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A linguistic ethnography of the sense of belonging: Iraqi Turkmen women refugees in Turkey

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ABSTRACT

This article is concerned with the construction of a sense of (non-)belonging in the context of forced migration. It is based on linguistic ethnographic fieldwork carried out in a Turkish town with a group of Iraqi Turkmen women refugees. Using data from audio-recordings of spontaneous interactions in Turkish in informal social gatherings, interviews, and home visits, this research seeks to understand how the sense of belonging and the experience of the sense of otherness are expressed through the Iraqi Turkmen women's discursive accounts. The findings reveal that their perception of foreignness and display of belonging lie on a dynamic continuum, which may reflect the qualities of a liminal stage.

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1. Introduction

With the emergence of an 'affective turn' in social sciences (Watson, 1999), increasing visibility of affect has led to a growing interest in theorizing emotions as social and cultural practices rather than private matters (Ahmed, 2004; Clough, 2007; Gibbs, 2002; Williams, 2001). The reconceptualization of affect as a sociocultural phenomenon stems from the idea that individuals cannot be detached from the larger social processes which play an important role in constructing, shaping, and transforming their perception of the world (Svašek and Skrbiš, 2007). In line with this dialogical and interdiscursive perspective brought to emotions, this linguistic ethnographic fieldwork conducted in a forced migration context investigates the affective processes refugees go through in the process of their relocation to a new country with a focus on the construction of the sense of belonging.

This article which is based on an 18-month fieldwork focuses on a group of Iraqi Turkmen refugee[1] women residing in the city of Kırşehir in Turkey for two to 3 years as of 2018 when the fieldwork was conducted. It relies on the linguistic ethnographic data obtained through the long-term observations of participants for 18 months and audio recordings of home visits. This paper explores the enactment of a specific affect that is belonging through a group of Iraqi Turkmen women's discursive accounts in the context of forced migration. It seeks to understand how the sense of (non-)belonging to the local community is expressed and negotiated through their everyday discursive acts.

While this paper explores the affective struggles of the Iraqi Turkmen refugees, it aligns itself with the methodological tenets of linguistic ethnography (LE) which aims at achieving theoretical reconciliation between linguistics and ethnography (Rampton, 2007). Post-structural theories which have given way for the reconceptualization of language in more contextual

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[1] The word *refugee* is not used here as a legal term but as a sociological term which addresses anyone who seeks asylum in another country due to involuntary reasons.

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and dynamic ways lay the foundation for LE research (Maybin and Tusting, 2011). LE positions itself as an interpretive approach (Copland and Creese, 2015) which posits that competing interpretations and symbolic representations may come out depending on how social reality is constructed, and to have such multiplicity in interpretation is a normal state of affairs. It is derived primarily from North American linguistic anthropology (e.g., Hymes, 1968; Silverstein and Urban, 1996; Duranti, 1997), symbolic interactionism (e.g., Goffman, 1956, 1974), and sociolinguistics (e.g., Bernstein, 1971; Gumperz, 1982).

Below, before the relevant literature is discussed around the main themes of this paper which are the sense of belonging, exclusion, and liminality in the discourse of migration, the reader will be informed about the context in which this linguistic ethnographic research took place and the brief history of Iraqi Turkmens.

1.1. Situating the research site

As a result of the Geneva Convention signed by Turkey in 1951, Turkey grants legal refugee status only to citizens of European countries. Due to this geographical restriction in the convention, Turkey can only provide temporary international protection to the residents of non-European countries either until they are transferred to a third country by the United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees (UNHCR) or accept voluntary repatriation to their countries of origin. During the completion of this process, asylum seekers are placed in certain cities by the Ministry of Interior, and these cities are called "satellite cities".[2] Located in Central Anatolia with a total population of 150,000, and partially bordering the capital Ankara on the West, Kırşehir is one of these satellite cities, where Afghan, Iraqi, and Iranian asylum seekers are placed (Saygı, 2019).

Similar to other small Anatolian cities, based on the interviews with the locals, Kırşehir used to be proud of its preserved ethnic homogeneity until a few years ago. Its people, despite the demographic changes in recent years, are still emotionally attached to their city and neighborhood, and, in general, feel part of their geographic community. As opposed to the big metropolitan cities of Turkey such as Istanbul and İzmir, the people of Kırşehir are generally attached to traditional and cultural values largely based on Islam. Similar to what Kalaycıoğlu (2007) discusses concerning conservatism in Turkey, a large number of people who were born before the 1980s are the children of peasant families and tend to preserve "the moral order of the agricultural society" (p. 246) even if their economic conditions have relatively improved in comparison to the past.

Although Kırşehir has been a satellite city since the 1990s (Frantz, 2003), with the recent influx of refugees mostly from Iraq and Afghanistan, the cultural and social dynamics of the city have changed to a great extent. The settlement of people from outside of Turkey has never reached this level in its near history (UNHCR, 2022). Observing these recent sociocultural and population changes here can offer a different perspective through its authenticity and originality as an under-researched small city.

1.2. Understanding Iraqi Turkmens from a historical perspective

Despite their unique historical and sociocultural trajectories, the Iraqi Turkmen refugees who are the focus of this linguistic ethnographic study are an under-studied ethnic minority group which can only be encountered in Middle Eastern Studies (Yıldız and Çıtak, 2021). Iraqi Turkmens are the second largest ethnic minority group following the Kurdish community in Iraq (Tok, 2010). While 60% of Iraqi Turkmens are adherents of the Sunni sect of Islam, 40% of them are Shi'a (Minority Rights, 2014). The majority of the Iraqi Turkmens have a bilingual linguistic repertoire consisting of Iraq-Turkish and Arabic while the new generation may increasingly grow up as Arabic monolinguals. Even if Turkmen-Turkish is closer to the Azerbaijani dialect of Turkish, it is mutually intelligible with Turkey-Turkish, but it is influenced lexically by Arabic to a great extent (Haydar, 1979). Therefore, besides the ethnic kinship and religious ties, Iraqi Turkmens share the same language as Turkey Turks. After the ISIS attack on the province of Mosul in northern Iraq where the majority of Iraqi Turkmens live, they started seeking refuge in Turkey from 2014 onwards (Yıldız and Çıtak, 2021).

