

THE STRUCTURES OF DIALECT AS THE FOUNDING ELEMENT OF SOCIAL IDENTITY: THE CASE OF BURSA CITY

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Abstract: Identity is a concept that consists of many concrete and abstract elements, both individually and socially. Individuals form groups emotionally and consciously within the framework of this concept and build different social identities. Social identity brings individuals together within their groups around similarities and differences, completing it as an integral part of their own self. Social identity constructs individuals and groups in societies by representing them with many character traits and self-creation motivation. Language is one of the most important characteristics in self-motivation and representation in the social identities of individuals and groups. Spoken language and its varieties (dialects) shape the identity of the individual throughout their life from birth and help them to reveal their subjectivity within the framework of a separate social group identity. Spoken language and its varieties (accent/idiom/dialect) shape the identity of the individual throughout their life and help them to reveal their subjectivity within the framework of social group identity. The subject of this study is the status of the dialect element as one of these preserved features constituting and developing the social identity of the individual in the city of Bursa. Data were collected through field research, using the qualitative analysis method. As the structure of dialects is most intensively observed in villages, the sample consisted of people selected only from the villages of Bursa city, mountain villages in particular. The people chosen in terms of representation ability were individuals with different characteristics pertaining to education, age, and occupational groups. The linguistic features and structure of the dialect used in Bursa are not examined in the study. The aim of the study is to reveal, with the qualitative field study conducted with the source persons, that the social identity approach is one of the representations that builds the individual and society.

Keywords: social identity, group, Bursa, mountain villages, dialect

INTRODUCTION

Societies are formed and developed by the intertwining and interaction of many political, social, economic, sociological, and individual factors. With this formation, the environment in which individuals live at a local and regional level, and their common identity features are formed through the characteristics of this environment, the emotions and dynamics shared, and the differences/similarities from the individual level to society level. These differences/similarities separate the individuals from one another as well as from other groups sharing or not sharing the same environment. This situation also creates social identities of individuals in common groups.

All kinds of shared concrete or abstract elements are effective in individuals' feeling of difference/similarity in the conditions they live as groups and establish a separate unity within these differences/similarities. Among these elements having various types, such as geography, history, culture, religion, economy, language, ethnicity, and gender, some of the most important ones regarding the formation and feeling of a distinct identity from the individual towards the group are the differences/similarities in accents, idioms, and dialects that vary according to language and language structure.

The concept of social identity, which emerged in social sciences during the 1970s, is an important scale of analysis for explaining the situations in which sciences of psychology and sociology intertwine; it also shapes the relationship between the individual and their group. It should not be ignored that different identities have emerged in consequence of different stimuli as situations change within the framework of social identity theory. There may also be difficulties in distinguishing the group and role identities from personal identity in social identity theory. However, we need to understand how groups, roles, and personal identities are related in order to construct a general theory of the self (Burke & Stets 2000: 228–231).

In this context, the most important innovation that the study will bring to the field is that individuals reveal their social identity formation with their own expressions in face-to-face interviews.¹ In this context, gender diversity, age groups, geographical breadth, educational status, and occupational distributions were created in the field studies within a very wide framework. The interviewees were chosen from female/male in gender distribution, young/middle-aged/old in age distribution, village-neighborhood / city center scale in geographical distribution, from basic to higher education in educational distribution, and from all kinds of walks of life (housewife / private sector / public servant) in occupational distribution. Special words such as *Dağlı* (a term used for villagers living on the outskirts of Uludağ) and *Yörük* (a Turkic nomadic

clan), and special definitions uttered by the source persons in the interviews to express their identity and belonging are emphasized in the interview material because it was observed that the dialect structure of the Bursa province distinguished their own social identities from the identities of other provinces and emphasized their differences.

The questions in the fieldwork mainly focused on two topics. One of these topics is the language used by the interviewees and their sense of belonging, and the other is how their language affects their sense of difference or similarity with their environment. In this context, the private lives of the interviewees were not discussed, assuming that it would create a different sense of belonging and self-esteem for them. As in every study, two scales were used in the questions since limitations are encountered in every situation within this framework.

THE CONCEPT AND FORMATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

John Turner, Rupert Brown and Henri Tajfel, who conducted studies that form the basis of the concept of social identity, assumed that individuals are motivated to achieve a positive *self* and that the self-esteem of the individual is strengthened by the positive evaluation of the group to which they belong. According to them, people evaluate their own groups by comparing them with those of others. Accordingly, individuals provide a positive group identity that increases their self-esteem by comparing their in-groups with some related out-groups. The social identity of an individual is formed and shaped by the contribution of social groups to which they perceive to belong. Thus, in general, individuals are motivated to positively create differences/similarities with the in-group and some out-groups related to themselves in order to achieve a positive social identity (Turner & Brown & Tajfel 1979: 190).

