

The Perceptions of Teachers, Students and Parents on the Learning of a Mother Tongue by Bilingual Turkish Students (Nottingham and Leicester Supplementary Schools Cases, England)¹

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Abstract

It is important for bilingual children growing up in a foreign country to learn an L2 as it is to learn one's family's mother tongue; to learn and understand the L1 of that society, develop communication skills with relatives and learn their cultures' values. This research investigates the learning of Turkish as a one's family's mother tongue (L2) by Turkish-English bilingual students living in Nottingham and Leicester. A qualitative research methodology was applied in this study. The data were collected from a total of 8 students between the ages of 5-6, 3 teachers and 11 parents at Nottingham and Leicester Turkish Supplementary schools. In order to gather data about learning techniques, semi-structured interviews and observation were carried out. The purpose of this study is to understand and explain the students', parents' and teachers' views on bilingual Turkish students' learning of their mother tongue at 5-6 years old. The findings show that the views of the parents' and students' on learning Turkish as an L2 as one's family's mother tongue are essential to supporting effective communication with their relatives, by using and learning Turkish and its culture. According to teachers, they, in common with others, say they intend to teach Turkish to students so they will be able to express themselves in their mother tongue and help them to acquire their own background's cultural values. The research's participants highlighted that their difficulties are with speaking and reading skills; as a possible solution, encouraging students to speak, read and write in Turkish, and watch Turkish media programmes in order to improve their productive skills is recommended.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Turkish language learning, mother tongue, L1-L2

1. Introduction

Bilingualism has been becoming more important for child who grows up in a foreign country. Some people learn one language after another while others learn them at the same time. Although many definitions are used for becoming a bilingual child, there is no agreement about an exact definition. For instance, some definitions draw attention to linguistic elements, such as level of knowledge in languages whereas others address social factors (e.g. students' aims/motivations in learning L2). While Bloomfield (1933)'s definition is that both languages have to be used fluently, Haugen (1953) suggested bilingualism can be said to involve meaningful expression in the languages (Romaine, 1995). However, Diebold (1964) supported that bilingualism occurs from real contact with each of the two languages (Romaine, 1995). Nevertheless, all descriptions agree on the fact that bilingualism defines a personal ability and knowledge to use multiple languages in terms of use an L1 and the new language as an L2.

There are two types of bilingualism; simultaneous and sequential (Baker, 2011). Simultaneous bilingualism is acquired consecutively for up to three years. However, sequential bilingualism may be gained during formal educational or in informal ways (e.g. the street, kindergarten and neighbourhood). The result of both bilingualism types is based on first language development (Cummins, 2001). While gaining an L2, it is influenced by the scope of L1 acquisition.

Children's linguistic and educational development are influenced by bilingualism (Cummins, 2001). If children continue to learn languages in their school years, they will acquire fluent use of the languages in terms of listening, reading, writing and speaking. However, an essential element of the second language development of children is the level of children's mother tongue development (Cummins, 2001). Therefore, acquiring L1 positively affects learning the L2. Have a command of L1 is 12 proportional to the acquisition of L2. Additionally, knowledge of the mother tongue improves achievement in schools not only in the mother tongue but also in the majority of language effectiveness (Cummins, 2001).

Bilingualism and bilingual education have become important in teaching pedagogy in recent years. Bilingualism is an essential issue for education globally (Luchtenberg, 2002).

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A bilingual education is defined as any part of the curriculum which uses one language, but also a second language as teaching tools (Gaarder, 1967; cited in Cazden, 1972: 179). However, in my case, our bilingual education is separate from each other; while children continue the British state school, they attend Turkish school at the weekend. We should know that, as an educator, a school cannot do enough to teach an L2 as a mother tongue. Their use of the L2's successfully depends on their social environment and society's efforts in using L2 (Cazden, 1972). If school and society work together to improve bilingual education, this goal would be achieved. Moreover, bilingual education influences children's speech behaviour and attitudes toward language (Cazden, 1972).

