



ISSN  
2547-989X

Sinop Üniversitesi  
Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi  
Araştırma Makalesi

Sinop Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 7 (1), 197-221  
Geliş Tarihi: 08.01.2023 Kabul Tarihi: 09.03.2023  
Yayın: 2023 Yayın Tarihi: 31.05.2023  
<https://doi.org/10.30561/sinopusd.1231045>  
<https://dergipark.org.tr/sinopusd>

## A GALANCE AT BILINGUALISM AS A SOCIAL, LINGUISTIC AND EDUCATIONAL MATTER IN TURKEY

Seda DEMİR\*

Çağrı ERKOÇ\*

### Abstract

The purpose of this study is to highlight the versatility of bilingualism types in past and present times in Turkey and to examine the extent to which the concept of bilingualism finds its place in the related Turkish literature. The study also focuses on the status of immigrants considering the related sociological bilingualism elements in Turkish society and ethnicity. The data includes the books and articles in Turkish-related literature and the theses available at the Higher Education Council Thesis Center. Thus, the study was carried out in a style close to meta-synthesis form, it doesn't constitute a literature review. The study serves to close the gap for a general reference article about the academic studies on bilingualism in Turkey by enabling readers to look at the bilingualism forms in Turkey from different perspectives.

**Keywords:** Bilingualism in Turkey, Bilingualism among immigrants in Turkey, Multiculturalism in Turkey, Bilingualism in academic studies in Turkey

### Türkiye'de Sosyal, Dilsel ve Eğitimsel Bir Mesele Olarak İki Dilliliğe Bakış

#### Öz

Bu çalışmanın amacı, Türkiye'de geçmişte ve günümüzde iki dillilik türlerinin çok yönlülüğünü vurgulamak ve iki dillilik kavramının ilgili Türk literatüründe ne ölçüde yer bulduğunu incelemektir. Çalışma aynı zamanda Türk toplumu ve etnisitesindeki ilgili sosyolojik iki dillilik unsurlarını dikkate alarak göçmenlerin durumuna da odaklanmaktadır. Veriler, Türkçe ile ilgili literatürdeki kitap ve makaleleri ve YÖK Tez Merkezi'nde bulunan tezleri içermektedir. Bu nedenle çalışma meta-sentez biçimine yakın bir şekilde gerçekleştirilmiştir, literatür taraması niteliğinde değildir. Çalışma, okuyucuların Türkiye'deki iki dillilik biçimlerine farklı açılardan bakmalarını sağlayarak, Türkiye'de iki dillilik üzerine yapılan akademik çalışmalara ilişkin genel bir referans makalesi açığını kapatma amacına hizmet etmektedir.

\* Dr., Serdivan Anadolu Lisesi, serkoc\_16@hotmail.com

\* Öğr. Gör., Yalova Üniversitesi, cagrierkoc1989@gmail.com, <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1238-2865>

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Türkiye’de iki dillilik, Türkiye’de göçmenler arasında iki dillilik, Türkiye’de çok kültürlülük, Türkiye’de akademik çalışmalarda iki dillilik

## **Introduction**

Bilingualism has a very broad scale of research in modern-day language teaching and linguistics internationally. The matter hasn’t been a major topic of study in academic studies and academic publications in Turkey not until the last decade roughly and it is somehow related to the socioeconomic policies of many countries. However, raising bilingual children has become more important for countries’ educational policies in modern-day circumstances including Turkey.

As a country that receives a lot of immigration and has millions of citizens living abroad, it is difficult to say that academic studies in Turkey are sufficient in number or informative for educators and academicians in general. The study focuses on literature production on bilingualism in Turkish literature and in which aspects bilingualism signifies educational matters that are held through academic publications.

The study includes a meta-synthesis approach especially in its handling the academic studies on bilingualism. “In the simplest terms, the meta-synthesis method includes qualitative research on a specific subject, synthesizing and interpreting within the framework of a qualitative understanding.” (Gümüő, 2018, p. 21).

## **1. Bilingualism as a Sociological Element in Turkey**

Today, Turkish identity is two-staged. The first is the identity of the great majority, who consider themselves Turkish in terms of ancestry, language, history and culture constituting almost 85% of the total population while the second one is the political, legal and social identity (Buran, 2012). In this sense, Turkish was taken as the official language in the constitution as well. In Turkey’s constitution, it is clearly stated that its official language is Turkish. The status for any language in a country can be listed as follows:

1. Official language status in bilingualism

2. Bilingual or monolingual national language status - Strategically bilingual

3. Legal autonomy status (Saydı, 2013, p. 275).

Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, a monolingual policy has been followed despite the existence of social groups speaking different languages in the country. With measures taken, mother tongues other than Turkish were prevented from entering the public sphere and the public sphere was homogenized linguistically. This process, which continued until the 1990s, has been broken by several changes made at the legal level (Kubilay, 2004, p. 55). In Turkey, some parts of the country are strategically bilingual which means that the languages of small groups are entitled to various limited rights. It is not the constitutional right of the majority, but it keeps its place in the official language practices of the country. “It does not provide equality with the official language, but it ensures the coexistence of the official majority language and the language of the minority community” (Saydı, 2013, p. 275).

