Language Learning and Teaching in a Multilingual and Multicultural World

Prof. Belma Haznedar

**Boğaziçi University
Faculty of Education**

haznedab@boun.edu.tr

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Outline of the talk

➢ **Bilingual and multilingual populations**
   ➢ **Linguistic diversity in the world**

➢ **Education of bi-/multilingual learners**
   ➢ **Language teaching in Turkey**
➢ **Assessment of bi-/multilingual learners**
   ➢ **Questions?**

Bilingualism/Multilingualism

- A widespread phenomenon

- Two-thirds of the people in the world are bilingual/multilingual.
  - (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2013)

All typically-developing children

have the capacity to acquire languages they have constant and systematic exposure no matter how many languages they hear!

The brain does not impose any limitations!

PS: no equal proficiency levels in all domains of language, though!

Bilingualism/Multilingualism

- Over 7000 languages in nearly 200 countries
- Very common in many African, Asian and European countries
  - (Eberhard, Simons and Fennig, 2019)

- **Bilingualism/Multilingualism**
- **rather complex!**

- **Many different types**

- **Not possible to restrict it to certain geographical regions**

Simultaneous bilinguals	**Individuals who are exposed to two languages from infancy and, therefore, have spoken them since they began speaking (DeHouwer, 1990)**
Successive/sequential bilinguals	**Individuals whose exposure to another language begins after the first language has been acquired; at the age of three to five years, before schooling starts (Haznedar, 2013; Unsworth, 2013)**
Receptive bilinguals	**Individuals who can understand the second language but have limited proficiency in using it (Wei, 2007)**
Productive bilinguals	**Individuals who can function in both languages (Wei, 2007)**
Additive bilingualism	**Situations where both languages are supported in speakers' community and school settings (Wei, 2007)**
Subtractive bilingualism	**Situations where the mother tongue is lost at the expense of the acquisition of the majority language (Wei, 2007)**
Family bilingualism/heritage language use	**Situations where children of migrant or non-migrant families speak the language of the family's home/first country (Valdés, 2000, Rothman, 2009)**
Balanced bilingualism	**The individual has similar levels of proficiency in both languages, equal competence in both languages (Wei, 2007)**

Bilingualism/Multilingualism in Asia & Africa

➢ **Very common in many African and Asian countries**

   ➢ **India: the world's second highest number of languages** **(Bhatia & Ritchie, 2013)**

➢ **Mozambique**

(Kamwangamalu, 2006)

LET'S NOT GET THAT FAR☺

Europe has a rich diversity of languages, not only in the form of national languages but also very many regional and immigrant/minority languages (Shin, 2013)

Germany: (18%)
Belgium: (20%)
The Netherlands: (Regional languages +%90 English.)
Sweden: (Finnish, Romani, Samoan languages, Yiddish)
Norway: (Swedish, Danish, English)
Denmark: (Faroese, German, %86 English)
Italy: (34 regional/ethnic languages %34 English)

Even in the so-called 'monolingual societies'

➢ **Substantial numbers of bilingual/multilingual individuals**

➢ **Nearly one in five Americans speaks another language**
    (55 million people, US Census Bureau, 2016)

UK?

UK: various Celtic languages,
    Scotland: 1.4% speak Scottish Gaelic as well as English;
    Northern Ireland: 6.6% of the population are bilingual in
    Irish and English;
    Wales: 21% also speak Welsh.
    https://www.anefore.lu/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/EURYDICE-Key-Data-on-Teaching-Languages-at-School-in-Europe.pdf

➢ **More than a million children between 5-18 years old in schools who speak more than 360 different languages.**

➢ **One in six primary school pupils in the UK have English as an additional language.**

   (National Association for Language Development in the Curriculum, www.naldic.org.uk)

Turkey is no exception:) (ERG 2009 report, %15)

This figure has certainly changed due to millions of Syrians under temporary protection in Turkey, following the outbreak in Syria in 2011.

- **Today**

- **We are faced with socially, culturally and linguistically diverse schools and classrooms.**

- **Such contexts present huge challenges to teachers, administrators and policy makers.**

Why?
   Are bilingual/multilingual children confused?
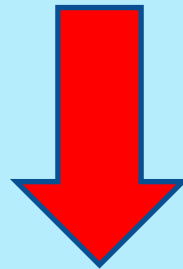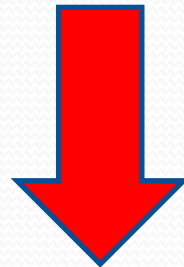
NO!

Let's first tackle the following questions:

Who is a bilingual/multilingual person?
        divergent responses!

Bilinguals: those who have equal proficiency in both languages?
        (Bloomfield, 1933; Weinreich,1953, Haugen, 1954)

NO!

A more flexible approach

(Edwards, 2003; Grosjean, 1985; Weir, 2000).

