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**LANGUAGE TESTING AND IMMIGRATION IN
GERMANY: THREE IMMIGRANTS'
EXPERIENCES WITH GERMAN LANGUAGE
TEST**

Almanya'da Dil Testi Ve Göç: Alman Dil Testi İle Üç Göçmenin

Deneyimleri

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Abstract

Many studies (Blackledge, 2009; Stevenson & Schanze, 2009; Shohamy, 2009) have been done on the recent policies of developed countries to control their borders and ensure the intactness of the majority language and culture in the face of influx of immigrants with language and civic tests. Nevertheless, there are fewer qualitative studies done on what immigrants think of the language testing process and what they have experienced. The current research aims to contribute to the literature about language testing from immigrants' point of view. For this purpose, three men who immigrated to Germany from southern Turkey were interviewed on Skype. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore their experiences during the process of studying for and taking the German language and civic test, and to investigate the ethicality of the test by drawing upon its impact on lives of test-takers and what its results mean for immigrants. Transcribed interview data were processed with in-depth content analysis and recurring themes were subsumed under similar categories. The study found that the immigrants were generally satisfied with the language test they took and considered the test to be an appropriate method of measuring the linguistic proficiency of immigrants. However, the three immigrants' accounts revealed certain shortcomings of the test in terms of fairness. The study concludes by making several suggestions to increase the fairness of the language test particularly for illiterate and elder immigrants.

Keywords: German language test, immigration, test fairness, Turkish immigrants

Öz

Gelişmiş ülkelerin sınırlarını kontrol etme ve dil ile vatandaşlık testleri yoluyla çoğunluk dili ve kültürünün bütünlüğünü göçmen akımına karşı koruma politikaları üzerine şimdiye kadar pek çok çalışma yapılmıştır (Blackledge, 2009; Stevenson & Schanze, 2009; Shohamy, 2009). Bununla birlikte göçmenlerin dil testi süreciyle ilgili ne düşündükleri ve deneyimleri hakkında daha az nitel çalışma

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bulunmakta. Mevcut çalışma göçmenlerin bakış açısından literature katkı sağlamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaçla Türkiye'nin güneyinden Almanya'ya göç eden üç erkek katılımcıyla Skype üzerinden görüşme yapıldı. Katılımcıların Almanca dil ve vatandaşlık testi için çalışma ve teste girme sürecindeki deneyimlerini keşfetmek ve testin adaylar üzerindeki etkisini ve sonuçların göçmenler için ne anlama geldiğini kullanarak testin etkililiğini araştırmak için yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeler yapıldı. Yazıya dökülen görüşme verisi derinlemesine içerik analiziyle işlenerek yinelenen temalar ilgili kategoriler altında toplandı. Çalışma göçmenlerin genel olarak girdikleri dil testinden memnun oldukları ve testin göçmenlerin dil yeterliklerini ölçmek için uygun bir yöntem olduğunu düşündükleri sonucuna vardı. Bununla birlikte, üç göçmenin açıklamaları testin eşitlik açısından yetersizlikleri olduğunu ortaya çıkardı. Bu çalışma özellikle okuma-yazma bilmeyen ve yaşlı göçmenler için test eşitliğinin nasıl artırılabilirliği konusunda birkaç öneriyle sonuçlanıyor.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Almanca dil testi, göçmenlik, test eşitliği, Türk göçmenler

Introduction

A great deal of work and research in language testing is centred on developing valid and reliable tests to measure language knowledge in an as accurate way as possible. However, over the past decades the scope of attention in language testing has expanded to include ethics and impact of tests in areas other than education such as in society at large. A growing body of research is carried out into the use of tests in non-educational settings, the ethicality of such uses, and the impact such acts have on test-takers. Tests are increasingly being used as powerful tools to shape national language policies, to control immigration, and to reform teaching and learning. The reasons behind usage of tests and particularly language tests and the way they are implemented raises questions about their ethicality and fairness, and open to question states' real intentions in employing such devices to decide who gets in a country and who is denied entry.

The Literature Review

Language and Nation

A common language is frequently voiced to be one of the criteria of nation formation. No matter how culturally and linguistically diverse a nation is, the majority language generally becomes dominant and the state requires its citizens to learn this language. Any individual or group failing or refusing to conform to linguistic hegemony are regarded with suspicion and are sometimes even viewed as threat to national and cultural unification. Bilingual communities have particularly suffered from policies directed against linguistic plurality (Blackledge, 2009).

