

**An Ethnographic Investigation of Kurdish Preschool Children
Learning Turkish Language and Literacy in Turkey**

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Declaration

I hereby declare that this is my own work and has not been written for me.



Dedication

To my mother and my fiancée for their endless encouragement and support.



Acknowledgements

First of all, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisors, Dr. Vally Lytra and Dr. John Jessel, for reading the drafts of my chapters and the thesis and offering me critical and insightful feedback. This work would not have been completed without their regular and supportive supervision. I would also like to thank Eve Gregory, who invited me to carry out my project at Goldsmiths and initially supervised the project. Unfortunately, she retired before the completion of the thesis. I would like to thank the Turkish Ministry of National Education for granting me a scholarship for my doctoral study and the department of Educational Studies at Goldsmiths for conference funding.

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Abstract

This study was inspired by my teaching experiences with young Kurdish preschool children in Turkey between 2009 and 2011. The study represents an ethnographic investigation into how these children learn Turkish upon entering nursery. It provides new insights into research on second language and literacy learning by addressing a gap in the literature on minority children whose language and culture have been suppressed in education and marginalised in society for an extended period of years. In theoretical terms I combine concepts from sociocultural approaches to second language and literacy learning (Drury, 2004; Fahim and Haghani, 2012; Kao, 2009) as well as the notion of translanguaging (García and Li Wei, 2014) to investigate children's language and literacy practices. I selected three children (one girl and twin boys) who were five years old at the time of the fieldwork as key participant children. The data included participant observations, audio- and video-recordings of interactions (mainly in the nursery and at the key participant children's homes), interviews with teachers, key participant children and their parents and the collection of relevant documents and artefacts.

The findings highlight the role of the nursery teacher and peers as mediators of the children's Turkish language and literacy learning. They reveal that the teacher models the language use, values and expectations of the curriculum in teacher-led activities. These activities are shaped by a prescriptive Curriculum for Early Years set by the Ministry of Education and by Turkish monolingual language policies. Languages are hierarchised, and the nursery's Turkish-only language policy assigns a higher value to the majority language (Turkish) over the minority language (Kurmanji), which is not officially recognised. While actively supporting Turkish language and literacy learning upon entering nursery, the teacher (a Kurmanji speaker) allows a limited institutional space for the use of Kurmanji. For example, she allows the children to respond to her questions in Kurmanji, but then repeats or rephrases the answers for them in Turkish. The study also highlights the reproduction of Turkish national ideology, which associates speaking Turkish with Turkish national identity. Crucially, the analysis of peer talk demonstrates how the children temporarily challenge established language hierarchies and ideologies by speaking Kurmanji. It simultaneously shows how the children draw on linguistic, cultural and social resources from home and the Kurdish

community to develop their Turkish language and literacy skills, including speaking and conceptual learning. By the end of the first term, Kurmanji language use in teacher-led activities and peer talk has diminished steadily as the children develop their Turkish language skills and internalise the values, beliefs and expectations of the curriculum and the setting. The study extends our understanding of the possibilities and limitations to the teacher's and pupils' agency in a nursery which aims to be strictly monolingual and monocultural.



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Chapter 1: The stories behind my research project

1.1 Introduction

Story... is an ancient and altogether human method. The human being alone among the creatures on the earth is a storytelling animal: sees the present rising out of a past, heading into a future; perceives reality in narrative form (Novak, 1975, p. 175).

The purpose of quoting such a definition is to emphasise throughout this chapter the way our past experiences play an effective role in shaping our future endeavours. Our experiences leave us with important questions which drive our intention to explore the answers. My intention to conduct this research was inspired by my experience of working as a preschool teacher. In this chapter, I shall tell my story along with that of one of my students, and I will indicate how my student's story left me with an important question, which will be explored in this dissertation: *How do Kurdish children learn Turkish upon entering nursery?* I shall begin by presenting my own story, followed by that of my student. Finally, I shall discuss the importance of conducting the current research.

1.2 My story

I was raised in a family setting as part of a Kurdish ethnic minority whose language and culture have been oppressed and marginalised for many decades. From the beginning of the 1920s, learning Kurdish language and culture was prohibited in schools and *madrasas* (religious schools) by the government of the newly established Republic of Turkey. Kurds were forced to learn and speak Turkish in public places, since dominant and nationalist discourses were implemented under nationalist policies that also covered educational ideologies. Subsequent governments have upheld the prohibition of Kurdish and the nationalist discourses under which Kurds have been marginalised. Being a Kurdish student in a village primary school in the east of Turkey was difficult for me in 1992, because the Kurdish language was not allowed to be taught and was prohibited from being spoken in schools. At primary school I did not understand what the teacher was saying, except a few basic instructions such as “come in, sit down and

stand up”. I remember little of my early days at primary school, other than a sense of darkness and confusion that remains with me today.

I was not the only one facing those challenges. My friends also struggled with Turkish. My first two years in primary school were not enjoyable, but I did begin to enjoy school after my Turkish began to improve. During my first year I found myself just wanting to go home. I did not talk to my friends as much as they talked to each other, although we talked to each other in Kurdish during break times as we shared a lack of knowledge of Turkish. When my friends and I faced a problem, we tried to get help from the older pupils. We were able to do this because there were only two teachers in the village school, and students were divided into two groups. One teacher was responsible for levels one, two and three (Years 1-3), and the other taught levels four and five (Years 4 -5).

I was totally unfamiliar with the language of instruction when I started school, and I felt like a fish out of water. In *Lost in Translation. A Life in a New Language*, Hoffman (1989) highlights how difficult it can be when we try to make sense of our learning in a new language. Hoffman is from a Polish-Jewish family and emigrated from Poland to the USA. She describes how she tried to make sense of her second language:

The words I learn don't stand for things in the same unquestioned way they did in my native tongue. 'Rive' in Polish was a vital sound, energized with the essence of riverhood, of my being immersed in rivers. 'River' in English is cold a word without an aura (Hoffman, 1989, p.106).

At the beginning it is difficult to understand learning in a second language, but an identity transformation takes place as we become more competent. Another immigrant scholar (a Russian-American bilingual) points out the identity transformation: 'My "Americanization" took place at all levels of my existence...I had lost not only my family and my familiar surroundings, but also my ethnic, cultural and class identity' (Yakobson, 1994, p.119). Yakobson's experiences bear similarities to my story. I shall share and discuss my experiences below, illustrating how as Kurds we have been told to forget our language and identity. I experienced this when I was in secondary school.

It was an ordinary day in my first year of secondary school, and I was trying to solve a crossword puzzle in a Turkish newspaper during break time with my classmates. One clue asked for a word for water in ‘old language’. For the answer, we shouted out ‘av’ (water in Kurdish) with confidence. But Orhan, one of our classmates who was sitting behind us and was interested in history, laughed and said that the word ‘av’ is Kurdish, and went on to say that what the puzzle wanted was a word from the Ottoman Turkish. Then Orhan confidently told us that the word for water is ‘ma’ in Ottoman Turkish.

This exchange took place in the Autumn of 1997, but whenever I come across similar questions in puzzles, I recall that day and think about how we were told implicitly and explicitly to forget Kurdish. Even the crossword bypassed Kurdish and referred back to Ottoman Turkish when referring to the “old language”. After that we were told to speak Turkish during our break times in future. Throughout my entire school education I did not witness any of my teachers or lecturers admitting that Kurdish is a language, until one of my lecturers did so when I was on an undergraduate course. We were told explicitly that speaking Kurdish was forbidden except at home or in the village.

1.3 My student Azad’s story

Years later, in 2009, I became a preschool teacher after graduating from university. I was appointed by the Turkish Ministry of Education to work in a suburb of the city of Van where the majority of Kurdish families had migrated from other cities such as Şırnak and Siirt because of conflict between the state and the PKK (the Kurdistan Workers Party), which was demanding autonomy within Turkey.

My first days as a teacher in the nursery reminded me of my time in the primary school. It was Azad (a pseudonym) in particular who stirred my memories of primary school. Azad was a six-year-old-boy, and like many of his friends he could not speak or understand Turkish. He was quite shy and unsocial and his behaviour and relationships with his peers and myself as his teacher bore strong similarities to my own experiences at primary school. When I looked at him, I suddenly remembered my days in primary school. I tried to get to know more about Azad and find out whether his

family could speak Turkish—especially his mother, because the majority of Kurdish women over 40 can understand and speak only a very minimal amount of Turkish. What I found was that Azad and the rest of his family spoke Kurdish at home, and his mother could not speak Turkish or understand it. This is what his mother told me when she brought Azad to the nursery. They had migrated from Şırnak in the mid-1990s and in his first weeks at school Azad either tried to communicate with his peers in Kurdish or stood in silence. He was shy, and stayed quiet during most interactions, but his facial expressions demonstrated his need to socialise with his peers. As he began to participate in classroom activities, he gained confidence in interactions with his peers and me. Azad started speaking in Turkish (although rarely) and began to understand instructions from me and other teachers after five weeks. His learning of the Turkish language was the focus of my attention and his progress interested me.

My interest in observing Azad's language practice at the nursery inspired me to learn more about the use of language. I thought it would be beneficial to find out which languages Azad's family practiced at home. In the second week, I met his mother when she brought him to school. This was rare where I worked because older siblings would generally bring their brother or sister to school. I immediately realised that she could not speak Turkish, so we talked in Kurdish. She told me that at home they spoke Kurdish and watched Kurdish TV channels such as Roj TV (Today in English). This TV channel was mainly watched by Kurds in Turkey until 2012 when its license was cancelled by the Danish authorities after it was accused of links to the PKK. Azad's mother explained that he was relaxed and talkative at home.

Studies such as Gregory et al (2008) found that children from ethnic minority backgrounds may be reluctant to use their mother tongue in the school environment, even if their language is permitted. For example, one student said that he was not brave enough to speak Bangla. Such findings reflect my own observations when I worked as a teacher, when I observed that my students felt that Kurdish was not allowed in the school setting. During their early days at nursery I explained some instructions to them in Kurdish to minimize the children's stress, even though this was not permitted in the classroom setting.

1.4 My journey towards a PhD

Azad and other students inspired me to explore how children start to learn a second language in more depth. What I was trying to understand as part of my job was how children like Azad come to understand and speak a second language so quickly. My own experiences and observations when teaching Kurdish children urged me to acquire a deeper understanding in relation to this idea. My first assumption was that the children's participation in classroom activities played an important role in their second language learning, whilst their interactions with individuals at nursery and outside it supported their learning. During that time, I decided that if I were to undertake postgraduate study, this would be the area in which I would concentrate.

However, I found that there was limited research on the subject. The Kurdish Studies Network¹ has a bibliography of studies on Kurds which includes more than 300 studies, some of which also explored the human rights issues that Kurds have faced (Bayir, 2013; Toksabai, 2010; Yıldız and Georgina, 2004). Others examine the relationships between language and identity construction among Kurds in the UK (Yılmaz, 2015). There are studies that examine Turkey's Kurdish language policy (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012) and the educational experiences of Kurdish children attending primary school (Çoskun et al., 2011). Another recent study explores language practices of Kurdish children in primary school in Turkey (Gökalp, 2015). The studies by Çoskun et al. and Gökalp will be discussed in greater depth in section 3.7.

In recent years, there has been more discussion on Kurdish as a language of instruction. In 2012, the Turkish government introduced legislation stating that Kurdish could be studied as a subject in secondary school. Earlier legislation allowed universities to offer undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Kurdish. These changes will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. While there have been discussions on Kurdish in general terms, my study explores the much more specific subject of how Kurdish preschool children learn Turkish upon entering nursery. My research takes a sociocultural approach, and is important because it involves an investigation into how young children from an oppressed minority learn a second language. I believe that my thesis will contribute to research on second language learning as existing literature

¹ <http://kurdishstudiesnetwork.net>

indicates that studies (Drury, 2004a; Thomson, 1995; Wong Fillmore, 1991) exploring second language learning have mainly focused on children learning a second language in western English-speaking countries such as the UK and the USA. There are few studies that examine indigenous minority children learning a second language in nurseries in non-western countries (Howard, 2004; Owodally, 2010).

1.5 Outline of the thesis

In this thesis, I explore my main research question and six other research questions. The main research question is: *How do Kurdish children learn Turkish upon entering nursery in Turkey?* This leads to six further questions:

- How do the children develop Turkish language and literacy in teacher-led activities?
- How does the teacher support the children's language and literacy learning?
- How is the dominant Turkish national ideology reproduced in language and literacy activities?
- What is the role of Kurmanji in learning Turkish language and literacy, and how does it change over time?
- How do children learn Turkish language and literacy from their peers?
- How do children use their linguistic, cultural and social resources and knowledge from their home and Kurdish community settings to develop their Turkish language and literacy learning?

The thesis consists of 8 chapters.

Chapter 1 presents the background that inspired me to conduct the study and shows how the research question emerged.

Chapter 2 presents and discusses the historical, political, educational and social contexts of the current study.

Chapter 3 presents and discusses sociocultural approaches to second language learning, and indicates their relevance to the current study. In Chapter 3 I also

combine these approaches with translanguaging (rooted in sociolinguistics and language education).

Chapter 4 discusses the methodology of the study and highlights its relevance to the current study.

Chapter 5 outlines the design of the study, and discuss data collection and data analysis methods.

Chapter 6 presents and analyses the instructional interactions that take place between the teacher and children.

Chapter 7 presents and analyses peer interactions during activities such as free playtime and art.

Chapter 8 discusses the study's findings and offers a conclusion and indicates future research directions.

Chapter 2: The context of the study

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall provide an account of the historical, political, educational and social contexts of my study. Firstly, I will define who the Kurds are, and secondly I will discuss the Kurds' situation during the Ottoman Empire. The chapter will move on to discuss their situation since the founding of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and offer a historical, political and social account of the community in which I conducted my study. I will then discuss the evolution of Kurdish language and literacy from the Ottoman Empire to the present. The chapter will close with an account of Turkish national education (including preschool education) and an examination of the importance of Turkish language and identity within the country's national education curriculum.

2.2 Who are the Kurds?

The Seljuqs, who established the Seljuq Empire and the Sultanate of Rum (1040-1038), were the first to use Kurdistan as a geographical term. This area covered the northern regions beyond the Araxes river, the west as far as Sivas and Marash, south to the Mesopotamian plain around Kirkuk (Northern Iraq), and east beyond the city of Kirmanshah in what is now western Iran (McDowall, 2007). The Ottoman Empire used the term Kurdistan to refer to the province of Diyarbakir to the south east of Turkey. Today, Kurds live mainly in northern Syria, west Iran, northern Iraq and southeast Turkey. In west Iran, there is a region called Kordestan that includes nearly a third of the Kurdish inhabited territories (Bruinessen, 1992). Similarly, after the 2003 Iraq war, an official region was recognised in northern Iraq. According to the Iraqi constitution (2005 Article 4), Kurdish is an official language, along with Arabic. The constitution declares that:

The right of Iraqis to educate their children in their mother tongue, such as Turkmen and Armenian shall be guaranteed in government educational institutions in accordance with educational guidelines, or in any other language in private educational institutions. (Iraqi Constitution, 2005, p.3).

Although Kurds live in different Middle Eastern countries, such developments have been seen as victories for all Kurds and have encouraged other demands such as political representation and language rights in education, especially in Turkey.

The majority of Kurds in Turkey are Sunni Muslims who follow the Shafi'i school of Islamic law. This is one of four schools of Islamic Law; the others are Hanafi, Maliki and Hanbali. Turks are also Sunni Muslims, but they follow the Hanafi school. However, some Kurds practise the other branch of Islam, Alevi, a heterodox Islamic group whose beliefs and spiritual practices are different from Sunni Muslims. For example, they do not generally fast in Ramadan or practise the prayers Sunni Muslims hold every Friday. Instead they have their own religious ceremonies which take place in a *Cem Evi* rather than a Sunni Muslim mosque (Bruinessen, 1996).

In Turkey, Kurds speaking Kurmanji are mainly Sunni Muslims, whereas a small fraction of *Zaza* speakers are Alevis (Bruinessen, 1992) (see Figure 2.1 below). The Kurds in my study are Sunni Muslims who speak Kurmanji. They practise Friday prayer and attend Quran classes held in mosques. Kurdish society is generally considered tribal, and families and clans play an important role. Kurds mainly come from an agricultural society in rural areas in eastern and southern Turkey. However, socio-economic and political changes—such as the conflict between the PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*/Kurdistan Workers Party) and the state—have undermined this structure. A significant number of Kurdish families have now migrated to cities such as Izmir and Istanbul in western Turkey. This migration to western cities either occurred voluntarily or was enforced by inter-ethnic conflict. Public education also has an important impact on Kurdish society, and has undermined the traditional tribal structure. The family structure is generally considered to consist of large and extended families. However, migration, public education and economic factors have led to changes, and families have become smaller and less connected (Meho and MacLaughlin, 2001, pp.4-5).

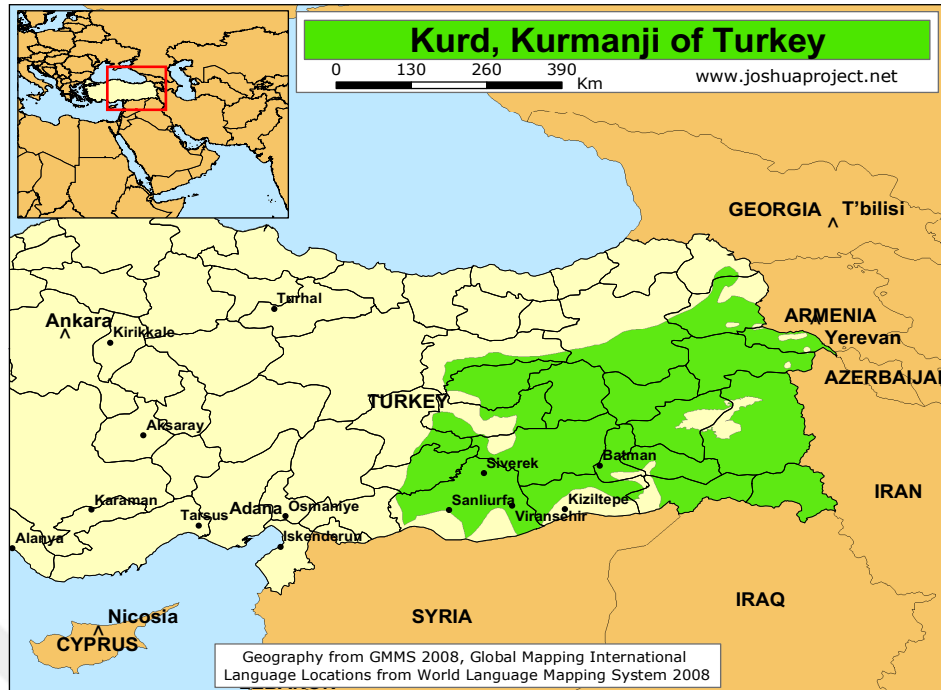


Figure 2.1: Kurdish populated areas of Turkey (shaded green)²

Figure 2.1 shows the Kurdish populated areas in Turkey. The exact figures for the global Kurdish population are not available for political reasons in states such as Turkey and Iran in which many Kurds live, but it is estimated that there are at least 30 million Kurds in the Middle East and in western countries such as Germany and the UK (Skutnabb-Kangas and Fernandes, 2008). The number of Kurds living in Turkey is about 17 percent (13 million) of Turkey's population (75 million), Turks make up 74 percent (56 million) of the population and the remaining 9 percent (6 million) is made up of other ethnic groups such as Arabs and Armenians, according to the KONDA research group (Erdem, 2013). In this research census, the Turkish population was asked how they define themselves in terms of ethnic identity (Erdem, 2013). The percentage of Kurds and other ethnic groups is likely to be higher than figures show, because minority groups do not consider it safe to express their identity—particularly those who live in the west of the country. If they expose their identity, they risk persecution and discrimination in the environments in which they live or work. This does not mean that all Kurds who live in western Turkey keep their identity secret. There are other reasons why this figure may alter. Skutnabb-Kangas and Fernandes

² https://joshuaproject.net/people_groups/12877/TU

(2008) suggest that states such as Turkey and Iran are not keen to find out the exact size of their Kurdish populations, and these countries have not included Kurds in their census because Kurds have not questioned their ethnicity or mother tongue for political and ideological reasons (ibid).

The Kurdish language belongs to the north-western group of Irano-Aryan languages. It is not a unified language, meaning that it has dialects which are separated into two groups with distinct differences. The first group, Kurmanji, which is the northern Kurdish dialect, is spoken by the majority of Kurds in Turkey and Syria. Families in my study speak this dialect. The second group, Sorani, is spoken by Kurds in Iraq. Kurmanji and Sorani both produced a literary language (Blau, 1989), but it is not a common heritage because Kurds have never possessed the political unity that might have created a common literary language (Edmonds, 1971, p.88). Kurdish was not used as the official language by Kurdish principalities such as Hasnawi and Dostaki around the 10th and 11th centuries. Instead, Arabic and Persian were the official languages, and Kurdish was mainly used as a means of verbal communication (Nebez, 2000). Section 2.5 will discuss the Kurdish language and literacy development in greater depth.

2.3 The Ottoman period

The majority of scholars agree that Kurds enjoyed autonomy as Kurdish principalities until the late Ottoman period (1828-1908), during which time the principalities lost their autonomy. Yeğen (1999) suggests that the Ottoman Empire had two structural characteristics; it was multi-ethnic and multi-denominational—although there was a religion-based hierarchy with Muslims at the top (Yeğen, 1999). According to Yeğen (1999), there were religious communities in the empire including Muslims and Christians.

During the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman language—or Ottoman Turkish (*Lisan-I Osmaniye*)—which is made up of Persian, Turkish and Arabic (Agoston and Masters, 2009)—was spoken until the First Constitutional Era (1876-78), after which Turkish language written in the Arabic alphabet became the official and instructional language in education (Balçık, 2002). In fact, the Ottoman Turkish was considered prestigious, and was the *lingua franca* of the elite (Imber, 2002, p.3). However, it was

not modern Turkish, which was introduced by Atatürk after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. One of the main differences between Ottoman Turkish and modern Turkish is the alphabet; the latter is written in the Roman alphabet following the 1928 language reform (*dil devrimi*). Turks used the Arabic alphabet, which is written from right to left, from the 11th century until the language reform (Saydam, 2007, p.13). The new Turkish alphabet included 29 letters (8 vowels and 21 consonants). The vowels are a, e, ı, i, o, ö, u, ü and the consonants are b, c, ç, d, f, g, ğ, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, r, s, ş, t, v, y, z. The Turkish alphabet does not include the letters q, w and x. Reforms were aimed at removing many words borrowed from Arabic and Persian, and printing books in old characters for instruction language was banned after the reform (Lewis, 1999, p.37).

Education in Kurdish areas mainly comprised religious schools until the late Ottoman era. The *sıbyan* schools, also known as the Quran schools, were elementary level and the *medresas* were for higher education (Ceylan, 2007). In these schools there was limited emphasis on the development of critical thought, and those who attended medresas were likely to take positions in the administration (Gündüz, 2009). There were, however, some Kurdish medresas in which influential Kurdish scholars were taught (Çoskun et al., 2011). Kurdish medresas include the Sitrabasa medresa of Diyarbakir, the Red medresa (*Medresa Sor*) of Cizre, the medresa Bayezid and the medresa of Shemdinan. In these schools Kurdish, Arabic and Persian languages were taught, and they were places in which Kurdish cultural practices thrived (Zinar, 1993). In other words, these medrasas were multilingual. Although Arabic was emphasised as the language of the Qu'ran, Kurdish was the language of instruction. Kurdish scholars such as Fegiyê Teyran and Mele Ehmed Cizîrî graduated from these medrasas and are considered to be the founders of the modern Kurdish literature (Zinar, 1993). Zinar (1993) describes the curriculum of these medrasas as including Arabic and Kurdish subjects.

However, Medrasas gradually lost their importance during the late Ottoman period because significant developments took place in education, which was modernised and spread from the centre to the peripheries. There was also an increase in schooling in general (Ceylan, 2007). The late Ottoman period was a time in which the modernization of the Ottoman Empire was taking place in terms of administration and education (Mardin, 1989, p.27). On the other hand, Kurdish nationalism emerged

after the disintegration of the empire. As Özoğlu's (2001, p.404) study concluded: 'Kurdish nationalism was not a cause but, rather, a result of the Ottoman Empire's disintegration'. It is clear that the beginning of Kurdish national awareness coincided with the late Ottoman period. The first Kurds who challenged Sultan Abdul Hamit's regime (1879-1909) stood against the regime as Ottoman citizens. However, ethnic emphasis later became effective (McDowall, 1996). Kurdish nationalists who came mainly from prominent families formed organizations such as Society for the Elevation of Kurdistan (*Kürdistan Teali Cemiyeti*) in Istanbul in 1908. Some members of these families worked in official positions (Bruinessen, 1992). After the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, a new nation state was established in 1923 on the Empire's remaining land. The following section deals with political and historical changes relating to the Kurds in Turkey during the Republic era.

2.4 The Republic Era

The Republic of Turkey was established as a nation state in 1923. From the 1920s to the end of 1980s, the state refused to accept that there were Kurds in Turkey (Yeğen, 1999), and Kurds were referred to as 'mountain-Turks' (*dağ Türkleri*). It is worth looking at policy reforms such as the Language Reform of 1928 (*Dil Devrimi*) and the Surname Law (1934), as well as institutions like the Turkish History Foundation (*Türk Tarih Kurumu*). The new state aimed at homogenising minorities such as Kurds and Armenians through reforms and institutionalisation. The Turkish History Foundation has played a significant role in canonising and reproducing the official historical discourse that has been accepted by a significant number of historians in contemporary Turkey (Öktem, 2004). The official discourse highlights the unwillingness of the Turkish state to accept the existence of Kurds (Yeğen, 1996).

The goal of language reform was to modernise Turkey and close the gap between the language of the elite and the public (Aytürk, 2004). The language reform saw the Arabic-Persian alphabet changed to the Latin alphabet, and was partly aimed at 'break[ing] Turkey's ties with the Islamic east' (Lewis, 1999, p.27). The regime and its intellectual advocates tried to legitimize the language revolution via a new thesis which claimed that the Turkish language was the origin of all languages, including

Kurdish, and that such languages had benefitted from it (Aytürk, 2004). Thereafter, the Sun Language Theory was based on the notion that the world's civilization came from the Turks (ibid). There were campaigns to Turkify the Kurdish regions; during the new era the Kurdish names of villages and mountains were changed to Turkish names. The symbol of the Turkish nation—the flag decorated with a crescent and star—was engraved on hills in the south and east of Turkey (Öktem, 2004) along with slogans such as, 'Happy is he who calls himself as a Turk' (*Ne Mutlu Türküm Diyene*), which is Atatürk's famous motto. According to Eissenstat (2003), this motto is aimed at creating a sense of 'otherisation' among other ethnic minorities such as Kurds, Armenians and Greeks. Eissenstat's analysis is important, as the motto shows how the new regime demarcates the boundaries between the dominant majority (the true Turks) and the suppressed minorities (including Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians). In fact, it sends a clear political message to the others that they would need to assume a Turkish identity in order to be part of the new nation.

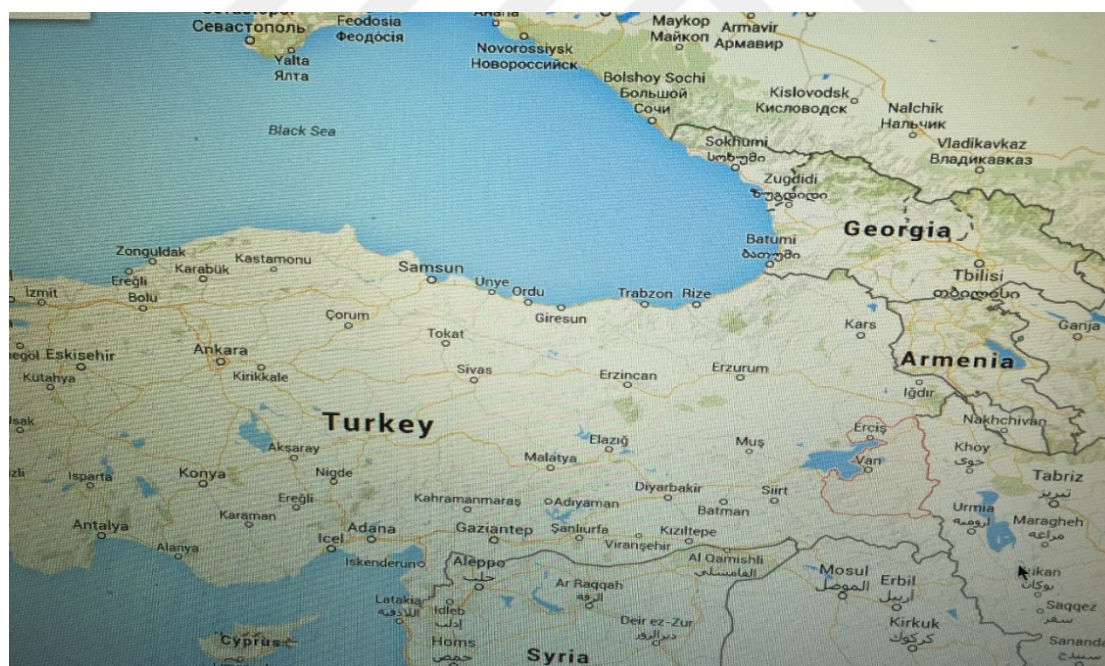
During the 1950s and 1960s the country experienced economic and political liberation as modern Turkey became a multi-party state. It was a crucial time, during which the ruling Kemalist elite lost the election. In the 1950 elections, the Democratic Party (*Adalet Partisi*) won the majority of votes against the Republican People's Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi*); this was a historical time that marked the end of Turkey's single party system. During this period, a new Kurdish movement emerged, demanding cultural and economic development for the Kurdish regions. The movement initially had support from the Turkish Left, but that support was taken away when it became more radical and separatist after 1970 (Bruinessen, 1997). There were many different clandestine Kurdish organisations leading up to the 1980 military coup (Bruinessen, 2000). One of these organizations was the PKK (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan/Kurdistan Workers Party*) led by Abdullah Öcalan who is currently imprisoned on Imrali island, Bursa, Turkey. The PKK was established in 1978 and began operating in 1979. The PKK began by attacking one of the tribes in southeast Turkey, claiming it was a collaborator with the Turkish state. The PKK's ideology is a mixture of Stalinism and nationalism, although the party defines itself as Marxist-Leninist (White, 2000, p.136). Other scholars such as Ergil (2000) argue that the organization is Kurdish nationalist as well as Marxist-Leninist. The PKK is considered one of the most important secular movements in the Middle East (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012). In 1984, it declared a

war for the liberation of Kurdistan from Turkey (Bruinessen, 2000). The PKK continued to demand liberation for Kurdistan until 2000. However, this demand changed throughout the 2000s after the capture of Öcalan in 1999. Since 1999, the PKK has sought ways to create political goals to stay within Turkey, rather than fighting for an independent Kurdistan. These goals are a democratic republic with democratic autonomy and democratic confederalism (Akkaya and Jongerden, 2012). The following subsection discusses how the displacement of Kurdish people within the country resulted from conflict between the Turkish state and the PKK.

2.5 Kurdish internal displacement

In this section, I shall discuss Kurdish displacement within Turkey as the families in my study migrated from other cities to Van, where I conducted my pilot study and main fieldwork.

Figure 2.2 The region of Van in east Turkey (outlined in red)³



Approximately one million people, mainly Kurds, were displaced between 1984 and 1999 due to the conflict discussed above. Villages were evacuated by the government

³ Source:

<https://www.google.co.uk/maps/place/Van,+Turkey/@38.5464001,39.1043778,6z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x4012699af06db69f:0x3d90e48a01e79b6!8m2!3d38.3679417!4d43.7182787?dcr=0>

under emergency laws, but some people left their villages voluntarily because of the PKK militants, as villagers refused to provide them with help. The destination of these people became either nearby cities such as Van and Diyarbakir, or cities in western Turkey such as Istanbul and Izmir (Betül-Çelik, 2005; Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre/IDMC, 2010). Those who migrated to Istanbul and Izmir faced challenges because of their ethnic identity. Betül-Çelik (2005) interviewed displaced Kurdish people in Istanbul regarding the problems they faced when arriving there. They were turned away by Turkish landlords when they tried to rent apartments, they were more likely to be involved in conflict with their neighbours, and the ethnic label “Kurd” was used by their neighbours as a pejorative term (Betül-Çelik, 2005). Displacement placed other burdens on them, particularly on women. These burdens included linguistic barriers, unemployment and illiteracy (ibid).

The pejorative labelling of Kurds is common in the cities of western Turkey in which many Kurds live. Kurds are defined as ‘easterners’ (*doğulu*), rather than Kurdish, whereas “westerners” (*batılı*) are more commonly used to refer to Turks. According to Gorgas (2009), this definition comes from the Kemalist ideology, which created non-physical borders dividing the country into east and west. As highlighted above, the dominant national ideology defined the Kurds as mountain Turks from the 1920s to the end of 1980s. It could be argued that Kurds have strong feelings of alienation from Turks, and a distinct majority/minority relationship exists due to conflict and the Kemalist ideology. For example, one study showed that there is a low tendency toward intermarriage between Turks and Kurds (Gündüz-Hoşgör and Smits, 2002). The study concluded that the tendency toward intermarriage was only 2.4 percent—or one in about 40 marriages—meaning that for both Kurds and Turks there was a strong tendency towards marrying within one’s own ethnic group.

The state passed laws such as the Law on Compensation for Damage Arising from Terror (Law No. 5233) for the displaced Kurdish people. This law came into effect on 27 July 2004, and coincided with Turkey’s accession talks to enter the EU (Kurban, 2012). In other words, Kurds were able to demand full compensation for material losses such as land, homes and possessions, which took place during the displacement period from 1987 to 2004 (Resmi Gazete/Official Gazette, 2004).

However, many of the Kurds who had been displaced had no wish to return to their villages. The reasons for this were mainly economic, since they had rebuilt their lives in the cities to which they had been forced to relocate (Kurban, 2012). Despite offering compensation for physical damages, psychological support was not provided for displaced persons, especially children. It is important to provide psychological support for children who have been affected both directly and indirectly by war, because conflict has a negative impact on children's emotional well-being. Young children who witness violence can show emotional distress (Gelir, 2013, p.27).

2.6 The development of Kurdish language and literacy

The aim of this section is to discuss and analyse the development of Kurdish language and literacy. There is no exact date on the origin of Kurdish literature, although poems in Kurdish were written as early as the 15th century (Blau, 1989, pp.47-8) and books in Kurdish were written in verse during the Ottoman era. The majority of these books were written in the Arabic alphabet, with others in Armenian, Yezidi or Assyrian alphabets (Malmisani, 2006, p.18). One of the turning points in the history of the Kurdish language was the 17th century, during which Kurdish had its 'golden age' as it was valued among the government elites in the Kurdish principalities at that time (Öpengin, 2012, p.157). Filiz (2016) argued that this golden age offered the Kurdish culture and language a more elevated status. According to Nezan (1989), there were 17 strategically placed principalities with a wide autonomy, including Ardalan, Bohtan, Rowanduz and Hisn Kaif. They protected the Ottoman Empire against Iran (Nezan, 1989, p.35). These principalities were destroyed by the Ottoman military in the end of the 19th century (Bruinessen, 1989). As their importance waned, a more centralized bureaucracy expanded into the Kurdish regions (Bruinessen, 1989, p.41). The collapse of the principalities and the expansion of centralized bureaucracy also forced Kurdish intellectuals into exile, where they established the Kurmanji press in Cizre and Botan dialects (southeast Turkey) using Arabic script (Haig and Matras, 2002, p.4).

During the Republic era, Kurdish language was banned after the establishment of Modern Turkey, when the Law on the Unification of Education was passed in 1924. But it continued to be studied outside Turkey. In the 1930s, for example, a Latin-script

Kurdish alphabet was introduced by one of the Kurdish intellectuals, Celadet Bedir Khan, during his exile. It was inspired by Turkey's own language reform (Haig and Matras, 2002, p.4). This alphabet includes 31 letters (8 vowels and 23 consonants). The vowels are a, o, î, i, ê, e, û, u, and the consonants are b, c, ç, d, f, g, h, j, k, l, m, n, p, q, r, s, ş, t, v, w, x, y, z (Gündoğdu, 2016). Today, literary Kurdish is written in Roman and (Kurmanji) Arabic (Sorani) script, and local dialects within these groups differ from each other (Edmonds, 1971, p.88).

Restrictions on the Kurdish language have been partially lifted since 1990. But there are no still Kurdish nurseries, primary or secondary schools. Instead, the restrictions have been lifted in the areas of publishing, broadcasting and higher education. This means that restrictions still exist with regard to education, although the change in official discourse has encouraged Kurds to write and publish books in Kurdish. For example, Avesta Publishing, founded in 1995, publishes books in Kurdish and also translates books into Kurdish (Bianet, 2013).

The current government, the AKP (Justice and Development Party), launched a television channel in Kurdish in 2009, broadcasting in Kurmanji and Sorani dialects. The channel—TRT Kurdish, which is still in operation—is part of the Turkish Radio and Television Cooperation (TRT). It could be argued that that the idea behind this was to deter Kurds from demanding education in their mother tongue. The ruling AKP hoped that the TRT Kurdish would satisfy Kurds by broadcasting news in Kurdish (Olson, 2011, p.26). Similarly, in 2012, the AKP announced that: “our students will have the opportunity to learn local languages and dialects, under the heading of existing languages and dialects” (Aktar, 2012). This means that the Kurdish language can now be taught in schools (at primary and secondary levels), on the condition that enough students sign up for the classes (Kalafat, 2017). At the present, regulations allow Kurdish children to choose Kurdish classes in secondary schools. According to statistics, the number of students who chose language courses including Kurdish and Arabic in primary and secondary schools was over 50,000 in 2013-2014, rising to around 85,000 in the 2014-2015 year. At the time of writing, statistics for 2015-2016 have not been released (Kalafat, 2017).

It could also be argued that the introduction of an MA course in Kurdish language, the opening of Kurdish language departments in Universities and the TRT

Kurdish channel would increase the visibility of Kurdish in education and media. Yet when Kurdish contexts in Turkey are taken into account, the issue is greater than publishing and broadcasting, as Kurds were officially denied basic human rights from 1923 to until the beginning of the 1990s. Although restrictions have been lifted on the Kurdish language in Turkey, it still has a lower prestige in society. Kurdish is still not recognised as an official language and is not taught in preschool or primary levels. It is worth highlighting that there are no Kurdish nurseries either.

2.7 The Turkish educational system

The Turkish national education system comprises formal and vocational education. Formal education runs from preschool years right up to higher education, while informal vocational education includes distance learning, apprenticeship training and open higher education (Ministry of National Education, 2005).

The roots of Turkish national education date back the late Ottoman Empire era between 1776 and 1839, during which time elementary schooling became compulsory and military schools were opened (ibid). Later, schools for people with special needs such as hearing and speaking disabilities were opened. In 1857, the Ministry of General Education of the Ottoman state was established for the first time. Since then, the Ministry has survived under different names (ibid).

The Turkish national education system underwent major developments following the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. These developments included the unification of education under the Law on Education in 1924 and the formalization of secular education in 1926. Turkish became the language of instruction in all schools in 1928. National schools were opened to promote literacy among the country's citizens (ibid). From the 1940s onwards, Turkey attempted to impose an eight-year compulsory education period covering primary and lower secondary schools. However, subsequent governments did not apply this legislation until 1997, when the Government officially began compulsory education for 8 years in order to increase the country's schooling rates (Güven, 2012). According to this system, children started in primary school when they were 7 years old. However, in 2012 the

current government introduced a new education system, increasing years of compulsory schooling from 8 to 12, and dividing the curriculum into three levels (primary, lower and upper secondary). Each level comprises 4 years of education (OECD, 2013). This system is described as 4+4+4. Children now start in primary school at the age of six. Preschool education is still optional, but is predicted to become compulsory in the near future.

There are four general aims of Turkish national education. The first is to produce citizens who are loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, which is based on the constitution and on Atatürk's principles and reforms. This aim also strives to internalise, protect and enhance the Turkish national identity and the country's ethical, humane and moral values; to love and respect families and the nation and be aware of individual responsibilities towards the democratic, secular and state laws of the Republic of Turkey, which are based on human rights and the main principles of the constitution.

The second aim is to generate creative and productive individuals who are healthy physically, emotionally, ethically and intellectually, and have clear responsibilities towards Turkish society as well as protecting freedom of academic thought and respect for human rights.

Thirdly, the Turkish education system strives to prepare students for life by improving their interests, abilities and talents and giving them the required knowledge, skills and teamwork strengths. At the same time, it aims to provide students with satisfying careers which will contribute to the overall wealth of Turkish society.

Lastly, the system supports the welfare and happiness of Turkish citizens and Turkish society as a whole. It also aims to support and accelerate the financial, social and cultural development of Turkish citizens by encouraging national unity and integrity and making the Turkish nation a constructive, creative and privileged partner of modern civilization.⁴

These four general aims are consistent with the ideology of the Turkish national education system. Kaplan (1999) argued that this ideology reflects Kemalism, and that

⁴ Preschool education programme, 2013, p.7 (researcher's translation from Turkish).

Turkish national education includes the key elements of Kemalist ideology. According to Atatürk, the aim of education is to make the new generation loyal to the Turkish nation and state, and prepare its citizens to fight those who are regarded as the enemy of the Turkish nation (ibid, p.140). The first aim of Turkish national education reflects how Atatürk's nationalism (Kemalism) and the Turkish national identity should be inculcated throughout education from preschool years. The first aim requires schools to generate citizens who should be loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk, and internalise, protect and enhance Turkish national identity. For example, the tenth of November—the anniversary of Atatürk's death—is marked every year, and the second week of November is called Atatürk's week in the educational curriculum. The next subsection will further discuss two important elements of the Turkish national education, namely language and the national identity.

2.7.1 The importance of language and national identity in the Turkish national education

The roots of the nationalist outlook in Turkey's education policy can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century, when Turkish sociologist Ziya Gökalp influenced the shape of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's reforms (Parla, 1985). Gökalp (1959, p.244) described education as 'the adaptation of individuals to the national culture', and argued that a child imbibes national culture through the life of the tribe. However, such tribal culture is incomplete, at which point the child needs to acquire the remainder of his or her national cultural needs through education. Thus, Gökalp suggested that the aims of Turkish education should be to pursue: 'Turkism, Islamism and Modernism', and that Turkish children should be taught Turkish language, culture and history as essential elements of the Turkish curriculum, in order to gain knowledge of the national culture (ibid, p.233). Gökalp's ideas were influential throughout the Young Turks Era (1890-1918) and his ideology became a tool for the Committee of Union and Progress (*İttihad ve Terakki Cemiyeti*, CUP), which was created by the Young Turks (Ungör, 2011, p.178).

According to Ungör (2011), the Young Turks viewed educational policies as tools with which to assimilate minorities such as the Kurds and Armenians. A national education ideology was built in the 1920s, in which the new Turkish nation state was

founded. The founders of the new state—including Atatürk and İsmet İnönü, the first and second president respectively—played a crucial role in deciding the aims of the education system, which were intended to reinforce and promote Turkish nationalism (Kaplan, 2002). Bayar (2010) maintained that the new state used the Turkish language as a tool to homogenise the nation with a goal of turning citizens into real Turks through linguistic assimilation during the 1920s and 1930s (ibid, p.125). This process was enabled through a series of laws, including the Language Reform of 1928, the Law on the Unification of Education in 1924 and the Surname Law in 1934, as discussed in section 2.4. This ideology also imagined a new Turkish national identity. As section 2.7 indicated, one important aim of Turkish national education is to reproduce the Turkish national identity, of which the Turkish language is a core element.

Language has been one of the main standpoints of modern Turkey, helping the country's centralising, homogenising and secularising policies, especially its education curricula. Turkish is not only a basic spoken language, but also acts as a marker of what it means to be a Turk (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012). As such, ethnic minorities (such as Kurds) and both ethnic and religious minorities (such as Armenians) are expected to learn and speak Turkish. Indeed, they were forced to do so in the early republic years through such policies. One could argue that these policies were successful, as ethnic minorities were compelled to use a single language (Turkish) by both politicians and ordinary people.

One of the turning points for the Kurds was the Law on the Unification of Education, which was passed in 1924. All educational institutions were unified under the Ministry of Education, and the law enabled the Kemalist ruling elite to promote the Turkification of society on the grounds that it prohibited the use of any language other than Turkish as languages of instruction (Balçık, 2008). Schools and Kurdish institutions such as Madresas, in which some Kurdish scholars had been taught, were forbidden under this law (Çoşkun et al., 2011). Another defining moment was the Surname Law 2431, which was passed in 1934. According to this law, all Turks must have a Turkish first name and surname, in the same way that the Turks in Bulgaria had been forced to change their names to Bulgarian ones (Eminov, 1999). Foreign names and surnames were forbidden (Çoşkun et al., 2011). This was significant because prior to that law people were often defined according to their ethnicity, and given names such

as Ali the Kurd. The 1934 law also banned titles such as Pasha (*paşa*) and Agha (*ağa*) (Resmi Gazete/Official Gazette, 1934). It could be said that Kurds have been the main target of the ethnic and linguistic homogenization of modern Turkey (Balçık, 2008). Other ethnic minorities, such the Armenians and the *Rum* (Greek-Orthodox), have also been treated adversely under the laws of modern Turkey.

The state's Turkish only language policy (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012) not only prohibited Kurdish as a language of instruction, but also undermined its use in everyday life. For example, educated Kurds began to speak more Turkish than Kurdish. This is in line with Zeyneloğlu et al.'s (2016) study, which investigated language shift among Kurds in Turkey and suggested that speaking Turkish increases with formal schooling. Other scholars (such as Hosgör-Gündüz and Smits, 2003) have also highlighted the relationship between speaking Turkish and education among Turkish Kurds. As well as formal schooling, other factors such as military service (Ergil, 2000) and the construction sector require Kurds (mainly men) to learn Turkish. As breadwinners, men are more likely to work in the construction sector in other parts of Turkey, especially in Istanbul. For example, men in Van (in east Turkey) go to west Turkey as temporary workers in the construction sector. Such factors require men to learn the majority language, but this does not mean that men stop speaking Kurdish in their homes once they have learned Turkish.

Similarly, more men than women learn Turkish at school, according to the Turkish Statistics Institute (2013), and the percentage of Turkish illiteracy among women was higher than that of men in Kurdish areas. However, illiteracy rates are very different for Kurdish, and Öpengin's (2012) study found that older Kurdish women have a greater proficiency in Kurdish than younger ones. This means that statistics do not take men and women's proficiency in Kurdish into account. Furthermore, access to TV, mass media and education would have a negative effect on the use of Kurdish in social domains such as the neighbourhood and the marketplace. Öpengin showed that Kurdish was mainly spoken in rural areas, whereas Turkish and Kurdish were used in urban areas. But Turkish was preferred in social domains such as market places in urban areas (Öpengin, 2012). It could be argued that factors such as repressive state policies and the low status of Kurds in comparison to others have an adverse effect on the

maintenance and transmission of the Kurdish language in Turkey (Öpengin, 2012, p.155).