- ➢ Grosjean (1989): Bilinguals usually acquire and use their
  languages
  for different purposes,
  in different domains of life,
  with different people
  in various degrees of
  proficiency (Weir, 2000)

As a direct consequence of this,

Bilinguals/multilinguals are rarely equally fluent in **all language skills** in their languages.

(Grosjean, 1985, 2008)

Balanced bilingualism is RARE!

(Edwards, 2003)

Characteristics of bilingual/multilingual people

Going back and forth between languages

Code mixing/code switching (Milroy, 1993)

Hocam midterm'ün tarihini değiştirebilir miyiz?
'Can we change the date of the midterm?'
(Haznedar, 2020)

A normal linguistic behaviour!

NOTE!
They don't do it while talking with monolinguals☺

Characteristics of bilingual/multilingual people

Language transfer:

Turkish-English bilinguals:

Investigator: Look at those boys Erdem. What are they doing?

a. Child: **Yes # ball playing** (2nd month)

b. Child: I **something eating** (3rd. month)
(Haznedar, 2001)

Language transfer:

➢   last for an extended period of time

➢   **Turkish learners of English:**
    using he for she, she for he

WHY?
Partially because
Turkish does not have grammatical gender.

Bilingual/multilingual person:
➢   lack of equal vocabulary in their languages
➢   translation equivalents?
➢   years and years of training!

                        (Paradis, Genesee & Crago, 2004).

- **This does not mean that bilinguals/multilinguals are semi-linguals!**

On the contrary

- **Advantages of knowing more than one language**

A couple of words for neurological processes in the brain

➢ **The brain**
    ➢ **no limitations!**

➢ **How does intense experience modify cognitive performance and brain structure?**

- **The brain is a dynamic system.**
- **It is shaped by everything we do, perceive or experience.**

SAMPLE: London taxi drivers vs. London bus drivers:

London taxi drivers who must pass strict examinations demonstrating their detailed knowledge of the streets of London have enlargement of the region of the hippocampus responsible for spatial navigation.

The hippocampus plays a key role in navigation and memory across species.

(Maguire et.al., 2006)

Cognitive aspects

➢ **Mental flexibility**
➢ **A superiority in concept formation**
➢ **A more diversified set of mental abilities**
➢ **analysis, synthesis and evaluation (the highest levels of cognitive processing)**

- **(Bialystok, 1999, 2001; 2005; Bialystok & Martin, 2004; Green, 2008)**

Interestingly enough!

➢ **Cognitive benefits**
➢   **found across the life span, including protection against normal cognitive decline with aging.** (Bialystok, et. al, 2004)

- **Social benefits**

  ➢ **respect and appreciation of cultural diversity,**
  ➢ **Negotiating,**
  ➢ **working with people from culturally diverse backgrounds,**
  ➢ **interpreting and communicating information creatively**
    - **(e.g. Curtain, 1993; Met, 1991; Pesola, 1991)**

- **IMPORTANT NOTE:**
  - ➢ **not all bilinguals/multilinguals gain these advantages.**

- ➢ **Under what conditions does bilingualism/multilingualism have positive impact on thinking?**

THESE BILINGUAL/MULTILINGUAL ADVANTAGES OCCUR IN ADDITIVE BILINGUAL/MULTILINGUAL CONTEXTS!

CONTEXTS WHERE ALL THE LANGUAGES ARE SUPPORTED

(Christian 1996)

Bilingual/multilingual education

- So, what is going on in bilingual/multilingual education?

COVID-19 days

➢ **No one would deny that our school systems must prepare for increasingly multilingual learners, a mobile society, with online communications taking place in different languages.**

Moving from a monolingual perspective to a multilingual approach!

Bilingual/Multilingual education

Cenoz (2009):

- the use of two or more languages in education
- aiming at multilingualism and multiliteracy
  (Garcia, 2009: 291).

Translanguaging (Baker, 2011:288):

hybrid language use that is systematic and sense-making for the learner.

The concurrent/integrated use of two languages in the classroom

A dynamic model of bilingualism/multilingualism

- ➢ the simultaneous co-existence of different languages in classroom discourse,
- ➢ supports the development of multiple linguistic identities.

Baker (2011):

> ➤ **The future direction of bilingual education.**

> ➤ **The separation of the mother tongue and the other language/s belongs to the 20th century, while the 21st century will see the deliberate and systematic use of both languages in the school system**
> > ➤ **(Baker, 2011:291).**

➢ **Content and language integrated programs (CLIL/EMILE)**

➢ regarded by EU institutions as an important instrument to foster European citizens' bi/multilingualism.

➢ CLIL programs are present in various European countries (e.g. Luxemburg, Malta, Spain etc.)

➢ An improvement in language teaching? (Perez-Vidal, 2009)
➢ autonomous learning?
➢ fostering awareness and individual responsibility?

