

The Opinions of Primary School, Turkish Language and Social Science Teachers regarding Education in the Mother Tongue (Kurdish)

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Multicultural education refers to educational reforms conducted to sustain a peaceful, respectful, egalitarian society that allows for the development of empathy today's increasingly pluralistic world. Multicultural education is regarded as an indispensable part of pluralistic societies. In such a context, it has become a topic of heated discussion in Turkey. As teachers are the performers of educational activities, their views on education in the mother tongue which constitute an important element of multicultural education, are highly important. The purpose of this study is to determine the perceptions of teachers regarding education in the mother tongue. A mixed method was used in the study. Quantitative data were obtained through the measurement of 8 items on the scale of "Teachers' Views regarding Multicultural Education". The scale was applied to 426 teachers in Diyarbakır province of Turkey. Qualitative data were obtained from interviews with 11 teachers who were determined through a purposive sampling method. The results of this study showed that teachers held positive views on education in the mother tongue and they supported education in the mother tongue although they were not fully aware of the scope of this education.

Key Words: Multiculturalism, Multicultural Education, Education in the Mother Tongue, Bilingual Education, Turkey

Introduction

Although debates concerning multicultural education and education in the mother tongue have been assumed prominence at a public level lately, there state policies have actually been in existence in many countries for a long time. In particular, social movements based around identities have drawn attention to the issue and led to an acceptance of multicultural policies (Kaya & Aydin, 2013). For instance, multicultural education appeared in the U.S.A. as a result of the citizenship rights movement in the 1960s while many European countries, Canada and Australia have developed multicultural education policies as a result of migration which has created specific educational problems for immigrants (Banks, 2010). According to many researchers, multicultural education is of great importance for students from different identities and backgrounds in allowing them to increase their academic success, facilitating their social integration, aiding society in accepting cultural differences, raising the culture of democracy and preparing students to live in a multicultural society (Aydin, 2013; Banks, 2013; Gay, 1994).

Education in the mother tongue is one of the most important elements of multicultural education (Dolby, 2012). This means using the language of a minority group as a language of education. Thus, this refers to the delivery some parts of school curriculum in that language. The teaching of science or maths in a minority language may be regarded an example (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008; Hornberger, 2012). Education in the mother tongue has been conducted in some countries using different approaches depending on the social plurality and political situation of the countries in question. Debates in these countries have not yet reached a conclusion, yet have led to the developments of new policies.

Today in Turkey, debates about multicultural education are revolve predominantly around the Kurdish issue and the right to education in one's mother tongue. However, multicultural education in essence is an educational approach which aims to remove religious, linguistic and racial tensions and focuses on the inequalities among different identities (Banks, 2013; Kaya & Aydin, 2013). To become a genuinely democratic country and sustain social peace, Turkey is obliged to develop a multicultural education policy. An increase in the number of studies conducted regarding multicultural education can be observed recently (Basbay & Kagnici, 2011; Damgaci & Aydin, 2013; Demir, 2012; Polat, 2009, 2012; Sevinc, Titrek & Onder, 2009; Toprak, 2008; Unlu & Ay, 2012; Yazici, Basol & Toprak, 2009)

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however a large number of studies are yet to be embarked upon concerning education in the mother tongue. As teachers are responsible for the successful carrying out of educational processes, their views on education in this mother tongue will help future studies. In this vein, the purpose of this study is to determine the views of teachers regarding education in mother tongue. In essence, the researcher tried to answer these questions: What are the perceptions of teachers on education in the mother tongue? Are there any differences in these views according to ethnicity, gender and religious beliefs?

Multicultural Education and Education in the Mother Tongue

Multiculturalism is a phenomenon that encompasses multidimensional and varied elements (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). The structure of education has come to be designed to reflect multiculturalism in countries with multicultural policies. According to Dolby (2012), the most important component of multicultural education is education in the mother tongue. Education delivered in more than one language is described as bilingual education (Kaya & Aydin, 2013). Language is an important tool in transferring cultural values to future generations. Teaching language has always been important for all societies in enabling them to sustain their cultural values. Language is a form of expression for a society. It is an indispensable cultural value that enriches the social sphere from poetry to novels, from music to other kinds of art (Edwards, 2010).

Nation states have become widespread as a result of modernization. These states have largely rejected their multicultural and multilingual heritage and the development of an identity around one nation has become an important policy (Giddens, 1985). The concept of identity held by ideologues of the nation state did not cover social differences (Smith, 2009). This can be easily seen in language policies. Many nation states initiate regulations to educate the whole of the population in the same way. In so doing, they do not take cultural differences into consideration (Karpat, 2007). Therefore, many nation-states are assimilators. By melting different ethnic and religious groups in nation-state pot, they wished to build a new national identity. To achieve this goal, the education system was seen an important tool (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998; May & Hornberger, 2008). People were supposed to share the same identities and values that would be imposed on them through a uniform educational process. But in the post-imperial period of history, ethnic and religious groups which formerly enjoyed their own identities, refused to have (artificial) identities imposed on them by nation states and they tried to express their differences in different ways. Education became an issue discussed in terms of developing the idea of forging a nation and the indoctrination of some particular identities (Hennayake, 1992; Kaya, 2005). In response to these efforts, minorities refused to accept centralist educational systems and wanted principles of multicultural education to become more widespread. (Cummins, 1981).

