



**MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL  
AND MULTIDIALECTAL DYNAMIC  
EDUCATION:  
MODELS FOR THE SCHOOLING OF KURDISH  
STUDENTS IN TURKEY**

*M. ŞERİF DERİNCE*

**MOTHER TONGUE FIRST ANALYSIS REPORTS**

**1**



**MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL AND MULTIDIALECTAL DYNAMIC  
EDUCATION: MODELS FOR THE SCHOOLING OF KURDISH STUDENTS**

**MEHMET ŐERIF DERINCE**

Diyarbakir Institute for Political and Social Research

(DISA)

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## MOTHER TONGUE FIRST ANALYSIS REPORT I

### MOTHER TONGUE-BASED MULTILINGUAL AND MULTIDIALECTAL DYNAMIC EDUCATION: MODELS FOR THE SCHOOLING OF KURDISH STUDENTS

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## Preface

Outcome of a two year endeavour, this report was written in a period when important developments concerning the education system in Turkey are taking place and debates concerning the use of mother tongue in education is growing, especially with regard to the status of the Kurdish language in Turkey. It puts forward concrete policy proposals for Turkey to use Kurdish and all other mother tongues in education.

On the contrary of the mainstream idea that the status of the languages spoken in Turkey would be determined after peace and reconciliation is achieved; we, as DİSA, believe that following a mother tongue-based multilingual education is a very crucial step in the way to achieve the very peace and reconciliation itself. Therefore, we find it very important to come up with concrete suggestions regarding the use of all mother tongues, including Kurdish, in the education in Turkey.

This report analyzes the issue of mother tongue based multilingual education with a critical perspective and comes up with concrete suggestions for the education of Kurdish children taking the social, linguistic, educational and political characteristics and needs of them and their parents into consideration. To this end, four different mother tongue-based multilingual education models are suggested, each of which takes the social and psycholinguistic relationships among languages involved in the models and the variations and differences within and across Kurdish dialects into consideration. Moreover, the heterogenous sociolinguistic profile of the Kurdish students is discussed with reference to issues including gender, class, beliefs, attitudes and so on. Also, we advocate for a new multilingual educational approach that critically examines the concept of literacy and its teaching in an attempt to prepare the ground for more critical/transformational individuals and societies to raise through education.

Furthermore, this is a pioneering study in many respects, especially in that it encourages us to have a new word to say, create a new discourse, and eventually face our stark realities.

To begin with, there have been some discussions on what kinds of models should be adopted and the pedagogical approaches to be followed for the schooling of Kurdish children. Yet, concrete and detailed multilingual education models, based on the social, linguistic, educational and political conditions of the children and the parents' demands have not been suggested so far. This report fills that void. Therefore, we believe that a new step is taken with this report.

On saying a new word and creating a new discourse, the first claim of this report is related to the social and psycholinguistic relations among languages, and approaches and views on language learning. Many people from different educational and socio-economic backgrounds might assume that, languages are competing with each other, and speaking more than one language will cause mind confusion and identity crisis, and the societies will fall apart if there are different languages spoken. However, the research and various examples show that languages are complementary rather than competing against each other, and under the appropriate conditions, multilingualism has more advantages than monolingualism, and that the disputes arise from the reaction to the



homogenization of language. Moreover, social reconciliation and consensus can be attained more easily in those societies which recognize languages of different groups. Similarly, speaking more than one language does not exclude one or the other but rather facilitates the learning process. In other words, research has proven that bilingual and multilingual individuals can learn additional languages more quickly and easily.

Another point is about the various approaches to education. In some countries such as Turkey, public education is detached from social reality and fails to fulfill citizens' practical needs. Furthermore, the educational system does not encourage students to question the relationship between minority groups and the state. Thus, the Turkish education system also contributes to the formation of new social hierarchies while also reproducing the current ones. Certainly, Turkey's current approach to education is not the only approach to education. Education can also be a tool for raising critical/transformational individuals and forming societies. Through such an approach, teachers and schools will be able to raise awareness concerning how schools define social realities and how culture, language and history are constructed by power and politics. And certainly there are concrete examples of such approaches with successful outcomes. Consequently, this study also advocates for implementing an approach to education that encourages developing students' critical consciousness.

Another topic that we follow in line with the same critical perspective is our approach to literacy. Like the case in education, in many countries literacy is perceived as being able to decode and comprehend written language and conduct basic arithmetic equations. However, literacy is also about using full capacity of the human brain apart from the oral and written linguistic, intellectual development. Moreover, our approach to literacy plays a key role in raising critical/transformational individuals and the development of societies.

In the field of education, research tends to overlook the heterogeneity of students. In Turkey, both the education system that serves the interests of the dominant group and the recent arguments favoring the mother-tongue-based education of Kurdish children assume that students are homogenous. This study, on the other hand, claims that the Kurdish children, especially the ones whose mother tongue is Kurmanji, have different characteristics and needs, and thus constitute a heterogeneous group due to their social, linguistic, political and gender differences. It is very important to take into consideration differences among children while developing a student-centered education system. In here, again we face the fact that we need to have a new word to say on the subject and to adopt a new approach.

This report also develops new insights about the relationship between language and gender. Recently, many campaigns in Turkey have focused on increasing the number of girls attending schools. However, most of these works do not explicitly state which girls they are targeting, thus ignoring the unstated insinuation that these programs target Kurdish girls whose mother tongue is not Turkish. Many individuals and organizations criticize such approaches, but they are unable to address how language usage and gender intersect in society. They are also unable to articulate how language acquisition (or lack thereof) limits boys and girls in different ways. This report includes such information. Furthermore, when this report discusses the relationship between languages and education, it also is debating the role of gender in society.

Finally, this report adopts a new approach to subdialect and dialect differences. Whether it is about the education of prestigious foreign languages, or languages of instruction, many countries have education programs based on a standard dialect. However, the standardization of a language is different from the standardization of an alphabet: a multilingual, multidialectal, and multisubdialectal education is possible with different subdialects of the same language when they use a common alphabet. Examples of such a system of education include Norway, Italy and Germany but not limited to them. Similarly, it is also possible to implement education simultaneously in the various dialects of the same language family. The best example of this is the system in the Kurdistan Regional Government in Iraq, where education is provided in both Sorani and Kurmanji dialects. Moreover, textbooks, which are written in these dialects, also include various words and sentences of the other dialect using comparison methods, thus giving students the opportunity to learn both dialects. It is both possible and crucial to have a comparative education given in a similar fashion for Zazaki and Kurmanji in Turkey. Furthermore, while this report offers models that can be used for the education of Kurmanji students, it also suggests programs in which they will be able to learn Zazaki. This work also supports the idea that it is possible to have a multilingual education, which promotes the use of subdialects of Zazaki and Kurmanji, while refusing the common misconception of having all the educational activities based on one standard dialect or subdialect.

For all of the reasons stated above, this report should be considered as an important step towards establishing and maintaining legal protection of Kurdish as well as all the other languages spoken in Turkey and promoting their use in education. We hope that this work will aid in establishing a social peace and reconciliation in Turkey while contributing to the struggle for the linguistic rights of the people and children speaking a mother tongue other than Turkish.

M. Şerif Derince

September 2012



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Second, we would like to express sincere gratitude to Dr. Susan Malone and Dr. Carol Benson. They have generously shared their knowledge and experience of advocating for mother-tongue-based multilingualism and actively participating in the preparation and implementation of various mother-tongue-based multilingual education programs in many countries. Their expertise played a crucial role in forming the models presented in this report.

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## Introduction

There has been a huge struggle going on for years in order to include the Kurdish language in the education system in Turkey. An important part of this struggle focused on the demand for mother-tongue-based education. However, a holistic mother-tongue-based education model has yet to be suggested for Turkey. Current discussions generally focus on the different models implemented in various countries.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, there is not sufficient public discussion regarding mother-tongue-based education models that can be used in the schooling of Kurdish students living in Turkey. The most important impediment to this is that conditions within Turkey have not been analyzed sufficiently and thus there is not enough knowledge to discuss the issue further. For the last few years, campaigns by Kurdish organizations, changes in Turkish and international conjuncture, and an increasing number of films and publications on the subject expressing the need for mother tongue based education to various platforms aided in increasing the visibility of the Kurdish language. We believe that it would be most efficient at this stage to continue the discussion based on the analysis of concrete education models. By going forward using concrete models, we assume that the demands will be expressed in a more assertive way and a more fruitful discussion will take place regarding the implementation of these models.

As Carol Benson points out, it is important to understand experiences of the groups that are subject to discrimination in order to implement an education system that will be in their favor. Any amendment done in the education system without understanding their experiences will continue to reproduce inequalities and limit the access to education to a certain group.<sup>2</sup> For this reason, while suggesting mother-tongue-based education models to be implemented in Turkey, it is crucial to take into consideration the sociolinguistic situation of the students whose mother tongue is not Turkish.

In this respect, this report is prepared in order to analyze the different needs and characteristics of Kurdish student living in Turkey and to develop mother-tongue-based multilingual education models that can be used for their schooling.

The report consists of three chapters. In the first chapter, the heterogeneity of Kurdish students is analyzed in the light of the information received from *Scar of Tongue*<sup>3</sup> and the teachers' workshop conducted by DİSA. The second chapter is about the models of education systems throughout the world, types of literacy, teacher training programs on linguistic and cultural differences,

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1 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Symposium on Mother-Tongue was held by Eğitim-Sen and the works of Education Reform Initiative (ERG) on multilingualism and education are the pioneering studies on this subject. In addition, mother tongue based education models from various countries were discussed during the conferences, panels, and activities held by the Kurdish Institute of Istanbul, Ankara Kurd-Der, Amed Kurdi-Der and many similar Kurdish organizations. These studies unquestionably contributed a lot to the existing knowledge and awareness on the subject.

2 Benson, Carol (2005), *Girls, Educational Equity and Mother Tongue-Based Teaching*, UNESCO, Bangkok.

3 Coşkun, Vahap; Derince, M. Şerif and Uçarlar, Nesrin (2010), *Scar of Tongue: Consequences of the Ban on the Use of Mother Tongue in Education and Experiences of Kurdish Students in Turkey*. DİSA, Diyarbakır. For the research please see: <http://www.disa.org.tr/files/documents/scaroftongue.pdf>.



the importance of parent participation in a multilingual education system, and the scientific foundation for multilingual education. The last chapter is on mother-tongue-based multilingual and multidialectal dynamic education models that can be used in the education of Kurdish students in order to eliminate the discrimination and inequalities that currently exist. This chapter also includes additional information on what kind of a regulation is needed in different classes and poses vital questions regarding the suggested models and the transformations of society that they envision.

## **Terminology and a Few Notes**

Above all, it should be noted that in this report the term Kurdish students is used for Kurmanj and Zaza/Kirmanc students and the term Kurdish language is used for Kurmanji and Zazakî/Dimilkî/Kirmanjkî unless stated otherwise.<sup>4</sup> Kurmanji refers to the dialect used by Kurmanj Kurds, whereas Zazaki, Dimilkî and Kirmanjkî all refer to the same dialect. The term Zazaki is preferred in this report over Dimilkî/Kirmanjkî because it is the most widely known name of this dialect. We are aware of the Turkish state's discourse and the political struggles on the subject and would like to state that we do not take any part in this contest. However, the opinion and the attitudes of the people who speak Zazaki as a primary language and the common cultural, social and historical elements shared by Zazas and Kurmanj people should be considered. Moreover, as it will be discussed in the further parts of the report, such kind of a contestation should be irrelevant in terms of educational practices.

Another important point to note is that the models suggested in this report do not carry the claim that they are the only appropriate models; the report is open to every kind of suggestion, criticism and feedback. It is also possible to offer other languages than the ones presented in this report as a foreign language. For example, English is suggested as a third language in this report, however a language other than English could be substituted and the order in which languages are learned and the content of the language classes could be different. The only thing that matters is not to lose the model's focus on multilingualism.

Moreover, it should be made clear that the main aim of this report is not to involve in detailed and comprehensive analyses regarding education and mother tongue, but rather to point out the must-included topics when discussing over the schooling of Kurdish students or designing educational programs based on a mother tongue-based multilingual approach. To follow such a method is important for two reasons. Firstly, there are not enough wholesome and reliable field work-based scientific research and it is not correct to do detailed analyses without such research. Secondly, this report is not only meant for the experts working in the field, but rather it aims at reaching to a larger group of audience ranging from teachers to students, and from parents to educational program development experts.

It is also important to make a few explanations on terminology. First, we prefer to use the term "mother tongue-based education" instead of saying "education in the mother tongue" or "mother tongue education" as the latter ones are commonly associated with monolingualism; the "based" part of "mother-tongue-based education" implies that more than one language will be learned

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<sup>4</sup> A more detailed discussion can be found in section 1.16 of this report.

during the educational process. Conversely, “education in the mother tongue” and “mother tongue education” frequently denote monolingual educational schemes, thus undermining the potential for multilingualism to develop. On the other hand, only using term “multilingualism” (without also signifying that the multilingualism is taking place in a mother-tongue based context) is also not preferred since not all the languages are studied for an equal amount of time. Furthermore, the term “mother-tongue” is associated with an important history of political struggle.

The preference for the term “multilingual” is also because it is the most suitable approach to describe the daily linguistic practices and conditions of the people of the world and Kurdish people in particular: All the education models suggested in this study aim to develop multilingualism.

This report also uses the term “multidialectal” for two reasons. First, all the suggested models aim to develop proficiency skills in both Zazaki and Kurmanji, regardless of whether the child’s mother tongue is Kurmanji or Zazaki. Second, we would like to emphasize that an education including instruction in the subdialects of Kurmanji or Zazaki is possible by using a common alphabet.

Finally, the term “dynamic” is preferred again for two reasons. First, this is because the term recognizes that there is a dynamic relation between the languages that the education models aim to develop proficiency in. This dynamic relationship exists according to the multicompetence approach (which is explained in detail in this report), and states that the proficiency of the languages known by the multilingual individuals are different than the monolingual individuals. The concepts and skills that a person learns in one language are transferred to the other languages, consequently multilingual individuals are able to express themselves in more ways than monolinguals. Moreover, this term also emphasizes that multilingualism is an ever-changing and ever-developing process. Secondly, the models suggested in this report do not have the claim to be rigid, the report also aims to underline the fact that every kind of education models should be updated and altered according to the changing needs and conditions. In other words, it is crucial that these or similar education models should be constantly revised and the necessary changes according to the needs of teachers and students should be applied after their implementation.

