

## Written Expression Skills of Both Monoliterate, and Emergent Bilingual Primary School Students: A Comparison with Monolingual Students<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

Many students learn Turkish as a second language in Turkey. These students, whose first language is Kurdish, learn Turkish at a certain level before starting school. As a result, these students become emergent bilinguals along with school life. On the other hand, some of these students almost do not use Kurdish in their lives and wholly turn to Turkish. Ultimately, all students whose first language is Kurdish continue their education in the same environment with students whose first language is Turkish. As a result, these children lag behind students whose first language is Turkish in many respects. They even lag behind students whose dominant language is Turkish and Kurdish as their first language. This research it is aimed to reveal the differences between the two student groups in the context of written expression skills. The effect of the dominant language difference, preschool education status and socioeconomic level on the written expression skills of primary school students were examined. The research group of 428 primary school fourth-grade students (girl: 201, boy:227) was determined by criterion sampling method. As a result of the research, it was revealed that the written expression skills of the students whose dominant language is Kurdish remained at a deficient level, and they made more spelling mistakes

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## **Introduction**

Language is accepted as the most essential and necessary tool in communication and interaction (Abdel-rahman Arman et al., 2015; Farooq et al., 2012). Thanks to language, people can understand each other more easily. As Bachore (2014) states, language is one of the critical concepts of communication and understanding. For this reason, it is essential to master the dominant language. However, sometimes people may not be able to master their language skills sufficiently for various reasons. Especially individuals in acquiring a second language face these problems (Rao, 2019). Individuals trying to acquire a second language can partially speak and understand the second language. However, they may not have immediate reach to the ability to speak the second language at a proficiency level (Ellis, 1997). Therefore, individuals who acquire a second language are likely to encounter difficulties in reading, to speak, listening and writing skills. Sokip (2020) also emphasizes this difficulty in second language learners. Abdel-rahman Arman et al. (2015) attribute these problems in basic language skills to the lack of effective and adequate language teaching. In other words, it is possible to achieve success in the four basic language skills such as reading, writing, listening and speaking with adequate language skills teaching.

### **Monoliterate Bilinguals**

In rural regions of Turkey, such as Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia, many students learn Turkish as a second language before starting school, whose first language is Kurdish (Yılmaz & Şekerci, 2016). Since these students, who are official citizens of Turkey, have different language skills, their proficiency in basic language skills is lower than monolingual students (Asrağ, 2009; Derince, 2012; Uğur, 2017). These students, who have to learn the second language rather than their first language, are literate only in the second language (Turkish). In other words, they are not literate in their first language (Kızıldaş, 2021). Literacy skills are almost non-existent in their first language. This situation is also included in the literature as monoliterate bilingualism (Güzel, 2014; Fishman, 1976).

Although monoliterate bilingual students speak both languages in everyday life, they speak only the second language in school education. They speak their first language again, but this use occurs mainly outside of class/school (Liddicoat, 1991; Musyahda, 2018). On the other hand, according to Fishman (1976), monoliterate bilingual students may have particular proficiency in their speech in both languages. However, since improving literacy skills in the country's official language, rather than in their first language, is a priority, proficiency in the first language may decrease (Ağırman, 2019). Bilingual students in Turkey speak as a second language to Turkish mainly in their schools. In the classroom, they only learn and speak Turkish. This prohibition is that there is no bilingual education in Turkey by the constitution (Turkish Constitution, 1982). In other words, since

they speak Kurdish at home and Turkish in a classroom environment, this also creates problems in acquiring second language skills (Ağırman, 2019). As a result, monoliterate bilingual students have problems with their second language skills because they speak Kurdish at home and Turkish in the classroom (Ağırman, 2019).

### **Emergent Bilinguals**

Emergent bilingual students continue to speak their first language at home while learning the second language at school (García et al., 2008). Students whose first language in Turkey, especially in rural areas, are Kurdish, also use the first language more intensively at home (Koşan, 2015). In such cases, children in the second language may remain at a lower level (Saydı, 2013) than other first language skills while progressing towards a better level. This negative result occurs because the emergent bilinguals are seen at the same level as monolingual students in the classroom. In the context of ethnicity, dominant language and socioeconomic level, emergent bilinguals, usually composed of heterogeneous and disadvantaged groups (Kong & Hurless, 2021), often do not receive the educational programs they need, according to García et al. (2008). He states that this causes various problems. Indeed, Ortiz et al. (2020) also draws attention to this problem and emphasizes differences between the achievements of emergent bilinguals and monolingual students. López and Santibañez, (2018) also emerged as another source of problems, stating that developing bilingual students also need qualified teachers. Likewise, it should be said that emergent bilingual students are also more unsuccessful in exams based on standardized tests than monolingual students (Hickey, 2016; Kong & Hurless, 2021).

