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Home Language Skills of the Third-Generation Turkish-Dutch Bilingual Children in the Netherlands

Hollanda'da Yaşayan Üçüncü Nesil Türkçe-Hollandaca İkidilli Çocukların Ev-içi Dil Becerileri *

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ABSTRACT: With the aim of investigating the role of first language skills in second language acquisition and school achievement in the immigration context, this study presents the findings of the home language skills of the third-generation Turkish-Dutch bilingual children (n=24) living in the Netherlands by comparing them with their monolingual peers (n=24) living in Turkey. Turkish language skills of the bilingual and monolingual group have been tested through word definition, word order repetition, grammaticality judgment, syntagmatic and paradigmatic word relations, lexical comprehension, lexical production and semantic fluency tasks. The results reveal that the bilingual children lag behind their monolingual peers in word definition, semantic fluency, syntagmatic word relations and lexical production tasks. The causes can be attributed to limited first language input and lack of institutional support for immigrant languages, which may lead to problems on children's concept and cognitive development besides second language acquisition.

Keywords: bilingualism, Turkish immigrant children, home language skills, language development

ÖZ:

Bu çalışmada, bir göçmen dili olarak Türkçe dil becerilerinin ikinci dil edinimi ve okul başarısı üzerindeki rolünü araştırmak amaçlanmıştır. Hollanda'da yaşayan üçüncü nesil Türkçe-Hollandaca ikidilli çocukları (n=24) sözcük tanımlama, sözcük dizilişi tekrarı, dilbilgisel değerlendirme, dizisel ve dizimsel sözcük ilişkisi, sözcük dağarcığı, sözcük üretimi ve anlamsal akıcılık becerileri konusunda Türkçe tek dilli yaşıtları ile (n=24) karşılaştırılmıştır. Yapılan analizler sonucunda ikidilli ve tek dilli grup arasında sözcük tanımlama, anlamsal akıcılık, dizimsel ilişki ve sözcük üretimi becerileri arasında anlamsal fark olduğu ve ikidilli gurubun tek dilli yaşıtlarının gerisinde kaldığı ortaya çıkmıştır. Bu farkın sebepleri arasında ev-içindeki dil girdisinin sınırlı oluşu ve göçmen dillerine karşı kurumsal bir desteğin eksikliği gösterilebilir. Ayrıca bu durum ikidilli çocukların ikinci dil edinimi, kavram ve bilişsel gelişimi konusunda problemlere yol açabilir.

Anahtar sözcükler: ikidillilik, Türk göçmen çocuklar, ev-içi dil becerileri, dil gelişimi

* This study is a part of a research project on family language policy of the second-generation Turkish families in the Netherlands

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Introduction

In this paper, the first language skills of the third-generation Turkish children, who are in the early years of primary school in the Netherlands, are documented. The first-generation Turkish immigrants moved to the Netherlands at the end of 1960s, and they have been active in all walks of life in the mainstream country. Concerning language skills of this group, there have been many studies conducted with Turkish children in the Netherlands; however, only a few of them focused on their bilingual skills (Aarts and Verhoeven 1999; Leseman 2000; Driessen and Merry 2011), and very few studies researched their first language skills (Shaufeli 1992; Verhoeven 1994; Aarsen 1996; Akoğlu and Yağmur, 2016), and their home language environment (Scheele, Leseman & Mayo, 2010; Aarts, Demir-Vegter, Kurvers & Henrichs, 2016; Bezcioğlu-Göktolga and Yağmur, submitted). Considering the fact that children are mostly exposed to Turkish before school age (Leseman, 2000), it would be unwise to underestimate the value of Turkish in language assessment of Turkish children. Besides, obtaining data on the mother tongue level of children is valuable since it gives us indications of their second language and school achievement (Cummins, 1979).

In order to better contextualize the current research, an overview of the Turkish speakers in the Netherlands, language policies and relevant studies in the following section are provided in the following sections.