### ***Scar of Tongue in Summary***

The report begins by overviewing the demands of the minority groups living in Turkey, other than the ones mentioned in the Lausanne Treaty, on the right to education in mother tongue. While the international conventions and treaties guarantee the right to mother-tongue-education for every individual and group, Turkey continues to be hesitant to follow its obligations regarding these conventions. Moreover, since the foundation of Republic, Turkey has shown extreme violence towards the groups—especially the Kurdish people—who are demanding the education in their mother tongue. In most cases, the process ended in jail sentences for their protesting. Furthermore, many students have been expelled from their educational institutions due to mother-tongue related protests and issues. For example, in 2002 more than 2000 students were expelled from their universities just because they demanded an elective Kurdish language course. The group who has given the biggest struggle on this subject is no doubt the Kurdish people. For this reason, we also witness that the Kurdish people has been paying the greatest costs.

DİSA’s report entitled *Scar of Tongue* analyzes how Kurdish-only speaking students are linguistically, educationally, psychologically, and sociologically affected by the monolingual Turkish education



system. In our study, we also included the interviews done with Kurdish-speaking teachers, non-Kurdish speaking instructors that teach Kurdish students, and non-Turkish speaking parents who have been part of these experiences and have had similar experiences themselves.

The interviews showed us that the Kurdish students **feel themselves one step behind in life** and have serious **communication problems** due to not having a mother-tongue-based education. Several people further stated that this situation also creates a **lack of self-confidence** among the students living in Kurdish regions and plays a huge role on their low success rate in crucial exams such as Level Determination Exam (SBS) and Student Selection Examination (ÖSS). Moreover, several problems such as; **failing in and dropping out of school, feelings of failure, stigmatization** due to speaking Kurdish, being subject to **different kinds of violence, suppression and repression** are all problems students face due to their **lack of communication skills**. Furthermore, students expressed that after a certain point, people speaking Kurdish are labeled as **underdeveloped** and began to **depreciate their culture**. Due to the language barrier, parents were not able to efficiently participate in the education of their children and consequently feel a huge psychological burden. This situation also points to the discrimination and injustices Kurdish students face in schools. The report states that as generations develop, the ability to speak Kurdish decreases and a **loss of language** occurs. Consequently, the report claims that the Kurdish students are linguistically and educationally disadvantaged and face serious discrimination and social inequalities in the education system. It is also claimed that this discrimination and the injustices faced by the Kurdish students are in fact a projection of the violence the Kurdish people face every day in the larger community. The study concludes by giving some suggestions on eliminating these problems. One of these suggestions is the necessity of preparing mother-tongue-based multilingual education models that can be used in schooling of Kurdish students. In order to contribute to the public discussions on this subject, we, as DİSA, prepared and implemented an action plan.

The first step of this action plan was to organize a workshop in order to share and further analyze the information gathered from the *Scar of Tongue* with teachers working in the Kurdish region. After completing first step, DİSA held a workshop with teachers working in metropolitan schools in Western Turkey where the majority of the migrant Kurdish children go to school. This second workshop focused on the condition and needs of Kurdish children living in resettlement areas. Lastly, DİSA organized another workshop, which included experts on multilingualism and discussed various mother-tongue-based education models used in different parts of the world. In the light of these discussions, we exchanged ideas on ways to prepare various mother-tongue-based education models that can be used in schooling of Kurdish students. Another false presumption we have noticed in some of the previous works and during the workshops is on the homogeneity of Kurdish students. However, as it is further discussed below, from different aspects Kurdish students form a heterogeneous group.

## CHAPTER 1: The Heterogeneity of Kurdish Students

Much of the research on Kurdish students assumes that Kurdish students form a socio-linguistically homogeneous group. According to this assumption, from birth until they begin to speak, Kurdish children are exposed only to Kurdish, and exposed to Turkish only when they begin to attend school, around age six. What is seldom discussed is the children's psychological relationship to these languages at school and in their daily lives. Furthermore, studies rarely focus on students' language proficiency during the encounter with the Turkish language. Therefore a widespread victimization discourse on homogeneity has developed. Consequently, when suggestions are offered to negate victimization, they are also addressing homogenization. While researching for this report, both the teachers' workshops and some of the literature reviewed demonstrate that the Kurdish students, like all other pupils, are a socio-linguistically heterogeneous group according to their socio-linguistic characteristics. Class differences, gender, geographic location, political orientations of the parents, bilingual and multilingual levels, migration, belief, and dialect and subdialect differences are some of the factors that account for this heterogeneity. These factors do not occur per se, but rather emerge as a consequence of the social, cultural, psychological and political processes. These factors are explained in further detail below.

The following anecdotes are not yet supported by extensive research for, at present, there is no established literature on the subject. The information presented below comes from DİSA's report entitled *Advocacy for Mother Tongue in Education*, which was based on a series of interviews done in 2011. The first of these workshops was organized in Diyarbakir, and twenty-five teachers working in different cities of the Kurdish region participated. The second workshop was also held in Diyarbakir, with the participation of twenty teachers who worked at metropolitan schools attended by migrant Kurdish children in western Turkey. The final workshop was held in Istanbul. Its participants were experts in education and mother tongue-based education. The following information is based on discussions that took place in those workshops, especially the first and second ones, and observations of both the author of this report and those of the participants of the workshops.

### 1.00. Gender, Mother Tongue and Schooling of Kurdish Girls

Various socio-economic and cultural barriers violate female students' right to education in many countries. These barriers do not only limit girls' ability to begin school, but also create serious obstacles in girls' ability to pursue higher education even when they are able to start school. Even though there is an abundance of research and academic publications on the barriers to girls' education, within these reports the subject of language and mother-tongue based education is often neglected. Overall, most of the statistics-based research demonstrates that girls have less access to education than boys do. According to this line of research, the reasons for this are parents' attitudes, cultural and religious concerns, and poverty.



However, there are few studies that focus on the connection between gender and language. One of the rare exceptions is Carol Benson's research for UNESCO.<sup>5</sup> In her seminal report, Benson explains that those female students whose mother tongue is different from the school's language of instruction experience severe inequality and discrimination. According to Benson's research, girls have the hardest time in developing their language proficiency since they spend most of their time outside of school performing household chores, while boys are allowed to play and converse in the community, which strengthens their language skills. Moreover, some research also points out that in class boys are encouraged to actively participate in the lessons whereas girls are not encouraged to talk and express themselves.<sup>6</sup> For this reason, girls have less contact with the dominant language than the boys have, and, consequently, cannot fully follow the curriculum conducted in this language. However, Benson states that at mother tongue-based bilingual schools throughout the world, girls attend the classes more regularly, they are more likely to be identified as good students, and they receive high scores on various achievement tests. Moreover, they quit school or repeat grades less often. For this reason, Benson affirms that having an education based in the language that girls are already competent in and improving the opportunities for access to a mother tongue-based bilingual/multilingual education can make a positive difference in female students' lives.

In Turkey, gender inequality is generally analyzed together with the female literacy rate and compared to the increased rate in school attendance at each educational institution. Because the research concentrates on these factors, the relationship among gender inequality, class differences, and social and political power is generally neglected. However, the available research does provide significant data on female literacy, school attendance, and the chance of women in finding jobs after graduation. These statistics prove that gender inequality is present in Turkey and that consequently female students are in a more disadvantaged position than male students.<sup>7</sup>

Because the socioeconomic and political factors causing gender inequality are generally ignored and because the political will to eliminate these factors is lacking, it is impossible to implement a program that can achieve a schooling rate for girls of 100%. Currently, Turkey does not have a comprehensive, long-term program to fulfill its obligations arising from the international conventions it has already signed. In order to reach these goals, various campaigns such as "Father, Send Me to School", "Come On Girls, Let's Go To School!" or "Snowdrops" have been organized by local and international non-governmental organizations. However, these campaigns are carried out mostly in a modernist and to some extent colonialist discourse. During these campaigns, multilingualism and mother tongue-based education are never discussed; on the contrary, these topics are often intentionally disregarded. Accordingly, these campaigns, which are supposedly be carried out in order to raise the schooling rate of the Kurdish girls, are in fact aimed to assimilate them into a Turkish, monolingual education system. On the other hand, apart from the Kurdish circles, it can be said that there are also independent individuals and institutions who are in favor of a more egalitarian, gender sensitive, and democratic education system and who voice their concerns and opinions while criticizing these campaigns.<sup>8</sup>

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5 Benson, *Girls, Educational Equity*.

6 O'Gara, Chloe and Kendall, Nancy (1996), *Beyond Enrollment: A Handbook for Improving Girls' Experiences in Primary Classrooms*, Creative Associates International, Washington DC.

7 Tan, Mine, (2000), *Eğitimde Kadın Erkek Eşitliği ve Türkiye Gerçeği, Kadın Erkek Eşitliğine Doğru Yürüyüş ve Eğitim, Çalışma Yaşamı ve Siyaset*. TUSİAD, İstanbul; Otaran, Nur (2003), *Eğitimin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Açısından İncelenmesi, Turkey 2003*, UNICEF, Ankara.

8 It is especially important to note the efforts of Eğitim-Sen.

## 1.10. The Kurdish Language and Gender

Many Kurdish students, girls or boys, can never attend school due to poverty, the discriminatory education system, lack of schools and teachers, the violence they face at school, and their parents' indifference. When, mostly due to poverty, parents are forced to make a choice of which of their children to send to school, they generally send their sons. Apart from the reason of poverty, some girls are not allowed to go to school due to religious concerns. For some girls, even if they can attend primary school, they cannot get a higher education because of the monolingual and sexist education policies or the pressure of their families. Furthermore, girls who have access to education at the primary school level face more obstacles than the boys due to language of instruction in regions where Kurdish is spoken heavily, because girls typically have less contact with Turkish than boys do prior to starting elementary school. Some observations suggest that girls also tend to lose their proficiency in Kurdish more rapidly than the boys, who have more opportunities to use the dominant language.<sup>9</sup> Because research lacks an empirical study to determine the cause of these issues, for now it is plausible to assume that they are the result of gender roles forced upon boys and girls.

This situation is more severe among the Kurdish girls and women who have migrated or were subject to forced displacement. They are discriminated against on the basis of their ethnic identity at school, in the workplace and in their social lives, and the fact that they must communicate in Turkish after migrating makes their lives even harder. The work of Handan Çağlayan, Şemsa Özar, and Ayşe Tepe Doğan entitled "*Ne Değişti (What Has Changed)*" analyzes this issue. The researchers point out that "apart from gender-based discrimination, women and girls who are subjected to a forced displacement are also facing discrimination based on the fact that they have come from a different region, possess a different ethnic identity, and speak a different language/dialect."<sup>10</sup> This research also demonstrates that women and girls who have migrated do their best to learn Turkish in order to minimize incidents of domestic violence, their dependence on men, and the social and legal obstacles faced when using Kurdish in public spheres.<sup>11</sup> In other words, learning Turkish greatly helps in weakening the bonds of patriarchy and allows girls to get out of the house more often, as well as increasing the likelihood of women finding a job, earning an income, and communicating with the dominant society without the help of men.<sup>12</sup> On the other hand, this research also demonstrates that in younger generations, Turkish is replacing Kurdish as the primary language of communication.

In conclusion, whether research is discussing the situation of girls or boys, the use of Kurdish and transmission of Kurdish to future generations is at peril. Nevertheless, as Benson pointed out, there is a great potential in demanding a mother tongue-based multilingual education that aims to eradicate discrimination and exclusion arising from the relation between gender and linguistic differences.<sup>13</sup> Because female students can participate in the education programs offered in their mother tongue, they can benefit from the opportunities offered by mother tongue-based multilingual education.

9 For further discussion on this topic please see: Derince, M. Şerif (2012), *Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Eğitim ve Anadili*, DİSA, Diyarbakır

10 Çağlayan, Handan; Özar, Şemsa and Doğan, Ayşe Tepe (2011), *Ne Değişti? Kürt Kadınların Zorunlu Göç Deneyimi*. Ayizi, İstanbul.

11 Çağlayan; Özar and Doğan, *Ne Değişti?*, p.121.

12 Çağlayan; Özar and Doğan, *Ne Değişti?*, p.123.

13 Benson, *Girls, Educational Equity*.



### **1.11. Differences Between Villages, Rural Areas, and City Centers**

As the previous discussions suggest, another variable that determines the heterogeneity of Kurdish students' preparedness for education is the environment and the places in which they live. The interviews done for *Scar of Tongue* and the teachers' workshops which were conducted as a part of DiSA's *Advocacy for Mother Tongue in Education* report demonstrates that language proficiency varies greatly between Kurdish children living in villages and rural areas and those in city centers or metropolitan areas located in the western Turkey. According to this, the Kurdish children living in villages and rural areas of Kurdish-populated regions have no knowledge of Turkish prior to starting elementary school, as Kurdish is the dominant language of their family life and of social interactions in the community. On the other hand, Kurdish children living in cities located in Kurdish areas and the western cities are subject to social interactions in both Kurdish and Turkish, and therefore are already somewhat multilingual, although it might not be typically a balanced bilingual situation. Lately, Turkish is becoming more dominant in this multilingual situation as all the family members are starting to communicate more in Turkish in addition to most social interactions being conducted in Turkish. Consequently, Kurdish gradually becomes a second language and is lost during the education period.

### **1.12. Class Differences**

Regardless of whether they live in city centers, villages, or rural areas, the majority of Kurdish children are from poor or economically disadvantaged families. In addition to the monolingual, discriminatory education system, these children also do not have an access to a high-quality education due to their socio-economical status. This results in the reproduction of their poverty and puts them in a vicious circle. Many of these students have a hard time purchasing or obtaining educational materials and many teachers are reluctant to teach these students. Moreover, almost all of these students are educated in crowded classrooms where the teacher is unable to devote sufficient attention to each child. Their parents typically also do not support their child's education due to their socio-economic situation. Moreover, the parents are not considered a fundamental part of the educational process, and they are never or rarely asked by the education system to provide insight about their children or their opinion on their children's educational progress.

For students coming from poor families, the students' language proficiency also depends on the place they live. Kurdish families live throughout Turkey, not just in rural areas and villages, and language proficiency is dependent upon whether they live in villages, towns, city centers dominated by Kurdish-language speakers, or western metropolises where Turkish is the dominant language.

Because so many Kurdish families are socio-economically disadvantaged, few Kurdish children come from the middle class. Those who are from the middle class are generally members of families who are living in city centers of a Kurdish region or families who migrated to western metropolises. They might have access to a (relatively) better quality of education and their family members generally speak Turkish to each other. Even though the children have knowledge of both of the languages, they are more inclined to develop a monolingual life where Turkish is the dominant language. This situation may have little relationship to the political consciousness level of the parents. In other words, the fact that parents have a high level of political sensitivity does not necessarily mean that they teach Kurdish to their children, and consequently Turkish becomes their children's first language.

