Perspectives of Turkish Teachers on Deaf Students' Access to English as a Foreign Language Education

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Öğretmenlerin İşitme Engelli Öğrencilerin Yabancı Dil Olarak İngilizce Eğitimine Erişimine İlişkin Görüşleri

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Abstract
In Türkiye, K-12 Deaf students often do not learn English as hearing students learn. This paper applies a qualitative approach and uses semi-structured interviews as the data source to analyze the perspectives of nine teachers of Deaf students on Deaf students' access to English as a foreign language education in Türkiye. In analysis, the study applies content analysis and considers Bourdieu's forms of capital, the theory of figured world, and social model of disability as the theoretical framework. The findings show that teachers of Deaf students in Türkiye have an ideology of Deafness as a culture, view Turkish Sign Language as the primary language of Deaf individuals, and support using sign language as a medium in Deaf education. However, teachers of Deaf students prefer postponing English as a foreign language education for Deaf students until Turkish Sign Language is fully acquired. The findings of the study suggest integrating Turkish Sign Language in K-12 Deaf education as a medium and designing education programs to teach English as a foreign language to Deaf students simultaneously without postponing learning any languages.

Keywords: *English as a foreign language, Deaf students, teachers of Deaf students, Deafness as a culture, k-12 Deaf students.*

Öz
Türkiye'de, örgün eğitime devam eden işitme engelli öğrenciler genellikle işiten öğrencilerin öğrendiği gibi İngilizce öğrenememektedir. Bu çalışma, nitel bir yaklaşım bağlamında yarı yapılandırılmış görüşmeleri kullanarak dokuz işitme engelli öğrenci öğretmeninin Türkiye'deki işitme engelli öğrencilerin yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitimine erişimine ilişkin bakış açılarını analiz etmektedir. Çalışmada veriler içerik analizi yöntemiyle analiz edilmiştir. Bulgular, Türkiye'deki engelli bireylerin sağırlığı bir kültür olarak algıladıklarını, Türk İşaret Dili'ni sağır bireylerin birincil dili olarak gördüklerini ve sağır eğitiminde işaret dilinin bir araç olarak kullanılmasını desteklediklerini göstermektedir. Bununla birlikte, işitme engelliler öğretmenleri, işitme engelli öğrenciler için yabancı dil olarak İngilizce eğitimini Türk İşaret Dili'ni tam olarak öğrenilene kadar ertelemeyi tercih etmektedir. Çalışmanın bulguları, Türk İşaret Dili'nin örgün eğitime devam eden öğrencilerin eğitimine bir araç olarak entegre edilmesini ve herhangi bir dil öğrenmeyi ertelemeden sağır öğrencilere eşzamanlı olarak yabancı dil olarak İngilizce öğretmek için eğitim programları tasarlamayı önermektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Yabancı dil olarak İngilizce, sağır öğrenciler, sağır öğrencilerin öğretmenleri, bir kültür olarak sağırlık, örgün eğitime devam eden sağır öğrenciler.*

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Giriş

Foreign languages (FL) are necessary to learn in the current global era because of social, economic, technological, and cultural exchanges among different nations (Coupland, 2013). Learning a language is also a linguistic human right, a principle that ensures that all languages are "accepted and respected" (Wee, 2007, p. 325). Thus, all linguistic minorities, including Deaf people, in principle have equal linguistic human rights, including the right to learn FLs, which includes both spoken and signed languages, through formal or informal education (Kelly et al., 2015; United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization [UNESCO], 1996).

In Türkiye, given the role of English as a global language, English as a foreign language (EFL) is considered a necessary resource to access global knowledge and the forms of capital available in globalization (Bhatt, 2001; Bourdieu, 1991). However, the opportunity to learn EFL is not always accessible for Deaf students who are linguistic minorities with Turkish Sign Language (TSL) as their primary language (Karasu, 2014). Most Deaf students in Türkiye do not have access to education through TSL. Moreover, Deaf students are exempted from studying EFL because of the medical perspective on Deafness, which precludes Deaf learners from EFL education (Kuzu et al., 2011; Regulations of Special Education Services, 2018; Selvi & Yildirim, 2023). Instead, the focus of Deaf education in Türkiye is on improving the oral language production of Deaf students in Turkish (Birinci, 2014; Kuzeci, 2015).

