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Preschool English teachers gaining bilingual competencies in a monolingual context

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ABSTRACT

This study examines three preschool teachers' developmental journeys from Foreign Language to Bilingual English teachers who participated in an in-service training over the course of nine months set in preschool education in Turkey. The data were teachers' logs, two written interviews and observation notes. The research questions addressed the evidence for a developmental growth into bilingual teacher roles and examined how such development might influence these teachers. Adopting a longitudinal design, our study is informed by Benson's (2004) categories of BE teacher competencies but modified to fit an EFL context with no history of heritage/colonial language. The findings indicate teachers' roles of pedagogue, interactive communicator, and a previously uninduced role, translanguaging facilitator. In addition, we argue that these categories influence each other, because the theoretical pedagogical aspects and the practical language aspects inform each other. The evidence of growth into new bilingual teacher roles could offer implications for similar contexts, particularly by showing that kindergarten school teachers need to embrace and develop roles other than foreign language teacher.

1. Introduction

The potential cognitive, social and linguistic benefits of bilingualism (Bialystok, 1987, 2018) and changes in attitudes in language learning in terms of the role of native speaker norms and tolerance of L1 (Moore, 2017) imply a greater need for bilingual teachers who can facilitate the development of bilingualism in children in school settings. Bilingual teaching in the current context draws on the understanding that two languages emanate from the same underlying linguistic competence and recognises that a first and second language influence each other, and so the second language may not correspond exactly to native speaker language (Turnbull, 2018). Furthermore, in the context of the current study, bilingual education does not necessarily lead to the equal development of both languages, but it supports the development of incipient bilinguals. Another aspect of Bilingual Education involves plurilingual teachers who use both languages. In the current context, the language teacher is supported by a teacher using only L1, working in tandem. Much of the available research investigates one of two contexts. The first focuses on the process of promoting bilingualism in countries where the target language is the societal language, i.e. the language used in the wider society, but is not the native language of indigenous inhabitants or immigrants, e.g. English in US (Varghese & Park, 2010), and Spanish in Guatemala (Herrera & Wedin, 2010). The second is bilingual

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practices focused on Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), a term which covers any context where language is taught through content, and is synonymous with Content-based Instruction and Immersion (Lo & Lin, 2015), e.g., Leone (2015) in Italy, and Sylven (2013) in Sweden; an overview of the current state of CLIL was analysed by Dale, Oostdam, and Verspoor (2018). There has been less attention to non-CLIL Foreign Language (FL) contexts, and, in particular, to bilingual education at preschool level (Palviainena, Protassovab, Mård-Miettinenc, & Schwartz, 2016), especially in non-European contexts.

In view of this lack of focus on non-CLIL foreign language contexts, particularly outside of Western Europe and the US, and also in the need for more studies at the pre-school level, this study examines three preschool teachers' developmental journey from Foreign Language to Bilingual English teacher during their participation in a nine-month in-service training. Data from teachers' logs, two written interviews and the consultant's observation notes provide evidence of development of competencies needed for bilingual teacher roles. Our study is informed by Benson's (2004) categories of BE teacher competencies, modified to fit a context with no history of heritage/colonial language. Benson's categories, namely, 'pedagogue, linguist, intercultural communicator, community member and advocate' underline the pedagogical aspects that are not often adopted by teaching methods in English as a foreign language (EFL). Benson's categories are defined as follows: *Pedagogue* involves the theoretical knowledge and understanding of communicative competence as opposed behaviourist understandings; *linguist* is defined as having a good spoken and written knowledge of L1 and L2; *intercultural communicator*, means using knowledge of the cultures of both languages, as a member of the L1 community educated in the L2, to bridge the culture gap; *community member* refers to the teacher's wider role in the community as a speaker of the local language, especially with students' parents, and finally, *advocate,* indicates individuals who have witnessed the success of bilingual programmes and can testify to their value compared to monolingual programs where restrictions on L1 results in lost opportunities. It can immediately be seen that the last two categories do not apply to non-heritage language contexts. The features of EFL mainly involve explicit teaching of language as a subject rather than as a medium of communication in the classroom with relatively less attention to facilitating its acquisition as a medium of communication but more to 'its repetitive and mechanical use as a medium of teacher instruction' (Richards, 2006, p. 41). EFL, or traditional bilingual language learning, is characterised by the concept of 'two solitudes' (Cummins, 2008) in which languages are seen as separate and translation is considered harmful to learning L2. In bilingual education based on translanguaging, however, students are able to move between languages, gaining important insights into language as a result (García & Li, 2014). Thus, bilingual education based on translanguaging is liberating and has implications for social justice in a way that traditional foreign language teaching, including traditional bilingual teaching, does not (García & Lin, 2016).

An important aspect of the current research is therefore the focus on preschool education where both English and Turkish is systematically embedded into the syllabus, distributing the classroom time equally between the L1 and L2 teachers, and prioritising the use of both languages as a medium of communication. This is a rare instructional practice which has been underexplored, which we are addressing in this study as we provide further details below.