Turner, Brown and Tajfel's greatest contributions to the field in their social identity studies can be found in the concept itself. This concept creates a bridge between the individual and the social sphere and guides the social-cultural reality to explain the behavior of the individual. Unlike Freudian and other explanations for using identity as a means of explaining human sociability, Turner, Brown and Tajfel's definition sees inter-group ties as the primary feature of the nature of social identity. Hence, the things we do and the emotions we feel as group members consist of meanings in social areas as well as our individual characteristics (Reicher & Spears & Haslam 2010).

Social identity theory, coined by Tajfel, is basically a social psychological theory that explains group processes and behaviors. Compared with other social structures, psychological theories and social group behaviors and feelings of

belonging to the group are analyzed together. As a result, a definition of a group and different levels of representation of self-classification are provided. With this theory, an individual's multiple group identity is tried to be revealed through the one that is more specific than the others (Kaplánová 2017: 140–141).

According to Demirtaş (2003: 129–130), the most important assumptions of social identity theory are listed as follows. First, individuals classify and identify themselves as a separate group. Thus, their social identity is formed by this identification. Second, the individuals compare their group with other groups and accept this as a distinctive situation. Third, individuals perceive their groups differently from other groups by comparison, and at the same time engage in group favoritism. Fourth, the characteristics of the group that individuals belong to cause the individuals to view their social identity positively or negatively.

In social identity theory, there is a different structure beyond the individual characteristics of a person and the relationships they establish with others as individuals. This structure is a new identity that has been given a different shape by creating an individual identity together with the group membership. However, the most important distinctive feature of this identity is that it is established within the consciousness of the group and transforms into a psychologically sociological structure and creates a different identity for the person (Demirtaş 2003: 130–131). In regard to relationships people establish with others, it is possible to talk about the existence of two basic tendencies:

On the one hand, try to resemble others, integrate with them, be like them, try not to fall short, and on the other hand, try to differ from them, not to be the same with them, to be more advanced or superior to them. In terms of individuals, groups can be thought of as a place of both similarity and differentiation. In fact, the differentiation of individuals from others is a social phenomenon as is also their integration. Within the framework of social identity theory, human similarities and differences can be examined together. The identity of an individual, a group, or a society means that that individual, that group, or that society is different from others. (Bilgin 2007 as cited in Sürgevil 2008: 114)

There is an innate tendency for people to evaluate themselves and their own characteristics (ideas, abilities, developments, etc.). When people are not able to obtain objective information about this assessment, they prefer to compare themselves with others who are similar to them. Comparing oneself with someone similar is preferred because it is thought to be more meaningful and more informative than comparing with a very different person (Pelled & Eisenhardt & Xin 1999 as cited in Sürgevil 2008: 115).

In this connection, firstly, most people act consistently and meaningfully by referring to shared norms, values, and understandings as well as unique beliefs. Secondly, besides the psychological dynamics related to social identity, they define themselves as group members and do not solely think within the framework of individual needs. In other words, social identity and social processes exist as a reality together with individual identity and processes. At this point, social identities have an emotional value beyond self-perception. To the extent that people define themselves as members of a group, they attribute their dignity to the fate of the group (Reicher & Spears & Haslam 2010).

Turner, Brown and Tajfel (1979: 202) state that, in social identity theory, there is a form of favoritism within the group that goes beyond the economic interests of the in-group. According to them, it is difficult to explain such behavior with competition or hostility based on conflicts of interest. Similarly, this kind of intra-group favoritism also represents in-group bias in terms of going beyond the “objective” needs of the situation. The effects of the out-group variable suggest that social comparison may be the underlying process. The desire for positive social identity may, therefore, represent an autonomous factor in intra-group discrimination, causally different from functional relationships among groups.

In this regard, three concepts should not be considered independently from each other in social identity theory. These processes constitute social identity as a whole. They are social categorization, social comparison, and intra-group favoritism (Gülcan & Ergin 2020: 34).

