

# *The Impacts of Bilingualism on Pre-Schoolers*

**Nurdan Açelya KELEŞ<sup>1</sup>**

**Osman SABUNCUOĞLU<sup>2</sup>**

## **Abstract**

Bilingualism has been a key area of research interest lately and has spread so rapidly that many parents want their children to acquire two languages equally well. There has been a lot of research on bilingualism. However, teachers' and parents' views of bilingual education are not available. This is a significant gap and this study wants to fill this gap. This research aims to investigate the effects of bilingualism on pre-schoolers at a private preschool in İstanbul as being bilingual is vital for language acquisition at an early age. In this research a questionnaire, which is a quantitative data collection tool, was conducted in order to identify parents' and teachers' attitudes towards bilingual education. The participants were eight instructors and forty parents. The data collected were analysed descriptively and evaluated. In the light of the findings, parents have a positive attitude towards bilingualism and are aware of the importance of bilingualism. Native speakers teaching children English consider bilingualism to be very important. Children should be encouraged to pick up a second language in a natural environment and bilingualism should be part of the education system in Turkey.

**Keywords:** *Bilingualism, Acquire, Conscious Learning, Communicate, Observation*

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<sup>1</sup>İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi, Türkiye, nurdankeles@stu.aydin.edu.tr, <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9158-2426>

<sup>2</sup>Dr. Öğr. Üyesi, İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi, Türkiye, [osmansabuncuoglu@aydin.edu.tr](mailto:osmansabuncuoglu@aydin.edu.tr), <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6341-5524>

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## **İki Dilliliğin Anaokulu Öğrencileri Üzerindeki Etkileri**

### **Öz**

Son yıllarda çift dil öğrenmenin önemli bir araştırma konusu olduğu görülmektedir. İki dil bilmenin hızla yayılması nedeniyle birçok ebeveyn çocuklarının erken yaşta iki dili eşit düzeyde edinmesini arzu etmektedir. Dil öğretim alanında iki dillilik üzerine birçok araştırma yapılmıştır, ancak öğretmen ve ebeveynlerin iki dilli eğitim ile ilgili tutumlarını ölçen bir araştırma henüz mevcut değildir. Bu çalışma bu boşluğu doldurabilecektir. Bu araştırma erken yaşta birden fazla dil ediniminin İstanbul'daki bir ana okulda çift dilde eğitim alan çocuklar üzerindeki etkilerini araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu araştırmada nicel bir bilgi toplama aracı olan anket uygulandı. Sekiz öğretmenin ve kırk ebeveynin katıldığı bu ankette katılımcıların tutumları belirlendi. Toplanan bilgiler analiz edildi ve değerlendirildi. Elde edilen bulgular çerçevesinde, ebeveynlerin ikinci bir dil edinimine karşı pozitif bir tutuma sahip olduğu ve ikinci bir dil ediniminin öneminin farkında olduğu anlaşılmaktadır. Okul öncesi çocuklara İngilizce öğreten ana dili İngilizce olan öğretmenlerin iki dil bilmenin çok önemli olduğunun farkında olduğu görülmektedir. Çocukların erken yaşta doğal olarak ikinci bir dil edinimi teşvik edilmelidir ve eğitim siteminin önemli bir parçası olmalıdır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *İki Dil Bilmek, Dil Edinimi, Bilinçli Öğrenme, İletişim, Gözlemleme*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Bilingualism has recently been a major area of interest and learning at least one or more languages has recently become people's biggest goal as they have different purposes for learning two languages equally well. Some people aspire to learn one or two foreign languages for study or work purposes while others need to communicate with each other. Therefore, there is a lot of demand for people who can use at least two languages fluently (Richards & Schmidt, 2015). They choose to learn English as it is viewed as a lingua franca, which is a language that is adopted as a common language between speakers whose native languages are different (Oxford Dictionary, 2015). People who are aware of the importance of speaking two languages want to achieve their aspiration by providing their kids with opportunities to acquire languages.

Bilingual education has recently become a common tool of education. Parents who immigrate to another country usually send their kids to preschools in which they can acquire the language in a natural way (Baker, 2014). Likewise, some parents who live in Turkey want to give their kids a chance to acquire English naturally, so they start to get exposed to English in preschools at a very young age. As they start to acquire English at a young age, they will succeed in becoming fluent in English. The development of fluency at a young age can make language learning successful. For this reason, bilingual education is becoming more and more popular with children across the world (García, 2011). As people need to communicate with others from different cultures, they want to offer their children opportunities to learn one or more languages at the same time other than their own language.