The formative nature of the preschool years (Cunningham, Zibulsky, & Callahan, 2009) implies great potential for learning gains, thereby necessitating the need to improve classroom practice and learning (Yoshikawa et al., 2015). It is important to understand preschool teacher beliefs, actions, and words, emphasising the role of both individual characteristics, and environmental influences (Vorkapic, Vujicic, & Cepic, 2014). The literature has explored the pedagogy applied in bilingual preschool education in immigrant contexts, particularly in the US and in Israel. In the US, Gort and Sembiante (2015) and Gort and Pontier (2013) reveal the benefits of bilingual teaching in facilitating a natural learning process and supporting dual language identity when teachers were flexible in their language practices. Similarly, in Israel, Schwartz, Mor-Sommerfield, and Leiken (2010) found that benefits resulted from a flexible approach to both languages, and that learning opportunities may be lost when there is an ideological bias against the heritage language. Such flexible practices are the focus of the current study, which, in line with a call by Palviainen and Mård-Miettinen (2015), considers teachers' reflection on their own practices in a preschool context. Also, it is important to consider how the response to bilingualism will be affected by countries' demographic and sociocultural profiles (Arthur & Martin, 2006). The literature has often focused on underprivileged young learners of school age, and especially in developing countries (Kuchah, 2018), and where teaching is often done in poorly−funded schools in difficult circumstances (Benson, 2004).

In contrast, the current study focuses on a context which is clearly distinguished from studies in the literature above. The research context is a non-immigrant, non-post-colonial and non-heritage language context; it focuses on relatively privileged students in the private sector, with small class sizes; language teachers who use English only, but who work with L1 teachers, and share the students' L1. The restrictions on language teachers not using the L1 is likely due to the low prominence of the L2 (Housen et al., 2011) and the lack of opportunities for exposure outside the classroom. In the current context, bilingual teaching is emergent, and relatively uncommon. Thus, the context is monolingual and monocultural, i.e., all learners share the same L1 and culture. The aim of the study is to understand the teachers' development of competencies in the social context, and gain insight into the similarities and differences with understandings of bilingual competencies in other contexts, particularly those described by Benson (2004).

The study draws on multiple sources of data, which present the teachers' perspectives on their own development, and that of their students, respectively, as well as a third source from the consultant. These three perspectives can be considered as providing cross-referencing of the view of emerging positions. Thus, the theoretical underpinnings that inform the method are in accordance with the two research questions:

- What evidence is there for teachers' new competencies, and changes in beliefs underlying these, gained as a result of experience of bilingual teaching?
- How do the teachers' new competencies interact with each other, and with aspects of the local culture to influence their students and their teaching?

2. Literature review

2.1. Emergence of bilingual teacher competence

The growth of interest in bilingualism, especially early bilingualism, has led to research in bilingualism in non-immigrant contexts e.g., South Africa (Makalela, 2015), Europe (Nikula & Moore, 2019) and China (Lin & Lo, 2016). The current study contributes to this category with a study in the context of Turkey. The transformation to a BE teacher can have many benefits, bringing a more positive attitude towards teaching and direct gains in teaching and learning (Bukor, 2015), as well as boosting commitment and job satisfaction (Canrinus et al., 2011). However, even with training, the transition to BE teacher involves great challenges, not least, the prevailing TESOL/EFL ideology, which ensures limited experience of bilingual practices for teachers (Lin, 2013). Most teachers, regardless of their context, are likely to follow traditional methods involving primarily explicit teaching of rules and vocabulary, error correction, structured language practice, and testing linguistic knowledge, for a variety of reasons, including their own education (Tsui, 2007) and institutional constraints (Xu, 2013). To create a substantial change requires training in awareness and self-reflection to bring out beneficial aspects of teachers' beliefs and experience (Baker, 2014), allow them to become agentive through self-reflexive activities, and to understand learning in context (Wong et al., 2017). They also need support to engage in flexible use of languages, responsible code-switching, contextual and linguistic supports, adjustments for individuals, and role-modelling (Palviainena et al., 2016).