Although emergent bilingual learners use two languages together in their social lives, literacy skills in their first and second languages are low. Language skills also negatively affect academic achievement (Kim, 2019). In other words, emergent bilingual students need language support programs (Menken & Klyen, 2010). Namely, although development is progressing in the second language, it can be said that they are not at the desired level. There are three types of developing bilingual students. These are going to adequate formal schooling, limited formal schooling and long-term emergent bilingual students. The first group have a limited educational background. They are not literate in their first language. The second group can speak both languages. However, they do not have good literacy skills in either language. The third group has superficial reading and writing skills (Freeman, Freeman, Mercuri, 2003; Olsen, 2010). Students whose first language is Kurdish in Turkey can also be evaluated in this context.

### **Written Expression Skill**

It is a well-known fact that emergent bilingual students do not have adequate reading, speaking, understanding and writing skills in Turkish (Yılmaz & Şekerci, 2016; Yiğit, 2009). The

writing and reading skills (Ellis, 1997; Rao, 2019) of bilingual students who acquire a second language other than their first language will be negatively affected by this situation (Alfaqiri, 2018). Moreover, according to Ađırman (2019), the skill bilingual students have the most difficulty with after grammar is written expression. This situation may be due to a lack of proficiency in the second language. According to Gocer (2013), if the student does not acquire good reading and comprehension skills, the student is written expression skills will not be good either. In other words, it states that writing skill is acquired after teaching other language skills. Namely, learning language skills at a proficiency level is also an essential condition.

Written expression skills include a complex and cognitive process. Written expression skill, which seriously affects students' language development and academic success (Hyland, 2003; Safa, 2018), requires the ability to think deeply and analyze a subject by using the individual's prior knowledge (Chakraverty & Gautum, 2000; Eryaman, 2008; Nunan, 1989). That is why written expression skill, unlike speaking skill, needs more support from family. In other words, it is challenging to acquire written expression skills naturally. However, since it has a complex feature that requires the coordination of many cognitive skills and requires support, students accept written expression as a challenging process (Gillespie & Graham, 2014). For this reason, it is an expected possibility to encounter some difficulties in acquiring written expression skills (Anvar & Ahmed, 2016; Aronoff & Rees-Miller, 2007).

According to Brisk (2011), especially students who acquire a second language face some difficulties acquiring and developing their written expression skills. Written expression skill is challenging as it requires much knowledge such as vocabulary, grammar and rules (Negari, 2012). In addition, Brisk (2011) draws attention to the fact that as children who acquire a second language develop their written expression skills, they have more command of the language. He states that students begin to have power over the second language with this proficiency. Husna et al. (2013) also draw attention to the difficulties experienced by second language learners, especially in written expression skills. The problems experienced by second language learners are listed as insufficient vocabulary knowledge, not knowing the meanings of words sufficiently, not being able to organize paragraphs. According to Alfaqiri (2018), there is a fundamental reason for this: Acquiring a language becomes a burden as students see second language acquisition as a goal they must conquer. Thus, they face severe difficulties, especially in their written expression skills. On the other hand, it can be stated that the different language structures cause these problems. In other words, it can be a problem if the first language does not provide the desired contribution to the second language. The lack of concrete data showing that the first language contributes to the written expression skills of bilingual students in Turkey and the similarity of this situation in other countries (McCarthy et al., 2005) is proof in this regard. Likewise, the fact that emergent bilinguals do not meet the second language in a formal sense

is an obstacle to developing written expression skills. Especially not having preschool education negatively affects the language skills of bilingual students (Susar Kırmızı et al., 2016; Kıvrak, 2019; Koşan, 2015). Similarly, the low socioeconomic level is also a negative factor affecting the written expression skills of second language learners (Doğan, 2017). To summarize, monoliterate and emergent bilinguals students in Turkey have problems with their written expression skills. Language differences, lack of preschool education and socioeconomic level are also essential factors at the root of the problem.

It is important not to see written expression only as a judgment and evaluation tool and overcome the difficulties encountered in written expression skills. Teachers have a significant role in teaching written expression skills. First, the teacher should help students acquire good writing skills (Rao, 2019). Therefore, teachers should emphasize improving students' written expression skills because written expression skill is not an innate skill that cannot be changed or developed (Nasir et al., 2013). Therefore, misconceptions about written expression skills should be avoided. Otherwise, the development of written expression skills is prevented, and its importance is pushed into the background. In other words, the importance of written expression skills should be given priority in the first stages of second language teaching (Al-Gharabally, 2015; Fareed et al., 2016). Teachers should take responsibility in this context.

When the literature is examined, it is noteworthy that the studies examining the written expression skills of students who acquire Turkish as a second language are limited. These studies were mostly limited to secondary school students (Ağırman, 2019; Doğan, 2017; Kıvrak, 2019; Özdemir, 2016). Therefore, no comprehensive research was found on emergent bilingual primary school students in rural areas of Turkey. Düzen (2017) also draws attention to this limitation. On the other hand, in the literature outside of Turkey, it can be said that there are a significant number of studies to determine the written expression skills of second language learners and the problems they experience (Anvar & Ahmed, 2016; Alfaqiri, 2018; Farooq et al., 2012; Fareed et al., 2016; Rao, 2019). The lack of studies in this context in Turkey, especially in bilingual primary school students, is a fact. This study is of great importance to fill the gap in this area. Comparing the written expression skills of bilingual primary school students and monolingual students makes the study even more original and meaningful. The research assumes that students whose first language is Turkish have lower written expression skills than students whose first language is Kurdish. Among the bilingual students in Turkey, some students almost forget their first language (Kurdish) and rarely use this language. Therefore, it is essential to identify some students in this context who are almost at the same level as monolingual students. For this reason, the dominant language of all student groups was determined in the research. In the context of the importance and aims of the research, answers to the following questions were sought:

1. Do bilingual and monolingual students' typos, correct and total word levels, and written expression skills differ significantly according to the dominant language?
2. Do bilingual and monolingual students' typos, spelling errors, correct and total word levels, and written expression skills differ significantly according to their preschool education status?
3. Do bilingual and monolingual students' typos, spelling errors, correct and total word levels, and written expression skills differ significantly according to socioeconomic level?