In the postmodern world, the increased mobility of people across state borders due to various reasons, be they political or economic, have led many to think nation-state are weakening and losing control over their territories. We believe this observation is not completely accurate. Although with increased globalization nation-states are forced to relinquish control in certain areas, they seem to reassert their control when it comes to deciding who is in and who is out. Through invention of national identities, in which a common language serves as an indispensable component, and repression of minority or immigrant identities, they instil in their citizens the ideas of national unity. Those who are unable to conform to the dominant ideology are marginalized, denied civic services such as education and healthcare or excluded from the society altogether.

Nation-states have proved to be resilient in the face of pervading capitalism and globalization. While they seem to be frequently voicing a discourse of multilingualism and multiculturalism, nation-states develop language policies that promote monolingualism.

They search for answers to what unites a nation and what makes an individual citizen of a nation-state. In this search they seem to have found a powerful tool called language and have devised language policies that take a single language and a single variety of that language as the norm. Since the languages of immigrants are a deviation from the norm, they are seen as a threat to the social cohesion. In order to perpetuate the norm and linguistic homogeneity, nation-states subject immigrants and those who wish to become citizens to language and societal knowledge tests. The increased use of language tests by governments in different political and societal contexts such as in immigration and citizenship are proof of how powerful tools they have become (Shohamy & McNamara, 2009). This is an unrealistic linguistic objective as immigrants use more than one language in their communities and tend to develop hybrid varieties of the language of their new countries (Shohamy, 2009).

The national identity is partly based on a shared culture and language and these two are viewed as symbols of belonging and loyalty to that identity. Failure or refusal to show loyalty to the national identity can result in punishment, sanctions, and even exclusion. Language tests and proof of knowledge of host society and its civic freedoms and duties have come to play a significant role in testing of loyalty and patriotism of immigrants wishing to become nationals of a country (Hogan-Brun, Mar-Molinero & Stevenson, 2009).

Testing regimes

Although certain countries such as the United States, Australia and the United Kingdom have been requiring language and/or knowledge of society tests for quite a long time now, the usage of such tests as conditions in granting permanent residency or citizenship dates back only a couple of decades ago. Among the factors contributing to this regime of testing in immigration and citizenship are influx of migrants and refugees in the wake of the Second World War, growing number of economic migrants to industrialized nations, the fall of communism in Eastern Europe, the enlargement of the European Union eastward (Van Avermaet, 2009), poverty and civil wars in Africa and in the Middle East. Faced with this influx of immigrants and economic migrants, industrialized nations moved to control people wanting to enter, settle or apply for citizenship. They erected barriers to stop rising migrations and did this under the cover of social integration by requiring immigrants and citizenship applicants to pass a language test, prove familiarity with the host country's values and civic rules or attend obligatory integration programs. Van Amermaet (2009, p. 17) puts the real intention of such programs succinctly: "So, whilst 'integration' is the key term used in all policies, the long-term aim is often 'assimilation'". He challenges the idea of integration through promotion of monolingualism and advocates a multicultural and multilingual society, which will eventually lead to 'multicultural citizenship' (2009, p. 17).

The use of tests as conditions of residency and citizenship perpetuates the status and power of the dominant national language and marginalizes immigrant languages, while knowledge of society tests serve to impose ideologies on immigrants and those wanting to become citizens (Shohamy, 2013). It is "the imposition of a particular ideology of belonging" (McNamara, 2009, p. 158) and it serves the culture of the majority group in the host country. McNamara further argues: "The primary function of the test is not to promote the welfare of immigrants, but to express an ideology associating language use with cultural values" (p. 158).

A growing number of European states are adopting stricter measures for applicants who wish to settle or become a citizen of the country. One of these conditions the applicants are subjected to is the language requirement. In a 2007 study cited in Van Avermaet

(2009), European countries of France, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, and Austria had language tests for immigration and entry to the country while Denmark, Estonia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, and Norway required language tests for integration and residence. As for citizenship, Bulgaria, Denmark, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Slovenia, and the UK had language tests as requirement.

Among the European Union countries, the Netherlands seems to have the most restrictive measures of immigration control. Any person wishing to become a citizen of the Netherlands has to pass through three stages of testing: one for entrance to the country, one for social integration, and one for naturalization. The Law on Integration Abroad of 2006 requires the applicants to take a phone test in the Dutch language over the computer before their arrival in the Netherlands. The test is unique in the world and comes as a barrier to family unification of Turkish and Moroccan immigrants to the Netherlands (Kunnan, 2012). Following granting of entry, applicants have to attend compulsory integration courses that contain language as well as knowledge of Dutch society. Since citizens from European Union countries, Switzerland, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the United States are exempt from the test, it has been criticized to be discriminatory and in violation of human rights. Furthermore, applicants who fail to successfully complete integration programs are subjected to punishment in the form of financial sanctions and civic rights restrictions. The main aim of language testing in immigration and citizenship in the Netherlands as can be summarized as:

