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MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION OF TURKISH MINORITY IN BULGARIA  
*BULGARISTAN'DAKİ TÜRK AZINLIĞIN ANA DİL EĞİTİMİ*

Emel MUTLU\*  
Suzan KAVANOZ\*\*

**Özet**

The Turkish minority in Bulgaria makes up a significant part of the country's population. What makes this Turkish minority maintain their culture and identity for nearly six centuries is their mother tongue which they have kept and used so long. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the historical period of mother tongue education of Turkish minority in Bulgaria and to examine the developments in Turkish language education in Bulgaria today. While doing so, the study aims to highlight political, economical and social elements that affect Turkish language education. The findings of the study indicate that the quality and situation of Turkish language education in Bulgaria suffered to a great extent from changes in political regimes. However, positive efforts have been observed in mother tongue education of Turkish minority in Bulgaria especially during the EU membership process of the country.

**Key Words:** Turkish Minority in Bulgaria, Turkish Language, Mother Tongue Education, Identity.

**Özet**

Bulgaristan'da yaşayan Türk azınlık Bulgar nüfusunun önemli bir bölümünü oluşturmaktadır. Türk azınlığın yaklaşık altı yüz yıl boyunca kültür ve kimliklerini yaşatabilmelerinin neden uzun süredir korudukları ve kullandıkları ana dilleridir. Bu çalışmanın amacı Bulgaristan'daki Türk azınlığa sağlanan ana dil eğitiminin tarihsel sürecini çözümlenmek ve Türk dili eğitiminde ülkenin değişen politik yapılarına bağlı olarak ne tür gelişmeler olduğunu incelemektir. Aynı zamanda Türk azınlıklara ana dil eğitimi etkileyen politik, ekonomik ve sosyal öğeleri vurgulamayı amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmanın bulguları, Bulgaristan'daki Türk azınlığın ana dil eğitiminin durumunun ve niteliğinin ülkedeki yönetim biçimi değişikliklerinden büyük ölçüde etkilendiğini göstermektedir. Ancak özellikle Bulgaristan'ın Avrupa Birliği üyeliği sürecinde, Türk azınlığın ana dil eğitiminde olumlu çabalar gözlenmektedir.

**Anahtar Sözcükler:** Bulgaristan'daki Türk azınlığı, Türk Dili, Ana Dil Eğitimi, Kimlik.

**Introduction**

Mother tongue education is very crucial in a person's life in that it does not only develop mother tongue but it also improves especially children's cognitive abilities in the main school language. Upon the light of previous findings that suggest bilingualism exerts linguistic advantages on children and the children's abilities in both languages depend on each other, the importance attached to mother tongue education is not surprising. When bilingual children are taught their mother tongue effectively and their literacy is developed, their school performance also increases (Cummins, 2000; Skutnabb-Kangas, 2000). Conversely, when mother tongue is ignored, its development is prevented and thus children's personal and conceptual foundation required for effective learning is threatened. Besides, the best way to achieve knowledge is through the

\* Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Education, Foreign Languages Education Department Graduate

\*\* Yıldız Technical University, Faculty of Education, Foreign Languages Education Department, Asist. Prof. Dr.

mother tongue. The importance of mother tongue was recognized by international organizations like UNESCO as early as 1951, claiming that it is culturally, pedagogically and psychologically more appropriate than imposing another language upon others (Yadav, 1992). Also, preservation and promotion of a language is required for the culture and traditions inherent in that language.

Having emphasized the importance of mother tongue education, this study seeks to examine both the historical and current Turkish language education of Turkish minority in Bulgaria and political, economic, social reasons that affect this process with an aim to demonstrate a clear picture of how policies implemented in Bulgaria regarding mother tongue education to Turkish minority deprived these people from this right and enforced Bulgarian language in order to eliminate Turks with their culture and identity. In addition, the study attempts to point out the circumstances under which Turkish education is carried out as well as motivations behind it. In this context, Turkish course materials, educational methods implemented while teaching Turkish and qualifications of the educators will also be the focus of this study. It is the researchers' hope to demonstrate to what degree Bulgaria failed to protect Turkish minority's linguistic rights in the past and to what extent Bulgarian government has been trying to improve the current situation triggered by their wish to join European Union. In the light of the data gathered, it will be possible to understand the quality of mother tongue education Turkish people living in Bulgaria could receive previously and can now. Considering the significance of mother tongue in providing the continuity of societies and cultures, the assertion that it is Turkish language that keeps the Turkish community in Bulgaria alive makes this study an important one in language education field.

### **1. Turks in Bulgaria**

Turks, who are defined as minorities in Bulgaria today, settled in Balkans densely in the Ottoman times. The first traces of Turkish education in Bulgaria are seen with the coming of various Turkish clans and tribes into this country. Turks raided in Bulgaria starting from the fourth century and these displacements continued until the middle of the nineteenth century. The first Turkish tribe who came to Bulgaria (375 AD) was the Huns (Memişoğlu, 2002, p.1). After the Hun Turks, various Turkish tribe raids such as that of Avars, Bulgarian Turks (Kutrigurs ve Onogurs), Pechenegs, Oghuz Turks, Kumans and Tatars followed them (Kafesoğlu, 1977).

Starting from the Ottoman's Empire conquering Tırnova in 1393, Vidin in 1396 and Dobruca in 1400s, Bulgaria was kept under Turkish rule until 1908 (Dayıoğlu, 2005). As in other places in the Balkans, Turkish settlements in Bulgaria were the result of various population and housing policies of the Ottoman Empire they transferred from Anatolia. As what follows, Turkish population in Bulgaria has experienced great changes up to now. Even though in 1880s Turkish population in Bulgaria was about 650.000, constituting 21.8 % of the whole population in the country, this rate gradually declined in 2001 and Turkish population dropped to 746.664 which made up only 9.5 % of the whole public (Lutov, 2006). The continuity of the decline in population rate was the evidence of an ongoing migration of Turks from Bulgaria. There might be various reasons underlying this downward change of Turkish minority population, but the wars in which Bulgaria took part and the policies about Turkish minorities had an important influence in generating these migrations.

### **2. Turkish Minority Education System in Bulgaria**

Education of Turkish minority in Bulgaria has gone through several modifications due to frequent changes of governments and administration systems as well as some treaties signed. Until the period starting with the immigration of the Ottoman Turks from Anatolia to Rumelia in 1353, data relating to education of Turkish people in Bulgaria is not sufficient. The education provided is supposed to have been mainly on Islamic principles and basics for daily prayers. Besides, the earlier education, culture, and art belonging to Turkish tribes are known to have come from the period of Bulgarian Turks (Kutrigurs and Onogurs) (Memişoğlu, 2002). At the same time, it is known that mother tongue of Bulgarian Turks, like Göktürks', was also Turkish. In this part of the study, education systems provided to Turkish minority by Bulgarian governing organs will be examined under different periods.

## **2.1. Turkish Education of Turkish Minority in Bulgaria during the Ottoman Period**

The establishment and spread of Turkish education in Bulgaria gained speed and density under the reign of the Ottoman Empire. Ottoman rulers gave great importance and contributed to Turkish Islamic education by founding mosques, schools and Muslim theological schools in the villages and towns where the Turkish mostly lived, right after the start of Ottoman reign in these regions. Turkish education in Bulgaria in the period of Ottoman Empire was covered in two sections as Reorganization and Pre-Reorganization period.

### **2.1.1. Mother Tongue Education of Turkish Minority before Reorganization (*Tanzimat*) Era**

The Ottomans, as they did in other regions under their rule, created a suitable environment that allowed Turk-Islam education in the villages and towns inhabited by Turks and Muslims by establishing madrasas and building mosques between the late 14<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries in Bulgaria (Atakan, 2006). Mosques, which were not only places for worshipping but also an important component of Islamic education, were the first educational institutions. Moreover, mosques were also considered the most efficient educational and cultural institutions as they contributed to the socialization.

Islamic schools, the numbers of which reached up to 174 in the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, served as important educational institutions. Mysticism of Islam, patience, modesty, obedience, tolerance to others, and moral values were among the mostly taught issues (Memişoğlu, 2002). They had profound effects on the people of those regions providing Islamic thinking and understanding. Along with the Islamic schools, *sibyan schools*<sup>1</sup>, madrasas of secondary and higher degree were amongst the institutions educating Turks in Bulgaria.

#### **2.1.1.1. Sibyan Schools**

*Sibyan schools* in Bulgaria were first established in big cities, towns, and villages subsequently. At the beginning, they were founded in the buildings inside the *kulliyes*<sup>2</sup> as well as those next to mosques and then in almost all Turkish villages with higher population (Vatansever, 2008). The reason why they were built next to mosques is the common belief that religious education constituted the most important part of religion and the teaching of prayers. They were founded mostly by wealthy people or senior state officers through charity organizations, and their expenses were funded by those organizations' incomes as well. As for the villages and some districts, they established their schools with the support of their local people. In the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the central district (*sancak*) of the Rumelian states hosted 60 *sibyan schools* whereas this figure surpassed 330 in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Memişoğlu, 2002).

Boys from Turkish Muslim families, between the ages 7 and 15, attended those schools and the girls' ages ranged from 7 to 13. No data has been found relating to the admission procedure to those schools possibly because every son or daughter of Muslim families had a right to attend them. As in other schools in the Ottoman Empire, during reorganization era, *sibyan schools* did not have a certain curriculum, instead, the children were taught mainly basics of Islam and practical knowledge of prayer. However, this situation changed after the reorganization era. During this period, new courses were added to the curriculum such as religion, ethics, mother tongue, social sciences, law statements, history and geography, calligraphy, music, gym, and practical skills for households (Vatansever, 2008).

