

A Bilingual Life Among the Triangle Tent and Reindeer: Heritage Language Education and Use of Mongolian Dukha Children

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ABSTRACT

One of the bilingual communities surviving today in Mongolia, which is the cultural heritage site of the ancient communities that left their mark on the history of Central Asia, are the Tuvan and the Dukha, which is considered a branch of them. In this study, it is aimed to reflect the language teaching practices carried out for the young generation of Tuvan and Dukha origin living in the Northwest Mongolia region and to reveal the views of the Dukha, the reindeer herder living in the triangular tent, on the Dukha language, which is the heritage language shown in the endangered languages category, and the supportive education practices carried out. The study was designed as two-stage qualitative research methods, such as field research and case study. First of all, the living areas of Tuvans and Dukhas in the Western and Northern regions of Mongolia were visited, and data were collected from available sources. In the second stage, interviews were conducted with the Dukha children studying in the town school through a semi-structured interview form. Obtained interview data were analyzed by content analysis. In the study, it was observed that Dukha children acquired L1 language in the family environment and also learned L2 language, but mostly they communicated in the dominant L2 language and therefore language change and endangered language situation progressed day by day. The country's local languages support policy and the positive impact of the heritage language supportive trainings made from time to time by various international institutions for families and children were mentioned.

Keywords: Bilingualism, endangered languages, heritage language, language change, language policy, Mongolian Tuvans, Dukhas.

INTRODUCTION

In addition to historical and cultural ties from the past, international mobility trends are effective on the demographic structure of today's societies. In this context, it is possible to come across multilingual and multicultural communities and states in almost every region. The concept of bilingualism, which has various definitions such as "having speaking skills (through speaking and writing) or comprehension skills (through listening and reading) in more than one language and "the regular use of two or more languages and the need for and use of two or more languages in daily life", is also associated with multilingualism and multiculturalism. In the literature, there are qualitatively different approaches to bilingualism according to language usage continuity (Thiery, 1978: 146). According to some, it is necessary to approach these concepts in terms of individual and social facts (Fishman, 1985a), and sometimes even in terms of ethnicity (Fishman, 1985b; Edwards, 2012), according to some, it is necessary to question the usage of these terms. For any community in the world that qualifies as multilingual, it cannot be said directly that a large proportion of the population can communicate in two or more languages (Edwards, 2012). Therefore, bilingualism and multilingualism, which are far from certain because they are interpreted according to different usage points (Bhatia, 2012) and definitions (Pauwels, 2016), are essentially positioned on the normal and ordinary necessity of daily

life for the majority of the population (Romaine, 2012: 445). While bilingualism is discussed as a phenomenon that occurs at the social or individual level in terms of the state and communities (Baker, 2006; Beardsmore, 1986); to define this, attention is drawn to a number of variables such as language achievement, language proficiency, language performance and language skills (Baker, 2006). For the broader social context, Fishman's (1965) question "Who speaks to whom and when?" is used. Disciplines such as psychology, linguistics and sociology have a leading influence on bilingualism and multilingualism research. The usual consequences of language contact may overlap with bilingualism or even multilingualism that can be found in an individual language user or in society as a whole (Wei, 2012), however, significant differences can

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occur, particularly in minority language groups, which often involve unequal strengths of language contact (Edwards, 2012). Language contact, or linguistic interaction, offers a framework for the analysis of produced identity. Identities; encompasses macro-level demographic categories, temporally and interactively specific participatory roles and local cultural locations (Mary Bucholtz & Kira Hall, 2005; Edwards, 1985; Edwards, 2009). Therefore, language is also a product of cultural heritage. (Blackledge & Creese, 2010). In this context, the heritage language; passes through the family filter through intergenerational transmission (Little, 2020), meets a minority language of a smaller audience that is not spoken by the majority of families within the community or country (Park & Sarkar, 2007). Language change or language shift may occur as a result of language contact in society. The type of interaction between the majority language and the local languages determines the type of linguistic outcome. Among the factors of this situation, cultural reasons, integration policies of societies and attitudes play a role (Yağmur, 2009). Many psychological, economic and political factors directly or indirectly affect a speaker's language choice. Therefore, speaker choices must be determined for a realistic understanding of code switching (Baker, 1992). Language death occurs if a language is not spoken by its heirs and the speakers have chosen to communicate with another language (Johanson, 2007). Identity politics, language rights and the status of 'endangered' languages in society; are associated with the revival of the language, the dynamics of minority languages and the ecology of the language (Edwards, 2010; Fishman, 1991; 2001).

In addition, according to the relationship between attitudes and language use / language learning (Dörnyei, Csizér & Németh, 2006), the language associated with a person's ethnic and cultural identity may be a less dominant language; another language preferred for economic advantages, may be more dominant (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). In some cases, regardless of minority group dynamics, acculturation orientations and language policies of host societies have an impact on language use cases. As a matter of fact, studies on language planning show that state language policies often have an impact on language shift or change observed in minority groups (Cooper, 1989).