If one considers the growing costs immigrants have to pay for the language courses, the language tests and the residence permits one may conclude that the purpose of the tests, in particular through the sanctions attached to failure on the tests, has changed from facilitating the integration of immigrants to reduce the stream of immigrants, the effectiveness of which is demonstrated by the decline in immigration in the period 2001–2005. With these measures the Netherlands thus seems to have opted for a simple and highly successful immigration control system. (Gysen, Kuijper, & Van Avermaet, 2009, p. 101)

Language Testing in UK

The United Kingdom, up until 1962, had no immigration controls and received a large number of immigrants largely from the Caribbean, Pakistan and India. The 1981 British Nationality Act introduced a language requirement for citizenship for the first time. Applicants to British citizenship were required to have a sufficient proficiency of the English, Welsh or Scottish Gaelic language. In 2002 the British government extended the language requirement to individuals who applied for citizenship as spouse of a British citizen, and set the required language level at ESOL Entry 3, which is equivalent to the Common European Framework for Reference (CEFR) level B1. Blackledge (2009) argues the primary aim of such policies was to exclude young people from South Asian nations of Bangladesh, Pakistan, and India. To make the naturalization process more restrictive, the Life in the UK Test was introduced for any citizenship applicants and in 2007 the same requirement was legalized for applicants for residency permits. Regarding the new legislation then Prime Minister Tony Blair noted in 2006:

We should share a common language. Equal opportunity for all groups requires that they be conversant in that common language. It is a matter both of cohesion and of justice that we should set the use of English as a condition of citizenship. In addition, for those who wish to take up residence permanently in the U.K., we will

include a requirement to pass an English test before such permanent residency is granted.

The UK immigration and citizenship laws are becoming increasingly restrictive and exclusive, and the reason for that seems to be deterring immigrants to the UK, and managing imagined threats to social cohesion rather than encouraging social integration (Blackledge, 2009). According to Blackledge (2009, p. 83), the coercive nature of a policy which requires applicants to learn English or be refused access to the community of citizens, or denied the right to remain in the United Kingdom, or to be with their 'loved ones', strengthens the existing gate-keeping mechanism so that it is more socially exclusive than before.

Language Testing in Germany

After the unification of Germany in 1990 the issue of social integration arose as a key issue. Up until the unification Germany has been receiving a significant number of guest workers from Turkey, Poland, Hungary and Vietnam and the integration of this group that made up about 8-9% of the total population was a serious problem facing unified Germany. The debates over the issue culminated in the Foreigners Act of 1997 but the act was revised in 2004 with the addition of *jus soli* principle of citizenship. According to the revised act, children of foreign parents born in Germany after January 1, 2000 are qualified to become citizen automatically provided that either one of their parents had resided in the country for a minimum of eight years. Adults who had lived in Germany for at least eight years could also apply for citizenship as long as they have adequate knowledge of German language. The immigration law of 2005 offered the opportunity of migration to ethnic Germans from former Soviet Union and eastern European countries on condition that they pass a German language test. "The language test is not a standardized test of language proficiency but a conversation that aims to establish whether the German language and culture has been part of the applicants' upbringing and family tradition" Schupbach comments (as cited in Kunnan, 2012, p. 172).

In Germany, participants are obliged to fulfill a contract for language course. If the immigrants fail to do so, they are denied residency or citizenship (Van Avermaet, 2009). Language courses for integration are 645 hours. 600 hours are for language and 45 are for orientation courses (Stevenson & Schanze, 2009). The course is grouped into two categories, foundation and further. At the foundation level, basic knowledge of German is taught and the participants could be exempted from certain modules if they could pass the diagnostic tests prepared by the Goethe Institute (Stevenson & Schanze, 2009). These courses could be taken either part-time, full-time or in the evening classes. The participants are supposed to get B1 level for passing. The government pays for the tuition of the courses. However, the participants still have to pay 1 euro per hour.

Method

Focus of Study

According to House (as cited in Davies, 1997, p. 347), ethics means "the rules or standards of right conduct or practice, especially the standards of a profession." It means there should be some accepted rules to consult when evaluating a profession's conducts in above manner. To illustrate, the American Psychological Association (APA) offers guidelines based on the most occurred situations psychologists have encountered (Bishop, 2004). The guidelines here are not absolute facts for ethics. Rather they are guidelines to appeal when doing a profession morally. Consequently, in case of a problem

that has not been faced before, the APA requires testing communities to broaden their ethical way of thinking.

