

International Scholars' Views on the Language Reinforcement Program*

Yusuf AVCI¹

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Gamze ÇELİK²

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Ayşe DAĞ PESTİL³

Çanakkale Onsekiz Mart University

Abstract

Language plays a critical role in an individual's adapting to a community and developing a sense of friendship and belonging. In its absence, Humans suffer from a lack of trust in each other since they cannot speak in the same language. If they fail to communicate, this incapability leads to problems. Additionally, individual and common social communication can be performed by language education, as well and language education is directly associated with the cultural transmission. Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University functions as an educational bridge between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan and offers education in Turkish (Turkey Turkish). Moreover, there are Turkey Turkish departments at Humanitarian Social Sciences University and Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University in Kyrgyzstan. The ongoing Language Reinforcement Project annually offers training to the students of these departments of the contracted organizations for six months. According to the scholars' views how the Kyrgyz students who had the chance to come to Turkey via the Language Reinforcement Project were affected by the internship in general and how the components of this project will contribute to Turkish and Kyrgyz people are the research questions of the study. The sample of the research consists of ten volunteer scholars working at Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University in Kyrgyzstan in the Fall Term of the 2018-2019 Academic Year. Six female and four male scholars participated in the research. This study is a qualitative research study and the data collection tool of the study is the interview. According to the results of the study, the scholars expressed their satisfaction with the students' internship or training in Turkey as well as the other advantages.

Keywords: Language Reinforcement Program, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey, Sociolinguistic, Language and Culture, Cultural Transmission.

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¹ Associate Prof., Turkish Language Education Department, Faculty of Education, Çanakkale, Turkey, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9837-8890>, yavci@comu.edu.tr.

² Research Assistant Dr., Turkish Language and Literature Education Department, Faculty of Education, Çanakkale, Turkey, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1683-2349>, gamzecerelik@comu.edu.tr.

³ Lecturer, School of Foreign Languages, Department of Translation and Interpreting, Çanakkale, Turkey, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-3460-3390>

Correspondence: aysedag@comu.edu.tr.

Introduction

A language which helps people communicate is the most basic means of communication. Individual and social communication among countries is also provided via languages which are commonly offered in education-related institutions. Language is an integral component of culture and language education offered in such institutions is directly intended for the cultural introduction and transfer. A society's language and its members' mental tendencies are tightly connected; if one acquires some information related to one of both, then he/she can pass sound judgements about the other because language and mental activities occur together and are constructed together. Societies' characteristics can be observed in their languages, through which they are understood. Metaphorically speaking, a society's language is its soul (Humboldt, 1836 cited in Selçuk, 2007). One can hardly think of two aspects as identical.

Education means an investment made for mankind. As the relationship between language and education is discussed in consideration of the society, one should be able to question whether this investment yields love, respect, and friendship. Was the language education dealt with from a cultural perspective? Are members of a community respected by the nationals of a foreign country that have received education at a host university? What do people and scholars as providers of education think about this phenomenon? As they learn a foreign language, individuals meet a new culture and they come to recognize the similarities and differences between this new culture and their own and hone their linguistic skills to a certain level of comprehension (Çiftçi et al. 2013, as cited in Üçler 2018). In this sense the connection between language and culture proves to be more meaningful because all languages carry traces of the society and culture where we use them (Vardar, 2001, as cited in Şengül 2009). Language serves as an indicator of lifestyle and way of thinking of that society.

Humboldt, a prominent scholar known for the studies on language and cultures, describes the relationship between language and culture as follows: "Language is the external manifestation of the spirit of people; their language is their spirit and their spirit is their language" (Humboldt, 1836 cited in Selçuk 2007, p.37). Therefore, language along with culture governs the lifestyle of a society. Learning a language means getting to know that lifestyle and after a while adapting to it (Avcı and Küçük, 2017a). As Üçler (2018, p.732) reports, "a language can actually be learned by learning about the cultural background sustaining that culture because language constitutes the mental map of a society and this map is enriched by cultural codes".

On the one hand, culture is stable; on the other hand, it is a part of the change and thus, "it has a dynamic structure. This dynamic structure introduces new behaviors during the change. These thoughts, behaviors and beliefs occurring thanks to the communication codes of its society are expressed through language. Culture brings new notions and vocabulary items in language and language accommodates cultural properties and carries them over into the coming centuries" (Erdem et

al., 2015, p. 9). Therefore, it is the typical interaction that language nourishes culture and culture nourishes language in return.