Although the Turks' relationship with Anatolia dates back to ancient times, their definitive and uninterrupted dominance in known history began with the Battle of Manzikert in 1071. When the Turks came to Anatolia, although there was not a large population in Anatolia, Greek, Armenian, and Syriac tribes were living in the region. After the Turks dominated Anatolia, some of the Kurds, Arabs, Laz, and all the Zazas had the opportunity to live in Anatolia together with the Turks (Yüksel, 2011, p. 4). In addition to the Oghuz Turks, Kipchak, Pechenek, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Uyghur, Kazakh, Kumuk, Nogay, Karachay-Balkar, Uzbek, etc. Turkish elements came to Anatolia over time. Apart from these elements of Turkish origin, various ethnic elements such as Circassians, Georgians, Albanians, Bulgarians, Serbians, Croats, and Pomaks, who were denied the right to live in the Caucasus and the Balkans, came to Anatolia, especially since the 19th century (Yüksel, 2011, p. 4).

“Later on, in the Ottoman Period, there used to be more than sixty religious and ethnic groups in the multicultural structure of the Ottoman Empire” after which

the Turkish Republic was established (Karpas, 1974, p.2). This would hint at the multi-cultural and multi-linguistic as well as a multi-dialectic structure. “It has been observed that non-Muslims (especially Greeks and Armenians) in the regions where Turks are the majority in Anatolia and Rumeli forget their mother tongue and use Turkish as a spoken language” (Koloğlu, 1993, p. 75).

In the following centuries, for instance, as a result of the 93 War the Balkan Wars and the Turkish-Greek Population Exchange, hundreds of thousands of Muslims from the Balkans and the Caucasus flocked to Anatolia. Among these Muslim immigrants who immigrated to Anatolia in the 19th century, there are also many communities whose mother tongues are languages other than Turkish. Immigrants speaking Circassian dialects, Chechen and Georgian languages came from the Caucasus, as well as Bosnian and Albanian-speaking people from the Balkans.

It is possible to classify the languages living in Turkey as official/state languages, local languages, and minority languages. Apart from these languages, people of different nationalities living in Turkey also have mother tongues. However, these languages are in the "guest languages" position. Along with Turkish, the main languages spoken in Turkey as a mother tongue are Turkish, Arabic, Albanian, Bosnian, Armenian, Circassian, Georgian, Hemshin, Kurdish, Laz, Pomak, Romani, Greek, Syriac, Jewish, Zazaki (Yüksel, 2011). But, also, in some previous studies, some researchers used different criteria from each other and accepted belief or tribe groups as separate ethnic groups. For example, belief and tribe groups such as Muhacir, Christian, Yörük have been considered as separate ethnicities by some researchers (Buran, 2012).

To have a glance at the ethnicities, communities, nationalities, tribes, or in short, cultural groups in Turkey chronologically such a table could be helpful to hint at the scale at large:

**Table 1.** *Cultural or Ethnic Inhabitants of Anatolia through Time*

Before Manzikert	After Manzikert	Beyliks Period	Ottoman Period	Modern Day Turkey

Greek, Armenian, Syriac tribes	Kurds, Arabs, Laz, and all of the Zazas	Oghuz Turks, Kipchak, Pechenek, Kyrgyz, Tatar, Uyghur, Kazakh, Kumuk, Nogay, Karachay-Balkar, Uzbek, etc.	Muslims from Balkans and Caucasus with Circassian dialects, Chechens and Georgians from Caucasus, as well as Bosnian-speaking people from Balkans and Albanian-speaking Albanians	Turkish, Arabic, Albanian, Bosnian, Circassian, Abazin, Armenian, Georgian, Hemşin, Kurdish, Laza, Pomak, Romani, Greek, Syriac, Jewish, Zazaki <sup>1</sup>
--------------------------------	---	---	---	--

As mentioned above, Turkey has had a rich scale of ethnicities which was named “the country of cultural mosaic” in the related spheres. But it is important to note that minorities or ethnic groups in Turkey especially in the Eastern and South-eastern parts of Turkey have seemed more disadvantaged in sense of language, climate, life standards, political and social welfare, etc. The first language of families in these regions, especially those living in rural areas or villages is Kurdish and many of these regions’ first languages are Arabic (especially in southern parts) and Zaza which makes them multicultural and consequently, bilingual or multi-lingual as well. But according to some views “it should be noted that bilingual students in rural areas (Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions) of Turkey are official citizens of the Republic of Turkey; that is, they are not a minority” (Yakışır, 2009). “Citizens who

<sup>1</sup>Kurdish and Zazaki are not completely separable concepts in terms of philological aspects, as in the related literature, one of which (Zazaki) is a subdialect of the other (Kurdish). But it was individually included in the study by its name considering its prevalence on the geography. “Kurdish has some dialects the four main of which are Northern Kurdish ‘Kurmanji’, Central Kurdish ‘Sorani’, Southern Kurdish and Zazaki-Gorani. In addition, mutual understanding would change among them because of some non-linguistic factors” (See. Khalid, H. S. (2020). Kurdish language, its family and dialects. *Kurdiname*, (2), 133-146.)

speak the minority language enjoy some of the rights granted to them: they can use their own language in official proceedings, legal affairs, schools, educational institutions, media organs, all or some of these” (Saydı, 2013, p. 275).

## **2. Bilingualism Types among the Immigrants in Turkey**

Various phenomena in the world in the past century have caused people to leave their country of origin and migrate. One result of migration movements is multiculturalism, and naturally the other will be multilingualism. While problems such as adapting to the society they live in and being able to communicate directly affect their lives, factors such as their circumstances to receive education, the change in their socio-economic and socio-psychological life (the affective perception of whether they are welcomed in the target country or not) also affect immigrants and their children indirectly. At the top of these problems they encounter, comes the language barrier.