Another ambiguity lies in the dilemma between public morality and individual morality. Institutional ethics (morality) such as professional morality stands between public morality and individual morality (Davies, 1997). As it could be seen, the issue of ethics is not a static and rigid concept. Rather it is an ongoing process to ensure people live together peacefully and equally. Similarly, ethics in language testing is not easy. To check whether a language test is ethical and fair, factors such as transparency, validity, practicability, the test's consequences and social outcomes should be taken into consideration. Hamp-Lyons (1997) suggests evaluating the test from the perspectives of the participants. This could help us understand any conflict between public morality and individual morality, and any negative consequences of tests for individuals.

Aim of Study

This study focuses on language testing for residency and citizenship in Germany. The language test is high-stake because it impacts the lives of many immigrants who have decided to leave their homeland and live in a new country. Nevertheless, tests like these are claimed to be conducted to keep the gate, control the flow of immigrants, and denies basic human and individual rights such as healthcare, pension and social security (Shohamy, 2009). In addition, these tests are claimed to cause negative attitudes toward others and increase racial and ethnic tensions. Considering similar more conclusions reached in literature in the field of language learning, language testing, and its consequences, there is a need to do research in each country to follow their procedure to integrate immigrants.

The need to follow the language testing process from ethical approach has also a value due to increasing number of people who move from their homeland to other countries today. According to the 2017 international migration report published by the United Nation, there are 258 million people who are living in a country that is not their homeland. This is a fact that triggers the question of what kind of language problems and language testing issues these immigrants face, particularly the working class, the refugees, the asylum seekers and marginalized groups.

There are few studies conducted to investigate immigrants' perspective of ethics in language tests. Therefore, the current study interviews three men from Turkey about their experiences in the process of taking the language test, their feelings toward the test, and the social outcomes of the test. In this way, the study aims to investigate the process and consequences of the language test from the perspective of test-takers and offer suggestions to improve fairness of language testing in Germany.

Moreover, the current research also hopes to shed more light on language testing for countries that are receiving huge numbers of immigrants for the first time in their history. To illustrate, Turkey has received 3,606,208 Syrian refugees by May 2019, a figure revealed by the UN High Commissioner for Refugees. While there has been ongoing controversy about granting citizenship to some of the Syrian refugees, Turkey still has not set its language testing policy. Hence, the issue of language and language testing need further consideration in the field of literature.

Considering the aim of the study mentioned above, the research question of the current study is:

1. What has been the overall experience of the immigrants on language testing considering their feeling toward the whole process, the social consequences of the testing and integration level accomplished during the whole process of the application?

Research Design

This study uses qualitative data to find out the answer for the research question. It also has taken a phenomenological approach and aims to describe the participants' experience from their point of view. The investigation into the views, beliefs, and attitudes of immigrants in language testing might expand our knowledge of test taking for residency or citizenship from different viewpoints. Understanding the experience of these participants might help important stakeholders in language testing to plan language tests that are more ethical, help integration in a shorter time and have positive social consequences. It is important to point out that the participants in the current study are only a subgroup of all test takers.

Participants

For the aim of the study, one friend in common with the participants and the researchers helped to find the first participant in Germany. The second and third participants were found with snowball sampling. After being informed of the current study's purpose and design components, all participants granted their written consent prior to data collection. They were also informed that their identities and information would be kept confidential and used only for the purposes of the current study. Lastly, the participants were reassured that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

All three participants are from southern Turkey. They are all multilingual male residents in Germany. Their native languages are Turkish and Kurdish. Miran and Engin speak one more language other than German. Further details about the participants are shown below, in Table 1.

Table 1

Details about Participants

Names	Şerif	Engin	Miran
Gender	Male	Male	Male
Age	38	42	23
Education level	High School	Primary School	University
Marital status	Married	Married	Single
Number of children	2	1	0
Job	Restaurant worker	Driver	Unemployed, computer programmer
First languages	Turkish-Kurdish	Turkish-Kurdish	Turkish-Kurdish
Second Languages	German A2	German and Arabic at elementary level	English A1, German A2
Reason for moving to Germany	Family-unification	Asylum	Temporary residency
City of residence in Germany	Cologne	Bremen	Erlangen
Length of study for language test	3 months	9 months	20 months

Times of taking language test	2 times	1 time	1 time
Date of passing test	2008	May 2012	August 2013
Citizenship or residency	Residency	Residency	Residency
Time spent in Germany	6 years	8 years	14 months

Data Collection

For data collection procedure, semi-structured interviews were conducted in the first week of June in 2016 via Skype. The videoconferencing sessions that were high quality in term of both sound and vision contributed to comfortable interview atmosphere so the participants would express their ideas frankly and without any interference from outside. The interview guideline was comprised of half structured questions which were prepared by the two researchers to get data considering the participants' overall experience, the feelings toward test taking process and social integration. The questions were also revised by an expert from the field of language testing before they were finally sent to the participants in advance.