According to Cem Gülcan and Tuba Çevik Ergin, social categorization is the situation where the individual puts their group first and looks at everyone outside as the *other*. In short, the individual includes the individuals around them either in the inner group they belong to or the outer group they do not belong to. Although usually this categorization takes place in terms of language, religion, race, age, and gender, it can be in countless different dimensions. The individual constantly makes efforts to compare themselves and their community with their competitors. Social comparison means that an individual operates this process not through themselves but through the community they belong to. Regarding intra-group favoritism, individuals create a social identity through the groups they are members of, and if there is a negative evaluation in the inner groups, the social identity of the individual will also be negatively affected by this situation. The individual enters some kind of mental conflict. The process that prevents this is exactly intra-group favoritism (Gülcan & Ergin 2020: 34–35).

Individuals show a tendency to compare their own group with other groups. Other groups in the social environment provide a basis for the individual to evaluate the position of their own group. The position of the group that the individual is a member of is determined through social comparison (in-group/

out-group comparison) made with other similar groups. This comparison is related to values attributed to certain behaviors and qualities (strength, skills, skin color, etc.) (Dadak & Demir 2020: 13).

It is possible to point out three mental processes related to the person being a part of an inner group. Social classification is one of the social-cognitive processes that explain the social identity phenomenon. Individuals tend to classify themselves and others as members of various social groups. This classification was made by Mert Gürlek and Muharrem Tuna as follows:

– *Social group: refers to the sum of individuals who perceive themselves as members of the same social group. Therefore, the criterion for group membership is not the frequency of interaction among groups or independent goals, but rather the individual's self or others' identification as a member of a group.*

– *Social identification: refers to adopting and identifying with the identity of the group in which the person classifies themselves. Identification occurs as a result of similarities and differences.*

– *Social comparison: refers to comparing the group, with which a person identifies themselves, with other groups. Social identities are not only defined but are also compared. The person looks for distinctive elements between their own group and other groups. Positive distinguishing features for the inner group indicate a positive social identity for group members.* (Gürlek & Tuna 2018: 41–42)

Therefore, according to social identity theory, groups identify with their own groups and form their own identities with in-group favoritism against the backdrop of different characteristics. Beyond that, they excel with groups they feel belonging to because of their distinctive aspects.

Social identities are an important part of the self-concept. When it is thought that it belongs to a group, ways to gain positive emotions from that group are sought. The way to reach these positive emotions is to distinguish the in-group positively from other groups. Thus, a positive self-desire is formed in our environment. In fact, the uncertainty of differentiation and anxiety are felt in such a case, which leads to criticism that social identity theory also causes exclusion, prejudice, and discrimination. However, this theory is a good way to evaluate motivations in explaining the social world. This study is also considered in this context (Harwood 2020: 3).

Social identity basically provides a definition of who a person is in terms of the defining characteristics of a category to which one feels belonging. People have a repertoire of separate categories of memberships that differ from the

self-concept in relative overall importance. Each of these memberships is represented in the mind of the individual member as a social identity that both defines and prescribes it. Social identities are not only descriptive and prescriptive but are also evaluative. They provide an assessment – often widely shared or consensual – of a social category, and thus, of its members, relative to other relevant social categories (Hogg & Terry & White 1995: 259– 260).

As discussed above, there are many tangible and intangible elements that compose social identity and explain behaviors. These qualities can be various material and moral elements. Many examples may be given, such as language, religion, ethnicity, gender, age, economic, political, and social status, including language and accent, idioms, and dialects spoken by people. Accents, idioms, and dialects arising from the structure of languages within groups speaking the same language appear as a dynamic that creates and develops the social group identity of people in every field and area. An important feature of social identity theory is that it formally expresses group members' behavior to explain it. For this reason, the sample representation was chosen over the language in the study.

THE RELATIONSHIP OF SOCIAL IDENTITY WITH LANGUAGE AND DIALECT

According to the Turkish Language Association's dictionary (TDK 2022), dialect "is a spoken language specific to certain settlements or classes, which may differ in sound, form, syntax, and meaning within the same language". According to Muharrem Ergin, a prominent figure of Turcology, "[d]ialect is the name given to small branches of a language that are present in an accent and based on differences in pronunciation, and the speeches of various regions and cities of a country that differ from each other in terms of utterance. There are differences of voice (utterance) in dialects, voice and shape in accents, and word differences besides voice and shape differences in the idiom that falls within word field" (Demir 2002).

Dialects constitute an important area of a language, which is the subject of this study. Dialects as live spoken forms of languages have a special value in that they contain all varieties of the native language. On the other hand, a written language exhibits standard features. This language is edited, designed, and formatted by writers. However, dialects are spontaneously created natural languages in an instance during a speech, away from fiction. In this context, the producers of written language texts are "writers" (literate, intellectuals), whereas dialects are "speakers". Therefore, in linguistics research, text data

containing the speech styles of dialects have a special place because they have the ability to represent the native language better than the written language texts (Akar 2016: 170).