Turkish Speakers in the Netherlands

The immigration history of Turkish community in the Netherlands extends back to late 1960s. A lot of Turkish immigrants moved to the Netherlands as a result of the unemployment in rural areas in Turkey. In the beginning, they were considered to be guest workers (Backus, 2013), since their aim was to earn enough money for a better future back in Turkey. Nevertheless, financial opportunities in the host county seemed appealing, and this resulted in the settlement of Turkish workers with their families in the new country. Currently, there are around 400,000 Turkish people in the Netherlands, which is considered to be quite a large number in the country as the recent statistics show that one in eight “Dutch people has non-Western foreign background” and almost half of the Dutch population with more than one nationality also holds Turkish or Moroccan nationality (CBS, 2015).

The Turkish community in the Netherlands is known to maintain Turkish as a community language to a high extent (Böcker, 1994; Arends-Tóth & van de Vijver, 2008; Lucassen & Laarman, 2009; Extra & Yağmur, 2010; Yağmur, 2010; Eversteijn, 2011; Backus, 2013). They have easy access to Turkish media channels at home, they mostly spend their holidays in Turkey, mostly marry a partner from Turkey and interact with the Turkish community rather than the other minority and the majority groups, all of which brings the language into the daily lives of Turkish people. Therefore, children are mostly exposed to Turkish before school age (Leseman, 2000), and even the third-generation population have a certain command of Turkish language.

Concerning the social and language interaction in the Turkish community, lack of Dutch skills and living in a Turkish dominant environment made the use of Turkish

inevitable for the first-generation. They were mostly primary school graduates or had no schooling (Crul & Doomernik, 2003). The idea of moving back to Turkey resulted in lack of emphasis on learning Dutch language and culture. However, the ultimate settlement of this group changed the situation. The second-generation Turkish group was one step ahead of their parents in bilingualism in that they had schooling in Dutch in the Netherlands despite being exposed to monolingual Turkish at home, but they were still mostly from low socio-economic background like their parents (Leseman & van de Boom, 1999) with limited linguistic opportunities both in Turkish and in Dutch, and with the highest school drop-out rate. Currently, the second-generation group are the parents to their third-generation children.

Language Policies for Minority Languages in the Netherlands

Whether a minority language is supported or hindered by the policy makers in the mainstream society has significant effect on the maintenance of that language in the host country. It is not wrong to indicate that the language policies in the Netherlands hinders the improvement of minority languages as of time. In 1974, teaching of immigrant languages were initiated at schools in order to improve the home language skills of immigrant children as well as to support their learning of Dutch, under the name of Education in One's Own Language and Cultures, and then Education in One's Own Language. Turkish, among other immigrant languages, was taught at schools to children in the primary and the secondary grades. However, the second Balkenende cabinet ended these courses in 2004 with the idea that this contradicts with the integration policy of minority children (Extra & Yağmur, 2006), which brought the idea that a successful integration of minorities must solely be with their own efforts but the support of the government. Stevens (2008) puts forward that such changes tended to cause teachers to suggest minority parents speak the mainstream language in their daily lives, thus the society values the learning of the majority language to be successful in the mainstream country (Rijkschroeff, et al., 2005).

On the other hand, there are considerable efforts for teaching Turkish from a bottom-up level by Turkish minority language speakers to maintain teaching of Turkish during extra-school hours. At the national level, the teaching of Turkish was initiated by the establishment of Dutch Foundation of Turkish Education. Türkçe İçin El Ele (Hand in Hand for Turkish) was a project that aimed at developing and implementing a curriculum to provide Turkish speaking children with the most appropriate Turkish education. Currently, teaching of Turkish to children activities are limited to local level language teaching programmes at the mosques or private organizations such as OKUL in Eindhoven and Türk Okul Aile Birliği (Turkish Parent School Association) in Veghel.

Lack of an institutional support for teaching home languages comes with its challenges for Turkish speaking children.-As Cummins (1979) also asserts, a good basis in the first language is a strong indicator of learning of the second language. However, the school system does not value the first language as a consequence of submersion education (Akoğlu & Yağmur, 2016). Submersion education is described by Baker (2006, p.195) as

> A swimming pool metaphor is present in the idea of submersion education. Rather than a quick dip into a second language in mainstream education, submersion contains the idea of a student

> thrown into the deep end and expected to learn to swim as quickly as possible without the help of floats or special swimming lessons... Students may either sink, struggle or swim.