Of all the components that constitute culture, language plays the most important role in shaping a culture. As language improves, culture gets enriched (Pehlivan, 2007, as cited in Kutlu, 2014). Kramersch (1993) supports the idea that second or foreign language learners should also learn the target culture because language cannot be learned without a cultural framework. Moreover, according to Byram and Morgan (1994), culture education is an inseparable component of language education. Thus, students' developing awareness of the differences between a target culture and their own culture is of great significance for their language education (İşcan and Yassıtaş, 2018).

Currently, teaching Turkish as a foreign language is performed with the help of class materials produced without separating linguistic and cultural elements and created to present them accurately and professionally. Furthermore, new materials are added constantly.

However, studies on this subject are not limited to only the production of classroom materials. The programs of teaching Turkish as a foreign language have been implemented in multiple ways and by the involvement of many branches. Language varies according to how and where it is used. For example, a large number of scientific terms are included in scientific texts, whereas in literary texts, in which the language involves feelings like excitement and fear, the language is different. In everyday speech we use a different vocabulary (Dağ Pestil & Özden, 2017).

According to the UNESCO data, the Turkish language is one of the first languages to have an immense historical background and richness and spread over a vast area. J. Deny (as cited in İlhan, 2012, p.1519) emphasizes the richness of the Turkish language by saying, "[...] But it is not possible for any scholar committee to construct the innate language feeling rules that are acquired by the human intelligence left all alone in the middle of the steppes in Turkistan".

The number of studies on teaching Turkish as a foreign language has been increasing in different dimensions. In Turkey and, especially in the last years, in the world, official and individual quantitative and qualitative studies on teaching Turkish as a foreign language have increased in number. The efforts, which were first made in the 11th century to produce works in this field, continued with master's and PhD programs in order to train people who are actively teaching to teach Turkish as a foreign language. In addition, the efforts in this field have also been handled by the government, and then Yunus Emre Institute has undertaken the role to teach Turkish in different parts of the world by opening offices in different countries. Yunus Emre Institute - which started offering services in 2009 - along with Inter-ministerial Common Culture Commission - which had launched its services earlier - carries out studies for the same purpose. Domestically the TÖMER- the Turkish Education Center-, which is affiliated with the national universities with foreign students offer Turkish-oriented educational services (Dağ Pestil & Özden, 2017).

Now, in order to learn a language in the easiest and most effective way, one has to live in the relevant country and experience its culture. However, the number of people that enjoy such an opportunity few if any. Therefore, this means investing years of efforts in learning a language whose native speakers you have never seen and with whose native speakers you have not had a conversation (Saraç, 2018). However, one of the most efficient and easiest ways to learn a language is to learn it in its country. In the present century of an advanced international and intercultural communication, studies that focus on language learning in the relevant country have extended its reach out of classrooms and multifunctional and comprehensive projects have started to be produced. For example, with the Big Student Project, which was put into action in 1992 and which aims to teach Turkey Turkish and to introduce the Turkish culture. Accordingly, the importance given to the Turkish language has increased (Kutlu, 2014). In relation to these studies, it is promising that new projects have been conducted.

An example of these projects was conducted in 2018 in the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language. The project was titled Language Reinforcement Program of Teaching Turkish as a Foreign Language. Kyrgyzstan and Turkey partnered to conduct a two-year sociolinguistic study. This article, which incorporates only a small portion of the study, informs the readers of the thoughts and reflections of Kyrgyz scholars on students who have visited Turkey to serve their internships within the framework of the project. In a new communicational setting, we firstly form hypotheses, then we make plans, and finally we put them into practice.

It is clear that the problems that occur and the solution thereto mostly come from our cultural adaptations. In this aspect, language is a guide which we consult in relation to learning cultural facts. In Turkey, sociologists do not think of language as one of the basic fields of interest. However, language is the most important factor that determines how we look at a society and handle problems in it.

People lead their lives under the control of language which occurs in the communication environment of the society that they belong to. The gravest mistake is people's thinking that a language is just an ordinary tool of thinking and satisfying communicational needs. As a matter of fact, language itself regulates people's lives and is an integral part of the real world. What is certain is that "the real world" is based mostly on subconscious language habits.

Method

The present research is a case study and relies on a qualitative methodology. The participants were interviewed to collect data. Quantitative studies reach many people, but they remain partial in gathering data on the views of people. Interviews help researchers obtain detailed data on observations and thoughts of people concerning specific subject matters. In qualitative interviews, the participants directly reveal their views and express themselves better. They offer their knowledge, observation, and

experiences about a subject in detail and thus provide a rich corpus of data for researchers (Patton, 2014).