There are many dialects in a written language. Depending on the geographical distance and the intensity of cultural relations, many language interactions occur among them. Hence, dialects strengthen themselves and diversify at the same time by exchanging words with each other. In this respect, they also contribute to the enrichment of the general language (ibid.).

The dialects that merge or show a significant familiarity in terms of *sound, shape, structure, vocabulary, syntax, and emphasis*, which are called the six basic units of the language in the classifications of language, idiom, and dialect, are identified and grouped according to their similarities and differences. Considering these criteria, world languages have been classified based on their origins and structures. As different languages are classified in this manner, idioms and dialects of a particular language can also be classified in terms of various features. As mentioned above, it has been determined that geographical aspects and names, settlement names, tribe and clan names, phonetic characteristics, or language features in general are used in language classifications (Buran 2011: 41).

The first scientific study on the dialects of Turkey Turkish is V. A. Maksimov's work titled *Опыт исследования диалектов в Худавендигаре и Карамании* (Opyt issledovaniia dialektov v Khudavendigare i Karamanii 'An Experience of Researching Dialects in Khudavendigar and Karamani') published in 1867. In 1896, twenty-nine years after Maksimov's study, Ignas Kunos classified the dialects of Turkey Turkish for the first time. The dialects of Turkey Turkish have been categorized by researchers such as Ignas Kunos, Ahmed Caferoğlu, Tahsin Banguoğlu, E. Piet Kral, Tooru Hayashi, and Leyla Karahan. While only Anatolian dialects were categorized in some of these classifications (Kunos, Caferoğlu, Karahan), some of them included Rumelian dialects in their classifications (Banguoğlu, Kral). Apart from these general categorizations, regional classifications were also made by some researchers, such as Gyula Nemeth, György Hazai, Zeynep Korkmaz, Hayashi and Ahmet Bican Ercilasun. While Nemeth and Hazai classified Rumelian dialects, Korkmaz categorized southwest Anatolian dialects, whereas Hayashi grouped the dialects of the Black Sea region (Karadeniz) and Ercilasun sorted Eastern Anatolian dialects. Many researchers have also made classifications on province and district levels (Buran 2011: 42–52).

The concept of Anatolian dialects, which is the subject of this study, refers to the dialects of the written language spoken with different sounds. The Anatolian dialects that started to form in Anatolia from the thirteenth century are

languages based on the Oghuz language in terms of their linguistic features but have features such as sound, structure, and form, which are different from standard language and can be noticed in spoken language. Dialects exhibiting structures different from a regular language are (local) languages that are spoken in regions with a small population and provide understanding between limited and homogeneous social groups. Although dialects are languages spoken among homogeneous groups, they can still exhibit different features within themselves. The language of the ethnic groups settled in the same region may change over time due to factors such as migration, external marriage, education, etc., resulting in the formation of a separate dialect region within an existing dialect region, called dialect stratification (Akar 2003: 136). According to Erdem (2008: 511), there are only a few studies on dialects in Anatolia, and even the studies examining primary long vowels include many unidentified words.

Language and dialect studies have been carried out by researchers in the city of Bursa in the Marmara region for a prolonged time. Before moving on to the influence of dialects in the formation of social identity, which is the main subject of the study, it would be worthwhile to discuss the subject of the dialect of Bursa City. Further on, an assessment based on the field studies will be made about the effect of this dialect on the formation of social identity.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE DIALECT IN THE CITY OF BURSA

The city of Bursa is an ancient settlement located in the Marmara region of the Anatolian peninsula, the home of different civilizations for centuries. Bursa has turned into a multicultural structure due to migrations in the past centuries. It is a city established by migrations. There have been various migration flows to Bursa throughout history, during which a wide variety of nations and communities from various places have settled in.

The city came under the rule of the Turks in the late thirteenth century and it has been one of the cradles of Turkish-Islamic civilization since then. The strategic location and fertile soils of the city as the cultural basin that brings civilizations together have led to an important population settlement belonging to the Turkish-Islamic civilization. The intensive settling of the Turkish-Islamic population started primarily in mountainous regions of the area while the city center preserved its commercial and cultural vitality. Bursa has been a city for centuries; it has received migrations and managed to create a common city culture. Immigrants from different cultures and languages shortly adapted to Bursa and brought new values to the city. Although Bursa has experienced many difficulties due to migrations, it has produced new values by taking advantage

of the dynamism created by the immigrants who have made contributions to the culture and economy in Bursa (Kaplanoğlu 2014; see also www.keles.gov.tr/ilcemizin-tarihi).