Today, many nation-states have been forced to revise their education systems and consider the differences within them. The ambitions of minorities to live with their own identities have led to important changes in state systems. On the whole, minority policies have been largely mainly based on language policies (Cummins, 2000). In addition, issues such as minority status have assumed an importance. One of the most important component of minority policies was the integration of minority languages into the education system (Banks, 2009; Cummins & Hornberger, 2008). Integrating the languages of minorities into the education system has led to some political and social problems (Martin-Jones, De Mejía & Hornberger, 2008). Debates and discussions within the societies concerned have ushered in the development of different bilingual education practices. Nevertheless, no all-encompassing standards have yet emerged with regard to education in the mother tongue. Different countries have developed varying models and integrated the languages of minorities languages into the education system to differing degrees as a result of the debates conducted in these countries.

It is possible to talk about several definitions and practices considering the teaching of languages of minorities. It is possible to consider concepts such as education in the mother tongue, education of the mother tongue, bilingual education and multilingual education. Mother tongue education refers to the teaching of that language rather than the use of it as a language of instruction. For instance, elective Kurdish education can be regarded as the education of mother tongue. Thus, it is not education in mother tongue. The term, education in the mother tongue means using the language as a language of instruction. Therefore, this involves the delivery of certain parts of the school curriculum in that language (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008; Hornberger, 2012). In this respect, it is aimed at both providing for the teaching of that language and using it academically to develop it on a personal basis. As regards bilingual education, a student receives education in more than one language at the same time (Banks, 2009).

The concept most common within an international context is bilingualism, not multilingualism. In bilingual education, a student undergoes educational procedures in two languages. These languages are the ones which are widely spoken by dominant or minority groups. Therefore, bilingualism involves the use of the dominant and minority languages in education and the delivery of the school

curriculum in these languages (Dicker, 2003; González, 2008). For instance, a Kurdish student may receive education in both Turkish and Kurdish. In multilingual education, the number of languages offered is larger. Opponents of bilingual education argue that education in the mother tongue will exert an adverse effect on students' academic success and prevent the integration of different ethnic groups. But studies conducted indicate the opposite (Garcia & Bartlett, 2007; Rhys & Thomas, 2012). According to many studies, students who obtain the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue are more successful than those who are not presented with such a possibility. (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008). Students who learn in their mother tongue acquire higher levels of self-confidence and academic success. Moreover, the idea that education in mother tongue will divide the society is not supported by the majority of researchers. On the contrary, it is emphasized that the loyalty to the country will increase as they become more content with their educational experiences (Brutt-Griffler & Varghese, 2004; Oran, 2005; Ortayli, 2010).

Applications in an international context

There are different ways to incorporate the languages of different ethnic groups within education system (Mayer & Akamatsu, 1999). When the examples are considered in an international context, it can be seen that countries that make multiculturalism an important part of education system have developed their own bilingual education systems (González, 2008). Many kinds of bilingual education models have been developed. Although, there are some differences among these models, it is possible to define some similarities.

Bilingual education models show differences depending on educational philosophy and the programs delivered (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008). The expectations from bilingual education are important. In other words, does bilingual education aim to develop students' linguistic skills or does it occur because of some political concerns? When the aim is to develop students' linguistic skills and allow them to use more than one language in daily life, the steps are different. Therefore, it is needed to define the duration and scope of bilingual education. When the applications currently practised in an international context are considered, it is possible to define four kinds of bilingual education model. These are the transition, maintenance, enrichment and heritage models of education.

The Transition Model

Transition model is usually used in countries such as the USA and western European countries like Sweden, Germany and Switzerland. It can be seen that countries that have accepted large numbers of immigrants generally accept the transition model (Crawford, 1995). Transition model is considered to be the weakest in terms of bilingual education. In this model, education is sustained in both the mother tongue and dominant language during the early years of primary education. After that, the dominant language is used permanently.

The Maintenance Model

The maintenance model is considered to be a stronger bilingual education model. In this model, both the rate and length of using the mother tongue increase. Teaching Welsh in England, Catalan in Spain and French in Canada can be regarded as examples of this model. The purpose is not only the teaching mother tongue but also equipping students with a language level that allows them to perform all their academic activities in that language (May & Hornberger, 2008). In this respect, it should be possible to use mother tongue in all levels of education, from primary education to higher education. Moreover, this model is widely used in places where there are a lot of migrant groups.

The Enrichment Model

This model draws attention to social interaction and integration. In this model, students from minority groups use both their mother tongue and dominant language as languages of instruction and sustain their academic life through two languages (Cummins & Hornberger, 2008; Mayer & Wells, 1996). The different element in this model is the encouragement of students from the dominant group to learn the languages of minority groups.