### 1.13. Political Orientations of Families and the Use of Kurdish Language

It cannot be said that there is a direct correlation between Kurdish families' political orientations and their use of Kurdish language. It is generally expected that the more politically involved families use Kurdish both at home and outside the home more often than families who are politically inactive. Some unsystematic observations point out that the majority of the children of politically active families living in Diyarbakir's city center and in some other metropolitan areas speak relatively less Kurdish when compared to other Kurdish children, as Turkish has become the more dominant language in their lives. On the other hand, these observations also demonstrate that it would be wrong to insist that these generalizations are always accurate, as there many factors affecting the frequency of use of Kurdish language.

In the last few years, there has been an attempt to change people's attitudes towards this subject because of the campaigns organized by the Kurdish Language and Education Movement (Tevgera Ziman û Perwerdehî- TZPKurdî). Even though empirical research on the use of Kurdish language was not conducted during or after these campaigns, there are strong observations showing that there has been an increasing interest in Kurdish language courses throughout Turkey in the last few years. Furthermore, even families that do not use Kurdish often in their daily lives now support the idea of mother tongue-based education more enthusiastically than they did previously.

Apart from the campaigns of TZPKurdî that served as a milestone, the attitudes of the Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) officials and members on the defendant's right to a defense in their mother tongue in courtrooms also raised a serious awareness on the subject.

### 1.14. Levels of Multilingualism

As previously mentioned, the majority of Kurdish children born in villages or rural areas of the Kurdish region hear and speak Kurdish first. However, such children are increasingly exposed to two or more languages due to factors such as migration, increased use of the television and internet, and traveling. Interviews conducted with Kurdish children's teachers and our observations suggest that Kurdish children can be placed in five groups according to their socio-linguistic profiles.

**Kurdish-only-speakers:** This group consists primarily of children living in villages or rural areas who speak only Kurdish at home and in their social environment. They have almost no contact with the Turkish language until they begin school. For their first few years at school, they typically continue to speak only Kurdish; if they can continue their education, they start to speak Turkish after a few years.

**Kurdish-dominant bilinguals:** The children in this group have Kurdish as a first language; however they learn Turkish in the first several years of their education. These children often speak Kurdish with their family members and outside of school, thus preserving their ability to speak Kurdish. Even though they learn Turkish, usually with the help of the television and at school, they can express themselves best in Kurdish.

**Kurdish-Turkish balanced bilinguals:** This group consists primarily of Kurdish children living in the city centers of Kurdish regions and in the western metropolitan. They generally grow up speaking Kurdish with their parents, relatives, and close friends. Because they live in cities, they



are also exposed to and learn Turkish prior to beginning school. Studies show that these children are more successful at school than their peers who do not know any Turkish before they begin school and they are also able to transfer their Turkish literacy skills to Kurdish.<sup>14</sup>

**Turkish-dominant bilinguals:** The majority of children in this group are part of the second generation of their family to live in city centers or resettlement areas, and they grow up speaking Turkish if their parents do not specifically encourage them to speak Kurdish. These children have been exposed to both Kurdish and Turkish since their birth, however, as both television and their social interactions outside their homes are mainly in Turkish, they also speak in Turkish, and some have difficulty understanding Kurdish conversations. They also frequently have difficulty forming complete sentences in Kurdish and many cannot speak Kurdish, other than a few basic phrases or words. After these children start school, they hear Kurdish only when the family members talk among each other and many cannot participate in conversations held in Kurdish.

**Turkish-only speakers:** Some of the children who were born in resettlement areas, especially the ones born in the western metropolises, have no knowledge of Kurdish. Even though these children identify themselves as Kurdish, for a variety of reasons they are unable to speak any Kurdish. These children's families either do not have enough knowledge of Kurdish or prefer not to speak Kurdish with their children. They may even discourage their children from speaking Kurdish, assuming that if their children speak Kurdish that they will not be able to learn Turkish well, and will fail at school and work. If there are elder family members who speak only Kurdish, the children will either not interact with them or communicate with these family members with the help of other family members.

Apart from the above-mentioned groups, Kurmanj children growing up in the region where Kurmanji, Zazaki and Arabic speaking families live together are exposed to several languages from birth and are therefore typically able to have daily conversations in Zazaki and Arabic as well as Kurmanji. Zazaki and Kurmanji belong to the same language family, therefore their syntax and grammar structures are very similar and many common words exist. Overall, this situation contributes to a multilingual structure in the region. For this reason, it is very common to hear children able to speak in Kurmanji, Turkish, Zazaki, and Arabic in such cities as Diyarbakir, Bingöl, Batman, Urfa, Mardin, Dersim, and Siirt. The fact that elementary students now learn English starting from the 4<sup>th</sup> grade also brought a new dimension to the current multilingual characteristic of Kurdish students, even though they do not receive an efficient English language education.

## 1.15. Migration

One of the most important factors when discussing the language and the educational conditions of Kurdish children is migration.<sup>15</sup> A significant proportion of Kurdish children either experienced forced migration or were born in resettlement areas. However, these waves of migration did not all happen at the same time, nor were they all due to the same reasons. Therefore, the effects of each migration were different as well. According to the observations and the experiences of the teachers who participated in our workshops, there seems to be three different patterns of migration:

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<sup>14</sup> Derince, M. Şerif (2010), *The Role of First Language (Kurdish) Development in Acquisition of a Second Language (Turkish) and a Third Language (English)*, Boğaziçi University Institute of Social Sciences, unpublished master thesis.

<sup>15</sup> Unless stated otherwise, in this study, the concept of migration is used to describe forced or voluntary migration to the western cities of Turkey due to war or economic reasons.

**a) Migration due to economic reasons, dating back more than 40 years:** The majority of the children of these families either speak Kurdish a little and use it while communicating with their elder family members or do not speak Kurdish at all. However, many people belonging to this group –especially the generation who are 20 years old and older– have recently shown an interest in taking courses at language courses in order to regain their ability to speak Kurdish. Turkish is the first language of majority of the children in this group.

**b) Forced migration due to war going in the Kurdish region during the 1990s:** The children of these families who were born before their families migrated generally have a sound knowledge of Kurdish and continue speaking Kurdish with family members and relatives. Some of the children who were born in resettlement areas can speak Kurdish well, whereas some of them only speak Turkish, and others understand only basic Kurdish. Some of these families are protective of their children's Kurdish language skills, and thus speak only in Kurdish to their children and do their best to ensure that their children's Kurdish language proficiency is as high as their Turkish language proficiency. The majority of these children are advantaged in sustaining bilingual development. Teachers also reported observing that there is an increasing interest in attending Kurdish language courses among the family members in this group. The existence of an elderly family member or members, such as grandparents, that speak Kurdish at home also creates an opportunity for children to practice their Kurdish.

**c) Economic migration during or after the war:** This group consists of the families who migrated to the western cities due to unemployment and poverty caused by the war during the 1990s. These families might not be necessarily harmed directly in the armed conflict, but rather suffered from the war's indirect effects. Depending on the time they spent in resettlement areas, these families children are either Kurdish-Turkish bilinguals or Turkish-dominant bilinguals who can understand Kurdish, but respond to questions asked to them in Kurdish in Turkish. Like Kurds who were subject to forced migration, if there is an elderly family member who speaks only Kurdish with whom they regularly interact, the children are less likely to forget their mother tongue.

Apart from these three groups, there was a Kurdish migration to Central Anatolia, especially to Konya and Ankara, during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During our workshops, this subject was brought up and the participating teachers expressed that the Kurdish people who migrated during this time do not call themselves migrants, but rather identify themselves as locals. These teachers also observed that the children of these families generally have a working knowledge of both Kurdish and Turkish, and thus have a balanced bilingual development. In the workshops, participants theorized that this situation could be due to these families identifying themselves as locals rather than as migrants and, consequently, the families take measures to prevent language assimilation.<sup>16</sup> However, due to increasing use of the internet and television, once these children reach approximately ten years old they tend to speak less Kurdish than the previous generations did because Turkish is the dominant language of their surroundings.

There are two factors that determine the frequency of using Kurdish for these groups. The first factor is the presence of an elder family member speaking Kurdish with other members. The second one is the presence of other Kurdish families in the resettlement areas. If it is a high-populated Kurdish

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16 I would like to thank to Mamoste Sadik Varli for bringing this important observation to our attention.



area where the children can hear Kurdish on the streets, this situation encourages them to learn and use Kurdish.

### 1.16. Dialect and Subdialect Differences

All languages are spoken slightly differently in different regions. In other words, there is not a single language that has only one dialect or one subdialect. However, as a result of the emergence of nation-states, a centralized power that favors one dialect over the other dialects is implemented. This created a hierarchy among the dialects. The situation reached its peak in the West, where there is a comparatively low level of multilingualism; increasing number of printed materials, spread of education and increasing number of media agencies and the fact that these activities were done in a standardized, dominant language weakened the other ones. The fact that these activities were done in the standardized, dominant dialect weakened the other dialects. Unfortunately, there is not sufficient awareness about this topic, and extinction of various dialects and subdialects is accepted as natural and inevitable. In the case of Turkish, the extinction of Turkish dialects and subdialects is already at a critical level. The official dialect of the Turkish language, which is used throughout state offices, is called the Istanbul dialect. Even though there are various dialects still used throughout the country, the users of these dialects generally belittle their dialect over the prestigious Istanbul dialect.<sup>17</sup> Although the same situation is not true for Kurdish yet, a similar process has begun. During the interviews done for *Scar of Tongue* and for various other panels, conferences and meetings, it is expressed that because Kurdish is not a standardized language, there are many obstacles to using Kurdish in education. However, these discussions take place due to the presumption that this situation is natural and inevitable without giving much thought about the standardization of Turkish and the extinction of other linguistic variations. According to this assumption, people speaking dialects and subdialects of a same language may not understand each other fully, which may result in miscommunication. However, the difference between subdialects of the same language is generally trivial and most of the time only the sounds and the uses of words differ. Basic structures such as syntax and grammar are typically the same and individuals or groups speaking different subdialects usually do not have a hard time understanding each other. This situation changes when the discussion moves from different subdialects to different dialects, as different dialects may have differences regarding grammar as well. However, long periods of cultural and political oppression and the monolingual education policies of the Turkish state resulted in weakening Kurdish dialects and subdialects. Thus, the differences between some Kurdish subdialects and dialects could be greater than the differences between others. For this reason, understanding a subdialect or dialect depends on an individual's knowledge of her own dialect. It is easier for a person who has a deep knowledge of her own dialect to understand another dialect.

Kurmanji Kurdish is a language with many different subdialects. But the academic research on

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<sup>17</sup> In fact, İstanbul dialect was formed by the influence of the pronunciation of Turkish words by Greek, Armenian and other groups already residing in İstanbul when Turkic communities started to settle in the city from 15<sup>th</sup> century onwards, as the city came under the Ottoman rule. That is to say, it borrowed several characteristics of various languages. For further discussion see: Gümüşkılıç, Mehmet (2008), "18. Yüzyıl İstanbul Ağzı Hakkında Bazı Gözlemler", *Turkish Studies*, V 3, No, 3, pp. 388-401.

the subject of Kurmanji Kurdish's subdialects is insufficient. However, the few sources that do exist acknowledge that there are several subdialects of Kurmanji. Among these subdialects are Semsur, spoken in Adıyaman and the surrounding region; Botan, spoken in Şırnak and Siirt; Mardin, spoken in Mardin and the surrounding area; Hekarî/Culemergî, spoken in the Hakkâri region; and Serhadî, spoken in Van, Ağrı and the Kars region. Many Kurmanj Kurds still use these subdialects in their daily lives. However, this is changing: the increasing number of language courses, educational materials, and published books and TV programs in Kurmanji has resulted in beginning the standardization process of the Kurmanji language. Nevertheless, there are several groups that object to the standardization of the language and affirm that the variations in dialects and subdialects should be preserved and that texts instructing students in written Kurmanji should note these differences and in what practical contexts they occur. However, as the Kurdish language is deprived of institutional support, the individuals and Kurdish groups working in this area prioritize preventing the Kurdish language from becoming extinct. For this reason, there are not fruitful and profound discussions or critical studies on the standardization of the language and the preservation of its dialects and subdialects yet.

On the other hand, preserving the use of various Kurdish dialects and subdialects and using them in education has a chance to enable society to develop a new understanding regarding linguistic hierarchies. This is not only true for Kurdish-language education; it also represents the potential for the Turkish-language education system to eliminate the hierarchy among its various dialects.

It is important to note that standardization of a language is different from the standardization of an alphabet. The fact that there is not a standardized Kurdish language does not mean that there is not any standardization in its alphabet or notation. The Kurdish language has a long history of written tradition; moreover, each year hundreds of books, newspapers, and texts are published in Kurdish and thousands of Kurdish websites are started. In publishing, grammatical standards exist and are followed by Kurds living outside of the homeland, too. This is also the case if individuals write the materials in different subdialects. In this respect, it is possible to claim that written Kurdish has a solid set of rules. This fact also refutes the argument that Kurdish language is not ready to be used in education since standardization of the language is not done. On the contrary, an education in subdialects of Kurmanji and Zazaki can be done by using a common alphabet. Such an experience will also bring a new point of view for the education system in Turkey.

Another important issue that needs to be discussed just like the issue of subdialects is dialect variations within the same language group.<sup>18</sup> In terms of the issue and the geographical context, the place of Zazaki (also known as Dimilkî and Kirmanchî) is one very important issue in the discussions over the use of Kurdish in education in Turkey. At present, there are two approaches to this issue. According to some linguists, Zazaki is a dialect of Kurdish, whereas other linguists state that that Zazaki and Kurdish belong to the same language family, however, they are two different languages. The issue of whether or not Zazaki and Kurmanji are two separate languages is complicated by the fact that a significant proportion of the people identifying themselves as Zaza also call themselves Kurdish and claim that they share a common language. However, some

<sup>18</sup> According to various sources, Kurdish has roughly four dialects. These are: Kurmanji, spoken in Turkey, Iraqi Kurdistan, Syria, and Iran; Zazaki (Dimilkî, Kirmanchî), spoken in Turkey; Soranî, spoken in Iran, Iraqi Kurdistan, and Iran's Kermanshahi region; and Hewramî (Gorani), spoken in Iran, which belongs to the Zazaki family. See Hassanpour, Amir (2005). *Kurdistan'da Milliyetçilik ve Dil, 1918-1985*, trans: İbrahim Bingöl and Cemil Gündoğan, Avesta, İstanbul.



Zazas insist that they are a different ethnic group and speak a different language. The discussion regarding whether Kurmanji and Zazaki are two different languages or two different dialects of the same language is not the issue of this report. In either case, Kurmanji and Zazaki have more common linguistic elements than differences. Children who are speaking either would be able to learn the other with ease.

The most important point about this debate is that it is a political decision to decide whether a language is a language or a dialect. For example, even though Azerbaijani and Turkish are very similar languages, and people speaking these languages can generally understand each other, Turkish and Azerbaijani are not defined as dialects, but rather as separate languages. There is consensus that the defining line between languages and dialects is based on whether people speaking the languages or dialects understand one and other. However, this differentiation is not easy to parse and implement. For instance, Kurmanji speakers living in Federal Kurdistan Regional of Iraq can easily understand Soranî speakers living in the same region, whereas Kurmanji speakers living in Turkey almost always have difficulty understanding Soranî speakers.