It is known that part of the ancestors of the people who live in the Republic of Turkey and identify themselves as Turks, originate from Turkic tribes who spoke a Turkic language and migrated from the Central and Inner Asia during the eleventh to fifteenth centuries. After the Battle of Manzikert in 1071, the Seljuks launched incursions into the Anatolian peninsula. After the military success gained in Manzikert in 1071, the Oghuz Turks and other Turkish tribes (clans), who migrated from the Central Asian regions to the West, entered and settled en masse in Anatolia (Aray 2014: 46–48).

In the Turkish of the Anatolian Turks living in Bursa, which is the subject of the study, Ertuğrul Gazi, a member of the Kayı clan of the Turkish tribes who came to Anatolia in the early thirteenth century, and his allegiant, the Yörük tribe, were allocated Söğüt as summer and Domaniç as winter site by the Sultan of the Anatolian Seljuk Empire, Sultan Alâeddin Keykubat I, who settled them in Karacadağ, west of Ankara. Ertuğrul Gazi, settling near the Byzantine border of Anatolia as a result, started conquests. His son Osman Gazi continued with the conquests after his father's death and took a large part of the region under his domain (Kaplanoğlu 2014).

As the dominant language in the population structure of Bursa formed by migration, Turkish has been an ancient language spoken and written both in this city and in Anatolia for centuries. Accents, idioms, and dialects of this language have maintained their existence by enriching their powerful representation for centuries, with the features that are lived and spoken in addition to the written features of the language. There are dozens of different or similar accents, idioms, and dialects in Anatolia and its hinterland; and the city of Bursa, as an ancient settlement, exhibits these characteristics of the Turkish language.

Classifications of Anatolian dialects were discussed in a detailed study of Ahmet Buran. According to Buran's work, in the classification of the dialects of Turkey Turkish made by Ignas Kunas, the dialects in Bursa are categorized under the title of "İzmir Bursa Zeibek dialect", but are included in the Western group of dialects under Group 1 (Afyon, Antalya, Aydın, Balıkesir, Bilecik, Burdur, Bursa, Çanakkale, Denizli, Eskişehir, Isparta, İzmir, Kütahya, Manisa, Muğla, Uşak, and Nallıhan (Ankara) dialects) in Leyla Karahan's classification (Buran 2011: 42–46).

The etymological features and richness of the accent/idiom/dialect structures of the Turkish language are not the subject of this study, but it will be beneficial to briefly give a few examples. In the studies about Turkey Turkish dialects, changes of sound are occasionally observed in most dialects, and features or

modifications in sounds specific to a certain area or a village are also observed. In some settlement areas, a few different uses of the common features of the dialect peculiar to the region may be seen. Since the subject of this study is not to study the dialects in the province of Bursa in terms of linguistics, it will be sufficient to give two examples about the subject and the details are left to linguistic studies. First, the separation of “ç_ş” (ch_sh) in the dialects of the cities of Muğla, Uşak and Kütahya, Edirne, Kars, Adana, Kırşehir, Malatya, Ordu, Sivas, and Trabzon is also noticed in Bursa dialects (Eroğlu et al. 2010: 17). Second, the most important phonetic feature that draws attention in the indigenous dialects of Bursa is the length of vowels, some of which occur as a result of sound events, and some are the primary lengthenings used in the historical periods of the Turkish language, which can be followed up to Ancient Turkish. Almost all of the primary long-vowel words identified in the studies on Anatolian dialects are used in the local dialects of Bursa. Primary vowel lengths show the ability to continue in today’s derivatives of words that contain this length. In addition, the vowel changes in primary long-vowel words did not have any effect on the vowel length in the word: *e:ki / i:ki, de:- / di:-, yü:rük / yö:rük*, etc. There are also words containing primary long vowels in Bursa’s native dialects apart from the words that have been detected in other dialects (Şahin 2012: 6).

Bursa has been a political and cultural center since the fourteenth century, followed by Konya and Kırşehir. Remarkably, there are many works written in Bursa, and some features seen in Old Anatolian Turkish texts are found in the dialects spoken in mountain villages, which can be described as pure dialects and are considered to be the least exposed to foreign influences (Şahin 2016: 293).