Being bilingual at a young age can offer kids many advantages. Firstly, bilingual education help kids develop cognitive skills. These kids are more creative than others who are monolingual. They start to think creatively and productively. This can give them an academic advantage over monolingual kids. Bilingualism can have a thoughtful effect on their brain and cultivate intellectual skills (Garcia,2011). Secondly, being bilingual can increase their awareness of their other cultures as they can be culturally responsive and develop a positive attitude towards other cultures. Being bilingual can also make kids more sociable individuals. As they need to communicate with their peers, they will be able to make friends and learn from one another. However, speaking two languages rather than just one has understandable applied benefits in a progressively globalized world. In recent years, educators and researchers have begun to confirm that the benefits of bilingualism are even more essential than being able to converse with a wider range of people (Bialystok, 2011).

Because of this high demand for English, many investors invest in preschools. For instance, the number of preschools in Turkey is growing fast. There is a lot of demand for preschools in which parents can raise bilingual kids and bilingualism is supported. In some of these international preschools native speakers are employed, so kids can get a chance to get exposed to English and pick up the language from these native speakers. In these schools where the language of instruction is English, there is a possibility of taking basic courses

preparing them for the future in both languages.

The topic that I have selected is important for Turkey in terms of how the communication gap is growing within here, mainly due to the increased tourism and the students coming to study here. I grew up in a bilingual environment where I spoke English and Turkish simultaneously and as I grew up I realized its importance on my interactions and ease within the community. Also, now as an English teacher, I understand the importance of speaking and understanding two languages well.

There are three main reasons for doing research into bilingualism. The first purpose is this research is to verify if bilingualism can become an education system in Turkey. The current situation will be analysed and then will be compared to the results I obtain to indicate whether or not bilingualism can work here and how teaching pre-schoolers a second language will influence their parents' and teachers' perceptions of bilingualism and bilingual education. Second, whether English can be easily learned alongside Turkish in schools by pre-schoolers, since children learn and pick up a language earlier than adults and more easily, this will be observed and evaluated during the research as well. Thirdly, the role of English in students will be observed with their interactions and their ease in communicating in both languages will be observed and evaluated if it is easier to acquire a language when they are young. Furthermore, if they learn English in a natural environment where they can communicate better and there is no affective filter with the teacher which helps in easy language learning will also be researched.

There has been a lot of research into bilingualism; however, teachers' voices and parents' beliefs about bilingualism have largely been absent from such analyses and little is known about what opportunities bilingual education can offer their kids and whether it can make a difference in their lives. This is a significant gap given and this study wants to fill the gap by exploring and analysing parents' and teachers' perceptions and practices of bilingual education in a preschool case in Istanbul.

This study has aimed to explore a group of ELT teachers' and parents' attitudes towards being bilingual. The following questions are addressed in this study:

1. What are the parents' attitudes towards bilingualism?
2. What are the teachers' attitudes towards bilingualism?
3. Should bilingualism become an education system in Turkey?

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

Bilingualism refers to all people that can communicate in at least two languages. The process of bilingualism may happen at different ages and, of course, in different environments. Being bilingual enables pupils to communicate almost effectively in two different languages and also having a perception of both cultures. It is about being able to comprehend another language and being able to shift mechanically into speaking it with them. Bialystock (2011) states that a bilingual person is described as a person who is able to speak two languages equally at a certain level. Likewise, Hamers and Blanc (2000:6) define a bilingual person or bilingualism as "people who can speak two languages with a native-like proficiency."

Bialystok, Craik, Green and Gollan (2009) all point out that there are different many ways of being bilingual. Some of them are bilingual by birth whereas others desire to be bilingual. Some of the reasons for bilingualism can be listed as follows:

- the place where bilingual people live like Canada,
- people raised by bilingual parents or parents who can use different languages,
- moving to a different country,
- getting educated in another language especially university,
- residing in another country for a while.