## **Method**

### **Research Design**

The quantitative research method was used in this study. Quantitative research offers the opportunity to perform analysis and quantification to get results related to various variables from the collected data. This context includes using specific statistical techniques and analyzing numerical data to answer various questions (Apuke, 2017). Quantitative research methods are divided into surveys, correlational, experimental and causal-comparative research, according to Sukamolson (2017). In this study, the 'survey model' was used within the scope of quantitative research methods. The survey model is a model that requires the use of statistical methods by measuring the characteristics of a particular population selected through a designed measurement such as a survey (Sukamolson, 2017). In this study, the scanning model was used because it was aimed to determine the effects of some variables on the written expression skills of primary school students whose first language was different from their second language.

### **The Study Group**

The study group of this research consists of fourth-grade primary school students studying in a city located in the eastern part of Turkey. The research sample was selected by criterion sampling method, one of the purposeful sampling methods. In the criterion sample, it is essential to determine the participants with a predetermined set of criteria (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2006). The criteria determined in selecting the sample of this study; are bilingual and monolingual primary school students who study in the same schools. In addition, being a fourth-grader is also a criterion. Because the last grade level of primary school in Turkey is the fourth grade. Therefore, students who have reached this grade level are expected to have good language skills. Descriptive statistics of the study group are given in Table 1.

**Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Fourth-Grade Students with Different Dominant Languages Participating in the Research.**

Variables	Answer	f	%
Dominant language	Turkish	170	39.7
	Kurdish	258	60.3
Gender	Girl	201	47.0
	Boy	227	53.0
Pre-school education status	Yes	246	57.5
	No	182	42.5
Socioeconomic level	Low	204	47.7
	Average	118	27.6
	High	106	24.8

It is seen that the dominant language of 39.7% of the primary school students who participated in the research is Turkish, and the dominant language of 60.3% of them is Kurdish. 53% of the students are boys, and 47% are girls. 57.5% of students whose dominant language is further received preschool education. 47.7% of the students, that is, most of them, are in the lower socioeconomic level.

#### ***Data Collection Tools***

Data collection tools developed to measure written expression skills of primary school students whose dominant language is different are listed below.

*Student Information Form:* There are 11 questions in the student information form. These questions are the gender of the students, the education level of the parents of the student, the income of the family, the profession of the parents of the students, the status of receiving preschool education, the language most used in the family (Turkish, Kurdish), whether the mother and the student know Kurdish. In addition, the first language learned from the mother (Turkish, Kurdish).

*Written Expression Skills Scale:* The 'Story Writing Evaluation Form' developed by Doğan and Müldür (2014) was used. This form consists of 17 items: margins, paragraphs and lines, outline, title, heroes, place, time, plot, problem, solution, main idea, word, sentence, coherence, paragraph, spelling and punctuation. The criteria in the form prepared as a rubric were scored between 1 and 4. Therefore, scoring is as follows: unsatisfactory (1), acceptable (2), sufficient (3), very good (4).

*Typos Identification Form:* Criteria such as 'letter skipping, reverse writing, letter mixing, compound writing, syllable writing, word addition, misspelling, spelling errors' were considered. Typos determined for grades 1-5 in primary school by Erden et al. (2002) were also taken as a reference in evaluating written expression skills.

### **Data Collection Process**

In order to measure written expression skills, five topics were determined following the themes in the primary school fourth-grade textbook. Students were asked to write an accessible story about one of these topics. These issues were determined as 'healthy individual, environmental pollution, our responsibilities in the family, conscious consumerism and protecting animals'. The students were given about 40 minutes, which is one class hour. Classroom teachers carried out the activity. Hyland (2003) emphasizes that freewriting allows students to express their thoughts freely and develops their creativity. Freely written stories were evaluated with an assessment scale of written expression skills. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient calculated for the story writing evaluation scale was 0.81. According to Kalaycı (2018), in this case, the scale is highly reliable ( $0.80 \leq \alpha < 1.00$ ). The data collection process took approximately one week.

### **Data Analysis**

The data collected at the research end were analyzed with the SPSS 25.00 package program. In the context of these data, the t-test was used to compare the means of the two groups and determine whether there was a significant difference between them. A one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to compare more than two groups. A significance level of 0.05 was taken as a criterion in all analyses. In scoring students' written expression skills, the sum of the scores in 17 questions in the written expression skills scale was considered. The number of all words in the free story written by the students was determined as 'total word levels'. 'Correct word levels' were determined by subtracting typos (letter skipping, reverse writing, letter mixing, compound writing, syllable writing, word addition, misspelling, spelling errors, etc.) from the total number of words written.