The Heritage Model

Heritage model is usually suggested for languages which run the potential risk of becoming extinct. In this model, it is aimed to integrate languages which have decreasing numbers of speakers such as native or ethnic group languages in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and Norway. Thus, these languages can be protected from extinction. The heritage model is especially important for some traditions to allow them to be transferred to later generations (García, Zakharia & Otcu, 2012).

Bilingual Education in Turkey

The Turkish Republic was founded on the heritage of the multicultural Ottoman Empire heritage, however it was based on the identity and culture of one dominant ethnic group (the Turks). Therefore, the new state encountered many problems concerning multiculturalism (Faltis, 2014). The founders and ideologues of the new nation state ideologists created a state system related to Turkish ethnic identity and wished for wider society to accept it (Mahcupyan, 1999). However, many people with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds did not easily accept this identity and cultural policies imposed from above. Consequently, they objected to this idea in different ways (Kolcak, 2015). This sometimes led to violence and conflicts. The foundation of the Turkish Republic as a nation-state did not eradicate different cultural and religious groups nor their cultural demands (Kaya, 2005). The right to education in mother tongue has been expressed by the representatives of different minorities, most notably by leading Kurds (Coskun, Derince & Ucarlar, 2010). However, Ottoman society taken over by the Turkish Republic, was made up of different ethnic and religious groups. Ottoman Empire succeeded in establishing a social space in which these groups could live largely in peace for many years (Karpas, 2002; Ortaylı, 2010). The autonomy granted to religious and ethnic groups enabled them to sustain their cultures and languages. Therefore, both Muslim and non-muslim groups had a chance to use their languages for academic instruction. As a result, they were able to maintain cultural differences (Karpas, 2002). The situation was not different in eastern madrasahs. In these educational institutions, works in Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Kurdish were taught and Kurdish was used as a language of instruction. The Ottoman Empire was very flexible about the issue and built a state system which protected the cultural identities of all ethnic groups (Kaya & Aydin, 2013).

Today, many nation-countries in the world have assumed a structure that embrace plurality and have made multiculturalism a state policy (Gollnick & Chinn, 2013). As a consequence, it has become particularly important to incorporate the languages of minorities into the education system to enable the integration of these groups. Consequently, the aim has been to build social relations between the minorities and the wider country (May, 1994). Countries that have not developed flexible education systems, have had to deal with a tense social structure. Nations that have not adopted pluralism, have largely proved incapable to destroy or providing a peaceful social system or society (Cornell & Hartmann, 1998). A similar situation can be seen in Turkey. Turkey is obliged to follow a pluralistic policy in order to foster relations between different ethnic groups and this is based on the concept of multiculturalism. Accepting different cultures as part of a cultural 'richness' enables interaction between different social groups and facilitates their living together in peace. Language is an important element of pluralism and multiculturalism as it is the most important protector of culture. Therefore, education in the mother tongue and bilingual education have assumed a vital importance for the provision of social peace and harmonious cohabitation (Kaya & Aydin, 2013).

Multiculturalism and multicultural education have been topics of heated discussion recently in Turkey. As a result of the democratization and expression of differences in the public sphere, ethnic, religious, linguistic and gender identities have become more visible. Consequently, social demands have become more articulated and politicians have demonstrated greater interest in the issue. Turkey can be regarded as a policy-maker within the process. For the first time in its recent history, Turkey has introduced education in Kurdish through the offering of elective Kurdish courses. In addition, a T.V. channel broadcasting in Kurdish has been opened. By building living language institutions, it has enabled languages like Kurdish and Zaza to be taught at higher education level (Kaya & Aydin, 2013). It is possible to predict the continuation of these policies. It can be anticipated that these issues will be discussed more and a process which involves the integration of multicultural and bilingual education may take place. Therefore, teachers' views on the issue are very important and critical as they are the main actors of educational and instructional processes.

Method

Design

This is a descriptive study in which qualitative and quantitative data were used together. According to Creswell (2012), a mixed method is used wishes the researcher to bring about a better understanding of the issue under discussion, cannot address the central question of the study through the use of only qualitative or quantitative data, or wishes to add a different perspective to the study. The mixed method is a more preferable and acceptable method as it contributes to the answering of research questions through the employment of more than only one method.

Population and Sample

The population of this study is made up of 3610 teachers who work in primary and secondary schools in Diyarbakir, Turkey. Among these, 2550 are primary school teachers, 550 are social science

teachers and 510 are Turkish language teachers. The sample consists of 426 teachers including 311 primary school teachers, 65 Turkish language teachers and 50 social sciences teachers. The courses in these fields are based on culture, religion and language more than others. Consequently, they were selected for the purposes of conducting the research. The main group of this study is primary school teachers. In the study, a random sampling method, the *stratified sampling* method was used. The stratified sampling method involves dividing the population into homogenous sub-categories and performing a simple random-sampling method for each of these sub-categories (Buyukozturk, Cakmak, Akgun, Karadeniz & Demirel, 2010). The province of Diyarbakır was divided into two categories: the central district and other districts. All of the central districts in the Diyarbakır province were included in the study; four schools were selected all of which were located in the four central districts. For other districts stage stratified sampling method was used, five districts were selected and the survey was conducted at certain schools in these districts. Therefore, it was aimed to increase the sampling to represent the population. In stage-stratified sampling, a number of categories was selected among existing categories, then groups were selected randomly among these selected categories (Kitchin & Tate, 2000). The size of sample was determined as 348 by using a sample determination chart according to an acceptable error margin of .5. It was anticipated that some surveys may be invalid or may not be received by the researchers. Therefore, 500 surveys were sent out; 445 of them were received and 426 of these were considered as containing valid answers. A qualitative sample of the study consisting of three of the schools where the survey was conducted, was then compiled. These were the schools easy to reach. In total, 11 teachers were recruited. Five of them were of Turkish origin, four of Kurdish origin, one of Arabic origin and one of Zaza origin respectively. These teachers were selected on a voluntary basis.