#### **2.1.1.2. Madrasas**

Madrasas, viewed as an important element in Ottoman education history, were the schools where students were educated after *sibyan schools*. They were mostly established and administrated by charity organizations funded by citizens (Vatansever, 2008, p. 27). Following the occupation of the region, Ottoman Empire utilized madrasas with the aim of spreading Islam in the area and answering the educational needs as well as social-cultural ones of the Turks inhabiting the region. First madrasas started to appear in the late 14<sup>th</sup> century and their number reached up to 142 in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Memişoğlu, 2002). Those who finished *sibyan schools* or took private tutoring equivalent to this education were admitted to these schools. The total number of students in a madrasa rarely exceeded 20 although this could vary regarding the conditions of the

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<sup>1</sup> In the Ottoman Empire, primary education was mostly carried out at *Sibyan Schools*, which served just like the elementary schools of today, but they taught some Islamic teachings and simple mathematics and basic literacy skills.

<sup>2</sup> *Kulliye* refers to a complex of buildings, centered around a mosque and directed within a single institution such as foundations.

organization and the size of madrasa. Courses said to be taught in these institutions were Turkish and Islamic topics such as Islamic law, hadiths, interpretation of the Koran along with logic, the Koran, rhetoric, lexicon, syntax, geometry, calculation, astronomy and philosophy (Vatansever, 2008). As for the duration of the education, it changed according to the degree of the madarasa and the era, ranging from three months to three years. All madrasas located in Bulgaria served well enough to realize the objectives of the Ottoman Empire in the region in a feudalistic and theocratic way until the end of the 16th century as in other states of the Ottoman Empire.

### **2.1.2. Mother Tongue Education of Turkish Minority in Bulgaria during the Reorganization Period (1839-1876)**

With the launch of reorganization in 1839, various laws were enacted. The length of education in sibyan schools was determined to be four years on the assumption that teaching would be more qualified and it would be possible to develop an examination system (Memişoğlu, 2002). In line with the agreements dated as 1857, 1863, and 1864, serious steps to improve education were taken despite several difficulties. On the other hand, the most significant attempt to regulate the education system was Maarif-i Umumiye Nizamnamesi (General Education Constitution) put into force in 1869 (*ibid.*). This regulation confirmed that education, for the first time, had to be regarded as a service to be provided by the state. This paved the way for Turkish education system to be considered as one entire system, as in today's system of elementary, secondary, and high school. The reforms of 1869 contributed a lot to the revision of the Ottoman education system. Accordingly, several attempts to develop and revise education of the Turks in Bulgaria were observed during this period.

The initial revisions emerged as sibyan schools appeared. Sibyan schools, having deteriorated in time with decreasing level and quality of education, underwent some changes and were turned into four-year-elementary schools after the reorganization period. In addition to religion courses within their curriculum, the teachers started to offer courses like Turkish language, history, geography, and mathematics. Literacy was given importance and students were made to attend classes by law. Besides, the state started inspections at schools (Dayıoğlu, 2005). At the same time, establishment and spread of Rüştiye Schools (Junior high schools) gained great importance. Rüştiye Schools, which underwent frequent changes in terms of curriculum and duration of education at their infancy, added courses such as Persian, geography, and geometry to their present courses like Quran, religious doctrines, and calculation (Memişoğlu, 2002).

### **2.1.3. Mother Tongue Education of Turkish Minority during the Princedom Period of 1878-1908**

As the Ottoman – Russian war during 1877-1878 ended with the defeat of the Ottomans, Ayestefanos Treaty was signed on March 3, 1878, and Bulgarian princedom was established. Along with the Berlin Congress held on June 13, 1878, the north of Balkan Mountain ranges were designated as Bulgarian Princedom, and the south was East Rumelian State, which was a de facto Bulgarian territory although officially known as Ottoman land.

Tuna state on which Bulgarian Princedom was founded, was one of the wealthiest regions of the Ottoman Empire both economically and culturally. Moreover, it was known as the most educated region of the Empire after Istanbul as several reforms were implemented in modern schools there (Lutov, 2006). According to the figures of 1874 and 1885, the number of elementary schools in Bulgaria was 2.492 then. The Ottoman – Russian war created important damages in the education system as it did in other fields. 1877 and 1886 might be called the downward period of the education of Turkish Minority in Bulgaria. As Şimşir (1986) points out “Turkish education level grew gradually in 30 years, but it dropped drastically just in 10 years” (p. 32).

The years 1877 and 1886 were defined by Şimşir (1986) as follows;

1) In these years, Bulgarian Turks lost almost all their teachers. And, in those days it became more difficult to find teachers to teach in Turkish minority schools.

2) Most of the Turkish madrasas and schools were destroyed, and it would be too difficult to restore.

3) Economic superiority of Turks vanished, rendering Turkish people impoverished. That's why; restoration and maintenance of Turkish schools were arduous for Turkish society.

4) The properties of Turkish charity were widely destroyed, which almost terminated the incomes of madrasas (p. 35).

Turkish education in Eastern Rumelia, which went through a recession due to Ottoman – Russia war, started to recover as of 1879. This recovery would be achieved thanks to the articles of Dahili Nizamname (Internal Regulations) prepared by the Commission of European East Rumelia (Memişoğlu, 2002, p.62). This regulation allowed “Temporary Regulation for Primary Education”, which was agreed upon in 1879, to provide education under rather harsh conditions (*ibid.*). In the first term of 1879 – 1880, Turkish minority accounted for almost half of 34.000 students enrolled to the schools. The following year, the number increased to 80.590 (*ibid.*, p.63).

Although no issues related to education of Turkish minority was mentioned in the Treaty of Berlin in 1878, with the foundation of Bulgarian Princedom, internal regulations about this also arose. With respect to this regulation, Bulgarian Education Law, which regulated the state schools along with the minority schools, was enacted in January 30, 1885. This law divided education into two parts as state and private and within this distinction minority schools were regarded as private schools. As per the articles of 204 and 207, every Muslim school was to be administered by committees of three people in villages and of five in cities. Furthermore, the members of these committees were elected among the Bulgarian Muslim citizens. (Dayıoğlu, 2005).

The abovementioned law made Bulgarian language mandatory in those schools. On the other hand, minority schools did not have a centralized administration and a common curriculum so they each acted independently. Regarding the number of the minority schools during the Princedom Period, according to the first officially published research data, Turks had 1.243 elementary schools where 1.404 Turkish teachers taught and 69.936 students were educated in 1894-1895 academic term (Turan, 1998). The decrease in the number of schools was accompanied by a decline in the education quality. What's more, it was hard to reach the required education materials and books in that period. In 1243, there were only 2.549 books, 78 maps, 2 spheres, and 15 instruments of different sorts in Turkish schools and those difficult conditions were also present at *rüştiyes* and madrasas, the number of which decreased dramatically after the war from 40 down to 14. And, nearly 150 madrasas of pre-war period declined after the foundation of Princedom; the first survey conducted after the war in 1900 shows that there were only 20 madrasas with 21 teachers and 728 students (*ibid.*).

In the following years when the war's destructive effects started to fade away, both the conditions of minorities and the quality of education began to improve. In 1895-1896 school year, there was a considerable increase in the number of schools as well as in the number of teachers. However, this betterment period did not last very long. A gradual decrease in the number and lowering quality of education became prevalent in the late Princedom period, 1907-1908, that accompanied a significant decline in the number of schools and

teachers as well as students. The information related to this period reveals that owing to the negative circumstances of the Princedom Period, at the end of the period, Turkish minority in Bulgaria was the least educated society in the country.<sup>3</sup>

## **2.2. Mother Tongue Education of Turkish Minority during the Bulgarian Kingdom Period (1908-1944)**

After having declared its independence on October 5, 1908, one of the first actions of Bulgarian administration was related to education issue. In this context, the new education law published in official gazette dated as No.49, 5 March 1909 announced regulations concerning public schools and private schools that were aggregated (Dayıoğlu, 2005). Shortly after the Education Law had come into force, İstanbul

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<sup>3</sup> According to official statistics in 1990 3.9% and in 1995 3.7% of the Muslims were literate. In 1905, more detailed statistics were arranged. With respect to the report, literate Turkish citizens were 4 % among the Muslim societies. This rate was 32.3 % for Bulgarians, 35.2 % for Greeks, 53.8 % for Jews, 54.3 % for Armenians in the same year (Turan, 1998, pp.214-216). According to these numbers it seems that Muslim-Turkish minority is the least literate society in Bulgaria.



Protocol Agreement was signed between the Otoman Empire and Bulgaria in 1909 and eventually İstanbul Peace Treaty and the Supplemental Agreement to the treaty was also signed in 1913. These treaties concerned with supplying the Bulgarian budget with adequate funds for the protection of Muslim schools are not in effect today.

The regulations related to education were also included in the articles 54 and 55 of the Treaty of Neuilly which is still in force today. According to these articles, minorities in Bulgaria, by depending on their own resources, are permitted to establish their schools and use their mother tongue freely in these schools. In addition, Bulgaria would provide the necessary facilities for education in mother tongue at schools where the majority of minorities reside and it was also stated Bulgaria would leave allocate a fair share on state and municipal budgets as well as supporting minority education with the budget gathered from public funds (Turan, 1998).