2.7.2 Turkey's preschool education

The purpose of this subsection is to give an account of Turkey's preschool education and to indicate how the national ideology permeates this process. Preschool education is the first level of formal schooling, yet it is still not compulsory. In Turkey, public preschool education is provided by the Ministry of National Education (Gülay and Ekici, 2010), although there are also private nurseries. Preschool education begins at the age of four and is free of charge in public nurseries only. Over recent years there has been an increase in the number of children receiving preschool education in Turkey. Statistics from the Ministry of National Education indicated that 33.26% of children aged between 3 and 5, and 55.48% of children aged 5 or over attended preschool settings between 2015 and 2016. The rates for 2013 and 2014 were 27.71% and 42.54% of children aged between 3 and 5, and 5 or over, respectively (Ministry of National Education, 2016). According to statistics for 2015 and 2016, there are 27,793 private and public preschools in Turkey, of which 22,387 are affiliated to the Ministry of National Education. In the city of Van, where the current study took place, there are currently 672 public and 11 private preschools (ibid).

Nurseries in Turkey follow a uniform curriculum set by the Ministry of Education, known as the preschool education programme. In 2002, a nationwide curriculum for children aged between 3 and 6 years was put into effect in Turkey, which was revised in 2006 with the focus put on a successful transition from preschool to primary school for all children. In 2013, the curriculum was updated after it had been in place for 7 years (Tuncer, 2015). The goals of Turkish preschool education accord with the aims of Turkish national education discussed above. The goals for Turkish preschool education specifically include:

- 1- to ensure that children speak Turkish accurately and clearly.
- 2- to prepare children for primary school.
- 3- to provide a common shared environment for children who come from

disadvantaged backgrounds.

4- to ensure that children are encouraged to attain good habits and physical, emotional and intellectual development (Preschool Education Programme, 2013, p.8).

In addition to these goals, there are other developmental objectives. These include the development of linguistic, cognitive, social, emotional, self-care and psychomotor skills (Aras, 2016). The objectives for these skills are shown in Table 2.1

Table 2.1 The objectives of the curriculum according to developmental areas.

Social-emotional development:	Language development:
<i>1. Describe and express themselves</i> a. Recognise name, surname b. Recognise and identify physical and emotional features <i>2. Self-motivation</i> a. Start and finish an activity without adult guidance <i>3. Develop respect for different individuals and cultural features</i> a. Articulate their own national cultural features b. Compare their culture to those of other countries <i>4. Take responsibility in activities relating to Atatürk</i> a. Express views and ideas about Atatürk	<i>1. Demonstrate phonological awareness</i> <i>2. Demonstrate knowledge of the alphabet</i> a. Identify and distinguish sounds b. Produce similar words c. Identify and match letter sounds <i>3. Control own voice</i> a. Speak with appropriate intonation <i>4. Use appropriate sentences grammatically</i> <i>5. Demonstrate reading knowledge</i> a. The ability to talk about written materials b. Imitate reading c. Comprehend the importance of reading <i>6. Demonstrate knowledge of writing</i> a. Show written materials b. Show the direction of the writing system

	c. Comprehend the importance of writing
Psychomotor development: <i>1. Demonstrate locomotor skills</i> a. Follow instructions b. Run and jump <i>2. Demonstrate balancing skills</i> a. Stand on one leg b. Control body 3. Use small fine motor actions for movements <i>4. Move materials around</i> <i>5. Move with rhythm</i>	Cognitive development: <i>1. Demonstrate memory retention skills</i> a. Pay attention to objects and tasks b. Recognize and remember <i>2. Demonstrate logic and reasoning skills</i> a. Guess and count b. Observe objects and living creatures c. Make groups, compare, sequence and match objects or living creatures d. Solve problems e. Make sense of cause and effect <i>3. Demonstrate math skills</i> a. Make simple addition and subtraction sums. b. Identify geometric shapes <i>4. Demonstrate spatial and time skills</i> a. Follow instructions about position in space. b. Articulate spatial and time concepts <i>5. Comprehend the importance of Atatürk for the nation and state</i>
Self-care development: <i>1. Wash body parts independently</i> a. Brush teeth, comb hair, wash hands and face <i>2. Dress independently</i> <i>3. Take adequate and balanced diet</i>	

4. <i>Take care of dangerous situations and accidents</i> 5. <i>Take care of his/her own health</i> <i>(Preschool Education Programme, 2013 the researcher's translation from Turkish)</i>	
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The preschool curriculum offers eight main areas of activity (Preschool Education Programme, 2013). These are Turkish language, play, mathematics, drama, pre-reading and pre-writing, art, music, and science and nature. It is worth highlighting that the curriculum does not aim to teach reading and writing. Instead, it aims to prepare children for a successful transition to a Turkish language primary school environment. The aims and objectives of preschool Turkish language activities, which play an important role in the current study, are to enable children to learn to speak Turkish accurately and clearly, as discussed earlier in this section. Turkish language activities comprise rhymes and action songs. This puts a strong emphasis on singing activities. Teachers are expected to work out their own monthly plans and daily schedules based on the curriculum. The daily schedule includes starting the day, free playtime, activity time and the evaluation of the day. There are also activity corners in the classroom. These include Lego, books, music, art, science and nature and role-playing corners.

Tuncer (2015) pointed out that the curriculum has a holistic approach, which aims to take children's development in all areas including social, emotional and mental health into account. The curriculum suggests that children's developmental levels are taken into account when activities are arranged (Preschool Education Programme, 2013), and the curriculum is defined as having a child-centred approach. This means that teachers allow children to question, explore and make plans during classroom activities and provide children with opportunities to choose activities and materials (ibid, p.12). However, researchers (Aras, 2016; Sak et al., 2016; Tuncer, 2015) point out that teachers play an active role in planning and arranging activities. Comparing the Turkish preschool curriculum to the other programmes such as Montessori and Head Start, Tuncer (2015) argued that although the curriculum advocates a child-centred approach, children have greater opportunities during free playtime activities to choose what they want to do. Tuncer's argument is in line with the findings of Sak et al.'s (2016) study, which examined preschool teachers' views about Turkey's child-centred approach. The study discovered that the teachers' views were inconsistent with the child-centred approach of the curriculum, as teachers explained that they were expected to follow the curriculum. From this it could be argued that in practice the curriculum constrains children's active roles in arranged classroom activities.

Other researchers, such as Kandır and Yazıcı (2016) examined different aspects of the 2013 curriculum. Kandır and Yazıcı (2016) investigated the objectives of the curriculum relating to pre-writing and pre-reading. According to the study, the objectives of language

(such as knowledge of the alphabet and phonological awareness) and cognitive developments mainly supported pre-reading skills, and the curriculum pays insufficient attention to pre-writing skills. It could be argued this approach is not in fact holistic regarding the children's development in terms of language and literacy learning. Kandır and Yazıcı (2016) also highlighted the importance of the book corner for children's pre-reading and pre-writing skills, including the development of phonological awareness and vocabulary learning. Examining the arrangement of the corners in the classroom, such as the home, book and music, Ögelman and Karakuzu (2016) found that these corners were not arranged appropriately at children's eye level, especially the book corner. The study underlined that although these corners were accessible for children, their displays were not laid out at the appropriate level for children. One could argue that such a classroom arrangement is also inconsistent with the curriculum's holistic approach.

2.8 Summary

In this chapter I have given a historical, political, educational and social account of the context of my study by defining and describing the Kurds and discussing their situation from the Ottoman Empire to the present. The chapter has shown that the Kurds have been denied basic human rights since the establishment of Republic of Turkey. It has become clear that Kurds have been oppressed through a wide range of policies that have been implemented since the establishment of Turkey. As Zeydanlıoğlu (2012) argued, these policies have undermined the prestige of Kurdish as a language and a source of literature. Although some restrictions have been lifted on the use of Kurdish, it is still not recognised an official language—including in Turkey's nurseries.

The chapter has also provided a historical and political background to the Turkish national education system. It has underlined the fact that Turkish language and national identity play important roles in the education system in general. These historical, political, educational and social accounts will help contextualise my study in terms of the relevant literature, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

Chapter 3: Theoretical Framework: Approaches to second language and literacy learning

3.1 Introduction

Migration from both non-western and western countries to western destinations has drawn the attention of scholars to second language acquisition. Studies exploring second language learning (Drury, 2004a; Soltero-González and Reyes, 2012; Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016, Thomson, 1995; Wong Fillmore, 1991) have focused particularly on children acquiring a second language in English-speaking western countries such as the UK and USA. This means that language learning has been strongly associated with English as a second language (ESL) or as an additional language. In non-western countries, however, the language of the majority (or the official language) can also be a second language when children come from ethnic minorities, even though the nation considers it as its first language. In addition, minority languages may be officially banned in some countries (such as Bulgaria and Turkey, as discussed in Chapter 2).

Turkish as a minority language has been officially prohibited in Bulgaria, as Kurdish has been in Turkey. In such cases, minority languages are mainly used at home, and minority children formally learn a second language when they enter school. In some countries—both western and non-western—a number of children learn two languages simultaneously, which Kenner (2004, p.55) defines as living in ‘simultaneous worlds’. In other words, children’s second language learning takes place in a social context, in the form of interaction between the children themselves and other individuals around them. For scholars, these sociocultural approaches (based on the works of Vygotsky [1978, 1986]) focus on ‘the inextricable link between culture and cognition through engagement in social activities, tasks or events’ (Gregory, 2008, p.24).

In this chapter, I shall discuss sociocultural approaches to second language and literacy learning. I will also combine these approaches with translanguaging (rooted in sociolinguistics and language education) to examine how Kurmanji and Turkish are hierarchised in the classroom and to highlight the children’s agency in using the languages in informal peer interactions. I acknowledge the strengths and limitations of existing knowledge on second language learners, and argue that there is limited research on child learners from minority groups that have been oppressed on a long-term basis. In this chapter I will discuss and analyse Vygotsky’s sociocultural theory (1978) and define a number of terms (culture, language,

literacy and identity) from this sociocultural standpoint. I will also discuss the sociocultural concepts of scaffolding, guided participation, synergy, community of practice and funds of knowledge. The chapter will then move on to discuss translanguaging and highlight the ways in which its concepts can be applied to my study. These concepts (which will be outlined through relevant literature) will allow me to set up the theoretical framework for my research question: *How do Kurdish children learn Turkish upon entering preschool?* The chapter will conclude with a discussion of studies on children's language and literacy learning in early years in different minority contexts as well as studies examining Turkish as a second language in Turkey.

3.2 Sociocultural approaches

As indicated above, sociocultural approaches are rooted in the works of Vygotsky (1978 and 1986). Vygotsky (1978) emphasised the relationship between instruction and the child's development (Chaiklin, 2003). Cooperation with and instruction from an adult have positive effects on conceptual development, and are also crucial to the development and maturation of the child's mental functions such as reasoning. Vygotsky (1978) introduced the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) to analyse the importance of instruction from mediators such as a teacher in children's learning. He defined the ZPD as:

...the distance between actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers (1978, p.86).

The ZPD is a dynamic process, and Vygotsky (1978) indicated that potential development today can be actual development tomorrow. This process takes place through expert support and collaboration with more knowledgeable peers. Conceptually, the ZPD plays a crucial role in sociocultural approaches by providing a zone in which culture and cognition work in mutually supportive and creative ways (Cole, 1985). In other words, culture exteriorises mind and mind interiorises culture (Cole, 1985 in Gregory, 2008). Sociocultural approaches emphasise both the active role of children in their own learning and the role of the more knowledgeable mediators interacting with children in a given context. The child learns through tools (language and literature in his or her social environment), with support from more knowledgeable members of society. According to Vygotsky (1978), the importance of context

in children's learning is that the intellectual lives of those around the child are significantly influential on the child. For Vygotsky, learning is the means by which more knowledgeable members of society introduce children to a culture (Bruner, 1985).

Children's initiations into cultural practices take place through the transformation of an interpersonal level into an intrapersonal level:

Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: first, on the social level, and later, on the individual level; first, between people (*interpsychological*), and then inside the child (*intrapsychological*). This applies equally to voluntary attention, logical memory, and to the formation of concepts (Vygotsky, 1978, p.57).

As Vygotsky states, learning is both a social and a historical process that occurs between individuals. Mediation provides the foundation for creating a link between social and individual processes (Wertsch, 1985). Drawing on Vygotsky, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) argued that sociocultural tools such as language and literacy act as a buffer zone between individuals and their environment and mediate a link to their social world. Sociocultural tools such as language enable children to mediate and master their learning through an interpersonal process. Vygotsky (1986) argued that language determines the development of thought, and the child's intellectual growth depends on the mastering of his or her language (*ibid*, p.94). The child's sociocultural experience is emphasised by scholars as being effective in 'appropriating and owning' the language on a social level (Bakhtin, 1981, p.293). Children's learning—including thinking, reasoning and speaking skills—develop through interactions in formal and informal cultural activities. Vygotsky (1986) makes an explicit point in his discussion of the development of conceptual thinking when he states that in that development, concepts are learned by the child through cooperation with and instruction from more knowledgeable adults, rather than being assimilated by the child in a ready-made form (*ibid*, p.146).

I draw on sociocultural approaches to review the literature on second language and literacy learning as these approaches view children's learning as an *apprenticeship* to the socially and culturally established practices of a community (Rogoff, 1990, p.39). According to sociocultural approaches, second languages are learned through participation in culturally established activities and interactions taking place between novice learners and more knowledgeable adults or peers (Drury, 2004a; Eun and Lim, 2009; Fahim and Haghani, 2012; Kao, 2010; Lantolf and Thorne, 2006; Razfar et al., 2011; Thomson, 1995; Wong Fillmore, 1991). The sources cited above explore the ways in which children learn a second language in

a new setting with its own cultural practices and expectations, which are different from those of the children and relate to the majority culture.

The participants in my study engage in different settings (home and nursery) in terms of languages and cultures, or live in *simultaneous worlds*. They learn and practice a second language within these settings, and I believe that these settings affect their cognition and social development. This belief is based on the idea that sociocultural approaches highlight the relationship between mental process and sociocultural settings (Wertsch, 1995).

3.3 Conceptualising Culture, Language, Literacy and Identity

In this section, I discuss notions of culture, language, literacy and identity within sociocultural perspectives, and situate my own viewpoint within these terms.

3.3.1 Culture

Cole et al. (2010, p.1) referred to culture as ‘historically accumulated knowledge’, practices, tools (such as symbols and scripts), values and beliefs that are embedded in the child’s community and other overlapping communities that make up society as a whole. Lytra (2007, p.10) also defines culture ‘as a system of practices’, and such definitions help highlight the role of culture in children’s learning by offering an understanding of children’s learning as the construction of meaning via their culture. In other words, culture promotes children’s learning by providing them with different tools that enable them to develop skills such as thinking, speaking and reasoning (Rogoff, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978). At the same time, children contribute to culture by creating new meanings of their own by using these tools in interactions with other individuals around them (Rogoff, 2003). This means that there is a mutual relationship between children’s participation in cultural activities and culture itself (ibid). In this sense, I take culture to mean the practices by which young children learn the values, beliefs and expectations of a given society.

As far as the current study is concerned, children engage in the activities of different cultural groups, including minority groups as well as majorities. As highlighted above, young children from minority cultures mainly engage in practices related to their minority culture at home, and participate in majority cultural practices in schools. Minority culture may refer to being part of an ethnic minority, which can have a national or an immigrant origin. The current

study defines minorities as groups that possess less power in the broader sociocultural context (Skutnabb-Kangas and McCarty, 2008). With regard to minority children learning a second language and literacy, Gregory (2008) pointed out the risks of viewing children's learning according to what they learn from classroom activities only. Her analysis of a young Chinese boy learning English in the UK showed that there was a tendency to ignore his home learning, leaving him to consider learning only as a facet of his participation in the classroom. Gregory (ibid, p. 23) warns us that such a view of learning separates 'the mind from the interpersonal and cultural aspects' of learning a second language and literacy. This means that minority children's home learning is often ignored or at best viewed as obstructing the second language and literacy (this will be discussed further in section 3.4.5).

3.3.2 Language

As discussed above, Vygotsky (1978) set great emphasis on the ability of language to help develop higher mental functions. According to Vygotsky, language mediates children's learning. The process begins as a means of communication between children and other individuals around them. It then functions by organising their thoughts based on their interactions with other individuals. This understanding of language indicates the sociocultural approach to language as a cultural tool by which children learn from each other and adults such as teachers and parents (Rogoff, 2003).

Other scholars, such as Skutnabb-Kangas and McCarthy (2008), researched different minority groups and concluded that language was a 'system of sounds, words, signs, grammar and rules' for different modes of spoken and written interaction (ibid, p.4). This system also includes cultural values, beliefs and knowledge, as well as indicating and creating different identities, including ethnicity (ibid). This means that language is not only a semiotic system, but is also considered as a social practice by which meanings and identities are constructed (Norton, 2010). The view of language as a cultural tool and a social practice indicate that it mediates children's varying discursive practices (Creese and Blackledge, 2015). These discursive practices are dynamic, complex and mobile (García and Li Wei, 2014).

As far as young minority children are concerned, sociocultural approaches mainly define languages used and learned by these children as a home language and as a second language learned in schools (Gregory, 2001; 2008). A child's home language can be described as a minority language, as its speakers have less power to decide their own language status

(Skutnabb-Kangas and McCarthy, 2008). The home language in the current study refers to the language that the families of the participants mainly speak within their homes (Spernes, 2012). There is an intimate link between the status of a language and power, implying that language may act as an indicator of the power and status of the dominant group (Blackledge, 2000b).

Another indicator of the power of language in any given society is that the dominant language can symbolise a national identity (ibid). This will be discussed in more detail in section 3.3.4. Thus, a language is not only a set of linguistic rules, but also an important cultural symbol carrying values and beliefs (Blackledge, 2000b). In this study, I will therefore take language to refer to a particular system of sounds, signs and rules, as well as a cultural tool and symbol indicating the values, beliefs, power and expectations of a society. This understanding of language is congruent with recent sociolinguistic approaches. Blommaert and Backus (2011) referred to language as a set of repertoires which children possess and use in social settings such as a nursery. They argue that repertoires include language resources, which are learned through trajectories varying from informal to formal learning (ibid, p.2). Likewise, Heller (2007, p.2) viewed language as a social construct. This means that values and beliefs about language are ‘socially constructed’ within the constraints of settings such as schools sociocultural conditions. This view of language also considers language hierarchies as social and political constructs, rather than linguistic ones (ibid). My stance accords with these scholars’ approaches to language as a cultural, social and ideological construct (this will be discussed further in section 3.5 on the concept of translanguaging).

3.3.3 Literacy

The sociocultural approach to literacy I take in this study means that I consider that children’s literacy learning is mediated through social and cultural tools such as language as well as symbols such as writing systems (Vygotsky, 1978). Volk and Acosta (2004) defined literacy as a combination of social and cultural processes. This concept emphasises the importance of culture and context (Razfar and Gutierrez, 2003). In other words, rather than limiting the definition of literacy to decoding and encoding mechanisms, it is considered more broadly as a ‘meaning making process’ (Kim, 2011, p.490) in interactions with peers and more knowledgeable adults such as teachers.

This understanding of literacy is anchored in the New Literacy Studies approach proposed by Street (1984). Street suggested that there are two different models of literacy:

autonomous and ideological. The autonomous model views literacy as set of skills acquired naturally and socially, while the ideological model suggests that literacy is a social mechanism that consists of cultural and ideological assumptions that mediate the use and practice of literacy. In other words, literacy is viewed as a set of processes, rather than a set of skills (Street, 2012). The child is an active and competent participant in making meaning and constructing knowledge (Gregory et al., 2004). However, these approaches to literacy are at odds with the approach that views it as cognitive processes only (Kim, 2011), which can be defined as possessing the ability to read and write (Gee, 2010). The broader view is that literacy is not only a cognitive activity (ibid), but also a social and cultural processes in which children learn values and beliefs through negotiating with each other or more knowledgeable mediators (Kim, 2011).

As literacy is learned in social and cultural settings, issues arise concerning the definition and recognition of literary practices used in these settings. Settings have different power structures and privileges that value some literacy practices over others (Razfar and Gutierrez, 2003). This is more likely to occur in the context of relationships between minorities and majorities. In such contexts, literacy practices relating to the majority culture are placed in positions of privilege in schools and most cultural settings, while minority practices may be invisible or ignored (Volk and Acosta, 2004). Hamilton (2010) argues that understanding literacy as a social practice encourages us to examine power relationships between literacy practices and institutions such as schools, as these relationships are not considered equal. This implies that schools define and defend their own practices as proper literacy by teaching, supporting and controlling their own definitions of the subject (ibid). It could therefore be argued that power structures such as authority and language ideologies become the mediators of young children's literacy learning as their interactions in a given setting are shaped and guided by the language ideologies of that setting (Razfar and Gutierrez, 2003). If we accept that literacy practices are mediated socially, culturally and ideologically, vital issues of power and equity arise, affecting literacy learning in social settings such as classrooms.

Recently, scholars such as Long et al. (2013) argued for a critical sociocultural approach to literacy practices. This stance sets itself against the contemporary paradigm that has normalised practices of the dominant culture and ignored those of minorities in the classroom. The implication of this approach is that it questions 'whose practices are dominant and whose marginalised' (Street, 2012, p.27). In this thesis, I align myself with this critical

sociocultural approach, drawing on the minority language and culture to examine how the values and practices of my participants are marginalised in the classroom.

3.3.4 Identity

Identity is defined ‘a shared sense of cultural features’ (Blackledge, 2000b, p.12), which indicates the ways in which a community functions. Lytra (2007) refers to identity as a process that constructed through interactions with others. These definitions emphasise that identity is not defined by minority children. Instead it is constructed and appropriated in social interactions (Rogoff, 2003). As minority children learn a second language and literacy, they perform different identities within these activities. In line with sociocultural approaches to identities, children enact their identities through engagement in cultural practices (Roberts, 2007). In other words, their perspective does not view identity as an independent entity when participating in different cultural practices.

Learning a second language and literacy not only provides children with new skills such as speaking and reading, it also enables them to construct and consequently transform their own identities (Blackledge, 2000b). With regard to minority children, Blackledge highlights that children are expected to—and may in some cases may even be forced to—learn the important aspects of the dominant culture for their future lives, such as language and national identity. A student is expected to accomplish tasks, and the degree of their success or failure to do this marks their expectations (such as being a good learner at school) and sets their future careers (Broker, 2002). When children engage in everyday practices within settings such as a nursery, they learn the appropriate identities and responses relating to that setting (Roberts, 2007). During this process, Roberts argues that they apply what they have learned to new (next) activities. In other words, children construct their identities based on social learning and past experience. This indicates a vital and dynamic relationship between identity and learning.

Blackledge (2008) argued that ‘[I]dentities are inevitably mediated in and through languages’, reflecting values and beliefs about a particular culture. When these languages are related to the dominant or majority culture, children may be also expected to appropriate the values and beliefs of that culture (Blackledge, 2000a). This may also include a national identity as a precondition of the setting in which children begin to formally learn a second language.

Examining children's language and literacy learning in Turkish complementary schools in London, Creese et al. (2007) observed that Turkish identities and Turkish culture were reproduced through activities in which national days, such as Independence Day, were celebrated. They observed that teaching standard Turkish was the main aim of the schools. As discussed in Chapter 2, standard Turkish refers to the variety of Turkish spoken by Istanbul elites, which excludes regional varieties and is seen as a key element of Turkish national identity. The study suggested that learning a language officially consists firstly of learning an identity as a fundamental part of official curriculum expectations. For minority children, this may introduce a complex aspect of learning through engagement in dominant cultural practices. Constructionist approaches see identities as a coexistence of multiple levels of social interaction (Lytra, 2007). Similarly, poststructuralist approaches to identities are fluid and context-dependent (Norton and Toohey, 2011). These approaches underline the belief that identities are shaped by ideologies and constraints in a given setting. At the same time, these two approaches differ from each other in terms of the agency of the language users in identity construction. As highlighted at the beginning of this section, constructionist approaches argue that language users are active in constructing and aligning themselves with their identities (Lytra, 2007). In contrast, poststructuralist approaches emphasise the role of discourses in identity construction. These approaches argue that discourses can reproduce particular ideologies and power relations. In other words, poststructuralist approaches maintain that discourses can shape children's identity construction by constraining their language use (Pavlenko, 2002). I will therefore draw on both approaches to identity to highlight, examine and analyse the ways in which language hierarchies, ideologies and institutional constraints affect children's second language and literacy learning.

3.4 The main sociological concepts

In this section, I shall discuss sociocultural concepts in order to engage in a deeper understanding of second language and literacy learning. These concepts are: scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976), guided participation (Rogoff, 1990), synergy (Gregory, 2001), Communities of Practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) and funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2005). In the following section, I will discuss the concept of translanguaging, which originates from sociolinguistics and language education (García and Li Wei, 2014) and explain why I will combine this with the concepts taken from the sociocultural approaches listed above.

3.4.1 Scaffolding

Scaffolding is defined as process in which a child can carry out a task which is initially beyond their capacity with an adult acting as a mediator (Wood et al., 1976, p. 90). During the scaffolding process, the mediator indicates important features of the task such as modelling, offering instructions and reducing frustration (ibid, p. 99). The following six functions of the scaffolding process have been identified as:

- 1) *Recruitment*. Drawing the child's attention to the task.
- 2) *Reduction of degrees of freedom*. Simplifying the task by reducing the number of constituent acts.
- 3) *Direction maintenance*. Experts (adults) play the role of monitoring the motivation of novices (children) to fulfil the task.
- 4) *Marking critical features*. Experts identify, indicate and emphasise certain features of the task.
- 5) *Frustration control*. Partaking in an activity should be as stress-free as possible.
- 6) *Demonstration*. Demonstrating or modelling solutions to the task (ibid, p. 98).

Children are novices in terms of life, and they face uncertainty in the nursery as well. Their ability to overcome this uncertainty is limited. However, teachers can reduce uncertainty by organizing activities and acting as mediators (Wood, 1998) or by initiating children into specific practices (Gregory et al., 2004). Teachers assist the child by *task induction*, which acts as a primary form of scaffolding (Wood, 1998, p. 165). Wood et al. (1976) and McCormick and Donato (2000) applied the concept of scaffolding to teachers' questions, viewing such questions as a form of verbal assistance arising from a dialogue between an expert and novices in a classroom context. Vygotsky (1978) further stated that using questions as linguistic tools can help mediate, assist and scaffold the child during both formal and informal activities. The aim of this area of research was to examine how classroom participation and learner comprehension develop through questions from teachers, which from an important part of the instruction process. Study findings suggest that questions used by teachers in a classroom setting are productive in terms of uniting individual and social process in order to scaffold second language learning, since individual and social processes are mediated through language (McCormick and Donato, 2000, p.197).

Similarly, studies drawing on the ZPD (Vygotsky, 1978) indicate the importance of support in children's learning in a classroom context. Teachers as experts have a responsibility to structure the interaction, to encourage novices through the steps of an activity and to support them until they are able to perform the activity on their own (Zeuli, 1986, p.3). A study by Fler (1992) also found scaffolding useful for young children's conceptual learning. Fler examined the development of young children's scientific concepts in their first language, arguing that the concept of scaffolding underscores the teacher's role during classroom activities. The study included preschool, Year 1 and Year 2 children, and showed that the teacher developed scientific concepts such as electricity in preschool children through structured experiments such as dismantling a computer and making a circuit. In these experiments, the teacher scaffolded the children's understanding of electricity as a concept by drawing their attention to specific components of the computer such as the power switch. The study also illustrated that teachers can support children's conceptual understanding by asking questions about the activities they are involved in (such as whether the computer was plugged into an electrical socket or not).

An ethnographic study by Ruby (2014) highlighted the importance of scaffolding in children's learning. Ruby examined the impact of intergenerational relations between Bangladeshi-British grandmothers, parents and children on children's learning at home and in school. In the school setting, she analysed the way the teacher provided the children with support when completing a puzzle. Ruby argued that the teacher, as a classroom expert, provides the necessary support for extending children's knowledge in such areas which are just out of their current reach. She also pointed to the degree of scaffolding provided in classroom activities, concluding that the aim of scaffolding is to 'enable the child to manage the task without help in the future' (Ruby, 2014, p.66).

Reviewing studies on language learning (both first and second languages), Cameron (2001) argued that routine classroom activities help enable the scaffolding process. Through participation in routine activities, children listen, observe and make sense of the language used in order to mediate their own behaviour and understand what should or should not be done. In other words, when children are instructed during activities, they can learn the language of scaffolding at the same time. As far as Wood (1998, p.165) is concerned, the child's understanding matures during the learning process, and this plays a crucial role in children's learning when they are new to the activities. As previously discussed, the functions of the

scaffolding process such as modelling, instruction and frustration control render the concept more relevant to my study. What these studies share with my own work is the fact that the teacher is seen to play an active role in scaffolding process.

However, other scholars have criticised scaffolding for paying insufficient attention to relationships between the learners and the mediator. Gregory (2001) criticised scaffolding, arguing that the relationship between the child and the expert was unequal (see section 3.2.3). Although scaffolding is open to criticism, it can still inform interactions between teachers and children in a classroom setting. I will use this concept to analyse interactions between teachers and children—in particular to help understand how teachers scaffold children’s language and literacy learning during activities such as singing, drama and art.

3.4.2 Guided participation

The concept of guided participation was proposed by Rogoff (1990) to examine the role of adults and children in children’s learning. Guided participation includes both children and mediators (adults) in collaborative processes, firstly connecting children’s existing knowledge to new activities, and secondly “arranging and structuring children’s participation in activities” (ibid, p.8). In this process, assistance and guidance from more experienced participants is crucial to children’s involvement (ibid). In this sense, the concept differs from scaffolding as it emphasises children’s own responsibilities for their learning in areas such as managing their attention, motivation and participation in cultural activities. The concept of guided participation is an extension of Vygotsky’s zone of proximal development (ZPD), in which individual development is considered as taking place during joint activities with more knowledgeable members of the group using cultural tools such as language and literacy (Rogoff et al., 1993). Rogoff and her colleagues emphasised that the concept of guided participation is useful for simultaneously maintaining focus on individual, interpersonal and cultural processes (ibid, p.5). Guided participation emphasises:

- a) Shared problem solving with the help of more skilled adults.
- b) The importance of routine activities.
- c) Both tacit and explicit communication.

d) Support for novices' efforts.

e) The transfer of responsibility for handling skills to novices (ibid, p.39).

Rogoff et al. (1984, p.43) consider that guided participation involves the joint responsibilities of both adults and children. Rogoff (2003) pointed out that individual development is closely linked to cultural practices such as home language and gender roles, as well as the circumstances of their community (ibid, p.3). Children's higher mental functions develop through the process of guided participation, and mental tools such as focus and memory can help children pay attention and recall past experiences. Young children can succeed in literacy activities via guided participation (Petty, 2009), and many scholars view the concept of guided participation as an effective way of guiding second language learners (Drury, 2007).

Drury (2007) also values the concept of guided participation specifically for minority children participating in nursery practices that might be different from their own. According to Drury, Rogoff's approach can be useful to provide a summary of practices and experience at home, which may help highlight particular adjustments children need to make when entering nursery. Guided participation also considers children to be active participants in their own learning (ibid, p.52). Guided participation differs from scaffolding, which puts a strong emphasis on the adult's role in children's language and literacy learning (Rogoff, 2003). A recent study conducted by Ohashi (2013) also highlighted the importance of guided participation for second language learning. Ohashi examined Japanese primary school children (aged 8 and 9) who were learning English in Japan. The study found that the teacher helped enable children to develop their learning by structuring activities and guiding them during these activities. Ohashi particularly showed that children's active engagement in activities enabled them to develop their language use and make sense of their vocabulary. The teacher's guidance allowed them to become gradually more responsible for their own learning. Finally, Ohashi offers insights into the social nature of learning by indicating the links between language use, participation and engagement.

In addition, guided participation enables children to learn the expectations of their parents and the wider community. Through guided participation, children discover the roles and responsibilities adults take on at home and in their community (Rogoff, 2003). What is crucial is that the parents' values and beliefs guide children's learning and experience (Gaskins, 1999). For example, children can learn what women and men are expected to do in a

community when there is a gender-based division of labour in activities at home or in the community. Therefore, it is considered that home and community settings play a significant role in modelling and transmitting cultural roles, values and goals to children (Guavain, 1999). Rogoff (2003) argued:

What they do depends in important ways on the cultural meaning given to the events and the social and institutional supports provided in their communities for learning and carrying out specific role in the activities (p. 7).

Guided participation will allow me to explore children's participation in classroom activities as well as their use of language at home. In my study, children are involved in many different cultural activities in both settings. Their participation in home activities is already established as they are familiar with these practices. But in the nursery they become participants of different activities, which are orientated towards Turkish culture.

According to Gregory (2001), the child is active in constructing meaning with a more experienced member during guided participation, but there is still an unequal relationship in this process, which is between the older or more experienced participant and the child. Gregory also criticizes scaffolding for similar reasons, arguing that there is a unidirectional relationship between participants. To counter this, she proposes the concept of synergy which will be discussed in the next section.

In the meantime, the current study offers insights into the teacher's role in supporting and guiding children's language and literacy learning (such as conceptual and vocabulary), as well as attaching values to the languages.

3.4.3 Synergy

Gregory's critique of the concepts of guided participation and scaffolding led her to suggest another concept, that of *synergy*. She referred to synergy as 'a unique reciprocity whereby siblings act as adjuvants in each other's learning' (2001, p.301). As discussed above, scaffolding emphasised the active role of the teacher in solving tasks at hand. Similarly, guided participation argued for an understanding of collaborative learning between teacher and children. Although guided participation emphasised the active role of children in their own learning, children, experts and peers do not have an equal relationship in the learning process.

Synergy therefore differs from scaffolding and guided participation by examining the mutual relationship between children and their peers as mediators. The concept of synergy implies that there is a ‘mutual engagement’, which takes place between young children in language and literacy activities (Ren and Hu, 2013, p.75).

When the more knowledgeable sibling (or peer) teaches the younger one, s/he simultaneously practises his or her existing learning—such as by rehearsing a song that was learned in teacher-led activities (Gregory, 2008). Although the starting point of synergy aims to capture the effect of siblings’ interaction on their learning in informal situations, studies such as Kenner (2004) have demonstrated the ways in which peers learn from each other in school settings. By extending the two concepts (scaffolding and guided participation), Gregory also identified an important link between mediators and synergy. According to her, synergy is ‘the key mediator through which knowledge ... is internalized’ (2001, p.311). This provides us with an understanding of different kinds of mediators who are similar in age and who initiate children into new cultural and linguistic practices. In other words, teachers are not only mediators of children learning a second language, and peers and siblings can play similar roles. Gregory (2008) underlined that older children play a unique role in initiating younger ones into second language learning. This means that their actual development can reach the potential for development under the mediator’s guidance by examining the difference between what the child can do with the assistance of a more knowledgeable peer and what s/he is capable of doing alone (Vygotsky, 1978).

In their study of young Chinese immigrant children in Singapore, Ren and Hu (2013) showed that young siblings (Wendy and Jane) mutually engaged in learning activities at home. The older sibling (Wendy) taught the younger one (Jane) an English song she had learned in school. Wendy mirrored the language of the classroom activity by demonstrating, offering corrections and giving feedback. Wendy also learnt as much from her sibling as she taught Jane (Gregory, 2008). Jane mediated Wendy’s Chinese learning as she was more competent in Chinese than Wendy was, because Jane spoke Chinese regularly with her grandmother, who was her primary caregiver. Kenner’s (2004) study also demonstrated that peers can act as mediators of each other’s language and literacy learning. Kenner examined how young children of Chinese, Arabic and Spanish cultural heritage interpreted the relations between form and meaning in their heritage writing system at a primary school in the UK. The study found that peer interactions enabled the ethnic minority children to teach their peers particular symbols in

their own heritage writing systems. The study concluded that peer interaction is a useful tool for language and literacy learning, as it enables children to ‘make social, cultural and intellectual connections’ (Kenner, 2004, p.116). As these studies indicated, synergy can occur between siblings and among peers as well. In either case, a mutual learning takes place in their interactions. This resonates with Gregory et al. (2004), who pointed out that peers and siblings as well as teachers can be mediators:

Crucial to a sociocultural approach, therefore, is the role of mediator (a teacher, adult, more knowledgeable sibling or peer) in initiating children into new cultural practices or guiding them in the learning of new skills (p.7).

The concept of synergy therefore opens a window to examining peer interaction in second language and literacy learning. This concept will enable me to examine how peer interaction affects children’s second language learning by studying their participation in activities such as play and art. The effect of peer interaction in second language learning has been highlighted by other studies, including Long et al. (2004) and Swain et al. (2002). Long et al. (2004) investigated how young children supported each other’s second language and literacy learning in a preschool setting. The study demonstrated that young children encouraged each other to participate in different activities by using strategies such as repeating and counting numbers aloud when promoting participation. Swain et al. (2002) reviewed studies which drew on sociocultural perspectives and examined the effect of peer interaction on second language learning. Their main argument is that a second language is both a communicative and cognitive tool, and their review concluded that peer interaction mediates second language learning.

When children become full participants in the classroom setting, they are also members of a wider socio-cultural context through literacy practices. Drawing on Heath (1983), Rogoff, (1990) and Vygotsky (1978), Willet (1995) observed that children become competent members of the classroom and in a wider sociocultural context through interactions with their peers. The wider context may also shape their identities through participation in classroom routines which enable them to construct social relations (ibid, p.495). This leads on to the concept of Communities of Practice (to which I will turn in the next sub-section) for examining identity transformation and participation in new cultural settings (in my case the nursery setting).

I will use the concept of synergy to examine how children mediate each other’s learning in informal peer interactions. In more specific terms, this will enable me to analyse how children develop their Turkish language and literacy learning on the basis of their

internalisation of practices, beliefs and values from the teacher-led activities in informal peer interactions.

3.4.4 Participation and Identity in a Community of Practice

As discussed above, the concepts of scaffolding, guided participation and synergy illuminated different aspects of children's learning, such as the role of the teacher, collaborative learning between the teacher and children and children as mediators of each other's learning. However, these concepts pay insufficient attention to the relationship between learning and identity formation. The concept of Communities of Practice is considered to give greater insights into this relationship. This concept suggests that participation in a community is a way of learning the 'culture of that community' (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.95). Lave and Wenger situate learning as a social practice, rather than as specific cognitive skills developed through observation and imitation. As discussed in section 3.2, their argument is consistent with sociocultural approaches to the learning that takes place during social interactions. Their focus was on both context and participation. In a later study, Wenger articulated that their aim was to expand the traditional view of apprenticeship from a master/student basis to 'changing participation and identity transformation in a community of practice' (Wenger, 1998, p.11). In other words, newcomers learn and construct the identities of a given community through engaging in the cultural practices of that community. As discussed in subsection 3.3.4, this approach fits with constructivist and poststructuralist approaches, which consider identities as coexistent, context-dependent and constructive in terms of social interactions.

A community of practice is as a set of relations among persons, activity, and world, over time and in relation with other tangential and overlapping communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.98).

As the authors pointed out, a community of practice can be subsumed by other communities of practice. For example, a classroom is part of a nursery and that nursery is subject to a national education system.

Within communities of practice, Lave and Wenger (1991) introduced the concept of legitimate peripheral participation to highlight the process of the newcomer in a community of practice. It is considered that the concept of legitimate peripheral participation enables the

researcher to consider the relationship between apprentices and more knowledgeable members, as well as examine activities, identities and practices. This concept also allows the researcher to examine resources such as Lego and Play-doh found in the nursery (Toohey, 1996). The approach puts a great deal of emphasis on ‘the processes by which newcomers become part of a community of practice’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.29). Crucial to this process is access, which plays a significant role in a community of practice (ibid):

...In “communities of practice”, where individuals initially inexperienced and unaware are apprenticed into full participation into the sociocultural practices of community in which they live (McCormick and Donato, 1994, p.454).

McCormick and Donato (1994) indicate the importance of cultural practices in becoming a full participant in the classroom. Children’s participation in the classroom activities plays an important role in transforming their identities, since children whose participation is peripheral at first become full participants in the classroom. They sing, play and communicate in their new language.

Barron (2007; 2009) valued the concept of Communities of Practice as an analytical tool for understanding young minority children’s identities transformations. The author examined the ways in which Pakistani-British preschool children’s identities were transformed in the classroom. Barron indicated that at the start, children’s participation in classroom activities was peripheral, as their experiences and values (such as home language and culture) were different from those of the nursery. Barron also showed that children were socialised into the values and expectations (such as celebrating Christmas) of the broader society through classroom activities. The study highlighted the fact that children became more actively engaged in routine activities as time progressed. The findings of Barron’s studies (2007; 2009) resonate with Lave and Wenger’s (1991) conceptualization of identities, insofar as Lave and Wenger viewed identities as the part of learning that constituted ‘transformation and change of persons’ (p.51). In relation to the construction of identities, Lave and Wenger highlighted the role of activities in the process:

Activities, tasks, functions, and understandings do not exist in isolation: they are part of broader systems of relations in which they have meaning... Learning thus implies becoming a different person with respect to the possibilities enabled by systems of relations (p.53).

As they participate in new and majority-oriented cultural activities and expand their understanding of a new culture, children belonging to ethnic minorities become members of the broader system at the sociocultural level. In some cases, ethnic minorities are likely to be forced into the wider society by learning the language of the majority. Ogbu (1982) defined involuntary minorities as ‘castelike minorities’ (p.299). Comparing the Kurds in Turkey and the Turks in Bulgaria (see Chapter 2), Köksal (2006) considered them as two separate ethnic minorities, indicating that the Turks in Bulgaria had been oppressed in a similar way to that experienced by Kurds in Turkey. In Bulgaria, Turks were forced to learn the language of the majority and accept the official discourse of ‘one language, one nation, one state’. In Bulgaria, Turkish schools were banned for a long time (Eminov, 2001). Kurds experienced very similar discriminatory practices, in which involuntary minorities become peripheral groups when their languages are banned, and find themselves being stigmatised due to their ethnicities (Goffman, 1963). Kurds are told both explicitly and implicitly that one way of becoming a valued member of the wider society is to learn Turkish. In this sense, it can be seen that children’s access to the nursery is a way of moving from legitimate peripheral participation to full participation in nursery life—and more broadly, Turkish society.

Children learn what counts as legitimate linguistic and cultural knowledge in the classroom. This forms the basis of their classroom interactions, either with teachers or peers. For example, during activities such as art and stories children may be instructed as to what constitutes an appropriate linguistic and cultural conduct. This is a way of socialising children into the cultural setting, but also acts as a way of making an explicit distinction between school and home. For example, the teacher might tell the children that they do not say certain things in the school. Drawing on Vygotsky (1978), Haste (1987, p.173) referred to this process as “growing into rules”. According to Haste, children first learn what the rules are and are then given a legitimate explanation. Rules and their explanation provide children with access to a strong cultural framework (Haste, 1987).

Other researchers, such as Linehan and McCarthy (2002), criticise the concept of Communities of Practice for overlooking the role of the teacher in controlling classroom interactions. They argued that a teacher can implicitly and explicitly control what kind of identities (such as being a learner) a child constructs in the classroom or is expected to appropriate (ibid). To address this shortcoming in my analysis, I will use this concept to analyse the way teachers affect children’s identity transformation by constraining language use in the

classroom. I will also use translanguaging, which will be discussed in section 3.5, to indicate how the children transgress monolingual language use during informal peer interactions.

The relevance of the concept of Communities of Practice to my study is that my participants are new members of a nursery setting, in which they are learning a new language and participating in new cultural practices. This is congruent with sociocultural approaches to a second language learning that were discussed in section 3.2. These approaches highlight the fact that young children learn a second language in a new setting where practices are different from those of the children's home setting. Children become members through learning the second language (Gregory et al., 2004). It can therefore be seen that the concept of Communities of Practice will complement the other concepts discussed in this section by enabling me to examine how Kurdish preschool children construct identities (such as the Turkish national identity) through engaging in culturally and institutionally valued activities in a nursery setting. I will also use it to show how children negotiate their learner identity which is constructed in teacher-led activities as well as in informal peer interactions.

In the current study, the Community of Practice is the classroom, which consists of both the teacher and the children. It also comprises small peer groups such as a girl and two boys (who mainly play together and sit next to each other). In this situation children start as peripheral participants, but then slowly become full participants of the setting. Two important points can be identified with respect to the children's peripheral status: firstly they are apprentices, and secondly they are from a minority group (Kurds) which has a long history of oppression.

The chapter now moves on to another important concept, namely funds of knowledge, which enables me to examine how the children draw on their different cultural, linguistic and social resources from home and the community and put them to use in the classroom despite classroom constraints.

3.4.5 Funds of Knowledge of Second Language Learners

The concept of funds of knowledge proposed by Moll et al. (2005) differs from concepts discussed above in the way it examines how minority children draw on their knowledge and

experiences from home and community settings. It takes a stance against the deficit view that minority children have a lack of knowledge. This deficit view considers the language that minority children use at home as obstructing second language and literacy learning. Even teachers of young second language learners tend to view children's home language (first language) as having a negative effect on the process of children's second language and literacy learning. The deficit view leads teachers to ignore household experiences and knowledge as resources for children's learning (McCarthy, 2000). Moll et al. (2005) attempted to challenge the deficit view. The purpose of their study was to show that households are rich in terms of knowledge, which can contribute to children's learning. To this end, researchers visited the children's homes to examine and understand their household resources. These resources were then used to transform classroom activities in favour of children's learning (Moll, 1992). Moll and his colleagues were influenced by one important aspect of Vygotsky's (1978) theory, which stated that cultural tools enable individuals to mediate their thinking. Their premise was that individuals are 'competent, have knowledge and their life experiences have given them that knowledge' (p.X). Their aim strove to alter the perceptions of minority groups held by the majority.

Moll et al. (2005) took the concept of funds of knowledge and used it to challenge the deficit view. They argued that knowledge and skills produced at home enable teachers and researchers to view the child as a whole, since household practices are multi-stranded and dense. The child might be involved in multiple practices with various individuals at home, such as uncles, aunts and grandparents. Moll et al. highlighted the social history of families, using their origins and development to gain a better and more rounded understanding of the child as a whole. They referred to funds of knowledge as 'historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills essential for household or individual's functioning and well-being' (ibid, p.72).

Other scholars (Hedges, 2015; Gregory, 2005a) used the same concept to analyse household resources and funds of knowledge that children brought into preschool settings. In this sense, more recent use of the concept differs from that of Moll et al. (2005), which was initially based on 'views of families to counteract previous thinking and consequent dominant culture approaches to education' (Hedges, 2015, p.91). Hedges extended this view by suggesting that the concept could be used to analyse how young children apply their pre-existing understanding from home and community settings to new experiences and practices

in a new situation. Hedges examined a young Chinese girl's interests and thinking skills in a preschool setting in New Zealand. According to Hedges, the importance of these interests and skills was that they were linked to children's home and community experiences. The study showed that the child demonstrated the values and expectations of her family (such as preparing food) in activities in the setting. As Hedges suggested, the concept is not only a perspective that challenges the deficit view, but is also an analytical tool to examine the values and expectations of children's homes and communities, which are shown in classroom activities.