All interviews were individually analyzed by the two researchers separately to have an overall sense of the transcribed data. Since the aim of the study was to understand the participants' views, *priori* categories were not determined when trying to find recurring and salient themes in the raw data. Major categories in the data were gathered by examining all the cases together. To have an eye from outside and ensure inter-reliability, a researcher from the field of language testing and consequentialism revised the raw data, the coding and the results. Finally, the overall results of this study were presented in the discussion part.

Results

Transparency

The participants noted that they got the necessary materials for the language tests in Turkey. They knew what kind of test they were going to take, how many questions would be asked, the components of the test, and all the necessary details. The German Consulate General in Turkey informed their instructors and indirectly the test-takers about every detail of the exam. One of them took the exam in Germany and he noted that they were given a mock exam two weeks prior to the actual exam. In brief, the German government revealed everything about the exam to the test takers.

Testing Process

Although studying for the test was a challenge for all three test-takers, they did not develop any negative emotions toward German language or Germany. They were stressed about the language and the country they had never been familiar with before. Miran thought that German language was difficult in term of grammar and syntax. Engin agreed with him about grammar. Şerif claimed that German was one of the most difficult languages in the world and he had difficulty because of his age. He was 30 years old at that time. Three of them shared the idea that German was difficult for them because they only started learning the language when they decided to take the test.

Nevertheless, all the participants stated that they started to speak German better in time. Although they felt embarrassed to speak the language in the beginning, in time, they became more comfortable talking and expressing themselves in German. Miran said German is a beautiful language overall. Engin noted that he started to like the German language as he got more proficient. None of the applicants reported any negative attitude toward German during the process of getting prepared for the test.

Imperfection of Process

When they were asked whether they found the test to be deficient in any way or they had any suggestions to enhance the testing method, the participants did not say much. Miran noted that the way they were tested was very appropriate and ethical. Engin reported that the format of the test was very good.

However, the transcript of the interview showed that there were some deficiencies in the test. To illustrate, Şerif said some of his classmates were illiterate. Just like him, they wanted to obtain residency and eventually citizenship in Germany through family union. However, they failed the test and the ones who managed to pass the test felt sorry for them. Miran said that getting prepared for the exams was especially difficult for those who had not attended school for 17-18 years. Engin, on the other hand, thought that taking the language test before arriving in Germany was not as easy as taking it in Germany. The reason for that is test takers do not speak in German in their home countries. They speak their native languages. Therefore, taking the test in Turkey makes it more challenging for would-be immigrants. Şerif said the same. He said he did not have the chance to practice German at home. According to Miran, people who were old had difficulty with one of the tasks in the test. In this task, the test-takers were asked to make a sentence with one of the words on the cards they were shown. This was very challenging for adults over a certain age. Another point Miran mentioned is that the price of the course in Turkey. He paid 1200 euros for three months. On the other hand, the price in Germany for three months is 360 euros. Compared to Germany, the one in Turkey is quite expensive.

Outcomes of Test

The three participants think the test had positive outcome on their lives. While they were getting prepared for the test, they learnt skills that could be useful for their life in Germany. The format of the test and the content were constructed in a way that would meet their needs. For instance, they learned how to write and send emails in German. All the participants stated that learning to write a letter is helping with their life in Germany because this is the way the government communicates with its citizens. Şerif also mentioned that he could use what he learnt during the language training. For instance, he learned to name the objects around him in German.

Getting prepared for the exam also helped the participants with finding employment in Germany. Şerif noted that he and those who did not know German had fewer chances of getting a job compared to those who could speak the language. Şerif was required to go to another language course in Germany to get a job. Similarly, Engin said that he could not have got a job as a driver if he had not learnt German. He said he could buy his bread thanks to the German language.

The language also helps the participants to be more independent in Germany. Engin says that as a person learns the language, he starts to stand on his own feet. In the beginning, he had to bring someone with him to the police station or hospital. However, after he

learnt the language, his dependency on others was reduced. He began to function in the community without linguistic assistance from anyone. Miran also noted that he could express himself better when he went to a pharmacy or a restaurant. He could comfortably do whatever he wants.

Daily life is another sphere where immigrants need to use the language. Miran told us, thanks to the language instruction he received, he could go shopping, order food in a restaurant or ask for a cigarette on the street, or use public transportation on his own. Moreover, Engin thinks, language is useful when you ask for directions or establish relationship with people around you. Finally, Engin and Miran mentioned that they use German with their friends whom they do not share the same language.