Data Collection Tools

The data collection tool of the study is a qualitative interview. Interviews are one of the most preferred data collection tools in qualitative research. In interviews, individuals feel free to express themselves (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2011 p.127). According to the scholars' views how the Kyrgyz students who had the chance to come to Turkey via the Language Reinforcement Project were affected by the internship in general and how the components of this project will contribute to Turkish and Kyrgyz people are the research questions of the study. At the beginning of the research, an interview form was produced by the researchers. The questions below were asked to the participants.

Can you give information about the joint studies that Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University and some other universities (Manas, BGU) conduct with Turkey?

- 1. How would you interpret your students' views on Turkey?*
- 2. What are the gains that your students have made from their visits to Turkey?*
- 3. From a sociolinguistic perspective, how do you think your students' learning Turkish affects both societies?*
- 4. With which skills have you observed your students had the most severe difficulties as they learned Turkish?*
- 5. How does your students' travelling to Turkey and working there affect your students' attitudes?*
- 6. What are the positive and negative changes in your students who have been to Turkey?*
- 7. Turkish and Kyrgyz languages are cognately related and share cultural similarities. Could you explain the cultural and social relations between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan?*
- 8. How does the relations between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey throughout the history of both countries affect the peoples of these two societies?*
- 9. If you were to explain education with a metaphor/simile pertaining to your students' visits to Turkey, which one would you use? For example, similar to sugar put on drugs, education is the fog lamp on a foggy day, education is like a traffic sign, one language one person, knowing a language is like a magical universe.*
- 10. Is there anything else you would like to add?*

Validity and Reliability

In this study several aspects were given importance to improve validity and reliability: (1) Every process of the research was explained in detail (2) In the findings section, firstly the topics were identified. Later the scholars' views were provided unchanged. (3) Experts were asked to express their

opinions on the data collection tools used in this study. Based on their opinions, the necessary changes were made in the tools. (4) During the data analyses, themes and codes were jointly created by the researchers and the experts. The themes and codes created as such were then compared. (5) The themes were sent to two objective participants. The themes were revised if there were deficiencies and mistakes. (6) The data and the data collection tools were kept secret. At the beginning of the study, the researchers introduced themselves to the participants. The identities of the participants were kept secret. They were informed that the information they provided would only be used for scientific purposes.

Reliability = $\text{Consensus} / (\text{Consensus} + \text{Divergence}) = 99 / (99 + 13) = 0.88$. The reliability of the survey was calculated to be 0.88. According to Miles and Huberman (1994, as cited in Creswell, 2013), the reliability coefficient of coding should be at least 0.80 in order for a study to be reliable.

Study Group

Table 1 shows that the sample consists of 10 volunteering scholars, i.e. six females and four males, which. All the participants were studying at Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University. The participants' ages range between 35 and 50 years.

Table 1. Personal Facts

Gender	Participant's Age	Participant's University
1E	50-55	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
2E	45-50	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
3K	35-40	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
4K	35-40	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
5K	40-45	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
6E	35-40	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
7K	35-40	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
8E	35-40	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
9K	50-55	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University
10K	40-45	Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University

Gathering Data

The available literature was reviewed to determine the interview questions. Experts were asked to revise the questions to refine the questions. A total of ten scholars were contacted by email. Six were female and four were male. A great many scholars that work at the university were contacted, but only the volunteers participated in this study. The identifying facts of the participants were not provided in the research.

Data Analysis

For this research, content analysis, a part of qualitative data analysis, was employed. In content analysis, firstly data are obtained. Similar data were conglomerated to form the themes. The researcher organized these themes. Finally, the identified themes were analyzed. When the data were analyzed in qualitative research, the steps are as follows: 1- The data are coded. 2- The themes were formed. 3- The codes and themes were organized. 4- The findings were described. 5- The findings were interpreted (Yıldırım&Şimşek, 2011).

Findings and Discussion

Table 2. Joint Work

Participant Institutions	Gender
Collaboration with TÖMER	1E
Doing Internships (Kastamonu, Hitit University)	1E, 6E
Meetings	2E
Concerts	2E
Support of Turkish scientists (Aziz Sancar, etc.)	2E, 7K
Joint activities	3K
Turkish courses	4K
Conferences	6E
Seminars	6E
Mevlana Program	7K, 8E
Master of Arts	8E
Turkish council (Kyrgyz National University, Manas University, BGU University)	9K
Turkish Language Center (Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University)	10K

Most of the participants gave positive answers to the question if the universities in Kyrgyzstan and Turkey conduct studies in which they collaborate. The universities of these two countries jointly conducted many different activities. Turkey also provided support for Kyrgyzstan in scientific issues. The participants stated that there was a Turkish language department at Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University and Turkish lessons were offered there since 2004. The students of Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University can serve their internships at Manas University. Aziz Sancar too supported Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University in Kyrgyzstan. Moreover, with the Mevlana Program students can visit Turkey, which has enhanced the relationship between these two countries. Besides, Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University, Manas University, BGU University formed the Turkish Council. Thanks to the held meetings, the friendly relationship between these two countries were strengthened. It was provided that they got to know each other's traditions.