2. Methodology

2.1. The Sample

Two weekend schools in a cooperating-school zone within the East Midlands region local authority were contacted; both of them offered their readiness for participating in the research. These schools were chosen from the Education Counsellor of the Turkish Embassy in London website as schools of teaching Turkish to Turkish-English bilingual children.

The research data collected in Nottingham and Leicester in June and July 2016 at a Turkish Community School which teach bilingual children living England. The selected schools practice inclusion with Turkish-English bilingual children at 5-6 years taught in class together.

2.2. Participants

Participants were collected the research data from Nottingham and Leicester. All participants attended interviews. Furthermore, a purposive sample of 65 parents, 74 children and 8 teachers (an average of 4 participants of each group in each school) responded to the 8-item interview questions. Moreover, the participants were selected by considering they were Turkish-English bilingual children at 5-6 years and their parents who were living England. There are 2 teachers, 4 students and 7 parents from Nottingham; 1 teachers, 4 students and 4 parents from Leicester.

Children and parents were targeted due to their needs as the most effective factor in determining the program of organising the school timetable and the course content. Particularly, the teachers were chosen to improve an insight into the teaching approach of education and culture.

2.3. Research Design

2.3.1. Research Method

The focus of this study is the students', parents' and teachers' views on Turkish-English bilingual students' learning of mother tongue. I intend to design school-wide research, this would include the students at 5-6 years old, their parents and other parents, and teachers. Starting the study intends to involve 3 teachers, 11 parents and students at the age of 5-6. All three teachers and some pupils are in their first year at the schools. Furthermore, it is the second year of the Turkish course for some of the students; so it means that schools' curriculum is already known by students and their parents. In order to start, I prefer to do informal interviews with all teacher participants. Then, I intend to carry out doing semi-structured interviews arranged by myself as a researcher.

2.3.2. Data Collection

Triangulation of data collection was used in this research. Data was collected through multiple sources of evidence including:

Semi-structured interviews

Observation to children

Teaching journal from June to July in 2016.

The views of the participants on the learning of mother tongue by bilingual Turkish students was gained through the interviews. However, in order to decide how students use that language during the course time, four students were observed through the class twice. The triangulation was used to capture the consistency of the answers of interviewed students.

The teachers, parents and students provided the primary data source for this study. After designating the semi-structured interview and observation goals, the actual participants for participating have chosen purposive sampling techniques. The number of observed students depended on the population of the pupils studying at Nottingham Turkish Community School at the age of 5-6. Nevertheless, I would like to use as secondary data published and unpublished sources, such as books, internet sources, books and articles. The following step highlights the process of the data collection in more detail.

3. Data Analysis

My initial problem was the varying motivation and language competence of different pupils with different home linguistic contexts, and I wanted to find answers to the question 'What are the parents', students' and teachers'

perceptions of the learning of L1 Turkish in community classes?'. I wanted to find out what they think about learning Turkish as a first language and investigate possible solutions to problems they have identified, about learning Turkish. The research findings presented three main issues: (i) students', (ii) parents', and (iii) teachers' perceptions on learning Turkish as a one's family's mother tongue (L2) by Turkish-English bilingual students at 5-6 years old. The data analysis was separated into Nottingham and Leicester samples and into the participant cohorts (i, ii and iii) and lastly each participant group's view was compared between the Nottingham and Leicester settings.

3.1. The Perceptions of Students on the Learning of Turkish as a Mother Tongue

The interviews were done with 8 students in Nottingham and Leicester. During the interview of students, in order to contextualise, I would like to find their purpose of the using and learning the Turkish language, encountered problems that they have, and the way to solve these problems

3.1.1. Nottingham

I interviewed 4 students who are one of five and three of six years at Nottingham Turkish Community School. Two of them have British mothers, British-Turkish mixed nationality parents. All student participants in Nottingham take a Turkish language course for 3 hours on Saturdays. The interviews were carried out in whichever language students preferred and two of them chose to do so in English.

