

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON HOW EXPOSURE TO FOREIGN LANGUAGES AFFECTS YOUNG CHILDREN'S LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

PERSPECTIVAS DE LOS MAESTROS SOBRE CÓMO LA EXPOSICIÓN A LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS AFECTA EL DESARROLLO DEL LENGUAJE DE LOS NIÑOS PEQUEÑOS

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Abstract

To increase the quality of language education in Northern Cyprus, the number of schools that provide bilingual education (Turkish and English) at early ages and in the preschool period is increasing day by day. In this study, the opinions of preschool teachers were taken to describe the general situation of bilingual education in Northern Cyprus during the preschool period. Based on a qualitative study and an easily accessible case sampling, the research was conducted with 14 preschool teachers working in the Near East Preschool Institution, which provides bilingual education in the Nicosia district. In the research, the data were obtained through a semi-structured opinion form and analyzed by content analysis techniques. According to the research findings, although the preschool teachers stated that bilingual education positively affects language development, they also expressed that there were some negativities. As a result, although it has some limitations, it has been revealed that bilingual education contributes to the language development of preschool children and it is important for children to receive multilingual education from the moment they start preschool institutions, as in European Union countries.

Key Words: Early childhood period, preschool education, language development, bilingual education.

Resumen

Para aumentar la calidad de la educación lingüística en el norte de Chipre, el número de escuelas que brindan educación bilingüe (turco e inglés) en edades tempranas y en el período preescolar aumenta día a día. En este estudio, se tomaron las opiniones de los maestros de preescolar para describir la situación general de la educación bilingüe en el norte de Chipre durante el período preescolar. Sobre la base de un estudio cualitativo y un muestreo de casos de fácil acceso, la investigación se llevó a cabo con 14 maestros de preescolar que trabajan en la Institución Preescolar del Cercano Oriente, que brinda educación bilingüe en el distrito de Nicosia. En la investigación, los datos fueron obtenidos a través de un formulario de opinión semiestructurado y analizados por técnicas de análisis de contenido. De acuerdo con los hallazgos de la investigación, aunque las maestras de preescolar afirmaron que la educación bilingüe afecta positivamente el desarrollo del lenguaje, también expresaron que hubo algunas negativas. Como resultado, aunque tiene algunas limitaciones, se ha revelado que la educación bilingüe contribuye al desarrollo del lenguaje de los niños en edad preescolar y es importante que los niños reciban una educación multilingüe desde el momento en que ingresan a las instituciones preescolares, como en los países de la Unión Europea.

Palabras clave: Período de primera infancia, educación preescolar, desarrollo del lenguaje, educación bilingüe.

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is the meaning of thinking and behavior. Language provides an opportunity for people to communicate their knowledge, thoughts, and tendencies to each other, as well as organize their ideas and express their feelings (Salama, Chiparausha & Bsatar, 2022). Children need to be given opportunities to speak for the development of language. Children learn by talking. For children to use their language abilities, they need to see themselves as socially capable and accepted.

Language is a product that develops through mental processes intertwined with the social environment in which the individual is born. A person expresses his experience, feelings, and thoughts in the best way with the language he has acquired in the environment where he was born and grew up, accompanied by mental processes such as comprehension, attention, and perception. A child; The language he acquired from his mother and father and the language spoken around him or the language he was educated in and communicated in the school environment may differ. An individual who can speak and understand two different languages can exist in two different languages (Çetinkaya, 2015).

Language is the unique and unique skill of our species, humanity. Consciousness is relevant to everything that includes sociability and culture. Using the symbolic system of language, meaning is created and communication with other people is made. They talk about current realities, dreams about the future, and past experiences. We talk about our intentions and wishes as well as facts (Ortega, 2009). In other words, language is a behavior that takes the child away from his ego, makes him a social person, can control and follow himself, teach his thoughts, feelings, and behaviors gradually, and helps him feel safe (Topçuoğlu, 2006).

The most central task of language is that we can communicate with other people and ourselves through language. By learning different languages, different cultures are also learned. As it is known, learning a foreign language means not only communicating with people who use that language but also recognizing the cultural structure to which that language belongs. Through language, children can socialize and discover themselves. Language is a phenomenon that constantly gets old and renews itself according to developing and changing living conditions. Each language has a separate internal structure and the language reflects the cultures of the nations in the best way (Akarsu, 1984).