➢ **What is the picture in Turkey in terms of language teaching?**
➢ **First, let me say yes! we do have CLIL programs!**

In many private schools

CLIL programs
IB programs

➢ Schools authorized by the International Baccalaureate can offer any of its four academic programmes:

  ➢ **The Primary Years Programme (PYP),**
  ➢ **The Middle Years Programme (MYP),**
  ➢ **The Diploma Programme or**
  ➢ **The IB Career-related Certificate (IBCC).**

THIS IS NOT THE FULL PICTURE, THOUGH!

YES!
WE DO HAVE GOOD EXAMPLES!

Much effort in teaching Turkish as a foreign language

➢ Yunus Emre Institute
   (Online Turkish courses for children aged 7-16)

➢ The Lifelong Learning Directorate
   Public education centers

➢

- **Turkey has a long history of language teaching**

  - **French/English/German/Italian medium schools**

  - **Former Anatolian high schools (1970s)**
  - **Maarif colleges (1955)**
  - **Certain curriculum areas such as history and literature were taught in Turkish.**

  - **Science and technology courses such as chemistry, biology and physics were taught in English.**

BUT AGAIN THIS IS NOT THE FULL PICTURE, EITHER!

Problems in language teaching in Turkey !

THE TEPAV/BRITISH COUNCIL REPORT (2014)
Haznedar (2012)

THE TEPAV/BRITISH COUNCIL REPORT

A needs analysis report on English language teaching
In state schools
3 questionnaires

1) Students (20.000)
2) Teachers
3) Parents
   1) 80 classes

At the end of Grade 10 (after 920 hours of instruction in English)

Main findings:

1) 95% of the students: no functional use of English

2) grammar-based instruction

3) repetition of grammatical aspects of English

4) no strong ties among the grades

Why do we face with many problems in language teaching in Turkey?

Is this due to the language family Turkish belongs to?

CERTAINLY NOT!
Typological similarities do help/facilitate, but not a determining factor in learning additional languages!

Continuity in language learning/teaching

Lack of sufficient amount of input

Amount of input / amount of exposure
State schools vs. private schools in the Turkish context

THIS IS A BIG CHALLENGE!

➢ **ANOTHER CHALLENGE:**

➢ Social integration of migrants (primarily Syrians) who have been residing in Turkey under temporary protection.

➢ Syrians: 3,627,991 (5 Nov 2020)

https://www.goc.gov.tr/gecici-koruma5638

- **Maintaining and developing multilingual competence becomes a necessity.**

Shohamy (2006; 2013)

Multilingual competence

➤ **Majority of students arrive in schools with multiple competence and hold multiple identities.**

➢ **Bi/multilinguals' competences are complex.**

➢ **Two or more grammatical systems!**
   ➢ **phonological systems!**
   ➢ **morphological systems**
   ➢ **lexical systems**
   ➢ **pragmatic systems!**

How to assess multilingual competence?

Traditionally a monolingual view of languages:

a view that tends to ignore the complex communicative practices of multilinguals and their simultaneous uses of multiple languages

(Shohamy 2013)

Multilingual education

Herdina and Jessner (2002):

If bilinguals are measured according to monolingual criteria, they appear to be greatly disadvantaged both in linguistic and cognitive terms" (p. 7).

Monolingual assessments
     tend to ignore the different needs that
     bilinguals have for the two languages

     no attention to
     bilinguals use these languages for
     different purposes, with different
     speakers, and in different contexts
     (Grosjean 1989)

When assessed,

NO CREDIT TO LEARNERS' THEIR OWN LANGUAGES!

- **Dynamic nature of languages! Ignored?**
  - **The full language repertoire of the speaker is ignored!**

- **Rating scales of languages?**
- **School tests**
- **PISA tests?**
- **Citizen tests?**
  - **Tests driven by monolingual ideologies**

Today

A more holistic view of language, language learning, multilingualism
                              (Küppers & Yağmur, 2014).

More focus:

on the social context and the language learning environment (Block 2003).

The interaction between language systems is multifaceted and multidirectional, with each language system influencing and being influenced by other language systems

(Herdina and Jessner 2002).

- ➢ **Language is dynamic**
- ➢ **Language learning is dynamic**
- ➢ **Language teaching is dynamic**
  - ➢ **DURING THESE CHALLENGING TIMES OF COVID-19**
  - ➢ **We need to reassess things!**

We should prepare ourselves and embrace our students' multilingual repertoire.

This could be our new normal☺

Hopefully, these challenging times will let us build a more inclusive society and classroom.

We are all faced with a paradigm shift!

THANK YOU
Belma Haznedar
haznedab@boun.edu.tr
belma.haznedar@gmail.com

Correspondence:
Boğaziçi University
Faculty of Education
Dept. of Foreign Language Education
34342 Bebek/ISTANBUL

Web-site: fled.boun.edu.tr