At the K-12 level, most Deaf students in Türkiye have education in mainstream schools while some Deaf students prefer studying at schools for the Deaf in which teachers of Deaf students (ToDs) teach (Johnson, 2013; McDermid, 2020). ToDs who often view Deafness from a sociocultural perspective and have the perception of Deafness as a different culture, are often found committed to their profession and willing to learn about differentiated instruction practices to use in Deaf education (Engler & MacGregor, 2018; Luckner & Dorn, 2017; Potier & Givens, 2023). Studies also show that as ToDs gain experience in teaching and working with Deaf students, professionally, they feel more efficient in teaching Deaf students (Carrie et al., 2012).

In Türkiye, studies involving ToDs primarily focus on the diagnosis of Deafness, the assessment and educational processes of Deaf students, and the family involvement of Deaf children (e.g., Akmese & Kayhan, 2016). Additionally, research has concentrated on the literacy skills and learning processes of Deaf children (Sarıkaya, 2011), teacher competencies of ToDs based on the oral-auditory approach (Gürgür et al., 2012), and the opinions of ToDs regarding different communication modes used in teaching Deaf children (Akmeşe & Kayhan, 2016). Thus, studies often focus on ToDs as teachers teaching literacy to Deaf learners and consultants collaborating with classroom teachers and parents and examine the perspectives of ToDs mostly focusing on the process of Deaf education and the communication modes used in the field (Dorn, 2018).

All in all, the literature reveals that the perspective of ToDs on the language education of Deaf learners and the cultural and linguistic repertoires that some Deaf learners may bring into education is often a neglected area (Johnson, 2013; Musyoka, 2023). However, given the changing demographic characteristics and diversity of Deaf students, especially in the globalized world, more studies addressing the language education of Deaf learners are needed. Therefore, focusing on the schools for the Deaf where EFL education is not given to Deaf students, this study examines the perspectives of nine ToDs on Deaf students' access to EFL education at the K-12 level in Türkiye.

Ideologies of Deafness and K-12 Deaf Education in Türkiye

Türkiye is a republic country in Eurasia with one official and dominant language, Turkish (Constitution of Republic of Türkiye, 1982). Minority languages including Kurdish, Arabic, Zaza, and Armenian are also spoken, and TSL is used by many Deaf individuals (Kuzu, 2016), which makes Türkiye a multilingual country. Other spoken languages are taught as FLs in Türkiye and individuals in the country often consider FL education, which is mainly EFL education, a tool to access economic capital (i.e., having a job in the international market), cultural capital (i.e., accessing knowledge), linguistic capital (i.e., knowledge of a language), and symbolic capital (i.e., having a status or prestige) (Bourdieu, 1991; European Commission, 2017).

Ideologies of Deafness in Türkiye. There are two competing perspectives on Deafness: disability and difference in Türkiye, where the estimates of Deaf people range from 0.37% (Turkish Statistical Institute, 2018) to 0.5 to 0.6% of the population (Ilkbasaran, 2015). On the one hand, some researchers and medical personnel consider Deafness a disability attributed primarily to endogamy (Cankuvvet et al., 2015). The view of Deafness as a disability results in the use of hearing aids, cochlear implants, and early intervention programs for the spoken language development of Deaf children (Turan, 2010). In addition, families who believe that their Deaf children can hear after hearing devices, often believe that learning sign language is not necessary for their children, which results in Deaf children not being taught sign language (Csizer & Kontra, 2020).

On the other hand, the perspective on Deafness as a cultural and linguistic difference also exists in Türkiye. In this perspective, Deafness is defined not as a “deficit to be corrected” but a “difference to be accepted” (Polat, 2003, p. 326). That is, Deaf individuals are seen as members of a linguistic minority with different values, attitudes, and physical conditions than hearing people. However, the perspective of Deafness as a disability is dominant in Türkiye, which influences education policies in focusing on the oral production in the Turkish language of Deaf students (Ilkbasaran, 2015).

K-12 Deaf Education in Türkiye. In Türkiye, TSL was excluded from the official Deaf education system in 1953 (Zeshan, 2003). Since 2015, there has been an attempt to use both Turkish and TSL in schools for the Deaf (Fundamental Law of National Education, 1973). However, education policies in the country do not define sign language as the primary language of Deaf individuals and a medium of instruction. For example, the Law on Individuals with Disabilities (2005) refers to TSL as a tool used for communication with Deaf individuals (i.e., as a linguistic capital) and for the education of Deaf people (i.e., as a cultural capital). Similarly, the Regulations of Principles and Procedures on Forming and Application of Turkish Sign Language System (2006) define sign language as a communication tool and describe the purposes for using sign language as "to state emotions, thoughts, requests, and needs." However, communication is not only about making statements but also about receiving and interpreting what is meant by other individuals as participants in a discourse (Gee, 2014). Thus, the documents neither describe all features of communication in which sign language can be used nor mention sign language as related to Deafness. Therefore, policy documents in Türkiye ignore the cultural component of sign language, which in turn identifies the ideology of sign language as a communication tool, but not as the linguistic capital of a minority group (i.e., Deaf people).