The models developed to determine the use of heritage languages and to what extent languages are endangered aim to present the latest situation clearly with various scales. Here are some examples, The Ethnolinguistic Theory of Vitality (EVT) proposed by Giles, Bourhis, and Taylor (1977) to explore the role of various variables in intergroup relations, intercultural communication, second language learning, heritage language maintenance, and language change and loss (Giles, Bourhis, & Taylor, 1977); Fishman's (1991) 8-level (Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale GIDS), which provides

the theoretical foundations for the language animation practitioner (Lewis & Simons, 2010); UNESCO (2009) 6-level scale of endangered languages; Ethnologue Language Vitality Categories, which characterizes language vitality from five categories (Gordon 2005; Grimes 2000; Lewis 2009). Therefore, despite the disappearance of languages over time, studies of determining the usability or ethno-linguistic vitality for the next generation to transfer the language gain importance. Language speakers in danger of losing their heritage languages may systematically minimize or increase language vitality depending on how much they identify with their group, the degree of social interaction with in-group and out-group members, and language choices in various settings. It is further argued that group survival and language maintenance depend on the perceptions and behaviors of subsequent generations of ethnolinguistic groups (Sachdev et al., 1987). Therefore, in the transmission from generation to generation, the roles and responsibilities of the parents in the family come to the fore, the family efforts to protect the heritage language are of vital importance, the home environment and the language habits of the families are the most accurate predictors of the heritage language development (Fishman, 1991).

LITERATURE REVIEW

In the field of bilingual life and education, parent involvement, mother tongue and literacy environment, ethnic identity, heritage language and social-psychological factors that affect the successful maintenance of literacy are studied (Baker, 2011). In immigrant families, parents help the children to preserve the heritage language, support their communication with their relatives who carry the same culture (Park & Sarkar, 2007), help them to create a social identity that includes their heritage language and culture. Thus, examples with language vitality resulting from peer support were observed (Tse, 2001). While some studies have revealed that parents have the greatest responsibility in maintaining bilingual children in both languages (Guardado, 2002), parents strongly support their children's bilingual development; The main reason for this is that their children have better employment opportunities, self-identity and efficient communication in their own ethnic community (Lao, 2004). Sometimes the parent who speaks the heritage language at home may feel obliged to take on the role of a language teacher (Okita, 2002). The importance of school support for bilingual individuals to preserve their heritage language is also mentioned. Li (1999) argues that supportive interactions developed by parents' positive attitudes towards languages and cultures are important for children's bilingual education and building identity in the new environment. The effective learning of the language used at school is based on a solid foundation in the mother tongue. Regarding the development of bilingual children's language skills and school success, studies that show the importance of communicating

with their child in the language that the parents have the most dominance for the healthy cognitive development of the child (Yağmur, 2007), it was observed that the language development of the children will also be positive and their school success will increase in educational institutions where consistent bilingual programs are implemented. As well as language support for the children of immigrant parents, both family and institutional support are important for local languages spoken by less population in their own country. Some parents expect their children to learn the heritage language in order to preserve their cultural or ethnic identity or to transfer certain cultural values (Lee, 2002); so they take the responsibility of passing on the heritage languages to future generations (Fishman, 1991). The regulation of state-supported initiatives and language policies also gained importance in terms of maintaining the local language and cultural characteristics that societies brought in the past. As a matter of fact, all kinds of regulations and steps to be taken require action from a broad perspective, from family to country administrators.

For speakers of the Turkish language, the heritage language use maintains its vitality in multilingual and multicultural living conditions.

In addition to languages such as Turkey Turkish, Uzbek and Kazakh, which are kept alive as the dominant language / state language within the society they belong to, there are also those that are kept alive as local regional minority languages such as Tuvan, Tatar and Bashkir in the Russian Federation. In addition, there are Turkish languages such as Turkey Turkish spoken in Germany, the Netherlands, France and Belgium, which were moved to different countries in large masses through immigration and kept alive by the transfer of demographic mostly language and culture. Among the studies on the heritage language status of bilingual Turkish speakers, there are studies investigating the relations of Turkish with other languages outside the borders of Turkey and various aspects of Turkish bilingualism in contact with another language or dialect (Sağın Şimşek & Antonova Ünlü, 2019; Yağmur & Akıncı, 2003; Yağmur, 2004), and studies investigating the heritage language use of local Turkish language speakers in different geographies (Yağmur & Kroon, 2003a, Yamar & Kroon, 2006). As one of the geographies where Turkish language speakers have been home since the ancient times of history, there are Uyghur, Kazakh, Uzbek (Çantuu), Tuvan, and Dukha speakers, a branch of Tuvans, which are kept alive in Mongolia today. In the Mongolia Population and Housing Census National Report published in 2020; Among the ethnic groups living in Mongolia, according to the statistical data of 2010 and 2020, there are 2,354 Tuvans (0.1%), 208 people and Dukhas (Tsaatan) (0.4%) (Albayrak, 2022). In Mongolia, local ethnic groups have the legal right to receive education in their mother tongue. With the decision of the Mongolian State Parliament dated 24.10.2003, this

right is stated in Article 41 of the Mongolian Main Law and the Education Law as “Minorities have the right to receive education in their mother tongue and to leave their children as a legacy of tradition, history, culture and religion” (MUDHEEÇBTİ, 2009: Auyeskhana from 14, 2021).