“At Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University, there is a Turkish language department in the department of foreign languages. Turkish has been taught there since 2004 and it has been training linguists. This department is in a close relationship with Manas University, Anatolian high schools, and TÖMER. They complete their teaching internships there. There are also

students who go to Turkey for internships. For example, 12 students went to Kastamonu Hitit University and received a one-year education there.(1E)

“There are many collaborations between Yusuf Balasagun Kyrgyz National University and Turkey. For instance,

- 1. I can talk about the help of Aziz Sancar.*
- 2. I cansay how great the Mevlana Program is.”(7K)*

“As far as we know there is a Mevlana Program with Turkey. With the Mevlana Program, we can both have an MA in 7 or 8 universities in Turkey or get a one-month education in Turkey in winter.”(8E)

“In 2016, 2017, and 2018 with an activity called ‘Turkish Council’ we collaborated with Kyrgyz National University and BGU University. People from Turkey, Turkistan, and Kyrgyzstan too joined this council. In 2016 people from three countries came to Kyrgyzstan and there was a big meeting. A three-day meeting with the guests was arranged by Manas University. The aim of this meeting was to form the unity and friendship of these countries and to introduce their respective traditions to each other. The Turkish Council still works actively at the present time.”(9K)

Table 3. Students’ Views on Turkey

Opinions	Gender
Satisfied	1E,2E,3K,4K,5K,6E,7K,8E
Positive thoughts	2E,6E,7K
They want to receive education in Turkey	2E,4K
They want to work in Turkey	1E,2E,5K,7K,8E
They are interested in Turkey	2E
They like the education system in Turkey	4K
They want to have an internship in Turkey	1E
Hope to go to Turkey	9K
All students have different thoughts	10K
A nice, touristic country	10K

The participants answered the question “How would you interpret the views of your students towards Turkey” by saying that they would prefer to go to Turkey for different reasons. The main reasons are for education, work, internships, and for touristic purposes. For students, going to Turkey is their biggest dream and ambition. Generally, the students who were interviewed said that they were satisfied with their visits to Turkey. One participant remarked that everyone may have different views on Turkey. Turkey attracts the attention of Kyrgyz students. They like to come to Turkey because they like Turkey culturally, they are satisfied with the education system, and they want to work in Turkey.

“The students to visit Turkey are always satisfied and happy. They learn Turkish willingly. Students go to Turkey both to have an internship and to work and they are happy when they return.”(1E)

“I can say that students’ views on Turkey is very positive because they work in Turkey during their summer break and come back. The ones who cannot go want to go and think about going to Turkey.” (7K)

“They have very positive views. For example, Turkey was my aim. In order to achieve our goal with my classmates, we went to Turkey and they greeted us very well. Turkey is a developing country and they are a nation that likes science and books.” (9K)

“All the students have different views on Turkey, in my opinion it is a tourist area.”(10K)

Table 4. Students’ Gains from Visiting Turkey Programs

Gains	Gender
It enables one to like Turkish	1E
It enables one to know Turkish people closely	1E,10K
It gives the chance to see the things available in books	1E
It gives the chance to compare and know cultures	1E,3K,5K,7K,9K
It forms a bridge between the two countries	1E,7K
It enables one to learn the Turkish language well	2E,3K,10K
It enables one to see new places	3K,6E
It increases interest in Turkey and Turkish	4K
It brings in new aims	5K,9K
It broadens horizons	5K, 6E,7K,9K,10K
It enables one to work and earn money	6E
It enables one to get education	6E

It is clear in Table 4 that the travel programs to Turkey mainly give students the chance to compare cultures and broaden their horizons. Moreover, activities like these allow students to receive education and to work in Turkey. Besides, it increases Kyrgyz students’ interests in Turkey and Turkish. It allows them to learn the Turkish language well. It provides them to know their Turkish friends well and help them know the two cultures by comparing them. Students have the chance to see closely what they have read about in books. The travel programs are like a bridge between these two countries.