In addition to the limited definition of sign language, there is also a lack of teachers fluent in TSL and Deaf students often access education in spoken and written Turkish even in schools for Deaf students (Ilkbasaran, 2015). Moreover, currently, there is no EFL education in schools for Deaf students in the country, while in mainstream schools, unlike hearing students, education policies offer an exemption for Deaf students from EFL courses (Regulations of Special Education Services, 2018).

English as a Foreign Language Education for Deaf Students in and around Türkiye

Deaf individuals around the world and in Türkiye have both intrinsic and instrumental motivation to learn EFL to have better opportunities to find a job, travel, access knowledge, learn about different cultures, have education, and become global citizens (Birinci, 2014; Babaci-Wilhite, 2015). Moreover, Deaf students can study EFL in countries such as France, Finland, Venezuela, Hungary, Columbia, and Japan. For example, in Japan, Japanese Sign Language is used as a medium language to teach EFL to Deaf students. Similarly, in Hungary, Deaf learners learn EFL in Hungarian Sign Language, and various strategies are used to help Deaf learners interact with others so that they can use and practice English (Kontra et al., 2015). In Venezuela, cultural exchange programs or pen-pals from other countries are used to teach EFL to Deaf learners (Palma & Steyer, 2013). In Finland, Deaf students are involved in international networks in person or online to learn EFL by practicing it in informal contexts in a multimodal way; that is, through sign, written, or spoken languages (Quay, 2005). In France, Deaf learners learn EFL through a bilingual-bimodal approach, which means using spoken and written languages along with sign language (Bedoin, 2011).

To sum up, studies around the world show that Deaf learners study EFL through sign languages, international networks, and bilingual-bimodal approaches. Moreover, studies reveal that in countries where Deaf learners study foreign languages, the perspective of Deafness as a culture is widespread among teachers working in the field of Deaf education (Kontra et al., 2015). However, in Türkiye, there are few research studies on EFL teaching practices for Deaf students in formal education (e.g., Birinci, 2014), and there is a dearth of research to explore how perspectives on Deafness influence Deaf students' access to EFL education at the K-12 schools. Thus, this study focuses on ToDs working in public Deaf schools and explores the perspectives of ToDs on Deafness and how their perceptions of Deafness influence the accessibility of EFL education for Deaf students at the K-12 level in Türkiye. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What are the perspectives of teachers of Deaf students on Deafness in Türkiye?
2. How do the perspectives of teachers of Deaf students on Deafness influence Deaf students' access to English as a foreign language education at the K-12 level in Türkiye?

Theoretical Framework

In analyzing the findings, the study applied the social model of disability, Bourdieu's forms of capital, and the theory of figured world as theoretical frameworks. The social model of disability was applied to define Deafness as a linguistic and cultural difference (Shakespeare, 2005). Bourdieu's forms of capital were applied to examine ToDs' perspectives on EFL education as a tool to accumulate different forms of capital in the era of globalization (Bourdieu, 1991). The theory of figured world (i.e., personal interpretations based on experiences) was used to argue that participants' social and

educational experiences influence their understanding of Deafness and the languages that Deaf individuals learn (Holland et al., 1998; Urrieta, 2007).

Social Model of Disability. The social model sees disability as a difference, rather than a medical condition. According to the social model of disability, disability is constructed by society in which barriers towards disability are created by the majority (Shakespeare, 2005). This model also discusses social inequalities and emphasizes equity and the rights of individuals with disabilities in every field of society. Thus, the social model views Deaf individuals as people with different needs and sign language as their right to use to access knowledge, education, and other forms of capital (Wilson & Winiarczyk, 2014). Based on the social model of disability, this paper uses upper-case D to emphasize Deafness as a different culture rather than a medical condition (Johnson & McIntosh, 2009).