In addition to being a fundamental necessity and human right, the education of immigrant children is very important in terms of their adaptation to social, economic, and cultural life and so is the duty of states to provide education to all children. Thus, this has been one of the topics Turkish educational authorities have talked about for almost 15 years mostly, as a result of the difficulty of regular and irregular immigrants’ integration into formal education process in public and other schools. Because, at the beginning of the migration, Turkey mainly focused on the issues such as their sheltering, safety, food supply, etc. but it became clear that the Syrians would not return to their country immediately.

As Turkey stands on a strategically and geo-strategically important transit point from Asian and European countries it turned out to be an immigrant-accepting country while “it started to the population to European countries in the beginning of 60s” (Dinçer & Muratoğlu, 2014, p.4). Immigration to Turkey is, in a general sense, a two-sided factor. The first way is open to the public through legal means, such as work/occupation and residence, and it deals with the relocation of those who have

been allowed to settle and engage in the public domain of Turkey legally. This category produces regular immigrants. The other category consists of irregular migration, which includes refugees and asylum seekers and is carried out illegally, mostly in mass (İçduygu, Erder ve Gençkaya, 2014, p. 223). Turkey advocates facilitating access to justice, education, and health opportunities for regular migrants as well as irregular migrants. However, it is not possible to talk about the existence of an official policy or study for the language teaching of irregular migrants other than those under temporary protection.

During the Iranian Revolution in 1979, most Iranians used Turkey as a transit country and in 1989. The arrival of Northern Iraqis, whose number reached 500,000, from Iraq to Turkey, followed by the former Yugoslavia civil war and the Kosovo crisis, experienced intense migration to Turkey (Emin, 2019).

Turkey was exposed to the influx of approximately 350,000 immigrants of Turkish origin from Bulgaria before. “The Communist regime of Bulgaria caused over 300 thousand Pomaks and Turks to migrate to Turkey in 1989. Then Saddam Huseyin’s persecution of Kurds created a similar migration wave towards Turkey with the number of half a million people” (Tanrıkulu, 2018, p. 2586).

Apart from the immigrant Turkish families living in various European countries which resulted in bilingual individuals for over 50 years and several bilingual generations, the outbreak of the Syrian civil war (2011) caused roughly 3.8 million Syrians have migrated to Turkey and the number of bilingual individuals has started to increase with Syrian children born and started to grow/live in Turkey. Turkey was exposed to the influx of approximately 350,000 immigrants of Turkish origin from Bulgaria before (Tanrıkulu, 2018, p. 2586).

In this respect, there are roughly three types of bilingualism that can be classified in Turkey:

*The first bilingual group* can be categorized as citizens of different ethnic origins but most notably the languages are Kurdish, Georgian, Circassian, Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, Albanian, Syriac, Abkhazian, Armenian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Laza

and some others as mentioned earlier. Most of the people from these origins and nationalities are exposed to their first language before Turkish as their second language, and they need to communicate in Turkish not so often, not until they start their formal education. “Especially in the Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions, there are many bilingual individuals whose mother tongue is Zazaki and who have started to learn Turkish since school age” (Kesmez, 2015, p. 158). And as mentioned above this is the group that covers Turkish citizens, and they are the most vulnerable part to the language barrier. The ones living in villages are not usually exposed to Turkish which they meet in the very first years of their K12 education.

*The second group* consists of the immigrant (regular and irregular) families’ children who immigrated to Turkey at different times among which are Afghanistan, African countries, and Turkic republics to lead a better life, especially those who fled the war and took refuge in our country in recent years, such as Syria and Iraq.

*The third group* is the children of wealthy and well-off families who study two languages at the same time in the schools they attend, and from the foreign nannies hired for them from an early age to help them learn the foreign language better, which the related literature mentions as "enrichment education".

### **2.1. Bilingualism in Syrian Immigrants**

While a significant part of the Syrians living together with the Turks in the city centers, some of them still live in the temporary accommodation centers prepared for them. Those living in these centers, where only Syrians live interact with Turks limitedly, they have less Turkish knowledge and skills. They do not have much interaction with Turkish apart from the Turkish lessons given in the schools opened. But the situation of Syrians living in city centers is different. “They must speak Turkish with the majority in society on the street, at school or work. Therefore, it is possible to speculate that learning Turkish as a second language and its effect is mostly valid for Syrians living in city centers” (Biçer& Alan, 2018, p. 348).

While some children born in Turkey have simultaneous bilingual elements, most of them experience sequential bilingualism. Thus, bilingualism seen in Syrians

in Turkey has generally a dual structure. The first type can be defined as simultaneous because children with Turkish and Arab parents are exposed to Turkish and Arabic at the same time. While some “others are only exposed to Arabic more at home, the process of acquiring Turkish, which starts from the age of 3-4, makes a great progress with school” (Biçer & Alan, 2018, p. 348).

The other type is ‘sequential’, which occurs when the children speak Arabic until they go to preschool or primary school. Adults experience late sequential bilingualism as they interact with Turkish in later times because along with the age the importance and crucially of learning Turkish is becoming clear for Syrians living in Turkey. It is especially felt in socio-cultural phenomena like in marriages, trade, professions, social life and education in the life outside.

Another group of immigrants living in Turkey which has a considerable population are the Afghans. After the collapse of USSR and consequently its withdrawal from the country in 1989 a serious civil war started. Taliban got over the regime in such a political turmoil, but this would, again, refresh the tendency of Afghan people to immigrate to survive. In the period following the US intervention in 2001 and up to the present day, internal peace could be achieved, and conflicts have gone on to intensify (Barfield, 2010). In present day, there are many groups of Afghan people that have entered the country illegally and have no record of citizenship or membership to a legal practice they can benefit from which makes irregular immigrants. In present day in Turkey, temporary protection status is only provided to Syrians. This does not apply to Afghans or other foreigners making their integration into educational system even harder.