Demographics of the Participants

To better understand the sample of participants (sample), detailed information considering their respective ages, genders, branches of study, ethnic origins, languages spoken at home, regions of the university where they studied, and years of service is given in the chart below.

Table 1
Variables of Participants' ages, genders, majors, ethnicities and languages spoken at home

Demographic Variables		n	%
Age	21-30	140	32,9
	31-40	199	46,7
	41-50	75	17,6
	51 -over	12	2,8
Gender	Female	225	52,8
	Male	198	46,5
Major	Elementary Teaching	311	73,3
	Social Science Teaching	50	11,7
	Turkish Language Teaching	65	15,3
Ethnicity	Turkish	93	21,8
	Kurdish	225	52,8
	Zaza	67	15,7
	Arab	18	4,2
	Other	3	0,7
Language spoken at home	Mixed	20	4,7
	Turkish	168	39,4
	Kurdish	188	44,1
	Arabic	6	1,4
	Zaza	44	10,3
	Other	20	4,7

When the ages of the participants are considered, 46.7% of them (199) are found to be between 31 and 40, 32.9% of them (140) between 21 and 30, 17.6% of them (75) between 41-50 and 2.8% of them (12) are aged 51 and above. 52.8% of the participants were male and 46.5% female. Therefore, the numbers of male and female participants are close to each other. 73% of the participants were primary school teachers, 15.3% of them were Turkish language teachers, 11.7% of them were Social science teachers. 52.8% of the participants were Kurdish, 21.8% of them were Turkish, 15.7% of them were Zaza, 4.7% of them called themselves Zaza-Turkish, 4.2% of them were Arabic and 0.7% remained undefined. It was stated that 44,1% speak Kurdish, 39.4% speak Turkish, 10.3% speak Zaza,

4.2% speak two languages and 1.4% speak Arabic at home. 52.8% of the participants were of Kurdish origin, 8.1% of them stating that they speak Turkish at home. 5.4% of teachers of Zaza origin and 2.8% of teachers of Arabic origin stated that they speak Turkish at home.

Data Collection Tools

In the study, a “Multicultural Education Scale of Teachers” was developed. In this article, the “Mother tongue” dimension of the scale was considered. Qualitative data were obtained from the interviews performed with 11 teachers. For the “Multicultural Education Scale of Teachers”, studies in multicultural education field were examined and an item pool was created (Atasoy, 2012; Basbay ve Kagnici, 2011; Miksch et.al., 2003; Polat, 2012; Scott, 2011; Sevinc et. al., 2009; Yazici et. al., 2009). 48 items were selected from the item pool for the study and it was organized in accordance with the opinions of 5 experts in the field.

The scale developed by the researcher to determine the teachers’ opinions regarding multicultural education consists of two parts. In the first part, there are sections such as age, gender, branch, ethnic origin and in the second part there are questions to determine the opinions of teachers regarding multicultural education. In this part, there are 33 questions. This is a 5 point likert scale graded as follows: “Completely Agree (5)”, “Agree (4)”, “Partly Agree (3)”, “Disagree (2)” and “Completely Disagree (1)”. A pilot scheme was conducted in the spring term of 2013-2014 educational year and it assumed its latest form by removing some items. The scale has 33 items in its final version with exception of the demographics. There are 9 items in the mother tongue sub-category. The scale was applied to 426 primary school and secondary school teachers in the province of Diyarbakir for the “Multicultural Education Scale of Teachers”, the Cronbach Alpha inner coefficient of consistence was found to be .79 for 33 items. This shows that the scale developed is reliable.

The construct validity of the scale for "the Opinions of Teachers regarding Multicultural Education" about", contained data obtained from 426 teachers identified by factor analysis. The construct validity of the scale of “the Multicultural Education Scale of Teachers” was examined by factor analysis conducted by obtaining data from 426 teachers. A Kaiser-Meyer Olkin (KMO) test was performed to determine if the data and sample were suitable for factor analysis. After the analysis, the KMO was found to be .862. This value is over .50 which is the valid limit for factor analysis. After the factor analysis, 33 items were gathered within 4 factors and 33 items in the scale were explained with a total variance of 44.83%. After these analyses, it was decided that “Multicultural Education Scale of Teachers” was a reliable scale. When the dimension of mother tongue was considered, the KMO was calculated at .902 and this was explained by a total variance of .50%. The factor loads of these dimensions are given in Table 2.