The findings of Hedges' (2015) study are in line with those of other scholars, who highlighted that the transmission is not only a one-way system between school and home. Children also bring the home to the classroom via their home language and minority cultural experiences (Gregory, 2005a; Orellana, 2007; Ruby, 2014; Soltero-González, 2009). For example, Gregory (2005b) examined how a five-year-old Bengali-British child negotiated the meaning of a school text with his teacher on the basis of his home experiences. In the interaction, the teacher and the boy looked at a book they had found in the classroom. When they reached the page demonstrating a French baguette (a long stick loaf), the teacher described it simply as bread, as if the child was familiar with a baguette. The child disagreed with his teacher, saying that bread would not be like that. He then defined bread as being square. As Gregory indicated, there is a link between language and experience. According to Gregory, children can show their thinking skills and develop their language and literacy learning (such as their speaking skills) by drawing on their home experiences. Her study showed ways in which young children can bring home experiences into classrooms to sustain their academic learning. The concept of funds of knowledge therefore enables researchers and teachers to view the experiences children bring to the classroom as part of their learning process. Moll (1992) argued that teachers can help children to develop second language and literacy learning by utilizing available resources—including the home language. It is therefore important to know about children's households and to learn from them to support their second language learning (Soltero-González, 2009).

Nevertheless, there are scholars such as Oughton (2010) who criticised the concept of funds of knowledge for essentialising indigenous minorities as homogenous and as having "fixed cultural traits" (p.10). This means that there is a risk of stereotyping indigenous minority groups. Instead, Oughton (2010) argued that culture should be viewed as diverse and dynamic. The concept of funds knowledge will allow me to consider children's experiences outside of

school as part of their learning process, to think about what they bring to the classroom, and finally how they display and pass on their household knowledge in the classroom. I also believe this concept is a useful way of raising the profile of the household knowledge of Kurdish children, whose language and culture have been stigmatised and repressed as discussed in Chapter 2. In this sense, my study differs from that of Moll et al. (2005), as the children's household knowledge and resources are not officially recognised for use in classroom activities, despite the fact that the children indicate this knowledge and these resources in informal peer interactions.

3.5 Combining sociocultural approaches with translanguaging

In this section, I shall discuss the concept of translanguaging, which is rooted in sociolinguistics and language education, and explain why I will combine it with the sociocultural approaches discussed above. I will use this combination to examine how values are attached to languages (specifically Kurmanji and Turkish), as I am interested in how language hierarchies, ideologies and instructional constraints affect children's second language and literacy learning. In this sense, translanguaging complements the concepts discussed above by examining the processes of using 'multiple discursive practices' (García, 2009b, p.45) to construct meaning in a social setting. The concept of translanguaging is used to analyse how minority children use their home language alongside the second language, and how they consequently imbue classroom activities with meaning. As discussed in subsection 3.3.2, translanguaging is congruent with a view of language as a social practice, as something that is dynamic rather than fixed and static (Creese and Blackledge, 2015). Translanguaging therefore emphasises flexibility and fluidity in language use (Lewis et al., 2012), and differs from the concept of code-switching, which refers to a shift between two languages (García and Li Wei, 2014).

García and Li Wei (2014) argue that translanguaging not only enables children to move between languages which are socially and institutionally 'constructed as being separate', but also helps them integrate new language practices into their existing ones (ibid, p.80). The concept of translanguaging (originating from Welsh) was proposed by Cen Williams to examine classroom practices in which children were expected to alternate between languages (García and Li Wei, 2014). Baker (2011) referred to the concept of translanguaging—by

translating it from Welsh—as ‘the process of making meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages’ (p.288).

Focusing on translanguaging as pedagogy, García and Li Wei (2014) argue that it is a process by which children construct and modify their sociocultural values as they participate in different cultural activities in a school setting. In other words, translanguaging not only scaffolds language and literacy learning, but can also be transformative for children, teachers and education as a whole as well. The importance of translanguaging for education—especially in a monolingual education system—is that it allows us to examine children’s different language practices in the classroom. Translanguaging enables children to transgress monolingual education practices (ibid, p.68), creating a space in which children make sense of their learning by bringing their classroom practices and their own funds of knowledge together (ibid). Translanguaging also functions in the gap between monolingual classroom activities and minority languages which are not officially used in schools (ibid, p.70).

Drawing on Vygotsky’s (1978) concept of the zone of proximal development, García (2009a) suggested that translanguaging is a way of trying out ideas and actions, and a way of learning and developing literacy practices (p.153). Focusing on translanguaging as pedagogy, the author examined peer interactions in a bilingual preschool setting in the USA. García’s study showed that young Spanish speaking children learned new lexical terms (conceptual knowledge) in English through translanguaging. In their informal peer interactions, the children provided the meaning of Spanish lexical items for their peers, and the study concluded that translanguaging as a social practice can enable children to develop their second language and literacy learning in peer-to-peer conversations. More importantly, García argued that children can appropriate their language use in peer interactions by using ‘their entire linguistic repertoires flexibly’ (García, 2009a, p.153). Accordingly, they can understand various signs including visual, audible, physical and spatial, as well as written language available in their simultaneous worlds (García, 2009a).

Similarly, Creese and Blackledge (2015) focused on translanguaging as pedagogy and practice. Their view is that translanguaging enables us to investigate the agency of children in using their discursive practices in the classroom. In particular, they suggested that translanguaging can allow a researcher to examine how children negotiate identities and positions by moving between various linguistic resources. The authors conducted their study in a Panjabi complementary school in the UK, and showed that identity positions such as being

a student were adapted and negotiated as children used different languages (Panjabi and English). Another study conducted by Li Wei (2014) in a Chinese complementary school in the UK showed that children can generate new sociocultural knowledge and identities through translanguaging. In Li Wei's study, the children do this by bringing together both different language resources and, experience and knowledge of their social world(s) (Li Wei, 2014).

Other scholars (Creese and Blackledge, 2015; Lewis et al., 2012) focused on translanguaging as a new languaging reality. This is another view of translanguaging, which differs from translanguaging as pedagogy. According to the new languaging view, translanguaging focuses on the agency of language users as using language to make meaning (Creese and Blackledge, 2015). Li Wei (2011) also argued that translanguaging is 'transformative in nature' (p.1223). This means that through translanguaging, language users can undermine language hierarchies by creating a space in which they can use their full linguistic resources. Translanguaging as a new languaging reality makes the complexity of language practices more apparent—which in some cases may have been oppressed by nation-state policies (García, (2009b), reported in Li Wei and García [2016]). This view of translanguaging also enables us to examine the function of languages used by minority children whose language and culture has been stigmatised within a setting. For example, García (2009b) discussed the power and prestige of languages, arguing that languages have different levels of power and prestige, and children use them in different settings and for different purposes. In other words, children do not switch simply from one language to another when using different languages.

Thus, translanguaging can transgress a dominant monolingual ideology which excludes and ignores children who have different linguistic, cultural and social resources that contrast with those of the majority (Blackledge, 2000a). Blackledge argued that language ideologies are linked to power structures in settings in which different languages are used. The implication of this relationship is that such ideologies are constructed and reproduced in interactions. For example, a monolingual ideology can constrain interactions between the teacher and pupils by favouring one language use over another (Blackledge, 2000a). As discussed in subsection 3.3.2, language hierarchies are socially constructed. This implies that young children soon become aware of the prestige of languages through their participation in classroom activities (Thomson, 1995). This is congruent with recent sociolinguistic approaches to language, which sees it as a social and an ideological construct (Heller, 2007).

What is common among the studies reviewed is that they mainly used translanguaging as an analytical tool for examining interactions between teachers and children in multilingual settings in which there was an institutional support for minority language use. The studies reviewed also suggested that they mainly applied translanguaging to classrooms in which there was bilingual education. In such settings children were officially allowed to use their home language. This means that translanguaging practices were accepted and adapted by teachers (García, 2009a).

However, I will use translanguaging to examine how children use their discursive practices in informal peer interactions in classrooms that are officially monolingual. More specifically, I will use it to analyse the children's use of Kurmanji and Turkish languages with a focus on the agency of the children in using these languages in informal peer interactions.

The chapter now moves on to discuss studies on learning a second language and literacy conducted in different minority contexts.

3.6 Learning a second language in the nursery: Minority contexts

In this section, I shall discuss studies which examined young minority children learning a second language and literacy in early years settings. The purpose of this section is to understand how children from different minorities (indigenous minorities and immigrant ethnic minorities, for example) learn a second language in a preschool setting. Studies from different contexts will be discussed in this section, which can be divided into two groups: the first group investigated how indigenous minority children learn a second language and literacy in their own countries and the second focused on immigrant ethnic minority children in western countries. These studies were mainly conducted in nurseries. This section will begin by looking at indigenous groups and then move on to discuss immigrant minority groups. There appears to be only limited research available on the first group. This is a gap which my study will address by shedding light on how indigenous minority children learn a majority language, as well as culture and national identity, in the classroom.

Owodally (2010) focused on how young children aged 4 and 5 learned English as a second language in a nursery in Mauritius, an island located in the Indian Ocean where the three languages are used. French-lexified Creole is used by the majority of Mauritian people

(69%) at home, and French dominates the media. However, English is the language of instruction in primary schools. More importantly, Owodally explained the language policies of Mauritius, which have a top-down approach. These policies were introduced during the country's colonial period. According to the author, Creole-speaking people are considered to be in the lower class and their language is devaluated as 'not being a full-fledged language' in Mauritian society (ibid, p.19). In the nursery, all three languages were used, but the purpose of the nursery was to teach the children English in preparation for primary school. The ethnographic study showed that English was used in structured activities such as singing. Owodally highlighted that repetition played an important role in second language learning, as the teachers repeated songs for children to memorise. It was clear that both the French and Creole languages were occasionally used to translate some words or sentences from English for the children. However, the study indicated that French was mainly used in teacher-led activities. The author attributed this to the greater prestige of French in the wider society, proving that the values and beliefs of the broader sociocultural context filter down into classroom activities.

In a later study, Owodally (2012) discussed three preschool teachers' language choices and their nursery practices. Creole was the teachers' first language, and the author observed that children mainly communicated in Creole in their peer interactions. However, the study showed that the teacher used French in teacher-led activities—even though the children responded to them in Creole. The study also indicated that the teachers allowed children to use their home language, as well as providing them with translations of some Creole words if necessary. By doing so, Owodally argued that the teachers guided the children to learn the values that were attached to the languages and that the children subsequently learned the hierarchies among the languages (ibid, p.245).

Owodally (2014) discussed the way Mauritian preschool children learned the values attached to language whilst simultaneously learning the functions of different languages in the setting. The study showed that the teachers avoided using the children's home language for instruction purposes. Instead, they used it with the children only in informal talk when discussing information about daily life, such as what they ate for lunch. Although their home language was tolerated in the classroom, it was not valued as a linguistic resource for learning. French was mainly used as the medium of communication in the classroom. As far as English was concerned, there was only a limited. However, it was the language of instruction and was

used in particular activities such as conceptual learning (naming objects) and numeracy. Owodally (2014, p.33) argued that the purpose of using English in particular activities was to indicate that these activities were viewed 'as an object of serious study'. The implication of this is that English was valued for language and literacy learning.

Owodally's findings (2010; 2014) resonate with Sonck's (2005) study, which concluded that in Mauritius, English was viewed as the language of knowledge, while French was valued for cultural activities such as the theatre and movies. Sonck observed that families of children in preschool settings favoured French learning. According to Sonck, Creole was not used at all in some schools, and the author observed that some teachers even avoided admitting that they used Creole in the classroom. The author attributed this to the prestige of languages in the society. French in particular had a higher prestige in broader society and was generally used in schools (ibid, p.41).

There are other studies (Friedman, 2010; Howard, 2004, 2009; Paugh, 2005; Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016), which highlight the relationship between second language learning and identity. Friedman (2010) reviewed ethnographic studies which examined the way immigrant and indigenous minority children learned a second language and a new national identity. These studies were conducted at different school levels such as the preschool and primary classes. The review suggested that in preschool settings minority children were expected to learn the national identity while they learned the language of that school. It also underscored the fact that identity transformations are complex and dynamic, as discussed in section 3.3.4.

Howard (2004) examined the way young children (aged 5 and 6) learned a second language in a nursery. The author conducted the study in northern Thailand where the children's home language (Kam Muang) was different from the official language of the country (Standard Thai). Both languages were used in the school, but the language of instruction was the Standard Thai. The study aimed specifically to find out how the children assimilated language practices and ideologies, particularly learning social behaviours such as respect through their participation in classroom activities. The study found that the children were socialized into routine classroom activities to learn the use of honorific particles in Standard Thai. The teacher guided the children as these particles defined what it meant to speak Standard Thai. The implication of this is that language practices in the classroom are indicative of the values and beliefs of the wider society. In a later study, Howard (2009) showed that Muang minority children learned Thai national identity through engaging in classroom activities. The

author highlighted the fact that an emblem of respect and good manners is speaking Standard Thai, and respect plays an important role in the Thai national identity.

Similarly, Schwartz and Gorbatt (2016) investigated young Palestinian-Israeli children learning Hebrew as a second language in a bilingual Arabic and Hebrew speaking nursery in Israel. The nursery aimed to develop both languages, as they are officially recognised as national languages. However, Hebrew is the dominant language in public domains (Mor-Sommerfeld et al., 2007), and Arabic-speaking children are expected to learn Hebrew as the second language (ibid). But this is not the case for Hebrew-speaking children. Schwartz and Gorbatt (2016) showed that children negotiated their sociocultural identities such as being an Arab by their informal talk. For example, the minority Arabic-speaking children encouraged one of their peers from a mixed ethnic background to define himself as an ethnic Arab. The study also indicated that the children's language use depended on interlocutors. In other words, they knew when to use which languages and with whom.

Furthermore, Schwartz and Palviainen's (2016) review of the literature gives us an insight into the children's agency in using languages in peer interactions, as discussed in the previous section. They reviewed studies (including that of Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016) conducted in monolingual and bilingual nurseries in five different countries, namely the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, Israel and Singapore. The studies reviewed included both immigrant and indigenous ethnic minority children. Schwartz and Palviainen's study indicated that young immigrant children used their home language in peer interactions in nurseries where there was an official monolingual language policy (the Netherlands, Finland and Sweden). In the other context (Singapore), the review highlighted that the emphasis was on English as it was used for academic purposes, rather than general communication.

Examining indigenous ethnic minority children's second language learning, studies (Owodally, 2010, 2014; Sonck, 2005; Syrey et al., 1997) suggested that children learn a second language and literacy through engaging in classroom activities, which indicate certain values and beliefs about the dominant language. Studies also highlighted identity transformation when minority children learn a second language (Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016). The current study will extend these insights into how dominant language ideologies shape language practices, how teachers attach values to languages, as well as into the relationship between a second language and identity transformation. Another insight from these studies is that second language learning consists of identity transformation, as children are expected to learn and

appropriate values, beliefs and identities associated with the second language (Howard, 2009; Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016).

The section moves on to discuss studies focusing on immigrant children in western countries such as the UK and USA. Thomson (1995) researched young Pakistani-British children learning English as a second language in the nursery, highlighting the ways in which the children made sense of their learning through negotiation with their teacher and peers. The author highlighted the fact that their language use depended on the interlocutors such as peers and the teacher. They used Mirpuri-Panjabi (their home language) only, but used both languages at the same time with peers from the same ethnic minority. This enabled them to participate in different activities in the classroom. However, the author observed that towards the end of the first term one of these children spoke English only (ibid, p.244). According to Thomson this indicated the role of the language policy, which in this case advocated using the dominant language in different settings such as the nursery and the public domain. The author further argued that this offered insights into how children learn and understand the prestige of languages used in settings such as a nursery. Thomson also stressed that the children did not only learn a second language, but also they learned to become pupils (ibid, p.248).

Piker's (2013) ethnographic study examined Spanish-speaking young immigrant children learning English in a bilingual preschool setting in the USA. Both Spanish and English languages were used, with Spanish mainly acting as the language of communication. Drawing on Vygotsky (1978), Piker highlighted the role of play in learning a second language and literacy in peer interactions. The study found that peer interactions during free playtime enabled them to develop their English learning, including their speaking skills. Piker underlined the idea that play encouraged the children to use more English, as English as a second language became a necessity for children if they wanted to play with English-speaking peers. The author also suggested that Spanish language use decreased in peer interactions compared to the beginning of the school term when they generally spoke Spanish.

Another study conducted by Soltero-González (2008) investigated a five year old Mexican-American immigrant boy learning a second language and literacy in a monolingual preschool setting. The study offered insights into the way top-down educational policies affect language practices in the classroom. The author highlighted that although Spanish was not banned in the classroom, the teacher discouraged the children from using it. This was shown in the interview with the classroom's teacher, who stated that it was the children's best interest

to learn English as early as possible to facilitate their successful transition to the primary school. Soltero-González observed that top-down policies shaped language practices by preventing the use of Spanish in the classroom. However, the study showed that the child used his home language (Spanish) in peer interaction despite the official curriculum that advocated the use of English as his second language. Soltero-González's also offers insights into language as a new languaging reality as discussed in section 3.5. In peer interaction, the child constructed the meaning of school texts (drawing a door) through negotiation with his peers in Spanish. The findings of the study are consistent with the view that literacy is a social practice which is bound to ideologies. The study found that children used their home language in informal peer talk.

Soltero-González's findings resonate with those of Soltero-González and Reyes (2012), who investigated immigrant Mexican-American children's second language and literacy learning in the USA. The authors conducted their study in two preschool settings, where the language of instruction was English. Although the teachers allowed the children to use their home language, they did not guide such practices. For example, one of the teachers (bilingual in Spanish and English) reacted to one boy's utterances in Spanish by repeating his words in English. In the same interaction, it was made clear that the child was competent in his home language as he explained his drawing in long sentences in Spanish when talking to one of the researchers. But the boy spoke short sentences in English as he developed his second language and literacy learning. Another finding of the study was that the children mainly used their home language in informal peer interactions—although they spoke English with their teachers. The study showed that the children mainly used their home language (Spanish) for constructing knowledge and making personal connections with their peers.

Another study conducted by Akoğlu and Yağmur (2016) examined the importance of first language competence (Turkish) in a second language learning (Dutch). They compared young monolingual Turkish-speaking children in Turkey with immigrant Turkish speaking children in the Netherlands. The language of instruction was Dutch, and the study discovered a significant relationship between the children's home language skills (such as conceptual knowledge) and their second language development. They highlighted that home language skills affected second language learning as the children drew on their available skills to develop those of the second language. The research concluded that a second language learning can benefit children with full linguistic resources. The current study will extend these studies by

showing how the children's home language (Kurmanji) facilitates their second language learning.

The literature review in this section suggests that the official curriculum can shape the language use of the minority children in the ways in which teachers encourage and value the use of a second language. Studies indicate that children become aware of language when it is scaffolded, valued and guided in teacher-led activities. This, then, allows minority children to use their home language in informal peer interactions. In other words, the review gives us insights into how minority children develop an awareness of when and with whom they can use different languages in classrooms. That is, languages are hierarchised through classroom activities.

Studies examining minority children's second language and literacy learning show that there was in general institutional support for the children to use their home language alongside the second language. This institutional support meant that there was either a bilingual assistant available or a bilingual programme applied in the classroom. This institutional support emphasised children's home language as having a pedagogic value.

3.7 Learning Turkish as a second language in Turkey

In this section I will discuss studies examining early years second language learning in Turkey. I will also discuss a study conducted in a primary school in Turkey as it seems that there are few studies examining Turkish as a second language in preschool settings. This is because official discourse does not recognise minority groups such as Kurds and Arabs as separate ethnic minorities, as discussed in Chapter 2. Researchers may be disinclined to conduct a study on language learning relating to minority groups, or may avoid specifying these minorities. For example, Tulu (2009) examined how minority children's home language affected their Turkish language learning in nurseries, but the study did not specify who these children were in terms of ethnicity or what languages they spoke. The author used a language test which measured vocabulary learning, and participant observation (especially during free playtime). The results showed that there was a significant difference between the language development of non-native speaking children and that of native speaking children. They also indicated that there was a

difference in the results in terms of gender identity, insofar as girls were more successful than boys.

Yazıcı et al. (2010) investigated Russian-Turkish children learning Turkish in a preschool setting in Turkey. The children came from families in which the mother was Russian and the father was Turkish. The mothers spoke only Russian, whereas the fathers spoke both Turkish and Russian. Drawing on experimental approaches to language acquisition, the study used both experimental and control groups of 40 children. The authors found that the children in the experimental group learned more vocabulary than the control group did. For the experimental group, the teachers used strategies such as modelling sounds, words and sentences. The authors highlighted that Turkish language activities such as singing helped develop the children's vocabulary learning. According to the authors, these activities allowed the children to develop their speaking and listening skills.

In addition, Gökalp's (2015) ethnographic study examined Kurdish primary children learning Turkish in Turkey. This study is relevant to my study as it focused on the children's language practices and used ethnography as a research methodology. Gökalp highlighted that language ideologies (Turkish as the language of instruction and broader sociocultural context) mediated the teachers' language practices. The study emphasised that the teachers encouraged students and parents to speak more Turkish than Kurdish in daily lives to help the children for the future. For example, when the children spoke Kurdish, the teachers ignored the children's utterances in Kurdish and told them to repeat these utterances in Turkish. According to Gökalp, the teachers held the deficit view, and considered that speaking Kurdish could obstruct the children's Turkish and literacy learning. The study also indicated that the expectations of the school played an important role in the children's language and literacy learning. The main finding of the study was that language policies mediated beliefs and values about language use, as the children were encouraged to speak Turkish in social settings such as the school.

One final study by Çoşkun et al. (2011) explored the educational experiences of Kurdish children attending primary school. The researchers conducted interviews with the Kurdish children who learned Turkish upon entering school, and with the teachers who taught Kurdish children Turkish. The findings of the study indicated that Kurdish children's development lags behind that of their Turkish peers because of the language barrier. The author argued that Kurdish children are more likely to fail at school due to a lack of language skills in Turkish (ibid). This review suggests that there is a gap, and my study will address how young

minority children learn Turkish language and literacy in the nursery in Turkey. The study will indicate how children's home language facilitates learning Turkish in peer talk.

3.8 Summary

In this chapter, I have outlined and discussed the concepts that will inform my analysis, and discussed the relevant perspectives on second language learning. This chapter highlights the way children are scaffolded in and guided through activities (guided participation). The children create synergy among themselves and their siblings, and become full participants in a setting through participation in Communities of Practice. They also add new knowledge to their current funds of knowledge as they learn a second language and literacy. Assistance provided by more knowledgeable members of society is crucial to children's second language learning. Studies drawing on sociocultural approaches indicate the ways in which children's second language learning is expertly scaffolded as they expertly scaffold the language of their peers (Gregory et al., 2004). Finally, the chapter highlights the importance of translanguaging, which allows minority children to use their full linguistic resources in the classroom.

Chapter 4: Methodology

4.1 Introduction

I shall begin this chapter by discussing quantitative and qualitative research approaches before moving on to consider ethnography as a qualitative research methodology and its relevance to my study. From there I shall discuss the concept of reflexivity in ethnography before examining insider/outsider positionality to reflect on my research process. Finally, the concept of validity will be discussed.

4.2 Qualitative and quantitative research approaches

What is knowledge? How do we gain it? What is the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participants? These are common and longstanding questions that have been considered in academia in a variety of ways. Researchers have handled these questions from different research paradigms, principally taking quantitative or qualitative approaches or a mixture of both. According to LeCompte and Schensul (1999, p.41):

A paradigm constitutes a way of looking at the world; interpreting what is seen, and deciding which of the things seen by the researcher are real, valid, and important to document.

The main difference between quantitative and qualitative approaches is that quantitative approaches take a deductive approach, often based more on scientific or mathematical principles. A quantitative investigation will start with a theory or a hypothesis, the validity of which will be tested by objective research. Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, advocate an inductive approach emphasising the generation of theories as a result of research (Bryman, 2012). Qualitative and quantitative research asks different kinds of questions. The former asks how and why, while the latter considers what and how much (Cohen et al., 2011).

Quantitative approaches stress the ‘quantification in both the collection and analysis of data’ (Bryman, 2012, p.5). Such approaches have a theory-oriented methodology in which theory is tested for rigour and truth (Greig and Taylor, 1999). The deductive approach favours theories from which likely outcomes can be deduced, often in terms of statistical predictability. In quantitative approaches, the researcher mainly considers the establishment of the truth or falsity of a theoretical statement (ibid). For example, a researcher may seek to establish how true or false the following statement is: girls are better at learning a language than boys. Such

statements are considered as hypotheses which are then ‘tested through methods of observation or experiment’ to decide whether they are true or not (ibid, p.35). In relation to researching children’s education, quantitative approaches mainly take the view that children’s behaviour and understanding, and their acquisition of meaning and knowledge can be determined, measured and structured (ibid). According to quantitative approaches, ‘children are natural, physical beings and are subject to the same laws and principles which govern the structure of the universe’ (ibid, p.35). Quantitative approaches generally entail quantitative analysis based on statistical analysis (Cohen et al., 2011).

However, quantitative research is often criticised for ignoring the subjectivity of individuals, and as such is often unsuitable for measuring human individuality or their unique potential. When investigating such matters, the perspective of individuals needs to be taken into account. Qualitative approaches explore how individuals interpret and make sense of their world. This mainly refers to emic perspective (the participants’ point of view), rather than etic (the researcher’s own view). These perspectives will be discussed in more depth in the next section, but their difference represents the point of departure between quantitative and qualitative approaches. Qualitative researchers believe that a deeper understanding of social phenomena can be obtained through qualitative methodologies (Silverman, 2001), emphasising the generation of theories from systematic observation over the idea of beginning with a theory and then testing it. In contrast to quantitative approaches, qualitative research stresses the ‘understanding of the social world through an examination of the interpretation of that world by its participants’ (Bryman, 2016, p.375). The participants’ own understanding of their activities and knowledge are valued by researchers who use qualitative approaches. Furthermore, qualitative approaches mainly provide greater detail of activities so that they can be interpreted from a perspective that includes a broader sociocultural context (Greig and Taylor, 1999). The concepts that emerge from the current study will be discussed in the analytical chapters (Chapters 6 and 7) and the concluding discussion chapter.

As the current study was carried out in social settings (nursery and home), and because it involved human behaviour and its observation, the study’s methodology was drawn from qualitative research approaches, which were non-experimental. In other words, the study takes an approach that is ‘subjective, holistic, naturalistic, and inductive’ (Greig and Taylor, 1999, p.47). The research was subjective as each child’s understanding, knowledge and sense of value and meaning emerged his or her interactions with others. The children’s participation in the

classroom activities is viewed from their perspectives. The research takes a holistic approach as the researcher observed the children in a wide variety of activities and in different settings (home and nursery) to provide as detailed an account as possible of their participation in different cultural activities relating to their minority (Kurmanji) culture and the majority culture driven by Turkish state ideologies. The research is inductive as it began with a broad question designed to generate a theory through research, and did not seek to test a pre-existing theory (Cohen et al., 2011). In relation to qualitative research, Taylor (1993, p.7) argues that ‘in order to understand social action we must grasp the meaning that actors attach to their actions’. In this sense, the researcher was careful to examine the meanings the participants themselves attach to their actions or interactions, rather than his own pre-existing theories or opinions (Bapir, 2012).

Qualitative approaches enable a researcher to take a holistic view towards the research, in which participants’ views and context can be understood in more detail (Kyoko, 2004). Settings such as the nursery and the family are complex and multi-layered in terms of activities taking place in these settings (Cohen et al., 2011). Qualitative research approaches are therefore considered more effective in providing a detailed account of children’s participation in the multiple contexts that constitute the environment within which children learn a second language (Young and Astarita, 2013). In other words, qualitative approaches emphasise the importance of the context in which language and literacy are learned and used.

In the next section, I shall give an outline of ethnography and discuss its relevance to my study.

4.3 What is ethnography?

Ethnography is a research methodology applied by researchers in the social sciences (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Ethnography has been defined as ‘the study of social interactions, behaviours, and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organizations, and communities’ (Reeves et al., 2008, p.1). According to Gregory (2005b), ethnography describes context or environment, participants, and the specific social interaction and the product of those interactions that constitutes the area of study defined by the research question or subject matter.

Ethnography also allows the researcher to explore what is occurring as well as how and why. (Gregory, 2005b, p. xviii).

Ethnography mainly ‘involves the researcher participating, overtly and covertly, in people’s [participants] daily lives for an extended period of time, watching what happens, listening to what is said [...] collecting documents and artefacts’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.3). According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.168), an important aspect of ethnographic inquiry is what individuals do and why. In this sense, ethnography explores the way individuals construct their world through participation in social activities. Ethnography therefore also concerns itself in how participants construct their identities through participation in activities, such as those observed the nursery in this research (ibid). The features of ethnographic research are:

- a) Rather than observing participants under certain conditions, ethnography requires that the researcher studies participants in everyday contexts.
- b) The researcher collects data from various sources such as participant observation, documentary data and informal conversations. However, participant observations and interviews are considered key research methods.
- c) Data are collected mainly through an unstructured process. This means that the data collection process may not follow a fixed and detailed research design. The categories used for analysing participants’ interactions are produced through the process of the data analysis, rather than organised according to a predetermined structure.
- d) For data analysis, ethnography advocates the interpretation of meaning, functions and institutional practices, and examines how these meanings and practices are related to wider social, cultural, historical, political contexts (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007, p.3).

Geertz (1973) defines the ethnographic process as a ‘thick description [...] taking into account all relevant and micro and macro contextual influences that stand in a systematic relationship to the behaviour or events one is attempting to explain.’ (in Watson-Gegeo, 1992, p.54). Thick description includes detailed observational data and the participants’ own interpretation of situations (Cohen et al., 2011). Ethnography enables the participants’ voices to be heard via the thick description of events (Fetterman, 2010). Denzin (2000) argues that one of goals of

ethnography is to understand how individuals construct meaning in their lives. Similarly, Gregory et al. (2004, p.19) highlight three characteristics of ethnography. Firstly, it comprises fieldwork conducted in natural settings such as a school and home over a period of time. This indicates the aim of ethnography, which is to describe and understand cultural practices and the perspectives of participants. Secondly it involves the use of multiple methods to collect data from a range of resources. These can include participant observation, fieldnotes, audio and video recordings and interviews. Thirdly, it introduces inductive strategies as the best way of analysing data, which in ethnographic studies is qualitative.

In terms of this research project, ethnography provides me with a lens through which I can understand how my key participants make sense of Turkish language and literacy learning. Geertz (1973) suggests that researchers' understandings of cultural practices and patterns allow them to expose the practices participants follow in their ordinary life. This implies that the researcher examines the practices of participants taking their particularities into account (Geertz, 1973). Giampapa (2012) argues that ethnographic research focuses on the way in which the researcher builds a collaborative relationship with the participants in order to develop a holistic account of their views (the emic perspective). Fetterman (2010) distinguishes between emic and etic perspectives. An emic perspective is one that can be taken through understanding participants' views. Meanwhile, an etic perspective is one that the researcher takes through the methods used to collect and interpret data (ibid).

I use ethnography to examine how my key participants learn Turkish language and literacy. Most importantly, the approach enables me to observe and record how interactions take place between the teacher and the children and among the children, as well as interactions taking place in the key participants' homes. This allows me to understand and examine the way values are attached to the languages (Turkish and Kurmanji) in the classroom. Ethnography also allows me to examine beliefs surrounding the languages. I also chose ethnography to examine children whose culture and language have been suppressed and marginalised in education and the broader society. As discussed in Chapter 3, previous studies on Turkish language and literacy learning in nurseries were experimental (Tulu, 2009; Yazıcı et al., 2010). These studies did not focus on how the children learned Turkish language and literacy, or how they gradually explored their new culture and language.

Drawing on Geertz's (1973) 'thick description', Bloome (2012) argues that an emic perspective provides a researcher with an understanding of what takes place in the classroom

and how. The emic perspective is considered to be helpful in understanding participants' own perspectives. Cultural practices which take place in the classroom are not only described, but are examined from multiple levels to understand their meanings from the participants' perspectives (ibid). A researcher may come to understand these meanings by examining the way participants attach values to practices, and how they construct and share these meanings. According to Bloome (2012), the emic perspective takes into account how meanings are built and shared by the children and the teacher in the classroom. In other words, the emic perspective 'renders them accessible' (Geertz, 1973, p.14). It also emphasises how in the classroom children develop meanings and re-contextualise these meanings across a range of activities (Bloome, 2012).

Even though the emic perspective is crucial to understanding the meanings of activities from the participant point of view, researchers also highlight the importance of the etic perspective. For example, Fetterman (2010) asserts that an ethnographic study needs to include both perspectives if the researcher wishes to fully analyse and interpret the data collected. Ethnography therefore provides a theoretical framework for the full analysis and interpretation of collected data (this will be discussed in-depth in the next chapter).

The key principles of ethnography have been discussed above in terms of relevant studies. I shall move on to discuss the relevance of ethnography more specifically to researching children. Studies that examine children's language and literacy learning put a strong emphasis on ethnography for researching children's participation in cultural activities (Barron, 2009; Owodally, 2010; Toohey, 1996). For example, Toohey (1996) studied young immigrant children learning English as a second language (Cantonese was their first language) in a nursery in Canada. Toohey described the children's participation in classroom activities, analysing the way in which resources such as toys and books mediated the children's language learning and interpreted the formation of their identities and classroom practices. Likewise, Drury (2004a) suggested that taking an ethnographic approach is a relevant way of understanding children's perspectives.

James (2001) argues that the importance of ethnography in studying children is that it is 'a research methodology which has enabled children to be recognized as people who can be studied in their own right within the social sciences' (p.17). This understanding of the children emphasises their own agency in their learning processes. Here, agency refers to the children's ability to temporarily challenge classroom language ideologies (this will be discussed in-depth

in Chapter 7). The current study will examine and appraise the children's agency in using their home language within a monolingual classroom (see Chapter 7). According to Drury (2004a), this perspective provides the researcher with insights into children's language learning. James (2001) also suggests that ethnography allows the researcher to engage with children's own views and to access their ideas and views (p.247). This means that ethnography allows the voices of the participants to be heard. According to James, this is the strength of ethnography, and it lies:

in the ways in which, through close attention to the everyday and familiar through which the social world is both created and sustained, it has enabled the voices of those who would otherwise be silent to be heard (James, 2001, p.255).

As James points out, data collection methods such as audio recordings and participant observation enable me to collect data about my participants' different linguistic, social and cultural resources. In other words, the use of ethnographic methodology in my research enables me to examine how the children bring their individual and collected funds of knowledge to bear on developing their language and literacy learning in the classroom (Moll et al., 2005). This is an extremely important point, since deficit approaches to children's learning consider that children's home language negatively affects their second language learning. This underscores the importance of taking an emic perspective, insofar as it enables the researcher to understand what the participants believe and do (Gregory and Ruby, 2011). In my case, the emic perspective enables me to examine the children's understandings of the values, beliefs and expectations of their minority community and allows me to understand and analyse the way these beliefs and values affect their Turkish language learning. Research *with* children, rather than *on* them, shows how their new language and literacy skills (including thinking and speaking, and identities such as being a good learner) take on meaning for the children. This happens because the children 'act with agency to engage with, continue or resist and transform repertoires of practice across different setting in their lives' (Hedges, 2015, p.93).

On a personal note, I would argue that I first started using ethnographic methods unconsciously when I decided to explore my research question (*How Kurdish children learn Turkish upon entering nursery*, see Chapter 1) in 2009. At that time, as a nursery school teacher myself, I was observing children's participation in activities, as well as their interactions with each other and the teaching staff. I also observed interactions with their parents (mainly mothers) when parents brought their children to the nursery and came to collect them later.

However, my observations were not systematic, as were the observations that were done during the pilot study and the main data collection for this research. My observations during my teaching years were important as they helped me decide to conduct the current study on second language learning and also informed my choice of methodology and processes. One of the differences between my observations at that time and during the pilot study and main data collection is that for the pilot study and main data collection I used ethnographic methods such as participant observation and interview in a more systematic way in order to understand my participants' perspectives. As a teacher, my ethnography was instinctive; as a researcher it was informed, based on knowledge, understanding and through background research.

Having laid out the background that underpinned my research, I shall now move on to discuss reflexivity in ethnography.

4.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is a key concept in ethnography that refers mainly to 'a turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference' (Davies, 2008, p.4). Reflexivity concerns the effect of the researcher upon the research, the effects for example of different identities such as the gender and ethnicity of the researcher on the collection and analysis of the data. The researcher also reflects on the effects of his or her access to settings such as home and school and all areas in which the research is conducted. The importance of reflexivity in ethnography is that the researcher has a very close involvement in the culture and community of the participants (Davies, 2008). It is easy to think of research as an objective process in which all aspects of the study take place without the researcher's effects. However, the researcher's selection of topic, participants, and reporting of findings are effects that are reflected in almost all phases of the research (Davies, 2008). In other words, the researcher observes participants' participation in cultural practices to understand 'what they are up to' (Geertz, 1973, p.13). Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) emphasise the effect of values and interests acquired by the researcher from his or her position in particular socio-historical locations when conducting research. Research can be considered as a social process, and both the social process and the researcher's personal characteristics can affect research findings. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007, p.15) argue:

...the orientations of researchers will be shaped by their social-historical locations, including the values and interests that these locations confer on them. What this represents is a rejection of the idea that social research is, or can be, carried in some autonomous realm...

The concept of reflexivity in ethnography acknowledges that the researcher is part of the world under study (O'Reilly, 2009). This means that the researcher's relations with the participants become a factor of the activities whose meanings the researcher is examining (Lichterman, 2015). Reflexivity therefore reflects the researchers' awareness of their effect on the research process (Davies, 2008). In the next section, insider/outsider positionality will be discussed with reference to the relevant literature.

4.5 The researcher's positionality

In this section, I will discuss the advantages and disadvantages of being an insider researcher within the relevant literature. As an insider in the school and in the ethnic community (I am a former nursery school teacher and I am Kurdish), one would expect my access to the settings (home and nursery) to have been unproblematic. Ethnicity can allow a researcher to take an insider role (Mullings, 1999). In my case it certainly helped me establish a rapport with the families and teachers (Troman, 2000). According to Aguilar (1981), the advantage of being an ethnic insider is that participants are less likely to conceal their views from the researcher, and 'because of their ability to blend into situations, they are less likely to alter social settings' (ibid, p.18). Other researchers (such as Chavez, 2008) also discuss the advantages of being an insider during fieldwork. An insider's familiarity with the field (in my case the school and community) can provide a researcher with easier access to that field (Chavez, 2008). This means that insiders may need considerably less time to familiarize themselves with the field (Stephenson and Greer, 1981). As an insider researcher reviewing studies on insider status, Labaree (2002) obtained easy access to information about the organization studied. Labaree, as a senate faculty member, examined the limitations of pseudo-legislative forms of faculty involvement in shared government. He reflected on issues surrounding access by saying:

As a member of the academic senate, for example, I have a comprehensive understanding of how information is collected and distributed by and about the senate. I also have relatively easy access to the textual artefacts of the organization (p.104).

As this quote indicates, being an insider can save time outsiders would spend learning in the field. Labaree's ability to access data and to understand how that data is held is provided through his insider identity, as well as his full awareness of the importance of data. In line with Labaree, Chavez (2008) underlines that a researcher's familiarity can provide insights into the linguistic, emotional and psychological resources of participants. This implies that a researcher may be familiar with the styles and processes of the participants' interaction, and may be instinctively aware of where the boundaries of such interactions exist.

Another implication of this is that insiders will more readily identify and understand the cultural and personal meaning of patterns (Stephenson and Greer, 1981). By being aware of the boundaries, according to Chavez (2008), the researcher can understand which methods are more suitable for his or her research. In addition, an insider will have an innate knowledge of the sociohistorical situation of the field being studied. Labaree (2002) further argues that insiderness enables the researcher to more easily interpret cultural cues associated with the values and belief systems of the community under study. Thus, the researcher's insiderness can create a rapport with participants in a relatively short time, and this rapport can be established with less tension than with outsiders (Chavez, 2008; Labaree, 2002).

Although insider status offers the researcher these advantages, it may also lead to complications. Researchers such as Chimbutane (2012) agree with Chavez (2008) that familiarity with the subject—such as the participants and their language—allows the researcher to understand the nuances of participants' linguistic and cultural practices and to interpret their participation in activities. However, Chavez suggests that a researcher should be aware that complications can arise due to positionality. First, complications may arise from age and identity issues such as class differences between the researcher and the participants (Chavez, 2008). For example, a researcher who has a teaching background may not experience difficulties when he or she conducts research with teachers in the same school. But gender and class may create boundaries when the researcher talks with parents (the effect of the researcher's gender will be discussed in detail in the next subsection). This may constrain the researcher in ways in which he or she asks questions (Chavez, 2008). Secondly, another complication may arise from taking things for granted. Stephenson and Greer (1981) caution that an insider researcher may overlook some patterns and practices.

Previous familiarity with daily life in Troutdale, as well as in other rural American communities, initially blinded Greer to the presence of patterns in the daily events of going to the post office, bank, and the store (p.124).

Furthermore, some insider researchers' assumptions may create dilemmas. This is what some scholars (such as Gregory and Ruby, 2011) consider as the 'insider's dilemma.' In their study, Ruby clearly explained how her assumptions contrasted with reality.

I considered myself an 'Insider' by being a Bangladeshi as well as being Muslim. My initial feelings as soon as I received the offer of my first post as a researcher was one of exhilaration and anticipation as I knew I would be working amongst my 'own' people sharing a similar background, culture and faith (ibid, p.168).

Ruby's initial feelings (with her colleague, Tahera) were that they would conduct their project among their 'own' people without any difficulty, and it would be a 'simple' process. Their feelings echoed my own at the beginning of my fieldwork. The importance of this is to emphasise the fact that researchers make assumptions and need to remain aware of how these assumptions may constrain their visions. Chavez (2008) argues that the observations, interpretations and representations of insiders are affected by their various identities and positionalities. Crucially, Banks (1998) argues that a researcher's insider status is not static, and can change during the fieldwork.

My status as a former teacher helped me to be perceived by the nursery management and teachers as an insider. I was socialized into Kurdish culture during my childhood, socialised into Turkish culture through schooling and eventually became a teacher in a Turkish school. Banks (1998) points out that researchers who have experienced two different cultures were socialized into their indigenous communities as insiders, but practice a different culture as outsiders. The values, beliefs and knowledge of their minority indigenous communities are different from the wider outside community (ibid, p.14). My participants are being socialised in a similar way by participating in two different cultural practices in their very early years. From a personal perspective, I was socialised within a culture into which my participants are now being socialised, and I could therefore be seen as an insider at every level.

Having worked as a teacher in the same nursery I was now studying, I was able to establish good rapport with the key participants' parents. When I introduced myself as a former teacher who was Kurdish and was now working as a researcher, they treated me in the same way they would treat a teacher. During our conversations, they mainly referred to me as a

teacher by addressing me as **mamoste** (teacher in English). The implication of this was that as time progressed it enabled me to establish rapport with parents, allowing me access to normal practices such as watching TV together at home. I was viewed by the families of my participants as an insider. This was recognisable when I visited my participants' families. When they started talking about their own history, they could say that "you know being Kurdish is difficult" or "the 1990s were tough time as many Kurdish people like us were forced to migrate to cities". Such admissions and inclusive statements indicate that my participants' parents considered me as an insider, and expected me to have similar experiences and knowledge of being a Kurmanji speaker and to be familiar with Kurdish experiences during certain times. My insider status was a great advantage in such respects. Chavez (2008) indicates that an insider can have insights into the emotional states and psychological well-being of participants. But as Gregory and Ruby (2011) argue, access to settings is not a simple process for insiders as they may experience limited access to these settings (see the next section) which may include negotiations of time and other identities such as age.

4.5.1 The limits of insider positionality

In this section, I shall discuss the role gender effect plays in the fieldwork. I will also reflect on my own fieldwork experiences. McCorkel and Myers (2003) suggest that in general terms, researchers need to reflect more on the influence of their identities on data collected. Studies indicate that gender is likely to play an important role in providing or limiting access to settings (Warren and Hackney, 2000). According to Warren (1988, p.7), 'gender is a focal and organizing category in social science'. In other words, researchers need to develop a sensitivity to gender issues both during fieldwork and when it is written up. The literature on the effect of gender in ethnography focuses mainly on how male and female researchers gain access to the spheres of the other gender. Researchers should reflect on how they attempt to collect information from members of the opposite sex. Another researcher reveals how difficult it was for her to undertake fieldwork (Henderson, 2009). As a black female researcher in Mozambique, Henderson admitted that she faced unsolicited attention from men.

Male researchers must also reflect on the effect of their gender on the relationship with participants during fieldwork. Troman (2000) examined the causes and effects of stress experienced by teachers (3 male and 15 female). He reports that his gender affected his relationships with the participants. For example, some female participants were not willing to arrange second interviews. One participant said that she would need to discuss the interview request with her husband. Other male scholars (such as McKeganey and Bloor, 1991) highlight the influence of their own gender on their relationships with the participants. McKeganey and Bloor examined their fieldwork experiences across different research contexts: firstly, a participant observation study into therapeutic communities, secondly their ethnographic description of a home-help service and thirdly adolescent drug use in socially deprived areas. These studies were conducted with participants from both genders over an extend period. They found that their relationships with female participants were negatively affected by their gender in terms of accessing physical settings. For example, when they conducted research into a female therapeutic group, they were refused access to the dormitory, which was considered off-limits to male researchers. Similarly, their access to other settings such as the kitchen and the lounge was very limited (ibid, p.200). Therefore, the gender of male researchers may also limit their access to some settings.

As a male researcher, my gender sometimes limited my access to home settings. During the main data collection process, I visited key participants' homes when the children's fathers or uncles were present. The parents and relatives knew me as I attended the family meeting (30/09/2014), which takes place at the beginning of every academic year. Before that day, my presence and purpose was discussed between the head teacher and the relevant families before the family meeting took place. I considered the invitation a good opportunity to meet families. In fact, I tried to attend all events organized by the nursery. At that meeting, there were approximately thirty mothers, five fathers and one uncle. Teachers, the deputy head teacher and the (male) head teacher were also present. At the beginning of the meeting, the head teacher introduced the teachers and me to the parents. When the head teacher introduced me to them, he explained my research and said that I might want to visit their homes for my research in future. After the meeting, I talked informally to some parents, as well as the uncle whose nephews (twins) I decided to observe later. They all expressed a warm welcome and encouraged me to visit them.

The teacher in whose classroom I would be observing the children introduced me to the mother of one of the children (Yasmin, aged 4 at the time of the study). I had already observed Yasmin in the classroom and was thinking of focusing on her when her mother arrived to collect her from the nursery. As I was introduced to Yasmin's mother, I explained my research to her and said that I had chosen Yasmin for my research. I also said that I wanted to visit her home and to meet her husband. Yasmin's mother welcomed me, and she told me that she would let me know when her husband would be at home, since her husband does not always work at his carpenter's shop. Yasmin's father has jobs to do at different locations, including various schools within the municipality. Later they let me know when I could visit. As I was about to leave the nursery to go to Yasmin's home, I noticed that Yasmin was still waiting outside the deputy head teacher's office. I approached and asked her whether she wanted to come with me. She accepted and we both went to her home. When Yasmin and I arrived, both her father and mother were present. They welcomed me, and I explained my research to them in detail.

My visits to the homes of my participants (the twins Mehmet and Ahmet, and Yasmin) were mainly shaped by my gender (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007), since I visited their homes when their fathers or their uncle were present. For example, when I visited the twins' home, I did not see their mother. But their grandmother (on the father's side) was with us (me, their uncle and their father) in the living room. During my first visit, I did not ask why their mother did not join us until the uncle showed me out as I was leaving. He told me that his sister and sister-in-law do not come to the living room when a male stranger is present. If I had thought that there was not such a gender barrier, I would have visited my participants' homes more than I did, but I was unable to observe the relationship between mothers and children in a domestic setting. Out of cultural respect I arranged my visits for times when the fathers or the uncle were at home, so my visits took place mainly in the evenings (around 6 pm). I usually set up my visits to my participants' homes by calling their fathers to arrange a suitable time when they would be at home, and I negotiated the time of visits with them (Troman, 2000).