Although Turkish minority education in Bulgaria was finally organized and through these treaties some rights were granted to Turkish minorities, the political developments during this period produced a considerable impact on the functioning of education. Immediately after the independence of Bulgaria, the Turkish minority faced serious problems in education field as a result of the outbreak of the Balkan Wars and then the First World War. At the end of the Balkan Wars, a significant increase was recorded in the number of Turkish schools (Şimşir, 1998).

Table 1: Turkish Schools in Bulgaria between 1921 and 1944 (According to Bulgarian Official Statistics)

Education years	Primary Schools (Sibyan Schools)	Junior High Schools (Rüştiyes)	Total
1921-1922	1.673	39	1.712
1943-1944	397	27	424

Actual increase in the number of Turkish schools was seen when the Farmers' Party was in power during the leadership Stambuliski. Furthermore, two very important and positive developments occurred in this period. The first one was the opening of "Turkish State Teachers College"(Devlet Türk Darü'l Muallimin) in Şumnu in 1918 and the first graduates in 1920. Second, in the kingdom period , Nüvvap School (Teacher Education School) was opened under the name of "Medresetü'n Nüvvab" in 1922-1923 school year. It was one of the higher education institutions of Muslim Turkish minority in Bulgaria and established to educate müfti (Islamic scholar who is in charge of Islamic affairs for a district) candidates and teachers. Thus, it signifies the important step taken for the need of teachers which was constantly a serious problem. (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p. 233). Unfortunately, these positive developments were not long-lived. With the overthrow of the Farmers' Party on

June 9 ,1923, Turkish schools were started to be closed down and slowly began to be transformed into public schools. The closing of Turkish Teachers School in 1928 was the last blow on Turkish minority education (Ahmed, 2008, p.35).

A rapid decrease in the number of the Turkish minority schools was recorded in about twenty years. These schools were either closed down or turned into Bulgarian public schools. The property of the closed schools was transferred to public schools. In the name of assimilation of Muslim-Turkish minority, Bulgarian government's first target was to shut down or convert especially the Turkish schools in far mountain villages or in rural areas (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p.234). During the Second World War years, Bulgarian authorities got more rigid and continued to close minority schools with the aim of depriving Turkish minority of getting Turkish language education. In addition to directly closing down the schools where Turkish minority is densely populated, Bulgarian government succeeded in getting about 100 Turkish schools closed down by carrying out various interventions (Şimşir, 1986, p.150).

Above and beyond, Turkish minority schools had also financial problems. Schools were financed with the donations of charities and minorities. However, as the income was insufficient, to meet the expenses of the schools Bulgarian government started to collect taxes from the minorities in return for providing special

education for minorities. The heavy taxation placed such a burden on the Turkish minority that the ones who could not afford to pay these taxes resorted to send their children to Bulgarian public schools in which the education was totally in Bulgarian. Through placing unbearable monetary demands on the Turkish minority, the Bulgarian government was obligating Turkish people to abandon their rights to receive mother tongue education. This was also a strategy to accomplish assimilation of Turkish citizens. This situation resulted in a decrease in the number of Turkish schools. Even though in 1938, after a challenging process, Latin alphabet was put into use in Turkish schools, there were still problems unsolved. Dayıoğlu (2005), summarizes the education life during the Kingdom Period as follows.

In the period between 1938 and 1944, on one hand Bulgarian government continued closing down Turkish schools and thus intellectual Turkish teachers were suspended, on the other hand course books and various necessary equipments could not be supplied because of the economic problems resulted from the war: therefore the issues in education field got more desperate (Dayıoğlu, p. 242).

### **2.2.1. Acceptance of Latin Alphabet in 1928**

The first of November, 1928, marked the acceptance of new Turkish alphabet by the Turkish Republic; Arabic alphabet was no more to be used. Accordingly, in parallel with these developments, Bulgarian Turks felt the necessity to start education by using the new Turkish alphabet. This transition was not easy and it took a while before it was finalized. As soon as Latin alphabet was accepted in Turkey in the congress of Turkish Teachers Union held on November 1, 1928, the decision that education should be done in Latin alphabet at Turkish schools in Bulgaria was taken and this led to several preparations in this direction (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p.238). Notwithstanding, Bulgarian Ministry of Education declared in the 34423rd circular on September 10, 1928 that course books published in Latin alphabet will not be allowed to be used in Turkish schools for a four year period and the use of course books written with the Latin alphabet was considered illegal. (Keskinöglü, 1985).

Following the objection of Turkish Teachers Union to this decision, the Ministry allowed education with Latin letters and announced this with the 1040th circular dated on January 14, 1929. Publication of course books with Latin letters was also permitted (Hakov, 2008, p. 51). In fact, all these developments marked the beginning of education in Turkish minority schools in Bulgaria in 1930 in its real sense.

Regrettably, this new process of education and a wave of optimism did not last long. In 1934, with the coup d'état in Bulgaria, new government increased the pressure on Turkish schools. From 1936 onwards, education with Arabic letters in the Turkish schools in Bulgaria, which was prohibited before, started again and publication of course books in Latin letters was prohibited (Hakov, 2008, p. 51). History seemed to repeat itself. From this date, until 1938, education continued with two different alphabets; one with Arabic letters was mostly in the countryside, and the other with Latin letters, thanks to the pressures of more modernist section of society, was mostly in towns and villages. Finally after three years of confusion and unclearness, Bulgarian Ministry of Education declared in 1938 that education in all Turkish schools had to be delivered with books published in Latin letters and maximum two hours should be allocated to Arabic courses (Şimşir, 1986, p.163). As a result of considerable efforts, ten years later after the acceptance of Latin alphabet in Turkish Republic, Turkish minorities in Bulgaria could gain their right to acquire education with new Turkish letters.

### **2.3. Mother Tongue Education of Turkish Minority in Bulgaria during Communist Party Government (People's Republic of Bulgaria) Era (1944-1989)**

A new form of government in the form of People's Republic was constituted in Bulgaria on September 9, 1944 (Memişoğlu, 2002, p. 221). This new era signalled the beginning of Bulgaria's transition to socialism. It did not take too long for Bulgaria to get under the influence of Soviet Union quickly. On September 8, 1946, Kingdom regime ended and Republic was declared just in a week (Dayıoğlu, 2005). The regime change meant that it would be a new era for Turkish minority in Bulgaria as well. Turkish minority, which had lost their educational rights and educational institutions or had been converted into Bulgarian nationality, were able to express their demands now and consequently, several improvements in their education took place in the first period of this era. They were able to assert their need to place education on a more democratic level in the "Bulgaria Turkish Minority Conference" held by National Committee of Country Front-Line(1) in 1944 and the following decisions taken there were;

1. Extension and Practice of Compulsory Education to Girls and Boys
2. Education in Turkish in Turkish schools (primary and secondary) except for the courses given in Bulgarian
3. Principals and head teachers of Turkish schools must be Turkish
4. Wages of Turkish teachers must be paid by the government. Turkish teachers must have the right to retire.
5. Turkish teachers must benefit from the same rights as Bulgarian teachers do.
6. Turkish students who graduate from Turkish schools must be accepted to higher Bulgarian schools without exams.
7. The right in the sixth item must be valid for Turkish children, who graduated from their schools before September, 1944.
8. In all Turkish schools, education must be given with Turkish letters (Latin letters)
9. Turkish children should have one hour of religion course in a week.
10. School buildings, school fields and other estates which were taken from the Turkish minority by the previous governments must be given back.
11. New school buildings suitable for sanitary requirements must be built in the villages and countryside.
12. Turkish teachers, whose rights were taken, must gain their rights back.
13. Pedagogical courses must be provided during summer holidays in order to increase the vocational knowledge of Turkish teachers.
14. Pedagogical schools (teacher schools) must be opened in order to educate teachers in Northern and Southern Bulgaria and financial responsibility must be undertaken by the government (Memişoğlu, 2002, pp. 222-223)

In addition to the developments stated above, in September, 1946, after the declaration of republic, there were some arrangements in the domestic law; Turkish schools' private school status was abolished and they were transformed into state schools. From this date onwards, Bulgarian government would be responsible for all the financial expenses. Bulgarian government's reasons for transforming Turkish schools into state schools were threefold. Initially, financial burden on the minority would disappear and level of education in Turkish schools would improve and finally issues about course books and teachers would be solved. In addition to these laws, the law which came into force on December 4, 1947 also declared that minorities have the right to learn their mother tongue and improve their national culture (Yenisoy, 1999 )

After the nationalization of Turkish schools, Bulgarian government kept its promise for a while. From 1946 until 1959, a socialist model of education was in effect in Turkish schools as well as state administration. During this period, the number of Turkish schools increased continuously. The following table presents the situation of Turkish schools, teachers and students with numbers Ali Dayıoğlu (2005);

Table 2: The number of Turkish Schools / Teachers / Students in Bulgaria (1943-1950)

Years	Turkish Schools	Teachers	Students
1943-1944	424	871	37,335
1947-1948	987	2.437	88.600
1949-1950	1.199	3.037	105.376

During the period after 1944, in addition to primary schools, secondary schools and high schools, Turkish teacher education schools started to open as well. In 1947, the Nüv vap School in Şumnu was turned into a high school with the name of "Nazım Hikmet Turkish Gymnasium" (Dayıoğlu, 2005,p. 317). Afterwards, teachers' schools started to be launched with the purpose of raising teachers who internalized socialist values. The aim was to find a solution for teacher shortages. In addition to the schools founded for



this purpose, there were also long term courses in order educate Turkish teachers. There were 1.305 Turkish teachers trained in these courses in 1953 (Şimşir, 1986, p. 247).