Table 2
Subscale of Mother tongue and factor analysis of items

<i>Items</i>	<i>f</i>
I25	-,654
I26	-,634
I27	,509
I28	,798
I29	,809
I30	,776
I31	,728
I32	,621
I33	,571

For the qualitative data, 2 questions were prepared. The opinions of 5 experts were taken into consideration to define the reliability of these questions. Notes were taken and analysed after face-to-face interviews.

Data Analysis

In analysing the data obtained after the application of “Multicultural Education Scale of Teachers”, descriptive statistics such as number, percentage, mean and standard deviation were used. While analyzing the arithmetic mean, the values in Chart 1 were taken into consideration. While

analyzing the percentages, the options of “Completely Agree” and “Agree” were analysed as indicating agreement with the expression. “Completely Disagree” and “Disagree” were analysed as disagreement with the expression.

Table 3
Criteria of Scale Evaluation

<i>Items</i>	<i>Scores</i>	<i>Score Range</i>	<i>Evaluation Criteria</i>
Strongly Agree	5	4,20 – 5,00	Very High
Agree	4	3,40 – 3,19	High
Partially Agree	3	2,60 – 3,39	Medium
Disagree	2	1,80 – 2,59	Low
Strongly Disagree	1	1,00 – 1,79	Very Low

To define if the data is distributed normally, a Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test was conducted. In addition, the normality graphs were examined. After the analysis, it was found that the data did not distribute itself/spread in a normal fashion. Therefore, as the assumptions for parametric tests were not met, a Mann Whitney U Test for 2 independent groups and a Kruskal Wallis-H Test for independent k sampling were used. The analysis was performed using SPSS software.

Findings

Below, the data gathered from teachers' opinions on education in mother tongue are interpreted according to the arithmetic mean in accordance with the criteria in chart 3. The Arithmetic mean of the teachers' opinions regarding education in the mother tongue is $\bar{X}=3,72$. This value shows that teachers' opinions regarding education in mother tongue are positive. Among the items regarding education, the only item below the mean is the 25th item with a mean of 3.17 (I interpret this as a reflection that students whose ethnic origin is not Turkish feel isolated as topics about their history and culture are not included in courses). The acceptance rate of this item for all teachers is 49.1%, non-acceptance is 24.4% and the rate of partial acceptance is 26.6%.

Analysis of Thoughts on Education in mother tongue according to Demographics

The opinions of primary school teachers regarding education in the mother tongue were examined below with respect to the ages, genders, branches, ethnic origins, beliefs and language spoken at home of participants.

Table 4
Distribution of Education in the Mother Tongue According to Age

Age	N	Range	SD	χ^2
21-30	140	202,92		
31-40	199	220,33		
41-50	75	207,51	3	4,283
50+	12	261,08		
Total	426			

According to table 4, meaningful difference [$\chi^2(3)=3,639$; $p=,30$; $p> 0,05$] can not be found between the ages and opinions of teachers. Thus, it can be concluded their opinions don't change according to their ages.

Table 5
Distribution of Education in the Mother Tongue According to Gender

Gender	N	Range	Sum	Z
Male	225	231,81	52157,50	
Female	198	189,49	37518,50	-3,816
Total	423			

According to the results of the Mann Whitney U test in chart 5, there is a meaningful difference between gender and their opinions on education in mother tongue ($U=17817,50$; $p=,00$; $p<,05$). Thus,

teachers' opinions concerning education in mother tongue differ according to their gender. This difference concerns male teachers. Therefore, it can be stated that male teachers think more positively than female teachers regarding education in the mother tongue and they support it more.

Table 6
Distribution of Education in the Mother Tongue Regarding Subject Major

Major	N	Range	SD	χ^2
Elementary	311	220,78		
Social Sciences	50	222,85	2	8,419
Turkish	65	171,48		
Total	426			

According to the results of the Kruskal-Wallis variance analysis, there is a meaningful difference between teachers' opinions on education in the mother tongue and branch studied [$\chi^2(2)=, 53; p=,011; p<,05$]. Therefore, the teachers' opinions on education in mother tongue can be seen to differ according to their branch. The difference concerns social sciences teachers with a mean rank of 222,85. Social sciences teachers think more positively regarding education in the mother tongue than primary school and Turkish language teachers. Therefore, they support it more. In addition, primary school teachers think more positively than Turkish language teachers.

Table 7
Distribution of Education in the Mother Tongue According to Ethnicity

Ethnicity	N	Range	SD	χ^2
Turk	93	123,81		
Kurd	225	244,03		
Zaza	67	241,01		
Arab	18	187,50	5	88,688
Other	3	70,00		
Mixed	20	239,88		
Total	426			

When table 7 is examined, according to the variance analysis of the Kruskal-Wallis test, there is a meaningful difference between teachers' opinions on education in the mother tongue and ethnic origin [$\chi^2(5)= 88.68; p=,03; p<,05$]. Thus, teachers' opinions regarding education in mother tongue differ according to ethnic origin. When mean rank was analysed, this difference concerns teachers of Kurdish origin with 244.03 value. This is followed by teachers of a Zaza origin (241.01), teachers of mixed origin (239,88) and teachers of Turkish origin (187,50). Teachers of Arabic origin are ranked last with the value of 123.8. It can be said that teachers with Kurdish origin have the most positive opinions. After that, there are teachers with Zaza, mixed, Turkish and Arabic origin.