Forms of Capital. Education is required for all individuals to access what Bourdieu (1991) calls forms of capital, including cultural capital (i.e., forms of knowledge, education, skills), linguistic capital (i.e., the ability to use a language in a particular context), social capital (i.e., having networks), economic capital (i.e., having a job in the international market), and symbolic capital (i.e., recognition or prestige). According to Bourdieu (1991), capital is reproducible and can be convertible to other forms of capital in both concrete forms (e.g., money) and abstract (e.g., prestige) forms; capital also can produce profits, both abstract and concrete.

Bourdieu's theory of forms of capital, especially through education can be advantageous to individuals to access the benefits of globalization (Bourdieu, 1991; Rios-Aguilar et al., 2011). Learning languages, including FLs, help Deaf learners access various forms of capital in the global world. Understanding the views on Deafness as a disability or culture is important to help Deaf learners gain language and education rights and accumulate forms of capital through FL education. To understand ideologies of Deafness and explore how these ideologies as related to EFL education for Deaf individuals are constructed, the theory of figured worlds also helps.

Theory of Figured Worlds. People interpret the 'worlds' they participate in through interactions with the people and objects surrounding them. Their experiences, particular environments, and social and cultural backgrounds contribute to their understanding of the world (Crotty, 1998). However, people's interpretations of their worlds are not restricted to their personal experiences (Holland et al., 1998). Instead, gaining experience is a dynamic process requiring ongoing interactions and interpretations which result in creating new perspectives, and reinterpreting the 'world' they involve. Holland et al. (1998) theorize this process by using the concept of figured worlds, in which individuals reshape their identities. Holland and her colleagues (1998) define the figured world as "a socially and culturally constructed realm of interpretation in which particular characters and actors are recognized, significance is assigned to certain acts, and particular outcomes are valued over others'' (p. x). Thus, the theory of figured worlds is a way to understand the formulation of identity and agency and helps conceptualize how identities are developed in one's life trajectory through one's experiences and social relationships with other people (Holland et al., 1998).

The theory of figured worlds is not an isolated concept, but rather part of the theory of self and identity (Holland et al, 1998) that helps us understand how participation in different "worlds" makes people "figure" who they are and form identities "within and outside of these worlds" (Urrieta, 2007, p. 107). In developing new identities in figured worlds, social relationships with people performing in these worlds are crucial because people influence their identity formation. Thus, the theory of figured worlds helps in understanding how ToDs reconstruct their understanding of Deafness based on their social and educational experiences.

Methods

A qualitative approach was applied in this study. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with nine hearing ToDs who work in public schools for Deaf students in Türkiye.

Participants

To select participants, a purposive sampling technique was used in that the researcher reached and invited three ToDs with whom the researcher had professional connections in Türkiye (Noy, 2008). To recruit more participants for the study, a snowball sampling technique was applied (Noy, 2008). With the help of existing connections that the researcher had, ten more ToDs were invited to the study as participants. However, among the potential participants, only nine of them met the criteria of selection for the study. Thus, nine ToDs were recruited as the participants of the study. ToDs were selected based on their experiences in teaching Deaf students at the K-12 level for at least five years and working in public schools for the Deaf. Table 1 shows recruited ToD participants and gives information related to their gender, age, schools where they teach, years of teaching experience, and educational background.

Table 1. Profiles of the Participants

Pseudonym	Gender	Age	School	Experience	Educational Background
Harun	Male	45	High school for the Deaf	12	B.A. and M.A. in Special Education
Ali	Male	53	High school for the Deaf	19	B.A. in Special Education
Deniz	Female	29	High school for the Deaf	8	B.A. in Special Education M.A. in Education Administration
Ahmet	Male	38	High school for the Deaf	8	B.A. in Special Education
Seyda	Female	36	Primary school for the Deaf	10	B.A. in Special Education
Mehmet	Male	43	Primary school for the Deaf	13	B.A. in Special Education
Aylin	Female	32	Primary school for the Deaf	6	B.A. and M.A. in Special Education
Emin	Male	46	Primary school for the Deaf	15	B.A. in Special Education M.A. in Special Education
Mert	Male	30	Primary school for the Deaf	9	B.A. in Special Education

Note. B.A. = Bachelor's of Art; M.A. = Master's of Art.

The participants all received education in the field of special education specializing in Deaf education and have met Deaf people in various aspects of their lives. Participants were asked about their knowledge of TSL and English. While all participants stated that they could use TSL fluently, they defined their knowledge of English at the A1 or A2 levels (Council of Europe, 2020). All participants teach at public schools for the Deaf by using both spoken/written Turkish and TSL. While four participants teach at public high schools for Deaf students, five participants teach at public primary schools for the Deaf.