“This kind of programs make our students like Turkish better and help them know their friends closely, see places that they have read about in books, and compare the cultures. It allows them to have a strong bridge between these two countries.”(1E)

“This kind of visit programs to Turkey help students gain new aims, broaden their horizons, and know a new culture.” (5K)

“This kind of programs are beneficial for students because they not only work and earn money, but also they get education and travel. They achieve good things for themselves.”(6E)

“This kind of visit programs change students’ views on the world and they have a big contribution to knowing the cultures of Turkish people. It makes the relationship between the two countries beautiful.”(7K)

“Students gain new information and make new friends. Their Turkish improves. They get to know Turkey and their Turkish friends better.”(10K)

Table 5. Sociolinguistic Effects of Learning Turkish on Students

Sociolinguistic Effects	Gender
They observe the country	1E,7K
They bring the positive qualities to their country	1E,5K,10K
They introduce their country to other countries	1E
A thorough investigation of both societies	1E,10K
Friendship and peace	2E,5K,7K,9K,10K
Education	3K
Economic stability	3K
Learning a new language	4K,6E,9K
Making Turkish friends	9K

When the participants were asked on what topics would benefit students learning Turkish, the majority of the participants said that they think that the friendship between the two countries would improve. They may broaden their horizons by learning a new language. The majority of the participants think that they can bring the positive qualities in Turkey to their countries. Additionally, learning Turkish can help the two societies know each other in many ways.

“When we look at it from a sociolinguistic perspective, learning Turkish may affect both countries in terms of friendship and peace.” (2E)

“Learning Turkish affects both countries in terms of a good relationship, a steady friendship and new opportunities.”(5K)

“I know that knowing Turkish is good for finding Turkish friends, speaking Turkish and creating a person out of yourself is beneficial for both countries.”(9K)

“A student knowing Turkish and Kyrgyz may form a strong bridge between these two countries and in every aspect. The student may learn the culture and traditions of these two societies. They acquire new information and teach it to their people.”(10K)

Table 6. Difficulties of Learning Turkish

Difficulties	Gender
Lack of literary books	1E,10K
Lack of linguistic books	1E,10K
Grammar	2E,3K
Morphology	5K
Syntax	5K,7K
Past tense, indirect speech	9K
No problem	4K

When the participants were asked what kind of difficulties their students faced as they learned Turkish, they said that the most serious problem was the lack of books. Moreover, students encountered problems with grammar subjects. Especially syntax, morphology, past tense, and indirect speech are the subjects they had difficulty with.

“Students mostly have problems because of the lack of literary books. Besides, because there are very few linguistic books, students cannot own a book of their own. Only teachers have linguistic books.”(1E)

“I think grammar.”(2E)

“There isn’t a major subject or problem our students have faced. Our students can learn everything easily because they are very hard-working.”(4K)

“When learning Turkish, the students had difficulty with the syntactical and morphological subjects.”(5K)

“Some words in Kyrgyz and Turkish show that they come from one language. However, the syntactical subjects are a little bit difficult.”(7K)

“I think that past tense, indirect speech may be difficult for the students who are new to the language.”(9K)

Table 7. Effects of Learning Turkish on Students

Effects	Gender
Practicing speaking	1E,2E,4K,5K,8E
Making observations	1E,7K,
Positive effects	1E,2E,3K,5K,6E,9K,10K
Knowing the culture	4K,7K
Developing world culture	7K, 8E
Gaining Experience	8E
Giving support	9K
Loving Turkey	10K

When asked how students are affected by their visit to and working in Turkey, the majority responded that they were affected positively. Furthermore, one of the most important benefits is practicing Turkish by speaking it. In this way, they started to speak Turkish better and accurately. They had the chance to experience the Turkish culture closely. As they live in a different country, their world view develops. They gain experience. Turkish people support the Kyrgyz people. After Kyrgyz students had a chance to work in Turkey, they began to like Turkey much more.

“I think it affects positively because when you practice everything gets deeper. They see much closely that Turkey is a developed country. They even want to live there if there’s a chance.”(1E)

“I think that visiting Turkey and working there affected them positively and it had lots of help in practicing the language.”(2E)

“Activities like these are very good for students. This is both practice for them and they learn the Turkish culture better[sic].”(4K)

“They gain a lot of information about Turkey. They change their views on the world.”(7K)

“The change in their world view. They make bigger plans toward the future. They gain experience. They improve their language more.”(8E)

Table 8. Transformation of Students Who Lived in Turkey

Ss. Affected by	Gender
Rich history	1E, 6E, 7K
No bribing	1E
Respect for labor	1E
Appreciation for Turkey	2E, 3K
Gaining positive qualities	3K, 4K
Decrease in the desire to read	5K, 8E
Improvement in the Turkish language	5K, 10K
Improvement in one’s view of life	5K, 8E, 9K
Negative qualities	6E
Helpfulness of Turkey	7K
Increase in the knowledge about Turkey	8E
Deterioration in speech	8E
Learning hospitality in Turkey	9K
Being cheerful	9K
Snobbish people	9K
Self-confidence	9K

Some positive and negative changes in the students who visited and lived in Turkey have been observed. Table 8 shows in what ways these changes were observed by the scholars. According to the table, the majority of students were affected by the rich history of Turkey. Students liked the natural beauties and rich history of Turkey. It was observed that their view of life improved. Their self-confidence increased. Their Turkish improved, but it was also observed that some students started using their native language in an informal way. Besides, after they started working in Turkey, their interest in reading decreased. They think that some people are far more snobbish. Generally speaking, the students’ working in Turkey contributed to their development personally.