2.2. Competencies of bilingual teachers

In line with Benson (2004), we argue that teachers need certain competencies, and to be able to switch between various roles in bilingual education. However, Benson's (2004) five categories relate to heritage language situations where there is a colonial language. In this study we reduce the five categories of *pedagogue, linguist, intercultural communicator, community member and advocate* to three, namely, *pedagogue, interactive communicator and translanguaging facilitator*. We define these three categories in a rather different way from Benson, in line with the different context, as mentioned. *Pedagogue* is a teacher who is able to articulate theory, and is able to draw conclusions from interventions, and grow in confidence, and adopt a research frame of mind similar to teacher researchers (Edwards & Burns, 2016). *Interactive communicator* acknowledges that the teachers negotiate between generations, using their status to scaffold learners' play, and using their social and cultural knowledge to promote their students' growth (Newman, Ward, Smith Wilson & McCrea, 1997). Finally, *translanguaging facilitator* means encouraging students' ability to 'language', i.e., perform flexible and purposeful codeswitching, using all available linguistic resources (García & Li, 2014). This new model recognises the relatively monocultural context, and emphasises the interactive aspects, and the role of 'linguist' is in this context, subsumed into the more general role of translanguaging facilitator. This three-category classification can also be considered an adaption of Fillmore and Snow's (2000) categories, which describe a similar set of bilingual teacher roles in an immigrant context. Their classification consists of *communicator, educator, evaluator, educated human being and agent of socialisation*. In our classification, the role of *pedagogue* covers *educator* and *evaluator*, as these roles are seen as integrated, and *agent of socialisation* applies mainly to immigrant contexts with two competing cultures. The category of *educated human being* seems mainly related to language knowledge, and may be less applicable to language teachers, for whom this knowledge is a given. The new classification again recognises lesser role of the wider community in the absence of competing languages and cultures, and instead focuses on the development of interaction within the classroom, facilitated through teachers' promotion of translanguaging skills. Translanguaging has many definitions, but here refers to the practice of alternating between languages, and is regarded as a sociolinguistic and ideological practice, in which languages are not separated in their purpose, and are seen as interchangeable, even within utterances (Lewis, Jones, & Baker, 2012). The teachers in this study were investigated in relation to their *translanguaging facilitator* role as to how they facilitated the integration of translanguaging into their lesson delivery and interaction, an instructional choice for which they were not trained as an EFL teacher.

An important concept is multi-competence (Cook, 1992, 1999). Teachers will no longer see themselves, or their students as deficient according to native speaker standards, but as multi-competent and multilingual (Pavlenko, 2003). Thus, adoption of BE identity has implications not only for teachers' own practice, but that of their students. For example, BE identity for teachers allows students to identify as bilinguals and facilitate students' bilingual practices to support their learning (Hornberger & Link, 2012). Teachers' new status involves becoming a role model in terms of becoming accepted as members of a skilled group able to operate in more than one language (Varghese et al., 2005). The recognition of learners' plurilingualism is a consequence of teachers' recognition of their own, and learners take their lead from teachers (Ellis, 2013). Thus, teachers' emerging beliefs influence their teaching and relationship with learners (Flores, 2001).

Another development is the shift in the conceptualisation of BE from two separate languages to translanguaging (García & Li, 2014). In this approach, language is considered to consist of a single underlying linguistic competence. The concept of translanguaging goes beyond the concept of competence in more than one language, and considers language from the viewpoint of the multilingual rather than monolingual speaker; languages are seen as artificial constructs, which in fact originate from a single language ability; naturally, this has implications for users' socio-cultural identity (García & Li, 2014). Such realisation causes disturbances in the teaching context, which forces reconsideration of beliefs (Pennington & Richards, 2016), and teaching practices and teacher roles. Upheavals may be caused by 'pedagogical incompatibility' between previous teacher education and current needs (Morgan, 2004), for example, the shift from a coercive to a more collaborative relationship in the classroom context has implications not only for interactions with learners, but also for teacher identity in relation to dominant power structures (Cummins, 2000). In regard to these developments, the training in the current context consisted of workshops covering areas such as childhood language acquisition in relation to bilingual education, approaches to reflection, and pedagogical issues such as team teaching, teacher-student interaction patterns, and translanguaging. The aim was to develop teachers' pedagogical and instructional knowledge.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

The study described in this paper is longitudinal and qualitative, since our focus was to understand change by comparing participants' contributions at different stages of the investigation (Dörnyei, 2007, p. 86), and is designed to capture the details involved in stories of the actors (Neale & Flowerdew, 2003, p. 193) in their journey towards competence in bilingual education. This competence involves not only learning new ways of teaching, such as giving learners' time to respond, but also understanding the theoretical basis for this, i.e., gaining insight into natural learning processes. We take this approach to capture the complexity of the change, rather than build up 'thick description' of a particular moment in time. Because the emphasis is on the change, rather than the context itself, time spent in the research context extended from September 2017 to May 2018, with multiple visits, allowing the accumulation of sustainable collection of extensive and rich data. Each visit was one class-hour plus 1-h feedback session held with the 3 English language teachers (the participants), and the three Turkish homeroom teachers for discussion of the consultant's (the first author's) observation. The teacher data provides not only direct descriptions of their experiences and interactions, but also indirect data in the form of presentation of themselves, i.e., the data can be interpreted both semantically and latently (Colliander, 2017). These 1-h feedback sessions were not audio recorded, but sporadically noted. This could be noted as a limitation and further research could focus on a more in-depth examination of feedback sessions. The written interviews were carried out twice in week 6 and at the end of the program. The teachers wrote in response to a broad question, '*What did you experience in bilingual teaching so far?*'. Multiple data sets (the written interviews, the feedback notes and the tasks) were used in order to bring insight into the multiple roles of the teacher, i.e., they throw light on the pedagogic, social interaction and translanguaging aspects of their roles.