### **3. Bilingualism in Educational Contexts in Turkey**

*Education Opportunities and Turkish Education Practices for Bilinguals in Turkey -Irregular & Regular Immigrants:* Different pedagogical methods should be applied in the school, or Turkish courses where immigrants attend in order to ensure that they receive education in psychologically secure educational environments. For this reason, separated environments were prepared in Turkish teaching activities for

immigrant and refugee children from different ethnic origins and whose mother tongue is different, and Turkish education was tried to be realized by taking some precautions in this direction.

Educational attempts such as supportive language courses, the appointment of new teachers with this purpose or increasing the qualifications of current teachers with online education or seminars in person could be given as examples of those and actions the Turkish Ministry of Education have taken. The access of foreigners to education in Turkey is handled in the general legislation of the Ministry of National Education by

- law No. 6458 on Foreigners and International Protection, which entered into force in April 2014,
- regulation on the Education of Children of Migrant Workers dated 2002,
- temporary Protection Regulation published in October 2014,
- MoNE Equivalency Regulation (2004) on 23.09.2014 within the framework of the circular on "Educational Services for Foreigners" numbered 2014/21.
- Also, regarding the access of foreign children to education in Turkey, the MEB 2015-2019 Strategic Plan was included in the theme of access to education (Turkish Ministry of Education, 2015, p. 35).

Many institutions and organizations, especially the Ministry of National Education, have activities for Syrians to learn Turkish. The language of instruction in the Temporary Education Centers affiliated with the National Education, primary, secondary and high schools for Syrians is Arabic. In these schools, language skills are tried to be improved by giving Turkish lessons. But seemingly, a regular structure regarding the Turkish teaching processes of Syrians has not yet been formed (Biçerve Alan, 2018, p. 349).

*Bilingualism in Education for Turkish Children as an Enrichment Education:* As mentioned above the official language stated in its constitution is Turkish

in Turkey. But due to the cosmopolitan nature of the country, which houses various cultures together, different languages (Kurdish, Arabic, Laz language, and Zaza language) are spoken as well (Karataş & Ayaz, 2017, p. 146). There are many nations whose mother tongues are different in Turkey. Today, educating children whose mother tongue and official language are different is the basis of some problems. It is observed that in the case of education is performed just with the official language, the children whose mother tongue is different than the official language are strained and they face serious social problems in the first years of school (Karataş & Ayaz, 2017, p. 146).

Also in Turkey, a special value is attributed to English language knowledge so much that Turkish–English bilingualism is associated with a privileged social position, even for young children (Şenaydın & Dikilitaş, 2019). This group, according to Güzel (2014, p. 82) can be named as elite bilinguals, who has decided to be bilingual by their own special talents and wishes or have been directed to be bilingual by their parents, not by chance.

This group, as in Turkey, might include children of high/middle-class families, and students who have lived abroad for a long time with different duties. They are mostly the children of academics, diplomats, and international government officials, etc. Also included in this group are those who had a nanny or a caregiver in the past who spoke a different language, and young people who took a vacation in a foreign country in the summer and attended foreign language courses personally. But in present-day Turkey raising children is held much more consciously by the working class as well. So many families speaking a foreign language (mostly English) prefer and pay effort to raise their children bilingual.

Elite bilingualism is mostly represented by children and youth who have never had serious sociological or economic problems. As mentioned above, it is generally thought of as something positive, elegant, and uplifting. And there has been a high school culture that started in the recent times of the Ottoman Empire providing a multicultural structure of language education. However, it should be kept in mind

that according to some international academic definitions and assumptions, it is difficult to show an institution that meets the concept of a bilingual school in Turkey. Most of the schools that are thought to be bilingual schools or that are tried to be included in the bilingual school category because they provide bilingual education, teach certain courses in the foreign language of the country of origin and certain courses in Turkish (Demir & Demiriz, 2021, p. 228). Below a table can be seen with certain information on minority schools most of which are accepted bilingual in many aspects (the duality of the multiplicity of languages other than Turkish, cultural atmospheres the culture of the target language in question creates, institutional breeding related to the language teaching, etc.). But these institutions should not be confused with dual-language education.

**Table 2.** *Bilingual Schools in Turkey According to Their Origins<sup>2</sup>*

Bilingual Schools of According to Their Origins	Diploma Opportunities	Language of Instruction
Schools of European (German-Italian- French) Origin	Abitur Diploma Dual Country Diplomas (like Turkish-Italian/ Turkish or French Di- ploma equivalent to the French Baccalaureate	Dual or multiple language use in in- struction (one of which is Turkish) in addition to one or more optional or compulsory European language in for- eign language status
Schools of Romanian, Hebrew and Arme- nian Origin	<i>*Check footnote 1.</i>	Greek and Turkish for Instruction (English as foreign language)

<sup>2</sup>There is no clear information about the qualifications of the diplomas provided by the Greek-origin foreign schools.

Schools of American Origin	IB Diploma Program or AP (Advanced Program)	English-Turkish in addition to one or more optional or compulsory European language in foreign language status
----------------------------	---	--

IB (International Baccalaureate), French Baccalaureate, Abitur Diploma and AP (Advanced Program) programs enable the students to receive high school diplomas valid in the origin countries of the minorities established them. This way, students can continue without any exemption, course completion, or provide any kind of equivalency for the universities in the related countries. But details and applications, criteria, etc. might vary. These schools provide a third or fourth language as compulsory or optional, in addition to the education they provide in two languages. While most of the above-mentioned foreign schools are known as prestigious educational institutions by the Turkish community with their European, American, Greek, and Armenian origin examples, most of them date back to the last periods of the Ottoman Empire when they were named “minority schools”.