As for bilingual education, depending on the age in which an individual has acquired a second language, bilinguals are classified into different types of bilingualism: early, late, additive, subtractive and passive bilingualism. Firstly, early bilingualism makes reference to children who have learned a second language before the age of six and is divided into simultaneous and successive bilingualism. In order for the acquisition to take place, a great interaction between the learner and the target language is required (Krashen, 1985). Within this category, a

distinction between two subcategories can be made. Children who learn two languages at the same time refer to this category since the moment they are born. A good example of this is a multinational couple raises their child by speaking to him or her in two languages. Consecutive or successive bilingualism occurs when a child is still consolidating his first language when he starts acquiring the second one. Secondly, late bilingualism refers to bilingualism when the second language is learned after the age of 6 or 7 especially when it is learned in adolescence. At this stage, the speaker already masters a language, so he will use his first language as a reference to learn a second language. Thirdly, additive bilingualism refers to bilingualism which makes reference to the case in which someone has learned a second language in a manner that enables him to communicate in both languages, without diminishing his skills in the first language; it is a situation where a second language is an asset, rather than being a hindrance to the first language. Fourthly, subtractive bilingualism emerges as the opposite of its additive counterpart and is the phenomenon where someone has learned a second language, but not without after-effects for the first language. This means that while proficiency in the second language will increase, the proficiency in the first one will decrease. This type of bilingualism is usually found in groups of people whose mother tongue is positioned as a minority language. Finally, passive bilingualism can refer to bilingualism which involves a middle stage of bilingualism since it describes people who can understand a second language either written or spoken but cannot speak it.

Regarding the advantages of bilingual education, raising children to be bilingual is a significant decision. It will affect the rest of their lives and the lives of their parents. For children, being bilingual or monolingual may affect their identity, social arrangements, schooling, employment, marriage, area of residence, travel and thinking. There are some educational, communication, cultural, cognitive, personality, educational, social and economic benefits bilingual education offer. To start with, bilingualism helps members of the family to communicate well in an extended family and also people in a community can develop a good communication with one another. People are able to be literate in two languages. Bilingualism can also help people to have access to different cultures and also make people more tolerant of other people from different cultures. This can lead to a deeper understanding of

multiculturalism. Moreover, bilingualism can offer some cognitive benefits. For instance, young learners can be more creative than monolingual speakers. Furthermore, bilingualism can help bilingual kids raise their self-esteem, enhance their mental development and feel secure in identity. Bilingualism can also contribute to education. For example, it can increase curriculum development and make it easy for people of all ages to learn a third language. Finally, bilingualism can open up doors for career purposes as it can create new job opportunities and help them to earn money. For instance, several researchers have demonstrated the positive link between English proficiency and success in the labour market (Gonzalez 2000; Trejo 2003; Bleakley and Chin 2004).

On the other hand, bilingualism offers some disadvantages. The first disadvantage is that the kid will face a temporary problem if the kid cannot improve both of them. When the kid's languages are under the standards or underdeveloped, the kid cannot cope with the school syllabus in each language. Therefore, the kid will get behind his classmates. The second disadvantage is that a bilingual kid might face a problem with the identity. The kid will probably have a problem with his or her identity when he or she rejects heritage language or culture, he or she will feel lonely. This usually happens to immigrants' kids as they feel in the middle of both communities. Some people may lose their culture and language to be able to integrate to the community they live in. The third problem with bilingualism is that young learners can mix up both languages especially lexis, terms and grammar (Baker, 2014). A good example of language mixing is negative transfer between two languages and switching to another language. The major problem bilingual kids face is that they usually refuse to use one of their languages. They will probably reject their native language when they communicate with members of the family; they prefer to use the language used by their friends outside of their home. The main problem bilingual kids face is that they usually choose to use the majority language more. When kids reach teenage years, their peers play a bigger role than their parents when they make a choice about the language. If parents put pressure on their children or make them speak a language, the kids will be able to react to them badly. Kids who temporarily stop using one language when they are teenage, they can pick it up again later. To increase the chances of reversing

the rejection of one language, parents can talk to the teenager in that language.

There are many factors affecting bilingualism. The first factor that helps people acquire and improve a language is the need for that language. People need language to communicate or to interact with others. If the need for a language is available, language acquisition may occur voluntarily. This is true for children as it is for adults. The second factor is that people need to get enough authentic input or exposure to the target language and also, they can get a chance to use the language. The third factor influencing bilingualism is that they should be encouraged to acquire the language both at home, at school and at work by being given positive feedback. The last factor is that they ought to develop a positive attitude towards the target language and culture to succeed in the acquisition process.