THE PLACE OF THE CITY OF BURSA IN THE FORMATION OF SOCIAL IDENTITY

Regarding the effect of dialects as the main subject of the study, a difference can be observed between the city center and its villages – even among the villagers themselves in the city of Bursa in particular – in relation to the social identity of individuals and the structure of dialects, particularly in rural mountain regions.

Hence, a distinction was made between mountain and plain villages when the local dialects of Bursa were examined. The reason is the absence of migrant elements in mountain villages and the fact that immigrants and indigenous people live very closely and even intertwined in the lowland villages. In the field study, Source 6 stated that she was from the mountain region behind Uludağ, that the population of the area did not change with the flux of migration, and that

they lived in a more isolated way as they were engaged in farming and animal husbandry, so their dialect did not change. According to Source 6 (E. Ü., personal communication, January 25, 2021), there was no dialect in Bursa center. Similarly, Source 7 stated that their village had not received immigration, that they were not mixed like other districts of Bursa and that the most prominent dialect was spoken in the mountain villages of Orhaneli, Keles, and Harmancık (Y. İ., personal communication, January 26, 2021).

According to Source 8, the dialect is mainly spoken by the elderly in the old quarters in the center of Bursa, but since the center receives heavy migration, the dialect is used to a smaller extent. Source 8 said that the mountain villages of Bursa (Orhaneli, Keles, Harmancık) were underdeveloped and were not mixed through migration. Therefore, the region preserved its dialect structures in a more original way (M.D., personal communication, January 28, 2021). Source 9 stated that they were not mixed with the mountain villages of the Büyükorhan district, Bursa, that the population had changed significantly with migrations between the city center and the plain villages, and that there were no foreigners in their own region (İ. F., personal communication, January 29, 2021).

Therefore, the villages of Bursa, especially mountain villages and plain villages in general, were evaluated in the field study. The effect of dialects on social identity constituted the main subject of the field study. Data on the interviewees (i.e., the sources) are combined in the following table.

Table 1. Information on sources

Information	Region	Age	Marital status	Education	Occupation	Gender
Source 1	Fadıllı	47	Married	Primary school	Housewife	Female
Source 2	Muradiye	51	Married	Primary school	Retired	Female
Source 3	Gölbaşı	47	Married	Primary school	Housewife	Female
Source 4	Güneybudaklar	47	Married	University	Private sector	Female
Source 5	Kovak	39	Married	Secondary school	Housewife	Female
Source 6	Harmancık	38	Married	University	Private Sector	Female
Source 7	Topuk	46	Married	University	Private sector	Male
Source 8	Göynükbelen	69	Married	University	Retired	Male
Source 9	Çeribaşı	52	Married	Primary school	Retired	Male
Source 10	Çamoluk	39	Married	Associate degree	Housewife	Female

In the fieldwork conducted with a total of 10 sources, the ethnic origin, dialect structures, and most importantly, the belonging and feelings that these dialects formed in them individually were inquired after obtaining data on the persons.

In this context, Source 1 from Fadıllı village in the district of Nilüfer, Bursa center, stated that she had lived in that village all her life and that her family were Manavs (a Turkic clan). Source 1 added that they were not Yörük, people living in the mountain villages of Bursa, and this word was perceived negatively even in their villages. According to Source 1, it was said in their village that “Yörük girls can be married, but not vice versa”, and that this may be due to their living in more rural areas.

According to Source 1, very different dialects are spoken in the villages of Bursa. She stated that they knew the village of Fadıllı and the surrounding villages, and that the stress [on words or syllables or sounds] was different even in the nearby villages. As an example, according to her, the phrase “ne yapıyorsun kız” is “napiyongı” in their village, while it is being pronounced as “napiyonkı” in their nearby village Gözyazı, whereas in the village of Akçalar it is pronounced as a long syllable with harder sounds. Source 1 stated that they elide and shorten the sounds in the dialect used in their village.

When Source 1 was asked about their feelings about the dialect in their village, she stated that when they moved to their village, their dialect structure changed inevitably, that they spoke differently in another village of the city, that even her husband, who was from the city of Manisa, sometimes found it odd when she spoke at home, and that she also found it odd when they talked to people from other villages in a different dialect. Source 1 continued that they did this as a result of staying in their village, that they felt closer to people who spoke like them, and that they used the dialect unconsciously when they felt belongingness to that environment and found themselves closer to them in this environment thanks to linguistics. Source 1 stated that when they noticed a person speaking their own dialect even in another city, they approached that person immediately. She added that they would feel more relaxed in that environment and feel warmth towards that person and as if they were a part of them. In the first interview, it is seen that the person established a sense of belonging through the structure of the dialect they spoke (Y. K., personal communication, January 18, 2021).