I believe that in many societies it can be difficult to welcome a male foreigner who is not a family member (especially a researcher who is studying their children's habits) into a devout Muslim home, since mothers are reluctant to communicate with a foreign man without their husbands being present. Sharing cultural and religious backgrounds with the participants does not eradicate the effect of the researcher's gender. Roald's (2001) account of her fieldwork experiences informs us about the problems of a female researcher conducting research in a

Muslim community. In such religious communities, there can be a strong segregation between males and females. Roald (2001) argues that the segregation between genders in Muslim communities can be more distinctive than in other groups. She continues that even when both genders are present in the same room, there may still be invisible barriers between them because of cultural customs regarding roles and segregation. Each gender has access to different spheres of information and may provide conflicting viewpoints or attitudes. Roald reflected on her fieldwork experiences when interviewing male participants in their home setting. She experienced difficulties in terms of her outsider status as a female western researcher when she conducted interviews with the males. To overcome the effect of her gender she found it necessary to bring her husband with her, which whilst perhaps not being an ideal compromise, did at least improve the situation for her.

4.6 Research validity

Validity is as vital a concept in ethnography as others discussed above. In ethnography, validity is defined as ‘the truth or the correctness of the findings’ (Davies, 2008, p.96). Bryman (2012, p.47) offers a similar definition of validity, which ‘is concerned with the integrity of conclusions that are generated from’ the research. Hammersley (1991, p.62) also elaborates on validity by defining ‘the truth’ as ‘the extent to which an account accurately represents the phenomena to which it refers’. According to Davies (2008), one of the approaches to ensuring validity is to use a variety of methods such as participant observation during the research process. The participation of the researcher in the setting(s) being studied will help ensure validity (ibid) as the researcher can give an account of the setting—including its cultural and institutional aspects—through the observation of practices. Davies (2008) also stresses that an interpretation of the research findings depends on the extent to which the researcher comes to know the participants. This implies that data collection methods such as participant observation and interviews will help the researcher to ensure validity. This means that participants need to be closely observed over a long period, and their views taken into account from an emic perspective for the accurate interpretation of the research findings.

The active participation of the researcher in the field has a positive effect on the validity of the research as the researcher is required to deal with interactions taking place between the participants as well as between them and the researcher (ibid). For example, the researcher can

ask questions and talk to participants in informal interactions in order to obtain a better understanding of their perspectives (ibid). It is also considered that having pre-existing knowledge of the research field (being an insider) can also affect the research validity positively (Davies, 2008). Moreover, the process of being in the field provides researcher with opportunities to think about concepts whilst collecting and transcribing data. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) argue that:

the ethnographer's common practice of living among participants and collecting data for long periods provides opportunities for continual data analysis and comparison to refine constructs and to ensure the match between scientific categories and participant reality (p.43).

In addition, fieldwork may affect the research validity. According to LeCompte and Goetz (1982), problems such as exhaustion may arise from a long period of fieldwork as the researcher has become familiarised with the setting(s) to the extent at which there may be no new data to observe. The researcher may be discouraged by this or by other problems from collecting further data, which lead to new research problems (ibid). To overcome such problems, I sought to discuss the progress of my key participants with the teacher, and if I found interactions that indicated the key participants' language and literacy development, I shared them with the teacher too. I tried to collect data to my best ability throughout the predetermined period of my fieldwork. I also talked to colleagues who had completed their own periods of ethnographic fieldwork in order gain further insights into data collection. For example, I found that some excerpts which I recorded towards the end of my fieldwork provided me with an understanding of how the participants drew on their household knowledge to develop their conceptual learning in Turkish language and literacy (see Chapter 7).

Research validity is also dependent on the comparability and translatability of research findings—that is the generalizability of the research. LeCompte and Goetz (1982) argue that these two notions contribute strongly to ethnographic research. The notion of comparability emphasises an in-depth account of the settings and groups under the study. These accounts can provide a basis for comparison with similar or contrasting groups. Likewise, translatability deals with the research methods, the characteristics of the research setting and the categories that are used to analyse the data. Comparability and translatability can therefore help the researcher to generalise the findings, thus ensuring the validity of the research. According to Davies (2008), the generalisation of findings also depends on theoretical inference. This means that the findings of a study can be generalizable within a particular theoretical framework. For

example, the conclusions from a study such as my own on children learning a second language may be applicable to similar contexts by offering insights into how children in my study learn a new a culture and language and construct identities in social settings such as the nursery. The study's results may help to inform educational experts or those responsible for setting the curriculum in similar contexts or in broadly similar situations.

In the current study, I highlight the characteristics of the educational setting (the nursery) and the minority community in which my participants live by providing an account of these settings, particularly in Chapters 2 and 6. In other chapters (such as Chapter 3), I draw on other minority contexts to situate my study into the relevant sociocultural literature and to gain and provide insights from the findings of these minority contexts. By doing so, my study ensures its validity by extending and contributing to other studies conducted in similar minority contexts. In other words, theoretically the findings of the current study can be generalizable within the sociocultural theory on which the current study is based.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed my methodology and situated it within the relevant literature. I have outlined its relevance to my study. I have also reflected on my multiple identities—including my gender, my Kurdish ethnicity and the relevance of my work as a teacher—and have indicated that how these identities affected and contributed to my ethnographic approach to data collection and analysis. In addition, I have discussed the concepts of reflexivity and validity in ethnography. In the next chapter, I will move on to discuss the research design of the current study.

Chapter 5: Research design

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I shall give an account of the minority community in Van in which the families of my participants live and the school where I undertook my fieldwork is situated. I will then introduce my key participants, twins Mehmet and Ahmet, and Yasmin. Next, I shall discuss the data collection methods I used during my main fieldwork period between September 2014 and January 2015. These were participant observation, interviews, photography, documentary, and video and audio recordings. Finally, I shall move on to the data analysis methods that include codes and categories.

5.2 The minority community

As illustrated in Figure 2.2, the community I am studying is situated in the city of Van, which is one of 81 cities and 30 metropolitan municipalities in Turkey. It is estimated that the population of Van exceeds one million, and the majority of the population are Kurds. The community of which my key participants are part is comprised of Sunni Muslim Kurds, who speak Kurmanji—one of the dialects of the Kurdish language. The families in this community have a good rapport with their immediate neighbours and know each other as some of them came originally from the same villages. They were forced to migrate, mainly from southeast Turkey, as a result of inter-ethnic conflict in the 1990s. Before that time, this district—which is now referred to as a minority community (*göç mahallesi*) was sparsely populated.

The majority of the community migrated from rural areas (mainly villages), although some also came from the cities of Hakkari, Şırnak and Siirt. Those who came from rural areas were farmers who owned small plots of land in their villages as well as sheep and cows. When they left their villages, they moved to settle in Van. In such households, two married brothers and their families might live in the same house. However, those who come from urban areas are comparatively more affluent than their rural counterparts. They have had fewer problems

to contend with, as they have shops or other small-scale businesses in the city as well as houses. Some village families are wealthy and some urban families are poor, although this is rare.

In terms of family life, the father is considered to be the breadwinner, and is mainly out at work all day or away for months at a time (construction workers working in more distant areas, for example). Because of this, the mother spends more time with the children than the father. It is mainly the mothers who take their children to and from the nursery. I observed all this during my fieldwork and previously, when working as a teacher in the nursery. When I worked as a teacher, I found it difficult to persuade fathers to come to the nursery in order to discuss their children's progress. The fathers generally told me they could not come to the nursery as they worked and did not have time. In the community, the majority of mothers do not work. They spend a great part of their time at home and do not send very young children (0-3 years old) to day nurseries (*kreş*).

The school in which my fieldwork took place is situated in a neighbourhood where the majority of families have been internally displaced. Like many other districts in Van, the families are Kurdish Sunni Muslims and speak Kurmanji. This neighbourhood is part of the community whose settlers migrated from southeast Turkey (see map, Figure 2.2) as noted above in this section. The families consist of mother, father and children (each family has at least two children), and grandmother or grandfather. The unemployment rate is higher than in other districts of Van. Mothers do household tasks and fathers are mainly employed as temporary workers in the city of Van, although some are seasonal unskilled workers in western cities such as Istanbul and Izmir where are mainly employed in the construction sector. The season lasts from spring to autumn. The illiteracy rate among fathers and mothers is higher than in other parts of the city. Many mothers cannot speak Turkish, although the fathers can, as they are more likely to have completed primary school. This is in line with the findings of Betül-Çelik (2005)'s study, which found that the illiteracy rate was higher among Kurdish women than men. Betül-Çelik also pointed out that Kurdish men learned Turkish during their military service, which is compulsory for all Turkish and Kurdish men, in order to deal with the authorities (ibid).

5.3 The nursery

I shall continue by describing the *Cumhuriyet* (Republic in English) nursery in which I conducted my pilot study and main fieldwork. As discussed in Chapter 2, the nursery follows

a standard curriculum set by the Turkish Ministry of Education, which is known as the preschool education programme. This means that the classroom activities in this nursery are identical to those in different nursery schools in Van, and also in other parts of Turkey. In the nursery, children are distributed by the nursery staff into sections, regardless of their socio-economic background or linguistic competence in Turkish. Children are placed in sections according to their age, and divided into morning and afternoon groups. I was told that there were 100 children attending the nursery during the first term (from September 2014 to the end of January 2015). I was also informed that all children were Kurdish except for one child, who was of mixed ethnicity.

Figure 5.1 The layout of the *Cumhuriyet* nursery.

Classroom 1		Classroom 2	Classroom 3	
Toilet F	Main Hall This space is used for breakfast and lunch. Also, they celebrate some events such as Mothers’ Day in here. Gate			This classroom is used for seminars
Toilet M				
This space was previously used for breakfast and lunch				Classroom 4
Head teacher’s office				
Deputy head teacher’s office				

Figure 5.2 The main hall where children have their breakfast and lunch.



There were 8 teachers working in the nursery, each of which were appointed by the Ministry of Education after completing a four-year undergraduate programme in Early Years Education and passing the public personnel selection exam. This exam is applied in nationwide. Those who have finished undergraduate and MA courses take this exam for getting a job. The teachers have either a Turkish or a Kurdish background. As highlighted in Chapter 2, the teachers' pedagogy was informed by the curricula of 2006 and 2013 (during their studies, the curriculum of 2006 was introduced, and this was updated during their teaching years in 2013). The teachers followed a prescriptive Early Year curriculum set by the Ministry of Education and shaped by Turkish monolingual language policies. This means that the teachers were constrained by the curriculum to include the values and expectations of the majority culture. Although the teachers were required to apply a curriculum based on the values, beliefs and expectations of the majority culture (Turkish), as I will show in the data analysis, those from a Kurdish background allowed a limited institutional space for Kurmanji.

5.4 The key participants of the study

The children (Mehmet, Ahmet and Yasmin)

I conducted my main data collection in the *Cumhuriyet* nursery, in which I also conducted a pilot study between April and May 2014. In the first and second weeks of my main data collection, I attended different classes in the morning group of the nursery in order to decide which children I was going to observe. I chose the morning group as I wanted to visit families whose children would be my key participants in afternoon. As discussed in the previous chapter, it was difficult to visit the families of the key participants at morning as their fathers and uncles were out at work. I wanted to choose children whose families spoke Kurmanji at home. As discussed in Chapter 2, Kurmanji is a dialect of Kurdish and the families in my study speak it. I also intended to choose children whose families were keen to send their child to nursery, which is not compulsory in Turkey. I tried to observe as many children in the morning group as possible and spoke to teachers about which children I should choose to participate in my main data collection. At the end of the second week, I chose a four-year-old girl called Yasmin and four-year-old twin boys Mehmet and Ahmet. All three were in the same class.

I observed the children when their parents brought them to the nursery and when they took them home. For example, I observed the twins' interactions with their grandmother (on their father's side) when she remained in the nursery during the twins' transition period. During that first two weeks, the grandmother stayed with the twins in order to familiarise them with the nursery, as they often cried. The grandmother remained in the main hall when Mehmet and Ahmet were in the classroom. The twins sometimes came to the hall to see their grandmother and then returned to the classroom. During the first few days, the grandmother stayed longer in the nursery. As time progressed, she remained for shorter periods of time because the twins were becoming more confident as they grew more familiar with the nursery. I chose the twins as key participants as I observed that they communicated with their grandmother in Kurmanji.

I also chose Yasmin as my other key participant on the basis of my classroom observations. At the beginning of my observations, I noticed that she rarely interacted with her peers or the teacher in the classroom. She mainly played with toys on her own during the first few weeks. Yasmin was unable to communicate with other children or the teacher in Turkish. However, as time progressed she started playing with her peers during free playtime. My observations of Yasmin reminded me of my student (Azad) whose story I discussed in Chapter 1. It was Azad who inspired me to conduct this research as he was unable to communicate with me or his peers in Turkish at the beginning of the 2009-2010 school year. My choice of key participants was based upon my earlier observations of Azad.

The teacher (Elif)

Elif, the nursery teacher in charge of the class, had been appointed by the Ministry of Education after completing a four-year undergraduate programme in Early Years Education and passing the public personnel selection exam. Elif was 35 years old at the time of the study, and had been working at the nursery for almost three years. She had teaching experiences in other schools in Van before she came to work in the *Cumhuriyet* nursery. Overall, she had almost 8 years' teaching experience. She identified herself as Kurdish, and could speak Kurmanji but not write it. The teacher knew me from my pilot study and was familiar with my research.

Yasmin's family

Yasmin came from what can be described as a nuclear family. She has a brother (Bawer, 3 years old). Her father (Serkan) was 32 and her mother (Fatma) was 30 at the time of the main data collection. Serkan's parents migrated from Cizre, in southeast Turkey, due to the inter-ethnic conflict between the PKK and the Turkish state. Serkan was six years old when his family migrated to Van. The family lives in their own house, and the father works in the family's carpenter shop with his two brothers.

As far as language use at home was concerned, the family mainly spoke Kurmanji. However, this seemed to change when Yasmin started at the nursery. My fieldnote of 15/12/2014 records that "She has tried to speak Turkish at the home since she started in the nursery." This is what Yasmin's father told me during my second visit to their family.

The father (Serkan)

Yasmin's father can speak and understand both Kurmanji and Turkish. He can read the Turkish newspapers and write in Turkish. He can read and write relatively complex sentences in Turkish. Serkan went to primary school, but did not finish. He can read in Kurmanji, but he cannot write in it.

The mother (Fatma)

Fatma speaks both Turkish and Kurmanji. From participant observations of language use, she can engage in daily conversations and has conversational skills in Kurmanji. But she cannot read or write in it. In Turkish, she can recognise the names of products in the shop, but her

reading and writing abilities are very limited. She was also unable to write text messages. During one of my visits (17/01/2015), I was told that the teacher sent a text message about a parents' meeting and was waiting for confirmation, but Fatma could neither read the message nor respond to it. She told me that she had to wait for her husband to read and respond to the message. However, she can engage in a basic everyday conversation in Turkish.

The brother (Bawer)

Bawer was 3 years old at the time of the study. During my visits to the family, I observed that he was talkative and played with Yasmin a great deal. Bawer and Yasmin mainly spoke to each other in Kurmanji. According to my participant observations at home, he sometimes spoke in Turkish with Yasmin. I was told that he had started speaking Turkish after Yasmin started nursery.

The twins' family

Mehmet and Ahmet's family is an extended Kurdish family in which the grandmother lives in the same house, along with an uncle and aunt (on the father's side). This kind of family structure is common among Kurdish rural families as well urban families who initially migrated from villages as discussed above, but this is rare among Turkish families. In some Kurdish families, the grandmother or grandfather may act as head of the family, and they are looked after by their children as they grow older. The twins' family migrated from the city of Hakkari, which is located roughly three hours' journey to the south of Van. The family has their own house and the children's father works as a cleaner. The aunt and uncle are both accountants by profession.

During my first visit to the twins' home (15/11/2014), I observed that the family mainly spoke Kurmanji. I discussed this observation with Elif, the teacher. I discussed my visits to both families with Elif in order to get additional insights into both families. The teacher confirmed that both families preferred to speak Kurmanji in their own home.

The twins' mother (Ayşe)

Ayşe was 40 years old at the time of the study. She is a homemaker who had never gone to school. Ayşe can speak both Turkish and Kurmanji. Like Yasmin's mother Fatma, Ayşe can engage in various daily conversations and develop conversational skills in Kurmanji, but she

cannot read or write in it. Her competence in understanding and speaking Turkish is very limited. According to her husband, Hamza, she recognizes and knows a very few Turkish words, such as “welcome” and “understand”. The teacher also observed that Ayşe’s Turkish was very limited when she visited their family. The teacher shared her observations with me in one of our informal discussions about the family.

The twins’ father (Hamza)

Hamza was 42 years old at the time of the study. He works part-time for a private company as a cleaner. He went to primary school, but he did not finish it. He can speak both Turkish and Kurmanji. He can write short sentences in Turkish, but is unable to do so in Kurmanji. I observed that Hamza tried to speak to the teacher and other nursery staff, including myself in Kurmanji when he brought the twins to the nursery and collected them.

The paternal grandmother (Xanim)

The grandmother was around 70 years old at the time of the study. She speaks Kurmanji. Based on the grandmother’s self-reports and my own observations, she cannot speak Turkish, although she can understand it.

The uncle and aunt (Baran and Yıldız)

The uncle (Baran) and aunt (Yıldız) were 44 and 35 years old at the time of the study. Baran and Yıldız are brother and sister, and are the twins’ uncle and aunt, respectively. Both uncle and aunt are accountants. Baran is self-employed, whereas Yıldız works in the municipality of Van. Both can speak Turkish and Kurmanji and can write in it. The uncle completed an undergraduate course, and the aunt finished high school. I observed that the uncle and aunt spent time with Mehmet and Ahmet, and sometimes brought the twins to the nursery and collected them at the end of the day. The uncle and aunt told me they can also read and write in Kurmanji, and are fully competent in the language. As discussed in Chapter 2, Kurmanji has its own writing system and is in the Latin script. I also observed that they had a newspaper and books in Kurmanji in their living room.

5.5 Data collection methods

Since my research methodology would take an ethnographic approach, I used several ethnographic data collection methods during my main data collection. These were participant observation, audio and video recordings, interviews, and photographic and documentary data. I believe that each of these data collection methods contributed in different ways to my ethnographic research as each one had the capacity to generate data (Pole and Morrison, 2003). One of the advantages of using different research methods, according to LeCompte and Schensul (1999, p.1) is to 'ensure accuracy of data' collected. Another advantage is that ethnographic research methods such as participant observation can create intimacy, building rapport between the researcher and the participants and the community in which the research is conducted (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). This will be discussed in the following section. Researchers can also benefit from the connectivity between the different data collection methods used. For example, they can contextualize photos on the basis of observations. Ethnography also enables me to analyse and interpret data, as will be discussed in greater depth in section 5.8. In the following sections I discuss the data collection methods I used in my research in more detail.

5.5.1 Participant observation

As an ethnographic research tool, participant observation enables a researcher to provide a rich description of activities and interactions (Duranti, 1997). Schensul et al. (1999) define participant observation as a process of learning through participation in the daily activities of the subjects in research settings such as home and school. According to Wolcott (1999), participant observation provides a researcher with first-hand experience. Likewise, Schensul et al. (1999, p.91) consider participant observation as an important research method in ethnography for the following reasons:

- a) It plays a crucial and significant role in identifying and establishing relationships with the key participants.
- b) It allows the researcher to examine how activities are organized and prioritized.
- c) It allows the researcher to address cultural patterns, especially patterns of activities in which the key participants are involved.
- d) It enables the researcher to experience cultural practices that the key participants practice.

These reasons show what the researcher can achieve through participant observation—with reasons b and c being particularly important in this research. An understanding of cultural activity patterns helps the researcher to analyse the collected data more effectively.

Participant observation paves the way for the researcher to examine and understand key participants' interactions with other individuals in the same setting. Guest et al. (2013, p.76) suggest that participant observation can be used in settings where participants have 'complex interactions with each other, with objects or with their physical environment'. For example, the interactions of a child as a key participant with other children and the teacher can be observed over time in order to make sense of the child's interactions. Participant observation offers the researcher a way of being part of the setting under research. During observation, the researcher 'not only observes but also participates in what she is studying' (Delamont, 1975, p.14). The focus here is on the participants' intentions and actions. In classroom activities, the goal of participant observation is to understand what the participants (the teacher and children) do and how they do it (Delamont, 1975). This is crucial to all social research, particularly ethnography. Atkinson and Hammersley (1994, p.249) argue that:

in a sense, all social research is a form of participant observation, because we cannot study the social world without being part of it. From this point of view, participant observation is not a particular research technique but a mode of being-in-the-world characteristic of researchers.

Since the researcher stays in the field for a long time, Bryman (1988, p.61) argues that he or she becomes able to 'see through the eyes' of the participants. This means that events, activities and values can be viewed from the participants' (the emic perspective). Participant observation is also a way of understanding 'mundane details' of the settings and of the participants' daily lives (Bryman, 1988, p.62). This emphasises a full description of the settings and activities in which participants participate, which in turn helps the researcher to document a multi-layered description in order to provide a more complete analysis of settings and activities. Thus, it is considered that observations of children in different settings (such as at home and in the nursery) enable the researcher to provide a 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of activities that can lead to a more valid analysis. In addition, participant observation enables the researcher to contextualise and understand the activities and interactions of the participants (Bryman, 1988). Participant observation is the best way to document what is happening in the field. The emphasis on context allows the researcher to examine the values attached to practices within the specific context (Bryman, 1988).

Table 5.1. An overview of my participant observations in the nursery and at key participants' homes.

Nursery	Home
Fieldnotes I visited one of four morning nursery classes between September 2014 and January 2015. My visits included observations at breakfast and other class activities such as Turkish language, art and children's free play. I observed mainly three children (two twin boys, Mehmet and Ahmet, and one girl, Yasmin). Overall, my visits covered the time between the children arriving at the nursery and leaving it. My observations included one-to-one interactions between the teacher and the key participant children, small-group and whole-group interactions between the teacher and the children and among the children as well. I attended the family meeting which was organized by the nursery and was held at the beginning of academic year. The matters discussed in that meeting were: a) Opening times b) The benefits of early childhood education (its effect on children's development) c) Feedback from the teacher on family seminar	Fieldnotes I visited the two families of my key participants. I made four visits to one family and three visits to the other. I kept fields notes during my visits. Each visit lasted around two hours. I observed children interacting with each other (Yasmin and her brother, and Mehmet and Ahmet). I also observed children interacting with other family members. Number of fieldnotes: 4

Each school visit lasted around four hours. I made 35 visits. Number of fieldnotes: 35	
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5.5.2 Audio and video recordings

The importance of audio and video recordings is that the information collected is accessible at the researcher's convenience. In other words, the researcher can have multiple hearings and viewings (Nikander, 2008). With regard to video recordings, researchers (such as Pink, 2007) advocate video recording as a data collection method for capturing group activities. Göncü et al. (1999) value video recording for understanding participants' engagement in activities in natural settings such as home and nursery. One of the contributions of video recordings is that a video recorder can capture visual as well as aural cues (Ochs, 1979).

Dufon (2002) argues that video recordings in second language learning contexts provide:

information about posture, gestures, clothing, and proxemics, which inform us regarding native speaker norms with respect to these features and the degree to which the learners conform to them, which in turn provide us with some information concerning the extent to which the learners have been socialized into the target language community (p.44).

The quote demonstrates that video recordings can help the researcher to document more clearly the interactions of children learning a second language. For example, a child may understand the teacher's words through the teacher's gestures or posture. Video recordings are therefore richer than audio ones in terms of recording data as they record nonverbal communication (Cohen et al., 2011, p.426). However, they can be time-consuming to transcribe and analyse (ibid). Despite this, they can catch richer levels of data by recording the facial expressions and

body language of the participants. This means that video recordings can be useful for recording children's interactions with each other and their teacher during activities such as art, free play and literacy (Cohen et al., 2011).

However, audio recordings are sometimes more effective than video recordings when the researcher needs to keep notes. The researcher may place the audio recorder somewhere out of reach in the classroom, and still continue to observe children's interactions and take fieldnotes. It is important where the audio recorder is put. It should be able to capture the classroom activities in terms of time and place (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). In the classroom where I undertook my research, it was clear where desks were placed for activities such as art and literacy (writing) and for other activities such as free play and reading stories. Therefore, when children had art and literacy (writing) activities, I put the audio recorder close to these activities. When other activities (free play and story reading) were taking place, I placed the audio recorder near them and simultaneously observed their activities. But using audio recordings in the classroom does have drawbacks. One disadvantage of putting an audio recorder in the classroom is that the background noise may render some recordings unintelligible (Hammersly and Atkinson, 2007). Another is that during activities in which children move about, they move in and out of range of the microphone, adversely affecting the continuity of observations.

For these reasons, I used both audio and video recordings during my classroom observations for the main data collection (see Table 5.2). I placed an audio recorder on top of a cupboard in the classroom which was out of reach of the children. The purpose of putting the recorder in such a location was to record the nursery activities without the children being able to reach the equipment, and to obtain a more natural recording by sitting the recorder in a less obvious location. By doing so, the children would forget it was there and play more naturally. At first, they tried to interfere with the equipment and stop the recording. They also used to sing into the microphone. However, in the case of the video recorder, they did not stop the recording. Instead, they enjoyed being recorded; they waved to the camera and pulled faces.

Table 5.2 Audio and video recordings collected at the nursery and at key participants' homes.

Nursery	Home
Audio and video-recordings I recorded the key participants and the other children's interactions with an audio-recorder and video camera while taking fieldnotes. My audio and video recordings totaled more than 900 minutes in sessions ranging from 5 to 40 minutes. Audio recordings: 40 (5 to 40 minutes) Video recordings: 15 (2 to 10 minutes) Activities recorded were: Turkish language lessons: 15 Art lessons: 22 Free play time: 13 Breakfast time: 5 I collected artefacts and took photos of children's drawings, paintings and writing as well as their activity sheets and teacher planners. I also collected materials such as the pre-educational programme (see Section 5.5.5)	Audio and video-recordings I gave the families audio-recorders, but unfortunately Mehmet and Ahmet's family did not make any recordings. Yasmin's family made one recording. I was informed by the parents that they tried to record, but failed to do so because the children stopped the audio-recorder when they noticed it. I was told that this discouraged the families from recording further interactions. Therefore, I did not give them further electronic devices for recording or photographing. Because of this, I did not take photos or collect any artefacts. Audio-recordings: two hours Activities recorded were: Free play with Yasmin's brother (Bawer) Yasmin's interaction with her mother, such as talking about activities in which Yasmin participated in the classroom.

5.5.3 Interviews

When subjects cannot provide rich data via methods such as surveys and questionnaires, researchers may use interviews to explore them in more depth (Ortiz, 2003). Ethnographic interviews provide a researcher with insights into the experiences of the participants (ibid), and in this sense they offer more details of the participants' lives. However, interviews differ from everyday conversations, as they are planned by the researcher and co-constructed by both the researcher and the participants (Cohen et al., 2011). Participants' explanations can also reflect the cultures and subcultures to which they belong (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), and their accounts can be regarded as social products whose analysis can indicate the sociocultural processes that produced them (ibid). This means that 'ethnographic interviews often generate discussions about the influence of race, gender, class, and other sociohistorical forces on the experiences of participants and meaning made of those experiences' (Ortiz, 2003, p.37).

In this research, interviews provided me with what Fetterman (2010, p.40) refers to as an important ethnographic data collection method by which the researcher can 'explain and place into a large context what the ethnographer sees and experiences' during fieldwork. In other words, interview accounts are 'informed by social context and the participant's position within that context' (Ortiz, 2003, p.37).

Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) point out the importance of rapport between interviewer and interviewee. In cases where the interviewer and interviewee have little contact, it may be difficult to establish rapport. However, I was able to establish a good level of rapport with my interviewees during the participant observation process, which was conducted in the same setting as the interviews. Rapport enables the interviewer to be productive as it consists of being respectful, approachable, non-threatening and friendly. In establishing a good rapport, the interviewer must avoid being impatient or critical towards the interviewee's actions and responses to the questions asked (Cohen et al., 2011). This can also contribute to the interviewer's understanding of the interviewees' actions and responses, particularly when considering their perspectives.

Researchers such as Ortiz (2003) and Schensul et al. (1999) mainly refer to three different kinds of interviews: unstructured, structured and semi-structured. Unstructured

interviews—as the name suggests—can be conducted anywhere such as walking along a road and waiting for a bus (Bernard, 2006). In terms of time and place, they are flexible. For example, the researcher can sit down with a participant and conduct an interview informally at any point in the research (Bernard, 2006, p. 211). This approach encourages flexibility and informality, and the researcher can conduct it in cultural settings (Ortiz, 2003) or at events such as national celebrations to examine how these cultural events relate to the curriculum. On the other hand, structured interviews are more formal, and each participant is asked the same questions (Bernard, 2006, p. 251). On structured interviews, Bernard further elaborates that ‘the idea in structured interviews is always the same: control the input that triggers people’s responses so that their output is reliably compared’ (ibid).

Bernard’s quote demonstrates that questionnaires (a predetermined set of written questions) can be used in structured interviews. A researcher may use structured interviews for surveys (Bernard, 2006). Semi-structured interviews, on the other hand, enable the researcher to make use of the flexibility of open-ended structured interviews. This is an advantage of semi-structured interviews over the other two approaches to interviewing. In semi-structured interviews, the researcher prepares questions that guide the interview, but leaves them open-ended. This means that the interviewer and interviewee can expand on the questions (Schensul et al., 1999). In other words, open-ended questions asked in semi-structured interviews encourage participants to elaborate on the questions, providing richer levels of information (Ortiz, 2003). Ortiz also suggests that the open-ended questions can include sub-queries that enable the researcher to ask for clarification to help participants respond to questions in-depth.

I used semi-structured interviews in my research, as the researchers above stress the main advantage of this approach, which is the full use of the flexibility of unstructured and open-ended structured interviews. I conducted interviews with four teachers in the nursery, as well as the parents and uncle of my key participants. My aim was to understand the way teachers felt about the prestige of both Turkish and Kurdish and what their actual views were about the process by which the children learned Turkish. The interviews included questions about the teachers’ observations of children’s language and literacy learning, especially their perspectives on the classroom activities in which the children were engaged. I conducted interviews with the teachers and the deputy head teacher separately in their classrooms and office, respectively. I explained the aim of conducting the interviews to the interviewees, and they agreed that I could record the interviews (Cohen et al., 2011). It is considered that

conducting interviews in participants' own environments allows them to be more relaxed during the interview process (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Interviewees can also arrange the setting in any way they want to suit their own comfort (ibid).

Table 5.3 Interviews conducted with the teachers and the parents.

Nursery	Home
Interviews I conducted four interviews with three nursery teachers and the deputy head teacher (ranging from 15 to 20 minutes). I recorded the interviews. I also had informal discussions with staff, particularly the teacher in whose classroom I conducted my study.	Interviews I conducted two interviews with parents and the uncle (one with each family). In one family, I recorded one parental interview (40 minutes) and kept notes at the other.

5.5.4 Photography

Photography provides the researcher with a different sources and types of data. It helps the researcher to visually represent different settings within the research (Pole and Morrison, 2003). Photos taken by the researcher offer a good visual representation of the physical conditions of the settings—the nursery and homes in this research. The photos of the classroom help show the seating arrangements of participants (Duranti, 1997). Researchers such as Pink (2007, p.17) advocate photography as a method for research. Pink stresses the importance of photography, arguing that ‘by paying attention to images in ethnographic research and representation we are developing new ways of understanding individuals, social relationships...’ Pink (2007) also argues that context plays an important role in photography, as the photos take on greater meaning when contextualised. Ethnographic photos are those from which a researcher can obtain ‘useful, meaningful visual information’ (Edwards, 1992, p.13). Pole and Morrison (2003, p.63) argue that photography ‘...is an approach to data collection which stresses the importance of here and now, captured at the precise moment at which the camera shutter closed’.

In my research, photos may be used to indicate the linguistic landscape of the setting, such as whether the walls of the classroom are arranged in the majority language or both majority and the minority languages. This may provide an indicator of the prestige of languages. As such, photos can inform us about values attached to the languages used in that setting (Pole and Morrison, 2003).

The importance of collecting photos lies in ethnography's concern for daily activities. This concern pays attention to materials used in relation to these activities. It also looks at how participants engage with materials (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), whilst allowing the researcher to familiarise her/himself with the patterns of activities while the photos are taken (Schwartz, 1989, p.152). Schwartz maintains that 'photographs show concrete details of everyday events, activities and the contexts in which they occur, and provide data about community life'. This means that photography can inform us about practices taking place in particular settings such as classroom and home. However, one could argue that photos may tell us an incomplete story, in which case we also have to depend on additional information such as a written record. Photography can thus be used in conjunction with other methods of data collection—such as participant observation—that may help the researcher to contextualise photos taken.

Collier and Collier (1986) argue that photos of events and activities offer us insights into social interactions. The authors highlight the fact that details of these activities are captured and saved as photos, helping the researcher to examine interactions through visual sources (Pink, 2007). Collier and Collier (1986) further maintain that photos are also able to capture the appearance, postures, facial expressions and gestures of participants. Therefore, photography differs from the other visual sources such as video-recordings by giving a sense of the interaction between participants through static visual representation (Pink, 2007).

I took photos of the activities in which my key participants were engaged, as well as of the seating arrangement in the classroom (see Figures 6.1 and 6.2). I mainly took photos in the nursery, particularly in the classroom in which I conducted my main data collection (see Table 5.2).

5.5.5 Documentary data

Mogalakwe (2006, p.222) refers to documentary data as ‘written texts’. This includes different sources such as government publications by in the form of educational programmes and textbooks (ibid). Such teaching materials can demonstrate what is being used in the classroom, and will offer insights into the kind of activities being practised by children as well as the goals of the curriculum (Tarman, 2011). Similarly, materials such as textbooks may provide information about the education system. This helps the researcher to examine the relationship between the nursery and the wider sociocultural context (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). For example, the information found in textbooks informs us about activities practised in the school, and indicates whether activities are relevant to the majority group or a minority group, or both. Another reason for collecting materials is that they help the researcher to examine the values attached to them. Pole and Morrison (2003) argue that:

The physical positioning of particular artefacts, for example the prominent display of the school emblem, its motto...examples of its artwork...may indicate something of the nature of the school in terms of those activities that are particularly valued by those responsible for promoting the public image of the school (p.70).

In this sense, materials may indicate beliefs and values that the school aims to convey to the children and the community in which the school is located (ibid). Materials in the school, especially those on the walls, send messages that can inform us about the identity of the school (ibid).

Tarman’s (2011) study uses documentary data as a way of explaining Turkish educational policy. The study examines the Turkish educational policy by analysing documents relating to the curriculum—in this case published reports about the curriculum development process undertaken by the Ministry of Education. The study suggests that documents can provide the researcher with information about the historical, economic and social contexts of an educational programme. This means that researchers can examine documentary data to understand the aims of an applied programme in the classroom more fully, or in preparation for fieldwork. What is more, textbooks inform us about activities taking place in the classroom and indicate the relevance of these activities to the goals of the curriculum and wider sociocultural context.

During your fieldwork I collected materials such as activity sheets, textbooks and the preschool education programme (Cohen et al., 2011). I believe that these materials helped me understand aspects of my study that might prove especially relevant to my main research question and the sub-questions raised during my pilot study. For example, as discussed in Chapter 2, the pre-school education programme offered me a way of examining the aims and goals of the curriculum and how these aims and goals relate to classroom activities. The programme was particularly helpful in enabling me to understand the Turkish national ideology on which the curriculum is based. The reproduction of this ideology will be discussed in more depth in section 6.4.

5.6 Ethical considerations

In my study, I have taken into account ethical guidelines (such as voluntary informed consent) for educational research (BERA, 2011). As this research was conducted with very young children (nursery age, 4–5 years), their best interests were always my first consideration (BERA). Researchers (such as Alothman, 2016) suggest that research involving young children is an ongoing process as the children may show signs of rejection. For example, they may not want to be observed during some parts of the research process. The researcher needs to be aware of the children's rights whenever they show such a disinclination or an outright refusal to participate. I tried to avoid any potential problems that might affect my key participant children, the teacher and the nursery during my fieldwork (Alothman, 2016)—particularly in terms of photography, video and audio recordings. When I wanted to join the children's or the classroom interaction, I asked permission from both the teacher and the children to do so (see Chapter 7). As I had previously worked as a teacher in the Cumhuriyet nursery, I was referred to by the teacher in whose class I did my observations and the other nursery staff as *hocam* in Turkish ('teacher' in English). As highlighted in section 4.5, the parents referred to me as **mamoste**, which is the Kurdish equivalent for the Turkish *hocam*. This enabled me to join the children's interactions easily and helped them to feel relaxed during my fieldwork and participant observation.

I submitted my planned fieldwork framework to the Ethics Committee of the Department of Educational Studies at Goldsmiths before conducting my research, and received their approval. I also obtained permission from the local educational authority in Turkey before

starting my fieldwork. After I had chosen my key participants, I talked to their parents. I explained my research and my previous job as a teacher. I then asked them for their permission to carry out my research with their children. I also told them that I would visit their homes to observe the children informally in their home settings. The families gave me their permission orally and welcomed me warmly into their homes.

5.7 Translation

In this section, I shall discuss the importance of translation, as the data were collected in different languages (Turkish and Kurmanji) and are now being presented in English. I shall consider the translation and representation in all three of these languages. Duranti (1997) argues that translation is not a simple process whereby the worlds of one language are translated into another. Translation involves ‘a long series of interpretations and decisions’ made by the researcher (ibid, p.154). Duranti goes on to say that when translating, one needs to understand the context in which words are spoken and the perspectives of the participants. The importance of this understanding lies in the idea that translation is in itself an ethnographic activity, and can be associated with the ‘contextualization of words within the activity and the larger sociopolitical and cultural systems in which their speaker participates’ (ibid, p.154). Translation is far more than a simple process of matching words (ibid).

Nes et al. (2010) suggest that translation from the original language to target language may involve interpretation. The researcher must interpret the words of participants in order to render their meanings understandable in the target language so that target language readers can understand what the participants said or meant more easily. It is crucial to this process that the researcher is to be aware of meanings and their potential subtleties in order to avoid translation problems.

Duranti (1997) maintains that it is also advantageous to provide a copy of a text in its original language. This allows the reader an opportunity to question the researcher’s interpretations and decisions in the translations process. This can have a positive effect on the validity of the study and on the researcher’s translation decisions. Researchers also point out the advantage of being fluent in the participants’ language(s). Temple and Young (2004) suggest that fluency provides the researcher with more opportunities. For example, it enables

the researcher to be aware of a possible range of meanings in the participants' language(s) without having to rely on a translator. Another advantage of being fluent is that the researcher can be aware of specific concepts used by participants (Temple, 1997). When the translation takes place, the researcher will pay close attention to these meanings (Temple and Young, 2004).

In addition, Temple (1997) argues that another layer of knowledge production may be added during the translation process when the translator and the researcher are different people. Temple (1997) elaborates further on her own translation process when employing a translator. Temple decided to translate her own data as she found that the tone of some statements did not seem right. Temple attributed this to the difference in perspectives between her and her translator. This implies that researchers can avoid having another perspective in translated data by translating the data themselves when they are familiar with the participants' home language. Another disadvantage of employing a translator is that the translator is more likely to miss the perspective of participants because the translator is not an expert in the researcher's subject and does not share the researcher's engagement in or observation of participants' cultural practices over an extended period. I believe that being both the researcher and the translator resonates with my ethnographic methodology by allowing me to take the perspective of participants.

As the relevant literature points out, I believe that being fluent in Kurmanji and Turkish as well as being fully conversant with English-speaking academia and the use of academic English allows me to translate from both languages into English. I conducted the interviews with the teachers and the deputy head teacher in Turkish in the nursery, whereas I spoke with the families of the key participants at their homes in Kurmanji. I mainly kept fieldnotes in English to save time, since the fieldwork was intensive, and the transcription of the recordings (audio and video) data was time-consuming.

In the following section, I shall discuss the data analysis methods that will be applied to the data I collected.

5.8 Data analysis methods

In this section, I will discuss data analysis methods that are relevant to an ethnographic approach, before discussing the data analysis process I used in this current study. Ethnography not only includes data collection methods, but also provides the researcher with ways of looking at and interpreting participants' interactions (Cochran-Smith, 1984). Geertz (1973, p.20) argues that ethnography:

is interpretive; what it is interpretive of is the flow of social discourse; and the interpretive involved consists in trying to rescue the 'said' of such discourse from its perishing occasions and fix it in perusable terms.

The implication here is that the researcher interprets the meanings given by the participants to the practices and interactions among them. O'Reilly (2009) argues that the ethnographic approach to data analysis aims to search for meaning, and as a facet of this search the researcher needs to examine the ways in which participants draw on their social knowledge (ibid). The relevance of this to my study is that ethnography enables me to examine how the children draw on different social, linguistic and cultural resources to develop their language and literacy within the context and constraints of the monolingual curriculum. In other words, it enabled me to understand the meanings and values of these resources for the participants (Cochran-Smith, 1984). This means that it is important to examine the data from the participants' points of view (Cohen et al., 2011). The researcher can thereby focus on practices in which the participants are involved and on the interactions that take place between them (ibid). As discussed in Chapter 4, this was referred to as taking an emic perspective. Watson-Gegeo (1988b, p.580) reflects on taking the participants' views into account by highlighting the importance of 'culturally based perspectives, interpretations, and categories used by members of the group under study to conceptualize and encode knowledge and to guide their own behaviour'. The emic perspective informs us about the participants' values and beliefs. However, this does not imply that an ethnographic research analysis is only emic (Watson-Gegeo, 1988b). It is considered that a mix of emic and etic perspectives can be more comprehensive in terms of understanding the participants' participation in various activities.

Göncü et al. (1999) argue that an emic perspective enables the researcher to understand how cultural activities in settings such as home and preschool are valued by parents or teachers. Their study analysed data collected from four different communities in four different countries (Turkey, the United States, Guatemala and India). Their results showed that parents in different

environments encouraged their children to participate in play-related activities taking place at home. The study also pointed to the role of mediators such as mothers in conveying values to children through child-rearing via household activities that are part of daily life (ibid).

As discussed in Chapter 4, research paradigms are broad approaches to analysing and interpreting the (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). The current study takes an interpretivist approach to this process. According to the interpretive paradigm, culture is constructed socially and cognitively, and is mediated via sociocultural tools such as language and symbols (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). Researchers such as Hedges (2015) advocate an interpretive approach when examining children's cultural practices. This implies that culture is constructed by its participants through engaging in activities and interactions in social settings such as a nursery (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). The interpretivist paradigm also emphasises meaning as shared and situated concepts that are relative to their given context (ibid).

Interpretivism is defined as a bottom-up approach. In other words, codes and categories are mainly generated from the data rather than imposed upon them, and these codes and categories are then assembled into patterns (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). In this sense, the process is considered as inductive (Cohen et al., 2011). When the researcher examines codes and categories, he or she interprets the relationships between them. LeCompte and Schensul (1999) refer to interpretation as an approach that involves the meanings and significance given to patterns, categories and connections identified during analysis. The researcher also provides explanations that indicate how and why these patterns, categories and connections have come to exist (ibid).

Data analysis refers to the systematic process of coding, organizing, arranging and categorising the collected data to provide relevant and cohesive information. Codes mainly refer to words and short phrases that summarise interactions and indicate their essence (Saldana, 2009). Codes are not only used to put the data into smaller units, but also to guide the researcher, after which similar codes are assembled under various categories. In other words, the categories include specific clusters of codes (Saldaña, 2009). The categorization of collected data helps the researcher to find patterns (Kirsch, 2006). For example, as the researcher considers and reviews the codes that have been created, he or she may notice possible relationships emerging from among a number of categories that could be subsumed by other specific categories (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). According to Coffey and Atkinson (1996), one of the advantages of coding the collected data is to connect different parts

(segments) of the data to each other. These parts are then brought together to arrange categories that may include some common elements, indicating a close relationship between codes, categories and concepts (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996). Concepts emerge from the process of coding and categorising the data (Saldaña, 2009), and these concepts address the questions that the researchers are investigating in their studies (Ruby, 2014). Coffey and Atkinson (1996, p.32) further argue that codes are “organizing principles that are not set in stone. They are our own creations, in that we identify and select them ourselves. They are tools to think with.” As the authors indicate, codes are tools with which the researcher can manage the data and arrange categories. This also means that codes are not static, and researchers may change and expand them. Researchers refer to this process as a ‘cyclical act’ (Saldaña, 2009, p.8). Researchers (Coffey and Atkinson, 1996; Saldaña, 2009) agree that the first attempt of coding may require subsequent revisions as the researcher continues to capture, highlight and filter the salient features of collected data through this cyclical process (Saldaña, 2009). Therefore, coding is an analytical process that allows the researcher to ‘organize and group similarly coded data into categories’ (ibid, p.8).

Researchers such as Kirsch (2006) often begin their data analysis by analysing a small excerpt from it to decide on approach. Kirsch, for instance, used a photo taken during fieldwork as the first step in data analysis. Similarly, I begin my data analysis by looking at my Fieldnote 6.1, in which the teacher introduces the children to the colours in an art activity. These fieldnotes will be discussed in greater depth in the next chapter. In the excerpt below, the interaction between the teacher and key participant boy (Mehmet) is as follows:

Fieldnotes: Learning the names of colours

- 1 Mehmet: [Looking at the pastels. He waits for the teacher as she gives the pastels to the children one by one.]
- 2 Teacher: *Bakın bu mavidir* (Look at this. It is a blue colour) [She takes the blue colour and shows all children]
- 3 Mehmet: **Ewa mavi ye** (This is the blue)
- 4 Teacher: *Evet bu mavidir* (Yes, this is a blue colour)
- 5 Teacher: *Hadi maviye boyalım* (Let’s paint with blue). (Fieldnotes, 30/09/2014)

First, I give this interaction a code, which is ‘learning the names of colours.’ Here the children are learning a new colour (blue). Next, I look for similar teacher-led activities in which the

teacher guides and scaffolds the children's art activities. This means that Art Activities becomes one of my categories under which I examine the interactions between the teacher and the children. In fact, this analytical approach is guided by my main research question 'How do Kurdish preschool children learn Turkish upon entering nursery?' as well as another sub-question 'How does the teacher support the children's Turkish language and literacy learning?' These questions act as guides for me to code and categorise the collected data. For example, the latter question guided me to find patterns in which the teacher supported and guided the development of the children's skills including vocabulary building, conceptual learning and pre-writing. The latter question also helped me examine how the teacher responded to the children's utterances in Kurmanji (**bold script** in the excerpt above) by replying in Turkish (*italic script* in the excerpt above). This is apparent at turns 3 and 4 in the excerpt. It is worth mentioning the importance of data collection methods such as participant observation for the analysis of the data. For example, when I kept the fieldnotes above I paid attention not only to the use of words but also to how the child responded to the teacher and consequently how the teacher responded to and repeated the child's words. The nature and attitudes of the interactions also inform language use in the classroom.