Table 8
Distribution According to Language Spoken at Home Regarding Education in Mother Tongue

Language Spoken At Home	N	Range	SD	χ^2
Turkish	168	165.21		
Kurdish	188	245.39		
Arabic	6	160.75		
Zaza	44	251.14	5	67.636
Mixed Language	18	268.47		
Other	2	107.25		
Total	426			

In table 8, according to the Kruskal-Wallis variance analysis results, there is a meaningful difference between teachers' opinions on education in the mother tongue and the language spoken at home [$\chi^2(5)=49,044; p=,00; p<,05$]. Thus, teachers' opinions on education in the mother tongue differ depending on the language they speak at home. When mean ranks are analysed, this difference concerns mixed language with the value of 268,25. This is followed by Zaza (251,14), Kurdish (245,39), Turkish (165,21) and Arabic (160,75). Therefore, teachers who speak Kurdish and Zaza (mixed) have the most positive opinions on education in the mother tongue. This is followed by, Zaza, Kurdish, Turkish and Arabic.

11 teachers, interviewed for the study, were asked what was meant by education in the mother tongue. Secondly, they were asked "What do you think about education in mother tongue in Turkey?" All of the teachers' answer for the first question was "the students' receiving of education in their mother tongue". It can be understood that teachers are of the opinion that students only receive education when they acquire that education in the mother tongue. Five of the teachers think that there must be education delivered in the mother tongue in Turkey, 5 of them think that it may be and one of them think that it should not be delivered in the mother tongue. 91% of the teachers are positive to the idea of education in mother tongue. The teachers' responses to the question: "What do you think about education in the mother tongue in Turkey?" are below;

While a teacher of Arabic origin thinks that education in the mother tongue 'may be offered' in Turkey, a teacher with Zaza origin thinks there 'it should be' delivered completely in the mother tongue and tells an example;

...my friend had a student with Arabic origin that just arrived from Mardin (1st grade). The child didn't know much Turkish or Kurdish. After the child started school, he had a culture shock and never spoke to his/her parents or friends for 1-2 months.

A teacher of Turkish origin stated that education should not be delivered in the mother tongue as it can divide the country. After having received information about the aim of language (teaching) and its applications in the world, it was observed that he/she changed his/her mind and stated "It may be (delivered in the mother tongue)". Another teacher of Turkish origin stated that education in the mother tongue may be offered. A teacher of Kurdish origin stated "there absolutely must be education in mother tongue" and gave an example;

...while I was teaching 1st grade, I was teaching the letter "a". I was telling the students "you should write like this". I realized that one of the students didn't write anything. I came closer to the student and said "you can write like this". And I saw that the student was looking my face. And I said in Kurdish to make a circle and the student started to do it. I understood that the student didn't know the meaning of circle in Turkish. Thus, the student couldn't do it before. Students who don't know Turkish or know only a little, experience difficulties in early years.

Another teacher of Kurdish origin stated that there absolutely must be education in the mother tongue and expressed his/her view as follows;

...there must be education in the mother tongue for sure. People should have the right to choose. Maybe I want my children to receive education in English or Arabic not Turkish or Kurdish. I think there shouldn't be a limitation like that. Let them get education in whichever language they want.

A teacher with Kurdish origin stated "there absolutely must be, I hope we won't be disappointed again" for education in mother tongue and mentioned;

...My brother and I didn't know much Turkish when we started school. I was better but he had lots of difficulties. He finished university and he is working now. But because of our education system, he can't speak his mother tongue well.

A teacher of Turkish origin stated that it may be taught and mentioned as follows;

...it may happen but not in conditions like those of today. How will it happen? Materials, teachers, nothing is ready. It shouldn't be done without infrastructure or there will be worse results.

Another teacher with Turkish origin stated “It may happen but not in conditions like those of today. There isn’t sufficient infrastructure.” A teacher with Kurdish origin stated “It definitely must happen. When I say a few Kurdish words in the lesson, I see their desire (to learn).” A teacher with Turkish origin states his/her opinions about the issue as follows;

...it may happen because some students are thought to be ‘silly’ as they don’t know much Turkish for example, when I started to teach 2nd grade students, their students in the first grade reported a student had difficulty in understanding. Because, the student couldn’t learn how to read and write. But I saw that he could do some Maths problems on the board. He wasn’t stupid. On the contrary, he was intelligent. Because he didn’t know Turkish and couldn’t understand the teacher, he couldn’t learn how to read and write. After taking care of him for a while, he learnt how to read and write and became the most successful student in Maths.