These efforts and developments for the education of Turkish minority did not last too long. All these rights given to Turkish people by the Bulgarian government were taken back in the progress of time. First, Turkish lesson hours were reduced and combined gradually, afterwards Turkish classes launched in Bulgarian high schools were combined with other classes in 1955-56 academic year (Ertürk and Eminoğlu, 1993, p. 23). Restriction of education right of Turkish minority reached to its highest point with the combination of Turkish minority schools with Bulgarian schools according to the decision taken at the Joint Session of BKP Central Committee in October, 1958 (Poulton, 1994: 121). In 1960, all the Turkish schools were combined with Bulgarian schools. Turkish teacher schools had been closed before long (Eminov, 1997: 135). After these developments, Turkish minority would receive education in Bulgarian schools in Bulgarian language the same as Bulgarian people. Bulgarian government stated that the main purpose of termination Turkish education was to help Turkish students learn Bulgarian better, to make a breakthrough in the field of education and to help them reach a higher level. In fact, these efforts and alleged reasons set forth were nothing else than attempts of assimilation and Bulgarianization of Turks.

According to the decision taken by the ministry, while Turkish students had no Turkish lessons in the first year of primary school, they could only attend Turkish language and Turkish reading lessons for four hours in a week during 2nd 3rd and 4th grades. 7th and 8th graders, on the other hand, were provided two hours of Turkish each week (Şimşir, 1986, pp. 256-257). However, the Turkish course, which was provided as a free elective course, could only be taken on condition that at least 10 students submitted their wish in this direction (Eminov, 1997, pp.132-133). However, due to the fact that it was compulsory for students to learn languages such as Bulgarian, Russian, English and French, they did not choose Turkish in addition to all these courses. Turkish course, which was apparently an elective course was either not launched at all or the course was not held as it should have been. Class hours of Turkish course were gradually diminished. In 1974 Turkish education ended completely (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p. 320). Apart from this, it was prohibited for Turkish students to speak Turkish among themselves at school and during classes (Oran, 1993, p. 114).

It is possible to claim that behind the prohibition of speaking Turkish in the schools and Bulgarian government's decision in 1958-59 educational year to combine Turkish schools with Bulgarian school lies the purpose of assimilating Turkish minority into Bulgarian nation. After combining Turkish and Bulgarian schools and putting an end to Turkish education on a large scale in 1958-59 school year, usage of Turkish was prevented in every aspect of life until the collapse of real-socialist regime towards the end of 1989. The expectation behind this imposition was that Turkish citizens would use Bulgarian in their daily lives and would gradually forget Turkish (Eminov, 1997, p. 136).

Apart from the enforcements stated above, a variety of difficulties appeared for Turkish teachers as well; some of their rights were taken from them or they were discharged. Some of them were directed to other fields which had nothing to do with their profession and required hand labor. Until 1989, Bulgarian government implemented enforcements which disregarded the rights and freedoms of Turkish minority, which were guaranteed by a variety of treaties within the scope of its assimilation policy.

#### **2.4. Mother Tongue Education of Turkish Minority during the Republic of Bulgaria Period**

The power of the Communist Party came to an end on November 10, 1989 and the name of Bulgaria was changed to Republic of Bulgaria (Memişoğlu, 2002, p.263). When the rulership of Tudor Jivkov regime ended on that date, it was clearly seen that important developments occurred in democratization and within that framework moderate attitudes were shown for the problems of Turkish minority in Bulgaria.

On December 29, 1989, the decision to give back the names of Turkish minority, which had been changed constrainedly and to abolish the prohibitions on language, religion and justice was given (Memişoğlu, 2002, p.264). From then on, Turkish minority started to ask for Turkish lessons to be allowed at public schools of Turkish minority. As a result of these endeavors, same as before, Turkish-minority schools were not opened, but they could only get some rights on Turkish lessons, course books and teachers.

Since the early 1990s, Turkish people ambitiously strived to get Turkish lessons to be included at least in the weekly course schedule as a separate lesson at schools where Turkish students were educated. The efforts of Movement for Rights and Freedoms (MRF), which was regarded as the representative of Turkish minority, were obviously remarkable. As a result of these efforts, MRF and the authorities of the Ministry of Education came together to discuss this issue and reach a consensus in the late 1990s. At the end of the negotiations, Bulgarian government accepted to include Turkish lessons into the curriculum of the public schools located in the areas where Turkish minority existed in majorities. Regarding the agreement compromised, the Turkish lessons, which would be taught for 4 hours at a week, were going to be valid for all Turkish students at primary schools starting from the second semester of 1990-1991 education.. For Turkish lessons to be taught at these schools, there should be minimum 10 Turkish students in classrooms (Dayioğlu, 2005, p.389).

Making a statement on February 14, 1991 after the last agreement, Matev Mateyev, the Minister of Education, announced that Turkish lessons would be given starting from March at some schools as a piloting study, and then at all primary schools Turkish classes would be held (Poulton, 1994, p.171). Even though, this was a promising act, the announcement of the Minister of Education caused reaction on the part of the nationalist section. Consequently, as a result of increasing protests and agitation, the state retreated and this ended with the abolishment of Turkish lessons at schools.<sup>4</sup>

Despite of the fact that the minority groups organized protest demonstrations against this decision, Turkish lessons were not included in school curriculum at the beginning of 1992-1993 school year. Hereupon, notably Turkish people living in Kırçali and most Turks around the country did not send their children to schools by boycotting the new curriculum as of September 16, 1991 (Dayioğlu, 2005, p.391). The group of Turkish people who wanted their children to receive mother tongue education continued their protests to obtain their legal rights for weeks. In accordance with the decision of the Ministry of Education in November, 1991, Turkish lessons were allowed at schools in the areas where the Turkish minority resided so Turkish families started to send their children to school after almost forty five days. In the middle of 1991-1992 school year, in the areas where Turkish people were populated densely, Turkish lessons were allowed at some schools as an extracurricular course (Memişoğlu, 2002, pp.264-265).

Another development regarding Turkish language education was related with an enactment taken in September, 1994. Council of Ministers determined that 4-hour Turkish lessons would be given as non-compulsory courses to Turkish students at primary and elementary schools (Memişoğlu, 2002, p.265). On the grounds that the Turkish course was selective, there was a decrease in the number of Turkish students attending the lessons. From students' point of view attendance to a compulsory course (like English and French) whose validity is more widespread was more preferable. Furthermore, some of the school managers and teachers' It cannot be said that the education is going well when it is regarded that some school managers' and teachers' attempts to dissuade Turkish students from taking Turkish courses was another negative factor affecting Turkish education. Another point was that while students living in rural areas were attending the course more intensely especially during the winter, the participation rate was less during the spring and autumn time because of families' need for the labor force of their children throughout the plantation and harvest times of cultivated areas (Eminov, 1997, p.142). Notwithstanding, the status of Turkish education changed with the National Education Law enacted in 1999, mother language education was considered compulsory in the school curriculum from the first grade until the twelfth (Memişoğlu, 2002, p.265). According to the statistics of Ministry of Education, in 2002 number of students taking Turkish classes was approximately 40.000 (Dayioğlu, 2005, p.96).

As of 2005, there were not any minority schools in Bulgaria where language of instruction was Turkish except for four educational institutions teaching in Bulgarian as state schools , but affiliated to chief

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<sup>4</sup> With the abolishment of Turkish language education, Ahmet Doğan, the leader of MRF, explained that they printed 30.000 alphabet books and they would start to give Turkish lessons at the abandoned village houses of the emigrants and mosques out of school hours (Dayioğlu, 2005, p.391). There is not much available information on whether such an application has taken place or not. During the period that Turkish lessons were disrupted, Muharrem Tahsin started to give practical Turkish lessons in his column "Our Modern Turkish", and Kazım Memiş in "Language Courses at Your Home" in the Rights and Freedoms newspaper, the media organ of MRH (Eminov, 1997, pp.158 -164).

mufti (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p. 397). These were İmam Hatip High Schools opened in Şumnu on October 3, 1991, in Rousse and the other in Mestanlı Town (Momçilgrad) in South Bulgaria in 1991 (Lutov, 2006, p.13). In these schools, all courses were in Bulgarian and in addition, Islamic courses, Arabic and Turkish lessons were included in the curriculum (Tatarlı, 1992, p.323).

Another educational institution in this context was the Islamic Institute opened in Sofia on the basis of decision of Council of Ministers in 1990. The duration of study at the Islamic Institute was 3 years and the graduates could earn a foundation degree upon graduation. However, this institute was converted into High Islamic Institute as of 1998-1999 school year with a decision taken by Council of Ministers in 1998 (Memişoğlu, 2002, p.266). Moreover, to educate teachers for Turkish Language and Literature courses, Turkish Philology departments were opened at Pedagogy University of Şumnu and Teacher's Institute of Kırcaali in 1992-1993 academic year. About 500 students were accepted to these departments. At the same time, were sent to the universities in Turkey to attend teacher training courses and seminars to develop themselves professionally. The steps taken by Bulgarian government to improve Turkish Language Education and teachers for this purpose were noteworthy.