Data Collection

To gather data about ToDs' perspectives on EFL education for K-12 Deaf students, ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Review Board of the higher education institution where the researcher was studying. Nine hearing ToDs were interviewed in Türkiye in the 2022 fall semester. The researcher interviewed each participant in person in Turkish for 45 to 60 minutes. Semi-structured interviews were conducted face-to-face in Turkish in the schools where the participants were teaching. The interviews were audio-recorded and then transcribed.

The interview questions covered seven biographical and demographic questions and ten main questions on ideologies on Deafness, languages used to teach Deaf students, EFL education for K-12 Deaf students, and ToDs' perspectives on Deaf students' access to EFL education in Türkiye. The questions were generated based on the literature review conducted on ideologies on Deafness, FL education practices used in Deaf education, and Turkish education policies that offer exemption of K-12 Deaf students from FL education (Special Education Regulations, 2018).

A reflexive practice was applied in transcribing the interviews in that both linguistic and contextual levels of data were considered to minimize subjectivity and for the validity of data (Bucholtz, 2000). At the linguistic level, the interviews were transcribed word by word as used by the interviewee. At the contextual level, notes were taken related to the contexts in which the participants lived and had personal experiences. Moreover, for the reliability of the data, member checking was applied with the help of a bilingual colleague to check English translation of data to make sure that transcriptions are error and bias-free, and there is consistency in coding (Creswell & Creswell 2018).

Analytic Framework

The process of content analysis was applied in analyzing the interview transcripts because content analysis provides "systematic guidelines" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 41) which helped the researcher examine the research problem inductively (Krippendorff, 2018). Based on the research questions, data transcripts were coded into themes which were synthesized into three categories of research findings. First, line-by-line open coding was applied to identify specific concepts and codes (e.g., not being able to talk but using sign language). Code saturation was decided when similar codes started to repeat themselves and no new concepts were identified (e.g., the ability to communicate by using sign language). Next, by applying focus coding, the codes, and interview data were read over to find how they could be grouped and abstracted into categories (e.g., sign language as the primary language). Then, axial coding was applied to make connections between categories and identify themes considering the research questions (e.g., sign language as part of the Deaf culture). Finally, selective coding was applied to decide on an overarching theme (e.g., Deafness as a different culture).

In analyzing interview data, first, pen and paper, and next, Nvivo11 software (QSR International Pty Ltd., 2015) were used. At each stage of the analysis, analytic memos

were written. For triangulation, in addition to discussing emerging themes with a colleague to ensure multiple perspectives were covered in data analysis, different theoretical frameworks were utilized to gain a more valid and comprehensive understanding of the findings (Bogdan & Biklen, 2006).

Findings

The findings of the study show that there are conflicts between ToDs' articulated ideologies of Deafness as a culture and their views on EFL education for Deaf students, which are not inclusive and supportive of Deaf students' EFL learning needs and linguistic human rights. All participants have the perspective of Deafness as a culture and sign language as the primary language of Deaf individuals. However, while seven participants support EFL education for Deaf students without any exemption, two of the participants believe that EFL education should be postponed for K-12 Deaf students until TSL is integrated into Deaf education and acquired by Deaf students.

Ideology of Deafness as a Culture

Aligning with the social model of disability, all participants have the perspective of Deafness as a cultural difference rather than a disability and understand sign language as the primary language of Deaf individuals. For example, Ali, a ToD who works at a public high school has the perspective of Deafness as a culture and criticizes the practice of applying the same teaching practices for all Deaf individuals, because he has witnessed differences among Deaf students: "*Deafness is not a disability and shows differences in terms of hearing. For example, there are Deaf children using sign language as a mother tongue. There are also Deaf children using sign language as a second language and using cochlear implants or other hearing devices. The second group of Deaf children have lower-level academic skills because they do not have sign language as their primary language and learn spoken language through hearing aids later in their lives*. (Interview)"

Similarly, Emin has been a teacher at a public elementary school for the Deaf for 15 years. He has bachelor's and master's degrees in special education specializing in Deaf education. Emin clearly articulates the perspective of Deafness as a cultural difference: "*My education life in Deaf education has taught me that Deafness is not a disability but a difference. I mean Deaf people just need their language which is sign language and they just have a different culture*. (Interview)" Emin's comment reveals how his accumulation of cultural capital formed his figured world of Deafness from the perspective of the social model of Deafness.