Who are Mongolian Tuvians and Dukhas (Tsaatans)?

The Tuvan people (Johanson, 1998: 82-83), whose language they speak are in the Sayan group of Siberian Turkic languages, live in the Tuvan Republic of the Russian Federation, in the west and northwest of Mongolia and in the Xinjiang region in the northwest of China (Buran, Alkaya & Özeren, 2014: 188). On various maps included in the Atlas of Mongolian Ethnology and Linguistics (Rintchen, 1979), the names of Urianhay (Tsaatan), Urianhay (Altayn) are mentioned when marking the regions inhabited by Tuvan-origin peoples. An autonomous republic affiliated to the Russian Federation was established in 1944 and some of them continue their lives here. The Tuvans, though long associated with the Mongols, are essentially a dialect of the Turkic language (Gantulga, 2000; Nyambu, 1992; Tserendorj, 2002). When the living spaces from the past to the present are examined, today Tuvan speakers keep the standard Tuvan, northern dialect, northeastern dialect and southern dialects alive in various geographies (Ragagnin, 2011: 23-28). With regional differences and small groups forming a closed social structure within themselves, each dialect showed typological differences within itself. In the regions included in the borders of Mongolia, there are groups that are trying to survive, these are; Jargalant and Buyant sum related to Hovd aymağa; Tsengel sum related to Bayan-Ölgii aymağa; Zaamar sum related to Töv aymağa: The Tuvans, who live in Orhun in the Darhan-Uul region and Züünbüren in the Selenge region and Dukhas living in Tsagaannuur sum related to Hövsgöl aymağa that are Mongolia's smallest ethnic group, originally from Tuvans, called Tsaatan in the local language (Baatarhüü, 2017). There are three communities of Tuvan origin in Mongolia: 1. Altai Tuvans: Tuvans living around Bayan-Ölgii aymag are called Altai Tuvans (Taube, 1978). 2. Tuvans in the Hovd Region: They were migrated from the Altai to the Buyant Gol region in 1943 (Dolgormaa, 2019). 3. Dukhas (Tsaatans): In the northwest of the lake called Hövsgöl in northern Mongolia, the Dukhas (Azatkhan, 2019), who call themselves Dukha and were first introduced as Tsaatan (deer herders) in one of the local newspapers in 1936, are a less populated Tuvan group (Gül, 2007). In the studies of Mongolian scientist S. Badamhatan, who spent 11 months staying among the Dukhas in 1960, the Dukhas are divided into three according to their geographical location: 1. Dukhas migrating with reindeer in the eastern taiga, 2. Dukhas migrating with reindeer in the western taiga, 3. Dukha people living as sitters by the lake in the district center of Tsagaannuur (Azatkhan, 2019). The first

official sources of Dukha in Mongolia was with the census in 1935. In this census, approximately 400 people consisting of 40 families were recorded (Badamhatan, 1960: 20). Lake Hövsgöl, where the Dukha people live today, is 1030 km from the capital city of Ulaanbaatar. This region is 110 km from the Buryat Republic of the Russian Federation in the northeast and 100 km from the Tuvan Republic in the west. According to the data obtained by us; As of 2019, the total population of 520 families consisting of Tsagaannuur sumu Darhad, Tuvan, Khalkha and other nationalities is 1992 people. 126 of 882 citizens out of 236 families in the center of Sum are Tuvans. In the 2nd district, 418 of 1110 citizens out of 290 families are of Tuvan descent. In the Western and Eastern taiga, 208 people out of 135 families make their living with deer. Dukhas; Reindeer herders are the only ones living in triangular tents in Mongolia. They preserved their way of life and traditions that developed on the axis of traditional belief, and at the same time improved their communication with the Mongolian society and the modern world. However, due to the migrations that took place from time to time in the historical process, it has suffered from population loss. Due to their dwindling population and various economic and social reasons, it has become difficult for the young population to preserve their heritage languages and cultures, and according to recent studies, they have been included in the list of endangered languages.

Problem of the study

Linguistic, anthropological and ethnographic studies were carried out on bilingual Tuvans who live in Mongolia and are found to speak the dialect of the Tuvan language by origin. Apart from these, studies to teach them their mother tongue and to support them to live their language through younger generations are limited. In order to support the heritage language use of Tuvan and Dukha language speakers, who generally live dispersed in various regions, training programs were carried out by various institutions and international organizations from time to time. In this study, it was aimed to reflect the language teaching practices carried out for the young generation of Tuvan and Dukha origin living in the Northwest Mongolia region and to reveal the views of the Dukha, the reindeer herder living in the triangular tent, on the Dukha language, which is the heritage language shown in the endangered languages category, and the supportive education practices carried out. For this purpose, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. What are the support education practices carried out for the young generation of Tuvan and Dukha origin living in the Mongolia region?
2. What are the Dukha's views on Dukha, the heritage language shown in the endangered languages category, and the support programs carried out?