Until the demise of the Ottoman Empire in World War I, today's Turkey Turks and the Iraqi Turkmens used to live together under the rule of the same state for hundreds of years. After the British occupation of Iraq, the new Turkish Republic renounced her claim over Mosul at the Lausanne Conference on the basis that the region where the majority of Iraqi Turkmens live had a strong cultural, ethnic, and linguistic affinity with Turkey (Danış and Parla, 2009). As a result of long-lasting diplomatic negotiations over the Mosul province, the League of Nations which is the predecessor of today's United Nations awarded the Mosul region to Iraq (Kayılı, 2005). In the relevant literature, the Iraqi Turkmens' transition from the Ottoman Empire to Iraqi citizenship is depicted as a painful experience (Saatçi, 1996). Their separation from a Turkish-majority state and being part of an Arab-majority state with an ethnic minority status under the rule of the new state dominated by Sunni-Arab nationals brought with itself a lack of cultural and linguistic recognition (Saatçi, 1996). Similar to other ethnic minorities, they were targeted by discriminatory policies and practices (Saatçi, 1996). In her research conducted with the Turkmen intellectuals to explore Turkmens' sense of self-perception, Baykal-Büyüksaraç (2017) maintains that "the Turkmen ethnicity emerged as an injured, melancholic identity that promotes a backward-looking politics, as an expression of nostalgia for Ottoman times" (p. 43), and argues that Turkmens have been unable to construct a sense of belonging to Iraq which they see as "merciless infidel" (p. 28) for arguably having cooperated with Britain during the World War I to establish a "fictitious"

[2] Law no 5683 on Residence and Travel of Foreigners passed in 1950.

state. As opposed to Baykal-Büyüksaraç's (2017) study conducted with members of a specific Turkmen association based in Istanbul, another study conducted with the Iraqi Turkmen refugees in Turkey shows that despite the popular acceptance of Turkey as the motherland among the Iraqi Turkmens, 82% of them have a strong loyalty to their national identities as Iraqi citizens (Yıldız and Çıtak, 2021). This paper aims at contributing to these discussions regarding how the Iraqi Turkmens as one of the important actors in the Middle East affectively orient themselves towards different discourses and how their forced migration experience to the so-called motherland has shaped their self-perception. Besides, the historical encounter between Iraqi Turks and Turkey Turks who used to live together under the rule of the Ottoman Empire for hundreds of years until the foundation of modern Iraq and Turkey offers rich data for discourse analytic research and discussion.

Before presenting the analysis of the data, below, the reader will find the theoretical discussions on the sense of belonging and exclusion.

2. Theoretical background

2.1. Theorizing the sense of belonging and exclusion in migration discourse

The discourse of migration is often depicted as a highly affective interdisciplinary field of inquiry (Wise and Velayutham, 2017). A journey from a socially, culturally, and linguistically familiar place to a less known one brings with itself numerous risks from possible social exclusion to legal and economic precarity. According to Wise and Velayutham (2017), the process of resettlement creates intense contrasting feelings such as shame and pride, and honor and guilt. Numerous studies in the migration literature show the experienced status loss and marginalization after migration due to devaluation and stigmatization of migrants' social and cultural practices in the receiving country (Andall, 2000; Çağlıtütüncigil, 2015; Kempadoo, 1998). Developing a sense of belonging to a new territory, in other words constructing an emotional attachment to it is often described as the desired outcome of this process (Yuval-Davis, 2006).

In the sociologically oriented literature, while the concept of affect is defined as a communicative act functioning to attach social actors and thereby, enabling social group formations (Wise and Velayutham 2017), it is also described as discourse partly constructed through intersubjective relations and partly structured through social, cultural and ideological means (Lutz, 1988). As theorized by Probyn (1996), 'belonging' as a word includes both the process of 'being' and the sense of 'longing', and the latter brings an additional affective layer to the discussions about identity; therefore, to Probyn (1996), the sense of belonging is more associated with the dynamic side of identities such as self and other positionings, self-perceptions and the sense of attachment. In the same vein, the sense of belonging is conceptualized here as an affective layer of identities produced through social relations and history, in other words, an intersubjectively and interdiscursively achieved construct.

Challenging the artificial representations of communities as identity categories such as ethnolinguistic groupings, speech communities, and native speakership, Blommaert and Rampton (2011) argue that ideological forces are behind such ascribed membership from birth. They further argue that fixed and bounded a priori classifications "should have no place in the sociolinguistic toolkit itself" (p. 6). Blommaert and Rampton (2011) suggest that through an in-depth analysis of both linguistic and social context, a sociolinguist should explore the mobilization of available indexes of group belongings to "opt in and opt out" (p. 6). In line with Silverstein's (1976/1995) theorization of indexicality from a Peircean (1955) perspective, to choose one word over another or to articulate a sound in a certain way may invoke certain social meanings and point to a certain type of people depending on the social, spatial, and temporal structure of the context in which the sign is anchored to. For example, people may index certain identities momentarily depending on the position they want to hold in a conversation (Silverstein, 2014). The dynamic and interpretative nature of meaning-making enables us to socially and linguistically categorize people and position ourselves and others as "types of people" (Gee, 2008, p. 3). According to Silverstein (2003), a specific way of talking, acting, or wearing may gain certain social meanings in a specific context, and be enregistered to a specific community over time. In line with this conceptualization, this article is interested in exploring how the Iraqi Turkmen women perceive belonging to the Iraqi Turkmen community as well as the local community and what are the multiple and sometimes contrasting indexes and stereotyped images of belonging to these communities.

In her discussion about the discourse of migration, Gal (2018) suggests that "social inclusion and exclusion are shifting phenomena" (p. 66) and have permeable boundaries. Therefore, according to Gal (2018), migrants can develop multiple senses of belonging, and discursively choose to align or disalign with these groupings. Besides, instead of picking out one group belonging, they can simultaneously borrow the tools of contrasting discourses and be an "outsider-as-part-insider" (p. 67), and this state of in-betweenness in the discourse of migration takes us to a liminal space which will be discussed in the section below.