3.2. Context

The context was a private preschool in Izmir, Turkey, with children aged 5–6. The school pursues a policy of bilingual education, in which a bilingual (English/Turkish speaking) teacher works simultaneously with a monolingual Turkish teacher. The syllabus was structured so that classes were divided into two groups, with the Turkish and bilingual teachers working with different groups, but often on the same or related task. As the school has recently begun to implement a policy of bilingual education, training was necessary. The staff consisted of three English teachers and three Turkish homeroom teachers. The bilingual training (See Appendix A) was conducted by the first researcher, working as a consultant at the school. After 27 h of input over three weeks in 2017 summer, the consultant gave weekly lesson observation feedback to the three trainees over a period of 9 months. This involved not only training teachers in bilingual techniques but encouraging them to shift from the role of language teacher to facilitator, which involved realistic use of language, rather than using language for display purposes.

3.3. Participants

The three teachers were new to bilingual teaching but had considerable experience (5–12 years) in English Language Teaching. They were considered suitable for study as they represent teachers who, after substantial experience as language

Table 1
Our participants.

Name	Teaching experience/Bilingual pre-school	Age	Education background
Sedef	15/2 years	36	German and English language Teaching
Öykü	7/3 years	28	Translation and Interpretation
Naciye	12/2 years	35	English Language and Literature

teachers, were undergoing profound changes in their role as teacher. They were native speakers of Turkish, in early to mid-career, with a profile appropriate to support the spread of bilingual education. Table 1displays demographic information about our participants:

3.4. Data collection

The three data sets provide different perspectives on the developmental change of the participating teachers. The consultant's observation notes provided an expert's overview of the process, while the teachers' written interviews provided the stories of the adoption of new competencies, representing 'narratives of classroom life', which combine both analytic and creative forms of writing, and allowed for a legitimate expression of emotion, which is important in educational research (Nelson, 2011). The third data set included the teachers' logs, consisting of short extracts of classroom interactions. The teachers were asked to generate logs specifically about the children's uses of translanguaging utterances, rather than their own bilingual practices.

3.5. Data analysis

Content analysis was employed since we were inspired by a constructed framework of Benson's (2004) BE teacher competencies. We constantly negotiated the content of each thematic category to teachers' data. To secure trustworthiness (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), we adopted four criteria: *credibility* is assured by the time devoted to data collection, the researcher spent half a day a week in the research context over nine months; *transferability* is attained by providing thick description of the context; *dependability* and *confirmability* is provided by documenting the research procedures including procedures of data collection, analysis and interpretations as well as simultaneous joint coding through sustained negotiation. We also ensured debriefing for the classification of the coded data, which minimized possible bias due to the first author's immersion into the research context. The debriefing involved ongoing negotiation of the categorisation of the quotes for the themes relating to Benson's categories. However, two of Benson's categories were found not to be relevant, and one was modified. Thus, we recognise that deductive and inductive approaches can inform each other, rather than being incompatible (Goetz & LeCompte, 1981). We finally asked the participants to read the content of the analysis for their consent, i.e., member-checking.

4. Results

The data reflects a modification of Benson's (2004) categories, reflecting the EFL context and status of L2 as the weaker language, not widely spoken in the community. Thus, we discuss the teachers' role as *Pedagogue, Interactive communicator, and Translanguaging facilitator*. The *pedagogue* category reflects aspects of Benson's (2004) of the same name, relating to the need to move away from drilling and production of correct sentences, towards a more natural instruction, reflecting the L1 learning process, although adding that teachers develop an 'inquiring' frame of mind. Because only one culture is involved, *Interactive communicator* differs from Benson's *intercultural communicator.* Instead we focus on the teacher's role as an intergenerational communicator, scaffolding children's learning of social and cultural values. Finally, *translanguaging facilitator* draws on both these categories, via an understanding of the learning process and allowing and encouraging the use of flexible language practices, by, for example, accepting students' translanguaging attempts as normal and natural. This can be seen as updating Benson's category of *linguist*. While a knowledge of both languages is clearly essential, beyond this, the ability to encourage the development of two languages side by side has become equally important.

4.1. Pedagogue

The new role involved changes in many areas of teaching including lesson planning:

"I haven't taught this age group before … I am trying to find ways to draw their attention. We are planning the schedule in a detailed way. This shift has been improving my planning skills" (Naciye, Interview 1).

Other comments include "We usually work with small groups, we plan activities beforehand" (Sedef, Log); "We are aware of the need to be patient.' (Öykü, Log) One of the key issues was time allotted for learning task: "Time is not a concern anymore. I can design extendible activities that include fine motor skills, teamwork, communication, creativity" (Öykü, Interview 1).