Harun also has bachelor's and master's degrees in special education and has the perspective of Deafness as a culture: "*As I do more research and learn more about Deafness and Deaf education, I am aware that we, as a society, must accept Deaf people as they are. We need to accept Deafness as a difference and respect their Deaf culture*. (Interview)" Harun's quote exemplifies how education about Deafness can influence the views of Deafness and may result in a shift in ideologies of Deafness. Harun structured his figured world of Deafness as a culture and positioned himself as a person advocating for the ideology of Deafness as a culture and against the dominant ideology of Deafness as a disability.

Social experiences with Deaf people have also influenced participants' perspectives on Deafness. Two participants developed views of Deafness as culture exclusively through personal experiences with Deaf people at work and school. For example, Ahmet reports: "*Deaf students have taught me a lot of things. First, for example, I see that Deaf individuals share something in common. That is, they have the same language to communicate and*

understand each other. I mean I know that they do not have a disability, they are just like us [hearing people], just have a different culture and language. (Interview)"

Similarly, the social interactions (i.e., social capital) that Mert has with Deaf individuals have helped Mert construct his figured world of Deafness as a culture. When he was in college, Mert had a Deaf classmate from whom he started to learn TSL. His Deaf friend also helped Mert learn about Deaf culture such as the central role of sign language which in turn led Mert to promote the perspective of Deafness as a culture and sign language as the language of Deafness: "*After meeting with my Deaf friend, I learned more about Deaf people and their language. Now, I also teach sign language to hearing people and my goal is to raise awareness in society about Deaf individuals as people coming from a different culture and using a different language*. (Interview)" Mert's accumulation of linguistic and cultural capital through these experiences helped him structure his figured world to one of Deafness as a culture, in which he positions himself as an advocate for Deaf people by teaching TSL to the larger society.

Overall, the figured worlds of Deafness of the ToDs have been influenced by their education about Deafness and their interactions with Deaf individuals (Urrieta, 2007). Their understanding of Deafness as a culture has informed how they have structured their perspectives of Deafness as a culture (Holland et al., 1998). In contrast to the ideology of Deafness as a disability as imposed by dominant institutions and laws, the experiences these participants had through relating to Deaf individuals have enabled them to 'figure' who Deaf people are, as members of a culture, and understand the critical status of sign language as the main language of the Deaf individuals.

Ideology of Sign Language as the Primary Language of Deaf Individuals

Contrary to the language policies in Türkiye, all participants have the perspective of sign language as the primary language of Deaf individuals and one of the minority languages in Türkiye. For example, Ali believes that sign language is part of Deafness and important in Deaf education for the academic success of Deaf students. Ali claims that teachers who teach Deaf students need to be trained to use sign language in Deaf education to support their academic success. Ali states that "sign language is the primary language of Deaf students, and this language has a critical role in teaching literacy or EFL to these students." Ali's perspective on sign language reveals his belief in accessing cultural capital (i.e., 'literacy or foreign languages') through linguistic capital (i.e. 'primary language of Deaf students'). Ali also criticizes current higher education institutions in Türkiye as they provide Deaf education based on an oral-based approach and ignore the role of sign language in Deaf education: "*Universities in Türkiye do not use sign language in Deaf education. Instead, they train teacher candidates for Deaf learners based on an oral-based approach. The teacher candidates graduating from these universities are now teaching in schools for the Deaf. However, many of them do not question why they use an oral-based approach in teaching Deaf students; thus, cannot help Deaf students academically.* (Interview)"

Ali believes that training ToDs based on an oral-based approach results in low academic achievement in Deaf schools where Deaf students have access to education only through spoken or written Turkish. Although in Deaf schools in Türkiye, education has recently started being provided bilingually (i.e., with spoken/written Turkish and TSL) because of a lack of teachers fluent in TSL, Deaf students generally access education in spoken or written Turkish (Regulations of Special Education Services, 2018; Ilkbasaran, 2015). Similarly, Deniz explains: "*Although there is no systematic Turkish Sign Language education in Türkiye, these [Deaf] children learn sign language naturally. Even if a Deaf*

child can hear through different hearing aids, in the end, the child keeps using sign language because it [sign language] is his natural language. (Interview)" By saying "natural language," Deniz characterizes sign language as the ideal primary language of Deaf individuals. Similarly, Mehmet views sign language as the medium through which Deaf "*children communicate with each other*." (Interview)

Moreover, some participants have the perspective of sign language as a "right" for Deaf individuals. For example, Aylin explains: "*Even if they wear cochlear implants, Deaf individuals always want to learn sign language because they often say that 'it is my culture and my right'. That is true. I mean learning sign language is part of the human rights of Deaf individuals. It is their language right.* (Interview)" Here Aylin expresses her figured world of sign language as a right of Deaf people, which is not signified in education policies in Türkiye.