There are some approaches to raising a bilingual child. The first approach is one parent one language. The second one is minority language at home. The third approach is that when parents move to a country, they usually use their mother language at home while kids use the target language at school or with friends (Richards & Schmidt (2015). Children will develop their language skills through a foreign language system. The fourth approach is language immersion programs. Parents who cannot move abroad can send their kids to language schools where all classes are conducted in English. The last approach is language classes abroad. Parents can allow their kids to get exposed to real English in a natural environment if they cannot move abroad. A good example of this is a summer school or work-and- travel programs in a foreign country. Kids acquire the language from their parents in a natural way. In other words, they are not taught how to speak the language. Kids usually need two important things when they acquire it. First, they get exposed to the language and their needs should arise so that they can express their feelings. When they communicate or interact with others, they should produce or use the language so as to meet their needs.

Children acquire the language more easily in a natural environment without any negative feelings which make language learning difficult. Acquiring the language in a natural environment makes the language learning progress easier due to the unawareness of the language being taught. Acquiring the language without feeling forced or under pressure

makes a big difference while learning a new language. Acquiring a language subconsciously makes people feel more comfortable producing the language. They do not have the fear of making a mistake which speeds up the time of learning and producing language. If learners are not afraid of making a mistake, they can produce better learning outcomes

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted to explore the attitudes of parents and teachers towards bilingualism. The main purpose behind the first phase of the study was to identify the attitudes of the parents of 40 bilingual children and teachers teaching. To explore teachers' and parents' attitudes towards bilingualism, two different questionnaires in which 40 parents and 8 teachers participated were conducted. This is a quantitative study based on a numeric analysis, so the findings gathered will keep researchers and educators informed about people's perceptions of bilingual education. The teachers and parents filled in the surveys which are based on their views of children's bilingual development and bilingual education. Later on, the data collected were evaluated and discussed.

This study was conducted at a preschool in Istanbul which gives pre-schoolers a bilingual education. The school educates 40 kids who are aged 3-6. The parents are all English-speaking adults whose English levels are over upper-intermediate. They are aged between 33-56. 26 of the participants were women and 14 were men. The aim of the school is to help kids acquire English in a natural environment. The kids acquire English through songs, games, dramas, field trips, videos and visual resources. 3-4-year-old kids mostly focus on listening and speaking and then they continue with reading and writing. They have got English classes 25 hours a week, so they get a lot of exposure to the English language. Four of the teachers who teach these children English are native speakers of English while others are non-native speakers who are fluent in English.

The participants of the study were 40 parents and 8 teachers of children who are educated to be bilingual. In this study, quantitative data collection instruments were used. Two different questionnaires in which forty parents and eight teachers participated were conducted. For this study, the first questionnaire which was developed by Shin and Krashen (1996) was used to collect the required data about parents' attitudes towards bilingualism. The second questionnaire which was developed by Young and Tran (1999) was conducted with a view to collecting data about teachers' attitudes

towards bilingualism. The questionnaires which were given to parents and teachers to fill in were collected 2 weeks later. After applying and collecting the questionnaires from the parents and teachers, the data collected were analysed via excel. The findings discovered were evaluated later.

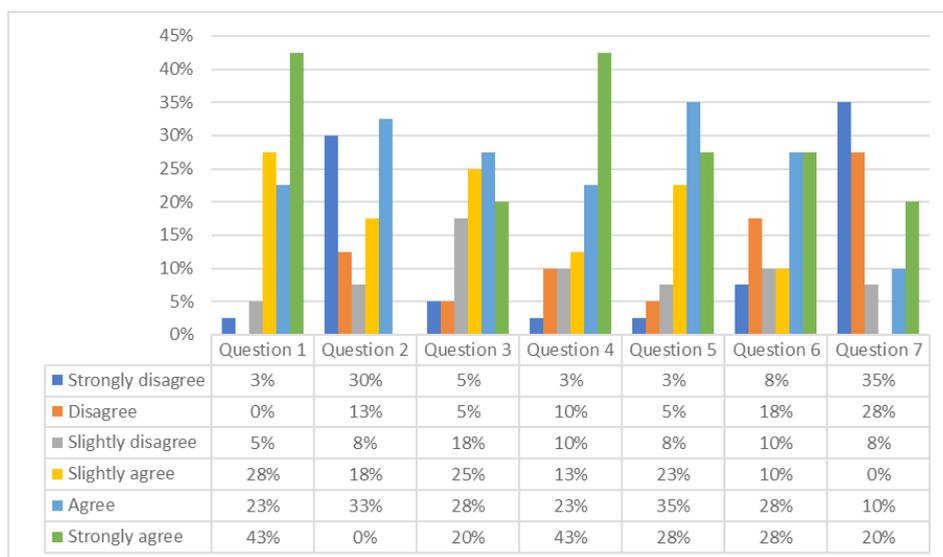
## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In this chapter the findings and the results of the data collection which have been collected are presented. The first section presents the findings of the first phase achieved from a questionnaire which aims to identify parents’ perceptions or attitudes towards bilingualism and bilingual education. The second section presents the findings of the second phase of the questionnaire aiming at obtaining EFL teachers’ views of bilingualism.