- 2.1 What are the views of Dukha children regarding their heritage languages and communication status in their living spaces?
- 2.2 What are the views of Dukha children on the level of knowing the heritage languages?
- 2.3 What are the views of Dukha children on the frequency of their use of heritage languages?
- 2.4 What are the views of Dukha children regarding language preferences in which they are good at communication skills?
- 2.5 What are the views of Dukha children regarding their preferred methods for learning heritage languages?

METHOD

Research Design

This research was designed as two-stage qualitative research methods, such as field research and case study. The data were obtained through the collection of information from primary sources and documentary screening. In addition, a case study, one of the qualitative research methods, was used to describe the mother tongue usage situations of bilingual Dukha children living in the region and to reveal their views on them. A case study is an in-depth study of one or more events, environments, programs, social groups, or other interconnected systems (Yin, 1994: 185).

Data Sources of the Research & Population and Sample

In the first part of the research, the data sources are the archival records made by the official authorities about the history, languages and cultures, education and language use of the Dukha and Tuvan-origin people in Mongolia, the study records made by research centers, ministries and various international organizations.

The research population consists of children aged 0-15 among a total population of 208 people of 135 Dukha families living in the eastern and western taiga region of Mongolia. According to the Mongolia Population and Housing Census National Report 2020 data, this age group, which constitutes 18-20% of the Dukha origin group, consists of 37 people on average. Easily accessible case sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was used in the research. The sample of the study consists of 6 bilingual Dukha children aged between 11 and 15 living in Mongolia. The sample size constitutes approximately 14% of the population. All of the children learned the Dukha language as the L1 language and simultaneously learned the official language of the state, Mongolian, both from their families and at school. Children receive education at Tsagaannuur Sum Primary School, affiliated with Hövsgöl Aymağa. Children participating in the study were coded as L1, L2, L3.... The information about the

Table 1: Information on Gender, Age, Place of Birth and Ethnicity of Dukha Children

<i>Learner</i>	<i>Gender</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Place of birth</i>	<i>Ethnicity</i>
L1	Female	15	Taiga	Mother-Father: Dukha
L2	Female	14	Taiga	Mother-Father: Dukha
L3	Female	15	Taiga	Mother-Father: Dukha
L4	Female	11	Taiga	Mother-Father: Dukha
L5	Female	11	Taiga	Mother-Father: Dukha
L6	Female	15	Taiga	Mother-Father: Dukha

Dukha children, who constitute the sample of the research, is as in Table 1.:

Data Collection Tools

In the field research part of the research, document analysis was carried out. In the case study part, personal information form and semi-structured interview form were used as data collection tools. In the personal information form prepared by the researchers, the age, gender, place of birth of the Dukha children, and the ethnic group of their parents were included. In the research, a semi-structured interview form was used in order to determine the students' use of heritage languages and their opinions. While creating the form, the information in the previous field research and the interviews with the administrators and teachers of the school where the Dukhas were educated were taken into consideration. The interview questions prepared in Mongolian took their final form in line with the opinions of a Mongolian Turkologist academician, a Turkish education specialist and a Tuvan origin teacher working at the relevant school. The questions in the interview form were:

- Is there anyone in your family who speaks Dukha? Who? •
- At what level do you know your heritage language?
- How often do you use your heritage language? • In which language (Mongol-Dukha/Tuvan) do you think your communication skills are better?
- Do you want to learn your heritage language better?
- What method would you prefer to use to learn your heritage language?

Data Collection and Analysis

The research was carried out within the scope of field studies to determine the Turkish language and culture elements in Northern and Western Mongolia, which were carried out by researchers in two separate times in March-April in 2017 and 2018. First of all, the living areas of Tuvas and Dukhas who were Turkish language speakers were visited, archive records were examined, interviews were conducted with the source people, and the recorded information about the Tuvas and Dukhas from the past to the present was compiled.

In the second stage, the taiga inhabited by the Dukhas, whose habitats were known before, and the Tsagaannuur Primary School, where the children were educated, were visited.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with the children in the town school where they were educated, accompanied by the prepared interview form. In the interviews, Mongolian was used as the medium language. In line with the consent of the students and their families, video recordings were taken under the supervision of the school administration and teachers and the data was transferred to the computer environment. Content analysis was used in the analysis of the data obtained from the interviews. Accordingly, the interviews were first written down by the researchers and then translated from Mongolian. In the research, each question was coded according to its content, and each question was evaluated within itself. The analyzes were made by two researchers, the consistency between them was checked and the findings were presented and interpreted in tables.