Similarly, supporting the view of sign language as a language right of Deaf individuals, Seyda views sign language as a necessity in Deaf education: "*Sign language is the primary language of Deaf individuals. So, it is a must in Deaf education to help Deaf students access education without any limits. That is, we should fully integrate sign language in Deaf education as sign language is Deaf students' language right.* (Interview)"

In sum, the participants have the perspective of sign language as the primary language of Deaf individuals and understand the importance of sign language being used in Deaf education as the foundation for all learning. Moreover, these participants' constructing their perspectives of Deafness as a culture, based on their social and educational experiences with Deaf people, have led some of them to be committed to Deaf students' gaining access to sign language as their primary language before learning EFL.

Perspectives on English as a Foreign Language Education for K-12 Deaf Students

All participants support K-12 Deaf students' access to EFL education without any restrictions and believe that EFL education can help Deaf students accumulate different forms of capital in the global world. For example, Ali believes that learning EFL may help Deaf learners accumulate social capital by expanding their networks (Bourdieu, 1991). Ali states: "*Learning English as a foreign language is important for us, especially in the global world. I know that in other countries, Deaf people are using at least three languages including sign languages. So, it is not scientific to think that English as a foreign language education is not possible for Deaf students in Türkiye. These students should also learn English to be able to be citizens in the global world*. (Interview)" The example that Ali gives on using EFL illustrates social capital, which Bourdieu (1991) defined as comprising networks to provide instrumental and emotional support for individuals.

In addition, Ali criticizes Turkish education policies that exempt Deaf students from learning EFL (Regulations of Special Education Services, 2018). He describes this exemption as "sad" and "not scientific" by stating that: "*It is so sad that Deaf students at K-12 schools can be exempted from foreign language courses. This offering gives students unbelievable freedom. Based on this definition, Deaf students often ask to be exempt from foreign language courses. I do not think that the decision to exempt is based on scientific studies and should be stopped*." (Interview)

Mert also wants to make EFL education accessible for Deaf students and suggests sign language as a mediating tool to teach EFL to Deaf students: "*English as foreign language teachers teaching Deaf students should know sign language very well and be experienced in designing EFL teaching materials for Deaf students*. (Interview)"

On the other hand, some participants believe that EFL education for K-12 Deaf students needs to be postponed until TSL is integrated as a medium language in Deaf

education and fully acquired by K-12 Deaf students. For example, Emin presents his concern: "*Without providing Deaf students with an education in Turkish Sign Language, the attempt to teach them English as a foreign language can make education more confusing and difficult for these students*. (Interview)"

Similarly, Mehmet argues for postponing EFL education for Deaf students until Deaf students have access to sign language to provide a foundation for learning an EFL: "*Sign language should be used to teach foreign languages to Deaf students. That is why first, we need to teach sign language to these students as their primary language. Then we can talk about teaching a foreign language to Deaf students.* (Interview)"

Discussion

The study found that ToDs in Türkiye have an ideology of Deafness as a culture and view sign language as the primary language of Deaf individuals. The study also found that ToDs view EFL education as an education right of Deaf students and a tool for Deaf students to accumulate various forms of capital in the global world. However, ToDs strongly believe that sign language is a foundation for EFL education for K-12 Deaf students based on which they offer postponing EFL education in Deaf education until Deaf students fully acquire sign language.

Bourdieu's (1991) notion of "field," which he defines as the "structure of the social space" (p. 41) is useful to bring in, to understand the dynamics of ToDs' perspectives on Deafness as a culture. ToDs' experiences and education in the field of Deaf education both as students and teachers informed how they constructed their figured world of Deafness, initially according to the ideology of Deafness as a disability, which was presented to them from the field in which they were educated (Holland et al., 1998). However, as they accumulated cultural and social capital related to Deafness, ToDs advocated for an ideology of Deafness as a culture. According to Holland et al. (1998), people develop new identities through relationships with other people. The participants who see Deafness as a culture developed these identities through education, their social relations with Deaf people, and their participation in Deaf communities (e.g., Mert), because of which they 'figured' Deafness as a culture.