I therefore analysed the data firstly by giving them codes and then by categorising them according to activities in which they emerged. For example, the fieldnotes above are subsumed under the category of Art Activities. At the same time, I draw on Goffman's (1971) dramaturgical metaphors of frontstage and backstage talk to define and divide classroom interactions into teacher-led and peer-led. I use the metaphor of frontstage to examine talk between the teacher and the children, and backstage to refer to the children's informal talk during small-group activities or play. As I created codes and categories, Goffman's metaphors guide me to put interactions that have been coded and categorised either under frontstage teacher-led activities or backstage peer talk. These became my two main extended categories.

My analysis was also informed by sociocultural approaches to second language and literacy learning. The key concepts (scaffolding, guided participation and synergy) outlined in Chapter 3 enabled me to examine the role of the classroom teacher and peers as mediators of the children's Turkish language and literacy learning. I also combined these concepts with the concept of translanguaging discussed in section 3.5 to examine the children's language practices in peer talk. In other words, analytical sociocultural concepts (scaffolding and synergy) and translanguaging enabled me to interpret the classroom interactions to examine

what and how the children learned. Finally, my analysis is informed by my own teaching experiences with young Kurdish preschool children in 2009 and 2011, as well as a thorough personal knowledge of the Kurdish community in Van.

5.9 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the data collection methods (including participant observation and interviews) that were used in my research. Data collection methods allowed me to examine the activities in which my key participants were involved (LeCompte and Schensul, 1999). Whist the collection methods enabled me to understand the meanings attached to the practices (ibid). In addition, I have discussed the data analysis methods that I will use to examine my data over the following chapters (6 and 7). Chapter 6 will examine the interactions that took place between the teacher and the children, and Chapter 7 will focus on the interactions that took place among the children in peer talk.

Chapter 6: Data analysis: Learning Turkish language, literacy and national identity in teacher-pupil interactions

6.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 3, studies inform us about the use of language in nurseries in which children's home language is officially allowed and where there are monolingual classrooms with bilingual teaching assistants (Barron, 2007, 2009; Drury, 2004a, 2007), or bilingual classrooms (Riojas-Cortez, 2001) in the English-speaking world in setting such as the UK or the USA. Drury (2007), for example, showed that bilingual teaching assistants could be useful in classrooms for ethnic minority children in the UK. Studies were also conducted in bilingual classrooms in non-western countries such as Israel (Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016), Thailand (Howard, 2004, 2009) and Mauritius (Owodally, 2012, 2014). Here, children's home languages were allowed, and used along with the language of instruction (Howard, 2004). However, it seems that there is a lack of research on other contexts in which monolingual education takes place or the language of instruction is considered as a first language, rather than a second one.

In this chapter, I shall discuss how the children learn Turkish language, literacy and Turkish national identity through participating in the classroom activities which are heavily based on the majority culture. I shall begin by discussing the children's participation in whole group activities such as Turkish language activities, science and nature, art, drama and pre-writing. These are routine classroom activities defined by the curriculum, as defined in Chapter 2. From there I shall examine how the dominant Turkish national ideology is reproduced in language and literacy activities. In order to discuss the full range of group activities the children are engaged in, I will start by describing a typical day in the nursery. In this chapter, I shall address the following research questions:

- How do the children develop Turkish language and literacy in the teacher-led activities?
- How does the teacher support the children's language and literacy learning?
- How is the dominant Turkish national ideology reproduced in language and literacy activities?

It is worth mentioning that my ethnographic methodological approach (as discussed in Chapter 4) will enable me to describe the activities in which my participants are involved in the nursery. Similarly, my theoretical framework and the sociocultural approaches (discussed in Chapter 3)

help define the perspectives by which I will examine these routine activities in order to understand the children's second language and literacy learning—that is, Turkish. The concepts of guided participation, scaffolding and community of practice will be used to analyse the excerpts and field notes in this chapter.

In the next section I shall describe a typical day in the nursery. The purpose of describing such a routine day is that the children's participation in cultural activities through guided participation enables them to observe and participate with a more knowledgeable adult in culturally structured activities (Rogoff, 1990).

I shall present my observation of this typical day as a vignette, written during the course of my main fieldwork.

6.2 A typical day in the nursery

Vignette 6.1

Today is a sunny day in October, but autumn has started and it is cold. The children enter the nursery one by one in single-file. Some of the children's eyes are bleary, but when they are greeted by the nursery staff with good morning (Günaydın), they smile and return the staff's greetings. The children take their shoes off and put them in a cupboard divided into small compartments, then continue into their own classroom where the teacher is already waiting for them. As they come to the classroom, the teacher greets them and they respond with greetings of their own. They hang their jackets and their lunch boxes on hooks. Some go to the Lego corner and start playing with the Lego blocks. The other children (mainly girls) go to the home corner to play house. A couple of the children pick up toy cars and play with them. The teacher and I watch the children to see who does what and check the register to see who did not come in today. The teacher also checks today's schedule. As breakfast time is approaching, she sings the song Tik tak saatine bak toplanma zamanı geldi (Tick tock look at the clock it is time to tidy up!). The children sing along as they tidy the toys and the Lego blocks. When they have finished tidying up, the teacher tells them to go to the toilet to wash their hands before breakfast. Once the children have washed their hands, they collect the lunch boxes they have brought from home (the nursery does not provide breakfast and lunch) and go to the dining area, where

they take a seat and wait for the other children. Once all the children are in the dining hall, one of the teachers asks the children to raise their hands palms facing inward and to offer a prayer of thanks for the food in Turkish. This is common practice in nurseries before children have breakfast or lunch, and is similar to saying grace in western schools.

After breakfast, the children put their lunch boxes back in the classroom and wash their hands again. When all the children have done this, the teacher explains to them which activity they are going to do and instructs them to sit accordingly. On this particular day, the teacher tells the children that they are going to learn a new song called the Rain Song (see Excerpt 6.1) after they have sung the songs that they have learnt so far. Afterwards, they are going to do an experiment called the Rain Experiment (20/11/2014).

Vignette 6.1 above describes a typical day in the nursery. The children start coming to the classroom at 7:30am onwards. They have free playtime until breakfast, which starts at 8:45am and takes 45 minutes. When the children enter the classroom one by one, the teacher greets them by saying *Günaydın* (Good morning in Turkish). The children respond to the teachers using the same word. As the children play, the teacher watches their play and prepares activities according to daily schedule (Figure 6.1). For example, she photocopies either an art or a literacy activity sheet for an upcoming activity.

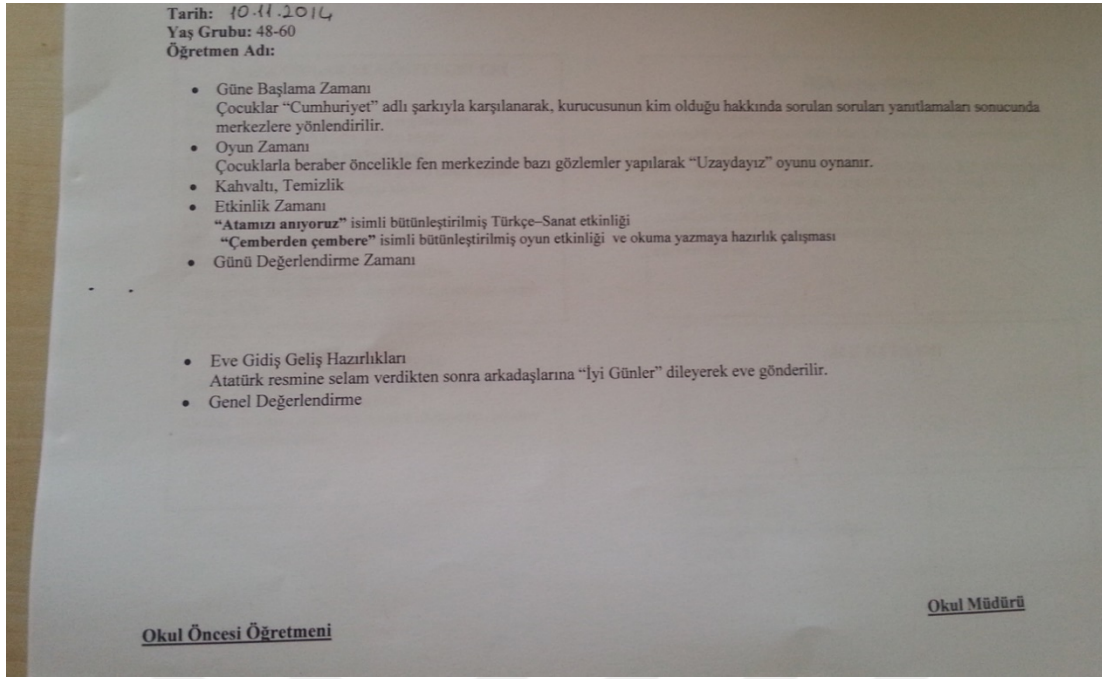


Figure 6.1: an example of the nursery schedule, as prepared and used by the classroom teacher.

This schedule includes starting the day (*güne başlama*), play time (*oyun zamanı*), breakfast (*kahvaltı*) and two sets of activities (*etkinlik zamanı*). During the week I was there on fieldwork, the content of the lessons was linked to the commemoration of the death of Atatürk (this will be discussed in Section 6.4). The first set of activities (Turkish language and art) aims to teach the children who Atatürk is. The second set consists of play and pre-writing.

Figure 6.1 shows a common pattern of daily activities, which can be categorised and described as follows: starting the day, free playtime, breakfast (or lunch for the afternoon group) and activity time. Activity time in a typical day is defined as that part of the day which starts after breakfast and finishes half an hour before the children go home. During playtime, the children play however they wish, either playing with each other or by themselves. The children in the morning group have breakfast together, then they have structured activities such as learning songs, art, Turkish language, pre-writing or numeracy. But the children are also allowed to do free activities during the activity time. This mainly occurs in the beginning of the term. During activity time, there is a strong emphasis on Turkish language activities such as reading stories and learning songs. Scholars emphasise that reading stories and learning songs help frame children's literacy (Cochran-Smith, 1984) and language learning. The teacher guides the children during these activities and models Turkish for them by correcting and praising them verbally (Walsh, 2011).

The teacher also guides the children's participation in activities by positioning the children physically. Reading stories and learning songs takes place at different locations within the classroom, where the teacher sits in front of the children and the children sit in chairs (see Figure 6.2). For other activities, such as art, the children sit in chairs around tables arranged in a U shape (see Figure 6.3). The importance of the seating arrangements is that they provide the children with an idea of the kind of activity that is about to be practised (Cochran-Smith, 1984). These arrangements also help the children understand the routine activities in the classroom. The teacher introduces the children to a new activity with a specific phrase, stating "Now we are going to do an activity..." (*şimdi bizim bir etkinliğimiz var*). Walsh (2011) points out the importance of transition between activities:

Words such as *right, ok, now, alright*, typically discourse markers, perform a very important function in signalling changes in the interaction or organisation of learning (p.7).

Walsh (2011) further argues that a teacher can guide children, hold their attention and signal the beginning of or end of an activity by using these transition words (p.7).



Figure 6.2: children sitting in chairs listening to stories and learning songs.



Figure 6.3: Seating arrangements for art, pre-writing and numeracy.

6.3 The children's engagement in teacher-led group activities

This section examines the children's participation in language and literacy activities under four subsections. The first subsection analyses the children's participation in singing activities, while the second aims to examine their participation in art activities. The third subsection moves on to discuss how the children learn language and literacy through drama, and the final subsection considers their participation in pre-writing and numeracy activities.

It is important to describe and discuss the organisation of classroom activities in order to help us understand how teachers and children engage in activities (Walsh, 2011). Classroom activities I observed are best described as teacher-led instruction. Interactions involve turn-taking, in which the teacher initiates the activity and allocates the next turn. The interactions between teacher and children can be characterised by interactional patterns of initiation (I), response (R) and feedback (F). However, expressions that occur during interactions are not limited to verbal communication, but also include gestures and facial expressions used to convey meaning (Walsh, 2011). Children can also initiate turn-taking as they play an important part in the interactions taking place in the classroom (Garton, 2012).

Scholars such as Lytra (2007) suggest that the classroom talk can be subdivided into two further categories. Drawing on Goffman's (1971) theoretical concepts of frontstage and backstage, Lytra (2007) suggests that these concepts may shed light on interactions during teacher-led group instruction, as well as interactions among children themselves (this will be discussed in detail in the next chapter). In this context, frontstage interaction refers to 'the official world of the teacher's agenda' while backstage interactions are considered to be 'the unofficial world of the peer culture' (Cazden, 1988, p.250). Cazden emphasises that frontstage interactions are 'public talk', implying that the children and the teacher need to behave according to and follow the official programme of the classroom (the Turkish preschool education programme, see section 2.7). For example, frontstage activities taking place in the classroom are expected to be in the language of the instruction—that is, Turkish. Meanwhile, backstage interactions are informal talk, which implies that the children can be more relaxed in terms of language use in peer-to-peer communication (Cazden, 1988, p.150).

Arthur (2001) argues that the language used in frontstage or backstage talk informs us about the values that are attached to those languages. For example, the language used during frontstage talk may have the highest prestige of all the languages used, whereas the backstage language may have less prestige, may not be officially recognised or may be colloquial more than academic. Arthur attributes the values attached to languages spoken in a classroom to national education policies. The *Cumhuriyet* nursery in which I conducted my fieldwork follows a uniform curriculum set by the Turkish Ministry of Education, which has a monolingual policy. According to my participant observations and teaching experience, the curriculum can be identified as having a top-down structure (Maybin, 2006) in which the aims of preschool education and the objectives of classroom activities are set by the Ministry of Education. Within this structure teachers are required to enable the children to achieve these aims and objectives (such as learning clear and proper Turkish) through language and literacy activities such as singing. The children, in turn, are expected to internalise, appropriate and reproduce the aims and objectives of the curriculum. In other words, they are expected to be good learners (Broker, 2002). The children are expected to learn language and literacy, and to be prepared for their successful transition to the primary school.

However, Lytra (2007) points out that backstage and frontstage talk may not be as distinct and static as is defined. Boundaries can be blurred during classroom interactions. Lytra shows that frontstage and backstage interactions can co-exist during classroom activities (ibid,

p.174). The children's participation in different settings such as home and the nursery enable them to practise different values, beliefs and expectations. In other words, they can practise values and expectations of one setting frontstage where everyone can see. However, the values and expectations of the backstage setting might not be practised in the front of all participants. It can therefore be concluded that these concepts enable the researcher to examine how frontstage talk follows the curriculum and backstage talk can contrast with it when the children draw on their home language and values. In this chapter I shall use the frontstage metaphor to analyse talk between teachers and the children in teacher-led activities. In the next chapter, the backstage metaphor will be used to analyse talk mainly among the children.

6.3.1 Turkish language learning activities

In this section, I shall use the concepts of scaffolding and guided participation to examine teacher-led group interactions. As discussed in Chapter 3, scaffolding refers to a process in which a child carries out a task which is initially beyond their capacity under the supervision of an adult acting as a mediator (Wood et al., 1976). During the scaffolding process, the teacher illustrates and mediates important features of the task such as modelling, instructing and reducing frustration (ibid). The concept of guided participation, similar to scaffolding, refers to children's apprenticeship in activities in which a more knowledgeable adult guides and supports the novice. This concept enables the researcher to examine routine activities in which children are guided (Rogoff, 1990). As discussed in Chapter 3, the main difference between scaffolding and guided participation is that guided participation emphasises a collaborative process during which children and teachers are jointly responsible for children's learning. In scaffolding, however, the teacher plays the active role, rather than the children themselves. In other words, guided participation emphasises children's own responsibilities for their learning in areas such as managing their attention, motivation and participation in cultural activities.

As discussed in Chapter 2, the main aim of the curriculum is to teach children clear and proper Turkish language skills by enabling them to develop their speaking and thinking skills in singing activities such as action songs and rhymes. Millington (2011) underscores the importance of singing songs in helping children learn a second language. Songs learnt in the classroom enable children to improve skills such as listening and speaking (pronunciation). Songs also help children build new vocabularies and familiarise themselves with sentence structures (ibid). Similarly, Kenney (2005, p.28) maintains that nursery songs consist of almost

all parts of language that can ‘lead to speaking and reading’. This means that songs represent important sources for early literacy practices and readiness for primary school. It is worth mentioning that learning songs takes place during classroom activity times. From my own participant observation, when the teacher teaches the children a new song, she introduces it by telling the children “We are now going to learn a new song”. The common pattern is that the teacher will sing the song and the children will repeat it after her.

Throughout the following excerpts in this chapter, Turkish is in *italics*, and Kurmanji, the dialect of the Kurdish language spoken by the families in my study is in **bold**.

Excerpt 6.1: The Rain Song

The teacher initiates the children into the activity as she does routinely: “We are now going to learn a new song that is called the Rain Song” (Line 1).

- 1 Teacher: *Evet şimdi yeni bir şarkı öğreniyoruz. Ben söylüyorum siz tekrar ediyorsunuz. Tamam mı?* (We are now going to learn a new song. I will sing and you will repeat after me. OK?)
- 2 Children: *Tamam.* (OK)
- 3 Teacher: *Yağmur yağıyor.* (Rain falls.)
- 4 Children: *Yağmur yağıyor.* (Rain falls.)
- 5 Teacher: *Seller akıyor.* (Flooding occurs.)
- 6 Children: *Seller akıyor.* (Flooding occurs.)
- 7 Teacher: *Arap kızı camdan bakıyor.* (The Arab girl looks from the window.)
- 8 Children: *Arap kızı camdan bakıyor.* (The Arab girl looks from the window.)
- 9 Teacher: *evet şimdi sıra Yasmin de. Hadi Yasmin sen söyle.* (Right, now Yasmin is going to sing it. Go ahead Yasmin, let’s sing it) [When they have repeated the song for the fourth time, the teacher nominates each child to sing solo.]
- 10 Yasmin: (silent)
- 11 Teacher: *yağmur yağıyor* (Rain falls.)
- 12 Yasmin: *yağmur yağmıyor* (Rain does not fall.)
- 13 Teacher: *seller akıyor* (Flooding occurs.)
- 14 Yasmin: *seller akıyor* (Flooding occurs.)
- 15 Teacher: *Arap kızı camdan bakıyor* (The Arabic girl looks from the window.)
- 16 Yasmin: *Arap kızı camdan bakıyor.* (The Arabic girl looks from the window.)

17 Teacher: *Aferin. Yasmin'i alkışlıyoruz.* (Well done. Let's applaud Yasmin.)

18 Children: [applauding] (Audio recordings, 20/11/2014)

The activity shows the pattern that interactions between the teacher and the children follow during a singing activity (Turns 1 and 2). The teacher tells the children how they are going to participate in the activity (Turn 1). This appears clear to the children, and they follow the pattern throughout as the teacher sings a line (Turns 3, 5 and 7) repeating it after her (Turns 4, 6 and 8). This shows that routine activities such as singing enable the children to predict the sequence of turn-taking. It is clear that the children have learnt how, where and when to take a turn. The importance of this particular song is that it is not only a nursery song, but also it is a popular and well-known children's song in Turkey. As an aside, it is interesting to observe that the lyrics of the song show that some ethnic groups (such as Arabs) are tolerated institutionally by their inclusion in songs in daily learning programmes which are based the pre-school education programme set out by the Turkish government (see Chapter 3), although ethnic minorities are mentioned in only a few songs. It is difficult to find nursery songs that mention other ethnic groups such as Kurds and Armenians despite the location of the city in which that nursery I observed is located.

At turn 9, the teacher nominates Yasmin to sing the song and expects Yasmin to do so: "Go ahead Yasmin". As Yasmin does not sing (Turn 10), the teacher sings each line (Turns 11, 13 and 15) and Yasmin repeats the lines after the teacher (Turns 12, 14 and 16). At turn 12, Yasmin sings the line as "Rain does not fall", which is incorrect, but the teacher does not correct her.

According to my participant observations and teaching experience, the teacher models turn-taking for the children. In other words, the teacher models turns and the children follow her instructions and repeat what she has said. This activity can be seen as successful by the way in which the teacher models the response and Yasmin faithfully repeats it—encouraged by the teacher who does not point out Yasmin's mistake. I also noted that the repetition of songs is a routine activity in the classroom. For example, they repeat a song after they have learned it, as was done in this activity, or they repeat songs that they have learned in previous singing activities before they start a new activity (see excerpt 6.3 below). My observations resonate with Klinger et al.'s (1998) findings that teaching songs in the first language in a primary school by rote learning in which the teacher repeats song entirely over time enables

children (aged 7 and 8) to make sense of the continuity and integrity of the songs, which consequently enhance recall. Klinger et al.'s study examines the effect of rote learning on teaching young children new songs. They refer to this approach as 'oral transmission by the teacher [which] the children imitate and rehearse for retention' (p.25). Drawing on Vygotsky (1978), Kultti (2013) values repetition as a form of guidance when investigating young immigrant children learning Swedish as a second language in preschool settings in Sweden. Kultti's study suggests that repeating songs can develop communication skills such as speaking (using new phrases) for young children as they learn a second language.

When the children have finished their singing activity, the teacher introduces another sequence of the classroom activities—science and nature. On this occasion, they engage in an activity called the Rain Experiment. The teacher tells them: "Now we are going to learn how rain falls." The teacher instructs the children to sit at the tables where they have art and some of their literacy activities (Figure 6.3). The children position themselves and talk to each other as they wait for the teacher. She brings a tank filled with water, some dry paint powder and men's shaving foam. She sets these materials on the table at which the children are already sitting. The following excerpt shows how daily activities are linked to each other, and indicates the ways in which the teacher scaffolds the children's learning in areas that are beyond their current reach.

The teacher begins the activity by squeezing the shaving foam onto the water to represent clouds, and then says "Let's drop the paint powder and see how rain is made." She pours the paint powder into the tank. The frontstage interaction continues as follows:

Excerpt 6.2: Learning how rain falls



Figure 6.4. The paint powder is dropped into the container.

- 1 Teacher: *Kaşıkla damlatalım yağmur yağdıralım.* (Let's drop the paint powder from the spoon into the container and then we can see how rain is made.)
- 2 Teacher: *Altan yağmurun yağışını izleyin. Bakın nasıl yağıyor bakın. Görüyor musunuz? Yağmur yağarken de böyle bulutların arasında damlacıklar geliyor. Görüyor musunuz?* (Watch the rain fall from the bottom of the clouds. Look, watch how it rains. Do you see? When rain falls it is like this, it falls from the clouds in droplets. Do you see?)
- 3 Children: *Evet.* (Yes)
- 4 Muammer: *Kırmızı oldu.* (It became red)
- 5 Teacher: *Evet. Normalde mavi olması lazım şey olmadığı için...emm mavi boyamız olmadığı için... altattan bakın yağmur yağışı aynen bu şekilde bulutların altında süzülülerek geçiyor. Görebiliyor musunuz yağmur damlacıklarını? İzleyin yağmurun yağışı gibi bak. Herkes*

görebiliyor dimi? (Yes. Normally, it should be blue, but we do not have it...emm... because our blue colour ran out. Can you see the droplets of rain? It looks like rain falling. Can everyone see?)

6 Children: *evet.* (Yes)

7 Teacher: *izle bak. Yağmur böyle bulutların arasında geçiyor. Yerzüne doğru iniyor. Görüyor musunuz?* (Watch, look at it. Rain falls like this from clouds, then it drops onto the ground. Do you see?)

8 Children: *evet.* (Yes)

9 Teacher: *Yağmur bu şekilde yağıyor. Herkes görebildi mi?* (Rain falls like this. Has everyone seen it?)

10 Children: *evet* (Yes) [shouting] (Audio recordings, 20/11/2014)

In this experiment, the teacher initiates the children into a science and nature activity starting with “Let’s drop the paint powder” (Turn 1). She then draws their attention to what is happening in the container (Turn 2). She provides an explanation of how rain falls, and she looks to the children for confirmation that they have understood (Turn 2). The children demonstrate their understanding by responding “yes” (Turn 3). Muammer extends the interaction by identifying the colour that he is seeing in the container (Turn 4). The teacher confirms that Muammer is right and continues by explaining the choice that she has made about the colour (Turn 5). At Turn 5 she again explains how rain falls by pointing to the changes taking place in the tank. The children show confirmation and understanding by saying “yes” to the teacher (Turn 6). At Turn 7, the teacher informs the children about the last stage of raining “it [the rain] drops on the ground”. Once again the children show their understanding of the teacher’s description of the rain fall process by saying “yes” (Turn 8). Finally, the teacher asks the children a last question as she wants to make sure that all the children have understood it. In response to her, they demonstrate their understanding of the rain fall process by shouting “yes” together (Turn 10).

The purpose of this activity is to develop children’s conceptual learning by linking the experiment to the Rain Song. Although the teacher has already provided explanations for some words such as flooding in the Rain Song activity, these explanations might still be conceptually abstract. The children are guided from the song to a more concrete activity as the teacher helps them to visualize how rain is produced through the experiment (Turn 1). This guided

participation also enables the children to build bridges between their present levels of understanding (Rogoff, 1990) as they have sung the Rain Song before the experiment. The teacher uses the materials and the tank of water to scaffold and broaden the children's learning about rain, drawing their attention to the experiment by dividing it into easily comprehensible steps (Wood at el, 1976). She aims at keeping the process as simple as possible. First, the teacher squeezes foam onto the surface of the water to represent clouds, then she adds dry paint powder to represent the raindrops. Finally, she helps the children through her questions and explanations. She makes the experiment interesting for the children, and it appears that this the lesson has been successful as they shout "Yes" (Turn 10) enthusiastically when the teacher has asks "has everyone seen it?" (Turn 9). Drawing on Vygotsky (1978), Gross (2012) reviews studies on science learning in early childhood development in the first language. Gross highlights the fact that children can learn scientific concepts in activities, and those concepts can form the foundations of academic subjects in other school levels such as primary and high school. For example, the study suggests that in simple water experiments children can learn scientific concepts such as flow and evaporation. In line with Gross's (2012) study, the children learn a scientific process which involving rainfall in the experiment discussed above.

Getting the whole class to sing reflects a pattern firstly of practicing songs to learn language and concepts and secondly helping children transition between one activity and the next. In my observations I saw that practicing songs before starting a new activity was a routine that was often followed. The primary purpose of doing this is to remember songs. The song discussed below is an action song and it is called The Ring Finger, and once again the teacher and the children repeat the words.

On this occasion, the teacher wanted the children to practice songs that they learned before starting the art activity called The Mushroom House—a paper and glue crafts activity. The songs chosen by the teacher are sometimes accompanied by actions and sometimes not. When this particular song is sung, both hands are made into fists and placed behind the back. One of the fists is brought to the front and the thumb is flicked up and down. At the same time the children and the teacher sing: "My thumb, my thumb, where are you?" The other thumb is brought to the front and then they sing "here I am and how do you do?" The first thumb's action is repeated and they sing: "thank you". This is done for the other fingers in order. As the children have already learnt the song, they do not need to use their fingers.

Excerpt 6.3: Practising the ring finger

- 1 Teacher: *Baş parmağım baş parmağım, nerdesin?* (My thumb, my thumb, where are you)
- 2 Children: *Burdayım. Nasılsın efendim? Teşekkür ederim.* (Here I am. How do you do? Thank you)
- 3 Teacher: *Parmak kaç parmak kaç.* (Run finger, run finger)
- 4 Teacher: *İşaret parmağım işaret parmağım* (My index finger, my index finger)
- 5 Teacher and children: *Nasılsın efendim?* (How do you do?)
- 6 Teacher: *Teşekkür ederim, parmak kaç parmak kaç* (Thank you, run finger run finger)
- 7 Teacher: *Orta parmağım orta parmağım, nerdesin?* (My middle finger, my middle finger, where are you?)
- 8 Children: *Burdayım* (Here I am)
- 9 Teacher: *Nasılsın efendim?* (How do you do?)
- 10 Teacher and children: *Teşekkür ederim, parmak kaç parmak kaç.* (Thank you, run finger run finger)
- 11 Teacher: *Yüzük parmağım yüzük parmağım, nerdesin?* (My ring finger, my ring finger, where are you?)
- 12 Children: *Burdayım.* (Here I am)
- 13 Teacher: *Nasılsın efendim?* (How do you do?)
- 14 Teacher and children: *Teşekkür ederim.* (Thank you)
- 15 Teacher: *Parmak kaç parmak kaç.* (Run finger; run finger) (Audio recordings, 12/12/2014).

The teacher begins the activity by singing the song (Turn 1). The children engage in it and take the next turn (Turns 2, 8 and 12). They also sing along with the teacher (Turns 5 and 10). At other points (Turns 3, 4, 6, 7 and 11), the teacher sings by herself. This excerpt indicates that the children not only learn the song, but also they know when to take their turn. It was clear from my observation that the children were keen to engage with the teacher in this activity.

A study conducted by Coyle and Gracia (2014) examined Spanish preschool children learning English in Spain. The authors argued that the ‘limited performance of a song’ can be insufficient for the development of a second language learning as children may not recall the song’s content (ibid, p.282). Instead, they suggest that through singing activities children develop their vocabulary in a second language and ‘speed up the process of producing new words orally’ (ibid, p.282). Similarly, my participant observations showed that the routine

repetition of songs enables the children to memorise the songs and recall them when called upon to do so. The children are therefore able to sing these songs to themselves when they are performing other activities such as art. This will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter.

6.3.2 Art activities

In this section, I shall examine the children's participation in whole group art activities. These can be divided into two categories: free and structured. On a typical day, free art activities take place after breakfast. The children are allowed practise free creative activities at the beginning of the term, but as the term progresses this becomes more rare, and is abandoned in favour of structured activities such as art and pre-writing. At the beginning of the term, the intention of free art activities is to familiarise the children with different classroom activities and the implements and media used. But the objective of art, as the curriculum suggests, is to enable children to develop their creativity and self-expression. The curriculum stresses process rather than product, and during the children's art practices the teacher guides and scaffolds the children's language and literacy learning, for example by introducing new vocabulary through these art activities. In the interaction below, the teacher leads the children into an activity in which they learn how to make a new colour by mixing two existing colours. She brings a container to the classroom and puts it on one of the tables (Figure 6.2) around which the children sit. Half the container is filled with water. The excerpt below shows how the teacher initiates the children into the activity by asking them about the colours they have learnt.

Excerpt 6.4: Learning to make colours

- 1 Teacher: *Bu hangi renk? Biz öğrenmiştik.* (Which colour is this? We have learnt it.)
[showing a blue colour]
- 2 Children: *Mavi.* (Blue)
- 3 Mehmet: *Mavi.* (Blue)
- 4 Teacher: *Maviyi bi karıştıralım. Şimdi ne koydum?* (Let's mix blue. Now, what colour did I put?) [While she is mixing the blue with water, she puts some yellow dry paint into the container]
- 5 Children: *Sarı.* (Yellow)
- 6 Teacher: *Sarı ile mavi yi karıştırın bakayım ne çıkacak ortaya. Hangi renk çıkacak? iyice bi izleyin. Siz hangi rengi görebiliyor sunuz?* (Let's mix the blue and yellow. What do you

- think will happen? What colour will we make? Watch carefully. Which colour can you see?)
- 7 Children: *Yeşil yeşiiil*. (Green! green!) [shouting out]
- 8 Teacher: *Aferin*. (Well done.)
- 9 Mehmet: *Yeşil*. (Green.)
- 10 Teacher: *Yeşil oldu değil mi?* (It has turned green, hasn't it?)
- 11 Children: *Evet*. (Yes.)
- 12 Teacher: *Demek ki sarı ile maviyi karıştırırsanız ne bulacaksınız?* (So, when you mix yellow with blue, what do you get?)
- 13 Children: *Yeşil* (Green.)
- 14 Mehmet: *Yeşiiil* (Green) [shouting out]
- 15 Teacher: *Peki, yeşil ne var? Etrafa bir bakın yeşil ne var?* (OK, what is green in this room? Look around you. What is in green?)
- 16 Ali: *Orda orda*. (There! There!) [pointing at a green doll]
- 17 Teacher: *Başka? Gidin bana yeşil getirin. Yeşil getirin*. (What else? Go and bring something that is green.)
- 18 Children: *[they bring something green to her]*
- 19 Teacher: *Aferin, evet aferin. Aferin Gül, aferin Muammer aferin Ayhan. Aferin Yasmin* (Well done. Yes, well done. Well done Gül, well done Muammer, well done Ayhan. Well done Yasmin.) [As the children bring toys and Lego bricks in green to her, the teacher praises them]
- 20 Muammer: *Yeşilleri ne yapacağız?* (What are we going to do with all these green things?)
- 21 Teacher: *Yeşil'in nasıl bir renk olduğunu gösteriyoruz. Bak şimdi, önce sarıyı öğrendik sonra maviyi öğrendik. Karıştırınca ne çıktı ortaya?* (We can see what green is, can't we? First, we learned yellow and then we learned blue. When we mix them, what do we get?)
- 22 Children: *Yeşiiil yeşiiil*. (Green! Green!)
- 23 Teacher: *Mehmet de yeşil getirmiş aferin Mehmet'e yeşil getirdiği için teşekkür ediyoruz*. (Mehmet has also brought something green, well done. Let's say thank you to Mehmet for bringing something green.) (Audio recordings, 12/12/2014)

The teacher initiates the children into the activity by asking the names of the colours that they have learnt (Turn 1). The children respond to her (Turns 2 and 3) and she asks another colour's name while she is mixing the blue (Turn 4). Again, they respond by saying the correct name of the colour (Turn 5). As the teacher gets the correct answer, she asks another question and gives the clue "What colour is this going to be" (Turn 6). The children respond her by shouting out "Green!" (Turn 7). The teacher praises them (Turn 8). Mehmet shows his individual understanding by repeating the name of the new colour "green" (Turn 9). The teacher again asks the children whether they have understood or not by rephrasing their response "It has turned green, hasn't it?" (Turn 10).

The children demonstrate their understanding by saying "yes" (Turn 11). This approach to guided participation enables the interaction to flow as the teacher guides the children to look around for other things that are green in the classroom (Turn 15). As the children bring green things to her, she praises them (Turns 19 and 23). At turn 20, one of the children, Muammer, asks what the teacher's intention is in collecting green things, and the teacher clarifies it in the next turn (Turn 21). In this activity, the children learn about the colour green by participating in a structured activity. They learn how to make green by mixing two different colours they have already learned about (blue and yellow). They then engage in an activity through the teacher's questions about their learning of colours (Turns 1, 4 and 6). The teacher guides them through her questions.

In this activity, the children develop their Turkish vocabulary through the process of making and talking about a new colour, and the activity shows that the teacher guides and scaffolds the children's language learning. She scaffolds them in a similar way to the Rain Experiment, by using supporting materials such as the container and the dry paint powder. The teacher simplifies the task and draws the children's attention to the task by asking questions such as "Which colour is this?" (Turn 1). According to Vygotsky (1978), questions as linguistic tools can mediate and support children's learning. By applying the concept of scaffolding to the teachers' questions, McCormick and Donato (2000) argued that questions can provide verbal assistance in interactions between a teacher and children. Meanwhile, the children take part in a scientific process that can offer them a foundation for scientific subjects in later schooling (Gross, 2012) as discussed in the Rain Experiment. In other words, such activities enable children to develop their vocabulary learning and extend their scientific thinking. This resonates with Wenham and Ovens's (2010) study, which examined how children develop

scientific knowledge in primary schools in the UK. According to Wenham and Ovens, ‘science is a way of exploring and investigating our world’ (ibid, p.9). This means that such basic experiments help enable children to develop their ability to examine materials such as colours and objects scientifically in their environments. In this activity, the children also learn how to make colours such as green. In addition, the teacher’s guidance in the activity—to find something green in the classroom—allows the children to learn about and to understand common materials in their environment. In other words, the teacher makes connections between the learning of colours and the children’s everyday lives, helping them make sense of the world around them (ibid).

The fieldnotes below show how the teacher introduces the children to new colours in art activities. These fieldnotes were taken during a whole-group activity during which the children engaged in a free art activity guided by the teacher, who gave them each an A4 white sheet of paper and told them to paint whatever they wanted. The teacher took the children’s pastels from a drawer and handed them out.⁵

In this activity, the teacher took a blue colour and showed all the children. The importance of this excerpt is that the teacher allows Mehmet to draw on his native Kurmanji to support his language development in Turkish. The interaction between the teacher and Mehmet, one of my key participants, is as follows:

Fieldnote 6.1: Learning the names of colours

- 6 Mehmet: [Looking at the pastels. He waits for the teacher as she gives the pastel to the children one by one.]
- 7 Teacher: *Bakın bu mavidir* (Look at this. It is a blue colour) [She takes the blue colour and shows all children]
- 8 Mehmet: **Ewa mavi ye** (This is the blue)
- 9 Teacher: *Evet bu mavidir* (Yes, this is a blue colour)
- 10 Teacher: *Hadi maviye boyayalım* (Let’s paint with blue). (Fieldnotes, 30/09/2014)

⁵ The children had brought these materials from home. At the beginning of the first term, the teacher provided the families with a list of materials the children would need for their activities, including paints, glues and scissors, which the nursery did not provide.

This excerpt shows that the teacher initiates the children into a whole group activity. The child looks just at the colour (Turn 1). The teacher indicates the colour by holding it up (Turn 2). It seems that Mehmet embeds the new vocabulary item (*mavi*) in Turkish into a sentence in Kurmanji, mixing the two languages (Turn 3). Although the teacher can speak and understand Kurmanji, she confirms Mehmet's response in Turkish (Turn 4). It appears that Mehmet is allowed to use Kurmanji in order to facilitate his grasp of Turkish. According to my participant observation, Mehmet was allowed to use Kurmanji during the early days in the classroom. He was also allowed to do so throughout the first term, but as the term progressed I observed that this practice became rarer. During the interview with the teacher (16/01/2015), she stated that teachers allow the children to use Kurmanji to reduce their frustration. She occasionally responds to the children in Kurmanji. But as the school year progresses, the teacher decreases the use of Kurmanji (this will be discussed in detail in the next section). Mehmet embeds the new lexical item in Kurmanji, and the teacher repeats his words in Turkish. Finally, the teacher encourages the children to paint (Turn 5).

These fieldnotes accord with Soltero-González and Reyes's (2012) study, which examined immigrant Mexican-American children learning English as a second language in preschool settings where English was the language of instruction. Here too, the teacher ignores the children's utterances in their home language (Spanish) and responds to the children in English. In these fieldnotes, the children (especially Mehmet) learn how the teacher attaches values to Turkish. She stresses the use of Turkish by confirming and repeating Mehmet's utterance "**Ewa mavi ye**" in Turkish "*Evet bu mavidir*".

6.3.3 Drama activities

The importance of drama is that it can provide children with a variety of interactions and feedback to help them with their language and literacy learning. Drama helps children learn vocabulary, syntactic and metacognitive knowledge, allowing them to develop their oral skills as they 'define, articulate, express and verbalize thoughts' during the dramatization (McMaster, 1998, p.575). Drama also enables children to develop their speaking skills, as they take on different roles (ibid). According to the objectives of the curriculum for Turkish language and art activities highlighted above, the curriculum suggests that drama activities enable children

to develop their kinaesthetic knowledge and to learn different roles by enacting those roles in the plays they perform.

In the excerpt below, the children play a game called The Farmer Jumped into a Pit. To play this game, the children stand in a circle holding each other's hands in a structured group activity that takes place during activity time. The teacher can either join the circle or stay outside it. In either case, the teacher will guide and encourage the children to engage in the game. First, a child is chosen to be a farmer, and that child moves to the middle of the circle. Then the farmer chooses another child as a partner. This is followed by choosing a nanny, a dog, a cat and some cheese, in that order. When the farmer chooses a partner, child, nanny, dog, cat and cheese, they start making another circle inside the previous one. As the farmer makes his or her choices, the other children sing as follows:

Çiftçi çukura daldı Haydi peri kızı (The farmer jumped into the pit, come on fairy girl)

Çiftçi çukura daldı (The farmer jumped into the pit)

Çiftçi hanımını aldı Haydi peri kızı (The farmer took a partner, come on fairy girl)

Çiftçi hanımını aldı (The farmer took a partner)

Hanım çocuğunu aldı Haydi peri kızı (The partner took a child, come on fairy girl)

Hanım çocuğunu aldı (The partner took a child)

The song continues for the nanny, dog, cat and cheese in the same way. In the excerpt below, Ahmet, one of the key participants, is learning new words in Turkish (Turn 9). However, Ahmet is relying on Kurmanji in this early stage of his language and literacy learning as Mehmet does so in the fieldnotes 6.1 above. The purpose of analysing this excerpt is to show how Ahmet develops his Turkish language learning in a drama activity. This excerpt is recorded towards the end of the school term.

Excerpt 6.5: Being the nanny

- 1 Teacher: *Evet. Ahmet çık ordan. Niye oynamıyorsun? Güzel oynasana oğlum. Gel. Güzel oynayacak. Güzel oynayacak misin oynayamacaksın?* (Right. Ahmet, get out from there!

- Why are you not playing? Play nicely. Come on. Are you going to play nicely or not?)
 [Ahmet is trying to hide under tables arranged in a U shape]
- 2 Ahmet: **Ee.** (Yes) [ee is not a word, but it indicates ‘yes’]
- 3 Teacher: *Evet diyeceksin.* (You should say ‘*evet*’, rather than ‘**ee**’)
- 4 Ahmet: **Ee.** (Yes) [This time in a weaker voice]
- 5 Teacher: *Evet.* (Yes)
- 6 Ahmet: *ivet.* (Yes)
- 7 Teacher: [Smiling]

Then the teacher starts playing again where they left off. She looks for the nanny.

- 8 Teacher: *Dadı nerde?* (Where is the nanny?)
- 9 Ahmet: **Ez dadı me.** (I am the nanny)
- 10 Teacher: *Ahmet dadı. Bak ben dadı’yım diyor.* (Ahmet is the nanny. Look at him, he says that he is the nanny) [She is smiling] (Audio recordings, 01/12/2014)

In this structured game the children play as a group. The teacher encourages them to learn to take on different roles such as being a farmer or a nanny through this dramatization. Another important point in this excerpt is that the teacher encourages Ahmet to reply in Turkish rather than in Kurmanji (Turn 3 and 5). Ahmet does not do so (Turn 4), but eventually he does what the teacher is encouraging him to (Turn 6). The teacher indicates her approval that Ahmet is able to say the word “yes” in Turkish, rather than in Kurmanji (Turn 7). By doing this, the teacher shows Ahmet that learning and speaking Turkish is valued, emphasising this by smiling (Turns 7 and 10). Eun (2010, p.408) argues that children can understand whether the teacher accepts ‘their values, beliefs and ways of behaving’ or not, especially when minority children learn a second language. Eun’s study discusses the main tenets of sociocultural theory, including mediation and collaborative learning, and values collaborative learning as a means of encouraging children to engage in different activities and take on different roles within them. In this excerpt, the teacher shows the classroom that Ahmet has learned the word “*dadı*” (nanny) (Turn 10). By praising Ahmet, the teacher emphasises the aim of the activity—that the children should develop their language learning and build a vocabulary in Turkish.

My participant observations reveal that the teacher mediated the children's learning by allowing them to use Kurmanji at the beginning of the school term, as fieldnotes 6.1 above indicated. However, as time progresses the teacher insists on using Turkish, as the excerpt above indicates. This appears later, when Ahmet embeds the new lexical item 'the nanny' in Kurmanji (Turn 9). This excerpt seems to indicate that the teacher treats Kurmanji as a transitional language that helps develop the children's Turkish language acquisition. In contexts where a majority-minority linguistic relationship prevails, the minority language can be considered as 'an instrumental value' (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1995, p.57). This means that the minority language is not the language of instruction, but instead is treated as an auxiliary tool to promote the acquisition of the dominant language (ibid, 1999) and to scaffold children's language and literacy learning. Another study by Woods et al. (1999) found that teachers allowed children from minorities to use their home language, but they did not encourage the children to speak it. Woods et al. (1999) conducted their study in two nurseries and one Reception Year class in the UK. Ultimately, the minority language is not valued, and the idea behind this is to encourage minority children to use the majority language only, a process the children in my study seem to internalise as the school year progress. In an excerpt from my interview with the teacher below, she also highlights the function of Kurmanji for reducing frustration (this will be discussed in detail in the next chapter).

İlk başta çocukların bana ısınmaları ve aktivitelere alışmaları açısından iyi oldu. Isınıyorlar çünkü çocuk yabancı bir dünyaya gelmiş gibi oluyor. Fakat benim dili bilmem onların buraya ısınması açısından iyi oldu.

Speaking with the children in Kurdish at first helps them to get on well with me and to familiarise themselves with activities, because they feel that they are in a different world when they start school. But my ability to speak Kurdish enables the children to get used to the nursery (Interview with Elif, 16/01/2015).

The next activity is another dramatic game in which the children participate in a structured play called the Wind Game. The children stand in a circle, and one child is called on to come to the middle of the circle and imitate the sound of the wind. As the child imitates the wind, the other children in the circle perform as trees, opening their arms horizontally and shaking them to the sound of the wind. The game is played until every child has taken on the role of the wind. During the game, the teacher tells the children how to imitate the wind, guiding their

participation in the activity. In the excerpt below one of the girls, Ela, begins to make the sound of the wind as the other children act as trees.

Excerpt 6.6: Imitating the sound of the wind

- 1 Ali: *Benim yapraklarım dökülmüş.* (My leaves have fallen) [While Ela acts as the wind, the other children perform as trees]
- 2 Teacher: *Yaprakları bile dökülmüş Ali'nin. Yapraklarımız bile dökülüyor dimi, rüzgar esince?* (Ali's leaves have fallen. Leaves also fall when the wind blows, don't they?)
- 3 Teacher [To Mehmet]: *Seninki bitti mi?* (have your leaves fallen?)
- 4 Mehmet: **na** (No)
- 5 Teacher [To Ahmet]: *Seninki de döküldü?* (Have yours fallen?)
- 6 Ahmet: **ee.** (Yes)
- 7 Teacher: *Evet, bu sefer Ela ağaç olacak. Caner de rüzgar olsun, tamam mı?* (Right, now Ela is going to be a tree, and Caner is going to be the wind, OK?)
- 8 Children: *Evet.* (Yes)
- 9 Teacher: *Gelin buraya, siz ağaçsınız. O vuu dediği zaman siz sallanacaksınız. Hadi bakalım.* (Come over here. You are trees. When he whistles, you will shake your arms. Let's do it.)
- 10 Caner: *Evet.* (Yes)
- 11 Teacher: *Biz ağaçız.* (We are trees)
- 12 Caner [Imitating the sound of the wind while the other children shake their hands horizontally]: *vuuu vuuu*
- 13 Teacher [After Caner has stopped making wind noises]: *Durmuş mu?* (Has he stopped whistling?)
- 14 Caner: [remains silent]
- 15 Teacher: *Durmuş durmuş. Ağaçlar tekrar.* (He has stopped, he has stopped. Let's do it again.)
- 16 Caner [Making the sound of the wind again]: *vuuu vuuu.*
- 17 Ahmet [While Caner imitates the sound of the wind, Ahmet is misbehaving by imitating him and shouting]: *vuuuuu vuuuuu*
- 18 Teacher: *Ahmet'e gülen yüz yok. Tamam. Hani durdu mu? Durmuş. Tamam.* (Ahmet won't get a smiley sticker. OK? Has he stopped? He has stopped.)
- 19 Ahmet: **Ez** (I)

- 20 Teacher: *Bu sefer Ahmet rüzgar olsun. Sıra Ahmet de. Ahmet gel buraya, sen rüzgarsın. Sen ağaç değilsin Ahmet. Kollarını indir. Tamam. Haydi bakalım, vuu yap.* (This time Ahmet is going to be the wind. Now, Ahmet is in the middle. Ahmet, come here, you are the wind. You are not a tree. Put your arms down, OK? Let's go.)
- 21 Ahmet: *vuuu vuuu.* [whistling]
- 22 Teacher: *Es. Sallanalım. Durdu mu?* (Whistle [to Ahmet]. Shake yourselves [to the other children]. Has he stopped whistling?)
- 23 Ahmet: *vuuu vuuu.* [whistling]
- 24 Teacher: *Durdu mu?* (Has he stopped?)
- 25 Ahmet: [remains silent]
- 26 Teacher: *Durdu durdu.* (He has stopped, he has stopped.)
- 27 Teacher: *Sallanmayin. Esiyor mu?* (Do not shake. Is the wind blowing?)
- 28 Children: [silent]
- 29 Teacher: Hadi es bakayım (let's whistle)
- 30 Ahmet: *vuuu vuuu.* [whistling]
- 31 Teacher: *Tekrar sallanalım, ağaçlar sallansın.* (Shake some more, trees! Shake yourselves!)
- 32 Ahmet: *vuuu vuuu.* [whistling]
- Teacher: *Ahmet gel. Şimdi Enes rüzgar olsun.* (Ahmet, come here. Now, Enes is going to be the wind.) (Audio recordings, 11/26/2014).