FINDINGS

Educational status and language teaching practices of Tuva and Dukha people living in Mongolia

Mongolian researchers Badamhatan (1960; 1962; 1996), Şagdarsüren (1974) and Bold (2019) as well as names such as the turcologists E. Taube (1978; 1981a; 1981b; 1981c), A. Wheeler (1999; 2000), E. Ragagnin (2011) have a significant role in the introduction of language and cultural materials of Tuvas living in Mongolia. "Anthropologist R. E. Akıncı (2009), who went to the habitat of the Tsengel Tuvas and conducted field research, and S. Küçüküstel (2012), who conducted research on the living area of the Dukhas, compiled the materials that would be the subject of language and culture studies firsthand" (Albayrak, 2022) and studies that were compiled with projects at various times were supported (Aydemir 2018). All these studies were generally carried out in order to determine the distribution of peoples in the historical process, the language and cultural materials they carried to the present day, and to reveal the current state of the languages. Within the scope of the field research carried out, it was revealed that recently in Mongolia, both local governments and externally supported institutions have carried out projects to preserve and sustain the heritage languages of Tuvas and Dukhas among them. We can briefly describe them as follows:

- The initiative for Tuvas living in Tsengel sum to receive education in heritage languages started in 1989 with two teachers studying in the Tuvan capital Kizil and in addition to Mongolian and Kazakh schools in Tsengel, Tuva Primary School, which would be the first and only Tuvan education in Mongolia, was established in 1991. (Tiva Ege Sarguul of Tsengel Sumuz). Tuvas receive their 4-year primary education

at Tuva School. Kazakhs and Tuvans, who have been co-educated together since the fifth year, are separated in the mother tongue Tuvan and Kazakh lessons. During the MOTUV-DER Project carried out in 2014, it was determined that the school had 12 teachers and 176 students, and 96 of the male students were boarding students (Aydemir, 2018: 655 cited in Albayrak, 2022). Between 1990-1993 and 2002-2005, Tuvan was taught as an elective foreign language course for three hours a week in local boarding schools in Mongolia within the framework of the Mongolian-Tuva Education Project (Ragagnin, 2012).

- Philologist Mira Bavuu-Syuryun and Aelita Salchak from the Tuvan Philology and General Linguistics Department and Khiys Gansukh, a member of the Mongolian Ministry of Science and Education Institute of Education, visited Bayan-Ölgiy, Hovd, Töv aymag regions in Mongolia on 13-27 September 2012 for language training in Tuvans and attempted to address their problems. In this context, the Linguistic And Psycho-Pedagogical Basis Of The Primary School Model For The Children Of Dispersive Groups Of Ethnic Tuvans In Mongolia (Linguistic and Psychopedagogical Basis of the Primary School Model for the Children of the Scattered Groups of Tuvans in Mongolia), donated by the Russian Foundation for Basic Research, was carried out. The main aim of the project is to create the most suitable primary education model for the multilingual and multicultural community, to determine the educational content for mother tongue, mother tongue literature and reading lessons in primary schools in terms of dialectic characteristics, and to provide more language education. Within the scope of the project, a dialogue was established with the relevant institutions and ministries in Mongolia and a mutual agreement was reached.
- The Center for Circumpolar Studies (CCS) has attempted to support the Dukhas to keep their language and culture alive in the taiga, their living space, with a project called The Mongolian Tuvan Survival Project in 2013. In the taiga, where nomadic reindeer herders gather in large family groups for the short summer term, they collaborated with a Tuvan native teacher, Oyunbadam, to create a traditional language programme. The language program will promote the use of heritage language in the cultural environment and will help transfer language and culture from the older generation to the younger generation. This language program is designed to serve approximately 60-65 students between the ages of 8-15. Vocabulary and grammar were taught to the students and they were encouraged to use the Tuvan language in their daily communication in the taiga. The Ministry of Education of Mongolia has approved to provide support for the program, in which a documentary film crew will also be present.
- The Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TİKA), of Turkish origin, carried out the Tent School Project within the scope of Educational Materials and Equipment Assistance to Tuva Turks. With the project, a total of 221 Tuvan children in 393 households in Buyant district of Hovd Aymağa were trained in the course center organized in the form of a tent to teach their mother tongue in 2014 (TIKA, 2014).
- In 2013, with the support of UNICEF, the Mongolian government and authorized institutions published a program and circular for bilingual Kazakh and Tuvan primary and secondary school students: Hos Heleer Surgalt Yavuuldag Yörönhii Bolovsrolin Surguuliin Ex Helnii Surgaltin Hötölbör, Suraltsahuin Udirdamj, Bolovşin: Bolovşin , Tuva Hel, (Mother Tongue Curriculum and Circular for Bilingual Primary and Secondary Schools, Education Level: Primary; Course: Kazakh, Tuvan), Mongolia Education Institute and UNICEF, Ulaanbatar, 2013.
- In 2014, UNICEF carried out a project called Supporting Education of Tuvan Ethnic Minority Children in Mongolia for Tuvan students in Mongolia. According to 2014 data, there are 1600 Canvases living in Tsengel sum connected to Bayan-Ölgiy aymağa. Within the scope of the project, a new alphabet was designed and textbooks in Tuvan language were prepared for students who were trying to receive language education with the lecture notes previously prepared by local teachers and the materials brought from the Tuva Republic of Russia. However, due to the dialect difference and some cultural differences in the books brought from here, it was necessary to prepare new books by local experts and teachers. The books were prepared by the Education Research Unit for Ethnic Minority Children with the support of UNICEF, and local teachers also provided assistance in this regard. The series consisted of the books named Tiva Dil 1, Tiva Dil 2, Tiva Dil 3, Tiva Dil 4 and Tiva Dil 5 for grade 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5th grade children, and a teacher's book for grades 2-5. In addition, with the support of UNICEF, the training program, teaching materials and teacher guides were prepared.
- In 2016, Tuvan textbooks named Çuruk, Tekhnologi I, Kijizidilgyelig Bilig I, Kiji Bolgaş HüreeI for courses such as Mathematics, Citizenship, Human and Nature, Painting and Technology were published by the Mongolian Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (Albayrak, 2022).