Referring back to the metaphor Baker (2006) uses, Turkish children, who hear and use mostly Turkish until they start school and whose Dutch is known to be the weak language until recently (Verhallen & Schoonen, 1993; Appel & Vermeer, 1998; Messer, 2010), are put in classrooms with their fluent Dutch speaking peers and an only Dutch speaking teacher, and they are expected to study in and use only the majority language in the classroom. The education system values the second language learning as the basic condition of school achievement, which makes it harder for the Turkish speaking children since they have to struggle both to get over the challenges they have in first language acquisition and to catch up with their monolingual Dutch speaking peers to be successful at school.

Importance of the First Language Skills

The third-generation Turkish children are considered to be true bilinguals; however, their home language does not correspond with the school language despite growing up in a bilingual environment (Aarts et al., 2015). Cummins (1979) suggests in his threshold hypothesis that if children reach a certain level in their first language, then their competency in the second language will be higher due to receiving the cognitive advantages of learning a language, so they need to obtain a minimum level of linguistic competence in their first language. Furthermore, Cummins (1981) also claims that adequate exposure and motivation in one language promotes the learning of the other language interchangeably.

A study with immigrant children in Sweden revealed that children of 10 years who have high proficiency in their first language did not have difficulty in learning the majority language, as well (Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukomaa, 1984). Similar results were received in a study (Mace-Matluck & Hoover, 1980) with Spanish-English bilingual children since children could transfer comprehension and telling stories in two languages, and in another research in which the reading skills in the first and second language was found to correlate (Lambert & Tucker, 1972). In the bilingual school context, research shows that when children receive bilingual preschool education, their vocabulary development in the second language is assisted (Barnett et al., 2007; Schwartz et al., 2012; Schwartz, 2014). According to Verhoeven (1999), if children develop higher skills in their first language, then their second-language skills also boost, so it has cognitive benefits. From this perspective, in the immigrant context, the home language of the immigrant children and their families deserves support by the mainstream institutions even at least for the sake of better skills in the mainstream language.

Language Skills of Turkish Speaking Children in the Netherlands

As the largest minority group in the Netherlands (Verhoeven, 2007), large numbers of studies have been conducted with Turkish speakers on their language skills in so far. For instance, Leseman (2000) assessed the Dutch and Turkish receptive and productive vocabulary skills of Turkish preschool children and compared the Dutch skills of these children with their monolingual Dutch peers. The results indicated that although Turkish children are exposed to Turkish until their school age, the learning of Dutch vocabulary

accelerate with the involvement of children in schools, but their vocabulary in Turkish does not show the same development. Similarly, Aarts and Verhoeven (1999) revealed in their research with 222 Turkish children living in the Netherlands that Turkish children's literacy skills are much lower than their monolingual peers. Verhallen and Schoonen (1998) focused on the lexical knowledge of bilingual Turkish-Dutch children in Turkish and Dutch, and found that their lexical knowledge is very limited both in Turkish and Dutch. Blom and her colleagues (2014) centred their research on the working memory of bilingual Turkish-Dutch children. The results of visuospatial and working memory tests revealed that bilingual children have cognitive advantages over their monolingual peers when their socio-economic status and vocabulary are controlled. Scheele and her colleagues (2010) included the home language environment in their research. This research gives another dimension to the comparison of language skills between bilingual and monolingual group since it adds the home context of children in the analysis. The results revealed that Turkish children fall behind their peers despite equal cognitive abilities, and there is a strong relationship between home language activities and language skills of children.