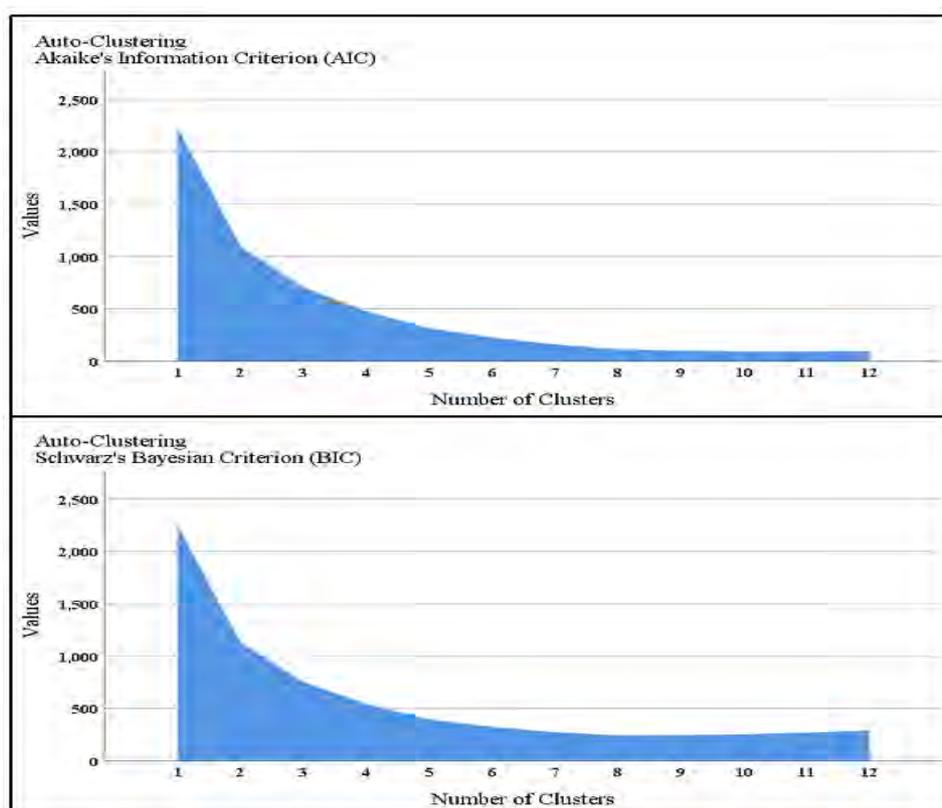
In the research, two-step cluster analysis was applied by using SPSS 25.00 program to determine the dominant language of primary school fourth-grade students whose first language was different. With this analysis, the homogeneity of the clusters within themselves and the heterogeneity between clusters is very high (Kalaycı, 2018). In this context, as seen in Figure 2, some questions were asked to the students about using the first language. As a result of the questions, the students were divided into two groups as the students whose dominant language was Turkish or Kurdish. They are primarily emergent bilingual students whose dominant language is Kurdish. Because these students receive their education in the second language, Turkish, not Kurdish, they also become bilingual over time.

**Table 2. Results of Two-Step Cluster Analysis for the Dominant Language**

Variables	Cluster 1 (Kurdish)	Cluster2 (Turkish)
Kurdish language proficiency	Yes (%93)	No (%100)
The most spoken language in the family	Kurdish(%73,6)	Turkish (%100)
The first language learned from mother	Kurdish (%64,7)	Turkish (%100)
Mother's Kurdish language proficiency	Yes (%96,1)	No (%54,7)
N* (428)	258	170

N: Total number of individuals in clusters

In the two-step clustering analysis conducted within the scope of the research, the silhouette coefficient was taken as the basis when deciding on the number of clusters. Silhouette coefficient takes values between -1 and +1. As this coefficient gets closer to the value of +1, the difference between clusters is minimum, and the difference between clusters is maximum. If this coefficient is 0, it means that the clusters are very close to each other and that the cluster elements are not different; that is, there is no clustering. Negative values indicate that individuals are placed in the wrong clusters (Rousseeuw, 1987). In the context of this research, the silhouette coefficient was obtained as 0.60. This value indicates a good level of differentiation between clusters and similarity within clusters. The findings of the AIC and BIC values used in deciding the number of clusters are given in Figure 1.



**Figure 1. Change in BIC and AIC Values of 12 Clusters Obtained in the Study**

Both AIC and BIC showed the most break in the second cluster. In other words, the values of the 2 clusters are generally close to each other, and the decrease in these values gradually decreases. These findings indicate that the data fit both clusters well.