There are also bilingual schools established for the minority communities’ children that have recently migrated from the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East rising the number of international schools in Turkey. Thus, “the number of international bilingual private education institutions that started to operate after obtaining permission from the Ministry of National Education based on the provisions of Law No. 5580. It is known that the number of international or foreign schools in Turkey provides education with the education curriculum used by countries such as Palestine, Iraq, Yemen, Libya, Saudi Arabia, and Sudan” (Demir & Demiriz, 2021, p. 228).

#### **4. The Concept of Bilingualism in Scholarly Studies in Turkey**

As stated above the study largely concentrates on academic studies in Turkey focusing on the literature production on bilingualism in Turkish academia and the aspects of bilingualism along with sociological matters that are held through academic writings and imprints. Below can be found some cumulative data on the thesis, academic books, and articles that studied bilingualism in Turkey.

#### 4.1. Thesis on Bilingualism

Depending on the data available on the Higher Education Council Thesis Center (<https://tez.yok.gov.tr/UlusalTezMerkezi/>) it is seen that the most frequently studied topics about bilingualism relate to language acquisition/learning, language teaching, language skills and linguistic pedagogy at large (31 theses at total) followed by linguistic fields at general (15 theses).

Table 4. *The Distribution of Thesis According to Some Topics Studied with Bilingualism*

Category of thesis on bilingualism	Frequency	Doctoral Dissertation (DD) or Master's Thesis (MT)
Academic problems at large related to bilingualism	4	3 Master Theses 1 Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and language acquisition/learning	31	26 Master Theses 5 Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and language teaching/linguistic pedagogy/linguistic skills at large		
Attitudes, beliefs, views and concerns about bilinguals and bilingualism	10	9 Master Theses 1 Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and linguistics (including linguistic skills, discourse, language outlook, code-switching, linguistic ardition, translanguaging, fluency,	15	12 Master Theses 3 Doctoral Dissertation

articulation or pronunciation, fluency, etc.)		
Socio-cultural and ethnographic studies with bilinguals/bilingual groups or bilingualism in a certain city/country/group, etc.	10	8 Master Theses 2 Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and academic success / cognitive capacity/social development	4	4 Master Theses No Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and lexicography, idioms and metaphors	6	4 Master Theses 2 Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and dialects	1	1 Master Theses No Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and error analysis	2	2 Master Theses No Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and media/media tools	1	1 Master Theses No Doctoral Dissertation
Bilingualism and pre-school studies	6	4 Master Theses 2 Doctoral Dissertation

#### 4.2. Books

Looking at the related Turkish literature, it is seen that the scarcity of academic books is considerable. As the concept of bilingualism is fairly recent in academic studies in Turkish academia it is no surprise to come across books written on bilingualism in general. Some of the books' names accessed are as follows:

Table 5. Books Available on Bilingualism Published in Turkey

Name of the Book	Related Topic
İkidillilik ve İkidilli Çocukların Eğitimi (“Bilingualism and The Education of Bilingual Children”)	<i>pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-</i>
İkidillilere Türkçe Öğretimi (“Turkish Education for Bilinguals”)	<i>pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-</i>
İki Dilli Toplumlarda Değininim-Kaynaklı Dil Aşınması: İran'da Türkçe-Farsça İki Dilliliği Üzerine (“Linguistic Attrition in Bilingual Societies Resulting from Adversion: On Turkish-Persian Bilinugalism in Iran”)	<i>Linguistics, linguistic pedagogy</i>
İki Dillilik ve Dil Edinimi (Almanya’daTürkçe-Almanca İki Dilli Büyüyen Çocuklar Üzerine Bir İnceleme) (“Bilingualism and Language Acquisition- A Research on Children Growing up Turkish-German Bilingual in Germany”)	<i>pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-</i>
Alanya Örneğinden Almanca -Türkçe İkiDillilik- Ses, Yapı ve Anlam Bilimi Açısından-Toplum Dilbilimsel Bir İnceleme	<i>Linguistics, sociolinguistics</i>
İki Dilli Türk Çocuklarına Türkçe Öğretimi (“Teaching Turkish to Bilingual Turkish Children”) (two different books from two different authors)	<i>pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-</i>
	<i>linguistics, sociolinguistics</i>

İki dillilik ve Çokdillilik (“Bilingualism and Multilingualism”)	
Çok Dilli Çocuklarda Dil Bozukluğu Nasıl Anlaşılır (“How to Detect Linguistic Defect in Multilingual Children”)	<i>pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-</i>
Çok Kültürlülük ve Çok Dillilik (“Multiculturalism and Multilingualism”)	<i>linguistics, sociolinguistics</i>
Göç Ve Çok Dillilik Bağlamında Okullarda Okur Yazarlık Eğitimi	<i>pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-</i>
Bir Çocuk İki Dil Çift Diploma (“One Child Two Languages and Two Diplomas”)	<i>pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-</i>
Romanya Türk Toplulukları Örneğinde İkiDillilik (“Bilingualism in Turkish Communities in Romania”)	<i>linugistics, sociolinguistics</i>
Translated Books about Bilingualism	Related Topic
İki Dilli Eğitim Anne Babalar ve Öğretmenler İçin Rehber (A Parents’ and Teachers’ Guide to Bilingualism by Colin Baker)	<i>pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-</i>
Dil Hakkı Azınlık Dilleri ve Çok Dilli Yaşam (“Language Right, Minority Languages and Multilingual Life”)	<i>Sociolinuistics</i>

When the name of the books available in Turkey studied on bilingualism the prominent contents held in these books are seemingly,

1. *Pedagogical knowledge -academic reference book-*,
2. *Linguistics, linguistic pedagogy*
3. and *sociolinguistics*.