The first question in the interview was concerning their first language; students' answers to this question varied because of their mixed parents. Those with mixed parents replied that it was English. Nevertheless, those having both Turkish parents said Turkish. Due to the social environment's effects and differences, they do not feel certain about their first language. According to my observations, there is a significant difference in their Turkish language levels. Therefore, it can be seen that having Turkish parents influences students' learning and use of skills in Turkish as an L2. It can be said that the acquisition of one's family's mother tongue is affected by their social environment (Allman, 2005; Martin, 1999). In early years of a child, parental linguistic differences have been related to the acquisition of language in children (Buac et al., 2014). The parents of bilingual children who are the primary caregivers play a key role in children's first language acquisition (Buac et al., 2014). The extent to which children are exposed to each language input is also important. For example, according to both the interviews and the observations, children answer the first language question according to whom children spend the most time with more than each parents' first language.

When asked about the purpose of learning Turkish, all students have the same idea that it is useful for communicating with their Turkish family members in both Turkey and England, however, one of them believes that if she knows Turkish, she makes friends more easily, but she did not say how and where this was done. Interestingly, one student of a British mother said:

'...I want to say it in private to my dad because my mum does not know what I am saying...'

It is shown that learning and speaking different languages can be a secret way to communicate with others. Students attend this course since their parents want to them to learn Turkish and the same reason with the purpose of learning; however, the children want to come to the Turkish course to communicate in Turkish social environments not only Turkey but in England also. Aside from the Turkish course to practice and improve their Turkish ability, the participants use and are exposed to the Turkish language by speaking in Turkish with Turkish parents and other family members, reading stories and watching TV programs.

Lastly, when asked about the problems they encounter and the solutions to these; even though they do not exactly know Turkish writing and reading, they thought that they have problems with writing in Turkish and understanding what they have read. Additionally, one of the students replied her problem was:

'...people come up to me and start speaking Turkish and I do not know what that speaking...'

In order to solve writing and reading issues, I try to ease these issues. For example, I gave a worksheet that includes sentences completion and sentences with missing words to help students understand and fill in the blanks. When they had completed it, I firstly read all the sentences and then they repeat them and so on.

According to my observations, the students speak English when they know that someone can speak English, they do not think that it is necessary to speak in Turkish with them. As far as the solutions of the problems encountered while learning Turkish, one of them suggested that doing more enjoyable activities like playing games; and watching cartoons in course time, nevertheless, another student believed that to improve requires doing more writing and reading exercises. However, all of them recommended that it a good way to practice is repeating that what teacher says to them and do more language exercises in daily life, outside of the Turkish language course to speed up their language acquisition.

3.1.2. Leicester

I interviewed 4 students who are aged six, and 3 of them aged five at the Leicester Hamidiye Turkish School. All of them have Turkish parents. Additionally, these student participants take a 3-hour Turkish course two days per week. The interviews were done in Turkish with all students.

The answers to the question about their first language were same – Turkish - for all participants. Although

one of the students' mothers' first language is Kurdish and another's German, these students have the same idea that the first language is their mother tongue. According to my personal journal, the language used at home is important for deciding their first language. When I asked their purpose for learning Turkish in a Turkish school, all have the same opinion which is to make it easy to communicate with family members from both countries. From my observations, even if they have good speaking abilities in Turkish, they spoke in English with each other at school. These pupils attend the Turkish course in order to learn and improve their Turkish ability in order to gain contact with other Turks. Because of having Turkish parents, all participants speak Turkish at home and in most of their daily lives. Moreover, students practice by reading stories and watching movies to improve their Turkish aside from this Turkish course.

Finally, when asked the question about any learning problems that they had encountered, they answered that they do not have any problems in learning, writing or reading in Turkish because they have Turkish families and they speak Turkish in their daily lives. Therefore, I could not ask them about their solutions or advice about this issue.