Language is indispensable for our mental structures. Language has a very important place for us to perceive, remember, provide attention, comprehend, and think, in short, for all our experiences in the world. There is much that is unknown about the language development of children. A child's language is constantly evolving and changing. By learning the language, children are now actively a part of the communication and learning process. A child's experiences and interactions with other people form the basis for making sense of their relationships. Children are born with the ability to communicate. Children who start to learn a foreign language early in their lives can understand their mother tongue better because they are aware of the existence of another language. The cultural perspectives of children learning a foreign language are broader than those of monolingual children who believe that only their own culture, language, and customs are important in the world (Uzunboylu, H. & Ozcinar, Z.; Titone, 1994).

Children's brain development occurs between the ages of 2-5 and this process is completed at the age of 6 years. Linguistic consciousness in children is also intense at this age. If foreign language teaching in a natural environment can be prepared by child psychology and development, children can learn languages much more easily at this age (Aytac, Demirbas-Celik & Kiracioglu, 2019). A properly structured language education can contribute positively to the mental development of the child. According to Lambert (1972), if a child who starts to acquire the mother tongue starts to learn a foreign language before passing the critical age period, he will be more successful in his future education life than his peers. This predisposition towards a foreign language acquired in early childhood also contributes greatly to the cognitive development of children.

The preschool period is one of the periods in which the development of children in many areas, especially mental, physical, and language, is the fastest. This period, which covers the 0-6 age period, is a period in which the child gains basic knowledge and skills, prepares for life in the best way and learns to adapt to the environment (Oktay, 1999; Haznedar, 2003). In other words, children's language learning processes have a unique course and this occurs in a natural systematicity. There is strong evidence that children who do not acquire a language until the age of 6-7 will not be able to learn a language after this time. Children between the ages of 2 and 6 learn language very quickly, and by the age of 6, their language skills are developed. It is observed that children have surprising language abilities when they reach school age (Eyol, 2007).

Even if there is linguistic meaning in a foreign language learned at a later age, there is no visual, auditory, or emotional depth. Every person can learn a mother tongue at different levels, but for a person to know both languages, as well as his mother tongue, language learning, must be compatible with the biological nature and development of human beings. Neurobiologically, the most appropriate period for language learning is the first 5-6 years of life, that is, the window of opportunity is open. It is known that the human brain is innately programmed to learn languages and language-specific neuronal systems are formed by triggering language inputs from the environment, and if these inputs reflect more than one language, neuronal systems are structured by including the cognitive and emotional depth of both languages. In this kind of foreign language acquisition, the accent problem disappears and both languages are learned unconsciously. The main problem is to be aware of the need to learn a foreign language before the window of opportunity is closed and to see the benefits of teaching a second language in the preschool period. At this stage where the brain absorbs like a sponge, it is a big mistake to restrict children to their mother tongue and ignore the neurobiological structure of human beings, or worse, to resist and think that foreign language education can be handled in primary, secondary and even university preparatory classes. Because education should be compatible with human nature (Alptekin, 2010).

Studies have revealed the importance of the first years, especially the preschool period, in foreign language learning, because language development has a great speed in the first years (Demirezen, 2003). The earlier the foreign language acquisition starts, the more permanent it becomes and positively affects the intelligence and development of the person. It also enables the person to master the language and acquire the third language more easily (Anşın, 2006; Sevinç 2003; Madarova & Garcia Laborda, 2020). In a study conducted by Sevinç and Sertkaya (2006), tests related to thinking skills were administered

to 115 children and it was determined that children who received foreign language education in early childhood were more successful than those who did not.

There is no negative situation for bilingual children. Their language development also follows the same development as monolingual speakers (Genesee, 1994). Children who develop the ability to use their mother tongue to communicate occur in similar ways as problem-solving skills and second language learning processes (Perez & Guzman, 2001; Hajrullai, 2019). As young children learn a second language, they also use the knowledge they have as they develop their first language. For these children, second language acquisition is not a process of discovering what language is, but rather discovering what that language is (Tabors, 1997).

The prevailing view in the first half of the 20th century was that bilingualism and second language acquisition at an early age hinder the child's skills associated with normal cognitive and educational self-development. These thoughts and views were reversed by the work of Peal and Lambert (1962). Studies on intelligence and academic achievement show that bilinguals show a general superiority over monolinguals (Bialystok, 2006; Dadashi, Soltani & Rahimi, 2020).