This aspect was also mirrored in the consultant's notes: "No rush, fewer activities but more opportunities for language comprehension and use, wait for students to respond." Among these, signs of change are evident in the consultant's notes: "When verbal instructions were given, teacher intervention became less".

Generally, teachers emphasise positive aspects such as openness, relaxation and flexibility. However, the teachers are aware of their new duties and roles that accompany this independence, flexibility and freedom. Teachers positioned themselves as learners. In interview 2, Öykü states "I try to read and learn about bilingual education more." In her final written interview, Öykü shows insight into her changed role. Not only does she accept the limits to her own role of controller, implying her role as observer, but she is able to see long-term benefits beyond the classroom. "They solve the problem on their own without a help of an adult. Hopefully, there will be less in other courses next year, so there is more space for the kids to adapt these skills" (Öykü, Interview 2).

Sedef says in her log "We plan the activities, but they are often flexible because we extend them according to students' needs and often give them (the children) the chance to choose or decide." Planning also involves considerations other than language. Öykü states:

> I thought it was all about the languages then, but now I see if someone intends to carry out a bilingual programme, he/she needs to acquire the understanding of 21st century skills and learn how to design a lesson plan for this programme (Öykü, Interview 1).

Greater freedom is another aspect of the pedagogue role because the overall approach is designed to allow space for children to feel the sense of self-actualisation in the classroom. Naciye notes "I feel more relaxed because I have learned to make the kids free to act and speak. The activities are more flexible because we give them the chance to choose or decide" (Naciye, Interview 1). One teacher sees the transition as a journey, which she watches unfold: "The implementation of this programme is a journey for me. I feel lucky to have the chance to take part in it from the beginning, so I can watch all the steps and improvement and the development of the program" (Sedef, Log).

Benefits are expressed in individual terms: e.g., feeling "more comfortable" (Naciye, Interview 1). Thus, the education is a social activity, but the resulting feelings of satisfaction are individual. The statement "I feel I am doing something really important" (Öykü, Interview 1) suggests that the personal development has wider repercussions. This emphasises learning as a joint process between the students and teachers with benefits for both. The benefits are expressed in terms of a feeling of privilege, being part of a wider effort of improvement, as well as personal advantages such as a general feeling of well-being. Thus, from a pedagogic point of view, the improved learning creates more rounded, satisfied individuals.

4.2. Interactive communicator

This section focuses on the interactive nature of the communication that teachers are engaged in. Sedef reveals insights into how the development of relationships underlines trust:

> We play games together, we do some experiments together, we have chance to play outside together, I take them to the toilet, or if they don't have water, we go out of the classroom and get it together…. Mostly, they can find me whenever they need to (Sedef, Interview 2).

By the end of the research period the concept of safety is linked to openness in communication and trust: "Now even their walking has changed. I can feel that they trust me more. I think they felt that I trust them and let them decide and choose. They give me hug while speaking English. They make jokes!!!" (Sedef, Interview 2).

The purpose of communication changed under the consultant's guidance, stressing "Teacher-oriented instruction should be abandoned. The teacher should be the user of language. Activities should make them understand the meaning and behave accordingly". The consultant continually emphasised the need for realistic communication and real interaction, as opposed to communication for display purposes: "If there is no action in the classroom (i.e. words only) students won't be exposed to meaningful context". The consultant emphasises the learners' active role, echoing the principles underlying a Total Physical Response methodology, "No need to take it directly from his (the child's) hand, you must give instructions".

As well as becoming more interactive themselves, teachers should promote interaction between students. The consultant's observation notes state "There must be a systematic increase in opportunities for students to influence each other." Rather than occurring between *individual* teachers and learners, learning is collective, occurring naturally through playful activity, with the teacher as the facilitator of the group, and of individuals. The result is learning for students and teachers alike, through interaction with students and peers, rather than a narrow focus on language-related learning objectives: "Although I had the experience of being a teacher of 6-year-olds before, this process is helpful to improve my teaching skills and involves psychological counselling and guidance education information during the day" (Sedef, Interview 1).

The teachers' role of interactor involves different roles. Öykü sees no contradiction between her emerging roles as both equal and role model. The significance of the phrase 'I don't know', below, in this regard may be a sign of emerging equality, as this very direct admission of ignorance to a teacher may imply disrespect in normal circumstances, where silence or hedging (I'm not sure) may be more acceptable:

> I used to not wait for the kids to comprehend thoroughly, I was such in a hurry. After having feedbacks, I've evolved into a leader, or a playmate rather than an instructor/teacher. Now, I see my kids (students; playmates) use phrases such as "I don't know" (Öykü, Interview 2).

This communication needs a greater awareness of each individual's role in the group in the words of the consultant' notes "Equal opportunities for interaction for all students; let's not separate boys and girls in groups; Attendance, learners are aware of others' absence."