#### **4.3. Articles**

Analyzing the bilingualism-related literature in Turkish, it can be seen that bilingualism in Turkish academia has started to expand prominently among other

linguistic concepts within 10-15 years and it has become respectively prevalent in Turkish academia during recent years.

According to Avcı and Kurudayıoğlu (2002, p. 262), the distribution of publications in the field of bilingualism by years when analyzed (in SSCI, AHCI, ESCI), a significant increase- quite late, though -is observed in the number of publications after 2014 and this must be resulting from the Labor Agreement with Europe in 1961 and the labor migration continued until the 1980s. They add that the keyword network of studies in the field of bilingualism includes elements such as bilingualism, second language acquisition, vocabulary teaching, Turkish immigrants, foreign language acquisition, multilingualism, borrowing, acquisition and Germany, Holland and Turkey are the mostly frequent country names included.

According to Bican, in the literature, there is a need to reveal the diversity in the criteria used in the definition of bilingualism and the similar and contradictory aspects of these criteria. It is an important deficiency that the basic framework of bilingualism studies, which spread over a wide area, has not found enough space in the Turkish literature (2017, p. 356). Again, according to Akkaya and İşçi (2016, p. 339), all the participants in their study stated that the studies on this subject are insufficient. Participants attribute this inadequacy to the lack of academicians working on this subject, academics' careers, social and economic reservations, and political reasons.

Demirdöven (2016, p. 95), has stated that all the participants in his study group see bilingualism as an advantage. These advantages are, while they might vary in different terms, 'linguistic/communicative skills, cultural elements, mental functions and economic values'.

Günaydın (2020), in his study on 75 Turkish articles about bilingualism published between 2010 and 2020 in terms of various variables found a concentration in the articles between the years 2015-2020, that most frequented samples are of primary and secondary school students, mostly the case patterns of the qualitative research approach were adopted while communication anxiety came to the fore as the

subject. Also, Turkish-Arabic was the most common couple of languages studied in the country while abroad, they were mostly conducted about Turkish- German languages.

Pekgenç and Yılmaz in their study on the opinions of classroom teachers about the mother tongue of bilingual students are examined; they found that teachers (1) see the mother tongue as a communication tool. This data is in line with other two studies investigating instructor views on bilingualism (Keleş and Sabuncuoğlu, 2020, Bal, Tona & Akman, 2021), (2) that they see bilingualism as a gain and think that it improves intelligence. But some teachers, who find bilingualism normal (3) stated that bilingualism can cause problems in the classroom, on the other hand, stating that bilingual education develops the capacity of the brain and should be applied. (4) The most recent problem communication reported was the communication problems and the difficulty in expressing themselves and not understanding what they read. Also, (5) teachers who speak the mother tongue of the students in bilingual classrooms see themselves as competent, advantageous and lucky. But classroom teachers, who do not know the native language of the students, stated that they see themselves as inadequate, troubled, trying to cope, and foreign language teaching. (6) They proposed a structural solution stating that students should receive education in both their mother tongue and official language together as education in their mother tongue is necessary. (7) Other problems were recorded as were the students' low academic achievement, lack of self-confidence and introversion. Similar results were found in another study on the mother tongue and primary school students' problems according to the experiences of classroom teachers. The study shows that students whose mother tongue is different face various problems when they start school. Problems such as not being able to communicate and experiencing introversion, self-confidence problem, socialization problem, and academic failure are expressed as the problems that come to the fore (Yılmaz & Şekerci, 2016, p. 57). According to the findings of Akkaya and İşçi, the positive opinion of the majority of the participants may mean that bilingualism is accepted in the academic environment in our

country and also bilingualism is perceived as a gain in the explanations of the participants (2016, p. 339).

There are also various studies concentrating on the views and attitudes of immigrant parents of bilingual children who find learning Turkish is crucial in adapting to life in Turkey and desire that their children learn Turkish which makes them bilingual (Ünal & Taşkaya & Ersoy, 2018; Nimer, 2019; Özger & Akansel, 2019; Şahin & Moralı & Göçer, 2021). The findings from research on the views of parents and teachers of bilingual children about bilingualism show that parents and teachers are aware of the importance of bilingualism in early childhood; they support the second language, and its effects are positive (Banko Bal, Ketenci Tona and Akman, 2020, p. 1722).

Table 6. *Mostly Encountered Elements about Bilingualism in Articles in Turkey*

Negative Judgements or hindrances about bilingualism	Positive Judgements about bilingualism	Target Groups/Communities Researched
There is a lack of academic study on bilingualism in Turkey.	Bilingualism is a gain for raising up qualified individuals.	Immigrants in Turkey (especially Syrians) mostly school children and university students.
Bilingualism causes communicative problems when children start to school if the school is not bilingual.	Improves cognitive capacity.	Turkish people living European countries (Germany and Holland most) who are bilingual
Bilingualism causes low academic performance, low self-esteem and isolation.	Bilingualism provides culturally rich elements.	Turkish people of different ethnic origins like Zazaki, Kurdish, Georgian, Circassian, Hebrew, Greek, Arabic, Albanian, Syriac, Circassian, Abkhazian, Hebrew,

Teachers have problems about managing classes which include bilingual students.	Immigrant families consider their children's' learning Turkish and becoming bilingual as a must for adapting to the life outside.	Greek, Armenian, Bosnian, Macedonian, Laza. Teachers or instructors who teach in classes with bilingual students.
---	---	--