- In 2016, the event called Samgaldai (Travel with Samgaldai) was held in the taiga where Dukhas live, within the scope of the Educational Quality Renewal Project conducted by the Education Institute of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science of Mongolia. The participant Dukha children were taught the song Samgaldai, and a dance show was performed accompanied by the song. During the activity of learning about the living space of the school, we made a trip to the taiga, introduced the taiga life to other students, organized a song and poetry competition, etc. activities were carried out.

As of 2020, the relevant ministries and training centers for the education of Kazakh and Tuvan bilingual children in Mongolia have increased their work and developed interactive teaching materials in addition to the programs and textbooks that have been made before (Albayrak, 2022). Interactive lessons offered in Mongolian, Tuvan, Kazakh, as well as in sign language, with the support of the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, by the Ministry of Education and Science and the Education Information Technologies Center, and at all levels, from 1st to 12th grades have been developed in all units. The program, which allows students to receive distance education in their mother tongue, can be accessed online (Albayrak, 2022).

Findings on the views of bilingual Dukha children on their heritage language Dukha and the educational programs that are carried out

In this part of the study, the findings obtained from the semi-structured interviews conducted with the Dukha children at their school are presented:

In the interviews, the first question asked to Dukha children was: “Is there anyone in your family who speaks Tuvan/Dukha? Who?” and the findings are shown in Table 2:

Table 2 indicates that the parents of 3 children prefer Dukha language as the language of communication. Regarding this, L2 expressed that “At home, my parents know the Dukha language well and always speak it.”, L3 stated that “My parents speak it.”

It is argued that the whole family of 3 children communicate in the Dukha language. Therefore, the use of heritage language within the family is more prevalent. The opinions of the

Table 2: Findings on the Status of Dukha Children to Communicate in Heritage Language in Their Living Spaces

Code	L	f
Mother-father	L2, L3, L4	3
The whole family	L1, L6	2
Neighborhoods and adults	L5	1

children are as follows: “My parents and elders speak Dukha” (L4), “My whole family speaks at home.” (L1). One child among them stated that the language used was Tuvan: “Everyone in my family speaks Tuvan.” (L6)

Only one child stated that he communicates mostly with older people in the taiga in the heritage language. “Especially old people speak Dukha all the time.” (L5).

Secondly, Dukha children were asked at what level they knew the heritage languages, and the findings are shown in Table 3:

Table 3 indicates that 2 of the children have no problem of understanding in the heritage languages due to communication in the Dukha language in their families and they have the chance to speak enough to express themselves. The views of these children, who can understand and speak the heritage languages well, are as follows: “My family speaks it at home and I can communicate with them. I can speak.” (L1)

“Everyone in my family speaks Tuvan, and I speak Tuvan when I’m with them.” (L6)

Three of the children were described as being able to understand and speak at a moderate level, as they stated that they could speak enough to communicate when they deemed necessary.

“I can express myself when necessary. I speak little.” (L2), “I can talk to close people and elders, but not very well. I can understand them.” (L5), “I can understand when my elders speak.” (L3)

Although only 1 child could speak limitedly, he stated that he did not actually know the heritage language: “Actually, I do not know, I speak very little.” (L4).

The children were asked how often they used their heritage language and the findings are shown in Table 4:

Table 4 demonstrates that 2 children stated that they usually communicate in their mother tongue in the taiga and when they are with their elders: “Because my family speaks that language at home, I also speak it when I am at home.” (L1), “Everyone in my family speaks Tuvan, and I usually speak Tuvan when I’m with them. But we speak Mongolian at school.” (L6)

Table 3: Findings Regarding the Level of Knowledge of Heritage Languages of Dukha Children

Code	L	f
High level of understanding and speaking	L1, L6	2
Intermediate level of understanding and speaking	L2, L3, L5	3
Low level of understanding and speaking	L4	1

Table 4: Findings Regarding the Frequency of Dukha Children’s Use of Heritage Languages

Code	L	f
Generally	L1, L6	2
At certain times and with certain people	L2, L3, L4, L5	4

It is highlighted that 4 children communicate in Dukha at special times such as holidays or when family elders want to communicate with them in their own language, and they also speak Mongolian. The children’s opinions are as follows:

“I speak it little to my parents when necessary.” (L2)

“I listen when my elders speak, but most of the time I speak Mongolian.” (L3)

“Often, old people speak at festivals and ceremonies. I speak a little, but I also answer in Mongolian” (L4).

“I can speak to close people and the old, the old always speak Tuvan among themselves. We understand, but we also give our answers in Mongolian.” (L5)

Accordingly, it is possible to note that children’s time to communicate in heritage languages is mostly limited to dialogues within the family and traditional activities in the taiga where time is spent with adults at certain times.