Bilingual education includes teaching the mother tongue and foreign language simultaneously by the academic content program model. Bilingual education is an education model that provides academic support to students who are less fluent in English or who do not speak English at all, both in their mother tongue and in English (Education Corner, 2018; Qassem, 2020). In short, two different languages are used simultaneously in teaching. Students develop their skills in two different languages while continuing their education life (Cummins, 2001; Lobanova et al., 2022). Students can identify the differences and similarities between the two languages they speak and develop literacy in both languages. The main purpose of bilingual education is to develop a sense of culture in children, to teach concepts and the information intended to be transferred, with a second language, similar to the acquisition of a mother tongue. Bilingual education emphasizes foreign language learning, which not only supports children academically but also encourages cultural enrichment (Malarz, 1998).

In the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (TRNC), foreign language has always been seen as a lesson, and its use in real life has remained in the background due to the lack of environments where students can practice the language in foreign language learning. Innovative education models are implemented in private schools to gain 21st-century skills. One of these innovative models is the bilingual education model. Bilingual education in the TRNC is a model initiated to ensure that children are exposed to the target language for a longer period, rather than teaching them together with their mother tongue. However, this form of teaching aims to help students increase their English proficiency, keep their own culture and language intact, help them adapt to a foreign environment, and promote their academic success in both the mother tongue and the target language.

This study, in light of the above, is aimed to examine the perspectives of teachers on how exposure to foreign languages affects the language development of young children and to contribute to the literature. Thus, the problem statement of the research was determined: "What are the teachers' perspectives on how exposure to a foreign language affects the language development of young children?" To answer the problem statement of the research, the following sub-problems were formed:

- 1) How do you think receiving education in both English and Turkish affects the language development of students?
 - a) Can you give examples of the positive aspects?
 - b) Can you give examples of its negative aspects?
- 2) Which language do you think students use more effectively in the classroom? Why?
- 3) As a preschool teacher, do you think students should learn English at an early age? Why?
- 4) Do you have any problems with students' correct and effective use of Turkish? If yes, what? If not, why?
- 5) A preschooler;
 - a) in their mother tongue
 - b) in a foreign language (English only)
 - c) bilingual
 - d) should receive multilingual education. Which option do you prefer? Why?
- 6) Bilingual education;
 - a) listening, speaking skills
 - b) reading and writing preparation skills
 - c) vocabulary
 - d) How does it affect the correct use of grammar rules?

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Model of the Research

In this study, the "case study" model was used. The case study is one of the qualitative research designs. In the case study model, the factors in one or more situations are investigated as a whole, and detailed research is made on how they are affected by the situation in question and how they affect it (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

2.2 Population and sample

This study was carried out with the participation of 14 preschool teachers working in Near East Preschool in Northern Cyprus in the 2022-2023 academic year. The researcher used easily accessible case sampling, which is one of the "purposive sampling" types, which aims to add speed, practicality, and economy to the research and is one of the sampling methods. Accordingly, all of the teachers participating in the research are women, 1 of them is 24-28 years old, 7 of them are 29-33 years old, 4 of them are 34-38 years old and 2 of them are 39 years old and above. It was determined that 1 of them gave education in 1-5 years, 3 of them 6-10 years, 8 of them 11-15 years, 1 of them 16-20 years of professional seniority, 7 of them in Turkish, and 7 of them in English.

2.3 Data collection tool

In this study, a semi-structured interview form for the views of teachers on the language development of preschool 5-year-old students of bilingual education was developed by the researcher himself. It consists of a total of 6 open-ended questions. These questions are; how education in both English and Turkish affects students' language development, which language students use more effectively in the

classroom, whether teachers need to learn English at an early age, whether students have any problems with their correct and effective use of Turkish, a school Teachers' opinions about preschool students' receiving education in their mother tongue, foreign language, bilingual or multilingual are related to topics such as how bilingual education affects listening, speaking skills, reading, and writing preparation skills, vocabulary and using grammar rules correctly.

2.4 Data analysis

Content analysis was used in the research. The main process in content analysis is to collect similar data within the framework of themes and concepts and organize them in a way that the reader can understand (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2008).

3. RESULTS

This study was conducted to evaluate the views of teachers on the language development of preschool 5-year-old students of bilingual education. "How do you think getting an education in both English and Turkish affects the language development of students?", "Which language do you think students use more effectively in the classroom?", "As a preschool teacher, do you think that students should learn English at an early age?" were asked to participants. A standardized open-ended interview and then content analysis was conducted with 14 preschool teachers using the interview method, one of the qualitative research methods. While the answers given by the participants are in quotation marks "italics", "P" in parentheses means participant. The expression (P:1) also represents the first participant.