On the other hand, research on Turkish language skills of Turkish-Dutch children are quite limited. Concerning the comparison of the first language skills of Turkish-Dutch bilinguals and Turkish monolinguals of children, a recent study by Akoğlu and Yağmur (2016) indicated that Turkish-Dutch bilingual children have lower language skills in Turkish regarding cognitive concepts, lexical, syntactic and textual skills than their monolingual Turkish peers. In addition, the level of education of mothers' have a significant impact on language skills of the bilingual group. Similar research by Backus and Yağmur (submitted) presented similar results in their comparison of the Turkish-Dutch bilingual group with the Turkish monolingual group in their socio-pragmatic skills. We aim at elaborating on the language development of the third-generation Turkish children by examining their first language skills.

Methodology

In order to document the linguistic variation in the first language skills of Turkish-Dutch bilingual and Turkish monolingual children, the following research questions are addressed:

1) Is there a gap between the first language skills of Turkish-Dutch bilingual children growing up in the Netherlands and monolingual Turkish children growing up in Turkey?

2) If there is a gap, in what specific language tasks do Turkish-Dutch bilingual children growing up in the Netherlands differ from the monolingual Turkish children growing up in Turkey?

The specific language tasks in this study are word definition, word order repetition, grammaticality judgment, word description (syntagmatic and paradigmatic word relations), lexical comprehension, lexical production and semantic fluency.

Participants

The participants of this study are 24 bilingual Dutch-Turkish and 24 monolingual Turkish children. The bilingual group was recruited from Eindhoven, Drunen and Veghel. Parents of the children in the Netherlands were approached through social media groups, prominent Turks in the area, school visits and Turkish foundations. Mothers and fathers were given information about the aim of the study. In total, parents of 24 children accepted to take part in the study.

A purposive sampling method was used for participant selection (Fraenkel and Wallen 2006). Namely, participants were selected based on certain criteria: both parents had to be Turkish, at least one parent had to be born in or moved to the Netherlands before school age, and children had to be in the early years of primary school. Based on the criteria, all of the parents were considered to be second-generation Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, so the children as participants constituted the third-generation Turkish group in the country. All of the participating families defined Turkish as their home language. Among 24 children, the parents of 5 children were born in the Netherlands, and for the rest of the families, one parent was either born in the Netherlands or moved to the Netherlands before school age. Their spouses moved from Turkey to the Netherlands through marriage. Previous research show that most of the Turkish community selects their spouses from Turkey (Böcker 1994; Lucassen and Laarman 2009; Yağmur 2010); therefore, the families represent the general situation in the country.

Four age groups constituted the bilingual group. Eight children were 5 years old (Mean age = 64.62 months), 8 children were 6 years old (Mean age = 76.87 months), 6 children were 7 years old (Mean age = 89.16 months), and 2 children were 8 years old (100 months). Fifteen children were female and the remaining 9 children were male. The level of education of parents varied. Mothers of 8 children and fathers of 6 children had a high level of education (i.e. graduates of higher education), 9 mothers and 13 fathers had average level of education (i.e. secondary school graduates) and the remaining 7 mothers and 5 fathers had low level of education (i.e. primary school graduates).

The monolingual Turkish group was recruited from Kastamonu based on a purposive sampling method. Twenty-four children were selected based on the same gender, age and educational background of their parents. Parents of these children were approached and explained about the aim of the study. The parents who agreed that their children could take part in the research were given an appointment for data collection. There were 15 females and 9 males similar to the bilingual group. Eight children were 5 years old (Mean age = 64.37 months), 8 children were 6 years old (Mean age = 77.12 months), 6 children were 7 years old (Mean age = 89.00 months) and there remaining 2 children were 8 years old (Mean age = 101 months). The level of parents' education was equal to the bilingual group.

Instruments

Various language tasks in Turkish were administered to measure children's Turkish language skills. To measure the knowledge of cognitive concepts, the Turkish version of a bilingual test (Verhoeven et al. 1990) was administered. This test had 65 items in total, and included sub-sections for colours (15 items), form (15 items), quantity (15 items), space