3.2. The Perceptions of Parents on the Learning of Turkish as a Mother Tongue

The interviews were carried out with 11 parents, about the perceptions of parents of their children to learning Turkish as a one's family's mother tongue. First of all, I investigated parents from Nottingham and secondly, parents from Leicester's views on the learning of Turkish. All parents were interviewed in Turkish.

3.2.1. Nottingham

7 parents of which 3 of them have children aged 9-12 and 4 of them have children aged 5-6 years old were interviewed. The participants are Turkish living in England, but four of them have a British spouse. The parents think that learning Turkish as their mother tongue, provides an understanding of Turkish culture in their own language because they pointed out that each language has its own specific characteristics and culture. One of the parents with a British husband stated that their daily language at home is English because her husband does not know Turkish, and English is the common language for understanding each other. Nevertheless, a Turkish husband with a British wife claims that if children are exposed to both languages at home, they can learn both of them at the same time spontaneously. So, although he can speak English, he speaks with his children in Turkish, but his wife prefers to speak in English.

When observing these two pupils' who are exposed to both languages, their Turkish-speaking abilities are better than the others. Thus, I hypothesise that there is a positive effect of the home social-linguistic environment and the exposure time to the language (Allman, 2005; Martin, 1999). Nevertheless, two parents with Turkish spouses stated that when students do not need to speak Turkish, they do not use it since they can easily speak and express themselves in English. In order to encourage students to use and speak Turkish, parents provide a wide linguistic environment by reading Turkish stories to them, speaking in Turkish when children want to communicate and watching TV programs together with all family members.

On the one hand, parents of children aged 9-12 said that they have difficulties with reading and writing in Turkish. Nevertheless, parents noted that although there is some online and social learning material such as TV programs and games, they are not appropriate to the students' age group because they depict violence. They recommended, playing games in English should be translated into Turkish as solutions to these problems. Therefore, when playing these games, students can learn Turkish. In addition, educational programs in Turkish should be appropriate to children's age and culture, and more materials should be provided to improve the children's Turkish language skills for students growing up internationally, by the Turkish Ministry of National Education and Education Counsellor of the Turkish Embassy. On the other hand, parents of children aged 5-6 highlighted that their children have problems in speaking, so they need to improve firstly their speaking ability rather than other areas. As a solution to these problems, their advice is more speaking exercise, encouraging them to them to speak Turkish and editing them while speaking English to Turkish. Importantly, one of the parents of 5-6-year-olds stated the following solution to these problems encountered while learning Turkish as a mother tongue:

...for Turkish community schools, the school substructure should be improved, and because of the different speaking levels of children, the classroom should be divided into appropriate levels for students.

The use of topics in course time should be extended for effective learning.

The parents' mean here that if topic areas are used in courses appropriate to students' Turkish levels, this will be more effective because the teacher can easily manage students and apply all worksheets to all students at the same time.

To sum up, students find easy to express themselves in English, so they prefer to use English; the parents agreed that students should do more language exercise and use Turkish in daily life to improve their language skills. It is important that schools improve and try to solve these learning problems.

3.2.2. Leicester

The interviews were carried out with 4 parents having children at 5-6 years old. All parent participants Turkish

and their families are also Turkish. All of them speak Turkish in daily life with their children.

All participants are Turkish but one's mother tongue is Kurdish. They support that speaking and learning their mother tongue, Turkish, enhances communication with Turkish family members in both Turkey and England. Moreover, one of them said:

...we do not want our children to forget Turkish, she uses that language very well and does not encounter problems with when visiting Turkey.

This quote and other data show that parents want to teach Turkish to their kids because they think using Turkish as a mother tongue is important for gaining a Turkish cultural identity. It affects directly children's characteristics and cultural identity.