However, understanding different dialects of the Kurdish language also depends on whether individuals received any education in the above-mentioned languages or dialects. People who are conscious of linguistic issues and have worked to develop their language proficiency are better able to understand other dialects. However, people speaking different subdialects of the same dialect due to varying political and psychological issues sometimes report difficulty in communicating with each other.

Furthermore, the notion of “understanding” is also difficult to define, as it is a relative concept.<sup>19</sup> For some people, “understanding” means being able to differentiate sounds, whereas for other people it means that they can follow a conversation. There is no uniform criteria for defining what it means to “understand.” Therefore, while discussing the relationship between Zazaki and Kurmanji and what it means to “understand” them, people are actually talking about a highly complex process.

In conclusion, there is not a single “right” answer to the discussions regarding whether Kurmanji and Zazaki are dialects of the same language or two separate languages. Different conclusions can be reached depending on whether the dialects'/languages' are analyzed in terms of linguistic, historical, cultural, or political aspects. In order to implement mother tongue-based multilingual education in Turkey, it is only important to recognize and note the similarities and the differences between Kurmanji and Zazaki. Observations also demonstrate that an individual who has advanced proficiency in Kurmanji can communicate with a Zazaki speaker, and the complexity of their communication can increase if they are both exposed to education about the other person's dialect/language. In other words, under normal circumstances, for a child that knows that knows either Kurmanji or Zazaki, learning the other one will be incomparably easier when compared to learning any other foreign language.

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<sup>19</sup> I would like to thank Geoffrey Haig for drawing my attention on this subject.

### **1.17. Differences in Beliefs**

Just as there are language differences among Kurds, there are also varieties of religious beliefs prevalent among the Kurdish people. Even though the majority of Kurdish people living in Turkey is Sunni Muslims and adheres to Shafi Islam, there is also a significant number of Alevi Kurds. There are also small numbers of Zoroastrian Kurds and Yazidi Kurds. However, in Turkish public schools compulsory religion courses teach Sunni-Hanafi Islam and exclude all other religious communities. Sometimes, the information presented in these courses is disrespectful towards and discriminates against Alevi, Yezidi and Zoroastrian community members. Moreover, the education system imposes the idea that having a religious belief is the absolute truth, and thus does not recognize the existence of non-believers, even labeling them as perverts. Therefore, any education model to be suggested should include precautions addressing this discriminatory and hierarchical relation between beliefs and should show the same respect towards different religions as well as unbelief.

### **1.20. Evaluation**

The factors explained above are generally intertwined and results in reproduction of a more profound inequality and discrimination. Education plays an important role in producing and reproducing the inequalities throughout the world. However, we believe that these inequalities can be eliminated with an intervention and the reestablishment of the education system. The content, form and the expected outcomes of this education system should envisage a new world. In this respect, the second part of this report will focus on the education models, and will try to answer how the processes of implementation of these models, literacy and trainings of teachers should be handled.



## CHAPTER 2: Education and Multilingualism

Mother tongue-based multilingual education models that can be used in Turkey for the education of Kurdish students that have different needs and characteristics should be based on certain factors. These factors should offer an alternative education system to the current monolingual one and should be able to eradicate the discriminations and inequalities arising from the wrong policies that have been followed until this day. The following section aims to elaborate further on these issues.

### 2.00. Education Systems in the World

We can roughly classify the education systems in the world into three groups: those that follow an authoritarian/teacher-centered education model, those that follow a model of progressive education, and those that follow a model of critical/transformational education. These systems are briefly explained below.

#### 2.10. Authoritarian/Teacher-Centered Education

The most prominent feature of the authoritarian<sup>20</sup> system of education is to accept students as passive subjects and teachers as the absolute authorities in classrooms. According to this system, education's main purpose is to transfer knowledge and skills onto students. Since it is the teacher who is transmitting the knowledge and skills, s/he is the absolute authority in the classroom, where there is a strict hierarchical relationship between the teacher and the students. Generally, classroom activities consist of exercises based on memorizing information and demonstrating skills. In language classes, vocabulary and grammar rules are taught separately, because it is assumed that these are independent subjects. Moreover, there is a strict, preset plan that determines when to teach each subject. According to this plan, learning language follows a linear path. In this process, the teacher generally asks questions where there is only one right answer and expects children to answer the question correctly. Most of the time the teacher is the only one speaking in the classroom and the more the teacher talks the less the students talk. In this approach to education, neither the teacher nor the students research, interpret, or criticize the information presented. In this educational approach, the teachers are like cashiers at a bank according to the famous pedagogue Paulo Freire's metaphor. Nor do they question the causes and the consequences of this system or try to search for "the truth."

This kind of approach to education has significant consequences, and has especially negative consequences for students who do not belong to the dominant group in society. In this model, the language learning process is based on the ideas of the dominant group and consequently the students are not taught to express their own feelings and opinions, but rather to imitate

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<sup>20</sup> Especially in the West, this kind of system is called "traditional education". However, such labelling, generally based on modernist discourses, stigmatizes everything related to traditions and results in an Orientalist point of view.

26 | Therefore, the term authoritarian/teacher-centered education is preferred, as the aim is to emphasize an education system that is based on memorization and one where students are expected to blindly accept information without questioning it.

the grammar and vocabulary of the dominant group through their teachers. Therefore, the communication is inevitably at minimum level and quite meaningless. Due to these reasons, many students' identities are generally overlooked and they are "silenced" in the classroom<sup>21</sup>.

### 2.11. Progressive Education

The notion of progressive education is primarily shaped by the opinions of famous psychologists and pedagogues such as John Dewey and Jean Piaget. Contrary to the authoritarian/teacher-centered education model, progressive education accepts students as active participants and claims that education should be based on practice instead of on the memorization of information. In this model, education is not just an exchange of information, but rather an area where the information is questioned as well as learned. The students are at the center of this model, and for this reason, the model is also referred to as student-centered education. Learning takes place and is meaningful for the students. Therefore, the primary goal of language education is to ensure students are capable of meaningful communication. In this model, language is not taught separately, but rather taught as a part of other subjects. In the authoritarian/teacher-centered model of education, students are expected to memorize all information presented, whereas in the progressive education model students are expected to learn languages as part of the development of their thinking skills

Progressive education, however, also has received criticisms. For example, learning processes are generally followed in accordance with scientific research and consequently this approach over-focuses on classroom activities and tends to overlook social realities that exist outside of classroom. Classroom activities are generally prepared according to an ideal student type, and this ideal is based on generalizations that emphasize positive qualities. Therefore, in this model, differences among students are generally ignored. Therefore, the differences among students are most of the time ignored and these students are accepted as composing a homogenous group. It is already a big mistake to consider the students as a homogenous group; however it is even a greater mistake to ignore the fact that this so-called homogenous group is composed of children belonging to the dominant social group. This situation contributes to the invisibility of children belonging to oppressed social groups.

### 2.12. Critical/Transformative Education

The critical/transformational approach to education aims to make students constantly question their relationship with their environment and the world they are living in, social injustices, multiple forms of oppression, and power. According to this approach, education's purpose is to encourage students to transform these relationships while questioning them. Brazilian scholar Paulo Freire is the most well known pioneer of this approach. For Freire, along with students everyone should be able to learn "reading not only the word, but also the world".<sup>22</sup>

21 Giroux, Henry (1991), "Series Introduction: Rethinking the Pedagogy of Voice Difference and Cultural Struggle", In *Pedagogy and the Struggle for Voice: Issues of Language, Power, and Schooling for Puerto Ricans*, (ed.) Catherine Walsh, OISE Press, Toronto, p. XV-XXVII, citation Gallagher, Eithne (2008). *Equal Rights to the Curriculum: Many Languages, One Message*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon. p.14-16.

22 Freire, Paulo and Macedo, Donaldo (1987), *Literacy: Reading the Word and the World*, Bergen and Garvey, South Hadley, MA.



The instructors who adopt the critical/transformational approach to education know how social realities are constructed and defined inside and outside of schools by culture, language, history, power, and politics. For this reason, they also consider the role of language and political interests in shaping education policies and are aware that educational policies are not always based on pedagogical studies. Therefore, it is expected that teachers also constantly question why and how they are teaching subjects and that teachers will foresee who will benefit from different facets of the educational process. In language education, the critical/transformational approach to education prioritizes the implementation of multilingualism in curriculum and classrooms and encourages students to speak in the language(s) that they are most competent in order to teach new languages and to prevent a hierarchy among the languages. According to this approach, language education should be taught by taking into consideration the students' social realities and should focus on creating meaningful interactions among students.

Multilingual education can be considered a significant part of critical/transformational education, but that is not enough on its own. Critical literacy, which is explained in more detail below, should also be a part of becoming multilingual in the critical/transformational model of education. Only then will it be possible to "read not only the word, but also the world."

As is well known, the majority of the teachers of Kurdish students living in Turkey tend to ignore that their students' mother tongue and identities. The ongoing policies of the state, teacher training, the curriculum, and the educational materials used in classrooms force teachers to act this way. Consequently, Kurdish students are discouraged to appreciate and value their own mother tongue and identity and preserve their culture.

The aforementioned approaches to education should be assessed in the context of Turkey and the Kurds. The prevalent system of education in Turkey is the authoritarian/teacher-centered model of education. However, in the first few years after the Republic was founded, there was a search to identify the best system of education for Turkey. John Dewey, one of the pioneers of the progressive model of education, came to Turkey in 1924 at the invitation of the Minister of Education and prepared a detailed report about the situation of education in Turkey as well as presenting his suggestions for improving the system. Among his suggestions were the ideas of education focusing on literacy, establishing village institutes, and establishing teacher training schools. The establishment of these institutions during the first years of the Republic proves that some of the suggestions of Dewey were implemented. However, it is clear that while implementing these suggestions some parts of Dewey's suggestions were omitted. For instance, Dewey suggested that the schools should be local and the region's circumstances should be taken into consideration when the school's curricula were being developed. However, the institutionalization of education proceeded through a strict process of centralization, and the authoritarian/teacher-centered education model was the only kind of approach to education utilized. Currently, there is no progress in implementing a critical/transformational approach to education: Neither the majority of academicians nor bureaucrats have even discussed this. Certainly, this is the result of a political system that favors the centralization of power.

Adopting an education system that is truly transformational for everyone, especially Kurdish students, is crucial for eliminating the multiple forms of inequalities and discriminations that were previously mentioned.

## 2.20. Types of Literacy and Critical Literacy

The above-mentioned approaches to education also determine how literacy is approached. There are three fundamental approaches to literacy. The most widespread one, **traditional literacy**, is defined as being able to read, write, and do basic arithmetic equations. People who do not have the necessary knowledge to do these things are generally labeled as illiterate and some refer to them as ignorant. The progressive education approach gives more importance to **functional literacy**. According to this approach, literacy is important to gain skills in order to develop humans' potential, earn money, and raise living standards. Such goals are also possible by pursuing higher education. The final approach is **critical literacy**.<sup>23</sup> Critical literacy aims to raise awareness among individuals and social groups who have been subject to social and political discrimination and inequality and to empower them. This kind of literacy also teaches individuals methods to use to transform their situations.

These three approaches should not be viewed as if they exclude one and other; on the contrary, they complement each other. However, it seems that both the international institutions and almost all of the national literacy campaigns adopt the traditional literacy approach and only a few recognize the functional literacy approach. The institutions that support a critical literacy approach are scarce and only a few civil-political institutions and opposition groups mention this approach at all.

The other important point that tends to be overlooked is the language of instruction in literacy programs. Several national and international campaigns accept the dominant language as the language of instruction used in literacy education and do not provide any options for people whose mother tongue is not the dominant language. Thus, this kind of attitude generally focuses on monolingualism and opens the path to extinction of languages.

According to the latest report conducted by UNESCO in 2011<sup>24</sup>, among 187 countries Turkey ranks 92<sup>nd</sup> with its literacy rate of 90.8%. This rate puts Turkey in the "low and medium human development" group of countries according to UNESCO's classification. For this reason, various campaigns have been organized in order to increase the literacy rate. During these campaigns, the importance of literacy is over-emphasized to the point that illiterate people are labeled as ignorant simpletons. This demonstrates that the traditional approach to literacy still prevails in Turkey. In Turkey, where a hierarchical system of social relationships exists, being a Turk and being able to read and write in Turkish are criteria for determining where one falls in the hierarchy. This system excludes and devalues people who are not Turks and/or who do not speak Turkish and in doing so create a colonialist relationship. Under this system, it is generally implied that the people who are not Turks and who do not speak Turkish are "ignorant" and "backward," and that the only way to liberate such people from this situation is to teach them to read and write in Turkish. The English word "illiterate" means "unable to read and write;" however, in Turkish the word "illiterate" can be translated to mean "ignorant," "unenlightened," "inexperienced," or even "ignoramus." This example provides insight as to how illiterate people are perceived in Turkey.

The cities with the lowest literacy rates in Turkey are Kurdish cities. For this reason, almost all

<sup>23</sup> It is also known as liberating and empowering literacy.

<sup>24</sup> For this report see: <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/indicators/101406.html>.



of the literacy campaigns focus on these cities. The aim of these campaigns is to “enlighten” the Kurdish people who do not speak, read, and write in Turkish. However, the education system that excludes Kurdish speakers as well as the inequalities and discriminations faced by Kurds are never mentioned in these literacy campaigns. Even though it is a well-established fact that a children learn reading and writing in their mother tongue the best, countless Kurdish children are forced to get an education in a language they do not fully understand, becoming imprisoned in a monolingual education system that lacks the psychological, sociological, and educational opportunities provided by a multilingual education, and forces them to forget their mother tongue. This approach plays a huge role in keeping the literacy rates low in Kurdish cities and reproducing the inequalities and discrimination Kurds face.

Kurdish women and girls are the ones who are most affected in this situation. Due to cultural and political reasons, patriarchy is prevalent throughout Turkey, and, consequently, the women and girls living in the Kurdish region are subject to oppression and discrimination. The literacy courses done in a monolingual system and adopting a traditional literacy approach were able to reach out to only few number of Kurdish women, however these courses forced upon them an colonialist relation. Unfortunately there are only very few courses, which can be an alternative to the current ones, that teach to read and write first in Kurdish and help these individuals to criticize the environment they are living in. Some Kurdish municipalities have begun to initiate this type of literacy course, however we cannot yet talk about a widespread system which can be accessed by the people living in other cities as well.

Without a doubt, in the contemporary world, being literate is an important part of getting an education and aims to empower and liberate people. However, in order to realize this, a liberating and empowering approach should be adapted. Otherwise, in a system in which individuals and societies are alienated from living conditions, discouraged, and dependent on outside political power prevail.