### Results or Findings of the Parent’s Attitudes Toward Bilingualism (Questionnaire Section 1)

Parents’ attitudes towards bilingualism can be seen below in Table 4.1. This questionnaire consisting of seven questions aims to identify parents’ attitudes towards bilingualism and bilingual education. Most of parents whose kids learn English and Turkish at a private preschool in İstanbul are satisfied with this education system. Parents are usually in favour of bilingual education which allows kids to get exposed to another language other than Turkish.

**Table 1.** Parent’s Attitude towards Bilingualism



The results or findings of the first section of the questionnaire are presented below. According to the findings of the first question, 42.5 % of the parents who have participated in this questionnaire strongly agree that bilingual education allows children to keep up in subject matter while acquiring English. On the other hand, 2.5 % strongly disagree with this statement. This indicates that most of the parents who educate their children with a bilingual education system also think this education system will help their children with the other subjects during school.

According to the findings of the second question, whereas 32.5 % of the parents agree that developing literacy in the primary language is necessary in order to facilitate the acquisition in English, 30 % percent strongly disagree. This finding actually gives us the information that parents should be informed about this situation. This shows that many parents would like their pre-schoolers to develop listening and speaking skills. However, others emphasise the importance of reading and writing in a foreign language.

According to the findings of the third question, most of the parents agree (agree: 27.5 % slightly agree: 25 % strongly agree: 20 %) that learning subject matter through the primary language first will make subject matter taught in English more understandable. This indicates that Turkish parents are in favour of taking basic courses in the child's native language. They would like their child to acquire English a lot, but when it comes to basic lessons, they think differently.

According to the findings of the fourth question, nearly half of the parents, which is 42.5 %, strongly agree that high levels of bilingualism can lead to practical, career related advantages. This is an important factor for the parents to support bilingual education. That's why, they encourage their kids to start acquiring English at a very young age. They probably think that if they are fluent in English, they will have many job opportunities in the future. For this reason, they believe that English will create many employment opportunities for their children in the future.

According to the findings of the fifth question, among 40 participants 34 believe that high levels of bilingualism can result in superior cognitive development which gives us the information that nowadays parents are aware of the importance and cognitive effects of being bilingual on their kids at an early age. Learning a foreign language will develop kids' cognitive skills such as creativity and brain power and also critical thinking

skills like applying and analysing. Language learning requires learners to construct or process knowledge rather than receive it passively.

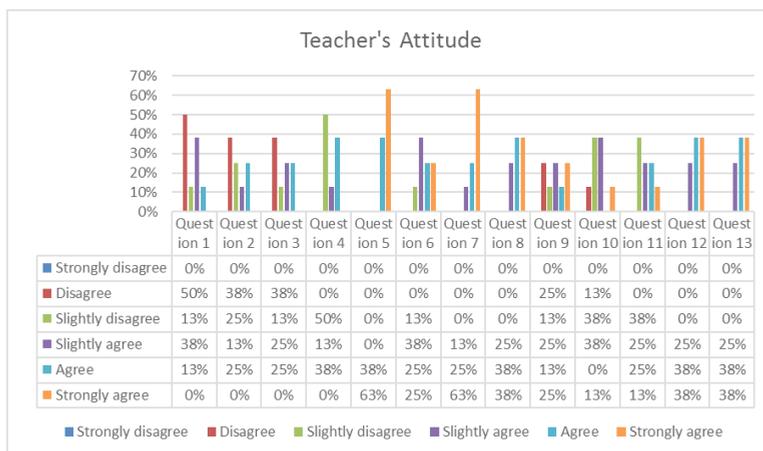
According to the findings of the sixth question, 65 % of the parents (27.5 % strongly) believe that it is important to keep the child’s primary language and culture. This shows that Turkish people consider cultural values to be highly important and they tend to maintain their identity. Not only will kids learn English but they will also protect their language and other values which parents think are important.

