Language ideologies in Turkey: the discourse related to MTB-MLE

By Gülşah Türk

Turkey is a multilingual context where a variety of languages are spoken by citizens and refugees. However, it is officially monolingual, which leads to Turkish being misrecognized by most as the only legitimate language to be used in the public space, particularly in education.

Even though the language policies of the state have a major role in setting monolingualism as the norm, public discourse on language(s) has been producing and reproducing certain language ideologies, thus contributing to the legitimation of monolingualism. Since the public discourse has a major effect on language-in-education policies in Turkey, understanding its functioning might help to overcome the challenges regarding mother tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE).

This study aims to analyze how and why certain language ideologies, regarding monolingual and multilingual education in particular, are reproduced, negotiated, or contested within the society in Turkey. To this end, the results of semi-structured interviews and focus groups with individuals from different backgrounds will be presented to show their views on multilingual education.