Source 2 from Muradiye- Sarnıç village of the district of Kemalpaşa, Bursa, said that their family immigrated from Varna of Bulgaria in 1893 and that they were immigrants. She added that the majority of the villagers were immigrants like themselves and that many words were spoken differently as every village of Bursa had different dialects.

Source 2 said that they were born and raised in central Bursa but when they moved to the village, their speech changed intentionally because everyone around them spoke in a different fashion. When asked about their feelings, Source 2 stated that they felt closer to those people in the new environment, and

that wherever they were, they would recognize anyone speaking their dialect in any community. According to Source 2, if they spoke in a different way to their own villagers, they would be excluded by them as they would think they had changed and would not like them, and, therefore, they felt obliged to speak like them when they went to their village.

Source 2 added that in the villages the dialects were mostly spoken by the elderly, and even if the elderly came to the city, they did not lose their (linguistic) characteristics. Similarly, she stated that the young people and children living in the village spoke in the same fashion, although not as much as the elderly, and those living in the city spoke their dialect only when they went to the village (S. Ü., personal communication, January 18, 2021).

Source 3 stated that the Yörük clan lived in Gölbaşı village in the district of Kestel, Bursa, and that the dialects, most of which were spoken by the elderly, were also spoken by their parents. She said that she had not lived in the village since the age of 14 but spoke the dialect sometimes when she visited the village, and she liked speaking it. As for social identity, Source 3 stated that she would be happy when she heard the dialect of her own region in a foreign environment. She added that the sense of belonging and in-group solidarity were strengthened in the experience of social identity (A. O., personal communication, January 21, 2021).

Source 4 stated that her father was from Güneybudaklar village in the district of Keles, Bursa, her mother from the district center of Büyükorhan, and they were of Yörük origin. She added that she regularly traveled to the village where the dialect was spoken by the elderly and the middle-aged, but young people did not speak this dialect because they lived in the city. According to Source 4, they would understand if a person was a Dağlı (a highlander) if they spoke the dialect of their village and that they would feel closer to that person as compared to others. She stated that when she spoke that dialect, she saw herself as a part of that region, and even if she did not speak the dialect in her daily life, she spoke it in the village just for fun. Source 4 continued that she was not found strange by outsiders or by her husband because of the dialect spoken in her village. She added that even her husband, originally from the [Black Sea] province of Artvin, sometimes spoke with her in the regional dialect (H. B., personal communication, January 21, 2021). Here, within the framework of the information provided by Source 4, it can be seen that social identity is also formed by the spoken dialect, defines the other party, and considers them as belonging to one's own group.

Source 5 was from Kovak village in the district of Harmançık, Bursa. She described herself as a Manav. Source 5 stated that their dialect was widely spoken in villages and it was common especially among the elderly as well as

the young people who lived in the village. According to Source 5, this dialect was only spoken in their own region and that no matter which foreign environment they entered, they would notice the person speaking this dialect, find themselves closer to that person, and would not get bored with that person. Source 5 stated that she got married at the age of 19 and left the village, but as they visited the village, although they lived in the city, they automatically switched over to their dialect and always spoke it in that environment. She added that this was normal because they were born and raised in this dialect and felt closer to those people when communicating with them (T. G., personal communication, January 23, 2021).

Source 6 stated that she was born and raised in the district of Harmancık in central Bursa and moved to the (city) center at the age of 10. She said that they went to the district as much as possible and had not broken their ties since they had relatives and acquaintances there. She added that they were of Yörük origin and spoke normal spoken language in the city, but when they went to the village, they unintentionally adopted their dialect upon seeing friends and relatives. Source 6 stated that speaking their dialect made them feel as part of their village, their ties with the village were never broken, that the feeling of “I am with you, too” was forming, and that they enjoyed speaking this dialect. She said she had “a very deep (strong) feeling”, adding that, in a foreign environment, they would immediately recognize someone who spoke the dialect of their region, and would ask them whether they were from Orhaneli, Keles, or Harmancık; therefore, they would introduce themselves immediately, and that they would feel closer to that person (E. Ü., personal communication, January 25, 2021).