2.2. Sense of liminality and the state of refugeeness

While this article primarily investigates the Iraqi Turkmen women's construction and negotiation of the sense of belonging to their new communities, their affective struggles in transforming from their former status as legitimate citizens of Iraq to the new one under the conditions of social and legal precarity are conceptualized as a period of liminality. The concept of liminality coined by van Gennep (1960) describes the transition stage of rites of passage in the field of anthropology. Rites of passage depicted by van Gennep have three stages: the first stage, 'separation', the second in-between stage 'liminality', and the third stage, 'incorporation'. According to Turner (1979), the most interesting aspect of life stages is the in-between time, in

other words, the liminal stage because it is the phase in which individuals have left their previous social position but have not gained entry to the next one yet. Until individuals gain the right to enter the next stage, they wait in the liminal stage. For Gibb et al. (2008), the feeling of a sense of displacement in the context of migration may result in suspension in a liminal space and be accompanied by a sense of ambiguity and ambivalence. Krzyzanowski and Wodak (2008) also define migrant identities as "inherently ambivalent and constantly subject to inherent and continuous change" (p. 115). During the resettlement stage often accompanied by the loss of status and marginalization, forming new belongings and trying to fit into different communities are precarious processes. The concept of liminality has an important place in the discourse of migration because, as also discussed by Probyn (1996), the practice of boundary crossings often co-occurs with a sense of in-betweenness. Because forming new belongings and trying to fit into a different community are often challenging processes, migrants' national home may gain new indexical meanings. The "utopia of the homeland" (Davis, 2010, p. 674) is often created by migrants by freezing time and space and turning 'home' into an imaginary space. At this point, the concept of liminality comes into play because what is called 'home' is transformed into an ambiguous concept partly detached from reality, and this, according to Davis (2010), results in disorientation in time and space.

Besides, in line with van Gennep's (1960) original definition of liminality, the act of migration can be conceptualized as a rite of passage because the experience of migration has a transformative force on migrants' lives. When their previously acquired capitals are devalued by their new community, which is often reported in the literature (see Andall, 2000; Çağlıtütüncigil, 2015), migrants may experience the processes of decapitalization and, they are, in a way, forced to gain new social roles and status in order to survive. The concept of liminality has specific relevance to the migratory context because migrants' unknown waiting period for legal status on the one hand and their struggle to gain social and economic capital, on the other hand, may leave them outside of the social structure and leave them in limbo for an unknown period. Especially, in the case of refugees, this liminal, in-between stage at which migrants are in search of forming new belongings may last for years, and their claim to move into the next stage may even be rejected. There are numerous research studies recently published in the Turkish context which report the systematic exclusion and discrimination targeting refugees in their daily relations. Saygı's (2019) study shows how individuals can be disqualified from acceptance due to their refugee identity, and their shared ethnic and linguistic affiliations may become useless capitals by being erased by the state of refugeeness. Akar and Erdoğdu's (2019) study shows how Turkish society has turned Syrian refugees into scapegoats blamed for everything going wrong in the country from insufficient access to basic services such as education and health services to poor socio-economic conditions. Erdoğan's 'Syrian Barometer' reports published in 2015, 2018, and 2020 to explore the reciprocal relationship between Syrian refugees and mainstream Turkish society demonstrate a sharply growing uneasiness about refugees in society and decreasing social acceptance year by year. This unrest reflects upon the refugee responses in the reports in which the increasing incidences of discriminative events and various forms of exploitation are remarked (Erdoğan, 2015, 2018, 2020).

Different from regular migrants, Diken (2004) argues that the state of 'refugeeness' can turn people's lives into a "bare life" (p. 89) by making them exempted from any types of belonging and identity. Diken (2004) further describes the state of refugeeness as follows:

> having left behind his origin and been stripped of his former identities, the refugee is socially a 'zombie' whose spectral past survives in a world in which his symbolic capital does not count, and whose present takes place in a condition of 'social nakedness' (Bauman, 2002, p. 116) characterized by the lack of social definition, rights, and responsibilities (p. 84).

Therefore, refugees may end up being strangers exempted from any type of belonging and identity in their new physical space. In some cases, the liminal stage one goes through may even turn into a permanent state and the refugee may end up tackling this unpredictable stage on a daily basis. Despite the significance of this matter, due to the methodological challenges of working with urban refugees longitudinally (see Sigona and Torre, 2005), the detailed qualitative analysis of refugee subjects' emotional lives and experiences through rich ethnographic materials is rarely carried out. To this end, this linguistic ethnographic research may methodologically open up new spaces to draw the picture of refugee life from a more nuanced and affective angle through a rich source of evidence obtained and investigated through discourse analytic means.

3. Data and methodology

This article is based on fieldwork carried out for 18 months between August 2016 and February 2018 in one of the neighborhoods of Kırşehir, Turkey, which will be called here 'Kadife Street'.[3] Iraqi Turkmens constitute the majority of refugees in the city of Kırşehir. Apart from their numerical significance, as bilingual speakers of Turkmen-Turkish and Arabic, generally speaking, they can communicate better with the locals than the other ethnic refugees in Turkey-Turkish. As having a shared language is one of the first conditions for generating rich interactional data for this specific research through which I aimed to collect the spontaneous conversations between the refugee and local neighbors, I preferred to work with the Iraqi Turkmens. Due to the conservative lifestyle of the Iraqi Turkmen community in the city, conducting ethnographic research with Iraqi Turkmen men and contacting them frequently for 18 months was not possible as a female field worker. Therefore, I

[3] Kadife Street is the pseudonym of the neighborhood where the author was born-and-raised as a local.

decided to work only with female participants, and this research became an all-female research project which includes the local and Iraqi Turkmen women.

As discussed in the introductory section of this paper, I followed the linguistic ethnographic framework for collecting and interpreting the data, and the approach adopted by LE research to collect and analyze the data has a close affinity with John Gumperz's (1982) interactional sociolinguistics (IS) framework. Because IS holds the idea that "language and social life are mutually shaping" (Rampton et al., 2004, p. 2), this interdependent understanding between language and social life necessitates bringing an ethnographic dimension to data collection along with the discursive analysis of interaction data. Rampton (2007) suggests that ethnography can move a linguistic exchange beyond the moment of interaction through its access to personal histories and histories of social relations.

During the 18 months of fieldwork, I shared the same neighborhood with my research participants, participated in numerous random and special community events organized by the local and Iraqi Turkmen communities in the neighborhood, and observed their interactional practices. Because Kırşehir is the city where I was born and lived until the age of 18, I was familiar with its cultures, people, and local language. This assisted me to turn my pre-existing personal ties and shared sociocultural backgrounds into an advantage to obtain my data. To facilitate interactions between both parties, I made the participation of the Iraqi Turkmen women possible in the local women's events by persuading both parties and audio-recorded the interaction in these gatherings. Through interviews, home visits, and audio recordings of spontaneous interaction data, in total, I recorded 70 h of conversations with 15 local women and 6 Iraqi Turkmen women. In this paper, I mainly focus on 30 h of conversations collected during my home visits to three Iraqi Turkmen women, namely Ele, Farah, and Kadime[4] because they are the core Iraqi Turkmen participants of this study whom I most frequently contacted and who allowed me to discover their emotional lives and reactions.