3.1 Teachers' opinions on the positive effects of bilingual education on students' language development

Some of the teachers who were interviewed emphasized the importance of students expressing themselves in both languages. In general, they argued that students learn faster and easier at a young age, they use both languages in daily life like their mother tongue, and they should have command of both languages. The opinions of the teachers on the subject are as follows:

According to P1, the positive aspects of bilingual education are, *"The younger the age, the easier it is to learn, and this enables them to learn a foreign language at an early age."* According to P5, the positive aspects of bilingual education are, *"They learn to use both languages and express themselves."* Positive aspects of bilingual education for P12, *"Using bilingualism as a mother tongue in daily life."*

Some of the teachers who were interviewed one-on-one emphasized that the perceptions of young students were very clear in their views on the positive effects of bilingual education on students' language development. In general, they stated that bilingual education increases students' awareness in language development, provides ear saturation, allows them to develop themselves more, can translate into both languages, and it helps them to learn both languages in the form of patterns in the following years. Teachers' views on the subject are given below.

According to P1, the positive aspects of bilingual education are, *"Since young children have very clear perceptions, they do not have much trouble learning a second language."* According to P4, *"It helps the next years because they learn in patterns"*. According to P10, *"It allows them to develop*

themselves more." According to P13, *"Hearing both languages increases children's awareness and provides ear saturation."*

3.2 Teachers' opinions on the negative effects of bilingual education on students' language development

Some of the teachers who were interviewed expressed their views on the negative effects of bilingual education on students' language development. In general, bilingual education is confusing from time to time, students have difficulty understanding the language in the first days of school because they do not know the language, they are afraid that they will not learn a language they do not know, and they think they cannot do it if there is something they do not understand in the language, there is a difficult adaptation period for foreign students, confusion between two languages, and they stated that they acted shy first because they did not understand the language. The opinions of the teachers on the subject are as follows:

According to P1, the negative aspects of bilingual education are, *"Children may act shy towards the teacher because they do not understand at first, but this will pass over time."* According to P2, *"It may have an effect in terms of difficulty for children whose language development is not ready."* According to P8, *"Children have difficulty in understanding because they do not know when the school is first opened."* According to P4, *"It can be confusing from time to time."* According to P8, *"Maybe he may be afraid that he cannot learn because it is a foreign language for the child. If there is a point that he does not understand, he may be afraid because he will not be able to do it."* According to P9, *"It is a difficult adaptation process for foreign children."* According to P11, *"There may sometimes be confusion between the two languages."* On the other hand, some of the teachers interviewed stated that bilingual education did not negatively affect the language development of students. The opinions of the teachers on the subject are as follows: According to P5, *"Bilingual education does not have a negative aspect. Every child willingly attempts to use every language."*

3.3 Teachers' opinions on the language that students use effectively in the classroom and the reasons

Considering the teachers' views on the language that students use effectively in the classroom, 12 teachers stated Turkish and 2 teachers stated both languages. According to P1, *"Students use Turkish more effectively. Because their mother tongue is Turkish. They also speak Turkish among themselves. Therefore, the most effective language is Turkish."* According to P4, *"They use their mother tongue Turkish more effectively. They express themselves more easily."* According to P6, *"Students prefer Turkish first because it is their mother tongue."* According to P7, *"I think both are effective."*

3.4 Teachers' views on students' learning English at an early age

When we look at the views of preschool teachers about students learning English at an early age, all of the teachers emphasized that students should learn English at an early age. According to P2, *"Students learn to pronounce correctly and try to speak with love."* According to P5, *"Every language that is started at a young age is easier to comprehend and learn. His ear satisfaction and vocabulary improve and he finds himself speaking comfortably in English."* According to P6, *"Starting language education at an early age makes learning more permanent."* According to P9, *"I think they are more open to learning at a young age."*

3.5 Teachers' opinions on whether students have any problems using Turkish correctly and effectively

When the teachers' views on whether they have any problems with the correct and effective use of Turkish by preschool students, 10 teachers answered no, 2 teachers said yes, and 1 teacher replied that it depends on the children. According to P1 *"We give importance to Turkish lessons like English."* According to P3, *"It may vary according to the children. Foreign children cannot use Turkish very effectively and accurately."* According to P6, *"Since the students' mother tongue is Turkish, they use Turkish effectively because they hear this language around them outside of school."* According to P8, *"Students sometimes answer in one word. They can avoid using long sentences."* According to P9, *"Some of our children do not use Turkish correctly and sometimes we have children who have difficulties in forming sentences."* According to P12, *"We do not have a problem because it is their mother tongue and because of the interest of Turkish teachers."*