(10 items) and relations (10 items). The test included questions such as "açık mavi" (light blue), "En ince adamı göster" (show the thinnest man), "Hangi evin üç tane penceresi var?" (Which house has 3 windows?), "Evle ağacın arasındaki kutuyu göster" (Show the box between the house and the tree) and "Hangi bardak henüz dolu değil?" (Which glass is not full yet?). Children got 1 point for each correct item they presented. For productive vocabulary, the TİFALDİ Expressive Language Test (Güven & Kazak Berumen, 2010) was administered. This test required the child to tell the name of the picture shown by the researcher. In addition, a word definition task (13 items) was administered in which children are required to provide the word that was defined to them. To illustrate, the researcher read the definition "Çok sıcak ve çok soğuk olmayan süte ne denir?" (What do we call the milk which is not very hot or very cold?), and the children were expected to come up with the answer "ılık" (warm). Another tasks included word order repetition (10 items) and grammaticality judgment (15 items). In the word repetition task, children were expected to repeat the sentence uttered by the researcher. In the grammaticality judgment task, the children were uttered a sentence by the researcher and they were expected to say if the sentence is acceptable or not. If not, they were expected to correct the sentence. For example, the researcher read the sentence "O resim yapmayı sever" (He/she likes painting). The expected response was that the sentence is correct. The researcher also uttered sentences like "Ben şimdi oturuyoruz" (I are sitting now). In this sentence, children were expected to say the sentence is not acceptable and correct it as "Ben şimdi oturuyorum" (I am sitting now), or "Biz şimdi oturuyoruz" (We are sitting now). In the semantic fluency test, given the semantic categories (animals and food), the children were required to come up with as many categorical names as possible within 60 seconds. The final task was word description to measure productive vocabulary skills. The test was adopted from Verhallen and Schoonen (1993). In this task, the researcher presented three high-frequency stimulus nouns (watermelon, dog, refrigerator) to children and asked "Could you tell me everything you know about a dog?" Children were expected to explain as much as possible about the presented word.

For CITO concepts, word definition, word order repetition and grammaticality judgment tasks, children got 1 point for each correct response. The scores on the productive vocabulary test were calculated based on the manual provided in the TİFALDİ test package. For the semantic fluency task, 1 point was given for each names children provided correctly under each category in 60 seconds. The results of the word description task was measured based on 2 category: paradigmatic and syntagmatic word relations. To illustrate, if the child explained the watermelon as "a fruit, has seeds", he/she got 2 points for paradigmatic relations (superordinate and part-whole relations), and if he/she said "in the fridge, red, summer", he/she got 3 points for syntagmatic relations (description information: size, shape, colour, taste, location, function, use).

Procedures

In the Dutch context, appointments were made with the mothers of the children. As children were available after-school time, the appointments were made in the afternoons. The first appointment began with a game of the child's choice such as memory and puzzle to break the ice between the child and the researcher. Then the researcher explained that

she was doing an assignment and asked if the child was willing to help her. All of the children showed their eagerness to cooperate. Data was collected in 2 or 3 different sessions. With the older group, data was collected in 2 visits, but as the younger group had a shorter attention span, a third visit was necessary to complete the data collection. Similarly, in the Turkish monolingual context, data from the older group was collected in 2 sessions, but a third visit was arranged with the younger group. After the collection of data, scores were coded into SPSS Package Programme (Version 22) for statistical analysis.

Findings

The analysis of the results of children's performance in Turkish tasks were performed in the following procedures:

First of all, each child in the bilingual group was matched with his/her pair for the same age, gender and SES in the monolingual group. Then, the scores of each pair was entered into SPSS Package programme, and the reliability scores of the tasks for the lexical comprehension, word definition, word order repetition and grammaticality judgment were computed and the Cronbach's Alpha values for each test was obtained. All of the scores were higher than .8, which signifies a good level of internal consistency between items.

Table 1. Reliability scores of the scales (Cronbach's Alpha values)

Scales	Alpha Coefficient	Number of Items
Cognitive Concepts	.847	65
Word Definition	.823	13
Word Order Repetition	.864	10
Grammaticality Judgment	.839	15

As computed by Kazak Berument and Güven (2013), the Cronbach's Alpha values for TİFALDİ Expressive Language test was .95 for 5 year-olds and 6 year-olds, .94 for 7 year-olds and .91 for 8 year-olds. All in all, the scores were highly reliable.