“For me, Turkey is a place where I have a lot of close friends and siblings. I like how Turkey works in a system. It is rich in history and I believe it will develop more because there is no bribing in Turkey. You earn as much as you work. They do not abuse you, they respect labor, so one wants to work more and more. They enjoy working. For now, there is nothing negative.”(1E)

“In our students we always observe positive changes. For this reason, we thank people who prepared this program by giving them the chance to learn Turkish.”(4K)

“Positive changes. They started speaking Turkish better. Their views on life changed. The negative effect is that they wanted to read less after they came from Turkey.”(5K)

“What is positive is that they gain more information about Turkey. What is negative is that they speak slang and they do not take their lessons seriously.”(8E)

“When we take on the positive side, they are hospitable, you learn to be cheerful. The negative side is that snobbish people are more. Students learn to stand up for themselves and to be self-confident.”(9K)

“Positive changes. Their speaking Turkish gets better, I cannot see negative aspects for now. Everything is OK.”(10K)

Table 9. Relationship between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan

Relationship Features	Gender
Having good relationships	1E, 2E, 6E, 8E, 10K
Comparative thesis	1E
Unity in language	1E
Cultural similarities	1E, 3K, 4K, 5K, 6E, 9K
New activities	5K
Hospitability	7K
Optimism	7K
Turkish Universities in Kyrgyzstan	9K
Mutual respect of two countries	9K
More development needed	10K

The ancestral and cultural similarities are some of the factors that unite these two countries. The majority of the scholars, who were asked to reply, “How are the cultural and social relationships between Turkey and Kyrgyzstan?”, stated that the relationships between these two countries are well. Further, it is thought that both countries have cultural similarities. They are cognately and culturally similar. To exemplify, celebrating holidays, being positive, and hospitability are mutual cultural aspects. All of these allow both cultures to get closer. Opening Turkish universities in Kyrgyzstan, doing a comparative thesis at universities, arranging meetings for new activities over the last years are positive developments for both countries. The scholars’ responses are as follows:

“Yes, Kyrgyz and Turkish societies descended from one root. Their similarities are more than their differences. There are slight differences because they were long time ago separated from each other, but if we look at the roots, they are the same. In the last years, the relationships have been getting better. There is an improvement in every aspect. For example, good theses are being written, comparative theses.”(1E)

“The social and cultural relationships between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey are very good. As the history of both cultures are the same, there are significant similarities in cultures, and this increases Kyrgyz students’ interest in learning the Turkish language.”(4K)

“The social and cultural relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey is developing. Thus, there should be new programs and more activities should be produced to improve the relationship between the two sides.” (5K)

“It is clear for everyone that Kyrgyzstan and Turkey are sibling countries from the past. And they have been preserving the cultural and social relationship from the past to present. In other words, they have a good relationship.”(6E)

“Both Kyrgyz and Turkish people are hospitable, optimistic people.”(7K)

“Nowadays the social and cultural relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey is very good. Opening Turkish universities in Kyrgyzstan, celebrating holidays, the respect of both countries for each other is very pleasing. “(9K)

“Recently it is good, but it should be further developed.” (10K)

Table 10. Historical Relationships between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey

Relationship in History	Gender
Negative events in <i>Kyrgyzstan</i>	1E
Positive effect	4K, 5K, 6E, 7K
No effect	2E, 9K
Effects	10K
Normal effects	3K
Negative situations	8E

In Table 10, the comments of the scholars on “How does the relationship between countries over the histories of these two nations affect their people are as follows: Some scholars think that the bad events having taken place in Kyrgyzstan will not affect Turkey negatively. Most of the scholars think that the historical events positively affect the relationship between the two countries. Some scholars think that the events having taken place does not affect the relationship between the two countries. There are also some scholars who think that the historical events strengthened the bonds between the two countries.