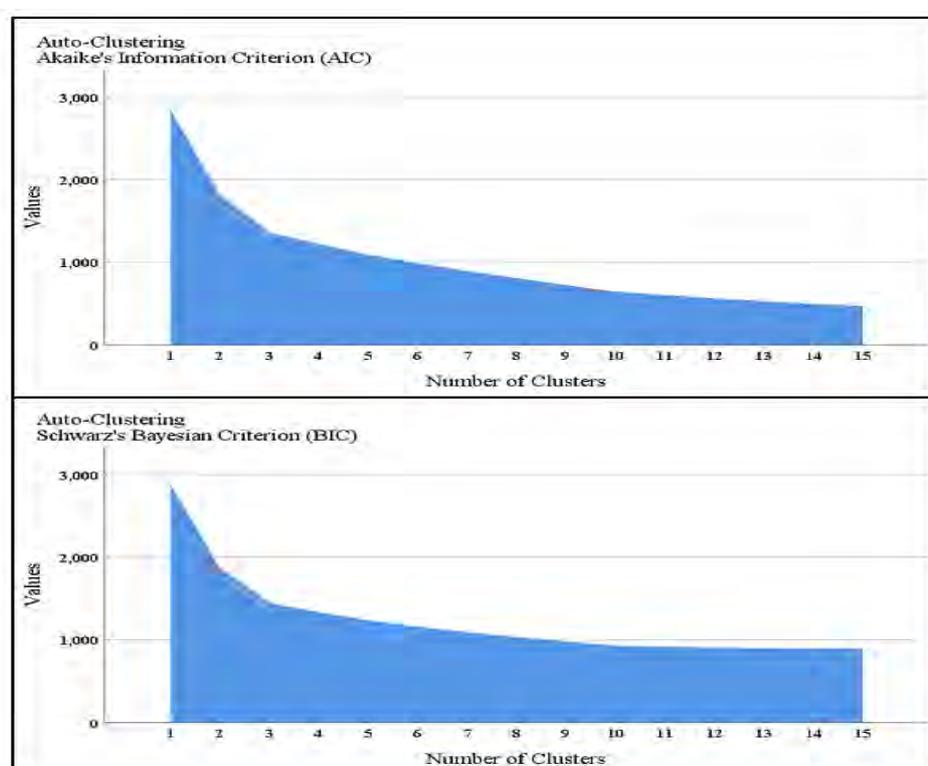
Similarly, two-step cluster analysis was used in the study to determine the socioeconomic levels (SEL) of primary school fourth-grade students whose first language was different. Five questions were asked to the students in this context. According to the findings obtained as a result of the questions, students were generally divided into three clusters in terms of socioeconomic level. The defining features of the clusters are given in Table 3.

**Table 3. Results of Two-Step Cluster Analysis for Socioeconomic Level**

Variables	Cluster 1 (upper)	Cluster 2 (average )	Cluster 3 (lower)
Family monthly income	3000 TL-More (%92)	1000-3000 TL (%100)	1000-3000 TL (%93)
Mother's education level	Bachelor's degree/ higher (%56.6)	Primary education (%73)	Primary education (%99.5)
Father's education level	Bachelor's degree/ higher (%75.5)	High school (%60.2)	Primary education (%100)
Mother's profession	Public official (%40.6)	Self-employment (%100)	Self-employment (%100)
Father's profession	Public official (%78.3)	Self-employment (%61)	Self-employment (%100)
N* (428)	106	118	204

N: Total number of individuals in clusters.

There are 106 students in the first cluster (upper socioeconomic level), 118 in the second cluster (average socioeconomic level), and 204 students in the third cluster (lower socioeconomic level). As a result of the two-step clustering analysis, the silhouette coefficient was 0.60. This value indicates a good level of differentiation between clusters and similarity within clusters. Findings of AIC and BIC values used in deciding the number of clusters are given below.



**Figure 2. Change in BIC and AIC Values of 15 Clusters Obtained in the Study.**

Both AIC and BIC gave the breaking value in the third cluster the most. In other words, the values above 3 clusters are generally close to each other, and the decrease in these values gradually decreased. These findings indicate that the data fit well in all three clusters.

### Results

In this section, the findings related to the sub-problems are presented. Table 4 shows the values of typos (spelling and word errors), correct and total word levels, written expression skills scores on the arithmetic mean, standard deviation and independent T-Test, according to the dominant language variable of primary school fourth-grade students whose first language is different.

**Table 4. T-Test Results of Typos, Correct, and Total Word Levels, Written Expression Skills Scores of Primary School Fourth Grade Students with Different First Language According to the Dominant Language Variable.**

Variables	Dominant language	n	Ss	Sd	t	p
Typos	Turkish	170	23.61	20.13	-6.723	000*
	Kurdish	258	41.55	30.68		
Correct word level	Turkish	170	96.47	41.59	5.745	000*
	Kurdish	258	72.74	41.96		
Total word level	Turkish	170	109.0	40.49	3.133	002*
	Kurdish	258	96.67	39.65		
Written expression skill	Turkish	170	32.23	10.49	9.040	000*
	Kurdish	258	26.55	11.05		

\* p<.05

Typos of primary school fourth grade students whose dominant language is different ( $t_{(426)}=-6.723$ ;  $p<.05$ ); correct word levels ( $t_{(426)}=5.745$ ;  $p<.05$ ); There was a significant difference in total word levels ( $t_{(426)}=3.133$ ;  $p<.05$ ) and written expression skill scores ( $t_{(426)}=9.040$ ;  $p<.05$ ). All the differences favour the students whose dominant language is Turkish.