In this activity, the teacher introduces the children to the game and then guides them as they play it. This game represents an excellent example of kinaesthetic learning, in which the children imitate the sounds of nature through a mediator (Turn 2). The children also learn to differentiate sounds when they imitate the sound of the wind (Turns 12, 16, 21 and 23). Drawing on Vygotsky (1987), Eun and Lim (2009) suggest that children can make better sense of activities if they perform or dramatize them. Mehmet and Ahmet's active participation is mediated via Kurmanji as they reply to the teacher in Kurmanji (Turns 4 and 6).

The example indicates the importance of modelling both academic and social learning. This is indicated in turn 18, when the teacher tells Ahmet off for misbehaving because he is supposed to be acting like a tree. She shows the children what counts as acceptable behaviour, especially Ahmet (Turn 18) through not allowing him a smiley sticker. The teacher also encourages the children to participate in the game by referring to being rewarded with smiley

stickers for good behaviour (Turn 18). The teacher uses these stickers—such as smiling face, a star or the moon—in order to model acceptable behaviours. She rewards the children by giving them these stickers. It seems that Ahmet has internalised the purpose of the emoticon stickers with which the teacher rewards their learning and approves their behaviours, and therefore shows his willingness to participate in the structured activity by taking a turn (Turn 19). Thereafter, the teacher tells Ahmet how to play the game (Turn 20) and guides him (Turns 20, 22 and 29). Ahmet's acceptance of turn-taking also shows that he understands the teacher's instructions—which are in Turkish—because he plays the game in the way it should be played. Ahmet's willingness may also indicate that he has moved from peripheral participation to active participation. I observed that he did not actively participate in activities during the first month. But as time progressed he became more keen to engage in classroom activities and began to take an active role in those activities as he did in excerpt 6.5.

6.3.4 Pre-writing and numeracy activities

In this section, I shall discuss the children's engagement in pre-writing and numeracy activities (Figures 6.5 and 6.6). For these activities, the children sit in chairs arranged in a U shape as they do when they have other activities, such as singing, which usually take place after they have had their breakfast. It is worth highlighting that the children are not taught letters at nursery, as the curriculum says that they must prepare themselves in nursery for primary school, where they will be expected to learn their letters. As far as pre-writing and numeracy are concerned, the nursery programme emphasises activities in which children can develop their hand-eye coordination skills. Numeracy activities, according to the programme, develop children's mathematical thinking and their reasoning skills.

The children learn shapes from the middle of the first term onwards. First, they learn to draw a circle, a triangle, a square and a rectangle. In my discussion with the teacher about the order in which children are taught shapes, she told me that the children learned to draw a circle relatively easily. For a triangle, she said that they learned to draw the straight edges. As far as squares and rectangles are concerned, the children found them less challenging when they learned them sequentially, because squares and rectangles have similar shapes. In the following excerpt, the children learn to form a circle before they sing their songs. The teacher introduces the children to the circle as a mathematical concept by helping them to form a circle for the singing activity that follows. The excerpt shows how the children learn to form the circle with their bodies.

Excerpt 6.7: Learning to form the circle

- 1 Teacher: *Daire yapalım. Daire yapalım, ortaya girme olduğun yerde Sema. Onun önüne geçme, yanına geç. Gel buraya daire yapalım. Yuvarlak yapalım.* (Let's make a circle. Let's make a circle. Sema, stay where you are, do not go in the middle. [To the other children]: do not go to the front, stay next to your friend. Come over here. Let's make a circle. Let's make it round)
- 2 Muammer: *Yuvarlak* (make it round)
- 3 Children: *Yuvarlak* (make it round)
- 4 Teacher: *Yuvarlak yapalım. Daire, daire yapalım.* (Let's make it round. Let's make a circle, a circle.)
- 5 Gül: *Ben yapmışım.* (I have done it.)
- 6 Teacher: *Evet* (Yes)
- 7 Teacher: *Caner biraz geriye git.* (Caner, go back a little bit)
- 8 Gül: *Mehmet gel.* (Mehmet, come here)
- 9 Teacher [as the children complete the circle]: *Tamam tamam* (OK, OK) (Audio recordings, 20/11/2014)

In this excerpt the children learn to form a circle through guided participation. The teacher initiates the activity by guiding the children to form the circle (Turn 1). One of the children, Muammer, repeats an everyday word for the circle, which the teacher has said, *yuvarlak* ("the round" in English) (Turn 2). The other children repeat by following Muammer (Turn 3). The teacher again uses the word's everyday equivalent ("the round"), and then she changes to its more scientific version by constantly emphasising it ("the circle") (Turn 4). Gül attempts to show the teacher that she has learned the circle by saying "I have done it" (Turn 5). The teacher confirms that Gül has understood by simply responding "yes" to her (Turn 6). The teacher continues to instruct some of the other children to make the circle (Turn 7). Gül tells Mehmet to stand next to her in the circle (Turn 8). Finally, the teacher confirms that the circle has been completed (Turn 9).

Through guided participation, the children have learned a mathematical concept, the circle. They make sense of their language and literacy learning when the teacher uses the everyday word (round) for a scientific concept (circle) (Gross, 2012). In this excerpt, it can be seen that the instructions flow from the teacher to the children. In other words, one of the

children (Gül) mirrors the language the teacher uses to instruct them to make the circle at the end of the excerpt. Gül uses the word “come here” (Turn 8) after the teacher has used similar words “come over” in turn 1 and “go back a little bit” in turn 7. In this sense, Gül learns how the circle can be made whilst scaffolding her peer (Mehmet) by showing the place where Mehmet needs to be.

Figure 6.5 shows the activity sheet of one of the children’s (Yasmin’s) pre-writing and numeracy activity, in which the children learn to trace triangles by joining the dotted lines.

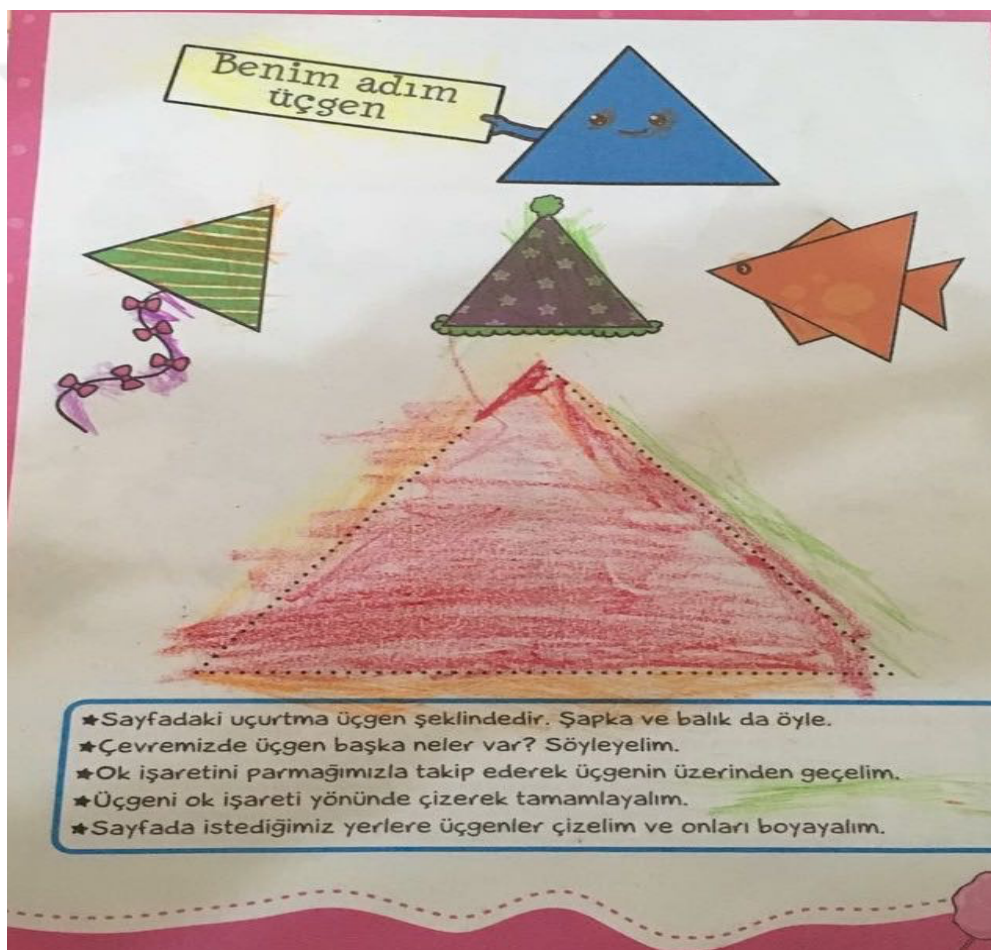


Figure 6.5: An activity sheet showing pre-writing and numeracy activity.

Fieldnote 6.2: Learning the triangle

The teacher gives each child a photocopy of Figure 6.5. Then she takes one and holds it up in order to introduce the children to a new shape, the triangle. She explains that the

triangle has three sides. The teacher guides the children according the instructions written on Figure 6.5. The instructions are as follows: *the umbrella, hat and fish are triangular in shape. What else is triangular in the classroom?* When the teacher asks the children, some of them point to the triangle on the wall. She praises them by saying “Well done”. Then the teacher continues to instruct the children. “First, you are going to follow the dotted lines with your finger in the direction of the arrow. Then you are going to trace the dotted lines. After that, you can draw triangles on the activity sheet.” (Fieldnotes, 29/12/2014).

These fieldnotes show that the teacher initiates the children into pre-writing and numeracy by introducing them to the triangle. Through guided participation, the children learn what the triangle is from the teacher’s instruction, as well as tracing the dotted lines and making the connection to other materials such as the triangle on the wall of the classroom. The teacher also instructs the children to reproduce their understanding of the triangle by drawing triangles after they have traced the dotted lines. At the same time, the children develop their conceptual learning by learning that the triangle is a geometrical shape. Examining children’s geometric knowledge in a preschool setting in the USA, Fisher et al. (2013) highlighted the role of instruction in imparting geometric knowledge. The study noted that the teacher’s guidance enabled the children to develop their knowledge of geometric shapes such as triangles and rectangles. In the fieldnotes below, the teacher introduces the children to the number 4. Their interaction is as follows:



Figure 6.6: Learning the number 4

Fieldnotes 6.3: Learning the number 4

Today, the children are learning the number 4. The teacher begins by showing the children figure 6.6, then she asks them what they see, and which number it is. Some children reply by saying that they can see the white storks. Then she tells them that it is the number 4. The teacher tells the children to bring her four objects before they start the activity. The girls bring baby dolls and the boys bring toy cars. Mehmet and Gül bring toy cars, but they don't have enough. Mehmet is two cars short and Gül is one car short. Mehmet cannot count what he has brought, while Gül counts 1, 2 and 3. Mehmet repeats what Gül has said. As the teacher sees other children who are one or two pieces short, she tells them to bring more pieces. She encourages them by saying "Well done". Finally, the teacher instructs the children to trace the legs of the white storks and the number 4, and she tells them to paint the white storks and the number 4 (Fieldnotes, 12/01/2015).

In this activity, the children learn the number 4 whilst developing their writing and coordination skills by tracing the dotted lines in a similar way to the approach used with the triangle in fieldnotes 6.2 above. The children also practise their pencil control by tracing the lines, and

their participation in this shared activity is mediated through the teacher using materials available in the classroom. These fieldnotes also show how Mehmet's interaction with Gül helps him learn to count numbers. It is worth mentioning that Mehmet and Gül play together during free time and sit next to each other during other activities such as art and singing (this will be discussed in more detail in the next chapter). The children's learning of the triangle and the number 4 will function as a foundation for their maths in later schooling. These fieldnotes also indicate that this kind of activity represents a foundation for literacy learning such in counting and writing. In other words, the children develop language and literacy learning by counting objects with the teacher's interactions (Gallenstein, 2005). In this way the teacher guides the children to apply their new lessons (the number 4) to new situations (counting objects).

This chapter will now move on to discuss the reproduction of Turkish national ideology in culturally and institutionally valued activities.

6.4 Reproducing Turkish national ideology in classroom talk

As discussed above, children are peripheral participants when they first enter the nursery setting. They start to participate more fully as they begin to engage in the classroom activities, with the ultimate aim of learning Turkish. In this section, I shall consider how the children set out to become cultural participants by engaging in activities which express and reproduce the dominant ideology of the curriculum. Woods et al. (1999) showed that minority children are expected to become pupils under the dominant majority model. Their findings suggest that the celebration of cultural and religious festivals celebrating important cultural figures in preschool settings reinforce the dominant culture of the society in which the children are learning. This section examines how Turkey's dominant national ideology is reproduced via national celebrations in the nursery. As discussed in section 2.7, the first aim of the Turkish national education system, with which the nursery curriculum is compliant, is to make sure that ethnic minority citizens know who Atatürk is, be loyal to him and internalise and enhance Turkish national identity. This means that the children's full cultural participation is completed through engaging in activities that reflect dominant national ideologies. In this section, I shall use the concept of communities of practice to examine the national and official demands of Turkey's curriculum with which children are expected to comply. Communities of practice refer to

settings ‘where individuals initially inexperienced and unaware are apprenticed into full participation’ in the practices of those settings (McCormick and Donato, 1994, p.454). The purpose of using this concept is to show how the children become ‘the kind of pupils the curriculum requires’ (Broker, 2002, p.154).

In this section, I shall use the frontstage metaphor to examine discussions between the teacher and the children as used in earlier sections of this chapter. Activities in this section take place at certain times and are defined in the pre-school education programme as having a strong cultural and historical focus. The preschool education programme is applied across the country. Republic Day, 29th October 1923, is celebrated during the last week of October. On that day, the establishment of the Turkish Grand Assembly is celebrated. The day is mainly celebrated in the classroom for two days leading up to Republic Day itself, because the 29th of October is a public holiday and all nurseries, primary and other schools are closed. During that week, the content of the lessons is linked to Republic Day. Other similar cultural and historical activities are associated with the 10th of November, when the death of Atatürk is commemorated, and April 23rd, which is National Sovereignty and Children’s Day. These historical dates are celebrated every year in nurseries and primary schools across the country. The fieldnotes below indicate how the children learn about the Turkish flag by making their own flags in an art activity.

Fieldnotes 6.4: Making the Turkish flag

The teacher gives each child a photocopy of the activity, and introduces them to the Turkish flag using a similar approach to the ones taken in pre-writing and numeracy. She takes a photocopy of the activity and holds it up. She then asks the children what it is. Some children respond to her by saying that it is the Turkish flag. The teacher praises them by saying “Well done”. Afterwards, she asks them where the Turkish flag is in the classroom. Some children point to the one on the wall. She confirms it and praises the children once more before initiating them children into the activity by telling them that they are going to make the Turkish flag with red paper and glue. After the teacher has instructed them, the children start making the flag using those materials. As they tear handcrafted paper and paste it with the glue onto the activity sheet, the teacher encourages them to tear the handcrafted paper into smaller pieces. When the teacher sees a child follow her instructions she praises that child, saying “Well done”. The

teacher is modelling the behaviour of that child for the other children, who want to draw the teacher's attention to their own work by saying "Teacher, look at mine! I am doing it too!" (Fieldnotes, 10/24/2014).

Figure 6.7 shows the children engaging in this activity to celebrate Turkey's republic Day. By doing this activity, the children learn a very important shared cultural symbol, the Turkish flag. They learn its colours (red and white), and can appreciate what it symbolises as each Turkish school has its own flagstaff in its yard (see the next excerpt). These fieldnotes remind us that one of the aims of Turkish preschool education programme is to teach children loyalty to the flag (see Chapter 2). Here, the dominant national ideology is reproduced in the art activity as the children reproduce the Turkish flag. The children learn a shared national identity and a value that is symbolic of the Turkish nationhood (Lytra, 2014). In learning the Turkish national flag, they learn a lesson in representing themselves as part of the Turkish nation. At the same time, they practise hand-eye coordination, developing their fine motor skills.



Figure 6.7: Making the Turkish flag

The excerpt described below is taken from another culturally significant activity in which the death of Atatürk as a national figure is commemorated. Figure 6.8 shows another activity in which the children participate, the importance of which is to learn who Atatürk is by participating another pre-writing activity. On the 10th November every year at 9:05a.m. the anniversary of death of Atatürk is commemorated throughout Turkey. Sirens sound for two minutes and all flags are lowered to half-mast from the beginning of the commemoration until sunset. In some primary, secondary and high schools it is compulsory to commemorate the death of Atatürk, and students remain silent for two minutes. In universities and nurseries, students do not have to remain silent, although some chose to. The Cumhuriyet nursery where I conducted my fieldwork commemorated it. I was told that the deputy head teacher asked the teachers to commemorate it together. The children in the morning group gathered in a classroom and were asked to remain silent for one minute. The excerpt below shows how the teacher introduces the anniversary of death of Atatürk.

Excerpt 6.8: Learning who Atatürk is.

- 1 Teacher: *Bugün Atatürk'ün ölüm yıl dönümü. Eskiden bundan yıllar önce bugün de Atatürk ölmüş. Bugün 10 Kasım. O yüzden bizde şimdi Atatürk'ü anma ile ilgili bir tören yapacağız. Sevim hocanın sınıfına gidicez. Ona gitmeden önce bir etkinliğimiz var onu yapalım. Çocuklar, bunlar da Atatürk'ün babası, Ali Rıza efendi babası Ali Rıza efendi...* (Today is the anniversary of the death of Atatürk [holding Figure 8]. Atatürk died many years ago. Today is 10th of November, and we are going to perform a ceremony to commemorate his death. We are going to Sevim's [another teacher's] classroom. We have an activity to do before we go. Children, this is Atatürk's father, Sir Ali Rıza. His father, Sir Ali Rıza...)⁶.
- 2 Muammer: *Evet, ba baba Ali Rıza efendi.* (Yes, fa... his father is Sir Ali Rıza.)
- 3 Teacher: *Evet.* (Yes)
- 4 Muammer: *Annesi Zübeyde hanım.* (His mother is Mrs Zübeyde.)
- 5 Teacher: *Evet annesi zübeyde hanım. Aferin Muammer. Muammer'i alkışlıyoruz. Bak Muammer öğrenmiş.* (Yes, his mother is Mrs Zübeyde. Well done. Muammer. Let's applaud Muammer. Look, Muammer has learnt the names of Atatürk's father and mother.)
- 6 Gül: *Ben de unutmadım.* (I also did not forget.)

⁶ "Sir" here is used as marker of respect. "Mr." is not used.

- 7 Teacher: *Geçen 29 Ekim de gittik izledik unutmamış. Aferin. Buda Atatürk'ün doğduğu ev. Önce bu çizgilerin üstünde geçerek. Tamam mı?* (We watched a programme about it last month on the 29th October. [She is referring to the documentary about the Republic Day on 29 October 1923] Well done. This is the house in which Atatürk born. First, you trace these lines. OK?)
- 8 Children: *Evet.* (Yes.)
- 9 Teacher: *Sonra... sonra Atatürk'ün resmini boyacayız.* (Later... Later we will paint a picture of Atatürk.) (Audio recordings, 10/11/2014)



Figure 6.8: The activity sheet with photos of Atatürk's mother, father and house.



Figure 6.9: The other side of Figure 6.8, showing a child tracing the outline of Atatürk.

In this activity, the children are taught who Atatürk is using a pre-writing activity. The teacher initiates the children into a culturally and institutionally valued activity, the commemoration of Atatürk's death (Turn 1). She also informs the children about an upcoming activity (Turn 1). A child (Muammer) interrupts the teacher by saying the names of Atatürk's father and mother (Turn 2). The teacher congratulates him by saying "Well done" and asks the other children to applaud him (Turn 5). By doing this, the teacher validates Muammer's knowledge about Atatürk. Gül also takes a turn (Turn 6) to show her knowledge about Atatürk. But it seems that the teacher does not hear Gül, as she continues to instruct the children (Turn 7). The children show their understanding of the instructions provided by the teacher (Turn 8). Finally, she gives them instructions for the final stage of the activity by saying "Later we will paint the picture of Atatürk" (Turn 9).

In this activity, the children learn who Atatürk is via a pre-writing activity in which Turkish national ideology is reproduced. In this excerpt, the teacher uses the past tense at first to introduce the children to the activity, which reflects the expectations of the curriculum. She then shifts to the present tense to describe Atatürk's family members and the house in which Atatürk was born (Turns 1 and 7). This is in line with the objectives of the Turkish preschool

education programme, one of which is to teach the children who Atatürk is and to state his importance to Turkish culture and society (*Atatürk'ü tanım ve Türk toplumu için önemini açıklar*) (Preschool Education programme, 2013, p.21). According to the programme, this includes information on where Atatürk was born and what the names of his father and mother are. Spyrou (2000) argues that when the past is presented in the present tense, it becomes 'more understandable' (p.65). Although the main aim of this activity is to teach the children who Atatürk is, the children also use the activity to practise their pre-writing skills by tracing the dotted lines. These skills will provide the foundation for their academic writing, as the children will develop their writing skills through hand-eye co-ordination. This is the aim of pre-writing activities, as is shown in the text on the top of Figure 6.9, which represents the ability to follow an activity which needs hand eye co-ordination.

McCormick and Donato (1994) argue that children's participation in classroom activities plays an important role in the transformation of their identities, including that of the learner. This is shown in turn 2, where Muammer displays his knowledge about Atatürk by drawing on his engagement in a previous officially valued activity—the Republic Day on 29 October. The teacher validates what he says by praising him (Turn 5). It is clear that the children are on their way to becoming the sort of pupils the curriculum demands and will approve of (Broker, 2002). For example, another child (Gül) also seeks praise from the teacher by stating that she remembers the names too (Turn 6). The teacher's praise for the children indicates how the dominant national ideology is reproduced socially and institutionally.

Atatürk, as the founder of the Republic of Turkey, is officially defined as a hero in the broader sociocultural context as well. He is respected for his role in the struggle for independence (*bağımsızlık mücadelesi*). This respect is also given to his family members. Atatürk's father is referred to as "Sir", rather than the more common "Mr", a special distinction that comes from the respect accorded to Atatürk, who is defined as a national figure. In the broader sociocultural context, Atatürk is defined as someone without whom the nation would not have survived. He is therefore seen as the embodiment of a shared value that is reproduced in Turkey's cultural activities, and this is represented in one of the main goals of the Turkish preschool education, which is to teach children about Turkey's most important figure and the symbolism of the Turkish flag. This is in line with Spyrou's (2000) view that national celebrations and commemoration activities in which children engage aim to reproduce 'the nation's unbroken continuity' and to produce 'loyal members who will uphold it above all else'

(p.65). Fieldnotes 6.4 and excerpt 6.8 show that those shared national values are transmitted to the children through the celebration and commemoration of events such as Republic Day and the anniversary of Atatürk's death.

As well as fieldnotes 6.4 and excerpt 6.8, the excerpt below demonstrates how the children learn about Turkish national ideology, which aims to produce individuals who are loyal to Atatürk and the nation. The excerpt is taken from a teacher-led discussion on Teachers' Day, in which the teacher asks the children what jobs they want to do when they grow up. Teachers' Day is celebrated on the 24th of November every year. As discussed in the Chapter 2, Atatürk changed the Turkish alphabet from Arabic script to a Latin one. National schools were established on the 24th of November 1928 to promote the new Turkish alphabet. When these schools opened, Atatürk was given the honorary title of First Teacher for introducing and promoting the new alphabet. Teachers' Day was officially proclaimed a day of celebration on the 24th of November in 1983. Its aims are to promote Atatürk's principles and reforms (see Chapter 2), to credit teaching as an occupation and to appreciate teachers and to improve relationships between teachers (Resmi Gazete/Official Gazette, 1992). At that point, Atatürk was declared as Turkey's first teacher. The purpose of analysing this discussion is to show how the children learn another of Atatürk's important roles.

Excerpt 6.9: The First Teacher

- 1 Teacher: *Atatürk, Atatürk bir tahtanın başında yazı yazıyordu hatırlıyorsunuz?* (Do you remember that Atatürk wrote on a blackboard?) [She is referring to the documentary about Republic Day on 29 October 1923.]
- 2 Children: *Evet* (Yes.)
- 3 Teacher: *Çocuklar ilk öğretmenimiz, ilk öğretmenimiz Atatürktür. Tamam mı?* (Children, our first teacher... our first teacher was Atatürk. OK?)
- 4 Children: *Evet* (Yes)
- 5 Teacher: *Ilk öğretmenimiz kim miş?* (Who was our first teacher?)
- 6 Children: (silent)
- 7 Teacher: *Atatürk miş.* (He was Atatürk.) (Audio recordings, 21/11/2014)

In this excerpt, the teacher initiates the children into the discussion by reference to a respected national figure. The teacher asks them whether they remember the documentary which

introduces Atatürk (Turn 1). The children confirm that they remember it (Turn 2). The teacher then defines Atatürk as “the first teacher”, and asks the children to confirm this (Turn 3). The children show their understanding by responding “Yes” (Turn 4). She then tests the children’s learning by asking “Who was our first teacher?” (Turn 5). As they do not respond (Turn 6), she says the response herself (Turn 7).

Bruner (1986) suggests that children learn a shared culture and at the same time make sense of their belonging to that culture. In this frontstage talk, the children learn another of Atatürk’s roles, that of being Turkey’s first teacher. The teacher contextualises this by saying that Atatürk was “our first teacher” in the celebration of Teachers’ Day. This allows the children to expand their understanding of Atatürk as well as constructing a sense of shared history by extending that understanding (Rogoff, 2003). In the fieldnotes below, for example, when the teacher introduces the figure representing a Turk to them, she defines the person as being somebody “like us”. The ‘our/us’ discourse refers to the Turkish majority culture as Atatürk is respected for his achievements, mainly in the struggle for independence and the reform of the majority culture’s language. It is clear that the expectations of the curriculum are inculcated through these activities, as they follow the official demands. In other words, the children internalise the values and ideology of the curriculum—which are different from those of their own minority culture—through their participation.

The fieldnotes below also indicate how the dominant national ideology is reproduced. Here, the children again engage in an art activity, in this case learning about different nationalities.

Fieldnotes 6.5: Learning about different nationalities

The teacher tells the children to arrange their chairs in a U shape. While the children are positioning themselves, she explains the activity they are about to engage in. It is an art activity called Understanding Different Nations. The teacher gives them a piece of A4 paper on which six nations are represented through six figures: a Chinese, a Turk, an Indian, an Eskimo, an Arab and an American. The teacher introduces the children to these figures one by one. When she introduces the children to the Turk, the teacher identifies the figure as Turkish by saying “He is like us”, and the children look at the figure to which she has referred. The teacher then instructs the children to paint these figures after she has handed out the pastels. Afterwards, the children start painting in colours of their

own choosing. The children each use different colours to paint their own activity (Fieldnotes, 30/09/2014).

In this activity, as in many others, the teacher initiates the process by providing the children with the activity sheet. She guides them by introducing the figures one by one. The children learn about people from whom they may be different, and about those whom they may resemble. In this sense, this activity indicates how the dominant ideology can shape the experience of the children. It can be seen that the national identity is constructed through the discourse of 'like us' (Spyrou, 2000). This discourse of similarity ('like us' and 'others') erases ethnic differences in the classroom, despite the fact that the children belong to the Kurdish ethnic minority, and binds them to the Turkish majority. In this joint activity, therefore, they learn more than painting an activity; they are guided to 'appropriate identities...and ideologies' (Willet, 1995, p.477). In other words, by participating in activities which reflect the curriculum's philosophy, the children are encouraged to construct a positive identity as a Turk (Willet, 1995). Through participating in activities such as those described in fieldnotes 6.3 and 6.4 and excerpt 6.8, the children learn and practise values and beliefs that are associated with the dominant national ideology. This exemplifies the process of minorities or immigrants moving from peripheral legitimate participation to full participation through common activities (Lave and Wenger, 1991). The children are encouraged to become part of wider sociocultural community through participation in the school's community of practice, whilst the values and beliefs they practise at home become increasingly associated with the minority culture, which continues to be marginalised through the state approach to integrating minorities from an early age (see excerpt 1). Upon entering nursery, the children learn and practise the culture of the majority, following activities and celebrations which are widely recognized and shared in a broader sociocultural context. As Vygotsky (1978) points out, children's development occurs through internalising their learning, which is mediated and guided at the interpersonal level.

6.5 Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed how children learn Turkish language, literacy and Turkish national identity through participation in classroom activities. I have examined the children's participation in whole group activities such as Turkish language activities, science and nature, drama, art, and pre-writing and numeracy. The chapter has also examined the ways in which

the teacher supports and guides the children's language and literacy learning. I have also examined the way the dominant Turkish national ideology is reproduced in the nursery.

This chapter has also categorised the excerpts and fieldnotes into two sections. Firstly, I analysed the children's participation in teacher-led activities such as drama, Turkish language activities, science and nature, art and pre-writing, looking at the ways children develop their speaking, thinking, listening skills, vocabulary and conceptual learning. Secondly, I showed in the subsequent section how the curriculum's national ideology is expressed in other teacher-led activities in which national days are celebrated and the death of important figures is commemorated. This chapter has also suggested that a good pupil is associated with a good Turkish citizen. What the interactions in this chapter have in common is that the children learn language and literacy through the model provided by the teacher in teacher-led activities. In other words, the teacher models the expected use of language, standards of behaviour, values and beliefs. As discussed in section 3.2.2 and above, these policies do not recognise the children's minority language, culture and identity. The teacher is therefore required to follow a pedagogy prescribed by such policies, and the children are expected to internalise Turkish national ideology. However, the teacher does allow the children to use Kurdish to develop their Turkish language and literacy skills and understanding. This highlights the teacher's agency, which I will discuss in greater depth in Chapter 8. In the next chapter, I shall discuss how the children develop their language and literacy learning by drawing on the teacher's modelling discussed above, as well as on different linguistic, cultural and social resources in their peer-to-peer learning.

Chapter 7: Data analysis: Negotiating language use, values and beliefs and constructing identities in peer talk

7.1 Introduction

As discussed in Chapters 3 and 6, there is a lack of research into monolingual contexts in which children's home language and culture are not officially recognised. This chapter will discuss how children in such situations use their home language to challenge established classroom language ideologies (Turkish only, in this case). In other words, the chapter will highlight the children's agency in using their home language in the classroom. Scholars such as Rodriguez (2013) define agency as being able to act and create the possibility of action against dominant ideologies. Ahearn (2001) suggests a situated understating of agency, meaning that rather than locating agency within children themselves, it is seen to be situated in social practices, and interacts with language ideologies and institutional constraints that shape children's learning. I take agency to mean the children's ability and conscious decisions to use their home language in the monolingual classroom, thereby challenging (at least on a temporary basis) the established classroom practices.

In this chapter, I shall also investigate how the children use linguistic, cultural and social resources in informal peer interactions. It is important to note that these resources are neither valued nor officially recognised in the classroom. In other words, the chapter indicates that the children use knowledge from their home situations, communities and first languages despite constraints applied by the curriculum, which has a strict monolingual pedagogy and national ideology (Kaplan, 1999). I will use Goffman's (1971) backstage dramaturgical concept to examine informal peer talk.

Although in the previous chapter the teacher allowed the children to use Kurmanji occasionally, I showed that the curriculum discouraged any frontstage dialogue between the teacher and the children in the classroom, as the children were encouraged to use Turkish as time progressed. This means that talk between the teacher and the children is 'institutionally structured talk' (Maybin, 2006, p.34), which in my research was consistent with the language requirements of the Turkish educational curriculum. This chapter examines the talk that takes place backstage, where the children use their home and community's social, cultural and linguistic resources in activities such as art and free playtime to help develop their Turkish language and literacy learning. Such interaction emerges in peer interactions in activities where

the teacher is out of earshot or when the teacher provides explanations (such as information on traditional gender roles) and gives instructions on topics such as class management. This means that backstage and frontstage talk can interact in either setting (Lytra, 2007). More importantly, the chapter highlights the contribution of the current thesis by pointing out how children model their language use, behaviour, beliefs and values on frontstage interactions in peer talk. To my knowledge, other studies using sociocultural theories pay insufficient attention to the appropriation and reproduction of these values and beliefs in peer talk (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Howard, 2009; Woods et al., 1999).

I shall begin by discussing how the children negotiate language use in backstage talk. I will then move on to examine how the children appropriate the language use, beliefs and values of the curriculum and develop their learner identities in peer talk. Finally, I shall discuss how the children bring different linguistic, cultural and social resources from their home and community settings into the classroom in order to develop Turkish language and literacy learning. In this chapter, I shall also address the following research questions:

- How do the children learn Turkish language and literacy from their peers?
- How do the children use their linguistic, cultural and social resources and knowledge from their home and Kurdish community settings to develop their Turkish language and literacy learning?
- What is the role of Kurmanji in learning the Turkish language and literacy and how does it change over time?

In addressing these questions, translanguageing, synergy, Community of Practice and the concepts of funds of knowledge will be used in this chapter.

7.2 Negotiating Kurmanji and Turkish language use in informal peer talk

This section examines how children undermine language hierarchies and dominant language ideologies by highlighting their agency in using language in peer talk. García (2009a) suggests the concept of translanguageing in order to fully understand children's language use in the classroom in both monolingual and multilingual contexts. As discussed in section 3.5, translanguageing is defined as an act in which children use different linguistic resources to

maximize their skills, understanding and achievement levels (Blackledge and Creese, 2014; García, 2009a). In other words, a translanguaging approach (García, 2009a) allows the researcher to examine linguistic resources which are ‘in use and in play simultaneously’ (Blackledge and Creese, 2014, p.11). In addition, scholars such as Creese and Blackledge (2015) and Lewis et al. (2012) emphasise translanguaging as a new languaging reality. This view suggests that translanguaging can undermine language hierarchies (Creese and Blackledge, 2015; García, 2009b) and can transgress the dominant national ideology by enabling minority children to make the best use their full linguistic resources (Blackledge, 2000a). This view also highlights children’s agency in using languages. Likewise, Li Wei (2014) argues that translanguaging allows us to examine how children can alternate between different languages and how they draw on their different skills, sociocultural experience, values and beliefs to negotiate meaning, identity and power relationships (p.159). Studies such as Creese and Blackledge (2015) and García (2009a) mainly use translanguaging as an analytical tool for examining interactions between teachers and children.

In this section, I shall use the concept of translanguaging to examine the children’s language use among peers in activities such as free playtime and art. These activities include small-group interactions. The excerpts and fieldnotes examined in this section emerged mainly in the middle of the first term. It is worth highlighting that although there is no half-term break in Turkish nurseries as there is in the UK, November can be considered as the half-term, as the first nursery term starts in September and finishes at the end of January.

The excerpt below is taken from a free playtime activity in which the children play in the home corner. The children speak in Kurmanji, but they change to Turkish when the teacher comes back into the classroom. As in the previous chapter, Turkish is in *italics*, and Kurmanji, the dialect of the Kurdish language spoken by the families in my study is in **bold** throughout. The interaction between one of the key participants (Ahmet) and another child (Gül) is as follows:

Excerpt 7.1: Making a home

- 1 Ahmet: **Ewa xanî ye?** (Is this a home?)
- 2 Gül: **Niç** (No)
- 3 Ahmet: **Ewa xanî yê min ewa jê Gül eyê** (this is my home and that is Gül’s home)
[to his friends]

4 Gül: **Ewa xanî yê min e ewa xanî yê teye** (This is mine and that is yours) [She disagrees with Ahmet]

5 Ahmet: **Ewa xanî yê min e...** (This is mine)

[At this moment, the teacher comes into the classroom]

6 Gül: *Sana bunu verecem tamam dur* (wait Ahmet, OK. I will give you this)

7 Ahmet: (silent) [as Gül agrees with him]

(Audio recordings, 18/11/2014)

This excerpt shows that the children challenge the classroom's constraints (speaking Turkish only) by using Kurmanji in their play when the teacher is not there. By doing so, they transgress the classroom norms through translanguaging (García and Li Wei, 2014). As discussed in Chapter 6, these activities are shaped by a prescriptive curriculum for Early Years set by the Ministry of Education, which stresses monolingual Turkish language policies. In other words, this is an example of translanguaging which shows the children's agency in temporarily using their minority language within the monolingual setting of the classroom. In this excerpt, Gül and Ahmet negotiate roles and materials such as toy plates and plastic spoons to make a home in the home corner. Here, the home refers to a physical space in which the children use these materials for their play. Initially, Ahmet uses Kurmanji to question the function of a space in their play "Is this a home?" (Turn 1). Here it seems that there is a conflict arising about whose property it is after Ahmet has introduced "his home" to the other children near their play area (Turn 3). But his own home then becomes a 'contested space' (Hélot, 2014) to which Gül claims ownership (Turn 4). Ahmet still insists that the place is his home (Turn 5), but he is interrupted by Gül when she agrees with him on the homes. At this moment the teacher comes back, and Gül switches to Turkish (Turn 6). Ahmet does not go further as Gül has agreed with him (Turn 7).

In this free playtime activity, the children negotiate their roles (such as who owns what) and the ownerships of resources such as the plates and spoons in the home corner (Toohey, 1996). They negotiate these roles and materials by drawing on their different linguistic resources—in this case listening and speaking both Kurmanji and Turkish through translanguaging. García (2009a) argues that 'playtime becomes a translanguaging event and the only way in which activities can continue across different languages' (p.156). This viewpoint is borne out here, as the children move between two languages. In this example, the

functions of Kurmanji include questioning ownership and negotiating resources. It is also clear that Kurmanji is used during free playtime among the children. However, Gül changes to Turkish when the teacher comes into the classroom. As highlighted in the previous chapter, the teacher responded to the children in Turkish when they spoke Kurmanji at the beginning of the first term, or repeated their utterances in Turkish. But as the time progressed, she began to ask them to repeat utterances in Turkish after her. It could be argued that Gül's switch to Turkish indicates that she has appropriated the language use of the curriculum in the classroom and knows when to use it. This means that the children have appropriated the values and beliefs and expectations of the curriculum which mediates their language use in the classroom (Schwartz and Palviainen, 2016). The children understand that the teacher values Turkish over Kurmanji, so they use Turkish when the teacher is present.

According to my participant observations in the classroom, Gül speaks Turkish to interact with the teacher and some of the other children. However, she uses Kurmanji when she plays and interacts with Ahmet and Mehmet. In this sense, Ahmet and Mehmet's interactions with Gül in Kurmanji help them to engage in different structures of classroom participation, such as small groups during free playtime (Ahmet, Mehmet and Gül, Ahmet and Gül or Mehmet and Gül) and other structured activities (learning songs, drawing and numeracy) in which they sit next to each other (see the next excerpt). As discussed in Chapter 3, one community of practice can be subsumed under another (Lave and Wenger, 1991), so it could be argued that Ahmet, Mehmet and Gül make up a community of practice which is subsumed under the larger classroom community. In this example, Ahmet and Gül use their full linguistic resources to negotiate ownership, and according to their community of practice, they show an awareness of what counts as legitimate linguistic and cultural knowledge in the classroom (Haste, 1987). For example, they speak Kurmanji when the teacher is not in the classroom, but Gül switches to Turkish when the teacher comes back. As discussed in Chapter 3, translanguaging accentuates the flexibility and complexity of language. Translanguaging therefore differs from the concept of code-switching, which deals with a shift between two languages (García and Li Wei, 2014).

In the following excerpt, the children are engaged in a painting activity. The two key participants (Yasmin and Ahmet) sit next to each other and Gül when they are doing their own activity. They speak in Kurmanji, but not as loudly as the children do in the excerpt above

when the teacher is absent. This interaction is set in the middle of the first term and involves a small group structure as follows:

Excerpt 7.2: The water pistol

- 1 Yasmin: **Me temaacana avî rastî heye.** (I have a real water pistol)
- 2 Ahmet: **Gum gum!** (Bang! Bang!)
- 3 Gül: **Dolavî?** (Is it in the cupboard?)
- 4 Ahmet: **Tu naynî meytebê.** (Will you bring it to school?)
- 5 Yasmin: **Naynim we nakûşim** (I will not bring it, and I will not kill you.)
- 6 Mehmet: **Temancana hebu?** (Is there a gun?)
- 7 Ahmet: **Temancana wi yê, dive gum gum** (It is her gun. The gun shoots. Bang! Bang!)

(Audio recordings, 26/11/2014)

In this excerpt, the children interact speaking only Kurmanji. They use Kurmanji to show their understanding of a gun and to make sense of their interaction. The interaction begins with Yasmin (one of the key participants) describes what she has at home in Kurmanji (Turn 1). As soon as Ahmet hears the word “gun”, he demonstrates his knowledge of a gun by imitating the sound of it (Turn 2). Gül also shows her interest in what Yasmin has said, engaging in the interaction by asking if the gun is hidden in the cupboard (Turn 3). Ahmet asks a similar question—will Yasmin will bring the gun to school? (Turn 4). Yasmin indicates her knowledge about guns and their lethal potential when she tells her friends in all seriousness that she “will not kill them” (Turn 5). Mehmet then engages in the interaction by requesting a clarification of whether what he has heard is right or not (Turn 6). Ahmet confirms that Mehmet has heard Yasmin correctly, and he again imitates the sound of the gun “Bang! Bang!” (Turn 7).

The children in this small group engage in a Kurmanji-only interaction. Their interaction indicates that they know about cultural tools such as guns. Yasmin shows her understanding that a gun can kill someone when she says “I will not kill you”. When Yasmin uses the word “**rastî**” (real), she indicates that she is able to distinguish a real gun from a toy gun—which in this case is the water pistol. The excerpt shows how proficient the children are in their home language, and represents an example of translanguaging as a new languaging reality, in which the children use Kurmanji to make sense of the difference between real and fake guns. This excerpt accords with Li Wei’s (2011) argument that translanguaging is

transformative. The children transform classroom activities by using their home language for the functions of the gun and different kinds of gun during the art activity, and they revert to their home language deliberately, showing that they understand the hierarchical nature of Turkish and Kurmanji within the classroom setting. As Li Wei (2014) argues, translanguaging enables the children to draw on their sociocultural experience (in this case knowledge about guns) through translanguaging. Thus, it could be argued that the children undermine—at least momentarily—the dominant national ideology and language hierarchies through translanguaging. This underscores their agency in using language and acting in within a monolingual classroom, treating languaging as a new reality as discussed in section 3.5.

Gregory (2008) argues that there is a tendency to judge minority children's learning by to what they learn from classroom activities. Gregory examined young minority children learning English in the UK, and considers that such judgments ignore what children learning from their homes and the communities, and take only learning from classroom participation into account. Here, the children draw on their sociocultural experiences to negotiate the meaning of the gun by saying “a real water pistol” and “Bang! Bang!” (Li Wei, 2014). Yasmin uses the word “real” to underline her position of power as the gun's owner, which she thinks that can kill many people: “I will not bring it, and I will not kill you”. This position is supported by Ahmet when he imitates the sound of gunfire at turns 2 and 7. In other words, Yasmin highlights the gun's capabilities and Ahmet imitates its sound of it being fired. This resonates with González's (2009) study, which examines how Latin-American preschool children use their home language (Spanish) to link their interests and home experiences to classroom activities during informal peer interaction. The language of instruction was English, and while Spanish was not officially banned in classroom activities, its use was not encouraged. By using their own languages, the study shows that children co-construct the meaning of their home experiences with their peers.

The children's knowledge about guns may come through their interactions with a more knowledgeable adult at home or in the community. Children can learn such knowledge by participating in adult activities such as watching the news (Rogoff, 2003). During one of my visits to Ahmet and Mehmet's home (15/11/2014), their father, uncle (Baran, father's side), grandmother (father's side) and I sat in the living room in which there was a TV broadcasting the evening news. When Baran and I were speaking, he politely broke off the conversation to draw Mehmet and Ahmet's attention to the news, which was about the Peshmerga (Iraqi

Kurdish soldiers) who went to Kobanî, a Kurdish city in Syria, by crossing southeast Turkey. At this time, Kobanî was besieged by ISIL (the Islamic state of Iraq and the Levant). Turkey allowed them to pass through its southern borders. The Peshmerga wore their military uniforms and carried guns. When the Peshmerga were shown, their uncle (Baran) drew Ahmet and Mehmet's attention to them by stating "Look, they are Kurdish soldiers" in Kurmanji. The children, watched the news until the anchor-man moved on to the next news item. Ahmet's interest in bringing the water pistol to the nursery is also because he occasionally brings his toys (especially cars) to the classroom to show off to his friends.

The excerpt below shows how the children use Kurmanji and Turkish together in a free playtime activity. They make cars with the big Lego bricks in the classroom. During their interaction, the teacher is present but she is not engaging with them. The interaction is among peers until the teacher is called to intervene (Line 20) at which point she also has an input. The purpose of analysing this excerpt is to show the children's language use in peer interactions, and how they negotiate roles and meaning through translanguaging.

Excerpt 7.3: Making a garage

- 1 Muammer: **Eva ya Mehmet'e** (This is Mehmet's car.)
- 2 Ahmet: **Ya min derhaniye** (Mine is there.)
- 3 Mehmet: **Evê tenê hema. Ez eva çêkim.** (This is the only thing I am doing.)
- 4 Ahmet: **Camê çêke** (Make a window)
- 5 Muammer: **Camê? Ev na çima?** (The window? How about these Legos?)
- 6 Ahmet: **Tu camê** (You make the window)
- 7 Muammer: **Tu geraj çêke ezê ji vana. Bîne bîne.** (You make the garage, and I will use these Legos to make the window. Bring them! Bring them here!)
- 8 Ahmet: [brings a large quantity of bricks]
- 9 Muammer: **Ya hemûçka neyne. Ya hemûçka neyne.** (Don't bring all of them. Hey! Don't bring all of them.)
- 10 Ahmet: **Eva camê.** (This is the window.)
- 11 Muammer: **Geraj.** (Garage)
- 12 Ahmet: **Gerajê gerajê.** (Garage, garage)
- 13 Muammer: *Gel gel garaj'i almışız* (Ali come, come. We have made the garage.)
- 14 Ali: *Güzel olmuş.* (It is nice.)
- 15 Ahmet: [Starts breaking down what they have made.]