3.6 Teachers' opinions on the language education that students should take and the reasons

When the teachers' views on the language education that students should take were examined, it was determined that 9 teachers answered multilingual, 4 teachers bilingual, and 1 teacher foreign language (English). According to P1, *"They can receive education in 3 languages. However, Turkish may not be as intense as English. Basic things can be taught and awareness can be raised."* According to P4, *"It is enough for them to put into practice whether they have learned enough or not."* According to P5, *"I think they should get multilingual education because it is easier to learn at an early age."* According to P11, *"If he learns two languages at the same time, he can master both. A third language can be difficult."*

3.7 Teachers' views on how bilingual education affects students' correct use of listening and speaking skills

Some of the teachers who were interviewed stated that they had a positive effect on the correct use of listening and speaking skills in bilingual education. In general, teachers stated that bilingual education improves students' listening and speaking skills, students begin to speak more effectively, and students learn by experience. The opinions of the teachers on the subject are as follows:

According to P8, *"Bilingual education affects students' listening and speaking skills positively. Children learn by experiencing."* According to P9, *"It especially affects speaking skills positively."* According to P13, *"Students' listening skills develop effectively."* According to P14, *"They start speaking more effectively. Because they learn to pronounce."*

3.8 Teachers' views on how bilingual education affects students' correct use of reading and writing preparation skills

Some of the interviewed teachers stated that bilingual education positively affects the correct use of students' reading and writing preparation skills. In general, teachers emphasized that bilingual education is confusing in reading and writing and improves reading and writing preparation skills. Teachers' views on the subject are given below.

According to P3, *"Students may experience confusion when they read English as if they read Turkish."* According to P4, *"Students become confused in reading and writing in bilingual education."*

According to P5 *"Bilingual education improves students' reading and writing preparation skills."* According to P8, *"Bilingual education affects students' reading and writing preparation skills positively."*

3.9 Teachers' opinions on how bilingual education affects students' correct use of vocabulary

Some of the teachers who were interviewed stated that bilingual education improves and enriches students' vocabulary. In general, the teachers said that the students had a positive effect on the correct use of their vocabulary and that they learned new words in two languages. The opinions of the teachers on the subject are as follows:

According to P2, *"The students' vocabulary improves because they learn new words in two languages."* According to P5, *"The students' vocabulary enriches."* According to P7, *"It positively affects the students' vocabulary."* According to P8, *"Children's vocabulary expands, they learn new words and their meanings."*

3.10 Teachers' views on how bilingual education affects students' correct use of grammar rules

Some of the interviewed teachers argued that in bilingual education, students positively affect the correct use of grammar rules. In general, the teachers stated that the students learned to use and speak sentences by the grammatical rules and that they learned how to pronounce correctly. The opinions of the teachers on the subject are given below.

According to P2, *"Bilingual education affects the correct use of grammar rules positively. Because they learn to pronounce correctly."* According to P5, *"They learn to use regular sentences."* According to P6, *"They speak by grammar rules."*

On the other hand, some of the interviewed teachers stated that Turkish grammar rules negatively affect bilingual education, that the students may not follow the grammar rules while speaking, that this situation will improve when they go to writing, and that it does not affect the correct use of English grammar rules. The opinions of the teachers on the subject are as follows:

According to P3, *"Bilingual education affects Turkish grammar rules negatively."* According to P4, *"Bilingual education does not affect the correct use of English grammar rules. They may not comply, but this situation will be corrected when it is written."*

4. CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSIONS

In this study, teachers' views on the effect of bilingual education on the language development of preschool students were examined and the following results were obtained.

Considering the teachers' views on the positive effects of bilingual education on students' language development, it is seen that students learn faster and easier at a young age, they use both languages in daily life like their mother tongue, and they should have command of both languages, that students' perceptions of bilingual education are very clear. It has been stated that it increases awareness in language development, provides ear saturation, allows them to develop themselves more, can translate into both languages and helps them to learn both languages in the form of patterns in the following

years. It has been revealed that children who acquire bilingual fluency around the world have higher levels of metalinguistics, an early and greater awareness of the structure of language, broader perspectives, and a more advanced level of social skills (Otto, 2010; Yavuz & Keser, 2019).

