

Researching bilingually: A Turkish/English case

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In this talk I will present a narrative of how my life history, starting from my school days, including the development of my academic, professional and social identity, affected my PhD study experience. My academic identity, for most of my schooling experience was based in the English language. My professional identity was partly based in English and partly in Turkish, depending on the jobs I have been involved in. My social experience, on the other hand, has been mostly based in Turkish, except for the time I have been living in the UK (past 8 years). I will talk about how these identities came together in my PhD studies. I will also talk about how a post-graduate scheme, the split-location scheme, specific to the university I was enrolled in, affected my experience of conducting research bilingually. The requirement for this split-location scheme was for me to spend three months of each academic year in the UK and the rest of the time in my home country, Turkey. I was working in Turkey, conducting my research with Turkish teachers, and was travelling back and forth between the UK and Turkey three times a year (one month each time) to meet with my supervisors and to make use of library facilities. I will describe how the split-location scheme added an extra dimension to my 'researching bilingually'. This talk will pull threads together from my different identities and languages to argue how natural it felt to switch between languages during my PhD study experience, and how this may have prevented me from reflecting on the consequences of this switching between languages. The paper further describes how this sense of it being 'natural' to switch between languages, and the lack of more reflection on this switching between languages, was sustained well into my PhD studies.