When asking about their purpose for sending their children to Turkish school, parents answered it as having a parallel idea that because of growing up in a foreign country and with a foreign language, children should express themselves in the correct way in Turkish; have the opportunity to present themselves in both English and Turkish.

Interestingly, although two of students' parents are also bilingual, one of them is Turkish-English, and another is Turkish-German. They do not speak another language with their children, except for Turkish until at the age of 4. Observing these children, they have good language skills in both languages but do not know German.

Encountering learning problems is common for all parents that are using two different languages language. They stated that children need time to think when speaking Turkish and if they do not remember the Turkish meaning of words, they use the English words because they are always exposed to English in daily and school life. They sometimes do not understand what they hear in Turkish and the meaning of some sentences. In order to solve these problems, they noted that the:

...school curriculum is enough to learn Turkish; however, we need to do more language exercises with our children to teach the language. They should read Turkish stories and be asked questions about it. This should be supported with games and TV programs in Turkish.

To sum up, parents participants from Leicester highlighted the importance of learning Turkish as a mother tongue for children's daily and academic career. Furthermore, using the Turkish language provides good communicative abilities with relatives. To improve language skills, practice and support are essential.

3.3. The Perceptions of Teachers on the Learning of Turkish as a Mother Tongue

Three teachers, two of them from Nottingham and one of them from Leicester were interviewed about their perceptions of teaching Turkish as a one's family's mother tongue to Turkish-English bilingual students at 5-6 years old. There is one formal teacher who is employed by Ministry of National Education in Turkey and 5 volunteer teachers who are students at the University of Nottingham, at the Turkish Community School in Nottingham. The formal teacher also works at Leicester Turkish Community School, so I cannot divide this section into Nottingham and Leicester.

Two volunteer teachers at Nottingham and one formal teacher at both schools were interviewed. Teachers believe that learning Turkish as a one's family's mother tongue is helpful in learning about children's own family culture; to get benefits of knowing two languages, and to enhance interaction with relatives. Two of the teachers answered similarly about the school curriculum's characteristics - that there are reading and writing activities in Turkish and in order to learn about Turkish culture, there are cultural activities, for example, explaining cultural festivals and giving information about wedding ceremonies. Nevertheless, one of the teachers highlighted that Math is important, in order to learn the meanings of numbers in Turkish. Surprisingly, another teacher replied that it is important for children to be taught Religious Studies based on Islam. The pedagogical approach of teachers tends to create a fun learning environment children. For instance, as far as effective teaching methods go, the formal teacher noted that singing songs, doing crosswords, playing games and describing pictures is beneficial. However, while planning classes, the students' level of Turkish should be taken into account. However, due to the lack of Turkish material, the formal teacher claims that this provides quality to student's learning experiences. Thus, the planned educational methods should be appropriate to students' readiness and the teaching experiences of educators. From my observations, the volunteer teachers do not have a lot of experience in teaching pedagogy, therefore, according to their views, the formal teacher is more skilled and qualified. Thus, I think using volunteer teachers is not the most effective way of teaching Turkish to bilingual children. Because of their lack of experience, they might not give appropriate or effective enough educational activities in the classroom.

When asked about the amount of time students spent using Turkish, the participants have shared a common view that students of Turkish parents have more opportunities than those of mixed parents to learn Turkish since they are exposed to Turkish more. However, in the case of children with a Turkish mother, this makes practice easier and these children quickly learn Turkish, because they spend much more time with their mother at home, so they are often exposed to Turkish. Nevertheless, by the same reason, children with Turkish fathers who work

have less opportunity to use Turkish in with them in their daily lives.