Source 7 stated that they were from the village of Topuk in the district of Orhaneli, Bursa, and that they were born and raised in the city center but kept in touch with their village thanks to their family. He added that they defined themselves as Manav, and that in their village, especially the elderly and mostly the elderly women spoke this dialect. He continued that when they went to their village, they instinctively changed their dialect. Source 7 stated that when they spoke this dialect, they “felt like themselves”, that they saw their friends as “familiar, known”, and that they thought their language was more artificial in the Bursa city center. According to Source 7, in a foreign environment, they would immediately recognize a person speaking the dialect of their region, they would feel closer to them immediately, and that they would greet the person (Y. İ., personal communication, January 26, 2021).

Source 8, a retired teacher from a village in the district of Orhaneli, Bursa, said that the villages had been settlements of the Yörük clan for centuries, that they were called Dağlı, and that this name was used for those living in the

mountain villages of Bursa. According to Source 8, the dialect was spoken more intensely on a daily basis in villages, especially in social gatherings (weddings, holidays, farewells, and circumcision), and it was common among the elderly. Source 8 stated that they were happy to speak this dialect, and that the dialect, which their “ancestors spoke in pure form”, created a sense of belonging in them. Source 8 continued that they spoke their dialect consciously because of their profession (teacher), and it was an important element that even reinforced the identity of Dağlı/Yörük (M. D., personal communication, January 28, 2021). Source 9 from one of the Büyükorhan mountain villages of Bursa also stated that they were Dağlı/Yörük, and that they spoke their dialect everywhere, saying, “I have learned it from our ancestors and parents”. Source 9 added that he had left the village at the age of 26 but said that he had spoken the dialect as his own language since then. He also stated that this dialect was an integral part of their identity. Source 9 emphasized that they felt different when they spoke the dialect, and stated that this dialect created closeness with the people they talked to (İ. F., personal communication, January 29, 2021).

Source 10 from the village of Çamoluk, in the district of Iznik, Bursa, stated that they settled in their village as immigrants due to the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–1878 and that they always spoke the dialect when they stayed in the village for a long time; they established a sincere bond with people who spoke this dialect even if they were not in the village. Source 10 stated that she understood the society she belonged to better with the dialect spoken in their village and they felt that they got along very well with the other party when speaking it, without experiencing any exclusion/disagreement (A. Y., personal communication, February 1, 2021).

CONCLUSION

Identity is an important concept with intertwined elements, created by individuals and societies. Within the framework of this concept, concrete and abstract elements bring together or separate and shape individuals and societies. Within the framework of the concept of identity, the analyses of social identity are particularly of a nature to guide the understanding of this concept more comprehensively. The feelings of belonging and self, which are formed through similarities and differences in the formation and development of social identity, include the individual in the group identity. The individual then creates intra-group solidarity and favoritism, comparison and social identification.

One of the most important abstract elements affecting the social identities of individuals and societies is the accents and dialects that emerge from the

structure of a language, depending on the geographical and historical background and the language itself. Individuals form their identities by comparing their own groups with other groups with their dialects. There is a structure that evolves from the individual to society in the formation and development of social identity. In this structure, differences are more prominent and identities that are different from others are shared and emphasized in terms of similarity.

At the individual and social level, multiple identities intertwine and create differences, feelings of self and belonging. Many different identities and senses of belonging stem from multiple characters. For this reason, it should not be ignored that each of the characters creates a different belonging and identity by considering multiple identities. However, in this study, an attempt was made to reveal these selves and belongings through language. This situation reveals the strong sides of psychology and sociology combined. Social identity theory is not the only, but a good, way to deal with multiple identities with new perspectives and characters.

While individuals in the city of Bursa differ from those in villages and even from those living in the city center by the dialect they speak, this also causes them to create a feeling of resemblance with the people in their region. This situation also develops a sense of belonging with them in every environment. Thus, they create their own social groups through the dialect they speak, and they identify themselves with these groups.

The field study revealed that the people living in Bursa mountain villages and suburbs see themselves as different from those in the center because of their dialects and they form a separate social identity. The most important aspect observed in this study is that the dialect they speak unites them with people who speak the same dialect and differentiates them from those who do not speak it, which leads to the feeling of happiness psychologically and to the feeling of belonging sociologically.

This shows how important dialects are in the individuals' sense of self and belonging in social identity. Language itself is one of the most important sociological and cultural realities of societies, and the dialect, which constitutes the sub-components of a language, is a special case created by societies in this sense. These situations are a field in which societies create characteristics such as subjective and local, and in this sense, they also provide diversity that encompasses the whole society from private to general. For this reason, it is an area that should be taken into consideration in the formation and development of social identity.

NOTES

- ¹ The interviewees are marked by their initials, and they gave their oral consent for the material to be published in an open-access journal. The recordings are kept in the possession of the author.

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