In general, teachers of Kurdish origin state that “It definitely must happen. I hope it happens this time. I hope we won’t be disappointed again.” Teachers with Turkish or Arabic origin remain objective and at an impartial distance to the issue. Teachers of Turkish and Arabic origin state that education in the mother tongue is something that should happen but they also express some worries. The first one touches on the fact that the present education system in Turkey is not ready for it. They think that without skilled teachers for this kind of education and on grounds of suitable curriculums not yet having been developed, this may lead to unsatisfactory results.

Conclusion and Discussion

Education in the mother tongue is a key element within multicultural education and it has become an issue of contention as a result of discussions regarding democratization and the Kurdish issue in particular. Together with improvements with regard to democratization, the issue has been more openly. This study was conducted to determine the thoughts of teachers in Diyarbakir regarding education in the mother tongue. It was established that most of the teachers think positively on the issue but there are also have some concerns. Male teachers think more positively than female teachers about education in the mother tongue. In addition, Social Science teachers think more positively than primary school and Turkish language teachers. Moreover, teachers of Kurdish and Zaza backgrounds think more positively than teachers whose origins are Turkish and Arabic. Lastly, teachers who speak Zaza and Kurdish at home hold more positive opinions than the others.

In addition, a large number of the teachers feel that students with different mother tongues are not supported enough. Thus, the possibility these students quitting education is high. They also think that students’ academic success will increase if they are presented with the opportunity to receive education in their mother tongue; those students who use their mother tongue effectively will learn a second language more effectively and this will not divide the country. While the teachers were inspired by the definitions regarding education in mother tongue, they did not possess a great deal of knowledge on the issue. All of the teachers who participated in the study expressed that they were not against education in the mother tongue per se. It was also found that teachers of a Kurdish origin support education in mother tongue without harboring a single doubt. Teachers of a Turkish or Arabic origin think positively on the issue while they have some concerns.

The expression of “I think that students whose mother tongue is not Turkish receive enough support for academic success” was agreed with completely by a total of 20,9% of the teachers, disagreed with by 59,2% of the teachers and partly agreed with by 20% of the teachers. As more than half of the teachers (59,2%) and most of the Kurdish participants (71.6%) think that students whose mother tongue is not Turkish is not supported adequately to help them achieve academic success and that the Turkish education system is an excessively ‘monotype’ system. The Turkish education system offers the same kind of education to everyone without paying attention to ethnic and cultural differences, ignoring local, cultural and religious differences most of the time (Egitimsen, 2010). These views demonstrate that Turkish education system needs a revision in terms of catering to plurality and equality of opportunity.

The expression “I think the possibility of students whose mother tongue is not Turkish leaving the education system prematurely is higher” is agreed with by 42%, disagreed with by %33,3 and partly agreed by %24,6. This shows that a significant number of the teachers feel that students whose mother tongue is not Turkish have a greater likelihood of leaving school and abandoning their education at an earlier stage than their Turkish-speaking counterparts. In other studies, education in the mother tongue has been found to exert a positive effect on students’ academic success and students who do not receive education in the mother tongue have a lower rate of academic success and feel

themselves isolated. Therefore, they tend to put an end to their educational ambitions at an earlier stage than others. In a study conducted by Garcia and Bartlett (2007), students at a bilingual school (all of the students' mother tongues are different) have a higher graduation rate than the average rate of other institutions in the state (%80). In addition, it is stated that students with different mother tongues in monolingual schools are forced to leave the school or dismissed from school more frequently than those at alternative institutions.

The expression "I believe that students whose mother tongue is not Turkish should have an opportunity to receive an education in their mother tongue" is agreed with by 77.2% of the teachers, disagreed with by 7.8% and partly agreed with by 15%. Most of the teachers support the rights of students whose mother tongue is not Turkish to receive education in their mother tongue. 78.9% of the teachers of Kurdish origin, 82.1% of the teachers with Zaza origin, 47.3% of the teachers of Turkish origin and 44.4% of the teachers of Arabic origin agree with the expression. Teachers with Kurdish and Zaza origin show a greater determination concerning the provision of education in the mother tongue. Half of the teachers with Turkish origin agree with the expression while a large number of them partly agree with the expression and show that they are indecisive about the issue. Moreover, teachers with Arabic origin are indecisive as they chose the "partly agree" option. In a research conducted by Egitim-Sen in 2010 with 781 participants from 26 provinces, almost half of the participants stated that it is a right to (be able to) receive education in languages other than Turkish. In the interviews, statements of a teacher of Kurdish origin summarizes the issue.

... not only giving education in Kurdish. Let the parents give education to their children however they want. Maybe I want my children to get education in English. Maybe I want them to get education in Arabic. I think there shouldn't be a limitation (placed on language choices) like that.

The expression of "Teaching school subjects in the mother tongue will make children learn easier" is agreed with by 75.1% of the participants, 7.7% disagreed and 17.1% stated that they partly agreed with this expression. 44.1% of teachers of Turkish origin, 85.8% of teachers of Kurdish origin, 80.6% of teachers of Zaza origin and 61.1% of teachers of Arabic origin agree with the expression. The most indecisive group is teachers of Turkish origin. A primary school teacher explained the issue in his/her interview as follows,

"...while I was teaching 1st grade, I was teaching the letter "a". I was telling the students "you should write like this". I realized that one of the students didn't write anything. I came closer to the student and said "you can write like this". And I saw that the student was looking my face. And I said in Kurdish to make a circle and the student started to do it. I understood that the student didn't know the meaning of circle in Turkish. The student therefore couldn't do it before. Students who don't know Turkish or know only a little experience difficulties in early years".