The three Iraqi Turkmen women who are the focus of this paper came from the city of Tel Afar in Iraq in late 2015. As Iraqi refugees, they all qualify for international protection granted by the Directorate General of Migration Management, Turkish Interior Ministry as per laws and regulations of the asylum process in Turkey since 2013. The initial contact was established with the Iraqi Turkmen research participants through the author's pre-existing social ties in the neighborhood. While Ele is in her mid-40s, her daughter-in-law, Farah is in her mid-20s, and the third participant, Kadime is in her late 50s. They are all Sunni Muslims and bilingual speakers of Turkish and Arabic. They are housewives who got married quite early when they were 13–14 years old. The participants reported having had stable and adequate income back in Iraq. İsminur whose name the reader will come across in the data analysis section is my local facilitator who accompanied me in every single interview and home visit. Although I was born in Kırşehir and share the same cultural and linguistic practices with the local women, because I had been away from my hometown for university education for the last ten years, I did not feel confident enough to open a dialogue with the local and Iraqi women alone. İsminur is a true insider who shares similar concerns and perspectives both with the local and refugee women. Similar to the Iraqi Turkmen and local participants, she is a Sunni Muslim middle-aged Turkish woman who is unemployed and married with children. Therefore, she was able to act as a mediator between the local and Iraqi Turkmen women. Besides, the interviews in İsminur's presence turned into an informal friendly conversation and my position as a researcher mostly remained in the background.

In the next section, the interaction data will be analyzed under three headings. While the Iraqi Turkmen women's claim for belonging to the Turkish category is explored in the first section, the Iraqi Turkmen women's resistance and fear to form belonging with the local Turks will be discussed in the following two sections.

4. Analysis and findings

4.1. Seeking belonging and connection through Turkishness

The Iraqi Turkmen women who participated in this research share the same ethnic, religious, and linguistic identities with the locals as Sunni Muslim Turkish-speaking Turkmens. To gain access to the local community in Kadife Street, the Iraqi Turkmen women often proudly invoke their Turkish origin in their encounters with the locals and claim belonging to the same ethnolinguistic category as the locals. In one of the interviews which I and my local facilitator İsminur conducted with the Iraqi Turkmen women, Kadime rejects the imposed foreign identity through the affective displays of a sense of belonging to Turkish identity as follows:

Extract 1: Where do we belong?

1	Kadime:	hindi bene deyler ne deyler sen yabancı- diyem biz orda bize deyler yabanci- burda deyler
2		deyler yabancı biz nere halkuyuk men yabancı degilem men Türküyem Türkü kızı Türkiyem
3	İsminur:	demi hakkaten öyle.
4	Kadime:	menim babam babası bura halkı men yerden çıkmiy babam mene söylemeyen yabancı
5	İsminur:	değilsin- doğru (.) bilmiyolar ki
6	Kadime:	bilmiyolar ha bize diyler yabanci biz yabancı deyuluk didim siz yabancı ben yabancı

[4] These names are all pseudonyms to protect the privacy of my interlocutors.

7 degilem- sizin aslınız nerde? menim aslım Türkiye

1 Kadime: now they tell me you are a foreigner- I say they {Iraqis} used to tell us foreigners there- here
2 {in Turkey} they say foreigners where do we belong? I am not a foreigner I am a Turk a Turkish
3 daughter of a Turk
4 İsminur: isn't it? it is really so.
5 Kadime: the father of my father was from here- I wasn't originated from soil- don't tell I am a foreigner
6 İsminur: you are not- right (.) they don't know though
7 Kadime: they don't know they tell us we are foreigners we are not foreigners I said you are foreigners
8 I am not- where does your origin come from? my origin is from Turkey

Kadime, Interview, 2017

Here, upon my question concerning her sense of closeness to her Turkish and Iraqi identities, Kadime positions herself as Turkish. Referring to the local people's perception of Iraqi Turkmens as foreigners, she challenges this imposed *yabancı* (foreign) identity on them. In line 1, she addresses her liminal position as a member of an ethnic minority group in Iraq as well as a status-less foreigner in Turkey. Kadime expresses her double-minority position in an affectively loaded way in this excerpt. She flatly takes up an aggressive stance toward the imposed foreign identity on her and employs linguistic structures having affective intensity such as negations (lines 2/*2*[5], 4/*5*, and 6/*7*), rhetorical questions (lines 2/*2* and 7/*8*), and an imperative sentence (line 4/*5*). While she emphasizes her shared roots with the Turkish people by addressing her ancestors who migrated from Turkey to Iraq, she blames the locals for not acknowledging her as one of them. In the last line, as she thinks the locals suspect the Turkish origin of the Iraqi Turkmens, by reversing this argument from the same essentialist frame, this time, Kadime argues that she knows where her origin comes from, but she is not sure about the locals' origin. She constructs a similar ethno-nationalist position and argumentation logic with the locals and shows her disalignment with the identity imposed on her; as a result, she positions herself to be more Turk than the local Turks. Kadime's accounts in this extract show how she can discursively play with the borders of inclusion and exclusion as an Iraqi Turkmen refugee in search of forming new belongings in this liminal space. In another instance, Kadime again shows her agentive resistance against the imposed foreign identity by saying that *"hindi {şimdi} burda gidiyok ev kiralıyok 'yabancısın yalLAH yabancı' - anne söyleME yabancı söyleME- Müslümansın"* ("here we look for a flat to rent {they say} 'you are foreigners go AWAY foreigners'- mummy DON'T say foreigner DON'T say-you are Muslim"). In this example, she strategically chooses to invoke her religious identity as a resource to claim belonging to the same religious community as the locals. In this way, she arguably demands to be exempted from such exclusive practices against foreigners in the city.

Such attempts to capitalize on the shared ethnic and religious identities reiterate themselves across the other Iraqi Turkmen participants. There are other instances in which, I suggest, the Iraqi Turkmen women make their Turkish ethnic identities visible to the local women to challenge the foreign identity. The extract below is from the first gathering between the Iraqi Turkmen and local women. After the local women express their surprise when they hear Ele and Farah, who the locals think are Arabs, speak Turkish, Ele takes the floor to legitimize herself in the local women's eyes by capitalizing on the shared Turkish identity with the local women as follows:

Extract 2: We are the real Turks!