For this reason, Turkey should give up its monolingual education system and literacy policies and should promote a multilingual education system that adopts a critical literacy approach. It is well known that the countries who have already adopted this kind of a system, such as some regions of Brazil, have made important progress in improving the situation of poor, disadvantaged, and culturally oppressed groups. It is crucial to adopt such a system in Turkey, especially for women and girls, in order to eradicate the ongoing oppressive and hegemonic social, political, and economic relationships that exist.

One might assume that a critical literacy approach to education can only be used in adult education. However, Alma Flor Ada suggests a framework that is based on the teachings of Freire that can be used in every level of education.<sup>25</sup> According to this framework, the critical literacy approach has four phases. Each phase covers an interaction process between students and teachers. In these processes, it is expected that students are able to have meaningful conversations and express themselves effectively. Cummins further explains these phases with the following figure<sup>26</sup>:

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25 Ada, Alma Flor (1988), “Creative Reading: A Relevant Methodology for Language Minority Children”, *NABE’87 Theory, Research and Application: Selected Papers*, (ed.) Lilliam Malave, State University of New York, Buffalo, p. 97–112

26 Cummins, Jim (2001), “Empowerment through Bilingualism”, In *An Introductory Reader to the Writings of Jim Cummins*, (ed.) Colin Baker and Nancy Hornberger, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, p.276–281.

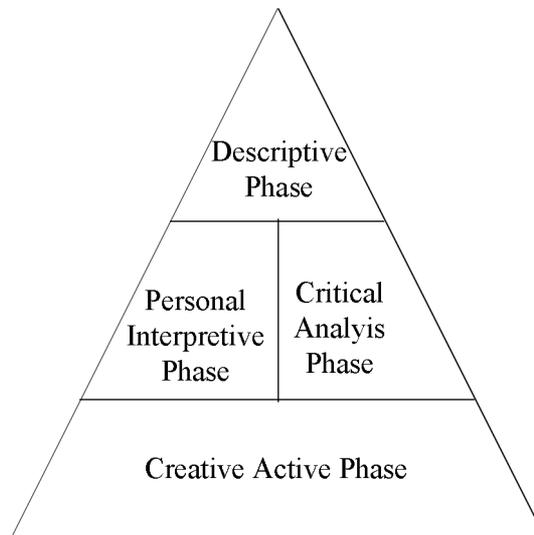


Figure 1: The creative act of reading. Source: Cummins (2001)

### 2.21. Descriptive Phase

In the descriptive phase, the focal point is the educational text that is being used. Several questions about the texts, such as “what,” “how,” “who,” “where,” and “why” are asked to the students in order to create a discussion among them. The answers to these questions are found in the texts. In this phase, generally, the discussion is a general one and is not yet aimed at questioning power relations in the society.

### 2.22. Personal Interpretive Phase

After the subject of the text is discussed during the first phase, children will try to relate it to their lives and experiences during the second phase. In this phase, questions such as: “Have you ever witnessed/experienced/felt such a thing? How did it make you feel? How did your parents react?” are posed. With the help of these questions, the students start to think and care about their experiences and feelings. This creates an environment based on trust, solidarity, and understanding. In this respect, the identities and the cultures of students can also be expressed in the classroom. Moreover, the information contained in the texts is better understood by the students as they relate it to their lives.

### 2.23. Critical Analysis Phase

After the second phase, children can go to the critical analysis phase. At this stage, the children are encouraged to think abstractly, make generalizations, and come up with arguments. The following questions can be used to provoke thinking and discussion this phase:

Do you think the information given is valid?

In which cases the information valid?

Do you think everyone is affected the same way by this information?

How could this situation have turned out differently in different situations?

How would the people belonging to different cultures, classes, and genders react in this situation? Why? How?



Ada affirms that all the students can be encouraged to think about these questions, however their arguments and analyzes will vary according to their experiences and development. These questions will further help children to grasp the meaning of the text and will encourage them to think about themselves and their place in the world while also challenging their knowledge and experience.

#### **2.24. Creative Active Phase**

The last phase consists of transforming all the information produced during the previous phases into a concrete plan of action. At this stage, the steps that the students can take in order to solve problems related to the text mentioned in previous phases are discussed. This phase is the most crucial one, as it aims to transform the students' and their families' lives by encouraging them to take action. In this respect, education will be meaningful and empowering for the individuals and social groups involved.

The learning process of each child is different. If, during the first phase, only a classic literacy approach to education is presented to students and they are not encouraged to go beyond that, only a classic approach to literacy will develop in most students. In that case, the individuality of the students and their potential to transform their environment and their society will not be realized. With the phases suggested above, it is possible to encourage students think about their lives while contemplating a text, thus encouraging them to take steps to transform their environment and society. Moreover, a hierarchical relationship between students and teachers is also prevented by intensifying the solidarity between them.

#### **2.30. The Use of Mother Tongue in Education and Common Models**

Bilingual and multilingual education models are used under different names. In some of these models, the mother tongue is used only during the transition period to instruction in a secondary language, whereas in other models the promotion of multilingualism is ensured because the mother tongue is preserved and the learning of additional languages is desired. There has been research on the application of these models in different parts of the world. This research aids in better comprehending the approaches and agendas behind language education and language policies.<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, this research also helps by relaying the outcomes of different policies. For instance, it has been shown that monolingual education conducted in the official language of the state is not the best way to learn the official language, nor are all models that claim to focus on a bilingual education actually promoting bilingualism. Various methods of language education also demonstrate that there is no absolute right or wrong method when it comes to language education and models can vary according to the circumstances of the regions where they are implemented. Several models of language education used throughout the world are briefly explained below.

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<sup>27</sup> Benson, Carol (2009), 'Designing effective schooling in multilingual contexts: going beyond bilingual "models"'. In *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*, (eds.) Mohanty, Ajit, Minati Panda, Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas. Multilingual Matters, pp. 63-82.

### 2.31. Models Used in Language Education<sup>28</sup>

**Submersion Model:** This model is used in countries such as Turkey where the education policies and the curriculum results in negative outcomes and problems in terms of multilingualism. In this model, a low-quality education is given in the official language of the country. The other languages are excluded and Western languages are taught as a second language. This situation results in monolingualism, based on the official language, and minorities who speak other languages have difficulty transferring their languages to future generations. In other words, minorities' mother tongues are lost by supplanting them with the dominant language. This is the primary reason for languages being lost in Turkey since the foundation of republic.

**Transitional Model:** This model is used in order to increase school attendance and facilitate literacy among minorities speaking languages other than the dominant language whose school success and attendance levels are low. In this model, the students start learning and write in their mother tongue during one or two years; however, after the initial years, their education is done only in the state's official language. The most well known example of this model is Hispanic students living in the United States. According to research, this model hastens the assimilation process by calling it integration, therefore even though the transition to literacy takes place quickly, inequalities cannot be eliminated, and the preservation and learning of the mother tongue cannot be realized and the problems arising from a monolingual education continue.<sup>29</sup>

**Maintenance Model:** In this model, which is generally used in the education of linguistic minorities, there are at least six to eight years of mother tongue-based bilingual or multilingual education and additional languages are gradually added to the curriculum, first as language courses, and, in later years, as the language of instruction in various subjects. In South Africa, several Asian countries, Bolivia, and Ethiopia this model has been successfully implemented. Several schools in the Basque<sup>30</sup> and Catalonia regions of Spain can also be cited as examples of this model. Research and statistics prove that this model has better results than the transitional education model.<sup>31</sup>

Another maintenance model is the Bridging Model of Multilingual Education, as suggested by Susan Malone.<sup>32</sup> According to this model, students become literate at a school that provides education in their mother tongues. Later, lessons to enhance students' listening and speaking skills in second and third languages are introduced and taught gradually. Thus, students are able to have conversations in their second and third languages as well as being able think abstractly and learn technical and academic terms in their mother tongues. Students can then transfer the skills

28 The discussions in this part are mainly based on these sources: Baker, Colin (2006), *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, 4. edition. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters.; Benson, Carol (2009), 'Designing effective schooling in multilingual contexts: going beyond bilingual "models".' In *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*, (eds.) Mohanty, Ajit, Minati Panda, Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, pp. 63-82.; and lastly Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove (1984) *Bilingualism or Not: The Education of Minorities*. Clevedon, UK: Multilingual Matters. As for the categorization, Carol Benson's article (2009) is followed.

29 Thomas, Wayne and Virginia Collier (1997), *School effectiveness for language minority students*. <http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/ncbepubs/resource/effectiveness>.

30 For a comprehensive analysis on the education models in Basque Country see: Coşkun, Vahap; Derince, M. Şerif and Uçarlar, Nesrin, *Scar of Tongue*, p.117-123.

31 Benson, 'Designing effective schooling', p.68.

32 Malone, Susan (2010), *MLE Program Planning Manual*, (unpublished source).



they originally learn in their mother tongue to their other languages. Thus, this model preserves students' mother tongues and allows them to learn new languages.

**Immersion Model:** The immersion model is a method generally preferred for the education of children in middle-class families in many country contexts. In terms of both the quality of education and development of multilingualism, this model provides positive outcomes. The languages used in this model are generally the prestigious ones and there is social support for learning and using these languages. The majority of students' education takes place in a second language instead of in their mother tongues. However, in this model the teachers are bilingual or multilingual and are fluent in the students' mother tongues as well. It is expected from students to appreciate their mother tongue. The most well known examples of this model are the French-English bilingualism programs implemented in Canada. However, the model has a risk of turning into a submersion model if it is implemented in economically disadvantaged regions where the official language is regarded more prestigious than the local languages of the region. In this situation, the children's mother tongue is generally neglected by teachers and is not included in the curriculum to the extent that it should be. Therefore, a submersion model that was explained above will be applied instead of an immersion model in such a case.

**Two-Way Bilingual Education Model:** This model has yielded to successful results regarding both academic development and multilingualism. In the schools where this model is implemented, both the students speaking a minority language as well as the ones speaking the dominant language are educated in the same classrooms. The instruction is given in two languages, but it takes into consideration the needs and the characteristics of students. If the minority language is extremely weak due to historical factors that point to it needing revitalization, then the school provides up to 90% of instruction in the minority language, because the dominant language is already supported by the social culture outside of school, and thus there is not a risk of not learning the dominant language. According to experts, if the rate of use of the minority language in instruction rises to 90%, this situation will become a maintenance model for the students from the minority group. This model increases the rate of bilingualism for the students who formerly spoke only the dominant language. The only problem regarding this model is the fact that students speaking the dominant language may not show sufficient interest in this kind of school. Especially in metropolises, it is hard to form this type of educational institutions. In small cities and rural areas, where daily interactions and economic relationships are bilingual, it is possible to implement this kind of model. For instance, in some of the schools in the United States, children whose mother tongue is Spanish are educated in the same classroom with children whose mother tongue is English, and a bilingual teacher teaches the class. Because this type of setting prioritizes the minority's language (in this case, Spanish), both groups of students benefit and become bilingual.

Without a doubt, the aforementioned models cannot be randomly selected and implemented in a region. It is also wrong to assume that only one model could be implemented in a region. For any of these models to be implemented, there must be enough linguistic knowledge, socio-economic support, and infrastructure (such as teachers and educational materials) to form the contents of the curriculum according to the needs of the people living in the region. Moreover, once a program is implemented, it does not necessarily mean that it should be applied in the same fashion in every community or school. As new needs arise, alterations should be made to the curricula, or new models could be introduced.

### 2.32. Problems Regarding the Language Education Models<sup>33</sup>

Much of the research convincingly shows that the submersion and transitional education models result in various educational, linguistic, and social problems, both in the short term and in the long term. The use of these kinds of models severely hinders the elimination of injustices and inequalities in education.

However, the alternative models presented above are not also ideal. Even if a multilingual education approach is adopted in principle, there still may be problems during the implementation phase. Each of these models has some variations, which may result in different outcomes. In addition, a model aimed to answer to the needs of a specific region may have different consequences in another region with similar, but not identical, needs. Another problem is the presumption that the children are monolingual and they speak either the dominant language or the minority language. The fact that these children are exposed to audio and written materials in several languages at the same time and that they may have different linguistic abilities needs to be accounted for in these models. Especially the increasing number of different communication ways for the last few years resulted in a more hybrid and complex language identity than it was anticipated. It cannot be said that these models sufficiently consider such diversity. In the case of Turkey, many children whose mother tongue is not Turkish already speak their mother tongue, Turkish as a second language, and in some cases, a third or fourth language. For example, a child living in Urfa whose mother tongue is Zazaki is also exposed to Kurmanji, Turkish, and Arabic, both at home and outside the home, and thus might have different levels of proficiency in each of these languages. Similarly, a child whose mother tongue is Arabic and who lives in Mardin hears Kurmanji, Arabic, Turkish, Syriac, and English (due to increasing number of tourists visiting the region) and from time to time try to speak these languages according to their differing needs, creating a situation Ofelia Garcia calls translanguaging<sup>34</sup>.

It is also very important to keep the balance between the models of language education that will be used in various stages of the education process and the difficulty of the state's centralized examinations. Even if an effective mother tongue-based education system is adopted at the primary school, parents may be hesitant to send their children to these schools if higher education entrance examinations are conducted only in the dominant language. It is already problematic that examinations are centralized; however, if this situation is unavoidable, then they should be multilingual.

Due to all of the problems mentioned above, many models of education have been misimplemented. Because these models were misimplemented, the likelihood of these models producing successful results was negated, and in some cases the implementation of these models was exploited for political gain. Apart from having a profound discussion on these education models, it is also important that the teachers, parents, education program experts and students have a clear grasp on the principals regarding learning and teaching languages. Only by doing this, conditions surrounding a region or a group can better be understood; goals and steps that are needed in order to achieve these goals can better be predicted. Susan Malone enumerates some of the works

<sup>33</sup> For a more detailed discussion see Benson, 'Designing effective schooling', pp. 70-76.

<sup>34</sup> Garcia, Ofelia (2009), 'Education, multilingualism and translanguaging in the 21st century.' In *Social Justice through Multilingual Education*, (eds.) Mohanty, Ajit, Minati Panda, Robert Phillipson and Tove Skutnabb-Kangas. Bristol: Multilingual Matters, pp. 140-158.



that should be done during this process:<sup>35</sup>

- Determining the oral and written linguistic skills of students, parents and teachers,
- Thoroughly researching the attitudes and perceptions regarding the languages in question,
- Raising awareness on language acquisition and education,
- Determining the social and individual demands in a participatory manner,
- Setting educational and linguistic goals,
- Evaluating possible human, material and economic resources,
- Determining the steps that need to be taken in the short, middle, and long term for achieving the goals,
- Preparing the programs that are necessary in order to achieve the goals
- Applying a management cycle that involves planning, pilot implementation, evaluation, recording data, and conducting analysis

Only after realizing these points will an education model that can fulfill the needs of different groups be developed.