Secondly, a t-test analysis was done in order to examine the difference between the first language skills of the bilingual children growing up in the Netherlands and their monolingual peers growing up in Turkey. As each bilingual child was paired with his/her monolingual peer on the same age, gender and socio-economic status, a paired-sample t-test was appropriate for the analysis. The results are presented in Table 2.

Scales		***N***	***Mean***	***S.D.***	***t***	***p***
Word Definition	NL	24	3.66	2.46	-8.39	.000*
	TR	24	7.00	3.14		

Word Order Repetition	NL	24	8.20	3.00	-.92	.366
	TR	24	8.83	1.40		
Semantic Fluency	NL	24	13.70	6.96	-2.58	.017*
	TR	24	18.66	7.14		
Grammaticality Judgment	NL	24	7.75	3.87	-.04	.961
	TR	24	7.79	3.06		
Paradigmatic Relations	NL	24	4.29	4.21	-.92	.367
	TR	24	5.16	2.61		
Syntagmatic Relations	NL	24	11.16	5.37	-2.10	.047*
	TR	24	13.95	3.64		
Lexical Comprehension	NL	24	55.54	7.33	1.83	.080
	TR	24	52.71	5.58		
Lexical Production	NL	24	82.58	23.37	-4.99	.000*
	TR	24	110.21	12.82		

NL: the bilingual participants from the Netherlands; TR: Turkish participants from Turkey

As presented in Table 2, there are statistically significant differences in the results for the tasks word definition, semantic fluency, syntagmatic relations and lexical production. However, the scores on the tasks word order repetition, grammaticality judgment, paradigmatic relations and lexical comprehension were not statistically significant. Besides, in all of the tasks except for lexical comprehension, the mean scores for the monolingual group was higher than the mean scores of the bilingual group. However, the bilingual group had higher scores in the lexical comprehension task.

Discussion and Conclusion

The bilingual participants in this study are the third-generation children growing up in the Netherlands. The parents of the third-generation, the second-generation; received education in the Netherlands, and they are aware that the social mobility is possible through education (Bezcioğlu-Göktolga & Yağmur, submitted). The second-generation bridges the first and the third-generation, which has a significant role in language maintenance (or shift) in line with the three-generation model proposed by Fishman (1961). In that sense, obtaining information about the language skills of the third-generation children is of vital significance as it provides valuable indications for the maintenance of the first language skills of future generations.

In this study, although there is not a statistically significant difference, the bilingual group possesses high scores in the word repetition task. The bilinguals could listen and

repeat back most of the sentences easily. They have similar scores in lexical comprehension and grammaticality judgment tasks with the monolingual group, as well. In the lexical comprehension task, they could understand complex instructions and concepts in Turkish. De Houwer (2006) and De Houwer, Bornstein and Putnick (2014) explain that bilinguals may have faster lexical development due to the fact that they hear two languages and they receive more input compared to monolinguals. In addition, compared to the monolingual group, bilingual children have the notion of different languages and cognitive advantages (Blom et al., 2014). Bilingualism requires ceaseless monitoring of the languages to use in different communicative contexts (Costa, et al., 2009). That is why bilinguals can be advantageous in tasks that require linguistic control (Bialystok, 1988) as well as metalinguistic awareness (Bialystok & Barac, 2012). In this study, the bilingual group shows awareness of sentences that are not grammatical and they can mostly control, judge and manage the ungrammatical sentences almost as well as the monolingual group.