### **3. Methodological Issues Regarding Teaching Turkish as a Mother Tongue**

Almost no information can be obtained regarding the methodology used while teaching Turkish to Turkish minority. In fact, lack of systematic regulations or procedures in teaching Turkish is not very surprising within a context pervaded by sudden changes and contradictions and various language policies driven by political concerns. The historical search into education of minorities seems to yield no results regarding the methods and techniques used for this purpose or how the Turkish curriculum was designed.

There were no indications of different components of curriculum development such as needs analysis, formulation of objectives and goals, teaching, testing and materials development as well as evaluation of the program. This shows how Turkish language education is completely neglected and to what extent it was left to drift over. Even though there have been many attempts to develop new approaches and methods in language teaching in the Western world since the nineteenth century, Bulgarian education system does not seem to benefit from these developments taking place just by the side of the country. Undoubtedly, in an environment where minority language education is set aside, one cannot expect to have teachers equipped with professional theoretical and practical knowledge base. On the other hand, the teachers who were supposed to teach Turkish were graduates of Ottoman Junior High School which did not specifically prepare them for this profession. However, by examining the materials used and considering teachers' professional background, the education is understood to be teacher centered where there was a lot of focus on reading and writing without a systematic principled approach to language teaching.

#### **3.1. Turkish Course Materials**

Despite lack of information about the methodology utilized in teaching Turkish, the data reached concerning course materials attract attention. It is interesting to note that during the period of Bulgarian Princedom, there were 2.549 books, 78 maps, 2 globes and 15 other materials in total in 1.243 Turkish schools, (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p.185). The search for information about the quality and quantity of course materials yielded results only regarding Turkish course books. In the following section the preparation processed of Turkish course books and their quality and place in Turkish education will be examined with a focus on how they change according to different periods. Since the acceptance of Latin alphabet marks the beginning of use of Turkish language teaching books, the first period to be examined will be Monarchy Period in Bulgaria between 1908-1944.

##### **3.1.1. Course Materials in Turkish Schools during 1908-1944 Monarchy Period in Bulgaria**

The first Turkish course books used in Turkish Schools in Bulgaria were seen a little bit later than Turkey, after the acknowledgement of Roman letters. In a congress organized in Lom Town in 1928, Turkish Association of Teachers resolved upon starting education with the new Turkish alphabet in Turkish Minority Schools. Abiding by this decision, Ahmet Şükrü Bey of Plovdiv prepared an alphabet book called "Peculiar to Bulgarian Turkish Schools" by using the new letters and that book was imprinted in Hasköy (Yenisoy, 1999, p.128). Teachers affiliated to Turkish Teachers' Association started educating students with this new alphabet

in the same year. More devoted teachers prepared new course books and had them imprinted in printing houses called "Tefeyyüz" and "Zerafet" in Plovdiv; "Ümit" in Sophia; "Terakki" in Şumnu (Yenisoy, 1999, p.128).

The utilization of these published course books became an important source of debate for a long time due to the Bulgarian government policy. In the wake of an intense pressure to teach with Arabic letters in Turkish schools, Bulgarian government stated in the Official Newspaper numbered 199 and dated September 5th, 1935 that all course books to be used in Turkish schools had to be approved primarily by the Chief Mufti and secondarily by the Ministry of Education (Dayioğlu, 2005, p. 240).

As if this is not enough, the aforesaid regulations included the statement that course books had to be written by Bulgarian writers and published in Bulgaria (Keskinöđlu, 1985, p. 71). However, according to the regulations approved on August 5, 1930 and April 5, 1934, the course books to be utilized in Turkish schools were granted approval by the Ministry of Education right after they were approved in the annual congress of Association of Teachers (Dayiođlu, 2005, p. 241). This meant that it would not be possible to use the coursebooks published in Latin letters due to the fact the chief mufti would not ever permit texts with Latin letters. Moreover, the legal arrangement that obliges the publication of books by Bulgarian writers in Bulgaria was oriented to prevention of using books published in Turkey in Turkish schools.

Thanks to Turkish government's decisive reactions against education with Arabic letters, Bulgarian Ministry of Education issued a circular numbered 400-1-15 and dated as April 12, 1938 and proclaimed that education in all Turkish schools would be carried out with the course books published in Latin letters (Şimşir, 1986, p.163).

### **3.1.2. Course Materials in Turkish Schools during Communist Party Power**

The foremost advance in that era was the conversion of private Turkish schools into public schools. One of the reasons of this formation was to solve the course book case of Turkish schools. It was emphasized that course books would be printed by the government in Turkish, thereby the course book issue, a major problem for Turkish schools, would be solved. Owing to the problem of course book to be used in Turkish schools; from 1944 to 1946 neither the teachers nor the students had had books to follow. The enactment of the law regarding the conversion of Turkish schools into public schools in September 1946 was an effort to find a solution to this "course book" problem. Another step taken in this direction was the contest held in 1947 by Bulgarian Ministry of Education which was the responsible organ for undertaking the development and printing of course books to be used at Turkish schools. The purpose of the contest was to choose course books for Turkish schools. After the contest, several books were chosen and delivered to Turkish schools in 1947-48 school year. Even though the books published initially did not include socialistic content, the books published afterwards reflected an aim of imposing socialistic values to students (Dayiođlu, 2005, p. 323).

In 1947-1948 academic year, a quadrennial-teacher training school was opened in Stara Zagora to educate teachers for Turkish schools and course book preparations began. From then on, the Bulgarian Ministry of National Education took the responsibility of course book development as well as publication (Yenisoy, 2007). The development of new course books was considered important at that time. In parallel with these developments, although there were just 23 books for Turkish schools published before 1944, the number of course books published between 1953-54 increased to 85 (Yenisoy, 1999 p.138).

Nonetheless, this favorable atmosphere started to fade away towards 1958. Despite the abundance of Turkish course books available, in 1958-1959 academic year, Bulgarian government took the decision to collect Turkish course books as a consequence of embarking on a forced assimilationist policy toward the Turkish-speaking minority. It was apparent that the goal of the government was to accommodate Turkish people's assimilation into the mainstream Bulgarian culture because Turkish schools were merged with Bulgarian schools and Turkish students were forced to read Bulgarian books published in Bulgarian language (Şimşir, 1986, pp. 285-295). The teaching of Turkish was entirely phased out by the early 1970s. In a very propagandistic manner, the Turkish section of Narodna Prosveta Publishing House continued to publish Turkish texts which were comprised of reading and grammar books to be used in primary grades until 1966 and there were also other types of texts like stories, novels, poetry books published until 1969. However, all of a sudden these publications ceased after 1969. The merging of Turkish schools with Bulgarian schools co-

occurred with government attempts to impoverish the written Turkish of native writers by forcing them to use Bulgarian and Russian words instead of Turkish words. These Turkish native writers were given an extensive list of Turkish words and their Bulgarian/Russian equivalents to use as a guide (Eminov, 1989).

Let alone allowing Turkish course books to be used, the government took a decisive step to eliminate Turkish literature including the works translated into Turkish from other languages and original Turkish texts on the grounds that literary works of native poets and writers keep Turkish identity alive and therefore the force of socialist Bulgarian literature is lessened among Turkish speakers which created a contradiction with internationalism and ethnic unification (Çavuş, 1988). The result was destruction of all works of Turkish and heavy fines on the Turks who refused to surrender their books. This forced assimilation process reached its peak when about one million Turks living in Bulgaria were pressed to replace their Turkish names with Bulgarian ones. Even the dead people's names were changed. This unfair enforcement lasted until the overthrow of communist regime in 1989; a governmental decision was given and the Turks of Bulgaria were allowed to readopt their Turkish names. This was followed by a new development in Turkish education. After 1989 use of Turkish books at schools were permitted once more and this paved the way to publications of Turkish course books again.

### 3.1.3. Course Materials in Turkish Schools during the Republic of Bulgaria Period

In 1989, there was not even one book in hand due to annihilation of all published books in previous years. As soon as the totalitarian regime came to an end, publication of Turkish course books, after a period of 25 years, gained momentum. The Movement for Rights and Freedom (MRF), founded on January 4, 1990, made every effort to publish Turkish course books (Yenisoy, 2007) During the months following the foundation of the party, Turkish course books suitable for each grade were prepared. The books sent to Bulgarian Ministry of National Education were accompanied with letters that bear the signature of Ahmet Doğan, the chairman of MRF. In his letters he was requesting the assessment and approval of the books by the Ministry. Yenisoy (2007, p.37) provides the following letter as evidence;

*Your Honorable Minister,*

*MRF Central Administrative Council had a group of writers prepare course books for teaching Turkish in classes I to XI. These are prepared to give assistance to the Ministry of National Education. They have been examined by the professionals in MRF. I respectfully submit to your Ministry to evaluate and approve these Turkish course books for classes I-VIII enclosed herewith.*

*Sophia, 30-10-1990*

*Sign and Seal*

The books were examined and initially the book written for the first grade "Long-awaited Alphabet", was not approved by one of the members of the Ministry. After some minor modifications and corrections, the Ministry officials accepted it for publication and dissemination to schools. However, the publication of the books was always postponed owing to the financial difficulties. Additionally, the contents of Turkish books which the Turkish Ministry of National Education accepted as course books for schools in Turkey were changed to a lesser extent as to reflect the conditions of Bulgaria; Turkish artists and Bulgarian classical works were included in the new version of the books. For the new version Turkish intelligentsia in Bulgaria were consulted and they contributed in the formation of the new content. Soon after, these books could be published by virtue of international organizations in Sophia in 1992 (Yenisoy, 2007). By the beginning of 1992-1993 school year the Turkish textbooks problem was essentially solved.