1 Ele: eskiden burdandı- bizim aslımız Türkiye'den gelme eskilerimiz burdan gitmiş Irak'a-
2 hepsi Türkmen- Arapça yok içinde hepsi Türkmen
3 Rukiye: dediğin gibi yani Türkten ayrılma {Kurtuluş Savaşı'nı kastederek}
4 Ele: biz Türkten gelmeyik (.)
5 Melike: Halep filan bizimdi mesela Türkiye'ye aitti bölününce Halep Suriye'ye geçti mesela Irağa
6 geçti Suriye'ye geçti ordaki kalan insanlarDAN mısınız? diye
7 Ele: bizim aslımız Kayseri'den gelme- bizim aslımız Kayseri'den gelmedir ama şimdi
8 tanımıyok sizleri
9 Melike: doğru
10 Ele: orda büyümüşük etmişik onun için tanımıyok

1 Ele: in the past from here- our origin is from Turkey our ancestors went to Iraq from here –
2 they are all Turkmens- there is no Arab among them all is Turkmen
3 Rukiye: as you said I mean they were separated from Turks {referring to the Turkish War of Independence}
4 Ele: we are originally Turks (.)
5 Melike: Aleppo and stuff like that for example used to belong to Turkey when it was split up
6 Aleppo was taken over by Syria by Iraq I mean you are among those who stayed there?
7 Ele: our origin comes from Kayseri {a Turkish city} our origin is from Kayseri but we don't
8 know any of you
9 Melike: right
10 Ele: we grew up there that's why we don't know you

Women's Gathering- January 2017

[5] The first number always refers to the transcript line in Turkish while the italicized second number refers to the transcript line in English.

In this extract, we see Ele's efforts to legitimize her Iraqi background by rejecting the Arab identity. In every turn she takes, Ele invokes her Turkish origin and attempts to prove the level of authenticity and purity of her Turkishness by arguing that there is no single Arab (line 2/*2*) among her family members. The reason why Ele resists the Arab identity is presumably to be accepted by the locals and eventually to gain legitimacy in their eyes. Because Syrian Arabs are the largest refugee group in Turkey, they have increased visibility in Turkish media and political discourse. As a result, all the refugees are potentially seen as Syrian, and therefore Arabs in Kadife Street. From the foundation of the Modern Turkish republic until today, the hegemonic identity politics in Turkey have been based on Turkish nationalism and Sunni Islam (Alaranta, 2016). In this blend, Turkish Islam which is considered to be "pluralistic, tolerant, open to secularism and democratic developments" (Özdalga, 2006, p. 566) has been positioned against Arab Islam. In line with the dominant national narrative, there is widespread Anti-Arabism in Turkish society which associates Arabs and Arab culture with backwardness, distrust, dirtiness, and so on. In this ethnographic study, it is not surprising to observe that the growing Syrian Arab refugee population in Turkey has triggered anti-Arab sentiments in society. Due to the hegemonic Arabophobia in the neighborhood, locals generally position the Iraqi Turkmen women as Arabs arguably as a sign of their disfavor. As this kind of ethnic stigmatization makes the refugee identity even more compelling, the Iraqi Turkmen women instrumentalize their shared ethnic identity with locals as a defensive strategy to separate themselves from the stigmatized Arab community in the country. Therefore, in line 7/*7*, we see, for the third time in this short dialogue, Ele mentions her Turkish origin referring to a Turkish city. In the following lines, she continues to invest her energy in emphasizing their shared root as Turks. By using her Turkishness as a defensive strategy, Ele aims to distance herself from the other refugee groups such as Syrian and Iraqi Arabs, and attempts to build a connection with the locals.

So far, these extracts have demonstrated the Iraqi Turkmen women's claim for belonging to the Turkish category as Iraqis of Turkish origin. Although the Iraqi Turkmen women may construct a strong desire to belong to the local community, in the following two sections, the reader will witness the Iraqi Turkmen women's resistance and fear to form belonging with the local Turks.

4.2. Construction of longings and belongings to Iraq

While the Iraqi Turkmen women invest their energies in gaining entry into the local community by forming new belongings through the shared collective identities, at the same time, they emphasize their differences from the locals by nostalgically imagining their previous place to be superior in any aspect. In the interview and spontaneous conversation data with the local women, there are numerous examples of such meta-talks in which the Iraqi Turkmen women address the ideological, cultural, and social differences between the two communities. In these instances, the Iraqi Turkmen women create a binary opposition between the people of Kadife Street and their people back home. By aligning themselves with Iraqi customs and traditions, they position themselves morally and culturally upright as Iraqis. Some of the examples in which the Iraqi Turkmen women express their disalignment with certain practices in Kadife Street through the comparison of Iraq with Turkey are as follows:

Extract 3: We are not like those in Turkey!

3.1 "Sizin bura ebed iyi degil kimse bakmıyo yaşlılarına"
"Your place here is never good no one takes care of their elderly people" (Ele, an Iraqi woman)
3.2 "Buradakiler hiç kocaya bakmiyir"
"Women here don't look after their husbands" (Kadime, an Iraqi woman)
3.3 "Buranin doktorları iyi bilmi:r"
"Doctors here don't know well" (Ele, an Iraqi woman)
3.4 "Buradakiler dinin kurallarını yanlış biliyir"
"People here don't know religious rules properly" (Kadime, an Iraqi woman)
3.5 "Şimdi burası her yere kız veriyorsunuz- biz uzaga vermenik"
"Now here you give a girl in marriage anywhere- we don't give a girl far away" (Farah, an Iraqi woman)
3.6 "Bura tembel yeri- biz öyle değilik"
"*Here is the lazy people's place- we are not like this*" (Ele, an Iraqi woman)

From various interviews and home visits between 2017 and 2018

These remarks mostly emerged from the unstructured spontaneous conversations with the Iraqi Turkmen women. In these extracts, they challenge the local norms and practices with a sense of distance and express their belonging to their old homes with feelings of nostalgia. As we can see in Extracts 3.1 and 3.2 taken from the home visit data, while the Iraqi Turkmen women criticize especially the local women for not taking care of elderly people and not treating their husbands well, they position themselves as morally upright. In Extract 3.3, Ele raises an issue about the health system in Turkey and makes Turkish doctors the object of her criticism. In Extract 3.4, Kadime and Ele position the locals in general as less pious and knowledgeable in religious matters by implying their own group's religious superiority. In Extract 3.5, Farah chooses the wedding rituals in Kadife Street as the object of her criticism. She evaluates the local customs in Kadife Street concerning marriage negatively by comparing it with Iraqi rituals and prefers to align with Iraqi ones. In the final extract, Ele makes the local

people's lifestyle the object of her criticism and positions locals as lazy people in comparison to them being hardworking as Iraqis.