ToDs also use their 'space of authoring' which is "the ability of people to self/sense-make" (Urrieta, 2007, p.111) in their figured world. Through observing Deaf individuals, ToDs (e.g., Ahmet) activate their space of authoring by making sense of Deafness and constructing their figured world of Deafness as a culture. Thus, they construct meanings in their figured world of Deafness and position themselves as people with an ideology of Deafness as a cultural difference and sign language as Deaf individuals' primary language (Skutnabb-Kangas, 2012).

On the other hand, ToDs' views on EFL education for Deaf students contradict the ideology of education for all (Constitution of the Republic of Türkiye, 1982) and the principle of no discrimination in education (Fundamental Law of National Education, 1973) as signified in the national law in Türkiye. ToDs argue that EFL education for Deaf students is necessary but must come after achieving sign language education for all Deaf students in Türkiye. Thus, the participants believe EFL education for K-12 Deaf students in Türkiye is not yet feasible because Deaf students need to acquire a foundation of sign language as the first language, which is not currently available in Türkiye (Ilkbasaran, 2015).

Based on their figured worlds of sign language as the primary language of Deaf individuals, ToDs prioritize sign language education over EFL learning for Deaf students to a) support Deaf students' access to education in their primary language and b) facilitate

Deaf students' EFL learning. The research literature also confirms that accessing education in one's primary language helps learners' academic success (Babaci-Wilhite, 2015; Heugh, 2014). On the other hand, sign language may not always be required in teaching EFL to Deaf students (Bedoin, 2011). Instead, reading and writing in the target language can be used to visualize the language for Deaf students and help Deaf students' foreign language learning (Cannon & Guardino, 2012).

The sense of efficacy of teachers who teach Deaf students was found to increase when they used the same language with their Deaf students (Carrie et al., 2012). Given that all ToD participants can use TSL fluently, but know EFL at the A1 or A2 level, ToDs may feel more efficient when they use and teach in sign language. Thus, ToDs may feel unable to meet the FL learning needs of Deaf students because of their limited knowledge of English as a result of which they may also prefer postponing EFL education for Deaf learners, on which more research needs to be conducted. However, to receive the same education as their hearing peers, Deaf learners should also receive EFL education either in sign language for which EFL teachers should be appointed as supporting individuals for ToDs, or through other evidence-based instructional EFL practices used for Deaf learners. For example, translanguaging practices may help prevent neglect of any languages that Deaf students wish to learn, and support Deaf students' use of their linguistic and cultural repertoire; thus, overcoming the restricted access of Deaf learners to any language learning, including EFL education (Cannon & Luckner, 2016; Musyoka, 2023).

In addition, prioritizing sign language learning over EFL education for Deaf students may contradict the ideology of education rights for all as signified in education policy documents in Türkiye because postponing learning EFL may limit Deaf students' access to education and different forms of capital as compared with hearing students. In conclusion, the participants' figured worlds of sign language as the primary language of Deafness seem to compete with their figured worlds of EFL education for Deaf students, also creating contradictions within their figured worlds of Deafness as a culture.

Conclusion

Being sure that TSL is acquired by K-12 Deaf students aligns with the participants' ideology of Deafness as a culture and their perspectives on sign language as the primary language of Deaf individuals. However, postponing EFL education until TSL is fully learned by Deaf students aligns with the education policies in Türkiye where Deaf students are suggested to be exempted from EFL education based on the ideology of Deafness as a disability as stated in policy documents. This study suggests avoiding such drawbacks in Deaf education by explicitly defining Deafness as a cultural and linguistic difference rather than a disability in policy documents to support Deaf students' access to EFL education.

Indeed, policymakers, Deaf advocates, and Deaf individuals should be working to support Deaf students' access to EFL education by accepting Deafness as a culture and Deaf students as individuals who have the right to access EFL education without any restrictions. Therefore, advocates of Deaf individuals need to consider Deaf education in terms of linguistic human rights by focusing not only on sign language as the primary language of Deaf students. They should also advocate for Deaf students' access to EFL education as part of their education and language rights and prioritize multilingualism to nurture linguistic diversity in education.

The findings of this study suggest conducting more research to understand the needs of K-12 Deaf students' access to EFL education in Türkiye. Further research studies with more policymakers, Deaf advocates, and practitioners working in the field of Deaf

education are needed to develop a deeper sense of the accessibility of EFL education for K-12 Deaf students. Finally, Deaf students or individuals themselves should be included as participants in further studies to examine their lived experiences and have their voice on language rights and their rights to learn EFL as a tool to access various forms of capital in the global world.

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