Table 5 shows the typos (spelling and word errors), correct and total word levels, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and independent T-Test of written expression skills scores of primary school fourth-grade students whose dominant language is Turkish according to the variable of receiving preschool education.

**Table 5. T-Test Results of Typos, Correct, and Total Word Levels, Written Expression Skills Scores of Primary School Fourth Grade Students Whose Dominant Language is Turkish According to the Variable of Receiving Preschool Education.**

Variable	Preschool education	n	Ss	Sd	t	p
Typos	Yes	134	23.42	20.36	-.240	811
	No	36	24.33	19.50		
Correct word level	Yes	134	98.00	42.49	.925	356
	No	36	90.77	38.07		
Total word level	Yes	134	110.4	41.98	.874	383
	No	36	103.8	34.40		

Written expression skill	Yes	134	37.00	10.95	168	1.847	067
	No	36	33.38	8.025			

\*  $p > .05$

Typos of primary school fourth grade students whose dominant language is Turkish ( $t_{(168)} = -.240$ ;  $p > .05$ ); correct word levels ( $t_{(168)} = .925$ ;  $p > .05$ ); It was found that there was no significant difference in total word levels ( $t_{(168)} = .874$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and written expression skill scores ( $t_{(168)} = 1.847$ ;  $p > .05$ ).

Table 6 shows the values of typos (spelling and word errors), correct and total word levels, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and independent T-Test of written expression skills scores of primary school fourth-grade students whose dominant language is Kurdish, according to the variable of receiving preschool education.

**Table 6. T-Test Results of Typos, Correct, and Total Word Levels, Written Expression Skills Scores of Primary School Fourth Grade Students Whose Dominant Language is Kurdish According to the Variable of Receiving Preschool Education.**

Variable	Preschool education	n	Ss	Sd	t	p
Typos	Yes	112	36.24	25.85	-2.458	.015*
	No	146	45.62	33.45		
Correct word level	Yes	112	76.64	40.61	1.309	192
	No	146	69.75	42.86		
Total word level	Yes	112	97.16	39.38	.177	860
	No	146	96.28	39.98		
Written expression skill	Yes	112	28.75	12.55	.400	005*
	No	146	24.86	9.459		

\*  $p > .05$

Correct word levels of primary school fourth-grade students whose dominant language is Kurdish ( $t_{(256)} = 1.309$ ;  $p > .05$ ); It is seen that there are no significant differences in total word levels ( $t_{(256)} = .177$ ;  $p > .05$ ) scores. It is possible to interpret these findings as that preschool education does not affect the correct-total word-level scores of students whose dominant language is Kurdish. On the other hand, there was a significant difference in typos ( $t_{(256)} = -2.458$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and written expression skill scores of primary school fourth-grade students whose dominant language is Kurdish. ( $t_{(256)} = .400$ ;  $p < .05$ ). According to this finding, it favours students whose dominant language is Kurdish who receive preschool education.

Table 7 shows the values of typos (spelling and word errors), correct and total word levels, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and ANOVA of written expression skills scores of primary school fourth-grade students whose dominant language is Turkish, according to the socioeconomic level variable.

**Table 7. ANOVA Results of Typos, Correct, and Total Word Levels, Written Expression Skills Scores of Primary School Fourth Grade Students Whose Dominant Language is Turkish According to the Variable of Socioeconomic Level**

Variables	SEL	n	Ss	SOS	df	AOS	F	p	D	
Typos	Low	78	20.39	16.73	2000	2	1000	2.512	.084	
	Average	59	24.59	20.30	6651	167	398			
	High	33	29.48	25.64						
Correct word level	Low	78	103.4	41.15	1098	2	5493	3.260	.041*	H-A
	Average	59	85.66	36.98	2814	167	1685			
	High	33	99.24	47.33						
Total word level	Low	78	114.1	42.24	7069	2	3534	2.186	.116	
	Average	59	100.2	34.60	2700	167	1616			
	High	33	112.6	44.41						
Written expression skills	Low	78	40.34	10.22	2472	2	1236	12.79	000*	H-A H-L
	Average	59	33.22	9.838	1612	167	96.57			
	High	33	31.90	8.765						

According to the socioeconomic level variable of primary school fourth-grade students dominant language is Turkish, the difference in typos ( $F = 2.512$ ;  $p > .05$ ) and total word levels ( $F = 2.186$ ;  $p > .05$ ) scores was not significant. On the other hand, the difference in correct word level ( $F = 3.260$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and written expression skills scores were statistically significant ( $F = 12.79$ ;  $p < .05$ ). After testing that the variances were not homogeneous, Tukey's multiple comparison technique, one of the post-hoc techniques, was applied to determine which group the difference originated from. There was a difference between the upper-level and intermediate-level students in the correct word levels of the students whose dominant language is Turkish. Likewise, there were significant differences in written expression skills between high-level students and intermediate and low-level students. These differences are in favour of high-level students.