Communication extended beyond the classroom on one occasion:

> One of my students learnt that I feed homeless animals after school, she followed me with her mom. She got out of the car and asked me to help. She said: "Ms Sedef, help?" I said: "Sure" and trying stop my tears. She told me how she loves animals, using translanguaging. She was trying so hard to speak English with me; I felt the strength of the connection between the relationship with the children and this program (Sedef, Interview 2).

Thus, the child learns about animals, and the teacher learns about the child, the students' worldview is becoming shaped by a person who, in the role of teacher, has transformed her identity to the student's friend, role model, and 'significant other'. Naciye sums up this new role: "Now I feel like their homeroom teacher, as I am spending time with particular kids all day. Compared with my previous teaching experience, I feel more comfortable in my classroom" (Naciye, Interview 1).

This emphasis on homeroom teacher role is interesting, as it suggests a much broader responsibility than EFL teacher.

4.3. Translanguaging facilitator

The *translanguaging facilitator* role seemed to dominate the content of the interviews and logs. This important evidence of the shift allowed teachers to re-analyse learner language and refocus on linguistic aspects not previously possible in their former role as linguistic analyst of purely L2 production.

In his observation feedback notes, the consultant underlines the natural, as opposed to forced use of language as in the following notes for post-observation feedback: "Assessing vs engaging. Forcing to respond verbally vs forcing to understand and act". Naciye seems to be able to make connections between her role, the students, the program and the consultant on the bilingual course. She acknowledges the role of all these elements that make up the school environment. In one episode, she writes "After I modelled the phrase as 'the blue bucket', they repeated the modelled form immediately", i.e. naturally, without forcing. One of the consultant's feedback comments was "No need for forcing them for repetition". As an emerging bilingual teacher, she may have been wary of forcing students into drilling, but she seemed pleased with the students' immediate voluntary responses. As Öykü also highlights in her first interview, "Acquisition is a process and we need to be patient", which implies how she came to realise the key role of observing and analysing naturally evolving learner linguistic development.

The teachers started to gradually reduce practices of repetition-based techniques in the classroom, and focused relatively more on children's verbal productions, which involves the use of both languages in the meaning-making process, rather than memorised sentences. The teachers' new role allowed them to regulate and monitor such a language use without constraining language production to one language only, free from the imposition of single language use in meaning making. Although teachers did not engage in translanguaging themselves, they encouraged it in the students, and recorded examples in their logs to understand its effectiveness. In the following example, a teacher notes one student echoing another, but across languages:

S1. "I can see you, (teacher's name)."

S2. "Ben de görüyorum (I can see (you), too)." (Öykü, Log).

Sedef asks for feedback on a speaking activity. One student responds in Turkish, picking up the word 'did' from the teacher:

T. "Did you talk about it?"

Ss. "Yes." (raises finger).

S. "Ben parmak kaldırmıyorum çünkü ben did'im" ("There is no need for me to raise my finger, because I 'did' it.") (Sedef Log).

Naciye (in Interview 1) has become much more accepting of student contributions, appreciating that natural responses in either language, such as above, can be as valuable as the 'right answer': "At first, I was trying to make them speak and I was asking them lots of questions to get the right answer. But now, I just give the instructions and wait for them to act naturally." (Naciye, Interview 1).

Sedef notes that students are able to guide each other, using translanguaging to shuttle between languages:

S1. "Here you are."

S2. "Thank you."

S1 ….

S2. "'*You're welcome*'" demedin ("You didn't say *'you're welcome'")*.

S1. "You're welcome." (Sedef Log).

This can occur because students feel safe to express their ideas. There is no teacher intervention; the children teach themselves. Öykü makes the connection between safety and self-expression: "Creating a safe zone where the little ones can speak their minds when they are not sure is something I have always thought of, and working in a bilingual program has given me the chance and direction to create one" (Öykü, Interview 2).

Öykü also describes how she stops being a gatekeeper who judges children and realises that "The feeling of not getting checked all the time will give them the opportunity to express their emotions and the sense of achievement more often" (Interview 2). Naciye also notes that a student uses an English word in a Turkish sentence and adds the Turkish meaning to reinforce the concept: "Bugün circle time'ı ben yapacagım. Ay çember zamanı" ("Today, I will do circle time. Circle Time (in Turkish)" (Naciye, Log).

Sedef notes how children are able to pick up on phrases she introduces into the class, whether deliberately or subconsciously, blurring the lines of planned input/natural exposure:

> I choose some phrases that the adults use in daily life and use them in class on purpose, they respond and use these phrases in such a short notice that makes me feel amazed and impressed by their learning capacity. Sometimes I do the same thing, not on purpose, but when I hear the same phrase from two or three kids. I try to remember if, and if so, when, I said it. When I remember the moment, I feel impressed by the students. (Sedef, Interview 2).