#### **2.40. Multilingualism and Multicompetence as a Dynamic Process versus Monolingualism**

Globally, the mainstream research on language takes monolingualism as a norm, and thus the research methods and data gathering processes it uses are selected and applied accordingly. Consequently, multilingual people (those who speak multiple languages in their everyday lives for different purposes) are evaluated independently. However, in many places in the world people use languages according to their needs in different contexts. There is no country in the world where a single language is used by all of its citizens for every purpose. Moreover, due to the process of globalization, contact influence between different languages has intensified. This has made the world an even more multilingual place.

In regards to this matter, Vivian Cook's perspective on "multicompetence" is highly informative. Multicompetence is generally defined as "two languages in one brain."<sup>36</sup> The languages spoken by a multilingual person are not defined as independently co-existing, but rather constitute unity in multicompetence. According to this model, multilingualism is not the aggregate of a person's first and second languages, but a function of her total cognitive linguistic skills. In other words, the cognitive skills of multilingual person are different from those of a monolingual person, and all these differences should be taken into consideration when assessing linguistic abilities. Such differences, under correct conditions, lead to the development of advanced mental and cognitive skills.<sup>37</sup> Such a model considers multilingualism not as a static state, but as a dynamic relationship between languages that are in a state of constant transformation and mutual influence.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Malone, *Manual for Developing MLE*.

<sup>36</sup> Cook, Vivian (2006), "Interlanguage, Multi-competence and the Problem of the 'Second' Language." *Rivista di Psicolinguistica Applicata*, 3, p. 39-52.

<sup>37</sup> For a more detailed discussion on this topic see: Baker, Colin (2006), *Foundations of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism*, (4<sup>th</sup> Edition), Multilingual Matters, Clevedon.

<sup>38</sup> For an explanatory discussion on this topic see: Herdina, Philip and Jessner, Ulrike. (2002). *A Dynamic Model of Multilingualism: Perspectives of Change in Psycholinguistics*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon. Also, Cook, Vivian, (1995)

In Turkey in general, and in the Kurdish region in particular, multilingualism and multicompetence are widespread.<sup>39</sup> Many Kurdish children are exposed to Kurmanji, Zazaki, Arabic, Syriac, and Turkish from their childhood, and then start to learn English at school. It is true that some living in areas where these languages are spoken may not become competent in all of these languages or may not use all of these languages in their everyday lives, but they grow up knowing about the languages and hear them being spoken. For these reasons, research on language should take monolingualism as norm, but its practical counterpart dynamic multilingualism.

## 2.50. Teacher Training on Linguistic and Cultural Differences

Teacher training is an area that differs from country to country, region to region, and even from one culture to another. It is also an area that is directly impacted by political power struggles. Those in power who control teacher training also generally control other aspects of education. For this reason, the struggle for power leaves its mark on every stage of the teacher training process. As a consequence of such struggles, some teacher training programs are attune to cultural and linguistic differences, while some others ignore such differences and train teachers to approach students as a homogenous group. The kind of training offered to teachers has a direct impact on social and power relations.

Although Turkey is a multilingual and multicultural country, various institutions that train teachers do so as if they are going to work in monolingual and monocultural contexts. Consequently, novice teachers encounter tremendous difficulties when they graduate from university and begin to work.

On the other hand, in those countries that officially recognize cultural and language differences, one of the most contested subjects pertains to teacher training. For, training teachers in line with an approach to education that recognizes multilingualism and multiculturalism requires a constant revision of all the components of processes of education, as well as a critical approach to resources and to methods followed. Only such an approach to teacher training can contribute to the development of pluralistic and egalitarian social relations.

In conclusion, it is possible to state that in regards to education policies, in systems based on the abilities of both monolingual and multilingual students, one of the foremost variables that determines the quality of education is the teachers' skills, professional experiences, and pedagogical approaches. In order for teachers to become active agents, they need to be able to problematize and critically approach the context they live in. Teachers in homogenizing systems function as technicians who transmit the curriculum determined by the power holders. The role of the teacher in this system is one of a transfer of the pre-existing information. Students are passive: they take in the information passed to them through rote learning. Neither teachers nor students research, interpret, or criticize the information given them. Nor do they research how and why an event or a situation came about, or verify the knowledge presented. The transformative teacher

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"Multi-competence and Learning of Many Languages", *Language, Culture and Curriculum*, Issue 8, p. 93–98. Cook, Vivian (2003), 'The Changing L1 in the L2 User's Mind', In *Effects of the Second Language on the First*, (ed.) Vivian Cook, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, p. 1-18, and lastly, Garcia, 'Education, multilingualism and translanguaging', pp.140-158.

39 See Eğitim Sen (2011), *Eğitimde Anadilinin Kullanımı ve Çiftdilli Eğitim; Halkın Tutum ve Görüşleri, Eğitim-Sen Türkiye Taraması*, Eğitim Sen Yayınları, Ankara. among others.



model, in contrast, allows teachers to develop a critical approach to global and social relations, and consequently allows discussions about the discourses of power as well, including discussing the ways in which educational institutions contribute to the cycles of social, political, and economic injustice, and inequality. Within the limits of this study, it is not possible to map out all the aspects of implementing a transformative education system and integrating it with the teacher-training curriculum, but the following list highlights the major elements of such a curriculum:

- Enables teachers and student teachers to think critically about current cultural and social relationships,
- Prepares the groundwork for students to comprehend the world and social relations through their own “voices,”
- Contributes to students and teachers’ ability to envision a society of individuals who participate in democratic processes on equal grounds.

## **2.6o. Parent Participation**

The majority of the non-critical approaches to education do not consider parents as a fundamental component of education. Often, the role given to parents does not go beyond feeding their children and providing for their physical needs, such as educational materials. In other words, during the application of the model of education and its components, parents’ opinions are never asked and parents are not included in the process. This exclusion is even more severe when parents are members of minority groups. As mentioned before, the majority of parents who are members of minority groups cannot adequately help their children with homework and are unable to have effective communication with teachers due to the fact that the school’s language is only in Turkish. Certainly, the most important factor in here is the fact that the school’s language is only in Turkish.

For this reason, multilingual education policies and applications should include the parents in the process from the start, respect parents’ backgrounds and experiences, and ask parents’ opinions on various decisions. The way to achieve this is to develop a curriculum that gives importance to culture. A detailed curriculum is a curriculum that considers all the experiences, needs and rights of the elements in the school; a curriculum that considers all the things in the school. This can only be achieved by preparing a curriculum that will be based on the cultures and the languages in where they are applied and eliminating any form of discrimination in every level of education.

On the other hand, educational regulations must also allow for parents who have been discriminated against to seek redress. Students’ performance can only be significantly improved if their parents’ status improves as well. For example, for a family whose language has been scorned – especially in regions where monolingualism is imposed-- it is hard to change the family’s attitudes towards and perceptions of the education system. For this reason, educational extension courses for adults, based on multilingualism and multiculturalism, must be offered. The specific contents of such courses should be discussed with participating parents and seminars on multiculturalism, multilingualism, discrimination, and inequality must be part of the curriculum.

Another important way for parents to participate in the education system is by helping to prepare

teaching materials. In the case of languages that are excluded from the curriculums, like Kurdish, lack of written, oral and visual educational materials is a problem. In countries where the situation is similar to the relationship between Kurdish and Turkish in Turkey, parents can help by creating some of the educational materials. In this way, culturally appropriate materials are developed, but also differences in dialect are presented and parents are included in the process of education. Moreover, it is certain that students will be more excited to use educational materials produced by their parents and relatives. The important part of this is to have women and girls be included in the process as decision makers. This may also help in the creation of educational materials that are sensitive to gender discrimination.

Through these efforts, parents who were once excluded from school and education can be reconnected to the education system, resulting in the empowerment of both the students and their parents.

## 2.70. Foundations of Multilingual Education

Multilingual education has its own foundations. These foundations are enumerated below, in accordance with the work of experts such as Jim Cummins, Tove Skutnabb-Kangas, Colin Baker and Carol Benson.<sup>40</sup>

**1- Each child learns best when they have an education in the language(s) in which they are competent most.** During the first stage of literacy, it is crucial to comprehend the relationship between the sound-symbol and meaning-symbol. Students learn to do this faster if they write the words that they know the meaning of. If this is not the case, the reading-writing process is slower and language learning is delayed.

**2- Everyone has the skills for learning several languages at the same time or consecutively.** All children, from birth (provided there is not a physical or mental deficiency), have the ability (knowledge of universal grammar) to learn many languages. However, as they grow up, this ability deteriorates due to the environmental factors. When children only hear one language spoken around them, they lose this ability faster than when they hear multiple languages. In this respect, as Cook states, monolingualism is the state of being deprived of languages.<sup>41</sup> An education system focusing on multilingualism will consider this innate ability to learn languages from the start and will utilize children's language skills.<sup>42</sup> Noam Chomsky, by paraphrasing the saying of von Humboldt, clearly expresses his opinion on the subject: "We cannot really teach a language; we

<sup>40</sup> For these sources, see: Baker, Colin (2011). *İkidiilli Eđitim: Anne-babalar ve Öğretmenler için Rehber (Parents' and Teachers' Guide to Bilingualism)*, (trans. Sezi Güvener), Heyamola Publications, İstanbul; Cummins, Jim (2000), *Language, Power, and Pedagogy. Bilingual Children in the Crossfire*, Multilingual Matter, Clevedon; Skutnabb-Kangas, Tove (2000), *Linguistic Genocide in Education-or Worldwide Diversity and Human Rights*, Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Mahwah, NJ; Benson, Carol (2005) "The Importance of Mother Tongue-Based Schooling for Educational Quality". EFA Global Monitoring Report, see: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001466/146632e.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> Cook, Vivian (2009) "Multilingual Universal Grammar as the Norm", In *Third language Acquisition and Universal Grammar*, (ed.) Yan-kit Ingrid Leung, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, p. 55-70.

<sup>42</sup> For the details of the theory developed by the world famous professor of linguistics Noam Chomsky, see these sources: Chomsky, Noam (2009), *Bilgi Sorunları ve Dil: Managua Dersleri (Language and Problems of Knowledge: The Managua Lectures)*, (trans. Veysel Kılıç), BGST Publications, İstanbul.



can only create conditions under which it will develop in the mind in its own way.”<sup>43</sup> In this respect, in a multilingual education classroom, activities should be prepared in order to create conditions that encourage the development of language.

**3- The concepts and skills in one language can easily be transferred onto other languages.** It is possible to transfer the necessary concepts and skills from one language to another by using bridging techniques. In multilingual education models, the transfer of linguistic and cognitive skills is taught as a part of curriculum. Therefore, when reading and writing skills in one language are developed, these skills can be transferred onto another language and the individual will be able to learn reading and writing in the second language faster.

**4- Languages are not rivals, but rather supporters of each other.** When a multilingual approach to education is adopted, the perception that the languages support each other instead of hindering each other is promoted. In this respect, multilingualism is not conceived of as a phenomenon that affects the individual in a negative way, but rather as a quality that makes individuals richer.

**5- New languages can easily be learned through multilingual education.** In a multilingual education system, new languages will be taught gradually and will start with enhancing oral skills first. This method will help students to learn the new language by engaging in meaningful communications. In this respect, the process of language learning will be fun and easy for the students, rather than a compulsory lesson they need to complete to pass. If not, an education given in a language which students do not have knowledge of is done by the memorization of words and sentences that children do not fully comprehend.

**6- Multilingual students are more successful at school than monolingual students.** The research shows that multilingual students are more successful at social sciences and maths and sciences than monolingual students. According to the research,<sup>44</sup> multilingual students use different parts of their brain and are able to analyze issues in a multifaceted manner. They are also better able to find solutions that are more creative.

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<sup>43</sup> von Humboldt, 1836, as paraphrased in Chomsky, Noam (1965), *Aspects of theory of Syntax*, MIT Press, Cambridge, p.51

<sup>44</sup> The two important sources previously mentioned are: Cummins, *Language, Power, and Pedagogy*; Baker, *Foundations of Bilingual Education*

### **CHAPTER 3: Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual and Multidialectal Dynamic Education Models for the Schooling of Kurdish Students in Turkey<sup>45</sup>**

Education can eliminate many consequences of multiple discriminations and inequalities, discussed in chapter 1, by focusing on linguistic diversity, which is discussed in chapter 2, and thus can fulfill the various needs of all communities, especially Kurds, in Turkey, but this can only be met by adopting a mother tongue-based multilingual and multidialectal approach to education. To this end, mother tongue-based multilingual and multidialectal dynamic education models for schooling Kurdish students in Turkey are presented in this chapter. The first chapter of this report explained why the terms multilingual and multidialectal dynamic education models are preferred and defined these terms.

From the information presented previously, we can conclude that 4 different types of models can be used for the education of Kurdish students who have diverse needs and characteristics. These models were prepared according to the students' sociolinguistic profiles, regarding their knowledge of Kurdish and Turkish languages. In other words, the classification of these models is mainly based on the students' language practices and proficiencies in Kurdish and Turkish. Model 1 is for the Kurdish students who only or mainly speak Kurdish, Model 2 is for the students who are exposed to Kurdish and Turkish since their birth and speak both of the languages, and Model 3 and Model 4 are prepared for the Kurdish students whose first or dominant language is Turkish for various reasons. Furthermore, these models can be used in 3 different regions according to where Kurdish people are living which can be classified as as Kurdish region, resettlement areas and the regions with special conditions. Kurdish region defines the geographical area where the Kurdish people have been living and existing historically and culturally for thousands of years. The resettlement areas, as it was defined in Chapter 2, consist of the cities located in the western part of Turkey such as Istanbul, Ankara, Mersin, Adana, Antalya, Izmir, Bursa and that have received waves of migration at various times. The regions with special conditions, as it was explained in Chapter 2, are the cities such as Konya and Ankara, where the Kurdish people were sent on an exile in pre-Republican times.