“The negative events having taken place in Kyrgyzstan throughout its history do not affect Turkey negatively. The events having occurred in Kyrgyzstan concern only Kyrgyzstan. Other countries may refrain from getting involved in Kyrgyzstan internal affairs out of fear, but in the end, everything works out well.” (1E)

“No, there is nothing like that nowadays.” (2E)

“I must say that it affects very positively because this situation further strengthens the bonds between the two countries.” (4K)

“It affects very well, very positively. Both sides treat each other with respect. They see each other as brothers and sisters.” (5K)

“(No) I think that the relationships over their histories have affected both sides positively.” (6E)

“Actually, the ancestors of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey are one. These two countries lead a life as brothers and sisters.” (7K)

“It is not historical, but in fact they beat a Turkish citizen in Kyrgyzstan, I mean bad people. And in Turkey, they beat an innocent Kyrgyz.” (8E)

“The bad or good events in a country do not affect other countries in a bad or good way.” (9K)

Table 11. Metaphors of Kyrgyz Students on Their Education in Turkey

Metaphors	Gender
A full pool (clean and transparent)	1E
Clear water	1E
Science aluiynemenenkudukkazgandai (Getting education/knowledge is like digging the land by a needle)	2E
Light	3K, 4K
Tree	4K
Traffic light	5K
Ocean	6E
A blind man regaining his sight	7K
Transforming pessimism to optimism	8E
Having the qualities of a human being	9K
Living well	10K
Understanding the importance of life	10K

In Table 11, the scholars were asked to metaphorize the education Kyrgyz students received in Turkey. The scholars' perception about the education Kyrgyz students got in Turkey is positive as evidenced by the metaphors. They used the figurative expressions “full”, “clean”, “transparent”, “pool”, “clear water”, “light”, “tree”, “traffic light” to refer to the education they got in Turkey. In addition, ocean, a blind man regaining his sight, and transforming pessimism to optimism are other figurative expressions. Some scholars think that education provides people with human qualities. A scholar explained this with a Kyrgyz expression: “*Bilimaluiynemenenkudukkazgandai*”, which translates into Turkish as “Getting education/knowledge is like digging the land by a needle”. According to the scholars, education is essential to living well and knowing the importance of living.

“A student who goes to Turkey to get education is like a full pool. A clear, transparent pool or like clear water.” (1E)

“We have a good proverb (idiom) Bilimaluuiynemenenkudukkazgandai. I was going to use this idiom.”(2E)

“Information is light.”(3K)

“I would say: Read friends! Education is like a tree. The more you water it, the faster it’ll grow. The more books you read, the more you will learn. Don’t forget education is light.”(4K)

“Education is like a traffic light. I would say that an educated person would be afraid of nothing.”(5E)

“Education is an ocean.”(6E)

“An educated person is a blind person seeing again.”(7K)

“Education transforms this pessimism to optimism.”(8E)

“A person who gets education learns to get the qualities of a person.”(9K)

“Education is living well, learning the importance of living.”(10K)

Table 12. Feelings, Thoughts, and Suggestions

Thoughts, Suggestions etc.	Gender
Opportunities to go to Turkey	1E
PhD	1E
Learning Turkish	4K
Learning the Kyrgyz language	6E
The increase in universities	6E
Education possibilities between countries	7K
Universities that have partnerships with Turkey	8E, 10K
Exchange programs	9K, 10K

When the scholars were asked if they had something to add, some said that they did not want to add anything. The scholars who wanted to share their feelings and thoughts put forward these suggestions: Facilitating travels to Turkey for all the students who want to see Turkey may increase their chances to go to Turkey. It is expected that the chances for Kyrgyz students who want to pursue their PhD in Turkey will be increased. Turkish people should try to learn the Kyrgyz language and Kyrgyz people should improve their Turkish. This will help reinforce the relationship between these two countries. It is hoped that the number of departments where Kyrgyz people can receive an education will be increased. If the number of exchange programs is increased in both countries, students are more likely to get education by benefiting from the exchange programs. In *Kyrgyzstan*, if they open more universities partnering with Turkey and similarly if in Turkey with Kyrgyz partners are, it will enable both countries to know each other closely.