A teacher participant defined the problems encountered while teaching Turkish at school. Because of the voluntary basis of attendance at those schools, the students do not always feel it necessary to come to class, use in Turkish and improve their language abilities. In addition, there is no marking system, so students do not take the course seriously. Nevertheless, as the students are at different levels of language and different age groups this makes it difficult for teachers to plan and apply same classroom activities in one diverse class. As for the solutions to these problems, the teachers and I personally suppose that classroom activities should be made more fun and presented in a more stimulating way to gain student's attention to learn and use Turkish effectively. However, parents should follow their children's progress and encourage them to learn Turkish. It is noted that Turkish language course books should be improved and made more appealing to children in the learning environment. Moreover, it is essential that peer education and use of technology is facilitated effectively, and education should be provided by professional educators rather than non-experienced volunteer teachers.

4. Research Findings

The purpose of this research was to investigate the views of students, parents and teachers on the learning Turkish as a one's family's mother tongue by Turkish-English bilingual students at 5-6 years old. I intended to explore the importance of the learning mother tongue as a mother tongue for bilingual children. The general opinion shows that learning a mother tongue is essential in order to understand and learn one's family's culture and to interact with that language's family environment in one's family's mother tongue. All participants agreed that teaching and learning the L2 confers benefits to student's future academic careers, however, according to Cummins (2001), learning an L2 helps the acquisition of another language, as it improves cognitive skills. All participants agreed that language exercises and using diverse language environments are important for students' learning an L2 and this should be improved by doing more practice. As for the problems encountered; the lack of speaking and understanding of Turkish is noticeable. As a solution to these problems, all participants share similar opinions that classroom activities should be made more fun and more speaking activities should be incorporated.

Recognising the problems encountered and the solutions to improve learning and use of skills in Turkish has helped to produce many effective ideas while teaching students. For example, I would give feedback to the educators and support the students' needs in the schools. According to the perceptions of the participants, this study shows that even though the students encountered such difficulties while learning and using Turkish, it is good to find that they also want to learn Turkish as one's family's mother tongue.

5. Discussion of the Study

The perceptions of students on the learning Turkish as one's family's mother tongue by bilingual Turkish students who are living in Nottingham and Leicester shows that they are learning Turkish in order to enhance communication with family members and friends and use Turkish effectively. Moreover, while most students use Turkish in their daily lives, a minority of students have a lack of skills in this language. The reason for learning one's family's mother tongue is that students want to learn Turkish to communicate with their family and friends, and use this in a Turkish environment are limited (Verhoeven, 1996; Baker, 2014; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). According to Verhoeven (1996) in a research study that was done in Holland, students used Turkish with their family and friends. However, bilingual students preferred English while speaking with their friends in an England context. Furthermore, Baker (2014) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000) state that children use their family's mother tongue with their peers and foreign relatives.

It is also a controversial issue that those whose language is the first language as a mother tongue for mixed parents children. According to Buac et al. (2014), parental language differences affect children's acquisition of language. The main caregiver has an important role to teaching language (Buac et al., 2014). He stated that children acquire the language is that they are most exposed to in their family. My findings show that students that spend time with one's parent more than another, adopt this parent's parents' language as their first language.

The student participants stated that they encountered problems in speaking and understanding skills. To solve these problems, they want to do more exercises and change teaching methods to watching TV programs or cartoons. Verhoeven (1996) says that although children acquire language in their early years more easily than teenagers, because while becoming teenagers, their social environment extends as does their native language, so their mother tongue ability might be enhanced.

Hewson (1982) supports a parallel idea with this study's findings that the parents' purposes for sending children to Turkish community schools to learn Turkish are to know and use Turkish very well as a cultural language. When visiting Turkey, children can express themselves; learning the culture in their native language. The parents said that in order to encourage their children to learn Turkish, they speak in Turkish and read Turkish stories at home. Although students know Turkish, they use English because they live in an English environment and have English friends. As for the problems encountered while learning Turkish, most parents

stated that children have difficulties with understanding in reading, writing and listening, however, others claimed that they have also speaking and expression problems. In terms of the solutions to these kinds of problems, parents supposed that more exposure to language via watching Turkish TV programs, or reading Turkish stories would be effective. Furthermore, they believed that if the school curriculum changes according to children's appropriate levels and course hours increase, this would be beneficial to students' learning. Verhoeven's findings (1996) show that Turkish parents prefer Turkish mass media for reading and watching material. Therefore, Verhoeven's research supports this study's findings. He pointed out that 73% of parents choose Turkish media and 23% of parents prefer both Turkish and Dutch TV channels and other media.