Integration

Among the semi-structured questions, there were questions related to integration. The first question was whether the participants felt integrated. Şerif said that he did not feel integrated because of his old age. Engin said he felt he was not fully integrated. He was a candidate for integration after he passed the language test. He said he felt integrated to a limited degree. Miran, however, said he was a little bit integrated to the country.

All the participants agreed with the government policy that states knowing the language is necessary for integration. Engin said that as you learn the language, you learn the country, its culture, and customs better. As a consequence, you do not see them as foreigners. People who do not receive language instruction before arriving in the country experience difficulties adapting to the country. However, he added that some still could not adapt to the country even if they could speak the language perfectly. They oppose the way the state approaches immigrants and citizenship applicants, he noted.

Similarly, Şerif thinks he has to learn the language to understand the German culture. However, he thinks even the age of 20 is too late to adapt to a totally new culture. He added that his culture, appearance, religious rituals, political views, and lifestyle are so different from those of Germans. These are among the reasons why certain people fail to adapt to their new country. On the other hand, he thinks it is easier for his children to adapt. His children start learning the German language at the school and acquire it much faster than their parents.

Miran says a person should be open to a new culture and make an effort to learn the customs and traditions of the host community. Otherwise, one could feel lonely and struggle to integrate. After the test, he was able to get by in daily life with his limited German and this, he says, helps him integrate further.

German Approach

The participants were asked what has been Germans' view of them after passing the test. Şerif said he was naturally looked down on. He says he was even noticeable because of his appearance. He unavoidably attracted attention. He pointed to his failure to speak the language fluently as the reason for being seen as an outsider.

Miran said that there were rumours about how Germans gave foreigners a dirty look. However, he did not feel such an extreme hatred toward the foreigners. The percentage of anti-immigrant population is quite slim. The issue is of course serious. However, when you deal with people in daily life, you realize that the situation is not that bad. Most Germans are warm and sympathetic toward immigrants. When immigrants speak German with an accent, Germans think it is cute. When they make mistake, Germans

find it sweet and nice. Of course if they speak the language accurately, Germans may like it better.

Engin also noted that Germans like the way the foreigners speak and do not have any negative attitudes toward them. They appreciate it. They see it as a sign of effort for integration and respect for Germans. Nevertheless, when foreigners fail to learn the language, they think these people are anti-social and do not like Germans.

Assimilation

The three participants stressed they have not been assimilated in this process. They could freely speak their native language(s), express their identity, and pass it to their children. They do not feel threatened in the process of learning the language or after it. All of them feel they are equal to native German citizens before laws and think Germany is a democratic country.

Discussion

The findings of the current research have revealed that the participants are satisfied with the German language test they took. They were stressed about the exam in the beginning and thought the German language was difficult. On the other hand, they had the necessary materials to study for the test and they were informed about the content, and format of the test. Philips (1996) lists a number of criteria for assessing high-stake tests (cited in Camara, 1997). He says that participants should be informed about the format of the exam, knowledge and skills needed with sample tasks, and model answers. The findings of our study show that language test for obtaining residency in German is transparent, which is one of the factors that make an exam ethical.

Some of the questions in the language test are controversial and are criticized to be inappropriate in the context of determining a migrant's eligibility for residency. Some of these questions are "Imagine your adult son comes to you and says that he is homosexual and would like to live with another man: how would you react?" or "Some people hold Jews responsible for everything and even think they are behind the attacks of 11 September 2001 in New York: What do you think about that?" (As cited in Stevenson & Schanze, 2009, p. 94). However, the current study did not reveal any results that support such claims. The participants reported that they were not asked such questions that made them uncomfortable or offended. The participants added that the way they were tested and the format of the language test were appropriate. It could be concluded from the findings that the German language test was ethical toward the participants.

The 2007 Programme for National Integration Plan (As cited in Stevenson & Schanze, 2009, p. 96) defines sufficient knowledge of German in accordance with level B1 of the CEFR as "the ability to cope linguistically with everyday life in one's environment independently, to conduct a conversation according to one's age and level of education and to express oneself in writing." The responses of the participants regarding the language test's outcomes justified this. The participants explained that they could communicate with the governmental bodies thanks to writing instruction they received at the language courses and used German on public transport, for ordering food, asking for directions or speaking to other immigrants. In addition, they do not have to depend on anyone when seeing a doctor or needing anything in their daily lives. Based on the responses of the participants, we could say that the German language test has social goals for the immigrants. The test's content and format are designed in a way that benefits immigrants in the best way for their survival.