The models explained below solely consist of preschool and elementary school periods. These periods are equal to a 9-year compulsory education time. However, different methods can be preferred in order to determine how to arrange this 9 year period. In other words, it can be implemented as a 9-year continuous education or it can be divided up into several periods. The only thing that matters is to have a 9-year compulsory education and that all of the students have access to a free and well-qualified education. In this report, the models are composed of 4 different stages considering the inclusion of different languages in the models and the educational activities which will be done in these languages. The first stage is the preschool period and will last for one year. In this stage, the aim is to develop the basic language skills in the languages

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<sup>45</sup> This chapter was presented as a draft at a panel held in Diyarbakır. After receiving the suggestions from the participants, the report was revised.



students know and prepare them for the school. The second stage consists of the first 3 years after preschool. In this stage, it's expected that the students develop literacy skills and learn new languages gradually in addition to mastering oral skills. The stage after this one will cover the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades and it is anticipated that the students become highly advanced in Kurmanji, Zazaki and Turkish and attain a certain level of English. The lessons which develop their conceptual thinking skills and provide academic knowledge will also be given to the students. The fourth and last stage will contain the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades in which the students begin to attend different courses in various languages; hence the multilingual education will be fully implemented. Apart from the compulsory subjects like social, physical sciences and maths, the students will prepare themselves for the high-school education during this period by attending compulsory and elective courses on subjects such as gender, citizenship and democracy education, nature sciences, history of religions, multilingualism and multiculturalism, media literacy, culture and art, literature and an additional foreign language. It is utmost important that these stages are covered as a part of the compulsory education system and that the students complete each stage successfully. In the case of students who fail to develop the necessary skills which were expected of them at any stage, they should be supported with a mechanism that aids them in overcoming the deficiency. In this regard, in order to evaluate their progress starting from the preschool, the implementation of an alternative measuring and evaluation methods while adopting a student-centered approach is essential. However, these measuring and evaluation methods should not contain the tests which are in use today, since they only focus on evaluating the result. For this reason, necessary infrastructures should be established in order to help students that will continue to high school after primary school to make their own choices and career plans rather than being subject to unsophisticated, result-based tests in certain languages.<sup>46</sup>

As it was mentioned previously, some of the Kurdish students speak Kurmanji dialect as their mother tongue whereas some of them speak Zazaki. Therefore, there will be differences in the suggested models regarding the regions. For the students whose first language is Kurmanji, the education will be in this language while it is aimed to teach Zazaki in Comparative Dialect courses. Likewise, for the Zazaki speaking students, the language of instruction will be Zazaki, and Kurmanji will be taught as Comparative Dialect.

Another important point is about the foreign language that is used in the suggested models. Because of the worldwide interest in English and the socio-economic and the academical benefits provided by having a sound knowledge of this language, English is suggested as the 3<sup>rd</sup> Language in these models. However, Arabic, Farsi, Armenian, German, Spanish, French or another language should be provided as an alternative. The choice must be made by the students and their families.

Lastly, it should be noted that since the development of multilingualism as a process is aimed through these models, new languages should be taught first orally, followed by written language. There are two reasons for this preference: First of all, oral language develops first through natural environment and it is used considerably for the expression of daily needs. Secondly, current foreign language education system existing in Turkey prioritizes the written language, particularly in state schools. As a consequence students receive a mechanical learning in which they have difficulty in speaking the target language for colloquial purposes even though they have the necessary written

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<sup>46</sup> How to establish these infrastructures should be a subject of another research.

language skills. Due to these reasons, the models suggested here prioritize the oral language education first, where the written language will be acquired gradually at a later time. The term oral language is used in the sense that the students learn the language through the pictures, objects, videos and sound recordings in authentic contexts rather than through written materials.

### **3.00- Questions and Issues That Should Be Addressed by the Models**

Both the models suggested in this report and the other educational models that may be recommended should address certain questions and issues. While searching for an answer to these questions, it is also necessary to underline the necessity of structuring the multilingual education models on two levels -the content and the form- in order to contribute in the creation of a solid future and compensate for the damages done in the past due to the monolingual and discriminatory education policies and regulations followed in Turkey. By content, it is meant that the content of the courses taking place in each model, the content of the verbal, visual and written materials and the teaching methods should adopt a Critical/Transformative Education approach. The form refers to how the languages used in the education will take place in the suggested models.

#### **Question 1: How the linguistic and cultural diversity will be used as a criterion?**

This issue, which is related to both content and form, will be solved by the making the necessary modifications in the content and the form. In regard to the form, the utilization of more than one language in all of the models since the very beginning will develop a point of view on linguistic and cultural pluralism. However, all the education materials –including the texts and pictures-, which will be used from preschool to 8th grade, should be prepared as a scrupulous example of linguistic and cultural pluralism and diversity.

#### **Question 2: How the children who lost their mother tongue can be helped to revitalize their ability to speak the ancestral language?**

It is possible to help in revitalizing Kurdish language among Kurdish children with a modification in the form: by using the Model 3 and Model 4 that is further explained below.

#### **Question 3: How will the curriculum address all forms of discrimination?**

In the education materials utilized in classrooms, all differences, based on gender, ethnic identity, physical disability, and social class will be embraced and precautions will be undertaken in order to avoid reproducing discriminatory education practices. Because of this, it is critical that the Critical/Transformative Education and Critical Literacy Approaches be adopted as the guiding influences behind developing school curricula

#### **Question 4: How will language loss be prevented?**

As these models' titles suggest, the models are prepared in order to promote multilingualism. All the education models explained aim to introduce students to new languages while conserving the use of languages students have already learned.



**Question 5: How will these models handle class differences?**

Because of the Critical/Transformative Education and Critical Literacy Approaches, the suggested models dissuade hierarchies between different social classes from forming and maintain policies and regulations that promote egalitarian relations.

**Question 6: How will differences in dialects be addressed?**

As this issue pertains to both content and form, it is critical to use different dialects and subdialects existing in the regions where the models will be implemented during education process. The written education materials will be prepared by taking into consideration of all the subdialects of the Kurdish in question. Teachers working in these regions that can speak these dialects could be assigned with revising the materials. Moreover, the teachers and the teacher candidates should be given the necessary training on these subdialects and should be encouraged to use the appropriate subdialect and prepare their own materials in order not to depend solely on the materials prepared by one institution. In this respect, the centralist tendencies will be prevented, the teachers will be included in a more efficient creation process and the materials will be more related to the lives of the children. This kind of an application is in total harmony with the Critical Literacy approach.

**Question 7: How will teacher training and in-service training be organized in order to strengthen teachers' skills and improve students' education?**

Teachers and how teachers are trained are the main factors in determining whether the models will be successful. Issues pertaining to content could be handled by using the methods mentioned in the Chapter 2 entitled *Teacher Training on Linguistic and Cultural Differences*. According to this, teachers and teacher candidates will use transformative teacher training to guide students develop a critical approach to the world and social relations, recognize various power discourses, and redress social, political and economic injustices and inequalities perpetuated in the world. The goals set by the multilingual education models could be achieved as a result of adopting such an approach to teacher training. Whether or not this is fully realized depends primarily on whether or not teachers are multilingual.

**Question 8: How can the curriculum and education materials be prepared so that they will aid in reinforcing equality among communities and help preventing discrimination?**

By implementing the Critical/Transformative Education and Critical Literacy Approaches across the curriculum and ensuring that written, audio-visual education materials are in harmony with these approaches, it is intended that students will develop the necessary awareness and the knowledge necessary in order to prevent the injustices currently faced by groups who are discriminated against. In particular, the creative action stage of the literacy model (see Chapter 2) encourages students to take action to fight discrimination.

### 3.10. Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual and Multidialectal Dynamic Education Models That Can Be Used in Different Contexts

The education models suggested below are designed on two grounds. Firstly, the heterogenous situation of the Kurdish children are taken into consideration. Namely, as mentioned before, the Kurdish children in question have different characteristics and needs, therefore more than one model have to be designed for the schooling of them rather than only one, and they ought to be able to attend one of these according to their own situation. Secondly, examples from different countries are taken into account. When historical and socio-politic conditions are considered, some of the mother tongue based multilingual education programs and the critical educational approaches of them can show the right way for the education of the Kurdish children too. From this point of view, the models described below are composed of the multilingual education programs implemented in the Basque Country<sup>47</sup>, *Multilingual Education Approach*<sup>48</sup> of Susan Malone that are implemented in many countries and the concrete suggestions given by Carol Benson<sup>49</sup> based on her experience of research from many countries. For the content of the models; Multicompetence as a theory of language formulated by Vivian Cook<sup>50</sup>; Critical Literacy model suggested by Jim Cummins<sup>51</sup> and Alma Flor Ada<sup>52</sup>; and for the education in general, the Critical/Transformative Education Approach<sup>53</sup> of Paulo Freire and Jim Cummins were embraced.

In summary, the education models suggested below are prepared in a way that both take the different characteristics and needs of the Kurdish children and benefit from the mother tongue-based education models and critical educational approaches that have yielded to successful outcomes.

47 Coşkun, Derince and Uçarlar, *Scar of Tongue*, pp. 106-111.

48 Malone, *MLE Program Planning Manual*.

49 Benson, "The Importance of Mother Tongue-based Schooling"

50 Cook, "Multi-competence and Learning of Many Languages"

51 Cummins, "Empowerment through Biliteracy"

52 Ada, Alma, Flor (1988) The Pajaro Valley experience: Working with Spanish speaking parents to develop children's reading and writing skills in the home through the use of children's literature. In *Minority Education: From Shame to Struggle*, (eds.) T. Skutnabb-Kangas and J. Cummins, (pp. 223-238). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.

53 Freire, Paulo (2010), *Ezilenlerin Pedagojisi*, (trans. Erol Özbek and Dilek Hattatoğlu), Ayrıntı, İstanbul; Cummins, *Language, Power, and Pedagogy*; and Cummins, "Empowerment through Biliteracy".

## Model 1- Kurdish-Based Gradual Multilingual and Multidialectal Education

The Model 1, which can be used in the education of Kurdish-only-speaking or mainly Kurdish-speaking students, is shown in the table below.

Stage	Stage 1	Stage 2			Stage 3		Stage 4	
Level	Preschool LoI:* Kurdish	1st Grade LoI: Kurdish	2nd Grade LoI: Kurdish	3rd Grade LoI: Kurdish	4th Grade LoI: Kurdish	5th Grade LoI: Kurdish	6th Grade LoI: Multilingual	7th and 8th Grades LoI: Multilingual
	Continue Oral L1	Continue Oral L1 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3 and Comparative Dialect	Oral L1, L2, L3 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3 and Comparative Dialect
	Comparative Dialect	Introduce Written L1	Continue Written L1	Continue Oral L1, L2	Written L1, L2	Written L1, L2, L3	Written L1, L2, L3	Written L1, L2, L3
		Introduce Oral L2	Introduce Written L2	Introduce Oral L3	Introduce Written L3	Two Courses in Turkish L2	Introduce Written Comparative Dialect	Continue Written Comparative Dialect
					One Course in Turkish L2		Some Courses in Turkish L2	Some Courses in Turkish L2
								One Course in English L3

(\*LoI: Language of Instruction, L1: Kurdish, L2: Turkish, L3: English)

### **Preschool Period**

In this period, the aim is to develop students' oral language skills while familiarizing students with Zazaki for students whose first language is Kurmanji and vice-versa for students whose first language is Zazaki, by playing games for one hour two days per week. It is anticipated that children will communicate with the help of visual rather than written materials. In both Kurmanji and Zazaki courses language development will be encouraged by using the TPR (Total Physical Response) Method, which aims to teach language by using actions, games or commands. Turkish and English are not taught in this period.

### **First Grade**

The aim during this period is to develop students' oral Kurdish language skills and for students to become literate in Kurdish. The language of instruction is Kurdish. However, the teaching of Turkish begins with Turkish classes for three hours per week. The Turkish courses aim primarily to teach oral Turkish. Additionally, Comparative Dialect courses continue for one hour classes that meet two days a week. English language education is not yet included in the curriculum.

### **Second Grade**

During this period, the curriculum aims to continue the development of oral and written Kurdish language skills. The curriculum includes Turkish lessons for three hours per week and intends that literacy skills gained in Kurdish will be transferred to Turkish through language transfer techniques. Therefore, second language literacy begins. Finally, Comparative Dialect courses continue twice a week using fables or traditional stories as course materials.

### **Third Grade**

During this period, the courses introduced during second grade continue. Education in Kurdish and Turkish continues and fables or traditional stories constitute most of the curriculum for Comparative Dialect courses. In third grade, English language courses that focus on building oral language skills are held for three hours per week. These courses aim to begin developing English-language conversation skills.

### **Fourth Grade**

Fourth grade marks the beginning of Stage 3. The difference between this period and the previous periods is that the curriculum in Stage 3 is enriched by the inclusion of courses focusing on natural sciences and social studies. A relatively easy lesson that is taught in Kurdish is also taught in Turkish and a lesson discussing Turkish grammar lesson is given in parallel with the grammar used in the curriculum lesson. The rest of the lessons continue to be taught in Kurdish. Literacy in English is also introduced during this period. In the Comparative Dialect courses, modern stories replace fables and traditional stories as the primary content.

### **Fifth Grade**

The curriculum introduced in the fourth grade continues during the fifth grade. The number of lessons that are taught in Kurdish and Turkish is doubled and Turkish grammar lessons continue in parallel with curriculum courses taught in Turkish. English and Comparative Dialect courses continue in the same manner as before.



### **Sixth Grade**

This period marks the beginning of Stage 4. Unlike the previous grades, relatively easy courses are now only given in Turkish. In other words, it is no longer required that the same course be taught in Kurdish before it is taught in Turkish. Turkish grammar courses continue in parallel with lessons taught in Turkish. The number of hours per week of English courses increases to four from three. In addition, written materials are introduced in Comparative Dialect courses.

### **Seventh Grade**

Sixth grade lessons continue during this period with minor changes. A course that was taught in Kurdish is now taught in English. The English language courses now include formal instruction in grammar and vocabulary. An academic Comparative Dialect course is added to the curriculum, where literacy skills in the relevant dialect develop. The students are encouraged to read and write various academic articles in this dialect. Elective courses depend on the students' preferences.

### **Eighth Grade**

The seventh grade program continues during this period without any changes. Only elective courses vary according to students' preferences.

## Model 2 – Kurdish-Turkish Balanced Gradual Multilingual and Multidialectal Education

Model 2, which can be used in the education of students who have a relatively balanced knowledge of both Kurdish and Turkish, is shown in the table below.

Stage	Stage 1	Stage 2			Stage 3		Stage 4	
Level	Preschool Multilingual LoI:*	1st Grade LoI: Multilingual	2nd Grade LoI: Multilingual	3rd Grade LoI: Multilingual	4th Grade LoI: Multilingual	5th Grade LoI: Multilingual	6th Grade LoI: Multilingual	7th and 8th Grades LoI: Multilingual
	Oral L1, L2	Continue Oral L1, L2 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3 and Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3 and Comparative Dialect
	Oral Comparative Dialect	Introduce Written L1, L2	Continue Written L1, L2	Continue Written L1, L2  Introduce Oral L3	Continue Written L1, L2  Introduce Written L3	Continue Written L1, L2, L3	Continue Written L1, L2, L3  Introduce Written Comparative Dialect	Continue Written L1, L2, L3  Continue Written Comparative Dialect
		<b>Multilingual books &amp; teachers</b>	<b>Multilingual books &amp; teachers</b>	<b>Multilingual books &amp; teachers</b>	<b>Multilingual books &amp; teachers</b>	<b>Multilingual books &amp; teachers</b>	<b>Multilingual books &amp; teachers</b>  One Course in English L3	<b>Multilingual books &amp; teachers</b>  One Course in English L3

(\*LoI: Language of Instruction, L1: Kurdish, L2: Turkish, L3: English)



## **Preschool**

This period aims to develop oral language skills in both Kurdish and Turkish and to introduce the Comparative Dialect by playing educational games for one hour two days a week to expose children to both dialects. It is expected that children will be able to use basic words to define what they see during these games. In Kurdish and Turkish courses, language development is encouraged by using the TPR method. During this period, English language courses are not yet introduced.