As a result, in all these extracts presented above, while the Iraqi Turkmen women make discursive efforts to prove the superiority of their own group's conduct, at the same time, they distance themselves from the local norms and practices through affective displays of appreciation of Iraqi culture. In this way, they discursively construct their unwillingness to belong to the local Turks' community in Kadife Street and strengthen their sense of belonging to Iraq. In these narratives, we may suggest that the Iraqi Turkmen women imagine their lives back in Iraq as a 'mythical place of desire' (Brah, 1996) by attaching it to additional emotional significance. Similar to the Indian migrant woman in Canada, Azmina, in Gibb, Hamdon, and Jamal's (2008) study, the Iraqi Turkmen women also express their nostalgia about their life before migration through disaligning with the local culture. According to Tharoor (1993), this idealized constructed image of an old home triggered by the feelings of nostalgia is built on migrants' selective memory, and such nostalgic sentiments result in simplifying, beautifying, and even distorting old memories back home. For Davis (1979), creating such nostalgic images of their original home country has multiple social and identity-related functions. While such collective nostalgic affective displays help migrants preserve their cultural identity by establishing boundaries between 'us' and 'them', they also contribute to gathering around one voice by protecting the continuity of their community. In these extracts presented above, idealizing their lives and practices back in Iraq, the Iraqi Turkmen women put similar effort, and mobilize their sense of nostalgia to conserve their cultural identity.

Another way in which the Iraqi Turkmen women index their sense of not-belonging to the local culture and construct a sense of nostalgia towards their Iraqi national identity is through their negative evaluation of the local food and reaffirming food practices in Iraq. These utterances mostly emerged during the spontaneous conversation with the Iraqi Turkmen women during the home visits are as follows:

Extract 4: Everything in Iraq is very good.

4.1 "Irakın her şeyleri çok iyi olur (…) Irakın tahini olursa alırık olmazsa almayık"
"Everything in Iraq is very good (…) if there is tahini from Iraq we buy it if not we don't" (Ele, an Iraqi woman)

4.2 "Irak'ın çayi iyi olur (…) biz buranın ekmegini yemiyok"
"Iraqi tea is very good (…) we don't eat the bread sold here" (Ele, an Iraqi woman)

4.3 "Irak yemekleri en iyi olur (…) sizin pirinciniz hamur oluyo- sizin pirinci men sevmenem"
"The best one is the Iraqi cuisine (…) your rice gets doughy- I don't like your rice" (Kadime, an Iraqi woman)

From various interviews and home visits between 2017 and 2018

In these extracts, the statements such as "everything in Iraq is very good", and "the best one is the Iraqi cuisine" show the nostalgic and romantic imaginary the Iraqi Turkmen women attribute to their lives back in Iraq. Similar to the previous extracts, in the above ones, one can see the idealization of Iraq by constructing Kadife Street's mainstream local culture as the antagonist of their narratives. The food items such as 'rice', 'bread', and 'tea' are instrumentalized by both Ele and Kadime to construct their Iraqi identity. Srinivas (2006) calls these romantic sentiments migrants attribute to their heritage food a semantic field "gastro-nostalgia". According to Srinivas, this sense turns a simple act of eating into a performative force which signifies migrants' sense of belonging to their homeland. From Wise and Velayutham's (2017) perspective, objects travel along with emotions which have historically been embedded in them. Therefore, it is not the object itself that inherently carries the meaning and significance but cultural and emotional associations that travel with them. To this end, these examples demonstrate that the Iraqi Turkmen women choose 'food' to objectify their affective attachment to Iraq and to express their non-belonging to the local Turks' community in Kadife Street.

While the extracts presented in this section regarding the evaluation of the local cultural practices in comparison to the Iraqi culture are fueled by the Iraqi Turkmen women's nostalgic accounts of the past, they also show us the changing nature of the women's perception of the level of foreignness. While in one context the Iraqi Turkmen women challenge the locals for being categorized as others, in another context, they accentuate the differences to show their otherness and in-group pride as Iraqis.

In the following section, by taking the discussion concerning the Iraqi Turkmen women's rejection of belonging to the local culture one step further, I will discuss the Iraqi Turkmen women refugees' construction of the senses of guilt and shame for "turkifying" and eventually their fear to be part of the local Turkish community.

4.3. Fear of identity loss: Turkification

Wenger (1998) argues that we identify ourselves and others not only through engagement but also through imagination. For example, people use their imagination while distancing themselves from certain types of people or feeling close to another group of people. Perceptive works such as constructing labels, stereotypes, and stigmas to define others are accepted as the products of imagination. In each community, members may have different collective imaginations to define certain types of people and actions. To this end, in the extracts I will present in this section, the Iraqi Turkmen refugees use the words ethnic identity of *Türk* (Turk) and the act of resembling the local Turks, that is *'türkleşme'* (turkification) as negative criticism to blame each other for crossing into the local Turkish culture. In such contexts, Iraqi Turkmen women use türkleşme specifically

to index a lack of piety and Europeanisation by extending its meaning to include morally and religiously negative connotations. As opposed to the extracts presented in the first section concerning the Iraqi Turkmen women's claim for belonging to Turkish identity, in such utterances, turkification signifies an undesired transformation process which they should avoid while the state of being Iraqi is positioned as a morally superior disposition which they should preserve. For example, in one of our spontaneous conversations with Ele during my home visit, she expresses her concern as follows:

Extract 5: Our Iraqi girls have turkified.

"bizimki- Irak'ta en güzel yer bizim şehrimiz olurdu hepsi kapanır hepsi şöyle pantolon da giyinmiydi şimdi buraya gelende bazısı da buralaşmış giymiş aman şöyle- kızlar bizim de Iraklılar da alışmış hepsi giyi ama biz bunlar on iki yaşından sonra hepsi etek giyer kimse de giymez pantolon giymez şimdi hepsi pantolon giyiyo (.) valla hep diyim siz daha türkleşmişiniz"

"our place- the most beautiful place in Iraq was our city everybody covered themselves no one used to wear pants now after they came here some of them localized they wear {pants}- our girls the Iraqi ones are used to them they all wear pants but after the age of twelve they all used to wear skirts none of them used to wear pants now they all wear them (.) honestly I always tell them that they have turkified"