In 1992-93 school year, Turkish course book problem was solved and the books were distributed to the schools where Turkish lessons are taught (Eminov, 1997, p.142). In addition to the books printed in Bulgaria, the Turkish government also donated books. Turkish course books for each grade in primary and secondary schools were prepared by Hayriye Memoğlu-Süleymanoğlu and Mehmet Süleymanoğlu and, in terms of their content, these books were totally different from the books produced during totalitarian regime years. Later, the second edition of these new readers was prepared by Turkish Republic Ministry of National Education (Yenisoy, 1999, p.163). Eventually, course books for grades I to VIII (10.000 books for each grade,



80.000 books in total) were sent to Bulgaria between 1997-2000.

In the inner covers of the books, the following statement was written: "*In the preparation of books, the educational methods implemented in elementary schools in Bulgaria were adopted.*" In the preface, the under mentioned explanation was seen "Primary and secondary school course books were prepared by the writers as a gratuitous service". The second editions were created by Turkish Republic Ministry of National Education and donated to Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science." On the back covers of the books, "Free of charge" remark appeared. In addition to these course books, the books sent by Turkish Republic Ministry of National Education to Bulgaria are demonstrated (Yenisoy, 1999, p. 164):

Table 3: Number of books sent to Bulgaria by Turkish Ministry of National Education

Institutions Sent to	Date	Book	Number
Sophia Islam Institute and Şumnu İmam Hatip High School	25.12.1991	Culture and Textbook	3419
Bulgarian İmam Hatip High Schools	11.12.1992	Textbook	1924
Şumnu, Rusçuk and Mestanlı İmam Hatip High Schools	13.01.1993	Textbook	1446
Burgaz Liberal University	10.01.1994	Culture Book	65
Varna Turkish Culture Association	25.12.1995	Culture Book	28
Sophia University	30.01.1995	Culture Book	22
Sophia University	11.09.1995	Culture Book	700
Sophia University	02.10.1995	Culture Book	25
Bulgarian Science and Education Ministry	1995	Turkish Language 2	155 000
Bulgarian Science and Education Ministry	1995	Turkish Language 3	150 000
Bulgarian Science and Education Ministry	1996	Turkish Language 4	120 000
Bulgarian Science and Education Ministry	1996	Reading Book	11 300
Bulgarian Science and Education Ministry	1997	Turkish Reading 2	10 000

In addition to the list above, according to the official information by Turkish Republic Ministry of National Education, between the years 1992-1993, 434.050 books were sent to Bulgarian Ministry of Education and Science (Yenisoy, 1999, p.164). In order to supplement student course books, teacher books were published in 2000. This is a methodical-preparation book. Along with course books recommended by the Ministries, Turkish children magazine "Balon", and the newspaper "Filiz" were used as companion materials to teach Turkish language. For high school students and undergraduate students at university level, "Kaynak", a literature and art magazine, could be used.

#### 4. Teaching Staff in Turkish Minority Schools

In addition to the general lack of resources, the lack of adequately trained Turkish teachers and their low salaries was another major reason for the poor quality of education in Turkish schools (Şimşir, 1988). Due to the instability of governments and changing regimes, there was not any special emphasis in teacher training so the education available was of not of quality. This part of the study explores Turkish teaching staff in Bulgaria, how they were trained and what kinds of qualifications were required as well as their economical situation. However, considering that each period had its own policies and conditions, the issue of Turkish teachers will be dealt within the scope of three different periods.

##### 4. 1. Teaching Staff in Turkish Schools in 1878-1908 Princedom Period in Bulgaria

In Princedom period, it was still possible to see the effects of Ottoman-Russian war on the teaching staff. This war made away off with adult Turkish teachers of Bulgaria. Şimşir (1986) states during the first 15 years, there was no focus on teacher training and 48 % of Turkish teachers in Bulgaria were older than 40

years old whereas and the rate of younger teacher below 30 constituted only 25% (Şimşir, 1986, p.39). Besides, they were not adequately trained and equipped with pedagogical knowledge. The 703 of 1500 Turkish teachers were primary school graduates, and 550 of them graduated from madrasas. There were solely 132 teachers who had their diplomas from Ottoman Junior High School (Şimşir, 1986, p. 39). There is not any explanation on teachers who have higher education. That is to say, 50% of Turkish teachers were primary school graduates, 40% of them came from madrasas and merely 10% of them were Ottoman High-school graduates. Since there were not any Turkish teacher training schools established that time<sup>5</sup>, the schools lacked Turkish teachers educated in teacher development schools or in higher level of institutions. So it is hard to say that primary schools, madrasas or Ottoman Junior High Schools prepared these teachers to teach Turkish.

Another important factor related to teachers teaching in this period was economical conditions. Since Turkish teachers were usually financed by local Turkish people rather than Bulgarian government, they were usually paid very little. To be more concrete, according to data concerning 1894-1895, 723 teachers working in Turkish primary schools in Bulgaria got less than 100 levas, and 174 of them earned between 200-400 levas as annual fees (Şimşir, 1986, p.40). On the other hand, the annual fees of Bulgarian primary school teachers were minimum 600 levas and maximum 2000. More than 96% of Bulgarian teachers earned more than 600 levas per month (Şimşir, 1986, p.40). This means that the salary of Bulgarian teachers was approximately ten times more than Turkish teachers. With the transition to Principdom regime in Bulgaria, Turkish people could not increase their economical standards and become a wealthy class of the Empire any more. This situation was reflected on Turkish teachers' salaries and therefore they were usually underpaid.

#### **4. 2. Teaching Staff in Turkish Schools in 1908-1944 Monarchy Period in Bulgaria**

The number of teachers working in Turkish schools increased during the Monarchy Period. In 1921-22 school year, there were 2.113 teachers working in minority schools where 60.540 Turkish students were educated (Dayıoğlu, 2005). Establishment of Turkish Teacher Training Schools is a considerably significant development in the Kingdom Period. One of these schools is Şumnu Turkish Teacher Training School (Darül-Muallimin) which was opened in 1918, and another one was Nüvvap School (Medresetü'n Nüvvap), the highest level of education institution for Muslim Turkish minority in Bulgaria. The aim of this school was to educate prospective muftis and teachers.

First graduates of Şumnu Turkish Teacher Training School received their diplomas in 1920. The courses given there were religion, Turkish language, Bulgarian language, calculation, geometry, pedagogy, teaching methods, didactic methodology, applied courses, history, geography, civics, biology, drawing, and gymnastics (Şimşir, 1986, p.60). The duration of education was two years. Only the students under 25 and with diplomas Turkish secondary schools were admitted to the program at this school (Şimşir, 1986, p.60). However, despite being a very important institution in terms of educating qualified teachers, the school was closed down in 1928.

Nüvvap School had two departments; Junior School would provide a five year study while High School education took three years. The lectures given in "Junior School" at Nüvvap School were as follows; In the first grade; Koran, Islamic law, Arabic language, Persian language, calculation, algebra, botanic, geography, Islamic history, Turkish literature, Bulgarian language, calligraphy and drawing. In the second grade, Bulgarian history, geography of Bulgaria, zoology and algebra were given. In the third grade, Arabic language, Islamic law, Bulgarian history and geography, history and also under the domain of natural sciences; geology, physics and chemistry were taught. Logic, moral, Islamic law, cosmography and trigonometry, natural sciences (anatomy and health), history, physics, chemistry, Turkish literature, Arabic literature, Bulgarian legislations, pedagogy and teaching methods were the courses given in the fourth grade. The courses student took in the last grades were Islamic theology, Islamic law, physics, chemistry, Bulgarian legislations, Turkish literature, Arabic literature, deontology and pedagogy (Şimşir, 1986, p.65).

On the other hand, the courses given in the first year of High School were Islamic law, Ottoman code of civil law, Islamic procedure, science of Islamic inheritance, introduction to law, Islamic law procedure and

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<sup>5</sup> Bulgarian Principdom regime had rejected all the applications of Turkish people to have a Turkish Teacher Training School.

Bulgarian procedure; and economics classes would be added in the second year and international law in the third to the previous ones (ibid.). Not surprisingly, it did not take too long for Bulgarian government to change Şumnu Turkish Teacher Training School into a gymnasium in 1947 and before long Nüvvap School was also closed down and a period of teacher education came to an end. Nevertheless, it is still possible to assert that Kingdom Period was more efficient in teacher education when compared with what had been done in the period before. The teachers raised in these schools held an important place in the education of Turkish minority in the following years.

When it comes to the economic conditions of teachers; even though the terms in Istanbul Peace Treaty (1913) secured teachers' salaries by rendering Bulgarian government liable for paying their wages, by enacting several legislations Bulgarian government deprived Turkish teachers of the social rights granted to Bulgarian teachers (Dayıođlu, 2005, p. 237). Eventually, it was the Turkish minority again who paid Turkish teachers' salaries in return their children's education. The economic conditions were so unbearable that many Turkish teachers resorted to migrating to Turkey.