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

- The official language status of Turkish in the constitution, according to a part of the Turkish academia, results in language barrier problems experienced in Eastern, Southern and Southeastern parts of Turkey and it is claimed to be leading to certain kinds of adaptation problems in Turkish children with different ethnicities when they first start to school. There have been times when discussions took place about education in the first language for the ethnicities in Turkey and the issue of bilingual education has long been an important political debate in many countries as well. Some thoughts frequently emphasize that bilingual education puts the unified form of the national elements at risk and that it might cause wasting public resources as well as hindering the integration of minorities somehow. In this regard, when discussing bilingualism in education in Turkey, it should be considered and evaluated in terms of social and cultural dimensions as well as pedagogical ones. All the cons and pros must be evaluated in detail and scrutiny taking the unique socioeconomic, ethical and national characteristics of Turkish people. Any probable risks, potential problems and probable educational planning should be considered carefully if any planning becomes evident and comes into question about bilingual education on behalf of the Turkish Ministry of Education. Although there has been a very evident shift towards

bilingual education around the world since the 60s and 70s (especially in Latin America, the USA and Canada), it should be kept in mind that each country is unique with its own ethnic, national and cultural dynamics when it comes to planning bilingual school systems and moderating the society and socio-political factors accordingly.

- Turkey is concerned with three very different types of bilingualism in contrast to the countries dealing with bilingualism in Europe and other parts of the world. With the changing political status as a result of wars in neighboring countries, the number and diversity of immigrants living in Turkey differs from time to time. With the change in number and type of bilinguals, this situation may create difficulty for decision makers to prepare practicable legislation and curriculum which has a vital place in education.
- Although a great many numbers of articles have been produced over the last 10-15 years of time, the scarcity in the production of academic books on bilingualism is highly visible. When the related books in Turkey are analyzed, it is seen that the socio-linguistic content can be given more place due to its being a country receiving significant numbers of immigration. It shouldn't be forgotten that immigrants will not only learn the structures of the languages but will also shape their lives around bilingualism and use them in the social domains in person. So more academic books with pedagogical as well as social context on teaching bilinguals must be written. Almost no instructional pedagogical books are found for teaching bilingual children in Eastern and Southeastern parts of Turkey for teachers experiencing language barrier in their classes and it is important for the teachers to be aware of the pedagogy on bilingual kids of different ethnicity especially while they are having culture shock themselves at the same time.
- Turkish universities should be more open to including classes about bilingualism in each program dealing with pedagogy in each branch and each

level from pre-school education to high school education, creating awareness on future teachers about bilingual students not only for bilinguals living the Eastern and Southeastern parts of Turkey but for any kind of bilingual students they are likely to teach. It must be integrated into the philosophy of education in Turkey because many scientific studies are hinting at the positive effect of bilingualism on the cognitive processes and mental development of young people.

- The topics mostly studied in articles and books are largely dealing with immigrants and bilingual Turks of a different ethnicity which concentrates on problematic aspects of bilingualism in educational settings. And the articles seem to be the most prevalent academic genre in Turkish bilingualism literature, therefore, more academic attempts are required to enlarge the related literature.
- Very serious novelty should be added to the present practices in the integration of irregular immigrants as well as regular immigrants in areas like material production, physical and logistic domains of education, the education of instructors as well as arranging the needs analysis. For example, looking at the numbers and the sociological happenings lately, it is highly urgent and crucial that young immigrants enroll in schools to their age and learn Turkish to integrate into the community in proper ways keeping them away from crime.
- Schools belonging to minorities from the early times of the Republic and even from the latest times of the Ottoman Period can be evaluated as centers of enrichment kind of bilingual education, but the prevalence is low and a great many of these schools have been located in big and cosmopolite cities like İstanbul, İzmir and Ankara. The number of bilingual high schools and kinds of schools must be increased in other cities and diploma qualifications

as well as enrollment opportunities must be amplified while the present surviving schools of this kind should be supported physically and financially by the state as well.