Another question directed to Dukha children is “Which language (Mongolian-Tuvan/Dukha) do you think your communication skills are better in?” and the findings obtained from the students’ answers are shown in Table 5:

Table 5 indicates that 5 of the children think that they are better at communicating in Mongolian, while only 1 of them think that it is easier for them to communicate in Dukha. The views of the students on the situation are as follows:

“I go to school every day. We speak Mongolian more and better.” (L2)

“I am fifteen years old and have not learned much in Dukha until now. We always speak Mongolian. My mother tongue is not very different from Mongolian, so I don’t find it difficult.” (L3)

“I understand and speak better if they speak Mongolian on Eid in the taiga.” (L4)

“The elders speak Dukha among themselves, but we speak Mongolian. I do not speak Dukha well. If someone asks us in Dukha, I will answer in Mongolian.” (L5)

“I know Tuvan well, but Mongolian is easier for me. We learn Mongolian at school, but I would also like to learn Tuvan better.” (L6)

The opinion of the child, who says that it is easier for him to communicate in Dukha language, is as follows: “My family speaks Dukha at home, but we learn Mongolian at school. I think the Dukha language is easier.” (L1)

Bilingual Dukha children were asked whether they would like to learn their heritage languages better, and if so, in which way they would prefer to learn them. First of all, all of the

Table 5: Findings Regarding Preferences For the Language That Dukha Children Have Good Communication Skills in

Code	L	f
Mongolian	L2, L3, L4, L5, L6	5
Tuvan-Dukha	L1	1

Table 6: Findings Concerning the Preferred Methods of Dukha Children to Learn Heritage Languages

Code	L	f
With courses at summer camp	L1, L2, L3, L4,	4
With elective courses at school	L5, L6	2

students stated that they wanted to learn the heritage languages better. Their views on the question of what method they prefer to use for this are presented in Table 6.

According to Table 6, 4 of the Dukha children stated that they would like to take language courses in the camps to be held in the summer. This shows that children have been positively affected by the summer camp activities carried out within the scope of projects that support the learning of heritage languages in the past. The children’s opinions are as follows:

“We would like to speak Dukha with the children. We were able to talk in the lessons during the summer course.” (L1)

“There was a summer camp at the school and I attended it. I learned new things on that project.” (L2)

“I learned a bit in school and then summer camp was organized. It would be great to attend it again.” (L3)

“It was nice to take lessons at the camp. We also learned traditional things. We learned to sing in Tuvan and it was not difficult. So we learned the culture as well.” (L4)

2 students stated that they wanted to learn by taking elective Tuvan lessons at school: “We were taking Tuvan lessons at school, and we learned Tuvan song and dance at the camp. It’s good to learn at school.” (L5), “We will learn better if there are lessons at school.” (L6)

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In Mongolia, which has hosted many deep-rooted civilizations of the past, various ethnic groups have been influenced by each other’s language and culture throughout their intertwined lives with the Mongols on a long historical journey. Although they maintain this unity within the borders of today’s Mongolia, when we look at other ethnic language speakers such as Kazakhs, who have a relatively large population and whose living spaces strengthen their unity, Tukhas and Dukhas have not been able to escape from being in the endangered language group as a result of their decreasing population and language changes. The young population moving away from the living area, especially for economic reasons, also accelerates the decrease in the number of speakers of the language day by day with the change in language preferences. According to Ragagnin’s (2011) findings, among the Dukhas who knew and used their mother tongue before, bilingualism has increased recently.

A significant point in the literature review is that observations and interviews carried out within the scope of the field research of this study is the positive language policy of the Mongolian government and its supportive attitude towards

communities that try to keep their heritage languages alive, and that in the last two decades, some local minority language training activities have been carried out both institutionally and within the country as well as the international agreements made. Especially the recognition of their ethnic identities, their registration, and the increase of support projects within the basic needs, which they have been trying to maintain with limited opportunities in certain regions in the recent period, have enabled the revitalization of life in the region and the revival of reindeer breeding, which is one of the main characteristic features of the Dukhas.

It is in question that the course teaching materials in the mother tongue are developed with local teachers according to the life styles and language characteristics of Mongolian Tuvas, apart from those in the Tuva Republic of Russia. In addition, depending on the development of today's distance education systems, it is important that the interactive course teaching materials developed for the Kazakh and Tuva population in the country are prepared in both Mongolian, Kazakh and Tuvan, in terms of enabling the young people to be included in the mother tongue education processes more easily.

With the data obtained in the case study part of the study, the use of the heritage languages of the younger generation and their perspectives on the languages are presented. The areas of use of the heritage languages of the Dukhas suggest that it is limited to the family or taiga at home. It has been observed that while parents and people over a certain age prefer communication in the mother tongue, the younger generation is bilingual in Tuvan-Mongolian. It is seen that children have a command of their mother tongue at a level to understand them because Tuvan is spoken in their families and they prefer Dukha for communication in the taiga, which is their living space, but they cannot learn their language adequately because there is no communication in Dukha language when it is not needed. In his study with Dukhas, Ragagnin (2011: 31-32) stated that Dukhas around the age of 30 are bilingual, those between the ages of 20-30 speak Dukha and Darhat Mongolian. He added that even if 15-20 year-old people have a good command of Dukha, they mostly use Mongolian in communication, while those aged 15 and under speak only Darhat Mongolian and have a passive Dukha language. According to the findings obtained in our study, it coincides with the fact that the children mostly prefer Mongolian as the language of communication, even though Tuvan / Dukha is spoken in the family or in their close circles. However, it can be said that those aged 15 and under are more positive in Dukha communication with relatively supportive training, even though they mainly speak Mongolian.

