

Is the demand for mother tongue education a need or a ruse?



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Is the demand for mother tongue education a need or a ruse?

By Harun Yahya [Print](#)

If there is a 'common language of love understandable by all' used with love by the members of a society, that community will be welded together by powerful bonds. Unity of language is one of the most important cultural bonds in a country.

A Single Official Language Provides a Glorious 'Ease of Living'

A single official language bestows innumerable benefits in all spheres of life. The use of a single official language in higher education, academic publications, commerce, the economy, the media, politics, the law, health and all the other services provided by the state is a source of great ease and of great comfort.

It is very important to be able to summon the fire service, a doctor or an ambulance in the event of an emergency. The case of a fire which was alleged to have ended in death in December 2001 when firemen in the Belgian town of Vilvorde only accepted emergency calls in Flemish, and refused to heed one made in French, is enough to show the terrible scale of the problem. This can easily lead to major problems everywhere with different ethnic components.

In the same way it is very pleasant to be able to easily access health services and to be able to communicate with hospital personnel, doctors and pharmacists. It may be vitally important to be able to understand the instructions of a medicine when the time comes. It is a source of great peace of mind to be able to communicate with everyone when one goes out to the shops, at work or in society at large.

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THE ONLY RATIONAL SYSTEM FOR TURKEY IS THE USE OF ONE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE

Countries have produced nations by combining various ethnic elements together. According to Peter Alford Andrews' 1992 book "Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey", based on census figures for 1965, there are 47 ethnic groups in Turkey. The USA is a single state made up of people of 72 ethnic origins. There are 16 different main ethnic groups in Great Britain. France is a state made up by the coming together of numerous elements such as Bretons, Corsicans and Basques. The Russian Federation is a powerful and enormous state composed of many nationalities. One common feature of all these countries is that millions of people are able to communicate with others - and the state - with a single official language. This is instrumental in facilitating access to public services and in permitting all sections of society to understand one another.

Turkey is one of those rare countries with a state culture going back 2,500 years. This rich history and profound cultural heritage has left close bonds between many peoples, from the Balkans to the Caucasus, and from the Middle East and North Africa to Asia. Turkey occupies an important place with its international alliances, importance among Islamic countries and global economic strength. In the same way that English is globally important from commerce and international media and from shopping to tourism, so Turkish is important on the regional level. The fact that the Turkish language family has 200 million members is another important matter.

THE REASON BEHIND THE DEMAND FOR MOTHER TONGUE EDUCATION IS THE 'WISH TO DIVIDE'

The recent debates in Turkey about the right to education in one's mother tongue also need to be evaluated within that framework. Not only Kurds, but also Circassians and Laz people and all other ethnic groups have a basic human right to speak their own languages as they wish. However, that right must not result in people of the region being deprived of Turkish, being alienated from the general culture of the country or even in their breaking away from it entirely.

Almost all books, archives and documents in Turkey are in Turkish. Newly published books, newspapers, the media and the internet are also in Turkish. Millions of foreign works have also been translated into Turkish. All research needs to be conducted using Turkish language archives and libraries. The imposition of a new mother tongue under these conditions means information dating back hundreds or even thousands of years having to be translated into different languages. That is technically out of the question.

On the other hand Turkish, the only official language in Turkey, has been used for hundreds of years as a "language of communication, speech and brotherhood" between dozens of ethnic components. It is the main factor that welds our people together.

It is therefore neither sincere nor logical to demand that Turkish language education, with all its advantages, be abandoned for education in different languages. To insist on such a demand that is so clearly not rational from all points of view can only be a stratagem, not a need. The fact that Kurdish is not a highly sought after or popular language across the world is another matter. Therefore, a young person who learns Kurdish will be unable to use it either in Turkey or abroad. Such a way of thinking will condemn the Kurds to a narrow world, will break their ties not just with Turkey but

with the rest of the world and will lay the foundations for the North Korea planned for construction in the region. To insist on "Kurds teaching Kurds and Kurds speaking only Kurdish" is a long way from being agreeable. The demand is therefore intended to lead to division.

To want to speak a separate language in a tiny region will lead to poverty, not wealth. It will lead to the region becoming foreign to the rest of the country, and to feeling that it does not belong to it: This is not freedom. It means imprisoning the people of the region in a tiny space and seeking a means of breaking away from the whole. The aim of this demand is to sever the bonds of language, and thus of faith. It means the severing of the vital 'ties of language' within the country. It is impossible to regard the demand for an enclosed life style in an ever-increasingly globalized world as in any way rational or sincere.

Of course, it is a good thing for languages with local and ethnic origins to be known in terms of folklore and to be protected. In doing that, however, to insist on abandoning Turkish, the official language of the state, means to sever the most important bond between 77 million people.

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