- 16 Muammer: Ahmet, Ahmet! [shouting]
17 Ahmet: [Carries on breaking the garage]
18 Muammer: *Bak seni dövecem.* (Look, I will hit you!)
19 Ahmet: [Continues to break the garage]
20 Muammer: *Öğretmenim, öğretmenim* (Teacher! Teacher!) [Shouting]
21 Teacher: *Bir dakika. ya ne oluyor niye bağıríyorsunuz* (Wait a minute, what is going on here? Why are you shouting?)
22 Ahmet: [Calms down] (Audio recordings, 21/11/2014)

This excerpt illustrates how the children use Kurmanji to negotiate the division of labour among themselves. They then switch to Turkish to encourage their peer (Ali) to play with them and to solve the conflict that arises. The excerpt begins with Muammer describing Mehmet's car (Turn 1). Ahmet then points to the place where his own car is (Turn 2). Mehmet then describes what he is doing in vague terms, seeming to position himself as someone who is focussed on his own work "This is the only thing I am doing" (Turn 3). However, Ahmet seems to take on the role of a leader as he divides the work between himself and Muammer, telling Muammer to "make a window" (Turn 4). Muammer challenges this position by asking him in a reasonable tone about the Legos they already have (Turn 5). But Ahmet insists on what he has said, stressing "you"—"you make the window" (Turn 6), whereas Muammer gives Ahmet the task of building the garage (Turn 7). It is clear that they have agreed on the division of labour, as Ahmet brings more Legos (Turn 8). But Muammer complains about Ahmet bringing all the bricks (Turn 9). Ahmet does not bring any more bricks, pointing instead to the work he has assigned Muammer (Turn 10).

Muammer also points to Ahmet's job, which is the construction of the garage (Turn 11). Ahmet emphasises this by saying the word "garage" twice (Turn 12). All subsequent interaction between the children continues in Turkish, when Muammer calls Ali over to show him what they have made (Turn 13). Rather than describing what he or Ahmet have done individually, Muammer says "we"—"we have made the garage". Ali praises their job by saying "it is nice" (Turn 14). Ahmet then suddenly starts to destroy the garage (Turn 14). For this time, Muammer begs Ahmet to stop (Turn 15), but as Ahmet carries on (Turn 16), Muammer threatens to stop him breaking the garage, saying "look, I will hit you" (Turn 18). As far as Ahmet is concerned this is an empty threat, and Muammer then appeals for help from the

teacher (Turn 20). The teacher intervenes in the conflict (Turn 21), telling the children to stop shouting and staying until they have calmed down (Turn 22).

This excerpt shows the children translanguage in order to use their full linguistic repertoire to negotiate roles and positions. They consequently develop their speaking skills in both languages in the backstage talk. In this excerpt, the children move between Kurmanji and Turkish in their play (from Turn 9). Their language use changes during the play; Kurmanji is used at first, and then they switch to Turkish. In using both languages, they negotiate roles and position each other in their play according to the division of labour. Ahmet appoints himself as leader, telling the others what needs to be done: “you [Muammer] make the window”. Although Muammer challenges this position by reminding him about the rest of the work, he accepts the instructions from Ahmet. This means that the children alternate between languages to negotiate roles and positions in their play (Lei Wei, 2014). Muammer challenges Ahmet’s position in different ways, such as kindly and imploringly “Ahmet, Ahmet!” (Turn 16), and threateningly “Look, I will hit you!” (Turn 18). With regard to their language learning, the children develop their Turkish and Kurmanji speaking skills by building on the concepts (such as garage) in Kurmanji. They describe these concepts in Kurmanji to negotiate roles and division of labour. The children then introduce their roles to their friends in Turkish. In other words, they develop their speaking and vocabulary skills in both Kurmanji and Turkish via peer interaction.

The fieldnotes below indicate how Cem (a boy) provides Mehmet (a key participant boy) with the definition of a Kurdish word in Turkish through translanguage. As the end of the term is approaching, the teacher allows the children, occasionally, to watch cartoons, which are in Turkish, after they have finished their activities. On this occasion, the children watch a cartoon, which is about cars. The interaction below occurs between Cem and Mehmet as they watch the cartoon.

Fieldnote 7.1: Learning the name of a colour

- 1 Mehmet: **Sore** (Its colour is red) [Mehmet is pointing to a car in the cartoon]
- 2 Cem: *Kırmızı* o (It is red)
- 3 Mehmet: *Kırmızı* (Its colour is red) (Fieldnotes, 15/01/2015)

In this peer interaction, Mehmet defines the car’s colour in Kurmanji (Turn 1). But Cem notices this, and he says the colour name in Turkish (Turn 2). By doing so, Cem seems to mirror

teacher-led utterances “it is in red”. Mehmet then shows his understanding of Cem’s correction by repeating what Cem has said (Turn 3).

Here it can be seen that translanguaging take place between Cem and Mehmet. Through translanguaging, Cem provides Mehmet with the translation of a Kurmanji word in Turkish. Cem takes on the role of the expert to provide Mehmet with the Turkish word for the colour. This evokes earlier teacher-led activities where the children participated in activities such as vocabulary learning. As shown in Chapter 6, the teacher repeated their statements in Turkish when the children responded to her in Kurmanji. In other words, the teacher corrects the child’s words in Kurmanji by encouraging him or her to repeat them in Turkish at the next turn. For his part, Mehmet learns the colour name and develops his Turkish language learning. García (2009a, p.153) points out that children can support each other’s learning to build ‘conceptual and linguistic knowledge’ through translanguaging. This means that children can mediate each other’s vocabulary learning through translanguaging. García (ibid, p.154) argues that ‘children also use translanguaging to mediate understandings, to co-construct and to include others’, indicating that Spanish-American preschool children learn new lexical items in English through translanguaging in informal peer interactions in a bilingual setting. García’s study demonstrates that the children provide the translation of Spanish lexical items in English for their peers. García further maintains that children appropriate language use in classroom through translanguaging. In my excerpt, the children are seen to move smoothly between two languages (Li Wei, 2014).

These two excerpts and the fieldnotes above also indicate the function of Kurmanji, which is now used primarily in informal interactions, a fact that can be seen in the backstage talk. According to my participant observations, the children’s language use depends generally on context and participants. This resonates with the findings of Schwartz and Gorbatt’s (2016) study, which examined Palestinian-Israeli children learning Hebrew as a second language in a bilingual Arabic-Hebrew preschool. The authors concluded that the children develop awareness of ‘who speaks which languages to whom and when’ (Fishman, 1965), highlighting the children’s agency in ‘shaping the linguistic environment and language policy inside and outside of their bilingual classroom’ (Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016, p.18). My observations confirm Owodally’s (2010, 2012) studies, which examined how young children (aged 4 and 5) learned English as a second language as well as preschool teachers’ language choices in a nursery in Mauritius where three languages were used (Creole, French and English).

Owodally's 2012 study indicates that the children mainly used their home language (Creole) during free play. Similarly, I observed that when the children were engaged in free playtime activities, they mainly interacted in Kurmanji. In other words, when it comes to teacher-led activities such as learning songs and drama, the children mostly spoke Turkish and the use of Kurmanji gradually decreased as the school year progressed.

More importantly, the teachers discourage the use of Kurmanji. One of the teachers (Selma, who is Turkish) makes the case that learning Turkish is necessary for the children. I ask Selma if the Kurdish language's lack of prestige accelerates the children's learning of Turkish.

Kesinlikle. Dediğim gibi ailede kürtçe prestijli çocuk ailede her türlü işini öle görüyor; ama buraya gelince her şey Türkçe. O zaman bi dakika diyor. Burda farklı bir şey var. Öğretmenleri ve arkadaşları ile konuşmak ve de arkadaş edinmek istiyorlar. Bu yüzden de Türkçe öğrenmek istiyorlar.

Of course, it affects learning Turkish. The children may not need Turkish at home as they speak Kurmanji, which is valued there. But when they come here [the nursery], the children notice that everything is in Turkish. The children realise "hold on, there is something different here." They want to make friends and communicate with their teacher. The children see that these things all need to be in Turkish. This encourages them to learn Turkish (Interview with Selma, 16/01/2015).

This interview shows how Kurmanji is evaluated, and how the lack of prestige of Kurdish further encourages the children to learn Turkish in the nursery. Selma highlights that for the children the function of Turkish is to enable them to interact with the teacher(s) and to make friends (Lytra, 2015). As she points out, the children quickly recognise the different values that are attached to different languages in different settings, such at home and in school. Similar opinions are echoed by another teacher (Mehtap, who is Kurdish). She says:

Kesinlikle etkili. Çünkü Kürtçe prestiji olsaydı Türkçe öğrenmek zorunda kalmazlardı yada okullarda Kürtçe eğitim olsaydı zorunlu olmazdı onlar için Türkçe. Ya Türkçe'yi öğrenmeleri sadece zorunlulukta. Sonuçta bir meslek sahibi olmaları, bir yere gelebilmeleri ve de prestij

sahibi olmaları için çocuğun bir okulda geçmesi gerekiyor. Okulu da okuyabilmeleri için Türkçe öğrenmeleri gerekiyor.

Yes, it has to do with the lack of prestige of Kurdish because wherever they [the children] go, Turkish is spoken as an official language. If lessons were taught in Kurdish in schools, they would be allowed to carry on speaking Kurdish, but Turkish is essential for them. Ultimately, a child needs to go through schooling process in order to get a job, have a career and to be valued by the society [both minority and majority cultures]⁷. To do this, the child needs to learn Turkish (Interview with Mehtap, 16/01/2015).

Here Mehtap uses the same word as Selma—“essential”—to highlight the importance of Turkish for making the best of the children’s life skills. From the interviews above, it can be seen that both the teachers indicate that the children are aware of the lack of the prestige of Kurmanji. They also highlight the instrumental and pragmatic reasons that make Turkish language the more privileged means of expression. These include sociocultural conditions (such as teaching Turkish in schools and making friends) and socioeconomic conditions (such as getting a job). These reasons encourage the children to use more Turkish and less Kurmanji in peer interactions and at home as well as while their school year progress. During one of my visits to Yasmin’s home, her mother’s comments bear similarities to the observations of the teachers when we (she, her husband and I) discussed Yasmin’s progress. I shared with them my own observations of Yasmin—that she uses less Kurmanji in the classroom, especially in free playtime activities—as time progresses. Her father (Mesut) agreed with me and continued by saying that Yasmin’s use of Kurmanji at home had decreased since she started at the nursery.

Blackledge (2008) argues that a dominant language ideology shapes the position of the language in institutional settings and the public sphere as it produces and reproduces the majority language as the language of communication, education and the workplace. This reminds us one of the aims of the Turkish preschool education programme that teaches preschool children to speak clean and proper Turkish, which refers to standard Turkish spoken by Istanbul elites, which excludes regional varieties (see Chapter 3). This reflects the dominant Turkish national ideology, which is monolingual. This ideology constrains interactions between the teacher and the children (Blackledge, 2000a) as discussed in Chapter 6. Lytra

⁷ Here society refers to majority and minority cultures. Both cultures value a job, which is the next logical step when schooling is complete.

(2015), in her study on language practices and language ideologies among Turkish-speaking young people in Athens and London, shows that ideological pressures affect beliefs and practices such as the restriction of setting (monolingual educational policies and nation-state ideologies). However, although the dominant language ideology is pervasive in the nursery and Turkish is the language of instruction, the children develop their Turkish language and literacy learning such as speaking skills (like the concept of ‘garage’ in excerpt 7.3 above) through translanguaging.

The excerpts and fieldnotes in this section show that the children use Kurmanji in their backstage talk to negotiate activities (such as making a home), division of labour (“you make the window”) and to define parts of their work (“this is the window”). Kurmanji also functions as a stepping stone to learning new lexical terms in Turkish (such as the colour red in excerpt 7.1 above). This is in line with García and Li Wei’s (2014, p.68) argument that translanguaging enables participants to momentarily transgress monolingual education practices. Although translanguaging allows the children to transgress language hierarchies and ideologies, it is clear that these hierarchies and ideologies (such as Turkey’s monolingual policy) still mediate language use in the classroom. In other words, language use is mediated by hierarchies, ideologies and institutional constraints (Schwartz and Palviainen, 2016). However, it is important to emphasise that translanguaging allows children to momentarily challenge and transgress the monolingual language ideologies—despite the fact that these ideologies still shape and constrain their language choices in the classroom. The next section will emphasise how active children can be in internalising the language use, values and expectations of the curriculum in their peer talk.

7.3 Appropriating classroom language, values and beliefs and developing a good learner identity in informal peer talk

As discussed in the previous section, the children mainly use Kurmanji in their peer interaction until roughly half way through their first term. In this section, I shall examine the development of the children’s peer interactions as they emerge via classroom activities such as art and literacy towards the end of the first term. In this section, as in earlier ones, Goffman’s (1971) dramaturgical backstage metaphor is used to demonstrate how the key participants develop their language and literacy learning by positioning each other, repeating songs from singing

activities, and by echoing and invoking the teacher's and their peer's voices in informal talk. Their interactions sometimes take place when the teacher is either out of earshot or not in the classroom. The concept of synergy proposed by Gregory (2001) enables me to examine the children's conversations in informal settings where they mediate of each other's learning of a second language. The concept of synergy refers to the unique way in which young children who are close in age support each other's learning (Gregory, 2001). According to Forman and Cazden (1998), the child can take on the role both 'teacher' and 'student' in peer collaboration. That is, peer interaction reflects a context in which children can reverse their roles by directing and following their peers, asking questions and answering their peers' questions (ibid, pp.204-5). In this section, I will also use the concept of Community of Practice to indicate how the children understand and appropriate the positive ideals (such as being a good pupil) of the nursery. As discussed in Chapter 2, one of the aims of the Turkish national education system is to produce creative and productive Turkish citizens who are healthy physically, emotionally, ethically and intellectually, and have clear responsibilities towards Turkish society. In other words, being a good pupil is associated with being a good Turkish citizen.

In the excerpt below, the children are involved in a structured art activity, which is about autumn. The teacher guides the children how to reflect the autumn in their paintings. Before they start, the teacher asks them what happens during the autumn season. The children respond to the teacher's questions—for example by pointing out that it rains in the autumn and they need an umbrella. The children are initiated into the activity through the teacher's questions. The interaction below takes place between a small peer group (Yasmin is the key participant, with Gül and Sema) when they are doing an art activity. The purpose of analysing this interaction, which emerges in a backstage setting, is to demonstrate how Yasmin positions herself as a good learner by defending her work, and to show how Yasmin's language and literacy learning (such as her speaking skills) has developed towards the end of the first term.

Excerpt 7.4: Making the butterfly

- 1 Gül: *Bak yağmur nasıl geliyor* [to Muammer]. *Bak ağaçlar, yağmur geliyor.* (Look [to Muammer], how rain falls from the sky. Look trees, rain falls.) [pointing to her drawing]
- 2 Yasmin: *Elma yapıyorum bak. Gül elma biliyorum. Bak elma biliyorum. Gül, bak ben ne yapıyorum. Sen bilmiyorsun. Bak elma yapıyorum. Ben bir tane daha yapacam.* (Look, I am

making an apple. Gül, I know how to make an apple. Look, I know the apple. Gül, look what I am making, you do not know how. I will make more apples.)

3 Gül: [focusing on Yasmin's activity]

[After this interaction, Yasmin starts to make a butterfly. This time, Sema resumes the interaction by pointing to Yasmin's butterfly, which for Sema does not look like a real one.]

4 Sema: *Kelebek böyle olmaz.* (Butterflies aren't like that) [pointing to Yasmin's work]

5 Yasmin: [ignores Sema]

6 Sema: *Böyle bir kelebek olmaz.* (A butterfly should not be like that.)

7 Yasmin: *Hıh. Güzelce kelebek.* (It is a beautiful butterfly) [hıh is not a word, but it is a way of disagreeing with someone in conversation.]

8 Sema: *Böyle olmaz.* (It should not be like that.) (Video recording, 11/12/2014)

In this structured activity, the children are learning to draw and to paint what happens during autumn. In this peer interaction, the children are positioning themselves and each other according to how appropriately they have painted the butterfly. Gül initiates the interaction by drawing Muammer's attention to her work (Turn 1). Similarly, Yasmin attempts to elicit a positive comment from Gül (Turn 2). In her turn (Turn 2), Yasmin tries to get Gül's attention by pointing to what she has painted, but Gül is not interested in what Yasmin says (Turn 3). Thereafter, the interaction among the children moves from attracting each other's attention to criticising their work, when Sema comments on Yasmin's work (Turn 3). But at first Yasmin pays no attention to what Sema has said (Turn 4). Sema carries on criticising Yasmin by commenting on the likeness of the butterfly which Yasmin is painting (Turn 5). This time Yasmin confidently defends her work against Sema "hey, it is a beautiful butterfly" (Turn 6). Sema insists that she does not like Yasmin's butterfly (Turn 7).

In this backstage talk, the children draw on their own experience and their own knowledge of what happens in autumn to paint their own activity. There is a synergy taking place among the children as they are close in age and initiate each other into the peer interaction. As discussed in section 3.4.2, the concept of synergy argues that children have an equal relationship in their learning. This excerpt shows the children engaging in an equal peer discussion through which they develop their Turkish speaking skills. They treat each other as

experts or contest each other's positioning. Yasmin's intention to draw Gül's attention is because Gül is one of the children whose work is appreciated as an example by the teacher. This means that Yasmin wants her own work to be praised by Gül. It would be argued that Yasmin considers Gül as an expert to comment on Yasmin's activity, seeing her as the expert. Then Yasmin contests Sema's positioning when Sema positions herself as an expert and criticises Yasmin's butterfly. Here it is clear that Yasmin has sufficient confidence in what she is doing.

According to my participant observations and informal discussion with the teacher, Yasmin is generally a confident child during her participation in activities and interactions with the other children in the classroom. Drury (2004b) suggests that children can develop their confidence by engaging in turn-taking discussions. In this case, the children evaluate each other's work and position themselves and each other in particular ways such as "beautiful butterfly" (Yasmin) versus "it should not be like that" (Sema). Sema constantly repeats her view of the inappropriateness of the butterfly, while Yasmin defends her painting. In their discussion, Yasmin positions herself as a good learner by turning a deaf ear to Sema at first and then by saying that "hey, it is a beautiful butterfly" in turns 5 and 7 respectively. Here, being a good learner refers to being a competent student who can follow the teacher's instructions and achieve the objectives of the activities—such as drawing nicely. By doing this the children also develop their speaking and listening skills as they address each other (Drury, 2004b). It could therefore be argued that Yasmin appropriates and internalises identities such as the learner identity, valuing it through participation in classroom routines. As discussed in section 3.4.4, children learn and construct the identities of a community through engaging in the practices of that community. At the same time, in this exercise they develop their pre-writing skills by drawing apples and butterflies. Similarly, through their peer discussion, they gain confidence. Gregory (2001) points out that peer group interaction is symmetrical, as opposed to teacher/pupil interaction, which is asymmetrical. In this instance, the children are in equal positions in terms of power, even though Sema challenges this by saying that Yasmin has not done a good representation of a butterfly.

To emphasise excerpt 7.4 above, excerpt 7.5 below indicates how Yasmin (one of the key participants) gradually develops her Turkish language and literacy through internalising valued practices and routines of the classroom. Here, Yasmin practises a previously learned action song in peer interaction. On this occasion, the children are doing an art activity called "The Mushroom House" to make a house with by using different coloured paper and glue

crafts. The action song is called the Ring Song. Yasmin sings this song while doing the art activity after they have sung it as a group (see the excerpt 6.4, in which I describe the song). As the children have already learnt the song, they do not need to use their fingers. The purpose of analysing this excerpt is to show how one of the key participants, Yasmin, has the ability and confidence to sing a previously learned song on her own towards the end of the school term. Another child, Gül, joins Yasmin (Line 10). The interaction is as follows:

Excerpt 7.5: Singing to herself

- 1 Yasmin: *Yüzük parmağım yüzük parmağım... Bu kesmiyo.* (My ring finger, my ring finger... These do not cut) [referring to scissors]
- 2 Teacher: *Kesmiyor? Başka bir tane getir.* (They don't cut? Take another pair)
- 3 Yasmin: *Yüzük parmağım yüzük parmağım. Bak benim pembeli. Bak pembeli.* (My ring finger my ring finger. Look, mine are the pink ones. Look, they are pink) [She addresses Ali]
- 4 Ali: *Benimki kırmızı.* (Mine are red)
- 5 Yasmin: *Yüzük parmağım, öğretmenim evimize götürecez bunu?* (My ring finger. Teacher, are we going to take this home?) [Referring to their art activity]
- 6 Teacher: *Evet* (Yes you are)
- 7 Yasmin: *Yüzük parmağım yüzük parmağım...* (My ring finger, my ring finger)
- 8 Teacher: *Yasmin al* (Yasmin, take this) [She gives Yasmin a construction paper]
- 9 Yasmin: *Yüzük parmağım yüzük parmağım, neredesin?* (My ring finger, my ring finger, where are you?)
- 10 Yasmin and Gül: *Burdayım. Nasılsın efendim?* (Here I am. How do you do?)
- 11 Yasmin and Gül: *Teşekkür ederim.* (Thank you)
- 12 Yasmin and Gül: *Parmak kaç* (Hide the finger) (Audio recordings, 12/12/2014).
- 13

The excerpt indicates that Yasmin is developing her Turkish language acquisition by singing the action song that the children learned in singing activities (see Chapter 6). The excerpt begins with Yasmin who sings the song while doing the art activity. At Turn 1, Yasmin's uses a variation "*kesmiyo*" instead of "*kesmiyor*", which is acceptable. The teacher also speaks with Yasmin about the scissors, which she says are not cutting (Turn 2). Yasmin continues to sing the song, and tells Ali that the colour of her new scissor is "pink" (Turn 3). Ali replies to her, showing her the colour of his scissors (Turn 4). Yasmin resumes singing the song, then pauses

to ask the teacher whether they can take their artwork home or not (Turn 5). The teacher responds to her by saying that she can take her artwork home (Turn 6). Thereafter, Yasmin continues to sing the song without pausing (Turns 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12), even though the teacher addresses her by giving a construction paper (Turn 8). Towards the end of the excerpt, Gül, who is sitting near Yasmin, joins in with her song (Turn 10). The excerpt ends as they sing the verse about the ring finger only (Turn 12).

In this interaction, it can be seen that there is synergy when Yasmin's singing acts as a stimulus for her peer (Gül) to join in (Gregory, 2001). In other words, one child's (Yasmin) action leads another (Gül) to practise what both children have learnt from the teacher-led singing activities. More importantly, this excerpt shows that Yasmin's development in learning and literacy has reached a stage at which she can remember and sing songs learned in singing activities in the classroom. This means that Yasmin performs a routine activity in the classroom in her backstage talk (Goffman, 1971). Yasmin has therefore internalised and reproduced the aims and objectives of the classroom activities discussed in section 6.3. These include the reproduction of songs and rhymes and the repetition of what have listened to (Preschool Education programme, 2013). As the excerpt shows (for example at Turn 1 where Yasmin uses a linguistic variation "kesmiyo" instead of "kesmiyor"), Yasmin is developing her knowledge of Turkish (Drury, 2004). It could be argued that Yasmin has become a full participant in the classroom at this point (Barron, 2007; McCormick and Donato, 1994). McCormick and Donato argue that children's participation in classroom activities plays an important role in the transformation of their identities. Yasmin can now sing and communicate in her new language.

Meanwhile the excerpt below shows how another key participant (Mehmet) has developed his Turkish language learning by invoking his peer's words and using them to position himself. In the excerpt, Mehmet repeats his peer's (Sema) words while engaging in an interaction with another peer (Serdar). The excerpt is taken from another structured art activity in which the teacher had asked the children to paint subjects related to autumn. In his interaction with Serdar, Mehmet talks about the visit that the morning group went to see the Van cats. These cats are unique as they have oddly coloured eyes (blue and green/yellow). They are well-known as Van cats (*Van kedisi*) in Turkey. The cats are kept and cared for at the cat centre (*kedi evi*) on the campus of Van Yüzüncü Yıl University. Morning and afternoon nursery groups visit the cat centre separately once a year, and the purpose their visit is to give the children an opportunity to learn about the cats there. The teacher also joins in with the interaction. By

analysing this excerpt we can see how towards the end of the school term Mehmet develops his Turkish language and literacy learning by echoing his peer's expressions, and how he positions himself as a good learner by invoking the teacher's voice. The peer interaction involving Sema, Serdar, the teacher and Mehmet is as follows:

Excerpt 7.6: The cat centre

- 1 Sema: *Bu kahve rengi* (This colour is brown) [referring to the pastel colour]
- 2 Mehmet: *Kahve rengi* (The colour is brown)
- 3 Mehmet: **Ez çûme mala pişîka tu nehati.** (I went to the cat centre where the cats are kept, but you [Serdar] did not go there.) [softly]
- 4 Serdar: (silent)
- 5 Teacher: *Maşallah kompozisyonu çok güzel olmuş. Serdar sende çiz bir güneş. Yuvarlak böyle.* (Maşallah! Mehmet has made a very nice painting of the autumn. Serdar, let's draw a sun. It is a circle like that) [The teacher comments on Mehmet's painting, pointing at the sun Mehmet has drawn.]
- 6 Serdar: (drawing)
- 7 Teacher: *Aferin, oldu bak* (Well done. Look, Serdar, you have done it.)
Mehmet: **Ez hemû tişte delal çe dikim.** (I always make nice things) [loudly, talking to himself] (Audio recordings, 12/12/2014)

This excerpt begins with Sema, who describes the colour of something near her (Turn 1). Mehmet repeats Sema's words as soon as he hears them (Turn 2). Mehmet then tells Serdar about the visit the morning group made to the cat centre in Kurmanji (Turn 3). As discussed above, the children's language use depends on interlocutors (González, 2009). When he talks to his peer, Mehmet often speaks Kurmanji. Serdar does not make any comment as he is working on his own activity (Turn 4). The teacher engages in the interaction by commenting on Mehmet's work, and she wants Serdar to make the sun like Mehmet's (Turn 5). When Serdar does so (Turn 6), the teacher praises him (Turn 7). Mehmet speaks confidently about his work in general after the teacher has praised him in turn 5 by talking to himself in Kurmanji in front of the teacher (Turn 8).

In this excerpt, it can be seen that synergy has developed among the children. Through synergy, Mehmet (a key participant) develops his vocabulary learning in Turkish to construct his learner identity. Sema's comment leads Mehmet to recognise and to practice the brown

colour by emulating the voice of his peer. The salient word *maşallah/maşallah* in both Turkish and Kurdish cultures is used to emphasise the greatness of things such as work done by someone, and to offer them praise. The intention of using this word culturally is also to wish someone good luck who is making good progress or doing a great job. The teacher deploys the Turkish version of the word to praise Mehmet and encourage him to carry on doing great work. The teacher's comment "Maşallah a very nice painting" gives Mehmet the confidence to say "I always make nice things".

It appears that Mehmet positions himself as a good learner by invoking the teacher's voice and addressing himself in Kurmanji in the front of the teacher, something which is rare. In other words, Mehmet constructs an identity which will be valued by the teacher through engaging in the classroom activities. His identity construction is similar to that of Yasmin that was discussed earlier in excerpt 7.4, in which Yasmin positions herself as a good learner by defending her artwork against another peer (Sema). As highlighted in Chapter 3, language and literacy learning are situated in social practices and are viewed as a process of constructing meaning (Kim, 2011). It can be seen that Kurmanji functions to address peer group members by reporting on activities (such as the visit to the cat centre) and expressing learner identities. What is more noticeable in this excerpt is Mehmet's agency, which is indicated in two ways: he confidently expresses his learner identity (Schwartz and Palviainen, 2016) and uses his full linguistic resources.

The interaction below takes place after the children have played a race game. In this game, they are divided equally into two groups. The teacher throws a number of small plastic balls into the space where reading and singing activities take place (see Chapter 6), and she gives each group a big plastic green bag. She then tells the children how they will play the game. The teacher explains to them that she will set a time during which each group needs to put as many balls into their own bag as they can. At the end of the game, the balls in each bag are counted to decide the winner. The teacher then tells the children that the winner is going to be the group which gets the most balls into their bag. By doing this, the activity aims to teach the children the idea of fast and slow. After this game has been played, the teacher allows the children to play with the balls. The interaction below occurs after the game as the children are playing with the balls. The purpose of analysing this interaction is to indicate how Mehmet develops his conceptual learning in Turkish by invoking his peer and teacher's expression as he did in the excerpt above.

Excerpt 7.7: Learning slow and fast

- 1 Cem: *Yavaş* (Slow)
- 2 Mehmet: *Yavaş atın* (Throw it slowly) [The teacher later also tells the children to slow down.]
- 3 Teacher: *Yavaş* (Slow)
- 4 Mehmet: *Yavaş yavaş* (Slow, slow) [loudly]
- 5 Teacher: *Mehmet, sen ne dedin?* (Mehmet, what did you say?) [Smiling. The researcher knows that her aim is to indicate that Mehmet is able to make sentences in Turkish]
- 6 Mehmet: (silent) [he is shy]
- 7 Teacher: *Yavaş yavaş diyor* (He says slow, slow) [addressing the researcher] (Audio recordings, 12/15/2014)

In this excerpt, Cem tells his friends to play slowly as the children play with the balls after the structured game (Turn 1). Mehmet repeats what Cem has said expanding his words into a sentence in Turkish “*Yavaş atın*” (Turn 2). Thereafter, the teacher warns the children to play slowly with the balls (Turn 3). Mehmet repeats what the teacher has said confidently (Turn 4). The teacher notices that Mehmet repeats after her, and she asks Mehmet to say it again (Turn 5). She repeats what Mehmet has said (Turn 7).

This excerpt indicates that Mehmet has developed his conceptual learning by faithfully repeating his friend and the teacher. He practises a new notion “*Yavaş*” (slow) that they have just learned. This peer interaction in the informal game, which is played after the formal one, enables Mehmet to act freely and to use his peer’s words “slow” in a sentence of his own “throw it slowly”. It could be argued that there is synergy taking place between the children as Mehmet models his own expanded expression on that of his peer (Gregory, 2001). By doing so, Mehmet indicates how good a learner he is. The teacher notices his reproduction of hers and Mehmet’s peer’s utterances, and then praises him for it with a smile. The reproduction of the notion “slow” in Turkish is one of the objectives of the curriculum, which in this case demonstrates the knowledge of the alphabet by producing similar words (see Table 2.1). In this interaction, Mehmet makes sense of the meaning of the notion “slow”, which in this case means not bothering each other and playing appropriately.

Drawing on Bakhtin (1981), Gregory (2001, p.319) suggests that games relating to language and literacy provide possibilities for children, offering them ‘a chance to try out voices from other people’s mouths’. Bakhtin (1984) argues that:

Our practical everyday speech is full of other people’s words...we use [them] to reinforce our own words; still others, finally, we populate with our own aspirations, alien or hostile to them (p.195).

Similarly, Maybin (2006, p.140) suggests that children use voices of other individuals in their ongoing talk to reproduce those voices as if they were their own. Maybin examined the way children (aged 10-12) used other people’s voices to construct knowledge and identity particularly in their backstage talk, pointing out that children are expected to take on the voices of the teacher and their peers in order to be a good learner. In other words, a good learner is the one who takes other people’s words and makes them their own. Although Maybin’s study focuses on monolingual English speaking children, it is relevant to my study as Maybin gives insights into identity and knowledge construction in informal peer interactions.

According to my participant observation, the teacher encouraged the children—especially Mehmet and Ahmet—to repeat words after her and their peers (see Chapter 6). I also observed that as time progressed Mehmet’s interactions with his peers and the teacher demonstrate his development in Turkish, including speaking skills and conceptual learning. As shown in the above excerpt, Mehmet actively participates in both types of play (structured and unstructured) and confidently emulates the voices of his peers and the teacher. However, as the excerpt shows when the teacher wants him to repeat what he has said, he can sometimes be shy. In one of my informal discussions with the teacher, she expanded on his progress by saying that Mehmet’s language and literacy learning could improve a great deal if he broke through some psychological barriers. She continued, saying that ‘Mehmet can occasionally be shy when he repeats what I have said, as well as what his friends say or when he does a solo performance’. In one of my visits to his family (04/01/2015), his uncle (Baran, see Chapter 5) underlined that Mehmet has started using Turkish words at home even though Turkish is not allowed in their home. It has already been seen that as time progresses, the children develop their Turkish and they use less Kurmanji in their peer interactions. In other words, the children know when to speak Kurmanji, and to whom.

7.4 Using linguistic, cultural and social resources from home and community in backstage talk

In this section I shall examine how children bring their different linguistic, cultural and social resources from home and from within the Kurdish community to help them develop their Turkish language and literacy learning. This section shows how the children draw on such resources to develop their speaking and thinking skills in the negotiation of values and beliefs relating these resources, helping them to use Turkish to negotiate and share their understanding of their own home and community values, beliefs and expectations. This section draws on the concept of funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2005, as discussed in Chapter 3) to understand how the children use linguistic, cultural and social resources. Moll et al. referred to the concept of funds of knowledge as ‘historically accumulated and culturally developed bodies of knowledge and skills for household or individual functioning and well-being’ (ibid, p.72). Drawing on this concept, Riojas-Cortez (2001) argued that funds of knowledge can be used in the classroom as recourses for developing concepts and skills. The study did this by showing how during socio-dramatic play Mexican-American preschool children in a bilingual classroom displayed their funds of knowledge such as family values (living together), traditions (such as Christmas) and language(s) (Spanish and English), which are allowed to use in the school. Riojas-Cortez (2001) maintained that values, beliefs and gender roles as funds of knowledge enable children to create identities based on such things as ethnic and gender factors. The author further argued that funds of knowledge help us to examine children’s cultural, social and linguistic resources in their peer interactions, including play. Another study conducted by Hedges et al. (2011) in two early years settings in New Zealand suggests that peers can also enhance each other’s thinking and influence each other’s interests by drawing on individual funds of knowledge concerning adults’ responsibilities for household and domestic tasks. The study found that children indicate their understanding of responsibilities such as baking and cooking in their sand and water play. I also engaged in the children’s interactions in this section, as my teaching experiences and knowledge of the community enable me to ask them questions about their play (González, 2009).

The next fieldnote was taken during free playtime, in which the children play in different corners such as home and Lego. Mehmet (a key participant child) is doing the ironing in the home corner. The teacher is checking the daily schedule and I am near Mehmet. Muammer, who is playing with the Lego, notices that Mehmet is doing the ironing. These

fieldnotes indicate how in a small-group peer interaction the children draw on cultural and social resources to negotiate traditional gender roles played in their community. The teacher also engages in their interaction (Turn 5):

Fieldnote 7.2: Challenging traditional gender roles

- 1 Mehmet: [He is ironing a pair of cotton toy gloves]
- 2 Muammer: *Aa bu ütü yapıyor. Bu kadın midir?* [Look, he is doing the ironing. Is he a woman?]
- 3 Children: [smiling].
- 4 Mehmet: [continues to do the ironing]
- 5 Teacher: *Erkekler de ütü yapıyorlar.* (Men also do the ironing)
- 6 Children: [Smirking] (Fieldnotes, 29/12/2014)

This fieldnote demonstrates that the children negotiate traditional gender roles (men and women) through their interaction. Muammer initiates the interaction by reminding the other children of the roles that men and women traditionally take in the Kurdish community (Yılmaz, 2015) (Turn 2). Similar gender representations can also be found in the majority Turkish culture. Muammer's identification of the roles seems to gain support from the other children, who show their support by smiling (Turn 3). But Mehmet silently challenges the stratification of the gender roles, and it seems that he does not agree with his friends as he continues ironing (Turn 4). The teacher also challenges the children's understandings of traditional gender roles by expanding the definition of these roles, referring to them as changeable (Turn 5). The teacher explains that men can also take on roles that are traditionally associated with women. But, it seems that the children do not agree with the teacher, and as their disagreement is illustrated by their smirks (Turn 6).

Hedges et al. (2011) show that children learn about adult responsibilities at home and in a community through observation and participation with parents in household tasks such as cooking. In these fieldnotes, it is apparent that the children draw on funds of knowledge—which can be categorized as the division of labour at home—to negotiate their understandings of cultural, social and language resources. Mehmet's ironing leads Muammer to show his understanding of roles taken at home and in the community. Gregory (2005) argues that language, thought and experience are inextricably linked. It can therefore be argued that

Muammer's observations of adult roles at home are expressed through his new language during peer interaction. It also indicates the children's opinions about these roles. As discussed in Chapter 5, in the minority community men and women are traditionally expected to perform different roles. Men are considered as breadwinners, while women are the homemakers.

My observations during the fieldwork reveal that women generally look after children and prepare meals at home. The men go to work in Van (in which the minority community in my study is situated) as well as in other cities such as Istanbul. In this sense, the fieldnote above mirrors the fact that the children bring the structures of their homes into the classroom. In other words, the social and cultural practices of their Kurdish community provide them with ideological resources that define adult responsibilities by gender. By bringing those resources into the classroom, the children position themselves and each other, negotiating their roles according to the values their community attaches to those resources. Gregory (1990) argues that negotiation plays an important role in minority children learning English as a second language. Examining a five-year Bangladeshi-British boy's language and literacy skills, the author showed that the child developed his reading and speaking skills through negotiated school texts with the teacher on the basis of his home and community's experience. The study concluded that negotiation can enable young minority children to develop their skills such as thinking and reading by learning new knowledge in their on-going interactions, as this excerpt shows. Although Gregory (1990) focuses on the role of negotiation in a reading process and a context in which the minority language and culture are tolerated, her study is relevant to mine as it gives insights into how minority children draw on their home and community experiences to develop their school learning.

The next excerpt also illustrates how in their backstage talk the children display their cultural values and norms that individuals are traditionally expected to practise in the Kurdish community. Many of these values and norms can be practised in the Turkish majority culture as both cultures have similarities such as religion (Islam) and gender representations. This excerpt records an interaction in which the children play with Play-doh during free playtime. The primary purpose of giving the children Play-doh is to enable them to practise their fine motor skills. The children play with Play-doh as part of their daily classroom activities in the space where art and numeracy activities take place (classroom seating arrangements are discussed in detail in Chapter 6). I observed that the children like to play house with Play-doh—sometimes making a cake, for example. On this occasion, Gül and Ahmet (a key

participant) engage in a socio-dramatic play using the Play-doh. Another child, Cem, also engages in their interaction. During the activity, I approach the children to observe their interaction and to see what they are doing.

Excerpt 7.8: Having a baby

- 1 Researcher: *Gül ne yapıyorsun?* (Gül, what are you doing?)
- 2 Gül: *Yemek* (I am preparing a meal)
- 3 Researcher: *yemeğin adı ne?* (What is the name of the meal?)
- 4 Gül: (silent)
- 5 Researcher: *yemeği kime verecen.* (Who are you going to offer this meal to?)
- 6 Gül: *Misafirler* (Guests)
- 7 Researcher: *Misafirlerin kim?* (Who are they?)
- 8 Gül: *Mehmet.* (Mehmet)
- 9 Researcher: *Peki Ahmet?* (What about Ahmet?)
- 10 Gül: *Ahmet babadır.* (He is the dad.)
- 11 Ahmet: [smiling]
- 12 Researcher: *He Ahmet?* (Is that right, Ahmet?)
- 13 Ahmet: **Ee.** (Yes)
- 14 Cem: **Eva çi ye.** (What is this?) [At this point, Cem enters the interaction. He points to the Play-doh food.]
- 15 Researcher: *Bak ne yapmış? yemek yapmış.* (Look, what has she made? She has cooked a meal.)
- 16 Cem: *Yemeeek!* (Meaaal!)
- 17 Researcher: *hı hı* (Yes)
- 18 Cem: *Bunun için?* (Is it for this?) [He points to a baby that Gül has made with the Play-doh]
- 19 Ahmet: **Ee** (Yes) [Smiling] [**Ee** is not a word, but it indicates yes]
- 20 Cem: *Nasıl ayıp bir şey dir ha. Ayıp bir şey dir.* (How shameful it is, it is shameful).
[Expressing disapproval at having a bay] (Audio recording, 26/11/2014)

This excerpt shows the children playing house with Play-doh, a game which involves the negotiation of values, norms and the use of materials such as Play-doh. The backstage talk shows that the children are drawing on traditional values, roles and attitudes embedded in their

Kurdish minority culture. The researcher asks questions about their activity to learn what the activity is about (Turns 1 and 3) and who is included in the activity (Turns 5, 7 and 9). In response, Gül explains the roles of the participants, which are the mother (Gül), the father (Ahmet) and the baby made of Play-doh (Turns 6, 8 and 10). Her responses are confirmed by one of the other participants (Ahmet) (Turns 11 and 13) as Ahmet shows his awareness of his role, which is the father in the socio-dramatic play (Turns 11 and 13).

Cem joins in with the peer interaction (Turn 14). It appears that Cem is interested in their socio-dramatic play by asking questions about roles such as the baby in the play (Turns 14 and 18). With Cem's engagement, it appears that a conflict arises in the interaction as Cem gradually comes to contest the roles and identities by questioning these roles such as the baby "Is it for this?" (Turn 18), and by showing his disapproval at having a baby (Turn 19). But Ahmet defends the role assigned to "the baby" as he smiles (Turn 19). Cem then terminates the interaction by referring to having the baby as shameful (Turn 20). By doing this, Cem appears to draw on the beliefs, values and norms of his respective community that a couple should only have a baby after they have been married.

This socio-dramatic interaction shows that the children have funds of knowledge of household functioning on which they can draw in their play. For example, Gül says that a meal needs to be prepared for the guests. According to my participant observations, Kurdish minority community families offer lunch or dinner when they have guests at their home. The function of these funds of knowledge (Moll et al., 2005) is illustrated in Gül's responses and actions as she indicates that she is preparing the meal that mothers traditionally prepare at home. By doing this, she highlights the role of fathers at home, insofar as fathers are not often involved in such tasks as food preparation. This indicates the children's understanding of the division of labour at home, and also shows how children carry and express their understanding of cultural and social resources, as it appears from this interaction that they have internalised appropriate roles and dispositions that are embedded in their community. On the basis of her funds of knowledge regarding to cultural norms and expectations, Gül defines her role and that of Ahmet as mother and father respectively. Ahmet does not resist those roles and identities, and willingly takes on a role of his own in the action.

According to my observations during fieldwork and teaching, in the minority community and in broader majority sociocultural contexts having a baby without an appropriate marriage is traditionally viewed as unacceptable. As I noted in the data analysis

above, couples should have a baby only after they pass through a process that includes engagement and marriage parties. It would appear that such cultural values and beliefs are displayed by Cem when he says “*Ayıp bir şeydir*” (It is shameful). It can also be seen that Cem’s reactions are modelled on the minority community, which is part of the broader sociocultural context (Gregory, 2005). Cem seems to advocate traditional roles and identities as he disapproves of the roles and identities in the play. Children ‘enact their cultural roles through socio-dramatic play’ (Long et al., 2004, p.101), meaning that they learn valued and appropriate roles and identities by observing the roles and identities that are assumed at home and within their community. They then model their own behaviours on those roles and identities (Long et al., 2004).

In the excerpt below, the children engage in an interaction that indicates their cultural knowledge and the expectations and understandings associated with the minority culture. The excerpt shows how the children develop their language and literacy learning by using cultural and linguistic resources such as the piggy bank and the bridal gown. Again, it is worth noting that such cultural icons are compatible between the minority Kurdish and the majority Turkish cultures. The purpose of analysing this excerpt is to show how the children use these concepts, which they have experienced in Kurmanji, in an informal peer interaction in Turkish. The excerpt below takes place between Yasmin and another child (Caner) when they are about to have breakfast after the children have tidied up the classroom. The researcher also engages in the interactions by asking questions for clarification.

Excerpt 7.9: The bridal gown

- 1 Caner: *Benim beş milyonum var.* (I have 5,000 Turkish Lira.)
- 2 Researcher: *Kim sana verdi?* (Who gave it to you?)
- 3 Caner: *Ben topluyorum.* (I saved it)
- 4 Yasmin: *Benim 5 milyonum var. Babam bana tek veriyor. Kumbaranın içinde topluyorum.* (I have 5,000 Turkish Lira too. My dad gave it just to me. I keep it in my piggy bank)
- 5 Researcher: *Baban mı sana veriyor?* (Did your dad give you money?)
- 6 Yasmin: *Evet. Elbise alacam.* (Yes. I will buy a dress.)
- 7 Researcher: *Caner, sen toplayip kendine ne alacan?* (Caner, what are you going to buy with your money?)
- 8 Caner: *kendime elbise alcam.* (I will buy clothes.)
- 9 Researcher: *Yasmin, sen başka ne alacan kendine?* (Yasmin, what else will you buy?)

- 10 Yasmin: *ben...* (I...)
11 Caner: *kendime ayakkabi alcam.* (I will buy shoes.)
12 Yasmin: *kendime bir tane gelinlik alcam.* (I will buy a bridal gown.)
13 Caner: *ben kendime ayakkabi, alacam takim elbise...* (I will buy shoes and a suit...)
(Audio recordings, 19/12/2014)

Caner initiates the interaction by saying that he has money (Turn 1). I considered Caner's initial statement as an opportunity that might provide an interaction about their cultural and economic resources and understandings, so I joined the interaction by asking Caner where he got the money (Turn 2). Caner replied that he that has saved the money (Turn 3). Yasmin then joins the interaction by explaining that she too has 5,000 Turkish Lira too, telling us where she got it and where she keeps it (the piggy bank) (Turn 4). It seems that my question not only generated an answer from Caner, also led Yasmin to join the interaction and to display her understanding of cultural knowledge such as economic resources by referring the piggy bank. The interaction moves forward as Yasmin explains what she is going to do with the collected money (Turn 6). I ask Caner how he is going to use his money (Turn 7). In response, Caner explains that he will buy clothes (Turn 8). In turn 9, likewise, I ask Yasmin another question to learn her plans about the money in her piggy bank. She is about to respond to me (Turn 10) when Caner interrupts her, saying that he is going to buy shoes as well (Turn 11).

As well as explaining her cultural knowledge at turn 4, Yasmin tells us about an important cultural object, the bridal gown (Turn 12). By doing this she further demonstrates her understanding of cultural values and her expectations that girls must wear the bridal gown when they become adult, especially during their wedding parties. Caner mirrors these cultural values and expectations, saying that he is going to "buy a suit" (Turn 13). Caner makes the case that boys are expected to wear suits when they become adults.

This excerpt shows that the children can draw upon their 'funds of knowledge' (Moll et al., 2005) in many ways. In my example, they show their funds of knowledge by drawing on a characteristic aspect of their society involving special clothes for a special ceremony. At the same time, the children explain that they use the piggy bank in order to save money. During one of my planned visits to Yasmin's home (15/12/2014) I saw that Yasmin, her uncle and her grandmother had returned from a wedding party that had taken place in their neighbourhood. It could be argued that Yasmin's participation in that wedding party enabled her to learn when

and on what occasion a bridal gown should be worn. Moll and González (1994) highlight that children's funds of knowledge are linked to household activities such as saving money, as well as activities such as wedding parties that take place in their respective communities. By drawing on funds of knowledge (cultural and social resources), children develop their own conceptual learning. They use concepts such as the bridal gown and the piggy bank to show their understandings of the functions of these objects. Here, the piggy bank functions as a way of saving money for buying valued clothes, while the bridal gown functions as an indicator of the norms and expectations that are traditionally seen as part of their culture. In other words, children conceptualize their understanding of cultural values and expectations such as the bridal gown and the piggy bank.