According to the findings of the seventh question, 70 % of the parents disagree that it would be confusing for Turkish students to have classes in Turkish and English at the same time. This information shows us that parents are aware that children can understand the difference between languages at a young age. When kids acquire rather than learn, they pick it up naturally, so it is impossible to mix up the languages. However, if they learn the language consciously, they will probably mix up both of the languages because of negative transfer or interference or code switching.

### Results or Findings of the Teacher’s Attitudes towards Bilingualism (Questionnaire Section 2)

In Table 4.2, teachers’ attitudes towards bilingualism can be seen. Teachers working at a private preschool in İstanbul have answered thirteen questions which aim to identify their attitudes towards bilingualism and bilingual education. Teachers teaching at this preschool are both native speakers and non-native speakers. Native speakers’ attitudes towards being bilingual and bilingualism differ from those of non-native speakers considerably.

**Table 2.** Teacher’s Attitude towards Bilingualism



The findings of the second section of the questionnaire are as follows: According to the findings of the first item, Turkish teachers are more likely to agree that if a student is not proficient in English, he/she should be in a classroom learning his/her first language (reading, writing) as a part of the school curriculum. However, English teachers disagree with this statement. Native speakers think differently from their Turkish colleagues because native speakers think kids should be encouraged to study English in the same way. High achievers and slow learners can be placed in the same place so that slow learners can be integrated to the program.

According to the findings of the second item, native English teachers disagree that if a student is not proficient in English, the child should not be in a classroom learning subject matter in his/her first language. They think kids should continue to study English with their classmates who are more successful than them. Kids can face some problems learning English like being ready or facing culture shock. Teachers can help them to overcome these problems. Slow learners can also experience a high level of affective filter which is a barrier to learning English.

According to the findings of the third item, 75% of the English teachers don't, 75% of the Turkish teachers do believe that learning subject matter in the first language helps second language students learn subject matter better when they study it in English. This indicates that Turkish teachers are for acquiring English, but they are against taking basic lessons in English. However, native speakers are for taking courses in English as they can allow kids to be exposed to real and authentic English.

According to the findings of the fourth item, 50% of the teachers feel that if students develop literacy in the first language, it will facilitate the development of reading and writing in English. Teachers are not sure about learning to read and write at a very young age. They do not think it is necessary for kids to read and write at the age of 3 years old. However, they should learn to develop both listening and speaking skills. Listening and speaking precede reading and writing.

According to the findings of the fifth item, all of the teachers agree that high levels of bilingualism can lead to practical, career related advantages. As English is an international language, there is a lot of demand for English users or speakers across the world. They think if kids start to learn the language at a very young age, they will speak English fluently. Therefore, they will have many good job opportunities when they grow up.

According to the findings of the sixth item, 87.5% of the teachers think that high level of bilingualism can result in higher development of knowledge or mental skills. There are many outcomes of language learning, such as knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Language learning is a mental or cognitive process in which mind is the centre. People first take in input, then they process it and finally produce output. For this reason, students can develop themselves mentally or cognitively and learn about the culture of the target language.

According to the findings of the seventh item, all of the teachers agree that it is good for students to maintain their native culture as well as American and British culture. They feel that kids need to develop their socio-cultural competence at a very young age. Kids need to raise their cross-cultural awareness, so they should be given a chance to learn social aspect of language.

According to the findings of the eighth item, the native English and Turkish teachers all agree that the development of native language helps develop a sense of biculturalism. They think that when kids learn or acquire English, they will be open to different cultures they are exposed to. Biculturalism can help learners to overcome bias or prejudice they have, so a bilingual education can help kids to develop a positive attitude toward bilingual and bicultural values.

According to the findings of the ninth item, 75% of the native teachers don't agree while 50 % of the Turkish teachers strongly agree that if a student is proficient in both Turkish and English, he/she should be enrolled in a classroom where the first language is part of the curriculum'. This indicates that native speakers are in favour of providing kids with a bilingual education which facilitates kids to focus on only English. This will enable them to succeed in their studies if only they get more exposure to the language.

According to the findings of the tenth item, all of the native teachers disagree (75% slightly disagree) and all of the Turkish teachers agree (75% slightly agree, 25% strongly agree) that if a student is not proficient in English, the student will do better in school if they learn to write in their first language. This shows that if the student is not good at writing in English, their English is not satisfactory. Kids should not be taught to write at a very early age. However, writing in English and writing in the kid's native language can go hand in hand. To write well the kid needs to get

more and more exposure to English. In other words, the kid needs to read and write. The integration of skills is very important for the development of English.