Table 8 shows the values of typos (spelling and word errors), correct and total word levels, arithmetic mean, standard deviation and ANOVA of written expression skills scores of primary school fourth-grade students whose dominant language is Kurdish, according to the socioeconomic level variable.

**Table 8. ANOVA Results of Typos, Correct, and Total Word Levels, Written Expression Skills Scores of Primary School Fourth Grade Students Whose Dominant Language is Kurdish According to the Variable of Socioeconomic Level**

Variable	SEL	n	Ss	SOS	df	AOS	F	p	D	
Typos	Low	28	30.57	28.10	4700	2	2350	2.525	.082	
	Average	59	39.49	32.95	2373	255	930			
	High	171	44.05	30.00						
Correct word level	Low	28	97.53	44.70	1946	2	9730	5.729	.004*	H-A H-L
	Average	59	68.32	37.93	4330	255	1698			
	High	171	70.21	41.70						
Total word level	Low	28	116.5	43.00	1285	2	6426	4.188	.016*	H-A

	Average	59	91.84	36.59	3912	255	1534			H-L
	High	171	95.08	39.38						
Written expression skill	Low	28	34.64	9.145	2087	2	1043	9.072	000*	H-A
	Average	59	24.91	9.344	2933	255	115.0			H-L
	High	171	25.80	11.37						

\* p<.05 H: High, A: Average, L: Low, SOS: Sum of Squares, AOS: Average of Squares, D: Difference

According to the socioeconomic level variable of primary school fourth-grade students whose dominant language is Kurdish, there was no significant difference in typos ( $F = 2.525$ ;  $p > .05$ ). On the other hand, correct word level ( $F = 5.729$ ;  $p < .05$ ); The difference in total vocabulary level ( $F = 4.188$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and written expression skills scores were statistically significant ( $F = 9.072$ ;  $p < .05$ ). There was a significant difference in the correct and total word levels, written expression skills of the students whose dominant language is Kurdish in favour of the students in the upper socioeconomic level.

### Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

Significant differences were found between the written expression skills of primary school fourth-grade students whose dominant language was different. There are various reasons behind these differences. In this part of the study, the effect of these reasons was questioned. Those whose dominant language is Kurdish are emergent bilingual learners. The language of instruction for these students is only Turkish. Even if Kurdish is dominant, students become bilingual because the education is in Turkish. Bilingualism is in the process of development.

It has been concluded that there are significant differences between the typos, correct and total word levels and written expression skills scores of the students whose dominant language is different. The scores for written expression skills of students whose dominant language is Turkish, monolingual, are at a higher level. This finding is consistent with various studies conducted in Turkey (Kan & Hatay, 2017; Özdemir, 2016; Sarı, 2001; Sugiharto, 2015). Likewise, Ng (2015) emphasizes that monolingual students have better-written expression skills than bilingual students. Similar results are found in the research conducted by Kan and Yeşiloğlu (2017). Farooq et al. (2012) also concluded in their research that the written expression skills of bilingual students develop in a challenging way. They emphasize that this difficulty creates a disadvantage. This disadvantage is mainly attributed to the structural and cultural differences in written languages. According to Cai (2004), these differences also lead to different problems. The problems are concentrated in grammar, writing appropriate compositions, and appropriately presenting their thoughts. According to Safa (2018), a written expression often becomes scary for individuals who acquire a second language due to these problems. It should also be noted that different research results draw attention to the disadvantages and difficulties experienced by second language learners in written expression skills (Ahmed Suliman, 2014; Hussein & Mohammad, 2011; Jun 2008). On the other hand, Poorebrahim et al. (2017) state

that bilingual students use more metacognitive skills than monolingual students, which positively affects their composition writing and written expression. Findings related to the better-written expression skills of students who acquire a second language are also included in other research results (Gort, 2006). Apart from this, according to Ng (2015), although being bilingual provides an advantage in writing skills, there is no clear and satisfactory data or study about this situation. On the other hand, there are also studies stating that there is no difference between the written expression skills of bilingual students and monolingual students. According to the results of his research, Ng (2013, 2020) states that there is no significant difference between the written expression skills of bilingual and monolingual students. Likewise, the research conducted by Droop and Verhoeven (2003) studying the written expression skills of bilingual and monolingual students supports this situation.

It has been concluded that there is no effect of preschool education on typos, correct and total word levels and written expression skills of monolingual primary school students whose dominant language is Turkish. In other words, taking preschool education or not does not affect the written expression skills of Turkish-speaking monolingual students. Likewise, students whose dominant language is Turkish have an excellent level of Turkish proficiency before they come to school may be effective because Turkish is already spoken in the students' homes and the neighbourhood. Yazıcı (1999) also states that having specific proficiency in the dominant language before starting school contributes to writing. More importantly, students in this group are exposed to the Turkish language to a great extent before they start school life. This situation is effective in language proficiency. Contrary to the result of this research, a significant number of studies have concluded that taking preschool education has a positive effect on written expression skills. Based on their research, Tavşanlı and Bulunuz (2017) state that preschool education positively affects the development of written expression skills. Similarly, Erdoğan (2011) draws attention to the positive relationship between preschool education and written expression skills in monolingual students. It should be noted that other studies draw attention to the effect of preschool education and going through this education process on students' written expression skills (Catts et al., 2012; Coşkun, 2006, 2010; Crone & Whitehurst, 1999; Cunningham & Stanovich, 1997; Farver et al. al., 2007; Kartal et al., 2016). According to Çetin et al. (2018), emphasizing that especially phonological awareness of preschool students is related to written expression skills, this relationship positively affects written expression skills in later ages. Undoubtedly, these results draw attention to the role of preschool education on primary school students' written expression skills. In addition, Yılmaz (2012) states that preschool education is a source for written expression skills. The child's scribbling at home before starting school, observing the writing work of his sibling who goes to school, drawing pictures and drawings form the basis for him to develop a thorough understanding of writing. This pre-knowledge he gained will benefit his writing studies when he starts school.