This excerpt also shows that the children use their developing Turkish language skills by drawing on their own experiences in different contexts such as the home and expressing them in their new language. By doing this, their language and literacy learning show that their funds of knowledge contradicts the deficit view that minority children lack valued cultural knowledge and resources (Long et al., 2004). In this sense, children's funds of knowledge tell us 'what children know and what they are capable of doing' (Riojas-Cortez, 2001, p.39). Furthermore, in this excerpt they position themselves and each other according to the expectations of their families. The importance of these expectations is that they influence the children's beliefs and values.

This section has demonstrated that the children develop their Turkish learning by drawing on the norms (such as an appropriate marriage), values, and expectations of their minority homes and community. It is also apparent that the children use more Turkish than Kurdish as the time progresses. In other words, as their Turkish language skills progress, they begin to use more Turkish than Kurmanji in peer talk.

7.5 Conclusion

In this chapter I have examined the language children use in peer talk. The chapter has highlighted their agency in using their full linguistic resources despite the nursery's monolingual ideology (Turkish language only) and the consequent constraints. As discussed in Chapter 3, language is not only a cultural construct but also a social and ideological one. I have discussed the children's internalisation of the values, beliefs and expectations of the curriculum, whilst showing that the children bring various linguistic, cultural and social

resources into the classroom to develop their language and literacy learning. We can see from the excerpts discussed here that the children often take contradictory positions against each other to ratify and contest their roles and identities. In their peer interactions, the children position themselves and each other according to both minority and majority cultural expectations and values. Although the curriculum ignores the values and expectations of the minority culture, those values and expectations are still expressed in the children's backstage talk.

The chapter has also shown that there is an on-going and dynamic process in backstage talk as the children negotiate identities such as a good learner, and their language use changes. This chapter has specifically shown how the children mainly begin by using Kurmanji in informal peer talk. But as time progresses, Turkish is used more, and the children rehearse and perform their learning (such as by practising songs) from the teacher-led activities in their backstage talk. They also develop their conceptual learning in Turkish by drawing on concepts (such as the garage) in Kurmanji. It can be argued that as the school year progresses, the children become increasingly aware of appropriate language use in the classroom, and therefore speak more Turkish. In other words, this chapter has shown that backstage the children appropriate and internalise the language use, values, beliefs and identities of the teacher-led activities in frontstage talk. However, this does not mean that they stop speaking Kurmanji or drawing on it. As discussed in Chapter 6, at the beginning of the term the teacher tolerates Kurdish in order to familiarise the children with classroom activities. But towards the end of the term, she insists on using Turkish (see Section 6.3.3). Finally, this chapter has shown the children's agency in temporarily challenging established language hierarchies and ideologies by speaking Kurmanji in certain situations.

Chapter 8: Concluding Discussion

8.1 Introduction

As discussed in section 1.4, during my teaching years (2009 to 2011) Azad and my other students inspired me to explore how children learn a second language in a comparatively short space of time. This urged me to find an answer to my research question: *how do Kurdish preschool children learn Turkish upon entering nursery?* In this study, I have examined the way young children from a suppressed minority background begin learning the language of the majority in a nursery setting. The contribution of my study to research on second language and literacy acquisition is that it addresses a gap in the literature on minority children whose language and culture have been suppressed in education and marginalised in the broader society on a long-term basis.

As discussed in Chapter 2, some restrictions have been lifted on the Kurdish language since 2009 (in areas of broadcasting, secondary and higher education). However, it is worth remembering that the language of instruction is Turkish only in the *Cumhuriyet* nursery, and Kurdish is not officially recognised. I presented and discussed the socio-historical background to the study in Chapter 2, which showed how Kurmanji has been suppressed in education and in the broader society. The importance of this is that it distinguishes the current study from previous research examining indigenous ethnic minority children's second language and literacy learning in nurseries (Howard, 2004; Owodally, 2010; Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016). The discussion in Chapter 2 and my main research question guided me to draw on sociocultural approaches to second language and literacy learning, which were discussed in Chapter 3. In this theoretical chapter I combined sociocultural approaches with the concept of translanguaging, which originated from sociolinguistics and language education.

In Chapter 4, I offered an in-depth discussion of the methodology, which was based on ethnography and enabled me to observe and record how and when the interactions took place between the children and the teacher and among the children, as well as those taking place in the key participants' homes. In Chapter 5, I outlined the design of the study and discussed methods of data collection and data analysis. In the two analytical Chapters (6 and 7) I analysed the data I collected between September 2014 and January 2015. I drew on Goffman's (1971) dramaturgical metaphors of frontstage and backstage to divide this data into two categories.

Frontstage talk referred to interactions that took place between the teacher and the children, while backstage talk dealt with those that took place among peers.

In this chapter, I shall discuss my findings by dividing them into two categories. I shall discuss the findings from frontstage talk and then move on to consider those from backstage talk. My frontstage findings contribute to sociocultural approaches by giving insights into the teacher's agency in allowing a limited institutional space for the use of Kurmanji. Similarly, backstage findings highlight the children's own agency in temporarily challenging established language hierarchies and ideologies by using their home language in learning and play. From there I shall move on to discuss the theoretical and methodological contributions of the study. Theoretically, this study contributes to sociocultural approaches by combining key concepts (such as guided participation and synergy) with the notion of translanguaging, which originates from sociolinguistic and language education. The combination enabled me to examine the values assigned to Turkish and Kurmanji and provided me with a tool to examine the children's language use in peer talk.

I shall conclude by pointing out implications of my study for policy makers, curriculum designers, teachers, head teachers and parents. The study suggests that it would be beneficial for policy makers, curriculum designers, teachers and head teachers to be aware of the children's cultural and linguistic knowledge from their homes and minority communities. Finally, the limitations of my study and directions for future research will be discussed.

8.2 The key findings

I have presented and analysed participant observation sessions, audio and video recordings, documentary data and interviews with teachers and parents in Chapters 6 and 7. I drew on the sociocultural concepts I discussed in Chapter 3 to analyse the data. These included scaffolding, guided participation, synergy, community of practice and funds of knowledge. I combined these sociocultural concepts with translanguaging. The research questions were:

Q1) How do the children develop Turkish language and literacy in teacher-led activities?

Q2) How does the teacher support the children's language and literacy learning?

Q3) How is the dominant Turkish national ideology reproduced in language and literacy activities?

Q4) What is the role of Kurmanji in learning the Turkish language and literacy and how does it change over time?

Q5) How do children learn Turkish language and literacy from their peers?

Q6) How do the children use their linguistic, cultural and social resources and knowledge from their home and Kurdish community settings to develop their Turkish language and literacy learning?

The first three research questions were addressed by looking at frontstage interactions that took place between the teacher and the children (Chapter 6). The fourth, fifth and sixth research questions were examined in interactions during the backstage talk among the children (Chapter 7). The first and fourth questions were also addressed in Chapters 6 and 7 as I examined the children's language and literacy learning and the role of Kurmanji in that learning process. For example, I examined how the children responded to the teacher in Kurmanji in frontstage talk in Chapter 6.

8.2.1 Findings from teacher-pupil talk

The findings described in Chapter 6 emerged from frontstage talk between the children and the teacher, and their interactions. The key findings were:

1). The children learned Turkish language and literacy skills such as speaking, listening and vocabulary as well as the values, beliefs and expectations of the majority Turkish culture. They also learned that their home language was not used or valued in the classroom.

2). The teacher modelled language use by attaching positive values to Turkish and encouraged it, as well as modelling school-appropriate values, beliefs and conduct.

3). The children internalised the dominant Turkish national identity, linking it to a successful learner identity. In the following sections, I will discuss these findings in-depth.

8.2.1.1 The children's participation in classroom activities

The first research question focused on how the children developed Turkish language and literacy in teacher-led activities. The first finding guided by this question was that the children learned Turkish language and literacy through participation in routine classroom activities based heavily on the majority culture and language. This finding gives us insights into the role of the nursery in teaching a new culture and language. As discussed in Chapter 2, the nursery was part of the Turkish central education system, which had suppressed the children's home language and culture since the establishment of the Turkish state in 1923. In the same chapter, I also argued that Turkish language played an important role in Turkish national culture. In other words, the *Cumhuriyet* nursery was institutionally, historically and culturally consistent with the Turkish national education system that expected the children to learn Turkish, which was an important symbol for the Turkish national culture. I argued in section 3.3.2 that language not only refers to a particular system of sounds, signs and rules, but also acts as a cultural tool, symbolically representing the values, beliefs, power and expectations of a society. The children not only developed Turkish language and literacy skills in the nursery, they also learned and practised Turkish values and beliefs rather than those relating to their own Kurdish minority culture.

In the routine classroom activities, they developed skills such as speaking, listening, pre-writing, thinking, conceptual learning and vocabulary building, as well as learning the values, beliefs and expectations of the classroom. This finding supports one of the main tenets of sociocultural theory—that children learn through participation in social and cultural activities (Vygotsky, 1978). Chapter 6 showed that routine activities (free and structured) played an important role in the children's acquisition of language, literacy and numeracy. These activities included singing, drama, art, pre-writing and numeracy. In these activities, they developed their different language and literacy skills. In singing activities, for example, the children developed speaking and listening by singing songs which they came to repeat over time in their free play. This finding resonates with Coyle and Garcia's (2014) study, which found that routine repetition of songs enabled Spanish preschool children to develop their

English vocabulary learning skills. Their study highlighted that the routine repetition of songs accelerated the process of vocabulary learning.

In drama and art activities the children learned new vocabulary in a similar way to singing activities. In art, for instance, they learned the name of colours, and in drama they developed their speaking skill by taking different roles in drama activities (McMaster, 1998). In addition, the children observed and learned scientific processes such as mixing colours to make new colours and simulating rainfall in a scientific experiment. In the other activities (pre-writing and numeracy), the children established skills which would serve as the foundation of their academic learning such as mathematics. In numeracy activities, they learned mathematical and geometrical concepts such as the circle and triangle by drawing these shapes in teacher-led activities. They also learned to count numbers. At the same time, their writing skills developed as they traced the outlines of the numbers.

Chapter 6 also showed how the children learned the values, beliefs and expectations of the Turkish curriculum through participation in routine classroom activities. They learned that the teacher valued Turkish by encouraging them to speak it when they responded to her in Kurmanji (Excerpt 6.5). This finding supports the view that values and beliefs about languages are learned in social settings under specific sociocultural and ideological conditions (Heller, 2007). In this sense, this finding contributes to sociocultural theory (Rogoff 1990) which argues that children appropriate their learning skills and perspectives through participation in culturally valued activities. As discussed in section 3.3.3, this finding demonstrates that literacy is a social practice which includes cultural and ideological assumptions that mediate literacy learning (Street, 1984), rather than a cognitive processes only (Kim, 2011). The finding confirms studies (such as Owodally, 2010, 2014; Sonck, 2005; Sprey et al., 1997), which found that indigenous ethnic minority children learned the values and beliefs about the dominant language and ideology through participation in the classroom activities.

The second finding was that the children mediated their language and literacy learning by using Kurmanji alongside Turkish. This finding was extremely relevant, as the curriculum—which was strictly monolingual and monocultural—ignored the children’s home language and culture, thereby viewing minority languages and cultures (such as Arabic and Kurdish) as having no pedagogical value. As shown in section 6.3, the children drew on their home language to develop their vocabulary learning and speaking skills. For example, one of the key participants (Mehmet) embedded new Turkish words in Kurmanji language sentences during

the teacher-led activities. This finding fits with Owodally's (2010) study, which was conducted in a multilingual nursery in Mauritius and showed that the children's home language (Creole) and French were used to translate some words or sentences from English for the children. Although Creole, French and English were used in the nursery, French and English were the dominant languages, and French was mainly used in teacher-led activities. Owodally highlighted that the children were exposed to French, which was the language of the wider society. In this sense, my study differs from that of Owodally (2010) by extending research on minority children, as it shows that my participants drew on their home language in a monolingual classroom.

This second finding provides new insights into the role of the minority language in learning a second language in an officially monolingual setting. Studies examining indigenous minority (Owodally, 2010, 2012; Sprey et al., 1997) and immigrant ethnic minority children (Drury, 2007; Piker, 2013) cover examples in which the children's home language and culture were officially allowed in the nurseries. This meant that the children's home language was viewed as having some pedagogical value in the classroom, in the sense that there was a degree of institutional space in which the children could use their home language. My research indicates that the children's home language still mediates their second language and literacy learning, even though the setting is constrained by a prescriptive curriculum that adheres to a strict monolingual and monocultural ideology. Although the curriculum did not recognise Kurmanji, Kurmanji still helped the children make sense of learning new vocabulary. This also leads to insights into the role of the teacher, which will be discussed in the next section.

8.2.1.2 The teacher as a more knowledgeable adult

The second research question focused on how the teacher supported the children's language and literacy learning. The first finding related to this question was that the teacher modelled language use, values, beliefs and conduct via the ways in which she ignored the children's utterances in Kurmanji and encouraged them to speak more Turkish. By doing so, she enabled them to be aware of the value Turkish had in the classroom and in the majority culture on which the classroom activities were heavily based. The current study confirms the concept of scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976) by pointing out that the teacher supported the children's language, literacy and numeracy learning by modelling solutions and drawing attention to the

activities. Wood et al. showed that a mediator can scaffold children's learning in different ways, such as modelling solutions to the task and reducing frustration. For example, the teacher in the current study demonstrated the process of rainfall through a relevant experiment (see excerpt 7.2).

This finding also agrees with Rogoff's (1990) argument that the mediator initiates children into routine cultural activities. Chapter 6 showed that the teacher familiarised the children with classroom activities such as free art and using Play-doh when the children started in the nursery. For example, at the beginning of learning a new song, the teacher guided them into the activity by telling the children "we are going to learn a new song". This helped familiarise the children with classroom routines. Likewise, they knew that they were expected to repeat the lines of the songs after the teacher. Chapter 6 also demonstrated that the teacher guided the children's learning by linking the activities to each other. For instance, prior to the rain experiment the teacher taught the children the rain song and then asked them questions about rainfall. The purpose of this was to build bridges from their current learning to new areas. The children learned the word "rain" in the Rain Song (excerpt 6.1), which was still conceptually abstract. Then they engaged in a more concrete activity (the Rainfall Experiment) in which they learned how rain was produced (excerpt 6.2).

The current study extends and contributes to the concepts of scaffolding and guided participation by arguing that the teacher's role is wider than these two roles, as the study highlights that a teacher guides the children in modelling the dominant language by valuing it over the minority language. Chapter 6 showed that in frontstage talk the teacher modelled the values, beliefs and expectations of the curriculum. These included speaking clean and proper Turkish, which was linked to Turkish national and learner identities, and to which I turn in the next subsection. When the teacher modelled Turkish values and beliefs, she implicitly discouraged the children's home language. In other words, the teacher evaluated the languages by attaching values to Turkish, and hierarchising the two languages. This was consistent with the nursery's Turkish-only language policy, which assigned a high value to Turkish and did not recognise Kurmanji. The next subsection will demonstrate how this value is embedded in the national ideology (Kaplan, 1999) and how the values and beliefs of the minority community were viewed as inconsistent with those of the curriculum. Through the teacher's modelling, the children were socialised into the majority culture. This modelling positioned the majority

culture as more valuable than the minority one. In other words, the teacher initiated the children into the majority culture, which the curriculum deemed an essential facet of their learning.

The second finding linked to the second research question was the teacher's own agency within the context of a constraining national curriculum in allowing the children to use their home language—albeit in a limited way. This finding was unexpected, as the reviewed literature on sociocultural approaches paid no attention to how the teacher tolerated the children's home language in a monolingual classroom. Section 6.3 demonstrated that while actively supporting the children's Turkish language and literacy learning upon entering the nursery, the teacher (who was a Kurmanji speaker) allowed a limited institutional space for the use of the Kurmanji. For example, she allowed the children to respond to her questions in Kurmanji, but repeated or rephrased their answers in Turkish.

The analysis of frontstage talk section 6.3 showed that the teacher encouraged the children to use more Turkish than Kurmanji as the school term progressed. As the terms progressed, the children's use of Kurmanji with the teacher declined dramatically. In other words, Kurmanji had a transitional role as the teacher allowed the children to use it as a stepping stone to the new language use, especially in set activities. As highlighted in the interview with the teacher, the purpose of allowing Kurmanji was to reduce frustration and to make the transition from home to school easier. It was also aimed to familiarise the children with classroom activities and help them feel secure (García, 2009a). This finding supports Skutnabb-Kangas's (1995) argument that the minority language can have a temporary instrumental value, despite the fact that at the end of the day the language of the majority is encouraged and valued. In other words, the use of the minority language is limited to specific times when the children's familiarity and learning levels are at a critical stage.

8.2.1.3 Learning Turkish national and learner identities

The first finding linked to the third research question emerged from section 6.4, and covered the reproduction of the Turkish national ideology in socially, culturally and institutionally valued activities. These activities included the celebration of national days such as Republic Day and the commemoration of the death of Atatürk as an important figure. Section 6.4 indicated that the aim of these activities was to create a sense of belonging to the Turkish nation

(Bruner, 1986) by celebrating important cultural milestones. The section showed that the children learned and practised the values and beliefs of the majority national culture by participating in activities related to these celebrations. For example, when the children learned about different nationalities (such as Arab and American) in an art activity, they were identified as Turkish through the use of the inclusive personal pronoun “*bizim gibi*” (like ours) (see Fieldnotes 6.5). In this activity, the children learned to associate themselves with Turkish rather than Kurdish cultural signifiers, and that they were different from other nationalities, such as American. This discourse ignored the children’s ethnic identity and positioned them as natural citizens of the Turkish nation. This explicit approach to stressing the children’s Turkish identities left no room for their ethnic differences or their minority background and language. Instead, it reproduced the Turkish single-nation ideology. This ideology associated speaking Turkish with the Turkish national identity, which will be discussed further in this section.

As discussed in section 6.4, the children were encouraged to become full participants of the broader Turkish society through engaging in activities that indicated shared national values (Lave and Wenger, 1991). These activities reflected the curriculum’s philosophy and reinforced Turkish national ideology, which aimed to reproduce ‘the nation’s unbroken continuity’ (Spyrou, 2000, p.65). This is demonstrated by one of the key aims of the Turkish education system—to produce citizens who are loyal to the nationalism of Atatürk and Turkey. With regard to language learning, the dominant national ideology ‘positions the majority language as the only language of communication in institutional and other public contexts’ (Blackledge, 2008, p.36).

The second finding from this section was the acquisition of Turkish national and learner identities. This finding is consistent with Lave and Wegner’s (1991) concept of Community of Practice, which offered insights into the relationship between learning and identity transformation. The authors argued that children learn the culture and identity of a community through participation in the activities of that community. This finding is supported by Barron’s (2007; 2009) studies, which drew on the concept of Community of Practice. Barron found that Pakistani-British preschool children learned the values and expectations (such as celebrating Christmas) of the majority culture in classroom activities. This finding also addresses the main shortcoming for which Linehan and McCarthy (2002) criticised the concept of Community of Practice, namely overlooking the role of the teacher in shaping children’s identity transformations. Section 6.4 showed how the teacher affected the children’s construction of the

learner identities (such as a good learner) by constraining language use (encouraging Turkish and ignoring Kurmanji). For example, the teacher praised them when the children achieved the objectives of the activities (such as learning about Atatürk, see excerpt 6.8).

Turkish national ideology was founded along with the establishment of Republic of Turkey in 1923 and was ‘the project of creating a unified’ (Howard, 2009, p.209) Turkish national identity that suppressed ethnic and religious minorities (such as Kurds, Armenians and Christians). Another important expectation of Turkish ideology is that children are expected to learn Turkish accurately and clearly, and to be ready for primary school, where only Turkish will be spoken. For the children, a good learner is a good Turkish citizen and vice versa. Similarly, studies discussed in section 3.6 (such as Friedman, 2010; Howard, 2004, 2009; Schwartz and Gorbatt, 2016), which examined both indigenous and immigrant ethnic minority children, pointed to the relationship between second language and identity transformation in the nursery. For example, Howard (2004, 2009) found that Muang minority children learned the Thai national identity, which was associated with speaking Standard Thai as polite and respectful Thai citizens. The current study extends those of Howard (2009), and Schwartz and Gorbatt, (2016) by offering insights into the relationships between the learner identity and the dominant national ideology. Section 6.4 showed that the children not only learned the official Turkish national identity, they also learned the learner identity that was associated with Turkish citizens as discussed above.

This learner identity was shaped by Turkish national ideology, which linked the use of Turkish to the country’s national identity. As discussed in Section 2.5, when the Republic of Turkey was established in 1923, the new Turkish ruling elite deliberately set out to use the Turkish language as a tool to homogenise the nation (Bayar, 2010). Minorities such as Kurds were expected to learn and speak Turkish in order to be ‘real Turks’ (Bayar, 2010), because the Turkish language was a marker of Turkish (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2012). Section 6.4 showed how the children learned the identity that the Turkish ruling elite envisaged when the new state was founded. Through the teacher’s modelling in the classroom activities (Howard, 2009), the children learned and appropriated the necessary ideology.

As discussed in section 3.3.4, this second finding supports constructionist approaches to identities that view identities as coexisting, multiple and constructed in social interactions (Lytra, 2007). It is also congruent with poststructuralist approaches to identities that are shaped by discourses and power relations (Pavlenko, 2002). As highlighted in section 6.4, the teacher’s

discursive practices (such as valuing good learner identities) shaped the children's own identity construction.

8.2.2 Findings from peer talk

In this section, I shall discuss the key findings that emerged from backstage talk that took place among the children. These findings include firstly the children's agency in challenging language hierarchies and ideologies, secondly the role of Kurmanji in learning Turkish language and literacy and the steady decrease in the use of Kurmanji during the process, thirdly the role of peer interactions in appropriating and internalising classroom language, values and beliefs as well as in identity transformation, and fourthly the importance of the minority language and culture for the children's Turkish development in areas such as speaking skills and conceptual learning.

8.2.2.1 The children's agency and the role of Kurmanji

The fifth research question examines the role of Kurmanji in learning Turkish language and literacy and how this changed over time. The first finding guided by this research question was the children's agency in temporarily undermining established language hierarchies and language ideologies by speaking Kurmanji. This finding extends the current understanding of the possibilities and limitations of the learners' agency in a strictly monolingual and monocultural setting. This finding emerged through the combination of sociocultural concepts and the concept of translanguaging. This concept, as Creese and Blackledge (2015) argued, enabled the researcher to examine the children's agency in using their full linguistic resources. The finding also supports studies (García and Li Wei, 2014; Li Wei, 2011), which maintained that children are able to transgress monolingual classroom practices through translanguaging. These studies were conducted in either complementary schools (Creese and Blackledge 2015; Li Wei, 2011) or in bilingual school nurseries (García, 2009a) in the UK and the USA respectively. The current study therefore shifts our current understandings of the children's agency in bilingual classrooms (which viewed the minority language and culture as having pedagogical value) to a nursery context that aimed to be strictly monolingual and monocultural.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Kurds in Turkey have been forced to integrate into the broader society as Turks in Bulgaria have been. Kurdish and Turkish nationalities have been stigmatised (Goffman, 1971) and marginalised in these countries. This means that the minority languages have been rendered unnecessary or not been officially recognised, undermining the values and beliefs associated with Kurdish and Turkish in Turkey and Bulgaria respectively. In both cases, members of the ethnic minorities have been expected to learn the majority languages in schools or in the military. In other words, learning the majority languages becomes vital as their own language has been suppressed during the education process.

As indicated in the interviews with the teachers in Chapter 7, the children were encouraged by the teachers to learn Turkish at all times. In addition, the interviews with the teachers indicated that the children recognised which languages were valued and from this, which language they needed to learn. The children were encouraged to communicate in Turkish, rather than in Kurmanji. This finding is in line with Thomson's (1995) study, which found that Pakistani-British preschool children learned the position of their home language (Mirpuri-Panjabi) and English in a classroom as the time progressed (p.242). Section 7.2 also showed that the children internalised the language policy of the classroom, soon coming to realise when to use which language and to whom (Fishman, 1965).

As discussed in Chapter 6, in frontstage talk the Turkish language was encouraged and valued. The teacher attached positive values to Turkish by scaffolding and guiding the children. Kurmanji was ignored or discouraged from the middle of the first school term whenever the children responded to the teacher in that language. Yet the teacher allowed the children to use Kurmanji at the beginning of the term, gradually affecting the children's language use in favour of Turkish even though they mainly used Kurmanji until the middle of the first term in informal peer talk. The current study shows that language hierarchies and ideologies as well as institutional constraints mediated the children's Turkish language and literacy learning. This finding confirms Owodally's (2012) study, which found that Mauritian children used their home language (Creole) in peer interactions in the classroom where the teachers valued French and English. This means that children understand that their home language is not valued and is not to be used in frontstage talk, and this is reflected in my participants' language choices (see section 8.2.1.1). The children, then, use their home language in peer talk. This finding supports Arthur's (2001) study, which argued that the language used in frontstage activities generally has the highest prestige among languages.

However, the children undermined language hierarchies, language ideologies and the classroom's constraints through translanguaging. Therefore, the current study also confirms other studies (Creese and Blackledge, 2015; Lewis et al., 2012), which highlighted translanguaging as the new languaging reality. This means that in spite of monolingual language policies, minority children create spaces in which they use their full linguistic resources when constructing meanings in social settings (García, 2009b). This finding extends studies such as Creese and Blackledge (2015) in two ways. Firstly, it contributes to these studies by using the concept of translanguaging as an analytical tool to examine informal peer interactions. Secondly—and more importantly—the current study extends those of Creese and Blackledge (2015) and Lewis et al., (2012) by highlighting the children's agency in temporarily challenging monolingual classroom practices. These studies highlight the children's agency in bilingual classrooms such as supplementary schools (Creese and Blackledge, 2015).

The second finding that emerged from section 7.2 was the role and use of Kurmanji in learning Turkish language and literacy and the steady decrease in the use of Kurmanji in informal peer talk. The children used Kurmanji alongside Turkish to negotiate roles and positions (such as being the leader in play activities) in backstage talk (see excerpt 7.3). They demonstrated their knowledge of sociocultural tools such as the gun only in Kurmanji (see excerpt 7.2). This enables us to examine how the children think about their sociocultural tools and experiences. It becomes evident that their knowledge about cultural tools comes from their engagement in adult activities (Rogoff, 2003). They also used both Kurmanji and Turkish to negotiate ownership and resources such as Play-doh (Toohey, 1996).

The second finding relating to the role of Kurmanji supports García and Li Wei's (2014) argument that children can integrate new linguistic knowledge into their existing language. Section 7.2 showed how they used the concepts and knowledge from Kurmanji to develop their conceptual learning in Turkish. The children integrated their Turkish language learning (including their vocabulary learning) into Kurmanji. However, section 7.2 showed that the use of Kurmanji facilitated their Turkish language and literacy learning in peer talk. For example, they used the concepts such as garage in Kurmanji to develop their language when speaking in Turkish. This finding also resonates with García's (2009a) study, which found that Spanish-American children learned new lexical items in English through translanguaging. As indicated in Fieldnote 7.1, one of the children (Cem, a boy) corrected Mehmet's (a key participant) Kurmanji lexical term by providing its definition in Turkish. What this indicated was Cem's

appropriation and internalisation of the nursery's Turkish-only language policy. In other words, Cem internalised the teacher's modelling and supported Mehmet by using this model in peer talk. This also showed how the children evaluated languages in their peer interactions.

8.2.2.2 The role of peers in learning Turkish language and literacy

The fifth research question explored how the children developed their language and literacy learning in peer interaction. As the preceding section shows, the children were aware of values attached to the languages. This section will therefore continue to discuss the children's appropriation of values, beliefs and classroom conduct. This section will also discuss the children's use of Turkish.

In response to the sixth research question, the analysis of the data demonstrated that the children developed their Turkish language and literacy learning by appropriating classroom values, beliefs and conduct in peer talk. This finding emerged in section 7.3, which demonstrated that the children reproduced these values, beliefs and expectations in peer talk. This finding confirms Gregory's (2001) concept of synergy, which emphasised the mutual relationship between children and their peers as mediators. In contrast to scaffolding and guided participation, where the teacher played an active role in the children's learning, section 7.3 showed through the concept of synergy that children actively mediated each other's learning in informal interactions. They positioned each other and themselves, and invoked peers' and the teacher's utterances in peer talk. For example, in excerpt 7.7, Mehmet (one of the key participants) developed his conceptual learning by invoking his peer's utterance "slow", which they had learned in the teacher-led activity. His peer (Cem) practised what they had learnt, and Mehmet extended it to "throw it slowly" in the peer interaction. On another occasion, Yasmin (another key participant) encouraged her peer to sing the song that they had learnt in the teacher-led activities. Yasmin's singing became 'a trigger' for her peer to join in (Gregory, 2001, p. 311). This finding supports Kenner's (2004, p.115) argument that peer interaction is 'a tool for literacy learning'.

This finding further supports studies (Drury, 2004a; Kenner, 2004), which were conducted in western countries such the UK and the USA. Drury (2004a) showed that through their participation in routine classroom activities, Pakistani-British children (Pahari was their

home language) were able to sing songs on their own in backstage talk. Kenner's (2004) study found that peer talk enabled young Chinese, Arabic and Spanish children to interpret the relationships between form and meaning in their heritage writing system in the school setting. This finding also resonates with a recent study by Ren and Hu (2013) which showed that young immigrant ethnic Chinese siblings mediated each other's learning at home. The older sibling taught the younger one school learning (an English song) whilst developing her sibling's Chinese. However, the current study extends these studies by highlighting the fact that peer interactions can also enable the children appropriate their learner identities. I argue that peer interaction not only enables children to develop their second language and literacy learning, but also provides them with spaces where they can internalise their new identities (such as a good learner) and negotiate these identities with their peers. The analysis of the children's interactions showed that they ratified and contested their learner identities. The transformation of their learner identities was expressed in excerpts discussed in section 7.3. For example, Yasmin (a key participant) defended her artwork against Sema who challenged her for not drawing nicely (See excerpt 7.4). In other words, the children positioned themselves and each other according to the classroom's expectations and values, and in doing so they showed that they had constructed their learner identities. This means that they internalised the values, beliefs and expectations of the curriculum.

The second finding that emerged from section 7.3 was that the children increasingly used Turkish in peer talk towards the end of the school term as they developed their Turkish language skills and internalised the values, beliefs and expectations of the curriculum and the setting. It was clear that they were developing their language and literacy by invoking the voices of the teacher and their peers (see excerpt 7.6). As discussed in section 3.6, studies (Piker, 2013; Thomson, 1995) which examined minority children's language learning found that immigrant ethnic minority children's language use changed as the school year progressed. Similarly, Maybin (2006, p.148) argued that 'when children internalise voices and dialogues, they are also internalising cultural and social aspects of the institutional order'. My participant observations from the key participants' homes revealed that they started using Turkish at home towards the end of the term.

Maybin (2006) also considered that children take on the voices of their teacher and the curriculum to direct their future actions and to organise their learning. This finding confirms Maybin's argument by showing how the children developed their language and literacy based

on the model by which the teacher guided and scaffolded them. In other words, the children's language use in peer talk changed in the direction led by the model of language in frontstage talk. Peer interaction therefore functions not only as a space in which children can practise their learning, but also as a stance from which they can take an evaluative perspective of the teacher's language use (ibid). It could be argued that the children show their language and literacy development by trying out what they have learned from frontstage talk in backstage talk. As such, their informal talk reinforces their language and literacy learning (Drury, 2004a).

8.2.2.3 The importance of the minority language and culture for language and literacy learning

The sixth research question focused on how the children drew on the linguistic, cultural and social resources of their minority Kurdish community to develop their Turkish language and literacy learning in peer talk, as demonstrated in section 7.4. The finding that emerged from section 7.4 was that the children do indeed draw on their own linguistic, social and cultural resources to help develop their Turkish language and literacy learning, including their speaking and thinking skills and their conceptual learning. As highlighted throughout this thesis, the values, norms and expectations of the participants' Kurdish minority culture were not recognised in the classroom. Although the official monocultural curriculum ignored these values and expectations, moment-to moment analysis (Maybin, 2006) of peer interactions revealed that the values and beliefs of the minority culture were still expressed in the children's backstage talk. In other words, this finding showed the importance of the minority culture and language, which has been marginalized for a long time in education.

This supports Moll et al.'s (2005) concept of funds of knowledge, which aims to challenge the deficit perspective. The deficit perspective views minority children whose language and culture have been ignored as the blank slates, since its starting point is to look at what these children can be taught, rather than what they already know (Long et al., 2004). As discussed in Chapter 3, Moll et al. challenged this view by showing that the household practices of minority children and their families were multi-stranded and dense, and the children had knowledge and experience through participation in these activities. This finding also resonates with those of studies (Hedges, 2015; Riojas-Cortez, 2001; Soltero-González, 2009). Hedges showed that ethnic minority immigrant children drew on their home culture in the classroom activities in nurseries in which the minority culture was officially valued. Hedges extended

Moll et al.'s (2005) study by applying the concept of funds of knowledge to the nursery setting, as Moll et al visited the minority children's homes to explore the richness of their home practices.

Although the preceding section concludes that the children internalise the values and beliefs of the curriculum as they reproduce them in peer talk, this section highlights that the children still draw on household and minority culture knowledge. This shows the role that the minority culture (Kurdish) takes in shaping their values and beliefs. Despite the historical and political conditions of the context that suppressed the minority culture and language in education and society, Section 7.4 demonstrated that the children's home culture and language were still effective in shaping their values and beliefs. Therefore, this finding contributes to earlier (Moll et al., 2005; Riojas-Cortez, 2001) and recent (Hedges, 2015) studies by highlighting the importance of minority home and community values and beliefs, which despite not being recognised by the curriculum have a great impact on second language and literacy learning. In other words, the concept of funds of knowledge not only enables us to examine how children develop skills such as speaking, it also highlights the role of 'social history and context in mediating what is learned (and taught)' (Rodriguez, 2013, p.102).

This finding therefore contrasts with the deficit perspective, which argues that the children's home language and culture are obstacles to learning a second language and literacy. In fact the children's experiences provide them with opportunities that mediate their language and literacy learning (Ruby, 2014). The children position themselves and each other according to their cultural, linguistic and social resources from homes and the Kurdish community, and the analysis of these resources indicates that the expectations of their family and their community will influence the children's beliefs and values. Their home knowledge and their Kurdish community background is something they can draw upon in their interactions, as discussed in Section 7.4. These resources can be categorised as follows:

- a) Values and expectations: wearing special clothes (a bridal gown or a suit) at wedding parties; having a baby only after an appropriate marriage.
- b) Economic values: saving money to buy the bridal gown and suit.
- c) Traditional roles: taking on parental roles (adopted from Riojas-Cortez, 2001, p.37).

In their backstage talk, the children positioned themselves and each other according to the categories above. For example, Yasmin (one of the key participants) used the concept of the bridal gown to project herself into the future as a woman who will wear traditional clothes at her wedding party. Meanwhile, another child (Caner) projected himself into the future as a man by referring to the suit. Their thinking skills showed their understandings of expected roles in the community and at home. At the same time, they drew on the concept of a piggy bank to indicate how they would save money to buying these special clothes. On the other occasions, the children negotiated values such as only having a baby after an appropriate marriage. Crucially, they negotiated the meanings of various cultural elements with each other through their second language (Gregory, 2005). Riojas-Cortez (2001) showed similar findings in Spanish-American children in a bilingual classroom, who used the values and beliefs of their home culture and language to guide their peers in appropriate behaviour using socio-dramatic settings. The author also observed that when they took on adult roles in their communities, the children guided their own actions and behaviours (ibid, pp. 37-8).

As discussed in section 8.2.2.1, the children used their home language to temporarily challenge the classroom's Turkish-only language use. The second finding guided by this research question also demonstrated the children's agency in drawing on the values, beliefs and expectations of their minority community in a monolingual and monocultural classroom. As highlighted in this section above, studies which used or drew on the concept of funds of knowledge argued that households from minority communities were dense and multi-stranded in terms of knowledge. However, what they overlooked, as Rodriguez (2013) argued in a review of studies which drew on the concept of funds of knowledge, was the children's agency in using that knowledge and experience from homes and communities in the classroom. This is because the curriculum of the classrooms studied considered the children's funds of knowledge as being of pedagogical value. The findings of this research extends such studies (Soltero-González and Reyes, 2012, for example) by highlighting the children's agency in drawing on their funds of knowledge in a classroom whose activities were shaped by a prescriptive curriculum and were based on the values and beliefs of the Turkish majority culture. This finding is consistent with Soltero-González's (2009) study, which found that Latin-American children drew on their home language (Spanish) and experiences in a preschool setting where English was the language of instruction. However, Soltero-González's study overlooked the children's agency in drawing on their funds of knowledge in informal peer talk.

8.3 Theoretical and methodological contributions of the study

The gap in the literature which my study addressed is the lack of existing research on minority children whose language and culture have been suppressed and marginalised. The current study has stressed the ways in which the teacher modelled the language use, values and expectations of the majority culture for children. The majority of studies informed by sociocultural theories focused on the role of the teacher in terms of scaffolding (Wood et al., 1976) and guided participation (Rogoff, 1990). Although these studies (such as Drury, 2007; Ruby, 2014) showed that the teacher as a mediator initiates and guides children in cultural activities, insufficient attention has been given how the teacher models values, beliefs and language use.

To my knowledge, existing sociocultural literature does not pay enough attention to how the teacher as a mediator modelled the values, beliefs and expectations of the majority culture (Cochran-Smith, 1984; Howard, 2009; Woods et al., 1999). As discussed in Section 8.2.1.3, the teacher can shape the minority children's identity transformation in the classroom not only by scaffolding and guiding the children to develop skills and to manage tasks at hand, but also by modelling the appropriate identities in the nursery. As highlighted in section 6.4, the teacher modelled appropriate Turkish national identities by constraining the children's language use and encouraging them to speak Turkish.

The second contribution the study makes in this area is the combination of sociocultural approaches and the concept of translanguaging, which originates from sociolinguistic and language education. To my knowledge, studies examining young children's second language and literacy learning and drawing on sociocultural approaches (such as Drury, 2007; Gökalp, 2015; Ruby, 2014) have not used translanguaging in tandem with these approaches. Other studies that have used the concept of translanguaging (such as Creese and Blackledge, 2015; García, 2009a; García and Li Wei, 2014) have mainly applied it as an analytical tool to examine the interactions between teacher and children in bilingual classrooms. A combination of these approaches has enabled me to examine the children's language and literacy practices in a monolingual classroom, particularly in terms of studying the ways in which established language hierarchies and language ideologies have affected the children's language use. By doing this, I found that the languages were hierarchised, and language use was shaped by the linguistic ideologies (Turkish language policy only). Another advantage of this combination is

that it enabled me to examine the children's agency in temporarily undermining these language hierarchies and ideologies, as well as drawing on cultural, linguistic and social resources from home and minority communities in backstage talk.

Methodologically, I used a multi-method approach to data collection, including participant observation, video and audio recordings, documentary data and interviews. The advantage of using a combination of methods was that they allowed me to observe and record the children's interactions with the adults and among peers in different social settings (home and nursery). An ethnographic approach also enabled me to contextualise the children's interactions by defining how and when they took place. More specifically, it allowed me to document how the teacher modelled language use for the children within the social setting of the nursery. It also enabled me to examine and document how and when the children's language use began to change in peer interactions. Another methodological contribution was that my teaching experience provided me with opportunities to actively engage in the children's interactions and ask questions about their work (Soltera-González, 2009). My teaching experience helped me remain aware of the children's language use in peer talk. During my teaching years in a similar setting, I observed that the children communicated with each other in Kurmanji in free playtime activities.

With regard to methods of data analysis, my study contributes to our understanding of frontstage and backstage metaphors (Goffman, 1971) by using these metaphors to show how values were attached to Turkish in frontstage activities and how the children used their home language in backstage talk. These metaphors firstly enabled me to document how the teacher modelled language and literacy learning and secondly how the children took on this model in their peer interactions. The frontstage/backstage metaphors also enabled me to examine classroom interactions by analysing them moment-to-moment in the ongoing interaction (Maybin, 2006). Frontstage talk showed how the teacher modelled values, beliefs and language use before all the participants in the classroom. The children were then expected to practise and appropriate these values, beliefs and especially language use. One advantage of using these metaphors was that they clarified and separated teacher and children interaction from peer group interactions. For example, the backstage talk highlighted the way language use changed over time in peer interactions. In other words, the current study contributes to our understanding of frontstage and backstage by highlighting differences in language use within a monolingual classroom.

8.4. Implications of the study

This study offered a detailed account of Kurdish preschool children's Turkish language and literacy learning in a nursery setting. It showed the process of learning between the teacher and the children, and among the children in the classroom. In the light of the findings discussed above, this section will suggest a number of implications for policymakers, curriculum designers, head teachers, teachers and parents. One of the implications of the study is that it would be beneficial for teachers and head teachers to be aware of the children's cultural and linguistic knowledge from home and minority communities. Teachers and head teachers will then be able to help children develop and improve their language and literacy learning in a shorter time. For example, teachers can visit children's homes at the beginning of the school term in order to help construct an appropriate yearly plan. They can then 'connect school literacy practices to children's life experiences and interests, broaden their literacy practices and develop academic strengths' (Soltera-González, 2009, p.283). By doing this, children can enjoy a smoother transition from home to school.

As discussed in section 3.4.5, the children's home language plays an important role in their second language learning. Gregory (2005a) showed that in a bilingual classroom the teacher provided the children with opportunities that allowed the emergent bilingual child to interact with his native-speaking peers. As the current study found, the teacher can also provide children with space in which they draw on their experiences from their homes and communities. Gregory (2005a, p.233) suggested that:

We need to provide young children with actual experiences, so that they automatically link the appropriate language with the objects, feelings, etc. associated with those experiences.

She pointed out that this would help children to develop language and literacy skills, even in a monolingual classroom, as the current study has indicated.

Examining Kurdish primary school children's language practices in Turkey, Gökalp (2015) suggested that the curriculum needed to be redesigned in order to include children with different language practices. As discussed in Chapter 2, some of the limitations on Kurdish have been lifted since the 1990s, especially in the areas of publishing and broadcasting. However, it is considered by teachers, head teachers and curriculum designers that it would be productive to take Kurdish children's cultural and linguistic backgrounds into account in the

preschool setting, rather than focusing on what they do not know. As this study highlights, their second language (Turkish) development would benefit from the use of their home language (Akoğlu and Yağmur, 2016).

The implication for parents is that at home they need to provide their children with opportunities to experience and learn concepts in the home language. This thesis has indicated that rather than being an obstacle to second language and literacy learning, a minority language and culture would help children to develop their learning in a monolingual classroom. One can argue that speaking different languages can be seen as an advantage as it allows children to make sense of their learning in a new language. In contexts where the minority language is undervalued, parents should not be discouraged from using that minority language at home. Akoğlu and Yağmur's (2016) study, which examined Turkish immigrant children's second language learning in nurseries in the Netherlands, found that their proficiency (their skills and experience) in Turkish affected their Dutch learning. The authors suggested that immigrant Turkish parents use their home language at home to the fullest extent, and should not be guided by beliefs that the home language would constrain second language learning. It is therefore beneficial to the children's learning to support their home language and culture.

8.5. Limitations and directions for future research

There are the limitations to the current study, one of which is mainly focused on the children's language and literacy learning in the nursery. Although I tried to collect data from home settings as much as I could, and my study did offer some insights into the children's language use at home, I feel that the literature would benefit from future research that concentrates on the way children's language practices change at home when they start school. In addition, we need more research examining the way children model language use for their younger siblings in minority contexts. Gregory (2001) argued that siblings are in a privileged position in which older brothers and sisters can transfer and translate the meaning of the school's education to their younger siblings. Gregory showed how siblings initiate each other into school practices at home. In her later study, she also indicated that older siblings brought school discourses home with them (Gregory, 2005a). Similarly, Drury (2004a) gave us insights into how minority children practised their learning at home. In other words, these studies indicate how children

take their school learning into a home setting. However, the studies did not pay specific attention to the way language use changed at home.

Future research could also investigate children from other minorities (such as Arabic) in terms of their Turkish language and literacy learning in Turkish nurseries. As discussed in section 3.7, there is no qualitative research other than my study that examines other minority children in similar circumstances. Existing literature is based on experimental studies (Tulu, 2009; Yazıcı et al., 2010). These studies do not mention the children's ethnic backgrounds (Tulu, 2009). In this sense, further research would offer additional insights into the teacher's agency, which was an unexpected finding in the current study. Future research could also investigate the role of digital technologies in minority children's Turkish language and literacy learning at home (Flewitt, 2013). Although my key participants did not possess smartphones or tablets, I observed that they accessed their parents' smartphones (mainly those of fathers and uncles as these devices had internet). In other words, children did have access to digital technologies available to them, and access is likely to increase in the future. Therefore, future research may investigate the role of such technologies in the learning processes of minority children.

This thesis leads to further research questions, which could be addressed in future. How do older siblings model language use for younger siblings at home after the older sibling starts nursery? How do new digital technologies such as phones and tablets affect children's second language and literacy learning, and how do these devices support their school learning at home?

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Appendix 1: Questions for semi-structured interviews held with the teachers and the deputy head teacher

- 1 What is the role of the nursery in teaching Turkish?
- 2 How do you support children's learning? What is your role in their learning?
- 3 How does being a Kurmanji speaker/not speaking Kurmanji affect the children's Turkish language and literacy? Is it an advantage or disadvantage?
- 4 According to your observations and teaching experience in this nursery, how do children learn Turkish language and literacy?
- 5 How do classroom activities such as Turkish language and art affect children's Turkish language and literacy learning?
- 6 How do children learn Turkish language and literacy from their peers?
- 7 What is the role of the family in learning Turkish language and literacy?
- 8 Do you think speaking Kurdish at home is an obstacle to learning Turkish?
- 9 What is the role of the community in learning Turkish language and literacy?
- 10 How does the lack of prestige of Kurdish in society and education affect learning Turkish?
- 11 Do you think Kurdish parents support children learning Turkish?

Appendix 2: Questions for semi-structured interviews held with the parents

- 1 What language do you generally speak at home?
- 2 Can you read and write in both Turkish and Kurdish?
- 3 Do you watch TV in Kurdish or Turkish?
- 4 When and why did you migrate to Van?
- 5 Do you speak generally Kurdish or Turkish in your home neighbourhoods?
- 6 Has language use changed at home since your child started in the nursery?
- 7 Has your child started communicating with you in Turkish since s/he entered the nursery?
- 8 Do you support your child's Turkish language and literacy learning?
- 9 Why do you want to your child to learn Turkish?
- 10 Do you help your child with her/his homework?

Appendix 3: This indicates the permission that the local educational authority gave me for my fieldwork.

KAYMAKAMLIK MAKAMINA
EDREMIT

Goldsmiths, Universty of London'da Milli Eğitim Bakanlığı adına 'okul öncesi çocuklarının dil gelişimi üzerine' doktora yapan İskender GELİR'in İlçemiz [REDACTED] Anaokulunda çalışma yapması Müdürlüğümüzce uygun görülmüştür.
Makamlarınızca da uygun görüldüğü takdirde Olurlarınıza arz ederim.

Mehmet İNAN
İlçe Milli Eğitim Müdürü

OLUR
12/07/2014
Duran ERYILMAZ
Kaymakam

Zorak Kayıt
Sayı: $\frac{830}{200}$

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