### **4.3. Turkish Teaching Staff during 1944-1989 Communist Party Power (People's Republic of Bulgaria) Period**

In the first years Communist Party power, as a result of struggling hard, Turkish people had the closed schools opened again and establishment of new schools followed this development. Accordingly, there was a considerable increase in the number of Turkish minority school. Yet, the increase in the number of schools created a need for more teachers for Turks. On the other hand, this new regime adapted a socialist view of education. Communist rule in Bulgaria generated a new approach to education as a means of instilling in communist values. A first step to realizing their ideology was to have socialist teachers who would indoctrinate these socialist views. Since the previous training schools like Nüvvap School and Şumnu Teacher Training School did not provide the teachers with this communist ideology, they needed new teacher training schools to disseminate and impose Marxist teachings. Hence, Turkish Pedagogy School was opened in Stara Zagora in 1947. Except for Turkish courses, Bulgarian was the medium of instruction in all the courses taught by Bulgarian teachers (Şimşir, 1986, p. 241).

It was not that easy to impose totalitarian regime and new ideologies only through schools, and therefore every possibility was used for this purpose. In-service Turkish teachers took intensive courses so that "old-fashioned" teachers were freshened up (Şimşir, 1986, p.242). Apart from this, in 1950-1951 school year, a two-year Turkish Pedagogy School branch affiliated to Bulgarian Higher Teacher Training Institute of Şumnu was opened to educate teachers (ibid. ). Furthermore, Turkish students started to enroll in Bulgarian Higher Teacher Training Institutes of Burgas, Plovdiv and Şumnu (Memişođlu, 2002, p.253).

During the great migration of Bulgarian Turks to Turkey in year 1950-1951, the need for teachers to work in Turkish minority schools increased because there were a lot of teachers among the Turks migrating to Turkey. Thereupon, new Turkish Pedagogy Schools were opened. This was followed with the opening of another Turkish Pedagogy School in 1951 in Kırcaali (Şimşir, 1986, p. 242). One year later, two new primary school teacher training schools were established in Sophia. Those were higher education institutions where the duration of education was three years so they required students who had their secondary school degrees. In addition, in 1952-53 school year, Turkish departments were opened in philosophy-history, philology and physics-mathematics faculties of Sofia University to train teachers for Turkish Pedagogy Institutes and higher schools (Dayıođlu, 2005, p. 318). In order to support teacher education and remedy qualified teacher shortage, conferences and seminars were held. As well as courses for teachers to be, there were also methodology rooms established throughout the country. These rooms provided the forum for teachers to meet and improve themselves professionally (Memişođlu, 2002). Another initiative for teacher development was translating teaching methods booklets into Turkish in order to cater for the needs of Turkish teachers while teaching various courses (Memişođlu, 2002, p. 254). Those books involved very detailed explanations of teaching such as information as to how a teacher should act and how he could adopt communist discipline.

Even though every effort was spent to get qualified teachers, the communist governors were still dissatisfied with the teachers' work. Therefore, depending on the legislation enacted by The Central

Committee of Bulgarian Communist Party on April 26, 1951, the Ministry of National Education took the decision to appoint “experienced” Bulgarian teachers to teach in Turkish schools. According to this legislation, “experienced Bulgarian teachers who know English would fulfill a two-year mission in these schools on condition that where they have worked before would be kept confidential” With this legislation, ultra nationalistic Bulgarian teachers were appointed to Turkish minority schools. In 1951-52 there were nearly as many Bulgarian teachers as Turkish teachers at these schools. Hiring Bulgarian teachers was a temporary solution for teacher shortage since some of them had to leave after a while (Memişoğlu, 2002, pp. 254-255). Improvements in education and the interest of Turks in the betterment of education as well as their endeavors to protect their identity and culture disturbed Bulgarian Communist government whose main aim was to assimilate Turks into Bulgarian culture. After all, they wanted to rule out teaching Turkish as a mother tongue and aggregate schools with Bulgarian schools. By forcing Turkish teachers to teach Bulgarian, they were trying to achieve Bulgarianization of Turks (Memişolu, 2002, p. 261).

After the conversion of Turkish minority schools into public schools, an improvement in the economic conditions of Turkish teachers was observed. Consequently, Turkish teachers earned the same rights as their Bulgarian counterparts. Within this scope, the Bulgarian government supplied a free public house and a 2.5 decare-land for teachers to make extra money in addition to their regular salary (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p.321). However, the merging of Turkish schools and Bulgarian schools created problems and that affected teachers negatively. Some of the teachers were removed out of their present duty and were charged with some other works unrelated to teaching.

Another period which made the conditions worse for Turkish teachers came in December, 1984 when a hard assimilation process started to take place. Many teachers who were regarded as distrusted by Bulgarian authorities were removed and obliged to do tasks which were irrelevant to their actual jobs and required hand labor (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p.321).

#### **4. 4. Turkish Teaching Staff during the Republic of Bulgaria Period**

1989 is an important date for Bulgaria and Turkish minorities in the country. In this year, not only 320.000 Turks emigrated to Turkey making it the massive migration since World War II, but also Bulgaria’s regime changed from socialism to democracy (Karapınar, 2003) . Several improvements regarding the rights of Turks to speak, write and read in their own mother tongue took place during the shift to democracy in Bulgaria. Turkish lessons were added as elective courses into the programs of the schools in the areas where Turkish minorities existed densely. In this period, the teaching staff who would give Turkish Language and Literature courses were recognized. Since 3722 teachers had migrated from Bulgaria to Turkey in 1989 and 1990 (Memişoğlu, 2002, p. 265), there were only a few teachers left who could give Turkish lessons in the country. At the beginning of this period, the number of Turkish teachers in Bulgaria was no more that 1.000 (Dayıoğlu, 2005). These teachers were mostly graduates of Turkish teacher training schools and institutes before 1960. Therefore, initially high-school graduate young Turkish citizens were charged with giving Turkish language courses. However, since their Turkish and pedagogical knowledge was inadequate and they had no idea about using the Turkish course books ordered after 1989 due to their lack of methodology knowledge (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p. 400), to develop their professional skills, many courses and seminars were organized in various places both in Bulgaria and Turkey (Memişoğlu, 2002, p.266) . Besides, groups of Turkish teachers started to attend summer seminars every summer in Turkey. During the two-week seminar period, some applied courses except for Turkish Language and Literature, Religion and History courses were given (Memişoğlu, 2002, p. 266).

What’s more, to prepare teachers for Turkish Language and Literature courses, Turkish Philology departments were established at Pedagogy University of Şumnu and Teacher’s Institute of Kırcaali in 1992-1993 academic year (Dayıoğlu, 2005, p. 400). In addition, by the decision of Cabinet Council in 1990, Islam Institute (at the level of bachelor degree where the study period was 3 years) was founded in Sofia (Memişoğlu, 2002, p. 266). The distribution rate of the participant Turkish-language teachers to courses and seminars held by Turkish Republic Ministry of National Education in summers according to years is given below (Yenisoy, 2007, p.44);

Table 4: Number of Turkish-language teachers who attended the courses and seminars organized between 1992-2006

Year	Number	City
1992	28	Ankara
1993	12	Ankara
1995	200	Unknown city
1996	20	Ankara
1997	3	İstanbul
1998	25	Bursa
1999	22	Uşak
2000	11	İstanbul
2001	10	İstanbul
2002	5	İstanbul
2004	3	İzmir
2005	5	İstanbul
2006	3	İstanbul

Memişoğlu (2002) asserts that there were 695 Turkish-language teachers assigned with teaching Turkish. With the help of the new regime and institutes opened in this period, many important steps were taken to compensate for teacher shortage and for the education of qualified Turkish-language teachers.

#### **5.Current Situation of Turkish-Language Education of Turkish Minority in Bulgaria**

Unfortunately, regarding Turkish language education now, the picture drawn is not very satisfactory especially when it is thought within the context of European Union framework and the criteria required to be a member of the union. Up to here, the paper aimed at providing a detailed historical account of Turkish language education including the nature of methodology, materials used and teacher qualification. However, before examining the current situation of Turkish-language education in Bulgaria, it is helpful to have a look at the article “*The Deception of Turkish Education of Bulgaria*” published in *Balkan Sentezi* which summarizes the conditions there:

It seems there is not any “legal” barrier against Turkish-language education in the country; however, the system applied in education does not lend itself to provide education in the mother language. In Bulgaria, the internal agreements make it possible for Turkish people to have education in their mother language. Therefore, there is no impediment which prohibits education in Turkish. On the other hand, because of the implementations of the Ministry of National Education after abandoning the communist system, it is de facto impossible to have education in mother language. Turkish appeared as an “elective course” in the curricula early on and in 1992 Turkish course books were published. But, there have not been any new publications since then. The elective course was not effective in the cumulative grade point average of students no matter if they took it as an additional course or not. On the contrary, once Turkish families started to opt for Turkish lessons as elective courses for their children, teacher shortage emerged as a problem. There were not any teacher training programs to educate Turkish-language teachers, and most of the present teachers had been deported in 1989. Now, who wants to take Turkish as a course can choose it as a “foreign language lesson” provided that there is a Turkish-language teacher employed at school. In short, the barriers resulting from implementations do not allow mother-tongue education (Balkan Sentezi, 2008, p. 67).