It has been concluded that preschool education does not affect bilingual students' correct and total word levels whose dominant language is Kurdish. It is pretty remarkable not to come across research findings in the literature stating that preschool education does not affect the written expression skills of bilingual students. On the other hand, the other findings obtained as a result of the research show that the variable of receiving preschool education effectively affects the spelling mistakes and written expression skills of bilingual students. In other words, it should be said that emergent bilinguals students who receive preschool education make fewer spelling mistakes and their written expression skills are generally better. This result is consistent with various research results in the literature (Susar Kırmızı et al., 2019; Kıvrak, 2019; Topcu, 2012). Similarly, in the study conducted by Kan and Hatay (2017), there is a conclusion that the reading and writing skills of bilingual students who receive preschool education are better than those of bilingual students who have not received preschool education. Similarly, in the study conducted by Kan and Hatay (2017), there is a conclusion that the reading and writing skills of bilingual students who receive preschool education are better than those of bilingual students who have not received this education. Koşan (2015) also states that bilingual students who receive preschool education in Turkey are successful in reading and writing. Therefore, Koşan states that going through preschool education also effectively ensures school readiness. Restrepo and Harmon (2008) also state that the education and writing activities during preschool education contribute to bilingual students' written expression skills later on. In Doğan's (2017) study on bilingual students (Turkish-Arabic) studying in Turkey, it was concluded that bilingual students who received preschool education had better written expression skills than students who did not receive this education. Other studies reveal the effect of preschool education on the written expression skills of bilingual students (Çabuk et al., 2018; Susar Kırmızı et al., 2016).

It has been concluded that the variable socioeconomic influences the typos, correct word levels and written expression skills of the monolingual students whose dominant language is Turkish. In other words, the better the socioeconomic levels of the students, the better their written expression skills. This finding also overlaps with some research results (Çelik, 2012; Deniz, 2003; Dölek & Hamzadayı, 2018; Haykır, 2012; Tabak & Topuzkanamış, 2014; Yılmaz, 2011). Similarly, Bartscher et al. (2001) also emphasize that low socioeconomic level causes a low level of written expression skills according to the results of their research. Chokwe (2013) draws attention to the fact that socioeconomic level is very effective, especially on writing skills, which is also harmful. When the results of various studies are examined, it is seen that socioeconomic level affects written expression skills (Arıcı & Ungan, 2008; Sholikah et al., 2019). In addition, Temel and Katrancı (2019) state that the socioeconomic level of the region where the school is located affects the students' ability to write

narrative and informative texts. On the other hand, there should be mentioned that studies conclude that socioeconomic level does not affect students' written expression skills (Pettigrew, 2009).

It was concluded that the socioeconomic variable affected the correct and total word levels and written expression skills of monoliterate and emergent bilinguals students. In other words, bilingual students with good socioeconomic levels have good written expression skills. This result is consistent with various research results (Deniz, 2003; Doğan, 2017). Likewise, according to the research conducted by Van Rensberg and Lamberti (2013), the written expression skills of students with low socioeconomic levels who continue their education in rural areas remain at a lower level. Salameh (2012) also attributes second language learners' low written expression performance to the low socioeconomic level. Chokwe (2013) also states that the academic writing skills of students who acquire a second language and have a low socioeconomic level are adversely affected by these disadvantages. On the other hand, Babayiğit (2014) draws attention to a fundamental issue in his research. He points out that studies examining the written expression skills of bilingual and monolingual students at the socioeconomic level are pretty limited, even in England. Moreover, he emphasizes that there is a need to examine the effect of socioeconomic variables on the writing skills of second language learners. It can be said that similar limitations exist in Turkey.

### **Recommendations and Limitations**

Preschool education should be compulsory, as it is foreseen that it will contribute to the development of written expression skills of emergent bilinguals. In order to reduce the negative impact of bilingual students' socioeconomic disadvantages on their written expression skills, students in these regions should be provided with original teaching materials. Supporting bilingual students to improve their Turkish skills outside of school can make their education at school more meaningful. For this purpose, projects can be developed to make parents a part of the language teaching process. Additional textbooks can be prepared to improve the Turkish skills of bilingual students. It may be suggested that researchers investigate and compare the academic achievement and reading comprehension levels of emergent bilinguals with those whose dominant language is Turkish. The research is limited to students whose dominant language is different and their primary school level. At the same time, the data were selected from only one province. This is another limitation.

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