The third section of the research, the perceptions of teachers, shows that their aims to teach Turkish to bilingual children are to improve their Turkish as a mother tongue, facilitating the acquisition of the L2, gain the ability to express themselves in Turkish and help them to gain a Turkish cultural identity. Crain (2015) and Cummins (2001) state that one of the important aspects of learning an L2 is based on the acquisition of the L1.

Teachers highlighted that the social environment influences children to use language (Crain, 2015; Baker, 2011; Allman, 2005); students have a local accent in Turkish because of the acquisition of language from family. The reason for their lack of using Turkish is the limited language environment, their lack of language ability and giving importance to English. This finding shows that parents and students have a high opinion of the native language (English) because they believe that students can acquire language via their social environment and family (Baker, 2014). Teachers pointed out that sources of teaching material, the curriculum of the school and teaching time are not enough to teach Turkish to Turkish-English bilingual students. In addition, from the teachers' perspective, students have poor pronunciation, a lack of vocabulary capacity, a lack of understanding and a lack of motivation to learn Turkish. Teachers' solution is that the children's social environment Turkish should be extended; more Turkish course time should be added; cooperation between parents, students and schools should be encouraged; and more research done into this area in the future. Previous research shows that a bilingual education provides basic literacy and students' knowledge and acquisition of other languages (Cummins, 2001).

It can be said of this study that the views of teachers, students and parents on the learning of mother tongue by Turkish-English bilingual students, all have parallel notions to the purpose of learning and teaching Turkish as one's family's mother tongue; using language is limited to the family environment; and they encountered problems in the acquisition of language and in order to solve these problems, they advised improving the curriculum, and supporting use of Turkish social media and TV programs.

It is a controversial issue as to why children, who are educated in a native language, should learn their family's mother tongue. Because of this, it is important to notice the absence or loss of the mother tongue. Therefore, teaching and learning the mother tongue are essential to ensure the maintenance of their own culture for children who are living in England. According to Baker (2011) and Skutnabb-Kangas (2000), the loss of language is less in early years. It can be suggested to the solution of problems that technology-based education should be improved; using Turkish should be encouraged outside of school. The school-family collaboration may be increased to improve the L2, and teachers are educated to teach the second language (L2) more effectively.

6. Conclusion

Reflecting on the purposes of writing this dissertation and research approaches show that there are very positive outcomes on the learning Turkish as a one's family's mother tongue by bilingual Turkish students. It also defined the problems encountered and the possible solutions to them. Whereas all participants suggest understanding is the most difficult element of learning Turkish, parents and teachers make a complaint about there is not enough or appropriate educational material, for example, educational course books, TV programs and video games in Turkish. To solve these problems, the parents and teachers highlighted that it is important to make the course as fun as possible via using technological tools and educational material, books, and games to name but a few. Nevertheless, the participants note that both students and teachers need to do more Turkish language practice. According to Verhoeven (1996), in early years even though children's language ability develops quickly, this rate declines over time, at the end of the critical language period.

However, although there are many advantages of learning an L2, as shown in the findings and the participants' perceptions, I think, it is early to decide whether the solutions are effective for the teaching and learning Turkish as a family's mother tongue. More in-depth research is needed within different school settings and different age groups to gather more reliable data. Furthermore, this may overcome the limitations of this study related to limited time for research.

During the research process, the advantage of identifying a focus that is appropriate to the changes in the school curriculum has been recognised. In order to generalise the results, data needs to be collected from a wider sample. In my personal opinion, the participants know their potential in terms of linguistic production in Turkish and their social and educational potential (Anderson et al., 2007).

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Notes

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