Ele, Home visit, 2017

In this extract, Ele positions her city back in Iraq as the most ideal place to live and expresses her longing for her life back in Iraq. Here, Ele's object of criticism is the Iraqi Turkmen women wearing pants. She criticizes them for acting differently and violating their in-group norms. Since none of the Iraqi Turkmen women used to wear pants back home, from the Iraqi Turkmen participants' perspective, the act of wearing pants, which is seen as a physically observable embodied affective display, signifies selling out their group values and seeking affiliation with another group. Similar to Ele, Kadime also interprets Iraqi Turkmen women's abandonment of traditional clothes as moral corruption committed for the sake of crossing into the Turkish group. Kadime further maintains that a woman wearing pants resembles Christians. In this way, she implies an association between the Christian world and Turkey Turks. Apart from this clothing issue, the Iraqi Turkmen participants often associate Turkishness with modernity and Europeanisation, which indexes alienation from the Islamic Ottoman heritage. According to Tok (2010), due to the Arabisation policies which aimed to assimilate the minority groups in Iraq, Iraqi Turkmens developed a conservative and closed cultural system as a reaction to the authoritarian regime of the Iraqi government. Due to the rapid process of modernization in Turkey following the declaration of a secular Turkish Republic in 1923, enormous changes in the lives and cultures of the Turkish people have been observed. Tok (2010) supports his claim through the interviews he conducted with the Iraqi Turkmens who argue that because Turkey Turks emulate the European lifestyle, Turkey Turks have lost their cultural identity while they argue to have preserved their culture which they inherited from the Ottoman Empire. Similarly, the Iraqi Turkmen women often draw attention to these argued differences in their conversations and make a comparison between Turkey Turks and Iraqi Turks. To illustrate, for Ele, having a public holiday on Sundays in Turkey instead of on Fridays, which was the case in Iraq is a sign of Christianity. Keeping the stores and workplaces open during Muslim prayer times in Turkey while all the places including schools are closed during these times in Iraq is another reported sign showing the religious superiority of Iraqis from the lens of the Iraqi Turkmen participants. Similarly, when they blame their children for turkification, the Iraqi Turkmen women indeed imply their children's alienation from traditional and moral values. For example, in one of our spontaneous conversations with Ele during my home visit, she raises her concern about the young generation. By comparing their children's past and present habits, Ele claims that they have become Türkiyeli:

Extract 6: I said you have become like Turks.

1	Ele:	bizim çocuklarımız altı yaşında yedi yaşında hep namaz kılar buraya gelince (…) dedim
2		valla bunlar Kuran'da gelmiş- altı yaşıy- altı yaşında namaz ögrenirsey ondan sonra
3		daha oruç tutmayı ögreniysen bizimkiler hep küçükene oruç tutarlar- şimdi buraya
4		gelene kadar yoruluyolar çalışmadan çalışmadan yoruluyolar namazı daha bırakıyolar
5	Hasret:	hıı
6	Ele:	dedim siz daha Türkiyeli oldunuz namaz hepsiyiz bıraktıyız- valla benim çaycıda
7		çalışanım vardı beş vakıtı camiyada kılardı
8	Hasret:	oohh
9	Ele:	burda yok (.)

1	*Ele:*	*our children used to perform their five-time prayers at six or seven they all used to perform*
2		*it when they came here (…) I said these are written in the Quran- the age of six- at the*
3		*age of six you learn how to perform it then you learn how to fast ours used to fast when*
4		*they were small- now after they came here they got tired of working they gave up their*
5		*five-time prayers*
6	*Hasret:*	*hmm*
7	*Ele:*	*I said you have become like Turks you all gave up your five-time prayers- honestly my son who*
8		*works in a tea house used to perform his five-time prayers in the mosque*
9	*Hasret:*	*oohh*
10	*Ele:*	*in here no (.)*

Ele, Home visit- October 2017

Here, we see that Ele is uneasy due to her children's abandoning their religious practices while they all performed their religious duties from the age of six onwards back in Iraq. In line 4/4, first, she attempts to relate her children's abandoning religious practices with their hard work in Turkey. Then, in line 6/7, she argues that they have given up following an Islamic way of living for having aligned with the locals by turkifying. Hence, in general, she blames the new physical space they moved in for her children's estrangement.

According to Wise and Velayutham (2017), daily habits, religious practices and certain food items as we have seen in Extract 4, are strategically used by migrants "to increase the affective engagement with the homeland" (p. 122) and therefore, to reduce their nostalgia. Similarly, in another instance, Farah expresses her uneasiness about her children's not practicing religion after migrating to Kadife Street. She argues that her children have become like Turks by abandoning their traditional way of living. The conversation unfolds as follows:

Extract 7: My son resembles Turks.

1	Farah:	Amirle Nasira her şeyleri unutmuşlar- Irak'ta- işte burayı ögrenende her şeyleri unuttu
2	Hasret:	hatırlamıyo mu?
3	Farah:	yoo unutmuşlar hepsini (.)
4	Ele:	alla bu surelerin hepsini biliyodu daha Amir hepsini hafız etmişti şimdi unutmuş =
5	Farah:	= unutmuş- imdi şarkı söylüyor {gülüşmeler}
6	İsminur:	Türklere benzedi
7	Farah:	evet valla öyle- şarkı bes {yalnız} dinliyo- hiç Kur'an açmıyo bes şarkı dinliyo
1	*Farah:*	*Amir and Nasira have forgotten everything- in Iraq- when they learn here they have forgotten all*
2	*Hasret:*	*don't they remember?*
3	*Farah:*	*no they forget everything (.)*
4	*Ele:*	*honestly she used to know all the surahs Amir memorized them all now he forgets =*
5	*Farah:*	*= he forgets- now he sings songs {laughs}*
6	*İsminur:*	*he resembles Turks*
7	*Farah*	*yeah honestly he did- he only listens to songs- he never opens the Quran he only listens to songs*

Farah, Home visit, 2017

In this extract spontaneously emerged upon her son's murmuring a Turkish pop song during our home visit with İsminur, Farah expresses her concern about her children's changing practices after their forced migration. While her son used to recite the Quran back in Iraq, she argues that he has forgotten everything he knows about religion as the only thing he does now is to sing Turkish songs (line 7/7). Similar to Ele's remarks, in this extract, based on her experience in Kadife Street, Farah associates Turkishness with having weak religious faith, and this association leads her to think that her children's Iraqi and Muslim identities are at risk in Turkey. From these extracts and also from the popular use of turkification among the Iraqi Turkmen women, it can be inferred that the Iraqi Turkmen women disalign with the local Turks' lifestyle. Hence, turkification symbolizes an unfavorable transformation in their eyes, and they reject the idea of forming belonging with the local norms and practices. Wise and Velayutham (2017) explain migrants' attempts to regulate their in-group norms and practices by their desire to create a collective purpose for their community and thereby, intensify their sense of belonging with the home country. Based on the data presented in this section, we may also argue that such policing practices targeted at controlling their in-group norms and practices seem to have a conservative function as much as an identity-related function for the Iraqi Turkmen participants as they serve to impose certain moralities among their community by gathering them around one voice against possible threats in Kadife Street.

