Perceptions on a Bilingual Education Model in Turkey Through the Use of a Kurdish Language Curriculum

Burhan Ozfidan, Mary Kristin Camara
Ph.D. Candidate, USA

Turkey, educationally, has been a developing country since 2002. Under the Prime Minister Erdogan’s supervision, the government has focused specifically on multiculturalism in schools, and society has taken on new dimensions of complexity and practically as social conditions, and demographics circumstances demand. This paper is informed by current debates over how one could prepare future bilingual education teachers to work at increasingly getting diverse classrooms and how the Kurdish language could be placed in a new curriculum at government schools in Turkey. Research has shown that educators and parents should support children’s learning and retaining their mother language. For instance, Noam Chomsky (2011) fully supported the Kurdish people for access to education in their mother tongue in Turkey. Finally, the Prime Minister and Minister of Education of Turkey proclaimed in March, 2012 that the Kurdish language will be taught in government schools as an elective course. This study’s first priority is to increase understanding of bilingual education as an approach to resolving language issues affecting Kurdish students in Turkish schools and to contribute to the current debates regarding Kurdish language-based education. This presentation, which is based on a qualitative study with eleven K-12 teachers and scholars, will delineate the participants’ developing views on a Kurdish language curriculum. This study illustrates the need for a Kurdish language curriculum in order to build a base that acknowledges the developmental process bilingual teachers undergo. This study also seeks to identify the obstacles and opportunities involved in setting up a bilingual education system. Our presentation will contribute to the growing body of strategies that teacher educators can draw on to socialize bilingual education teachers and foster the knowledge, dispositions and skills necessary for teaching in diverse settings in Turkey.

Reference

Keywords: Kurdish people and language, Bilingual education, language curriculum.