In another log, Sedef notes a translanguaging incident where a Turkish root is added to an English stem:

T. “Let’s colour these and then we are going to cut them out. Let’s cut first.”
S1. “OK! Cutcaz cutcaz!” (“We are going to cut them!”) (Sedef, Log).

The importance of this response to an instruction is reflected on by Öykü, who states “my mindset about the ‘comprehension’ has changed. I, now, know the importance of the actions which are triggered by the instructions.” (Öykü, Log). This refers to allowing students to respond to teachers’ instructions, rather than performing the actions for them. This adoption of a teacher’s word into the student’s language indicates comprehension through the imminent action response.

5. Discussion

In this research, the aim was to examine the roles adopted by BE teachers in the light of Benson’s (2004) categories and modify them according to the local context. The lack of a heritage language, and the monocultural context meant the categories focused on pedagogy, interactive communication and translanguaging, whereas roles of *advocate* or *intercultural communicator* were not observed.

5.1. Research question 1

What evidence is there for teachers’ new competencies, and changes in beliefs underlying these, gained as a result of experience of bilingual teaching?

The teachers’ shifting practices were explored using an adapted version of Benson’s (2004) roles of bilingual teachers. The teachers established a classroom in which they were pedagogues, interactive communicators, and translanguaging facilitators. As pedagogues, teachers took on a role that resembled that of homeroom teacher, implying closer contact, and acknowledging the need to teach life skills, as well as language skills, which is a much greater challenge than EFL teaching (Benson, 2004). The role of pedagogue involved changing perspectives on collaboration and flexibility in lesson planning, the individualisation of teaching, and taking a learner-centred view, with a focus moving beyond language to 21st century skills. Rather than Benson’s role of *intercultural communicator*, we identified a role of *interactive communicator,* which involved creating a safe context for communication, creating a sense of community, and allowing learners to engage in genuine and open communication. Interactive communication in a monolingual language learning context inevitably involves translanguaging, since the learners lack the L2 for such conversation. Thus, the socio-political aspects of translanguaging (García & Li, 2014, p. 123) were evident in this more egalitarian classroom, and through a ‘multilogue’, i.e., a conversation involving many (Schwab, 2011). This involved less drilling and repetition, and more peer communication. In line with Cook (1999), through their emphasis on promoting translanguaging, by responding to L1 contributions, teachers were providing a role model for learners, shifting roles between leader/facilitator, but also at times joining in activities as a participant with the learners, temporarily playing the role of peer rather than authority. This is less hierarchical relationship is implied in Öykü’s Log, in which she seems to regard the student’s frank admission to the teacher of “I don’t know” as a sign of equality. Teachers even play the role of learner (from children) of translanguaging, by observing language produced. Through the role of interactive communicator, the teachers have, in fact, reduced their overall amount of speaking and taken on a new role of listener/observer. In this respect, they are able to notice students’ language development. Translanguaging draws attention to learning, because the new L2 language appears embedded in L1 sentences, making it highly noticeable. Sedef underlines how she enjoys hearing words and phrases that she has, knowingly or unknowingly, introduced in the genuine interaction within the classroom.

5.2. Research question 2

How do the teachers’ new competencies interact with each other, and with aspects of the local culture to influence their students and their teaching?

The teachers show evidence of three new competencies, which interact to create skilful BE practice. BE requires pedagogic skills, which include planning for more individualised treatment of students, and flexibility, implying greater responsiveness to learners, and allowing students more autonomy (Lamb, 2011). This flexibility allows for much more interactive communication, in a secure environment (Bukor, 2015). The greater emphasis on communication inevitably requires translanguaging, because the students naturally use their shared resource, the L1 when learning to communicate in L2. Thus, the pedagogy promotes interactive communication and translanguaging. Plurilingual teachers like these are more accepting of translanguaging, and are more aware of the benefits, and the role translanguaging to facilitate rapport via, for example, humour, and promoting emotional involvement (Ellis, 2013). The practice-focused feedback from the consultant, who promoted translanguaging by stressing patience and opportunity for students, informs the pedagogy, creating a virtuous circle reinforcing theory with practice, helping teachers develop sense of commitment and job satisfaction (Canrinus et al., 2011) and creating beneficial effect on the classroom (Varghese et al., 2005).

Creese and Blackledge (2010) discuss an ecologic approach, taking into consideration the local cultural factors, i.e. political and social aspects, as well as the more micro level aspects of the context. The study shows that the teachers gained new competencies, which differed from those needed in heritage language or immigrant contexts. These competencies were influenced by the local context, which emphasised collective action and social support, in a monolingual and monocultural environment. In this context, the role of the teachers was not to bridge cultures, but rather to bridge a power-distance gap,

and not to balance competing languages, but to allow translanguaging to support the L2, the overwhelmingly weaker language. The focus in such contexts is not to develop the wider community, but to develop the classroom community in a more egalitarian, more liberal direction. Thus, while some of the developing insights of teachers uncovered in this study reflect universal BE aspects, such as the understanding of interdependence of languages (Cummins, 2000), other aspects, such as the reduction in the authoritarianism in relationships, may be particularly emphasised in the current context. The exclusive focus on the classroom means that teachers' role of intermediary in the wider society, e.g. with parents, was not a significant factor in the data.