The expression of "Students whose mother tongue is different than Turkish feel isolated when they start primary school" was agreed with by 72.7% of the participants, disagreed with by 9.4% and 17.8% of them partly agreed. 42.1% of teachers of Turkish origin, 86.6% of teachers of Kurdish origin, 70.2% of teachers of Zaza origin and 55.6% of teachers with Arabic origin agreed with the expression. In the study conducted by Garcia and Bartlett (2007), in a bilingual school that only consisted of students with different mother tongues, students stated that they felt more comfortable. They stated that they felt comfortable when they spoke in their mother tongue and not felt isolated as their friends' mother tongues were different. They stated that they didn't worry about speaking in English (official language) without fluency because their friends couldn't laugh at them as they were in the same situation. In addition, they stated that they tried not to speak Spanish when they were at another school because speaking Spanish was not welcomed. Also, as their English was not so good, they didn't speak in English because their friends might make fun of them. As a result, they said that they weren't happy at other schools.

Children whose mother tongue is different from Turkish may have difficulties when they start school. This occurs as they do not know Turkish or have only limited knowledge. As a result, their academic success may be lower than those whose mother tongue is Turkish. Deveci (2010) studied the difficulties of Turkish students at primary school in Denmark. The results showed that their level of academic success was low and they had difficulties in education. The reason of this result was when they started school, their Danish skills were lower than those of Danish students. Thus, they couldn't access or form some concepts in the Danish language. Also, their parents couldn't help them as the

parents did not know the language of instruction to an adequate level (Deveci, 2010). Multicultural education plays an important role in increasing the success of students from different groups, raising them as democratic citizens and preparing them to live in a multicultural society (Gay, 1994).

The expression of “If I had a mother tongue different than the dominant language of the country I lived in (Turkey, Germany, Belgium etc.), I would want to receive some parts of education in my mother tongue” is agreed with by 82.3% of the participants, disagreed with by 3.9% and partly agreed with by 13.6% of the participants. Most of the teachers stated that they agreed with the expression. When the expression is analyzed in terms of ethnicity, 89.7% of teachers with Kurdish origin agreed and 3.1% didn’t agree with this. 86.5% of teachers with Zaza origin agreed and %13,4 didn’t agree with the expression. Furthermore, 72% of teachers with Arabic origin agreed and 17.8% did not agree with the expression. Lastly, 62.4% of teachers of Turkish origin agreed and 8.6% did not agree with the expression. The Zaza and Kurdish participants have the highest rates in regard to this issue. As these groups are aware of status and ethnic groups, they easily develop empathy about minority rights and this causes them to think more sensitively. The lower rates among Turks can be related with their worries about unity of the country and lack of empathy.

The expression “I believe that a person who uses his/her mother tongue effectively can learn a second language better” is agreed with by 86.2% of the participants, 2.8% disagreed and 11.1% of them partly agreed with this expression. Hovens (2002) found out that students are more successful when they start their educational life in their mother tongue and cross over to the second language step by step. The expression of “I think giving different ethnic groups the right of getting education in their mother tongue will damage the unity of the country” is agreed with by 12% of the participants, disagreed with by 81% and partly agreed with by 6.3%. Most of the teachers think that it will not be harmful for the unity of the country if different ethnic groups receive an education in their mother tongue. Worries about the issue among Turks are seen to have higher rates. However, there are almost no worries among Kurds and Zazas. Those who demand the right to an education in mother tongue think that this will not damage the unity of country but those against this right think that it can be harmful for the unity of the country. In the interviews, it was seen that teachers who thought that education in mother tongue might divide the country were of a Turkish origin. When the aims of education in the mother tongue and practices in other countries were explained to them, they expressed the view, “If it is like this in other countries or if there will be education provision in Turkish, then it can be practiced”. Most of the participants against education in mother tongue have worries with regard to the aims of this kind of education and the content to be included. Informing the public about these issues will be helpful for further studies about education in the mother tongue.

To summarize, most of the teachers think positively with regard to education in the mother tongue. Teachers with Kurdish and Zaza origin expressed their opinions most clearly while teachers with Turkish and Arabic origin are positive to this kind of education although they harbor some worries. The reasons for these worries come from the lack of definition concerning the scope of education in the mother tongue and absence of reliable background information regarding the issue. There are a limited number of studies concerning education in mother tongue. Therefore, this study will serve to contribute to the field. Also, as a few teachers who participated in interviews mentioned “You can ask these questions here freely but you can’t make such a study in the west of the country”. This shows that teachers’ thoughts about education in mother tongue are an object of interest in western provinces (and may provide an interesting area/group for the purposes of future research into this topic).

Contribution

This paper has produced from some part of author’s MA thesis.

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