On the other hand, considering the teachers' views on the negative effects of bilingual education on students' language development, bilingual education is confusing from time to time, students have difficulty understanding the language in the first days of school because they do not know the language, they are afraid that they cannot learn a language they do not know, they think that they cannot do it if there is something they do not understand in the language, there is confusion between the two languages. They stated that they acted shy because they did not understand the language at first.

Some of the teachers stated that bilingual education is a difficult adaptation period for foreign students and affects their language development negatively. In many parts of the world, children grow up listening and then speaking two or more languages simultaneously (Ortega, 2009). The main reason for this is the necessity of different societies to live together. Since people speaking different languages had to live together due to reasons such as migration, war, and commercial activities, their languages were influenced by each other, which formed the basis of language relations. The widespread use of communication tools due to today's technological developments has accelerated language relations (Yılmaz, 2014; Guo, 2022; Chen & Guo, 2023).

Most of the teachers emphasized that the mother tongue (Turkish) is the language that the students use effectively in the classroom. On the other hand, they stated that students should learn English at an early age. While language acquisition expresses an unconscious and meaning-oriented learning in the natural environment, language learning, on the contrary, refers to learning focused on the structure of the language by being aware of it in formal environments (Otto, 2010). The mother tongue is not the learned language, but the acquired language. The acquisition process is natural and includes listening before speaking. While listening, the functioning of the language is comprehended and natural interactions are made without being aware of it. Language is used for communication purposes in the natural environment to meet the needs and socialize away from the classroom environment. The rules are not intentionally enforced. When encountered with the right structure, it is more about “feeling” or “sounding right” than it is correct, and in mistakes, it is not knowing what is wrong, but “feeling wrong” or “sounding wrong”. Learning takes place consciously in the classroom environment and never turns into acquisition. The rules are known, there is awareness, and they are talked about and discussed (Krashen, 1988; Lobanova et al., 2022).

The majority of the teachers stated that they did not have any problems with the correct and effective use of Turkish by the students. The basis of a strong empirical study is that children who grow up learning only their mother tongue acquire most of the language between the ages of 18 months and 3 and 4 years. The process that starts with hearing sounds in the womb is spent trying to keep up with the linguistic and phonological structure of the language until the first few months of life. While the first-year deals with one word, in the second year two-word sentences and a tremendous increase in vocabulary occur. At the age of three, syntactic and formal practices are involved, while usage-related mastery behaviors are seen towards the end of the age of 5 or at the age of 6, and the acquisition of the mother tongue is largely completed by all healthy children at the age of 6 (Ortega, 2009).

Most of the teachers stated that students should receive multilingual and bilingual education at an early age because it is easier to learn the language at an early age. In general, teachers determined that bilingual education improves students' listening and speaking skills, students begin to speak more effectively, and students learn by experience. Teachers stated that they had a positive effect on the correct use of reading and writing preparation skills in bilingual education. They emphasized that bilingual education is confusing in reading and writing and improves reading and writing preparation skills. When children learn a second language simultaneously with their mother tongue at the age of one or two, their language development is a bit slow at first. The reason for this is that they mix words from both languages, but when they reach the age of 3-4, they can distinguish languages and when they start primary school, they have a command of both languages at the level of mastery of that language (Kail, 2002).

The majority of the teachers stated that the correct use of the students' vocabulary affected them positively and that they learned new words in two languages. Some of the teachers have argued that in bilingual education, students have a positive effect on the correct use of grammar rules. In general, the teachers stated that the students learned to use and speak sentences by the grammar rules and that they learned how to pronounce correctly. On the other hand, some of the teachers interviewed found that Turkish grammar rules were negatively affected in bilingual education, that students could not follow the grammar rules while speaking, that this situation would improve when they went into writing, and that it did not affect the correct use of English grammar rules.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Teachers who will give foreign language education at an early age should be given education specific to this field, covering the mental and physical characteristics, needs, and expectations of this age group. Teachers should be informed about the methods and techniques that should be employed in this age group of students, the tools and equipment to be used, and the skills that are expected to be developed first.

When the necessary conditions are met, the starting age for foreign language education should be lowered to European standards. The number of students in classes should be brought to a suitable level for foreign language education at an early age. Equipment in classrooms and schools should be suitable for early children.

Both teachers and parents should be informed about the place and effects of the elements of the target culture in foreign language education at an early age. Within the scope of foreign language education at an early age, practices in which not only English but also other European languages such as German, French, and Spanish can be preferred should be employed.

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