According to the findings of the eleventh item, 50% of the teachers disagree that a child who can read and write in the first language will be able to learn English faster and more easily (as opposed to a child who listens a lot in English. If the kid does not get exposed to both of these skills, he or she will not develop writing who cannot read and write in his/her first language). The achievement in both languages can differ from one another. If kids read and write well in Turkish, they cannot succeed in reading and writing in English. There are some cognitive, affective and social factors influencing language learning. For example, the kid who is able to read and write well in his language needs to be self-confident in English.

According to the findings of the twelfth item, all the teachers agree that if a second language learner is in an English only class, he/she will learn English better. This shows that it is a good idea for kids to get exposed to English in class. This will increase the chance of reaching a good level of English. Therefore, pre-schoolers should only focus on practising English in preschool. As they are exposed to a lot of meaning-focused input, they will have a native-like accent or at least they will become fluent in English.

According to the findings of the thirteenth item, 75 % of the teachers disagree that students must learn English as quickly as possible even if it means the loss of the native language. This shows that teachers think of maintaining the kid's language to be very important. Kids should be at least bilingual and multilingual to survive in life. They need to learn to use English and some other international languages fluently to succeed in their future life. They should maintain their own language, so they can communicate with their parents at home. For example, Turkish immigrants can use their mother tongue at home while their kids use German at school so that they can maintain Turkish.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter you will find the conclusion of this study which is about bilingualism in Turkey. The main aim for this research study was to research and verify if bilingualism can become an education system in Turkey. You will find the discussions of the research questions and the recommendations in the next headings.

### **Parents' opinions on bilingualism and bilingual children according to the surveys.**

Recently English has become a lingua franca, so parents are aware of the importance of English and the benefits of being bilingual. The parents mostly share the same idea about bilingualism. Most of the parents believe that developing literacy in the primary language is necessary in order to facilitate the acquisition in English, but some of them still have questions about this situation. They do agree that learning subject matter through the primary language first will make subject matter taught in English more understandable and that high levels of bilingualism can lead to practical, career related advantages and can result in superior cognitive development which is an important factor for the parents to support bilingual education. They also believe that bilingualism helps kids with cognitive development. They are not only happy about their children learning about a new culture, but they also agree that it is necessary to keep the child's primary culture. Most of the parents do not believe that It would be confusing for Turkish students to have classes in Turkish and English at the same time. To sum up, parents do support bilingualism and think it is helpful for their child's social and educational development.

### **Teachers' opinions on bilingualism and bilingual children.**

In this study, opinions of 8 teachers were investigated. Half of them are bilingual and native in English and half who are monolingual (Turkish). As Turkey is a fast-developing country and the teachers at a certain level of education, there is not a very big difference between the opinions of Turkish and bilingual native English teachers. The teachers all agree on the benefits of bilingualism in the areas of social and mental skills. The teachers generally support bilingual education. The teachers agree that it is not necessary for kids to read and write at the age of 3. However, they should learn to develop both listening and speaking skills. They think that this education system is also helpful for the children's future education life and career. The teachers also believe that it is important to keep the child's primary language and culture and that kids should develop their socio-cultural competence at a very young age. They agree that bilingual education helps develop a sense of biculturalism which can help learners overcome bias or prejudice they have, so bilingual education can help children to develop a positive attitude toward bicultural values. On the other hand, there

is a disagreement between teachers about the children who are not proficient in English. Some Turkish teachers believe that if a student is not proficient in English, he/she should be in a classroom learning his/her first language (reading, writing) as part of the school curriculum. Overall, all of the teachers are happy with this system.

### **Recommendations**

According to the findings, opinions and observations, bilingualism has many benefits which cannot be ignored. The younger the children, the easier it is for them to produce the language. Being bilingual is important for the future life of the child and the country. It makes kids smarter and can have a thoughtful effect on their brain, cultivating intellectual skills. Thanks to English, Turkey can make more immense economic advances: in tourism, education and trade. Basically, English is Turkey's gateway to entering a multicultural world and not being left behind. Considering the opinions, observations and the findings of bilingualism, I believe that teaching English at an early age will be beneficial for the future of the child and country. Schools can adopt a bilingual education system at preschools.

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