The results of the studies on the efforts to maintain their heritage languages besides the dominant official language in the areas where the communities of the past lived their lives as ethnic local groups indicated that the state language policies

and educational practices are effective. Yağmur and Kroon (2003) observed that Bashkirs, who are Turkish language speakers living in the Russian Federation, are evaluated according to their backgrounds and living areas, and that there is a strong language revitalization movement in the interviews held with education experts and policy makers. The study argues that that Dukha children have developed an opinion on transferring the heritage language to the education environment at school, except for the use of heritage language in their immediate environment and living areas, and this is mostly due to the effect of the support education projects.

Tse (2001), in one of the studies that demonstrates the importance of parental and close environment support in the process of learning and maintaining the heritage languages of bilingual children, revealed that among minority language speakers in the USA, those who have parents who help them form a social identity that includes their heritage languages and cultures appears to have a high level of perceived language vitality resulting from institutions and peers. While Szecsi and Szilagy (2012) describe in their studies that families benefit from many resources such as television, DVDs, social networks to support heritage language development, Mu and Dooley (2015) mention the contribution of technology and community schools. Similarly, in this study, it was seen that cultural activities, summer events and support education programs with family participation aroused a desire to learn the heritage language on children.

CONCLUSION

When evaluated according to the findings of the study, the support given to local ethnic groups is limited so that the demographic movement in Mongolia does not create a basis for cultural degeneration and language change, and the population unity, which is provided by increasing the welfare of the young population in the basic living areas, for purposes such as education and job opportunities. However, adding education projects to heritage language support projects, providing technology-based and distance education opportunities are positive steps taken to teach heritage languages to the young population.

The study suggests that the use of Tuvan / Dukha language as a ceremonial and holiday language at certain times in the interviews with Dukha children is symbolic. The fact that young parents prefer Dukha as the language of communication among them at the family level, although it does not directly provide a good language learning environment, provides the opportunity to know their language to the extent of intelligibility, while on the other hand, it points out that the mother tongue remains in the background as the language of communication. Accordingly, it is possible to note that in the taiga, which is the living space of children, parents and older people constantly communicate in their mother tongue,

therefore it is likely that they create a mother tongue learning environment for young people even if they do not know it very well.

Despite all this, the fact that the younger generation develops a positive perspective on their mother tongue and expresses that they want to learn better is an indication that the mother tongue support trainings that have been launched recently have a positive effect and thus are sustainable. In this way, it is essential to ensure that they lead a healthy life in their living space and to prevent cultural distribution, together with the language.

When evaluated in general, these languages are in danger of extinction due to the fact that there is almost no use of heritage languages except for the taiga region, which is far from the center, thereby creating a closed society structure, the population is dispersed due to the abandonment of young people after the education and training processes, and therefore the language change increases at the same rate. It has been seen that it does not offer an effective solution to the situations of being.

SUGGESTIONS

In the line with the results of the research, the following recommendations are possible to put forward:

- Tuvas and Dukhas as ethnic language speakers in terms of language usage area and continuity in Mongolia, as well as other groups in the region, need support to maintain their language and distinctive cultural characteristics in multilingual environments. In this context, it is recommended to shed light on language maintenance and language shift situations by examining the factors affecting language use and individuals' perceptions of the social conditions that affect them, as well as investigating the sociological and psychological aspects of language, ethnicity and intergroup relations.
- Life support projects are required to be developed in order to ensure that Tuva and Dukha youth, as members of the society whose populations are decreasing, lead a healthy life in their living spaces with the use of heritage language and to prevent cultural distribution. In these processes, it is important to take especially parental support into consideration.
- It is recommended to increase the support given to the attempts of the Mongolian government to develop bilingual education programs and to design supportive teaching materials compatible with both print and distance education, which has been initiated with various international cooperation agreements, and their usability is required to be expanded.

- There appears to be a need for a good teacher training and development framework for children and youth to develop a good bilingual education system, an effective Mongolian as a second language program and a transition language strategy and to meet the demands. In order not to be exposed to the negative effects of bilingualism, Tuvan and Dukha children should be arranged in a way that allows them to reach a certain level in both heritage languages and Mongolian as a state language from the first steps in the family and formal education processes. As a matter of fact, the inadequacy of one of the two languages at the employment stage will cause language change for young people.

LIMITATION

The study was carried out with a limited number of students consisting of 11-15 years old student children due to the low population of the mentioned community and the dispersion of settlements in order to determine the heritage language education and usage status of Tuvas and Dukhas living in Mongolia. It is recommended to carry out further studies by applying various ethnolinguistic vitality scales on all groups of Tuvan descent and different age ranges living in Mongolia.

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