6. Implications for preschool education

Benson (2004) emphasised the importance of bilingual teachers in the context of competing languages and cultures in society. In contrast, in the current data, there was only one specific mention of the world outside the classroom, when a teacher encountered a learner who had followed her while feeding stray animals. While this is a moving account, it remains an isolated incident in the data, which otherwise seems to focus on relationships in the classroom rather than the society. However, this does not mean that translanguaging has no transformative social power in this particular context. The more equal relationship between languages, and teacher and students, has important implications in a country characterised by a high power-distance relationship and paternalistic leadership patterns, but also stressing collectivity and involvement in the community (Paşa, Kabasakal & Bodur, 2001). In this case, the community aspect seems to have developed as the authoritarian aspect diminished: it is possible to speculate that the reduction in emphasis on power-distance in education was facilitated by an underlying tendency toward collective involvement latent in the culture, realised through translanguaging. This can be seen in teachers' support for learners' working together and taking a less authoritarian, more facilitative role based on genuine communication. Thus, the strict hierarchy dominated by the teacher is replaced with a *thirdspace* (García & Li, 2014), where, through translanguaging, learners scaffold each other, share and learn from each other, while teachers are positioned as facilitators, observers and even learners of bilingual language development. This is a potentially important development in a country characterised by authoritarian teacher-child relationships in preschool education, which is insufficiently child-focused (Gol-Guven, 2009). Such an approach as considered here could increase pre-school teachers' skills, and shift focus from pre-academic skills towards socio-emotional development (Cunningham et al., 2009), with emphasis on bilingual language development.

6. Conclusion

New insights emerged from the study into the competencies needed to become a bilingual educator at preschool level in a monolingual context. Informed by Benson's (2004) categories, and updated with new perspectives on translanguaging, it shows the connections between pedagogy, communication and translanguaging, with consultants' input at the practical level having implications for teachers' theoretical conceptualisation of bilingual teaching. The teachers developed awareness into not only how they could support children's bilingual development by experiencing simultaneous co-teaching with the Turkish teachers, but also how they can sustain their new roles involving using English, not just for 'teaching', but for meaningful classroom interaction. That shift is critical for teachers originally trained to teach within the strict methodological constraints in the kindergarten context. They went beyond using classical methods, such as total physical response, involving repetition- or memorisation-based language teaching pedagogies. The research, however, has a number of limitations. The data was focused on one school in the private sector. Further research could compare bilingual preschool research in Turkey with other EFL contexts to understand differences between contexts, paralleling those that have been shown to exist in post-colonial contexts (Arthur & Martin, 2006). The research focuses on language (L2) teachers, but the views of the L1 teachers could also be the focus of future studies.

Author statement

This research has been conducted and written up by Kenan Dikilitas and Simon Mumford without any other authors being involved. Each author has equally contributed to the study dealing simultaneously or subsequently with all sections of the paper.

Kenan Dikilitas and Simon Mumford.

Appendix 1

Summary of Bilingual Teacher Education Program (BTEP)

Training Philosophy.

Teacher training is an area which requires careful planning, which includes modern pedagogical approaches. This series of workshops aims to address four major issues:

1. Raise awareness into language acquisition and bilingual education practices
2. Provide opportunities to build on existing experiences with bilingual instruction
3. Help teachers develop knowledge about bilingual classroom pedagogies
4. Enable teachers to develop instructional decisions and pedagogical

Training Content.

1. Intensive training program (*27 h in three weeks*)
2. Follow-up on-site support (*one academic year*)
   Monitoring of the bilingual program, Classroom observation, Feedback to teachers and administration, and Reporting results

Syllabus.

Session 1 introduces language acquisition in early stages of childhood
Session 2 introduces early bilingualism with respect to early immersion. What is early bilingualism?
Session 3 provides opportunities for teachers to learn bilingual education models and elaborate on the appropriate model for themselves in their own contexts.
Session 4 focuses on the process of developing skills. How do teachers develop in bilingual education programs?
Session 5 highlights the role of interaction in bilingual programs in relation to the degree of autonomy that teachers can and should develop.
Session 6 focuses on team-teaching as one of the key aspects of bilingual programs. The teachers will be guided to develop appropriate strategies to implement team-teaching.
Session 7 focuses on pedagogical bilingual instruction to develop translanguaging practices.
Session 8 highlights the role of interaction patterns to be used when instructing bilingually.
Session 9 encourages teachers to reflect on the process of becoming a in a bilingual teacher.

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