıplara benzer örnekler verdiler. Suina (2004), dili kaybetmenin nesiller boyu kültürel kayıplara neden olduğunu da belirtmiştir. Büyükkanneler, genç nesillerin kültürel ve dilsel miraslarından uzaklaşmasından endişe duyuyor ve bunun yetişkinliğe geçerken ilişkilerini, değerlerini ve kimliklerini etkileyeceğini düşünüyorlar. Büyükkanneler torunlarının dil ve kültür kayıpları nedeniyle suçlu olmadığını, bunun yerine sorumluluğun ebeveynlere düştüğünü iddia ettiler. Bu nedenle, ebeveynlerin ilişkilerini olumlu yönde geliştirmek için İspanyol dilini ve İspanyol kültürünü öğretmeleri gerektiğini ifade ettiler.

Ayrıca büyükkannelerin çoğunluğu torunları ile olan ilişkilerinin dil engelinden olumsuz etkilendiği fikrine katılmaktadır. Bazıları torunlarının bakıcısı olsa bile hiçbir şey paylaşmadıklarını, torunlarının günlük yaşamdaki temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için onlarla iletişim kuramadıklarını belirttiler. Guardado (2006), ebeveynlerin çocuklarının herhangi bir zorluk yaşamaması için evde İngilizce kullanmayı tercih ettiklerini, bunun da çocukların akademik ve sosyal yaşamları boyunca sayısız sorunla karşılaştıklarından çocuklarına ana dillerini öğretmek istemediklerini belirttiler. Fakat bu durum, büyükkannelerin torunlarıyla ilişkisini etkileyip aralarında kaliteli bir ilişkinin gelişmesini engelliyor. İlişkisi olumsuz etkilendiği için de kültür geçişi sağlanamıyor.

Hem katılımcılar hem de araştırmacı, kültür ve dilin bir kişinin kimliği olarak hizmet ettiğini ve yeni nesillerin kimliklerini kaybetmelerinin diğer insanlar karşısında daha güçlü olmalarını engelleyeceği konusunda hemfikirdir. Sonuç olarak, ebeveynler, büyükkanne ve büyükbabalar,

genç nesillerin de aynısını yapmasını bekliyorlarsa, ana dillerini ve kültürlerini korumada çaba göstermelidirler. Çünkü Fillmore'un (1991) belirttiği gibi dil ve kültür kaybı süreç içerisinde asimilasyona yol açar ve göçmenler dil kaybı nedeniyle tüm kültürel çeşitliliklerini kaybederler. Dilleri ve kültürleri insanların kimlikleridir ve onları daha güçlü kılar. Bu nedenle insanlar kendi dillerinin ve kültürlerinin dünyada sonsuza kadar var olmasına gayret göstermelidir.

ETİK BEYAN: "*Exploring Immigrant Children's Communication Problems With Their Grandmothers Due To Language And Cultural Loss*" başlıklı çalışmanın yazım sürecinde bilimsel, etik ve alıntı kurallarına uyulmuş; toplanan veriler üzerinde herhangi bir tahrifat yapılmamıştır ve veriler toplanmadan önce The University of Texas at San Antonio Institutional Review Board Girişimsel Olmayan Klinik araştırmalar Etik Kurulu'ndan 26/07/2013 tarih ve 13-214E sayılı etik izin alınmıştır. Karşılaşılabilecek tüm etik ihlallerde "Mehmet Akif Ersoy Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi Yayın Kurulunun" hiçbir sorumluluğunun olmadığı, tüm sorumluluğun Sorumlu Yazara ait olduğu ve bu çalışmanın herhangi başka bir akademik yayın ortamına değerlendirme için gönderilmemiş olduğunu taahhüt ederim. "