Even though there have been many endeavors for the betterment of teacher training and course book development following the transition to the republican regime, the mother-language problem of Turks in Bulgaria has remained. Although Turkish-language education is not banned by laws, the inadequacies in both theory and practice prohibit students who want to learn or develop their mother language. The deficiencies mentioned are not only limited to gaps in practical educational experiences, but there is also another “hidden barrier” against Turkish-language education which is related to the legislation that turns Turkish lessons into elective foreign language courses. The students are left to make a choice between Turkish courses and foreign



language courses that poses dilemma on the part of the learners. In short, if the student chooses Turkish course, he is deprived of another foreign language course such as English, a language that is also needed. On the other hand as stated by Harun Bekir, Academic Member at Education Faculty of Kırcaali, school managers also try to indirectly prevent Turkish-language teaching by asserting that there is neither demand for Turkish lessons nor teaching staff to provide education in Turkish. However, there is a dilemma in what these school managers claim because the main reason shown for the enclosure of Kırcaali Institute and Pedagogy University of Şumnu was the argument that in these departments more than enough teachers are trained and these graduates could not find jobs (Yenisoy, 1999, p.48).

Unemployment of teacher training graduates and the ambiguity of their future career affected people and there was less interest in these institutions and department. Additionally, no student was accepted to Kırcaali Teacher Training Institute in 2004 on the grounds that there were no academic personnel available to teach there as well as lack of students interested in becoming teachers (Bekir, 2008, p.3). The mother-language instruction problem of Turks is considered important by Europe.

The survey report European Commission Against Racism and Intolerance (ECRI) displayed the ethnical and religious discrimination in Bulgaria and it revealed to what extent Turkish minority has been condemned to poverty and unemployment and how their rights to get mother tongue education was denied. The report draws attention to the lower education level of Turks and argues the irrationality behind offering Turkish course as a foreign language to Turkish public and asking them to make a choice among other foreign languages and stresses that representatives of Turkish society are against this regulation (The Deception of Turkish Education of Bulgaria, 2008, p. 4). The arguments appearing in media create a negative image for mother-tongue education of Turks and providing Turkish as an elective foreign language course is regarded as the most serious problem.

With Bulgaria's European Council membership in May 1992, protection of national minorities became an important issue. Even though the convention that ensures minorities' rights was delayed till 1997, it was put into effect two years later in 1992 (Angelov & Marshall, 2006). A new period of human rights and directly parallel to this, an era of protecting minority rights started for Bulgarian government. Regarding education of Turks, based on National Education Law accepted in Bulgaria in 1999, education in mother-tongue was included into the syllabus as compulsory and elective. However, since Turkish lessons are given at the weekend and after normal course period at school, this created a low level of demand for these courses. In addition, another negative factor that prevents students from taking Turkish course is the consideration that these Turkish courses are foreign language courses and students have no other chances of taking another foreign language.

Especially after 2000, with the effects of EU membership perspective and European Council developing minority rights in the country became an important issue. In the 8 November 2000 report, prepared by EU Commission, the case of the Turkish minority which constitutes %9 of the population was assessed. Turkish minority is said to be well integrated to political life and although a great deal of development was achieved in Turkish education, teacher shortfall is still a problem. In the same report high unemployment rate in the region where Turkish minority is majority is also mentioned. Despite the fact that Bulgaria is a member of EU since 1 January 2007, the problems of Turkish minority in certain areas still continue. To name some, in spite the fact that restrictions on Turkish publications were lifted and respected with the convention signed in 1999, Turkish minority does not have a national newspaper. Also the available Turkish newspapers serve for some ideologies. European Council warned Bulgaria on this issue, but there are obstacles like lacking of intellectual people, financial problems and indifference of Bulgarian and HÖH officials. Turkish broadcast in national radio and television is in symbolic duration. Besides, Turkish minority still does not have an independent radio station. In various EU reports 'Turkish minority' statement is seen, yet in Bulgarian constitution the word 'minority' is not mentioned. According to article 36/2, the post-Communist Bulgarian Constitution (accepted as of July 13, 1991 does not recognize ethnic minorities but "citizens, for whom the Bulgarian language is not their mother-tongue" (Troebst, 1994, p.33). This vagueness in the definition might delay provision of rights to the Turkish minority. The Turkish community also succeeds in the implementation of programs aimed at the community's welfare funded by state subsidies and

different grants. The publication of Turkish textbooks is sponsored by the University of Sofia and the Foundation for Liberal Integration.

### **Conclusion and Suggestions**

Language is the most important factor that provides the continuity of culture and identity. Also, cultural heritage is transferred by means of mother tongue. In addition, art, music, literature of a society is cherished and developed with its mother tongue. When the significance of mother tongue in a person's life is taken into account, mother tongue knowledge and education gets crucial. Therefore, mother tongue usage and education right is determined with international law. It is an accepted fact that, in the absence of mother tongue education, a person cannot fully actualize himself.

Considering Turkish Minority Education in Bulgaria in different periods, it is clear that a major contribution was made to education and culture of Turkish people during the Ottoman Empire period through establishing primary schools, mosques and madrasas. As for the Principality Period, as a consequence of 1878-1879 Ottoman-Russian war, minority schools faced negative conditions. At the end of this period, the Turkish Minority had the lowest level of education in spite of some improvements observed at schools and the increase in the number of students, teachers and schools. When it comes to Kingdom Period, we see that Bulgarian Administration first closed the Turkish Schools and then the Second World War broke out. Accordingly, education experienced great difficulties; getting access to books and course materials was extremely difficult. As a result of major efforts, there was a transition to training with Latin letters in Bulgaria shortly after the launch of Latin letters in Turkey. During the ruling Communist Party, Turkish schools were integrated to state with a claim to provide better education. Afterwards, in 1960, Turkish schools were combined with Bulgarian schools. Finally in 1974, with the result of the prohibition of Turkish Education (even Turkish speaking), the Turkish minority's mother language right was taken away. Turkish education came to an end as a result of this assimilation policy based on the framework of nation-states. After Bulgaria's governmental system changed to Republican regime, Turkish became an elective language in 1991 and then was included in the school curriculum as a foreign language, which, in a limited way allowed the Turkish minority population to have a chance to learn their native language. New democratic regime entailed more freedom and rights for minorities in the country. Concerning the linguistic rights, in the conference held in Sofia in 1990, it was declared that Turkish minorities can use their own names, Turkish can be used in daily life and Turkish minority is free to publish in Turkish (Karapınar, 2003). Soon after the European Parliament approved the entry of Bulgaria in the European Union in 2007, significant improvements in the Minority and Human Rights issues started to be observed.

When Turkish language teaching methods are concerned, it is obvious there is not enough satisfactory research on the methods and techniques that are used. This supports the assumption that teaching mother tongue to Turkish people in Bulgaria has always been a neglected issue that has occupied almost no space in the political and educational agenda of the country. The same case is true for the course materials: actually the only material which is used in a Turkish lesson is the course books which were published in 1992. It is known that new departments and institutions are opened in Bulgaria to raise teachers and some other teachers are sent to Turkey in order to receive in-service training that will qualify them professionally. However, interest in being a Turkish language teacher in Bulgaria is very low because it is neither a well paid job nor there is job assurance. This situation indicates a future teacher shortage.

Although the Turkish minority's fundamental rights and mother-tongue teaching is provided by law, there are still problems in practice. Turkish language taught as "foreign language" forces students to choose between Turkish and another language. Moreover, this course is not provided with the reasons such as "there is no demand" or "there are not enough teachers". Another trouble is that the content of the course is behind the contemporary methods and materials used in language teaching. Apart from the Turkish minority, due to the different job opportunities, there is a small number of Bulgarians who also take this lesson, this makes the process even more complicated with students with differing needs and expectations as well as linguistic background.

Another important point in mother tongue education is the effects of the families, environment and the products of the developing countries. Families struggle to teach and keep Turkish language alive. Thanks

to their personal struggle mostly, Turkish is still alive in Bulgaria. But in the cities, the Turkish youngsters for some reasons speak Bulgarian among themselves, so it is hard to preserve Turkish language as a mother tongue in this environment. Turkish in Bulgaria is not a valid language in any field: for it is not used in contemporary music and arts. For these reasons it is not an attractive language for the youngsters. To keep Turkish alive, that is to keep the culture and identity of Turkish minority alive, Turkish language teaching methods and techniques must develop. Course books written with valid methods and depicting current topics needed to be used. Turkish language teaching should become an appealing profession and for this purpose instead of placing Turkish as an elective course in the curriculum, its status should be changed into a must course especially in the areas where Turkish population resides densely. The problems and issues concerning Turkish require the support of foundations related to Turkish world, Turkish Language and Turcology departments, Turcology Research Institutes, Bulgarian Education Ministry and Turkish Republic.

Turkish language education quality and situation in Bulgaria changes in accordance with every new system change. Because of these changes there are irregularities in the ways Turkish minority gets mother tongue education. Turkish language teaching methods and materials are out of date. There were some problems about growing qualified Turkish language teachers, and for some economical and social reasons this problems still continue. Turkish language education in Bulgaria should be made attractive both for learners and educators. The deficiencies about Turkish language education methods, educator and materials are such problems that can be solved with the help of foundations about Turkish World, Turkish Language and Turcology Departments, Institutes of Turkic Studies and Bulgaria Ministry of Education. So that it will be possible to provide Turkish citizens with their rights to get mother tongue education which plays an important part in people's identity and self esteem because minority education, in particular minority language education, should be a high priority because only through mother tongue education people belonging to a national minority can preserve and deepen their identity. The right of persons belonging to national minorities to maintain their identity can only be fully realized if they acquire a proper knowledge of their mother tongue during the educational process.

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