5. Discussion and conclusion

This research has given insight into affective struggles and identity-related concerns of a group of Iraqi Turkmen women in the context of forced migration. From a linguistic ethnographic perspective, it has attempted to explore how the sense of (non-)belonging to the local community in Kadife Street is expressed and negotiated through their everyday discursive accounts. This study reveals that the Iraqi Turkmen women refugees who participated in this linguistic ethnographic research have a strong loyalty to their Iraqi national identity. In the contexts where they make their Iraqi background visible, the Iraqi Turkmen women often choose to disalign with Turkishness. The Iraqi Turkmen women's discursive accounts show that the basis of their national pride comes from the customs, traditions, and ways of living which the Iraqi Turkmen women associate with being Iraqi. They feel national pride, especially in subjects such as religiosity, societal order, human behavior, and daily habits such as ways of eating and wearing and emphasize the superiority of their own group's conduct.

One thing that the Iraqi Turkmen women's strong sense of belonging to Iraq shows us is the success of the modern nation-states. Although the literature about the Iraqi Turkmens depicts the separation of Iraqi Turks from the Turkey Turks as a "traumatic event" (Baykal-Büyüksaraç, 2017, p. 25) when it comes today, we can observe the reciprocal distancing practices between the two Turkic groups who choose to categorize each other based on their national affiliations. While the Iraqi Turkmens romantically associate themselves with the local people based on historical and ethnic grounds, they obviously observe a vast array of social and cultural differences between these two communities. On the side of the local Turks, the reported exclusion of Iraqi Turkmens from the ethnic Turkish category is, to a large extent, related to their refugee status in

Turkey. As discussed in this article referring to the recent publications in the forced migration literature in Turkey, the state of being a refugee has a strong potential to overshadow other social identities subjects claim for themselves as in the case of Iraqi Turkmens whose ethnic identity claims are rejected for being stereotyped as Arab refugees in Kadife Street.

Along with the observed nationalist sentiments of the Iraqi Turkmen women, this article has also demonstrated that the Iraqi Turkmen women's resistance to being part of the local culture and identity contains competing discourses. As it has been discussed through the extracts presented here, while in one context, the Iraqi Turkmen women claim ownership over the Turkish identity by emphasizing their shared ethnic, linguistic, and religious ties with the locals, in another context, they express their fear and rejection to turkify due to their sense of distance to local norms and practices. To this end, from an affect theory perspective, such paradoxes and struggles in their construction of belonging to Kadife Street may reflect the qualities of a liminal stage which is triggered by the feeling that the continuity of their identities and cultures are at risk in Kadife Street. Seeking legitimacy in their everyday life, feeling displaced and attributing nostalgic and romantic images to their home prior to migration by disorienting time and space make their process of seeking belonging in a new nation-state more ambivalent. From a sociolinguistic point of view, the interpreted liminal stage and switching between the borders of different identity categories in their discursive accounts can also be related to the Iraqi Turkmen women's momentary communicative motivations. The data reveals that having both Arabic and Turkish linguistic backgrounds and being affiliated with both Iraqi and Turkmen heritage provide them necessary linguistic tools to strategically construct their identities, and switch between them. Besides, depending on which frame of reference is preferred, the Iraqi Turkmen women's perception of foreignness shifts and Turkishness may gain totally different symbolic values and indexes; thereby, its level of desirability changes according to the interactional strategy they adopt. While in one context Turkishness is taken as an ethnic category which they pride in, it is indexed by cultural degeneracy and weak religious belief in another context. When being Turkish is indexed by a less pious identity, the Iraqi Turkmen participants prefer to distinguish themselves from the locals by making their Iraqi identity visible as they feel closer to Iraqis in terms of the Islamic way of living**.** This contradiction arguably stems from the romantic Turkish image the Iraqi Turkmens nostalgically constructed for the 'motherland' Turkey when they lived under the pressure of Arab nationalism as an ethnic minority group. This encounter arguably shows the Iraqi Turkmens that the nostalgic image they attribute to Turks does not correspond to their experience with the local Turks in Kadife Street. The reason behind this mismatch can be historically and politically explained by the formation of modern Iraq and Turkey as two distinct nation-states. The separation of the same ethnic people who used to share more similar cultural and linguistic practices under the rule of the Ottoman Empire seems to have resulted in alienation and distinctness within the same ethnolinguistic community.

From a sociolinguistic point of view, as Gal (2018) maintains, **"**outsiderness and insiderness are not dichotomous" (p. 67). As in the case of this research, contradictory combinations of identity claims such as proudly claiming an ethnically Turkish identity as a Turkmen in one context but rejecting to turkify as an Iraqi citizen in another context can be discursively produced by the social actors depending on the interactional strategy they adopt. As Silverstein (2003) suggests, tracing how a very same linguistic item carries different indexical values is important for a researcher in order to situate utterances in a certain social, spatial and temporal structure. This requires certain knowledge about the sociocultural, ideological, and interactional frame in which the discursive interaction takes place. In this research, interpreting the discursive process of indexicalisation has been enabled through the use of linguistic ethnography as the methodological tool. This context- and discourse-sensitive approach has automatically brought with itself multiple and dynamic understandings to the sense of belonging which conceptualizes it as a process that is embedded in social relations and actions. From the methodological lens of linguistic ethnography and theoretical lens of affect theories, this article has discussed the Iraqi Turkmen women's affective struggles in their relocation process to Turkey as refugees. In this way, the rich ethnographic materials presented in this article have revealed that despite having ethnic, linguistic, and religious ties to locals, contrary to popular expectations, the Iraqi Turkmen participants have strong concerns about building a sense of belonging to the local Turkish cultures and practices in Kadife Street which they do not feel attached to.

Transcription conventions (adapted from Fuller, 2007**)**

Turkish	regular type
English	italic type
{ }	contextual information (e.g., analyst note, non-verbal events)
XXXX	unintelligible fragment on the recording
(.)	a pause of more than one second
-	a pause of less than one second or hesitation
CAPitals	high volume
=	contiguous utterances
/ /	overlapping utterances
?	rising intonation
.	falling intonation

Declaration of competing interest

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