In the lexical production tasks; however, the bilingual group does not have that advantage. Although they hear Turkish in their social environments and they have competency, they learn and use Dutch in the school context, they mostly prefer to speak Dutch with their siblings and peers (Eversteijn, 2011), and they tend to use Dutch if they realize the interlocutor can understand Dutch. Dutch apparently more active in their mental lexicon. In the word definition, semantic fluency and lexical production and syntagmatic word relations tasks, bilingual children fall behind their peers. In the word definition task, the bilingual group had difficulty in defining the words such blackboard (yazı tahtası), happy (mutlu), flood (sel), open market/bazaar (pazar) and bridge (köprü). Failing in defining the word "flood" might be explained as the word is not used frequently and the concept is not used in daily lives within the family in the Netherlands. However, the bilingual group had also difficulty in defining the high-frequency words such as "happy". Although they understood what the definition referred to, they could not come up with the Turkish word for "happy". Instead, they mostly uttered the Dutch word "blij" for instead of the Turkish equivalent of "happy". Descriptive information in the syntagmatic relations task indicates the richness of vocabulary of children, since they can provide rich information about the meaning of a word by describing and associating it with other words (Vygotsky, 1962; Anglin, 1985; Schwartz, 2014). The findings in this study show that bilingual children lack this richness in their home language. There is a gap between the expressive vocabulary skills of the monolingual and bilingual groups (Eilers, Pearson & Cobo-Lewis, 2006). There might be two explanations for this situation. The first one is that their parents might switch between languages very frequently (Eversteijn, 2011; Backus, Demirçay & Sevinç, 2013) and use Dutch adjectives and nouns in their Turkish sentences; therefore, children lack the Turkish equivalence of these words. Then children cannot learn such concepts in their first language. The second explanation might be that beginning from the preschool, there is a focus on vocabulary development of children in the domains of expressing feelings, numbers, counting, comparisons, etc. to achieve in the national educational goal about acquiring adequate vocabulary to be able to "think and talk about language" at the end of the primary school (Broekhof, 2006), which are all in Dutch. Exposure to and frequency of Dutch language in the school context may cause children to

remember and use the Dutch equivalence words instead of Turkish. All in all, lack of lexical knowledge, limited input in Turkish and the frequency of Dutch words instead of Turkish may lead to superficial knowledge in Turkish.

Overall, although bilingual children in this study do not significantly differ from their monolingual peers in the four tasks discussed above, they still do not seem to possess certain skills in their home language, especially in the production level. Bialystok (2009) asserts that if children of immigrant parents cannot achieve transmitting their immigrant language, than it is highly probably that the children will lack the opportunity to be balanced bilinguals. Second-generation parents are mostly eager to transmit their language to their children (Wong Fillmore, 1991; Eilers et al., 2006), but the second-generation parents themselves may not have enough first language skills to share it with their children. The use of Turkish in daily life does not necessarily mean that their children acquire the language well, but the quality of the input matters to a great deal, as well. Most of the Turkish immigrants come from a low socio-economic background (Leseman and van de Boom, 1999; Crul and Doomernik, 2003) and they may lack required understanding and knowledge for language development which can cause less stimulation for cognitive development (Bradley and Corwyn, 2002). In that respect, it might be a heavy burden to put the responsibility only on parents' shoulders. If there happens to be an interdependence between the first and second language skills of immigrant children (Cobo-Lewis et al., 2002; Bialystock, 2005; Schwartz, 2014), if limited first language skills hamper children bilingual skills in general and in academic register (Cummins, 1979; Verhoeven, 1994; Leseman, 2000; Yağmur & Konak, 2009; Scheele et al., 2010;), and if immigrant children fall behind their peers in school achievement (Leseman, 2000) which potentially cause problems in the mainstream society, then the mainstream institutions, policy-makers, schools, minority organizations and families should work in collaboration to create better conditions for language skills of immigrant children. Restrictions in the use of home language, as a consequence of submersion education, results in problems in children's cognitive and concept development as well as limited mainstream language skills. Submersion education causes negative consequences in the first language skills, which leads to various connected problems (Schwartz, 2014). Balanced bilingual children have advantages in cognitive tasks, metalinguistic abilities (Cummins, 1978; Diaz & Klinger, 1991) among many others. That is why, in order to become successful bilinguals, immigrant children should be given the opportunity to improve their mother tongue skills and cognitive development so as to prosper in the school language and academic achievement.

Limitations

The findings of this study is limited to 48 children in total, so it cannot be generalized to the Turkish-Dutch bilingual children in the Netherlands. Besides, it is only limited to the home language skills of bilingual children, so additional research on first and second language skills is needed.

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