The language tests have been shown (Zabrodszkaja, 2009; Shohamy, 2009) to test all immigrants in the same way. Factors such as age, illiteracy, speaking a language with a different script than the one used in the target language, lack of instruction in the target language leave some immigrants disadvantaged. Similarly, the current study shows the German language test does not accommodate those who are illiterate, or have not been to school for a long time or are older adults. To illustrate, some classmates of the participants could not succeed in the exam due to being illiterate or not being schooled for many years. Hence, they could not join their fiancés or wives in Germany. An alternative way of testing for those who are disadvantaged should be conducted to make the language test more ethical and equal for all immigrants.

There were different responses to the question whether the language test helps integration to the host country. None of the participants felt fully integrated to Germany. Yet they felt they are getting more accustomed to the country and feeling more confident communicating in the target language. One of the participants reported that he is too different to integrate into the German society and he does not have time to socialize in the community. Another participant said he feels he has become a candidate for integration by passing the language test. Similarly, Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (As cited in Doerschler& Jackson, 2011) sees learning the language as the first step for nation-wide integration. It could be said that language test is not a factor on its own for integration. There are other factors such as appearance, age and social opportunities of the immigrants. More studies could be done to assess the exact role of language and language test in integration.

Some scholars (Shohamy, 2009) have found that not speaking the language of the host country is considered as a sign of lack of sense of belonging to the country and failure to adopt core rules for living together. The results of the current study support this claim regarding Germany's perspective to language. The participants agree that lacking the language is seen as reluctance to adapt to Germany. On the other hand, the participants reported they do not experience any negative attitudes from Germans themselves when they speak German with a non-native accent. Rather, they feel Germans appreciate their effort to learn German.

On the contrary, a study (Doerschler& Jackson, 2011) done on immigrants and their competency in the German language showed that Turks are the only immigrant group that do not feel less discriminated as they improve linguistically. The other groups such as Italians, Greek, the Spanish or former Yugoslavia citizens feel more accepted by Germans as their language proficiency improves. The reason for the difference in participants' views of Germany and German language in two studies could be the ethnicity. All the participants in the current study are ethnically Kurdish, while the ethnicity of participants in the study cited above was not specified. They could be a mixture of Kurds, Arabs and Turks from Turkey categorized under the same group. For Kurds, learning German is their second language experience. They started their education in Turkish language without language accommodation in primary school. This could be the reason why Kurds feel more satisfied with the language accommodation, test and Germans' attitudes toward them. More studies should be done about immigrants from Turkey taking regional differences and multilingualism into account to understand the approach of immigrants from Turkey to language testing in Germany.

Implications for Language Teaching and Testing

The United Kingdom and the United States of America have been among the most powerful industrial countries that have drawn a huge number of immigrants from all over the world. Immigrants' English language learning experience and integration process have been studied by many researchers. The results of these studies together with the current study can shed light on the discussions on ethical and ideal language teaching and language testing for immigrants, particularly the ones from working class.

To begin with, the focus of Germany, the UK and the US that wish for the integration of the immigrants should be shifted from emphasizing the necessity of a common language and testing to participatory, natural and pro-longed language teaching. Such an approach is justified by the results of the current study that indicate immigrants have a very positive attitude to language learning and to native speakers of the host country. Also, they make the most of language testing process for surviving in their daily life. Namely, the motivation of learning an additional language is there, yet the problem remains with the rest of integration process, which the stakeholders can do a lot by taking action based on what the relevant literature suggests. It can be concluded from the current study that although the language testing process is transparent, ethical and has positive outcomes, the immigrants consider it as the first step to learning the language. They do not think it ensures integration or that it is sufficient on its own to learn the target language.

The current study revealed that the language testing process in Germany fails to address the needs of immigrants who have stayed away from school for longer periods of time, especially with certain types of questions such as making sentences with words on cards. For this reason, the process of language testing should be guided by the fact that some of the immigrants who immigrate to developed countries to join the workforce are illiterate or barely literate, come from socio-economically poor background or disadvantaged minority communities. Blackedge (2009) points out that the UK government needs to focus on helping immigrants gain access to social and linguistic capitals which are mostly in the hand of educated, white and wealthy class. He goes on putting emphasis on the need to focus on the lives and realities of immigrants in the UK for a successful language teaching program and integration process.

Lukes and Lyons (2015) studied underachieving immigrants in English language classes and warned the monolingual ideology of English might have the risk to exclude the value and potential of multilinguals in the US. The researchers suggest that a special care should be paid to those types of English language learners, and well-designed and creative programs can be prepared. Furthermore, they suggest that dialogic and participatory approach should be employed so that immigrants could make their voice heard, which can also be considered as a contribution to a more ethical and democratic society. Furthermore, they claim that these immigrants could also change their lives outside the class, participate in debates and even start new discussions.