## **First Grade**

This period aims to develop oral Kurdish and Turkish skills as well as to develop Kurdish literacy skills. Education will be provided in Kurdish and Turkish. However, children are not yet exposed to written Turkish. Additionally, the Comparative Dialect courses continue for one hour two days a week. English language education is not yet introduced.

## **Second Grade**

During this period, while the development of oral and written Kurdish skills continues, the literacy skills gained in Kurdish are transferred on to Turkish by using comparison methods. Therefore, Turkish literacy is introduced. The Comparative Dialect sessions continue two days a week, but at this time their content consists of narrated fables and traditional stories.

## **Third Grade**

During this period, the courses introduced during second grade continue. Education in both Kurdish and Turkish continues and the Comparative Dialect sessions still focus on narrated fables and traditional stories. However, in the third grade, English language courses that focus on building English language skills begin for three hours per week. These courses aim to teach English conversation skills.

## **Fourth Grade**

Fourth grade marks the beginning of Stage 3. At this stage, courses in the natural sciences and social sciences are added to the curriculum. Kurdish and Turkish grammar lessons are given in parallel with the curriculum courses. Students are able to choose the topic of one or two of their courses. Instruction in written English is introduced during this period. In the Comparative Dialect sessions, modern stories replace the fables and traditional stories as the majority of the content.

## **Fifth Grade**

The program introduced during the fourth grade continues during this period. The only difference is that students' preferences dictate the elective courses.

## **Sixth Grade**

This period bears the mark of the beginning of Stage 4. At this stage, the program is enriched by the inclusion of new lessons. Kurdish and Turkish grammar lessons are given in parallel with the texts used in the curriculum. Moreover, some courses are also taught bilingually in English. English grammar lessons are also given in parallel to the oral lessons the curriculum focuses on. In the Comparative Dialect sessions, written materials are introduced. Students are also able to select two more elective courses.

**Seventh Grade**

During this period, the curriculum mirrors the sixth grade curriculum, but with minor changes. Students are introduced to academic topics in their Comparative Dialect lessons in order to increase the level of their literacy skills in the dialects. They are encouraged to read and write various academic assignments in the dialect they are studying. Elective courses continue.

**Eighth Grade**

The seventh grade program continues during this period without any changes. Only elective courses vary according to students' preferences.

### Model 3 – Turkish-Based Gradual Multilingual and Multidialectal Education

Model 3, for use in the education of Turkish-only-speaking Kurdish students or Kurdish students with extremely limited Kurdish language skills, is shown in the table below.

Stage	Stage 1	Stage 2			Stage 3		Stage 4	
Level	Preschool LoI:* Turkish	1st Grade LoI: Turkish	2nd Grade LoI: Turkish	3rd Grade LoI: Turkish	4th Grade LoI: Turkish	5th Grade LoI: Turkish	6th Grade LoI: Multilingual	7th and 8th Grades LoI: Multilingual
	Develop Oral L1, L2	Continue Oral L1, L2	Continue Oral L1, L2	Continue Oral L1, L2	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3	Continue Oral L1, L2, L3
	L2 Kurdish	Introduce Written L1	Continue Written L1	Continue Written L1, L2	Continue Written L1, L2	Continue Written L1, L2, L3	Continue Written L1, L2, L3	Continue Written L1, L2, L3
			Introduce Written L2	One Course in Kurdish L2	Two Courses in Kurdish L2	Two Courses in Kurdish L2	Introduce Oral and Written Comparative Dialect	Continue Oral and Written Comparative Dialect
				Introduce Oral L3	Introduce Written L3		Some Courses in Kurdish L2	Some Courses in Kurdish L2
							One Course in English L3	One Course in English L3

(\*LoI: Language of Instruction, L1: Turkish, L2: Kurdish, L3: English)



**Preschool**

In this period, the aim is to help student develop oral Turkish and Kurdish language skills. The child's oral language skills develop with the help of visual rather than written materials. Language development is encouraged using the TPR method. The primary language of instruction is the one that the students are the most comfortable with, Turkish, however instruction in oral Kurdish language skills is given for one hour each day. English language and the Comparative Dialect sessions are not yet introduced.

**First Grade**

In this period, the aim is to develop oral Turkish and Kurdish language skills as well as to introduce literacy skills in Turkish. At this stage, the primary language of education is Turkish. However, the development of oral Kurdish language skills is supported by giving Kurdish lessons every day for one hour. The Kurdish language lessons aim to develop conversational skills in Kurdish. The Comparative Dialect and English language courses are not yet introduced.

**Second Grade**

During this period, oral and written Turkish skills continue to develop. Kurdish lessons are given every day for one hour; however the literacy skills gained in Turkish are transferred to Kurdish by using bridging methods. Therefore, bilingual literacy begins. The Comparative Dialect and English language courses are not yet introduced.

**Third Grade**

In this period, in addition to the courses introduced during the second grade, curriculum lessons taught in Turkish are also given in Kurdish, and Kurdish grammar lessons are given in parallel with the course contents. Furthermore, English language courses that concentrate on building oral language skills are taught for three hours a week are introduced, focusing on building English-language conversation skills. The Comparative Dialect sessions are not yet introduced.

**Fourth Grade**

Fourth Grade marks the beginning of Stage 3. At this stage, courses in the natural sciences and social sciences are added to the curriculum. Lessons are generally in Turkish; however some of the curriculum is given in Kurdish. Kurdish grammar lessons are given in parallel with curriculum lessons. Instruction in written English is introduced during this period. The Comparative Dialect sessions are not yet introduced.

**Fifth Grade**

The program introduced during the fourth grade continues during this period. The only difference is that students' are offered additional elective courses.

**Sixth Grade**

This period marks of the beginning of Stage 4. At this stage, the program is enriched by the inclusion of new lessons. Unlike in previous grades, the courses provided first in Turkish and then in Kurdish are taught primarily in Kurdish, as students' Kurdish language skills have developed far enough so that it is no longer necessary to teach the curriculum first in Turkish. Kurdish grammar lessons



are given in parallel with the courses used in the curriculum. The number of hours of English language courses per week is increased from three hours to four hours. The Comparative Dialect sessions are introduced for the first time.

### **Seventh Grade**

Sixth Grade lessons continue in this period with minor changes. A lesson that is taught in Turkish is now also given in English. The English language courses include grammar and vocabulary that corresponds with the curriculum's content. Students are offered to choose two optional courses taught in Turkish, Kurdish, or English. The Comparative Dialect sessions continues.

### **Eighth Grade**

The seventh grade program continues during the eighth grade without changes. Elective courses vary according to students' preferences.

### Model 4 – Language Revitalization Program for the Kurdish Students Whose First Language has Become Turkish

Model 4, used in the education of Kurdish students whose first language has become Turkish, is meant to provide multilingual education in Kurdish, Turkish, and English, is shown in the table below.

Stage	Stage 1	Stage 2			Stage 3		Stage 4	
Level	Preschool LoI:* Kurdish	1st Grade LoI: Kurdish	2nd Grade LoI: Kurdish	3rd Grade LoI: Kurdish	4th Grade LoI: Kurdish	5th Grade LoI: Kurdish	6th Grade LoI: Multilingual	7th and 8th Grades LoI: Multilingual
	Develop Oral L2	Continue Oral L2  Introduce Written L2	Continue Oral L2  Introduce Oral L1  Continue Written L2	Continue Oral L2, L1  Continue Written L2  Introduce Written L1  Introduce Oral L3	Continue Oral L2, L1, L3  Continue Written L2, L1  Introduce Written L3  One Course in Turkish L1	Continue Oral L2, L1, L3  Continue Written L2, L1, L3  Two Courses in Turkish L1	Continue Oral L2, L1, L3  Continue Written L2, L1, L3  Introduce Oral and Written Comparative Dialect  Some Courses in Turkish L1  One Course in English L3	Continue Oral L2, L1, L3  Continue Written L2, L1, L3  Continue Oral and Written Comparative Dialect  Some Courses in Turkish L1  One Course in English L3
(*LoI: Language of Instruction, L1: Turkish, L2: Kurdish, L3: English)								



### **Preschool**

In this period, the aim is to help students develop oral Kurdish language skills. Children are encouraged to express themselves with the assistance of visual rather than written materials. Language development is encouraged using TPR method. Turkish, English, and the Comparative Dialect courses are not yet introduced.

### **First Grade**

In this period, the aim is to develop oral Kurdish language skills and Kurdish language literacy skills. The literacy skills are taught in Kurdish, however teachers are also expected to possess a good knowledge of Turkish so that they can speak in Turkish and use comparison methods if students have difficulty understanding the curriculum. The language of education is Kurdish. Kurdish lessons aim to teach Kurdish conversation skills. The Comparative Dialect and English language courses are not yet introduced.

### **Second Grade**

During this period, the curriculum emphasizes the development of oral and written Kurdish language skills. Turkish lessons focusing on oral skills are taught for one hour three days per week. The Comparative Dialect and English language courses are not yet a part of the curriculum.

### **Third Grade**

In third grade, the courses introduced in second grade continue. Written Turkish and oral English lessons are also introduced. Oral English language courses are given for three hours a week. These courses aim to teach English language conversation skills. The Comparative Dialect sessions are not yet introduced.

### **Fourth Grade**

The fourth grade marks the beginning of Stage 3. At this stage, courses in the natural science and social sciences are added to the curriculum. Lessons are generally in Kurdish, but one subject is taught exclusively in Turkish. English language lessons, which concentrate on imparting writing skills to students, continue. The Comparative Dialect sessions are not yet introduced. Students are also able to choose elective courses.

### **Fifth Grade**

The fourth grade program continues during this period, except that the number of classes taught exclusively in Turkish increases from one class to two classes. Students continue are offered various elective courses.

### **Sixth Grade**

This period marks the beginning of Stage 4. The addition of new lessons increases the number of lessons that can be taught in Turkish and Kurdish. The number of hours of English lessons increases from three hours to four hours per week. The Comparative Dialect sessions are introduced.

### **Seventh Grade**

The sixth grade curriculum continues during this period with minor changes. A course that is taught in Turkish or Kurdish is now given in parallel in English. English language courses include

grammar and vocabulary according to the curriculum's content. Elective courses are given in Turkish, Kurdish, or English according to students' preferences. The Comparative Dialect sessions continue.

### **Eighth Grade**

The seventh grade curriculum continues. Elective courses are offered in Turkish, Kurdish, or English according to students' preferences.

### **3.20 Kurdish Education in the Transition Period**

The models described above were prepared for Kurdish students who have not yet begun to attend school. However, currently Kurdish students have to continue monolingual Turkish language schools. Once the mother tongue-based multilingual education system is accepted as a principle, it will be impossible for such students to take advantage of all of the levels of education in the model that are appropriate for their language skills. For this reason, these students should start receiving a Kurdish language-based education in their current stage. By considering students' sociolinguistic situation and the interests of the different student groups described below, appropriate educational interventions are possible.

**Students with an advanced level of Kurdish:** The students in this group speak Kurdish in their daily life. Except for preschool students and first grade students, once students acquire the ability to read and write in Turkish they can receive comparative literacy transfer courses in order to be able transfer the literacy skills they have gained in Turkish to Kurdish. This transfer would take at most one year. After the initial year, students would be able to study some of their curriculum in Kurdish. In this way, multilingualism in their written language skills can also be accomplished. Literacy transfer may also be included in the curriculum as a course.

**Students with a poor knowledge of Kurdish:** These students can regain their knowledge of Kurdish by taking courses as a part of language revitalization program, which could be added to curriculum. In later stages, they would be able to take some of their classes in Kurdish.

**Students with no knowledge of Kurdish:** These students can receive Kurdish language education from the beginner level to the advanced level. Non-Kurdish student can also join these courses. The goal is to teach daily Kurdish language skills and afterwards, at a more advanced level, academic Kurdish language skills.

Apart from the courses for students, Kurdish courses for parents can also be given in the schools. Moreover, parents could receive Kurdish literacy education and adult education according to their sociolinguistic characteristics and needs. These courses can take place in schools during weekday evenings or weekends.

Kurdish language courses addressing the needs of both students and parents should be prepared in accordance with the Critical/Transformative Education and the Critical Literacy Approach that were outlined before.



## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the mother tongue-based multilingual approach to education outlined in this report is not only crucial for the Kurdish community, but for all groups, including the Turks, living in Turkey. Such an education approach may play an important role in achieving social peace and establishing equal relations between people. This report was prepared in order to contribute to contemporary discussions revolving around mother tongue-based education. Since prior discussions regarding the inclusion of various groups' mother tongues in the education system in Turkey were based on examples from abroad, this report shows how to implement a mother tongue-based multilingual approach to education by using education models. This report is also concerned with creating a new discourse pertaining to relationship among languages, language learning, approaches to education, types of literacy, inclusion of dialects and subdialects in education system, and heterogeneity in student groups.

We hope that this report contributes to establishing a more equal world where every citizen can express themselves and their identity freely and fluently.

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This report was written in a period when important developments and debates concerning the use of mother tongue in education is taking place, especially with regard to the status of the Kurdish language in Turkey. It puts forward concrete policy proposals for Turkey to use Kurdish and all other mother tongues in education. On the contrary of the mainstream idea that the status of the languages spoken in Turkey would be determined after peace and reconciliation is achieved; we believe that a mother tongue-based multilingual education is a crucial step in the way to achieve the very peace and reconciliation itself.

This report analyzes the issue of mother tongue based multilingual education with a critical perspective and comes up with concrete policy suggestions for the education of Kurdish children taking the social, linguistic, educational and political characteristics and needs of them and their parents into consideration. To this end, four different mother tongue-based multilingual education models are suggested, each of which takes the social and psycholinguistic relationships among languages involved in the models and the variations and differences within and across Kurdish dialects into consideration. Moreover, the heterogenous sociolinguistic profile of the Kurdish students is discussed with reference to gender, class, beliefs, attitudes and so on. Also, we advocate for a new multilingual educational approach that critically examines the concept of literacy and its teaching in an attempt to prepare the ground for more critical/transformational individuals and societies to raise through education.

We hope that this study could pave the way for new directions in the scientific debates and contribute to the existing discussions on a multilingual and multicultural future in Turkey and that it makes a positive contribution to the language struggle of the all people claiming for mother tongue-based education.