“Increasing the number of people who want to go to Turkey. Providing students with opportunities to go for a PhD program. For example, I would love to earn a PhD degree there if I had a chance.”(1E)

“Learn Turkish, put an effort, improve your Turkish.”(4K)

“The thing that I want to add is that in Turkey and Kyrgyzstan, there should be more universities for education and for Turkish people to learn the Kyrgyz language.”(6E)

“To make it easier for students to get education in these two countries.”(7K)

“To establish good relationships with universities in Turkey, open more programs because most students cannot be accepted.”(8E)

“To increase the number of teacher and student exchange programs, to widen the field of education.”(10K)

Conclusion and Discussion

How can we make realistic assessments when we look at any part of the Turkistan geography, which is a source of our being, through the perspective of a guest? Realistic and helpful assessments about the countries and people in Turkistan as “One folk Seven states” would help reduce misunderstandings. Assessing Turkey and Turkistan based on language and culture from this viewpoint would prove fruitful. “Language” is above all because Turkish is a way of life. We extend the content of this statement as “language is a way of life”. A Turkish proverb would be a sound foundation for a better discussion: “People communicate by talking, animals by smelling.” As people who speak the same language have strong affective ties, it is difficult for evil-minded people to sow discord among them. Is the effect of the deterioration and corruption in the language in Turkey not a considerable factor? In fact, it is. Where have the conflicts over language, ethnicity, etc. dragged the country? It is possible to observe this phenomenon in every walk of a society.

Language in the most basic sense is a means of communication. In communication the aim is to convey the thoughts, feelings, and concepts that are formed in a person and achieve the result. The concepts are formed firstly in minds and then formed in molds to be transferred to the other side, the real world. The conceptualization, molding, and transferring as such manifest themselves in syntactical elements that characterize the Turkish language. This system defines the lifestyle. In this way, language is a transformed phenomenon that discriminates cultural communities from one another. Culture is not only a style of life and thinking of a single community but varies from community to community and refers to people’s method of general adaptation to a social environment. In this sense, it can be expressed that culture is the mirror of a language, a reflection.

Our conscious communicative skills that incorporate the privileged properties of colloquial language is the first step, base, and mediator for a conscious interaction that is essential for a social life. Thinking about specific things facilitates talking about and discussions over them. The structure of language brings about certain choices and tendencies without being decisive in thoughts and behaviors. The way that Kyrgyz students learning Turkish by visiting Turkey and communicating with the native speakers of the target language is one of the best examples for this. Additionally, students express that they started to speak Turkish better by visiting Turkey.

There is a close relationship between the languages of people and their worldview. A language's rules are not the only things that separate a language from the other. Language bestows a society a different way of thinking, behavior, and living. This is why and how a society's view of the world and the value they give to people show differences. Relatedly, the thoughts of societies and people, the balance they form between matter and person, the behavioral preferences manifest themselves through the languages they use. The relationship between Kyrgyzstan and Turkey enhanced by the Language Reinforcement Program. Kyrgyz students got the chance for a closer discovery of Turkey. Kyrgyz and Turkish Scholars collaborated.

The stronger relationship among the Turkish republics fosters the collaborations with Turkey, too. Accordingly, by the inner and outer forces that know the importance of language and people, there have been multidimensional problems that are too many to even classify. When we discuss the subject in consideration of the relationship between language and alphabet, it is possible to see how much they historically affect culture and lifestyle. The Bengutas alphabet, which is the beginning of written Turkish and our first national alphabet used by The Yenisei Kyrgyz and The Gokturks, are the alphabets estimated to go back a thousand years before Christ. The scholars who put forward the idea that the Bengutas alphabet is the national alphabet of Turkic people state that these letters were derived from Turkish stamps, pictures, and shapes (Ergin, 2006).

Now, the richness of Turkish culture preserves itself. There are common characteristics between the wedding ceremonies in Kyrgyzstan and Turkey likely the traditions in birth celebrations. In both cultures receiving one's blessings in case of death is common, too, as in the belief of evil eye of the people. As many features like these indicate the common root of Kyrgyzstan and Turkey even though these two people located in different lands apart from each other (Çeltikci & Kayhan 2016 p.77,78).

According to the scholars' views, the Kyrgyz students who had the chance to come to Turkey via the language reinforcement program were affected positively by the internships. If it got easier to travel to Turkey, more students would like to visit Turkey. It is considered that this internship program will contribute positively to Turkish and Kyrgyz people who believe that they descend from the same ancestral root. It is understood that this program is necessary but does not suffice on its own. As a

result of the present research, the recommendations below should be practiced for a better implementation of the program:

1. All sorts of education given abroad should be dealt with from a socio-psychological viewpoint.
2. As in all fields, humans as the basic determiners of an educational setting should be competent experts who are specialized in their fields.
3. The staff that will teach abroad should be recruited from a pool of faculty members who are highly representative.
4. Faculty members should be people who live by and practice the values that they believe in.
5. The people who have ideas, plans, and foresight in the long and short terms about their country may be hired as faculty members to teach abroad.
6. Most importantly the staff to educate people abroad should love the Republic of Turkey, the Turkish language and culture, and especially the Turkish people. In this perspective, all of these should be performed in interdisciplinary studies.

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