One more relevant study (Cooke, Winstanley and Bryers, 2015) was conducted in an English Speakers of Other Languages class in UK. It was about a project going on that deals with the issue of language teaching to immigrants with a participatory approach. During the lessons, teaching takes place with emerging topics and discussions and the classroom is considered to be a discourse community. The focus is on making meaning, going deeper and generalizing it. To illustrate, in one class time, the participants talk about a cartoon in which a woman wearing hijab is riding a bike and some men from her community describe her as "gone modern." The class discusses the language structure, give

similar examples based on their personal life in the host country and listen to alternative perspectives. It can be seen that English language teaching acts out like a small society where the aim is more than merely providing the right grammar structure. The language class has the mission of enabling immigrant women making their voice heard by active participation into thinking, analysing, making conclusion and consequently integrating them with other women on the issue of sexism.

Finally, the current study found that there was a link between the level of language learning and finding employment. Similarly, a study by Dustmann and Fabbri (2003) conducted in the UK found by using quantitative data that there is a positive relationship between the proficiency of English speaking and finding a job. As the immigrants' English level goes up so does their income. Accordingly, they lose some benefits if they fail to speak English at all. Considering the immigrants are drawn to the host country for employment, language proficiency is a vital issue for them. Hence, language teaching programs can be implemented in a longer period of time to accompany them in the journey of exploring the language in higher levels. In brief, integration of immigrants can be achieved by proving them with informal life-long learning opportunities in order that they could boost their social and linguistic capitals (Morrice, 2007).

Moving from the research on language testing for immigration purposes and the findings of the present study, we suggest the termination of the German language policy of requiring immigrants to take the language test in their country of residence as it denies them the opportunity to learn the language in its natural setting, and unnecessarily makes them stressed, further reducing their chances of passing the test. Given the opportunity to learn the German language in Germany, it is safe to argue that majority of immigrants would progress much more quickly and become familiar with social values of their new country at the same time. Furthermore, certain measures could be taken to make the testing process fairer for the illiterate and older adults considering their disadvantageous position vis-à-vis the current testing policy.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the current research it can be concluded that the participants were satisfied with the German language test. They were stressed about the exam in the beginning and thought the German language was difficult. However, they had the necessary materials to study for the test and were informed about the content and format of the test. The findings of our study show that the language test for obtaining residency in German is transparent, one of the factors that make an exam ethical. The participants' accounts of their experiences regarding daily communication with the society and how the instruction they received prior to the test facilitated this communication could be counted as an advantage of the test.

As for the claim that the language test helps immigrants to integrate into the German society, the study concludes that the three test-takers did not feel integrated though they noted they became more confident in their communication with the community as a result of their improved proficiency in German. However, the current study has revealed that the German language test does not accommodate those who are illiterate, or have not been to school for a long time or are older adults. Furthermore, the test does not lead to integration of test-takers into the German culture and society, yet it makes them a candidate for integration. Finally, the fact that German language policy of requiring immigrants to take the language test in their country of residence denies immigrants the opportunity to learn the language in its natural setting, and unnecessarily makes them stressed, further reducing their chances of passing the test.

Limitations

The first limitation of the current study is the number of the participants. Analysis of responses from three participants is not sufficient to generalize the findings. The second limitation of the study is that it does not include both genders. The participants are all males from southern Turkey so they are not representative of all immigrants from Turkey. Finally, questions about integration and assimilation are limited due to time and space. More studies could be done to understand the relationship between the language, foreign accent, language tests and integration. In addition, longitudinal studies with the immigrants and their children could be conducted to find out whether language tests jeopardize the immigrants' identity in the long term and assimilate them.

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Appendix

Semi-structured interview questions:

(Testing)

What has been your experience with language learning?

Was the process easy or difficult for you? Was it a big challenge?

How long did it take you to study the language?

How did you study the language? Did you study on your own, with the help from anyone or by attending a course?

Did the relevant authorities inform you about the content and the format of the test?

How did you learn about the content and format of the test? Did your approach toward the language changed negatively or positively?

How did you feel toward the target language while you were getting prepared for the language test?

(Social integration)

(Immigrants' feelings)

In your case, how necessary was it to learn the main language of the host country for integration? Did you feel integrated following the test? Why/Why not?

Which languages do you use with your family, friends and other people in your life?

(Others' perception of her or him)

How did the citizens of the country start to perceive you after you passed the language test?

How do you think the way you speak the official language influence the way Germans treat you?

Do you think a person with a native accent can function better in this country than you could due to your foreign accent?

Detailed background information:

Name:

Gender:

Age

Job:

Marital status:

Number of Children:

Education status:

Country of origin:

First language:

Second language(s):

What are the reasons for moving to the country?

How many years have you been in the country?

When did you pass the language test?

How many times did you take the language test?