## References

- Akkaya, N., & C, İ. (2016). Akademik çevrenin iki dillilik kavramı hakkındaki görüşleri. *Bartın University Journal of Faculty of Education*, 5(2), 328-343.
- Avcı, M. & Kurdayıoğlu, M. (2022). Türkçede iki dillilik çalışmalarının bibliyometrik analizi. *Ana Dili Eğitimi Dergisi*, 10(1), 252-265.
- Bal, Ç. B., Ketenci, M., & Akman, B. (2020). Okul öncesi dönemdeki iki dilli çocukların ebeveynlerinin ve öğretmenlerinin iki dillilik ile ilgili görüşleri. *Ahi Evran Üniversitesi Kırşehir Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 21(3), 1695-1725.
- Bal, Ç. B., Tona, F., & Akman, B. (2020). The views of parents and teachers of bilingual children about bilingualism. *Journal of Kırşehir Education Faculty*, 21(3).
- Barfield, T. J. (2010). *Afghanistan: a cultural and political history*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Bican, G. (2017). İki dilliliğin tanımlanması: Kuramsal tartışmalar ve güncel dilbilimsel yaklaşımlar. *Ana Dili Eğitimi Dergisi*, 5(2), 353-366.
- Biçer, N., & Alan, Y. (2018). İki dillilik bağlamında Suriyeliler üzerinde Türkçenin etkisi. *Yeni Türkiye, Yeni Türk Dili Özel Sayısı- II*, 100, 346-352.
- Buran, A. & Çak, B. Y. (2012). *Türkiye’de diller ve etnik gruplar*, Ankara: Akçağ Yayınları
- Demirdöven, G. H. (2016). *Duisburg/Essen Üniversitesi’nde öğrenim gören Türkçe öğretmen adaylarının iki dillilik olgusuna yönelik görüşleri (Yüksek Lisans Tezi)*, Sakarya Üniversitesi.
- Diñçer, G., & Muratoğlu, Y. (2014). *Türkiye’den OECD ülkelerine geçiş sürecinin çöküm modeli ile analizi*.  
[https://mpr.a.ub.uni-muenchen.de/62201/1/MPRA\\_paper\\_62201.pdf](https://mpr.a.ub.uni-muenchen.de/62201/1/MPRA_paper_62201.pdf)
- Emin, M. N. (2019). *Türkiye’deki Suriyeli çocukların eğitimi (Vol. 48)*. SET Vakfı İktisadi İşletmesi.
- Demir, S. & Demiriz, H. N. (2021). *Türkiye’de iki dilli okullar – dün ve bugün*. Güleç, İ., İnce, B. & Demiriz, H. N. (Ed.). *İkidilli Çocukların Eğitimi içinde*. İstanbul: Kesit Yayıncılık.
- Gümüş, S. (2018). *Nitel araştırmaların sistematik derlemesi: Meta-sentez*. Eğitim Yönetiminde Araştırma, 533-552.
- Günaydın, Y. (2020). İki dillilik ile ilgili yayımlanan makalelerin incelenmesi (2010-2020). *International Journal of Language Academy*. 8(5), 352-365.
- İçduygu, A., Erder, S., & Gençkaya, Ö. F. (2014). *Türkiye’nin uluslararası göç politikaları: 1923-2023*. İstanbul: Tübitak & Mirekoç.
- Karoğlu, H., & Çoban, A. E. (2019). *Türkiye’de okul öncesi eğitimde dil gelişimi ile ilgili yapılan lisansüstü tezlerin incelenmesi*. *Erzincan Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 21(1), 211-229.
- Karpat, K. H. (Ed.). (1974). *The Ottoman State and Its Place in World History: Introduction (Vol. 11)*. Brill.

- Karatas, K., & Ayaz, M. F. (2017). Bilingualism and bilingual educational model suggestion for Turkey. *New Trends and Issues Proceedings on Humanities and Social Sciences*, 3(1), 142-149.
- Keleş, N. A., & Sabuncuoğlu, O. The impacts of bilingualism on pre-schoolers. *İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi*, 7(1), 191-208.
- Kesmez, A. (2015). İki dillilik, Zazaca-Türkçe iki dilli akademisyenlerde dil kullanımı ve tercihler. *Bingöl Üniversitesi Yaşayan Diller Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 1(1), 157-165.
- Koloğlu, O. (1998). Arap harflerini kullanmayan milletlerdeki dil sorunlarının Osmanlı'nın son yüzyıldaki iç gerginliklere katkısı, "Osmanlı'dan Cumhuriyet'e Problemler, Araştırmalar, Tartışmalar" I. Uluslararası Tarih Kongresi (24-26 Mayıs 1993) Kongre Kitabı, Ankara: TarihVakfı Yurt Yayınları. s.73 (72-90).
- Kubilay, Ç. (2004). Türkiye'de ana dillere yönelik düzenlemeler ve kamusal alan: ana dil ve resmi dil eşitlemesinin kırılması. *İletişim Araştırmaları*, 2(2), 35-33, 55-86.
- Nimer, M. (2019). Türkiye'deki Suriyeli mültecilerin Türkçe dil eğitimi deneyimleri ve kurumsal yapılar. İstanbul Politikalar Merkezi Sabancı Üniversitesi Stiftung Mecra-tor Girişimi.
- Özger, B. Y., & Akansel, A. (2019). Okul öncesi sınıftaki Suriyeli çocuklar ve aileleri üzerine bir etnografik durum çalışması: Bu sınıfta biz de varız! *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 7(3), 942-966.
- Saydı, T. (2013). Avrupa birliği vizyonu ile iki dillilik, çok dillilik ve eğitimi. *Journal of International Social Research*, 6(28).
- Senaydin, F., & Dikilitas, K. (2019). Action research for self-evaluation of teaching. *The European Journal of Applied Linguistics and Tefl*, 8(2), 61-76.
- Şahin, K., Moralı, G., & Göçer, A. (2021). Mülteci çocukların türkçe öğrenme durumları üzerine ailelerinin görüşleri. *Milli Eğitim Dergisi*, 50(1), 95-122.
- Tanrıkulu, F. (2018). Suriye krizi sonrası Türkiye'deki sığınmacıların ve göçmenlerin eğitimi: Geçmiş, bugün ve gelecek perspektifleri. *Hitit Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*.
- Ünal, K., Taşkaya, S. M., & Ersoy, G. (2018). Problems encountered by Syrian immigrants while learning Turkish as a foreign language and solution suggestions. *Ahi Evran University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, 4(2), 134-149.
- Yakışır, A. N. (2009). Bir modern olgu olarak çok kültürlülük (Master's thesis, Selçuk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü).
- Yılmaz, F., & Şekerci, H. (2016). Ana dil sorunsalı: Sınıf öğretmenlerinin deneyimlerine göre ilkokul öğrencilerinin yaşadıkları sorunlar. *Eğitimde Nitel Araştırmalar Dergisi*, 4(1), 47-63.
- Yüksel, B. (2011). Türkiye'de diller /Languages in Turkey. (Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi). Fırat Üniversitesi, Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü.