A PHENOMENON IN THE MAKING: THE HIZMET MOVEMENT, ITS PHILOSOPHY ON EDUCATION, SCHOOLS, AND NOTIONS OF BILINGUAL EDUCATION

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

Education in general, and bilingual education in particular, faces many challenges in the U.S. As an immigrant receiving country, the U.S. is in dire need of sound language programs that will both maintain the use of home language and improve the English proficiency of bilingual children. This will also benefit the monolingual English-speaking students as well.

This study looks into a new emerging movement deeply involved in education: The Hizmet Movement (HM). Its emergence, philosophy, educational practices, and approaches to bilingual education are the focus of the study. The research question aims to bring out the views of HM administrators on education as well as bilingual education. The present day leader of the HM, Mr. Fethullah Gülen, was interviewed and his responses were taken as the basis for the HM’s educational philosophy. Phenomenology was adopted as a research method to collect, process, and analyze data. Some key findings include the following: a) the HM participants see education as a lifelong process to be pursued with passion and interest, b) the Gülenian approach offers a more Sufism oriented socio-cultural approach to education that includes altruism, inner ethics, morality, and tolerance, c) bilingual education does not exist in HM schools. However, those schools qualify as multicultural and/or multilingual schools in terms of student body with educators offering education in a monolingual setting, d) Mr. Gülen sees women as an indispensable part of the society and education.
Dedication

On a clear night having fixed their hearts upon the Light
they set out for eternity
And wherever the journey led, they carried their gift of radiance.

Fethullah Gülen

I dedicate this work to all the Hizmet Movement participants who left their loved
ones and the comfort of their homes behind to serve humanity and to bring light and hope
through education, tolerance through dialogue, and universal love and brotherhood
through sacrifice. I cannot commend them enough for the heroic acts and the legends
they are writing every day. I equally feel forever indebted to my adviser, Dr. Arlette
Ingram Willis, for her unwavering support, dedication, and compassion. She is truly an
exemplary human being. Thank you. Finally, thank you to my family and children for
being there and never doubting me. I love you to the moon and back.
# Table of Contents

Chapter I Introduction ..................................................................................................... 1

Chapter II A History and Review of Literature .......................................................... 16

Chapter III Methodology ............................................................................................... 64

Chapter IV Phenomenology, Bricolage and the Story of a Lived Experience: An Emic Perspective .................................................................................................................. 83

Chapter V A Phenomenological Case Study--Bilingual Education in Hizmet Movement Schools ........................................................................................................................... 105

Chapter VI Discussion .................................................................................................. 135

Chapter VII Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations ............................... 161

References ...................................................................................................................... 172

Appendix A Interview Questions ................................................................................. 186

Appendix B The Van Kaam Method of Analysis ............................................................. 188

Appendix C Translations and/or Transcriptions of Interviewee Responses ............... 190
Chapter I

Introduction

There is a common saying in the world of academia: politics is not education, but education is political. In the U.S., this means politicians and stakeholders have an impact on shaping the educational policies. In Turkey, however, in addition to the politicians and stakeholders, there are other elements adversely affecting education: the educational policies change almost every year, the deep state has its own agenda, favoritism is at its peak, and poverty prevents equal education opportunities for all. Herein, the Hizmet Movement (HM) is at the center of my research and is the focus of this study. I will address some issues faced in education from a different perspective through this emerging network.

I will also delve into the case of bilingual education in the U.S. I pondered much in order to give direction to this study, and, although I wanted solely to focus on bilingual education issues and education in the HM, I finally came to the conclusion that, in terms of methodology, what I needed to do was a study with a dual pathway encircled with education, spiritualism, and politics because of the magnitude of the movement. Thus, this turned into a study that argues for the use of descriptive and phenomenological introspection before engaging in a single-case phenomenological study. The latter examines how Hizmet Movement administrators (HM administrators) in charter schools view bilingual education and how their perspectives influence bilingual education in their schools. Conducting a study on bilingual education in the U.S. and correlating it to a Muslim movement that originated externally requires a broad approach and multiple
study methods. Thus, as the study progressed drawing on phenomenology, it evolved into a bricolage process that encompasses the seemingly disparate features of the study.

An example of the process follows: the forefather of the movement, Fethullah Gülen, made significant contributions to education in Turkey by encouraging his followers to build schools and educate children. Eventually, his efforts bore fruit. Today, the HM schools and schools with HM teachers and HM administrators have already spread to “nearly seven hundred schools worldwide” (Hendrick, 2006, p. 26). On another account, Ebaugh (2010), asserts that there are over 1,000 schools “that exist throughout Turkey and in approximately 100 countries throughout the world, located on 5 continents” (p. 97). She also states that this is not a definitive number since “estimates on the number of Gülen schools in Turkey and elsewhere vary greatly” (p. 100).

Mr. Gülen came to the U.S. in 1999, and with him came his philosophy. The focus to establish educational institutions shifted to the U.S. and, while simultaneously, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB) emerged to provide fertile grounds to put his philosophy into practice in the U.S. The call for charter schools to replace public schooling also appeared to open a door for an alternative form of education that HM educators would make full use of: charter schools. Today, regarding the number of the schools in the U.S., it is difficult to come up with a definitive number, as there are no aggregated accounts. A very rough estimate would be around 120 schools as of 2013. Herein, I will look into how the HM started, developed, and spread across the world. Then, I narrow my research focus to bilingual education in HM schools and schools with HM administrators.
It is a naïve assumption that the HM or any other movement that impacts masses on such a great scale is totally immune from politics, especially in the multi-dimensional and contested education system of the U.S., where, “academic achievement is presumed to be indicated by standardized test performance, tests that reflect a perception of the average U.S. school-child as White, middle to upper class, native English speaking, and native born” (Willis, 2009, p. 529). The Hizmet Movement, in this context, may offer an alternative, compassionate, purposive approach to a system where whitened education is imposed on all minoritized youth and diverse learning styles.

This study first set out to focus on the bilingual education practices in the HM schools in the United States. However, a comprehensive historical decade-by-decade overview and a wider coverage of the HM became necessary because education, as already stated, is a powerful political tool impacted by external elements that sometimes have no connection with education at all. For example, sociologist Hendrick (Steller, 2010) accuses the HM of being non-transparent and reticent. However, Harrington (2011) explains this by stating that “popular movements often engender apprehension because they are too difficult to measure, especially when, as with the Gülen phenomenon, the movement lacks a standard organizational structure” (p. 15). The HM schools do represent a singular movement, but these schools consist of a loose network of schools that have been established globally as well as in the U.S. There is no central governing body and no overt or covert body, except for the school districts and the state that advise them to implement a certain type of instructional program or curriculum. Simply put, the HM schools are local schools following the curricula of the states where they are founded. Furthermore, Hendrick also claims that the HM is a conscious brand marketed
consciously selected people. In his dissertation (Hendrick, 2009b), Hendrick links the movement to the conservative Justice and Development Party (JDP) in Turkey even though the movement has taken painstaking measures to stay away from politics and Gülen “has always opposed political Islam, helping to put a halt to its rise in Turkey” (Harrington, 2011, p. 16). Hendrick concludes that “their use of Islamic categories, their glorification of Anatolia’s Ottoman past, and their focus on Turkish exceptionalism in the world of Islam should not cloud the fact that, collectively, the Hizmet Movement’s primary motivation is power, not religious revival” (pp. 14, 15).

The upcoming chapters will look into those issues in more detail.

**Problem Statement**

As the cliché goes, we live in a global village. To me, this means something that happens at the other side of the world today affects the price of the milk I buy from the supermarket, the attitude of strangers with whom I interact on the street, or the services I receive from the state. It also means that one can tweet a revolution in Egypt to the world and change the outcome, or get an online degree from an American Ivy League college while enjoying the comfort of his/her home in Çankırı city, Turkey. National borders have become fluid, and with this fluidity, people have become more mobile. The HM, perhaps borrowing from its ancestors who once trotted from one Central Asian steppe to the other, used this modern mobility to its advantage to spread its quality education, interfaith dialogue, and tolerance across the globe.

As highlighted earlier, all education, regardless of its form, is not free of ideologies and political handicaps within the social context it exists. In the United States, the dominant social context has adopted apathetic policies about language learning and
language maintenance, which has led to the unlearning of home languages of the *English language learners* (ELLs). In the U.S. education system “the continued availability of bilingual education for significant numbers of ELLs is now in doubt” (Crawford, 2008, p. 144). Furthermore, after the arrival of the NCLB in 2012, 

Despite provisions requiring instructional programs to reflect ‘scientifically based research,’ the law provides indirect but powerful incentives to ignore this principle when it comes to ELLs. That is, it encourages schools to abandon native-language instruction in favor of all-English approaches. The anti-bilingual backlash has clearly taken a toll. (p. 144)

The arrival of the HM in the U.S. might mean many things to the solution of those issues. Although the results of the HM efforts in the U.S. are yet to be seen, the Sufistic approach that they employ to embrace *everyone*, their efforts to build a diverse and tolerant society, and the dedication of their teachers to provide the best education to their students might untangle the centuries-long knot on bilingual education. The HM schools look promising to serve as such medium and thus have become the center-point of this research.

The study is in a way also a test for the larger American society to see the limits of their enthusiasm for diversity and how far they might stretch their tolerance and acceptance to a non-Western, non-Christian movement.

**Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to provide the reader with enough data that they know what the HM as a social movement is; that is, its roots and history, philosophy, followers,
system, operations, and its relation to education. Regarding bilingual education, the study will highlight practices, if any, in the HM schools in the U.S.

Social movements, as Bernstein (2013), describes, are entities that “can target multiple institutions, practices, systems of knowledge, and cultural norms as well as the state” (p. 88). She categorizes the HM as such a social movement. She further classifies it as a movement that challenges the power of the state through a non-traditional method: \textit{not targeting the state}. To her, the HM “saw power anchored in multiple institutions” (p. 89). One may or may not agree with her assumptions, but some of those ‘multiple institutions’ are the HM schools established in the U.S. The significance of this study is that it delves deep into those schools’ pedagogical approaches, particularly in bilingual education while, at the same time, it provides the anatomy of a Muslim movement that, for the first time in modern history, is making an impact in the Western world through education, dialogue, and tolerance.

Current notions on education that consider education itself exclusively as an act or process of developing reason, acquiring skills, and building theoretical and practical knowledge that will equip the individual to perform a job naturally lead to results unsatisfactory to many educators. The assumption that schools are exclusively for vocational training or just for work-related skills minimizes the importance of education in the minds of the student. The study is also significant in that the HM provides a new framework and re-envisages education available today. According to Marsden and Retsikas (2013), this new form of education is the product of Muslim middle classes who wanted to see modern and Muslim together: “Muslim middle classes living in many different contexts have sought to harness and develop modern modes of educational
practices and institutions, recognizing how these allow them to fashion themselves as being simultaneously both modern and Muslim” (p. 20) and believe that the HM is an example. Besides that, there is scant empirical research that describes in-depth the theories, pedagogy, and instruction in the schools in general, and among bilinguals specifically. Finally, the HM takes into account the education of ethical values and morals as professed in the daily practices of teachers and how that results in high achievement schools in the U.S. Yet, it does not indoctrinate nor impose the HM philosophy on students.

Another significance of the study is that it adds another perspective to understand HM in the U.S. and globally, from someone who knows the HM intimately and is studying HM in U.S. schools.

**Research Questions**

Central to the study is the research question that gave me a sense of direction: “How do administrators and school directors in Hizmet Movement schools offering bilingual education at some degree perceive and apply the Gülenian perspective on bilingual education into the school practice in the U.S.?" The goal is to find answers to this question, bring out the dynamics of HM schooling, and comprehend the reverberations of that success of HM schools and stances toward bilingual education.

**Definition of Terms**

Throughout the study, a number of terms and concepts will be used repeatedly because of the significant value they add to this research. Notable terms and definitions are listed below.
**Bilingual:** I refer to the bilingual person as “an individual with a language background other than the societal language who has developed proficiency in his or her primary language and some proficiency in the second language” (August & Shanahan, 2006, p. 2).

**Bilingual Education:** I refer to bilingual education as

Education that provides literacy in the first language, which transfers to English, subject matter teaching in the first language, which helps make English more comprehensible, and comprehensible input in English, in the form of ESL, and subject matter teaching introduced as soon as it can be made comprehensible. (Krashen, 2009, p. 4)

On a broader context that extend beyond bilingual education for ELLs, bilingual education is

The use of two, or more, languages in the instruction and assessment of learners. Bilingual education differs from traditional language education programs that teach an additional language as a subject in that it uses the language as a medium of instruction. Programs vary in their goals, language use, and students served, and are also shaped by sociocultural and sociopolitical factors, historical context, as well as the status and power of speakers and languages. (Garcia & Homanoff Woodley, 2013, p. 1)

**Hizmet Movement Schools:** The definition of this term is a complex one. Keskin (2010) highlights the difficulty in defining a certain body or organization as Hizmet Movement schools since “most schools implement the same curriculum or the standards
based teaching methodologies used in the nearby public schools, and if you ask the people involved, they all have their own perspectives” (para. 2). Thus, there is no clear indicator to define these schools from one perspective, as there are many variations. However, for simplicity’s sake, and in order to give a rough understanding to the reader about these schools, I will borrow from Keskin and define the Hizmet Movement schools as a very loose network of private institutions with a modern curriculum interwoven with extracurricular activities that build on universally recognized social skills and moral values. They are non-religious, secular organizations staffed with altruistic educators working towards the common good of humanity. Additionally, these schools are “fee-paying private schools with rigorous academic standards for admittance [and] follow the curriculum of the host country with a majority of subjects taught in English along with some Turkish” (Ebaugh, 2010, p. 97). Finally, students in these schools “harmonize the global modern values with their local cultural traditions” (Keskin, 2010, “The first pillar or letter: G”, para. 4) to produce exemplary individuals for the glocal society.

The HM is a glocal initiative; it is both global and local. It is global in that the HM institutions and schools have spread to all continents of the world. It is also local in that the HM tailors its operations to the needs of the communities it tries to reach. For example, if the official policy mandates that half of the teachers to be locals, that is what the HM schools will do. Or, if the school day has to end at a certain time, the time schedule will be adjusted accordingly.

**Charter Schools with Hizmet Movement Educators:** These are not Hizmet Movement schools because they do not meet the criteria to be one. They are not private
schools, they are public institutions run by contractors who do not own the schools. Moreover, they are,

neither founded as private institutions, nor funded by private entrepreneurs and they are not allowed to charge any sort of tuition fee let alone putting enrollment requirements to select students that have promising academic potential. They don’t administer any entrance or qualification test. Unlike Gülen-inspired schools, charter schools have almost no donations from generous businessmen.” (Kurt, 2011, “A New Fictitious Phenomenon: Gülen Charter Schools”, para. 12)

Charter schools with Hizmet Movement educators are regular charter schools within the state’s control and can be immediately transformed into a regular public school upon non-renewal of contract.

Also, neither the private HM schools nor the charter schools with HM administrators do not need to meet the federal or state regulations with regard to bilingual education (even though the latter are funded by the public).

**Hizmet:** The literal translation of *Hizmet* is *Service* in English. In this study, Hizmet acquires a more particular meaning and is “perhaps best translated in this context as a volunteer service movement, or, as Gülen himself would say, a movement of people united around high human values” (Harrington, 2011, p. 11).

**Overview of Methodology**

In this research, I adopt a qualitative research design. McMillan and Schumacher (1993) define qualitative research as “primarily an inductive process of organizing data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among categories” (p. 479). This
inductive process deals with human thoughts, ideas, lifestyles, and interactions that are subjective and cannot be quantified into a set of numbers in this study. Moreover, the qualitative research design helped me to understand how Gülen’s philosophical thought is applied in HM schools in the U.S. In that regard, I follow the qualitative phenomenological design and look into the context of the research participants and their environments to form my own subjective understanding of the matter. I then break the data into smaller meaningful units and themes to make sense of the situation. Next, I proceed to translate those units into psychological meanings. Finally, I formulate imaginative variations on those units to diagnose and reveal what is crucial in them. My data for this study will consist of mostly observations and interviews. In sum, phenomenology is the method during data collection and analysis.

Since this is a phenomenological study with a dual pathway, part of the methodology includes bricolage. During the long course of study, I unintentionally became a bricoleur, that is, “a person who fashions meaning out of experience, using whatever aesthetic and instrumental tools that are available” (Denzin, 1994, p. 15). Additionally, my end product turned out to be a bricolage, which is “a pieced together, finely knit set of practices that provides solutions to a problem in a concrete situation” (p.17) as well as a “complex, dense, reflexive, collage-like creation that represents the researcher’s images, understandings and interpretations of the world or phenomenon under analysis” (p. 18). In the process, I performed “a large number of diverse tasks, ranging from interviewing, to interpreting personal and historical documents, to intensive self-reflection and introspection” (p. 17). I use bricolage as a method and approach to analyze my data on the Gülen interview.
Limitations

Potential limitations of the study center on my personal perspectives informed by my extensive involvement in the movement for a long time. This could be conceived as subjective. To some such philosophical and personal closeness appears to prevent the objectivity of observations and analyses. In an effort of full disclosure, I have outlined in the researcher’s perspective section, my standpoint. It is important to note, however, to some an emic perspective, to put simply that is, my insider views and constructs about the culture I came from, is needed to understand nuances that could be overlooked by outsiders. Also, because of the budget restrictions, I was not able to travel and recruit more research participants from different locations, and, in some cases, unable to interview some administrators where they actually worked, which prevented me from getting the feel of the place and obtaining more information about their institution.

Researcher’s Perspective

Mr. Fethullah Gülen is a prominent Islamic scholar, and in a post-911 world this may raise some eyebrows within the Western school of thought towards an educational initiative forming right in their sight. Within the Western mindset, Mr. Gülen’s philosophy and the schools that were established as a result of that philosophy may be regarded as a threat, even though the schools are secular and there is no Islamic education. Furthermore, it is unfair to brand Islam in general as a radical and hostile entity. Islam involuntarily had to assume an adjective, and turned into radical Islam in the eyes of the West; an Islam that does not tolerate, on the contrary, terrorize any effort for a peaceful and diverse world, largely because of media branding. So, under the media bombardment one might wonder what Islam is really about.
As a word, “Islam derives from the words peace and salvation and means the man’s surrender to Allah (God), his obedience to Allah’s commands, his walk to salvation through a safe and robust path, his affirmation of trustworthiness toward everything and everyone, and his refrainment from discomfort to others in terms of his deeds and words” (Capan, 2005, p. 29). Moreover, in essence, the Islam religion “consists of three segments: ‘faith (belief fundamentals), deeds (worship, actions, and sanctions), and morals’” (p. 29). At this point, it is safe to state that Islam has both worldly and ethereal aspects. Practices differ among Moslems in terms of the worldly aspect. The most obvious divide is between the Sunnis and the Shiites (Iran Islam). Unfortunately, what is portrayed as Islam in the Western media today is actually the practices and beliefs of the Shiites. After the death of the prophet Muhammad in 632 AD, questions arose on whom to elect as his successor (Caliph) and as the leader of the Moslem world. Four names emerged and they became caliphs in the following order: Ebu Bekir, Omar, Osman, and Ali. However, the Ali followers thought he should have been the first, and some even went as far as to murder the third caliph, Osman. The divide widened when Ali’s two sons, Hasan and Huseyin were killed during a war against the Sunni caliph in 680 AD. Fast forwarding to the present, as of today

Sunnis have a less elaborate and arguably less powerful religious hierarchy than Shiites. In contrast to Shiites, Sunni religious teachers historically have been under state control. (Blanchard, 2009, p. 3)

To make the distinction clear, Mr. Gülen states that
There are two important points one has to be careful about Iran: First, a bigoted Islamic view and sect export in the name of religion and Islamic revolution. They put their own sectarian belief and interpretations ahead of real religion. If someone is not a Shiite, s/he may not as well be worth anything at all. Second, their love of Ali is only a cover up to vitalize their own beliefs. It is actually not the love of Ali, but the animosity for Ebu Bekir and Omar that keeps them alive. (Sevindi, 1997)

Herein, for simplicity’s sake, I will use three specific terms-- radical Islam, moderate Turkish Islam, and secular Islam to distinguish among the forms most familiar to Westerners. Moderate Islam, in the Western sense, dates back to the times of the Muslim Sufi Mawlana Jalal Al-Din Rumi, whom Mr. Fethullah Gülen draws his inspirations from to this day. Sufism, simply put, is "characteristically tolerant, universally non-structured in terms of organized religion; it emphasizes personal integrity and a personal relationship with God" (Harrington, 2011, p. 29). The humanist, inclusive, and understanding nature of Sufism is perhaps best reflected in his writings; “Be so tolerant that your heart becomes wide like the ocean. Become inspired with faith and love for others. Offer a hand to those in trouble, and be concerned about everyone” (Gülen, 2008, “Tolerance”, para. 2). Sufism, however, is not a sect of Islam. It is a philosophical lifestyle encircled with Islamic tenets.

Regarding the Turkish people, the majority follows Sunni Islam. In the U.S. the official numbers declare the Turkish population to be almost 200,000 (Bureau, 2010, p. 1), however, unofficially it is said to be around 500,000 (Grabowski, 2005).
Last, the layout of the dissertation is as follows: Chapter 2 consists of a literature review of the Hizmet Movement (HM) with salient resources from the field. This is followed by an overview of the HM history. It also includes philosophical perspectives on education, language, and bilingualism from leading scholars in the field. Last, there is a collapsed overview of the history of bilingual education in the United States. Chapter 3 is the methodology section. It provides information on phenomenology and the dual pathway I used in order to analyze the data. Chapter 4 includes my emic perspective with a special section on Mr. Fethullah Gülen. Chapter 5 presents the data from the interviews, the supra themes, and results from the software analysis. Chapter 6 is a discussion of the findings. It is broken down into two major sections: a discussion reflective of the findings in the first pathway and a discussion reflective of the findings in the second pathway. Before the second pathway, I provided the reader with a comparative analysis of the HM’s potential contributions to bilingual education in order to make better sense of the findings in the second pathway. Chapter 7 concludes with implications, conclusion and recommendations for future research.
Chapter II

A History and Review of Literature

This chapter consists of three sections: a comprehensive historical overview of the Hizmet Movement and a review of extant literature on the GM begins the chapter to help create a context for understanding the influences of this movement within the field of education in general. Next, I present a variety of educational theories that undergird US education research and practice as well as the Gülenian perspective. The last section provides a short history of bilingual education in the US.

Historical Overview of the Hizmet Movement and a Review of Literature

The History

The Hizmet Movement can be called as a social movement that started in the late 1960s whose participants are dedicated to the advancement of scientific education and moral training based on respect and love for humanity, plus intercultural dialogue leading to tolerance and increased mutual understanding among people of different faith traditions and cultural backgrounds.

The movement is grounded in the universalistic teachings and charismatic leadership of Islamic scholar Fethullah Gülen (P. D. Johnson, 2013, p. 1)

The Hizmet Movement’s roots date back to the time when the Turkish Republic was founded. The change in the government system and the bourgeoisie it produced worked against the movement from the very beginning. The establishment of the new Turkish Republic in 1923 by Kemal Atatürk turned its back to the 600 year-old Ottoman history, and drew a sharp line between the past and the present. The Ottoman Empire had set up a governing system based on Islamic values that welcomed non-Muslims as well.
The Turkish Republic, while acknowledging its past from a nationalist point of view, denied any state and religion association because “a primary goal of Turkey’s Kemalist regime was to suppress Anatolia’s Ottoman-Islamic tradition by taking over the definition and application of faith, education, and law in Turkish society” (Hendrick, 2013, p. 16). It pioneered a completely Western culture and lifestyle that the system saw was the only way for advancement.

An era of laicism began. The founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk defines states that “laicism is not a mere separation between religion and worldly affairs. It is the freedom of conscience, religion, and worship” (TSK, 2014). Under this new regime, the sultanate-khalifah system (very similar in title and role as the Catholic Pope) was dismantled; the veil, important religious attire, was banned; the fez, a symbol of the Ottoman government, was replaced with fedora hats, coercively. Furthermore, the new republic got rid of the Ottoman alphabet that resembled Arabic characters almost overnight and Latin letters were imposed. A whole nation became illiterate. Educational institutions and places of religious worship such as madrasas (a school for Islamic instruction), tekkes (an Islamic monastery), and zawiyas (monastery complexes that belong to religious orders) were closed permanently.

The royal family members and their entourage that consisted of 155 people were sent on exile (Hasanoglu, Jan 28, 2012). Those who stayed behind were either executed or jailed. A completely sterilized secular system was implemented that favored only Atatürk’s principles and those who did not conform were harshly dealt with. In the middle of these extreme revisions, a new class of ruling elite rose into power. This new class adopted Western values, supported Atatürk’s ideas, and welcomed all changes that
came down from him no matter what. In return, they acquired privileges exclusive to
them. They had access to state property, were placed in important positions in the
government, and received tremendous financial support in the form of tax-breaks, use of
government resources, and other state enterprises. Today’s political climate reflects the
struggle between the extensions of this ruling elite class and the government elected
democratically by Turkish people. What follows is a historical overview of Gülen and the
Hizmet Movement.

**Beginning through 1960s**

The pioneer of the Hizmet Movement, Mr. Fethullah Gülen, was born in a small
village of Erzurum, Turkey in 1938. His father was an imam and his mother was a
homemaker. He was the second child in his family with eight children. Although almost
all religious instruction and practice was officially forbidden during his childhood, he
memorized the whole Quran when he was only five years old and took classes from
Islamic scholars such as his own father Ramiz Bey, the Nakşibendi Sheikh Muhammed
Lutfi Efendi, Rasim Baba, Osman Bektaş, Solakzade Sadık Efendi, and Siddik Efendi
(Yavuz, 2013, pp. 29, 30). He also attended the *Sohbets* (small-group talks of religious
nature) led by prominent religious figures, including Sufi masters, in the area. He could
not finish elementary school and had a lapse in his education because his father was
assigned to Alvar Köyü in Erzurum and the family had to move there. It was a small
village that did not have any schools at the time. He later acquired his high school
diploma through an adult education program. He was extremely “aware of how the youth
in Turkey were being attracted into extremist, radical ideologies, including atheistic
communism and materialism” [and] “lead the Turkish Association for Struggle Against
Communism in Erzurum and later on recruited ideological support against the political threat of Iranian Islam” (Ebaugh, 2010, pp. 25-26). While doing his mandatory service in the Turkish army, one of his commanders introduced him to the works of Western philosophers, which he read and learned from extensively. After his military service, he went back to his official imam job that he was certified in 1956 (Ebaugh, 2010, p. 26) prior to his military service. This time he was assigned to Kestanepazari, Izmir.

It is at this point, the second half of the 1960s, that he unknowingly started the Hizmet Movement. He established an all-boys dormitory and started to shelter and educate middle and high school students. His activities were later extended to summer camps. He did not get paid for his services, nor did he want that. He “remained distanced from the financial management of all institutions related to the movement. Instead, he encouraged the sponsors of these institutions to actively oversee the use of their monies. This built great trust in Mr. Gülen’s honesty and integrity” (Ebaugh, 2010, p. 37). The dorms and summer camps eventually led the way to the establishments of private schools. All the schools began under the auspices of the HM were private schools.

1970s

The Memorandum of March 12, 1971 made a significant mark on the Turkish political history. Nihat Erim, who was the 13th prime minister of the Republic of Turkey and stayed in office between March 1971 and May 1972 for nearly 14 months, calls this development as “the result of more than a century’s yearning and striving for democracy” (Erim, 1972, p. 246). He justifies the intervention of the military by stating, “it is only natural that when the Republic and the country is in danger the armed forces step in to defend them” (p. 248). He highlights that during that time student protests were turned
into armed fights between the rightists and the leftists, and people were trained and provoked by forces outside Turkey. Erim pictures the situation as follows.

Professional agents, trained, armed and directed from outside Turkey, were able to transform some leftist student organizations to urban guerrilla units which carried out kidnappings, bombings and political killings. Openly proclaiming that they were Marxist-Leninist and Maoist, young terrorists managed to turn some of the universities into communist arsenals and strongholds, preparing for the establishment of a Communist People's Republic in Turkey. With extreme rightists, on the other hand, forming paramilitary organizations modeled after Hitler's stormtroopers and preparing for a Holy War against "communists" and the government unable to control the situation, the country was on the brink of civil war and/or a communist takeover. It was at this point that the High Command of the Armed Forces reluctantly intervened. On the other hand, the social and economic structure of the country was in need of fundamental changes. With a population growing more than a million per year and the economic gap between regions being very deep, the situation created a fertile ground for extremism. (pp. 249, 250)

Finally the military intervened; the ruling officials in the government resigned, and order was restored for almost another ten years until the September 12, 1980 military coup. Amidst all this, Mr. Gülen was arrested after the Memorandum and jailed for six months. He was later ‘let go’ without charges. The authorities did not provide him with a legitimate explanation of why he was kept in jail for six months. He was appointed from his former post in Izmir to Edremit as an imam. He worked to establish dorms and
residence halls for middle and high school students. His efforts snowballed in the 1970s, reaching to colleges and universities. During the time, students had become extremely polarized and brainwashed with communist as well as ultra-nationalist ideas, especially at the higher education level. Parents perceived Gülen dorms and residence halls as sanctuaries for their children because

The dormitories served as shelters against alcohol and drug use, premarital sexual exploits, and involvement in communist, ultra-nationalist or other radical movements. Many conservative and religious parents encouraged their children to live in the dormitories as they attended university in the big cities in Turkey (Ebaugh, 2010, p. 28)

The 1970s also witnessed the Hizmet Movement’s first college preparation courses. This initiative was received with great enthusiasm in Turkey because the almost defunct Turkish public school system could not provide enough support to students with the very difficult-to-pass college entrance examinations.

Roughly, around 1975, when Mr. Gülen “managed to establish lighthouses and created a web of networks to realize his dream of cultivating a new generation of religious revivalists” (Yavuz, 2013, p. 36). Four years later, Sizinti, the Hizmet Movement’s Sufism oriented monthly periodical, began publication in 1979, marking the more official start of the HM. Today, it is still published both in Turkish and in English, under the name of Fountain.

1980s

On September 12, 1980, Turkey witnessed another military coup, and “following the 1980 military coup, the military leadership issued an arrest warrant against Mr. Gülen
on grounds similar to his arrest during the previous coup” (Yavuz, 2013, p. 39). During his “period of lying low” (p. 39) he used audio recording to spread his ideas. The warrant was lifted in 1986. He started to give public sermons again. The Hizmet Movement, in the meantime, opened its first private high school, the *Yamanlar College*, in Izmir in 1982. Despite his personal and spiritual journey, the Hizmet Movement continued to grow and began a daily newspaper, *Zaman*, in 1986. The English version of *Zaman*, *Today’s Zaman*, followed 21 years later.

Due to his undisclosed health conditions, he stopped preaching and resigned from his imam position in 1981, six months after the September 12, 1980 military coup. As Yavuz stated above, his resignation was also partially because of his need to lie low. In the history of the modern Turkish Republic era, Islamic movements and lifestyles have not been compatible with the military. In her pro-military article Narli (2005) states that

The military became not only the republic’s defenders, but also the guardians of secularism and the six principles of Kemalism: nationalism (synonymous with the narrow definition of Turkism, rejecting both irredentist Ottoman inclinations and expansionists pan-Turanist ambitions), secularism, republicanism, populism, statism, and reformism. (pp. 230, 231)

The army was also a staunch proponent of Westernization as well, and saw Islamic – *Islamist*, in Narli’s terms - movements as a barrier: “it also intervened politically to counter forces blocking this transformation and to preserve democracy, secularism, and national unity in the face of Islamist, separatist, and sectarian challenges” (p. 231). Thus, Islamic scholars like Mr. Gulen had no choice but to hide when the coup took place.

He went to *Hajj* (Muslim pilgrimage) in 1986 and, while still in Medina as part of
the Hajj, the Turkish State issued an order for his arrest due to claims on his involvement with the Mehmet Ozyurt criminal case. He decided to turn himself in voluntarily because he did not want to be arrested like a fugitive at the Syria-Turkey border. He took a difficult journey over Syria alone, crossed the border and then went to Izmir, Turkey to turn himself in. He was later acquitted of all charges. Eventually, he continued to only preach on Fridays again at various mosques, mainly in Istanbul and in Izmir. The sermons he shared were later put together in a three-volume book, *The Infinite Light*. The Hizmet Movement, in the meantime, opened its first private high school, the *Yamanlar College*, in Izmir in 1982.

**1990s**

The private school initiatives were carried over to the 1990s, a time that also serves as a transitional period for the Hizmet Movement from an institutional organization to a global phenomenon. For example, the first Turkish school was founded in Central Asia in 1992. It was founded in Nakhchivan City, Nakhchivan and undersigned by the then Azerbaijani President Haydar Aliyev, Department of Education Secretary Nazim Ekberov, and Zaman Daily Newspaper CEO İlhan Isbilen (Ozcan, 2012). One year later, in 1993, the HM’s first media channel, *Samanyolu TV*, started broadcasting under the Samanyolu Broadcasting Group (SBG). It is “the only private channel of Turkey which produces programs with a hundred percent of its own fund and airs these programs in its own broadcast group” ("Kurumsal [Institutional]," 2014). It broadcast to a conservative audience and did not have the profanity and sex that was common to other private channels in Turkey. The SBG grew exponentially: Burc FM and Dunya Radio started broadcasting also in 1993; Samanyolu Avrupa in 1999; Samanyolu Amerika in
2000; Mehtap TV in 2006; the English-language Ebru TV (in the U.S.) in 2006; the news-only channel Samanyolu Haber Kanali, the children’s TV Yumurcak TV, and Hazar TV (in Azerbaijan) in 2007; and the Internet TV Kure TV in 2010 (SBG, 2014).

The Hizmet Movement intellectuals established The Journalists and Writers Foundation (JWF) in 1994 on the Anatolian side of Istanbul. Mr. Gülen has been serving as the honorary president of the foundation since its inception. The JWF “aims to contribute to the society by enriching what already exists…” (Foundation, 2014). Intellectuals, as listed on the JWF as of 2014, include established scholars and writers such as Ekrem Dumanli, Mustafa Yesil, Huseyin Gulerce, Abdullah Aymaz, Ahmet Tasgetiren, Nuh Gonultas, and Ali Bulac. In 1996, the network’s first higher education institution, Fatih University, opened its doors. As of 2014, it has 3823 students in associate degree programs, 9124 students in undergrad programs, and 1645 students in graduate programs ("General information: Fatih with numbers," 2013). There are 70 different departments in 9 different schools offering a wide variety of degrees in education, fine arts, science, economics, engineering, medicine, law, music, and theology, to name a few. It is a coeducational school and accepts students from every demographic background including foreign nationals. Also in 1996, the network’s first interest-free bank, Bank Asya, started its operations. It is worth noting that, of all 346 businessmen, some were “indifferent to Mr. Gülen’s ideas but saw a business opportunity in the establishment of such a bank” (Ebaugh, 2010, p. 84). There are also other business initiatives of the HM that focus on sales and making profit. Most of them are affiliated to Kaynak Holding, an umbrella company with 23 different HM businesses. Some of them are as follows: Isik Yayinlari that sells spiritual books; Surat Teknoloji that provides IT
services and solutions to institutions; Kaynak Kagit that manufactures paper; Gokkusagi that sells school books, school supplies, and toys; Itina that sells dairy, poultry and meat products; Nuanstur that provides hotel reservations, domestic and international leisure travel, and Hajj and Umre services; Caglayan that does large scale printing and also sells printing machines; and Surat Kargo that offers all kinds of freight shipment ("Grup şirketleri [Group companies]," 2014).

Mr. Fethullah Gülen met with the Pope in 1998 in the Vatican. This was significant because he was the first Turkish Islamic scholar to do so. It was also significant in that this meeting made the interfaith dialogue initiative public for both within and outside the HM. He eventually came to the United States in 1999 in order to receive medical treatment due to cardiac dysrhythmia. He also had diabetics and heart problems (Gundem, 2005, p. xxxii). Why he chose the United States particularly, is a mystery.

At this point it is important to make some points about the political life in Turkey. Historically, the power elite supported parties with liberal and secular beliefs. Whenever a more conservative party came to power, there was intervention. This happened during the conservative Democratic Party rule in 1961. Its leader and the then prime minister, Adnan Menderes, and two of his cabinet members, Fatin Rustu Zorlu and Hasan Polatkan were hanged after the 1960 military coup. Another conservative and openly Islamist party, the Welfare Party, was closed in 1997 by the Supreme Court while it was still in power. This is known as a post-modern coup carried out by the military in Turkey. The Welfare Party eventually gave birth to the Justice and Development Party (JDP) in 2001, led by Recep Tayyip Erdogan. As of 2014, the JDP has been in power since 2002. The
JDP “is a conservative democratic mass party that situates itself at the center of the political spectrum,” and is “reformist,” “realistic,” “pro-change,” and “principled” ("2023 political vision: Politics," 2014).

One might think that the state and the government function as a one uniform body in a democratically managed system. However, this is a misleading concept when it comes to Turkey. The governing party is elected every four years in Turkey, and for the last three elections, the JDP, a political party respecting Islamic values, has won. The JDP’s position has posed a conflict of interest between the ruling elite in the state and the officials elected by the people. In Turkey, the state and the government are actually two separate entities. Governments like the JDP come and go, but the state ideology remains unchanged. Within the current system, the ruling elite, namely the state, exercises tremendous power over the military, judiciary, and the media. The ‘state people’ are an unnamed and unknown group of people who have been in the background of state affairs for generations. To make it clearer, a government is a temporary entity that exists in the present and may not be there tomorrow while the state is relatively permanent and has penetrated its claws on the past, present, and future of Turkey.

Until early 2000s, the ideologically charged ruling elite literally used to have the power to implement, change, and direct any kind of social, economical, and political activity. However, as a result of the accession process to the European Union, the democratic improvements made room for alternative voices such as the JDP. The state started to feel the pressure because it tightened its authority and the wide parameters it had enjoyed before. The state brought down a number of civilian governments with military coups throughout the short history of the Turkish Republic whenever such
conflicts of interest rose, especially with the political parties respecting Islamic values of the Turkish people. This happened in 1960, 1971, 1980, and 1997. The military power the state had over the government has decreased since 2010, and the ruling elite started to follow different strategies to regain power.

One such strategy includes connecting the HM with the current government, JDP. This way, it aims to politicize the HM, which has actually never dealt with politics and took extra care to stay away from it. The ruling elites aim to link the government with the Hizmet Movement so that JDP might be envisioned as a radical Islamist organization, which could lead to a trial and throw-down of the government. Politics and the HM have never been compatible and the forefather of the HM, Bediuzzaman Said Nursi (1877-1960), despised anything that had to do with politics. He noted that

To an extent, diplomats, officers, warfare personnel, and commandants deal with politics and the larger issues it brings as part of their jobs. This dealing, however, causes those people to neglect their responsibilities toward their own spiritual, religious, familial, and social lives. Furthermore, politics leaves their souls astray, turns their minds into prattlers, and loosens their hearts by breaking the enthusiasm and appreciation they have for their faith and Islamic truths. Eventually, politics spiritually kills the heart and thus provides a favorable ground for atheism… (Nursi, 1994, p. 38)

Mr. Gülen follows the same path. He says, “Our work is not about politics. Neither in the past nor in the future we do not and will not have the slightest interest for those kinds of things, be it overt or covert. We will not have any thoughts, signs, or comments” (F. Gulen, 2011). Instead, the HM reiterates its existence as an apolitical
educational initiative that derives its strength from high morals and ethics based on the Sufi past of Anatolia, in other words, Anatolia’s Ottoman-Islamic way of life. It continues to promote love, peace, and tolerance among all humans regardless of their belief system, race, and ethnicity. By way of contrast, from the Gülenian perspective, all Muslims are brothers and sisters in religion, and all Muslims and non-Muslims are brothers and sisters in humanity. Education stands as enlightenment to achieve internal peace through the medium of high morals and science. ("Fethullah Gulen: Turkiye’de Muslimanlar ve Kemalistler olarak her bakimdan ayrismis iki gruptan soz edilemez," 2011) (Fethullah Gulen: In Turkey, it is very incorrect to speak of two extremely different groups called as the Muslims and the Kemalists).

The 2000s

The first decade of the new millennium marked itself as a troublesome era for Mr. Fethullah Gülen. He dealt with his own health issues and legal battles in Turkey. The context of the Gülen trial(s) and his circumstances are perhaps best described by Harrington (2010):

It is in this milieu of the country’s judicial system that the Gülen trial unfolds: a prosecutor with unbridled discretion to file an indictment and begin a criminal trial in a State Security Court, under the watchful eye of the military, based on an extraordinarily broad definition of “terrorism” that encompassed political thought alone, in a judicial structure in which both the prosecutor and judges were appointed by a closed selection system, characterized by its ideological belief. (p. 68)
Mr. Fethullah Gülen was eventually acquitted of all charges and currently resides in Saylorsburg, Pennsylvania, U.S.

The new millennium also saw an influx of the Hizmet Movement schools and institutions: new private schools, universities, and interfaith organizations in almost all continents. For example, Sebat Egitim Kurumları in Kyrgyzstan runs 14 all-boys’ and all-girls’ high schools, 1 international school, 1 university, and 4 college dorms; Cag Egitim Isletmeleri in Azerbaijan operates 11 high schools, 1 elementary and middle school and 1 university; Selale Egitim Sirketi in Tajikistan has 6 high schools, 1 international school, 1 language center, and 1 college dorm; and KATEV Uluslararası Egitim ve Kultur Vakfi in Kazakhstan has 28 high schools and 1 university. A fruitful result of these schools was the start of the Turkish Olympiads, which was first held in 2003. In 2012, students from more than 130 countries competed with each other to win one of the best Turkish speaker medals in many different categories. Some of the countries were Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Denmark, Ethiopia, Japan, Kazakhstan, Panama, Togo, New Zealand, and the United States. It should be also noted that instruction in the Turkish language is not a required course in most countries. Education is offered in English and the language of the native country in those countries. In other words, there is no bilingual education in those schools.

**Historical Overview of the Hizmet Movement and a Review of Literature**

**The Literature**

Herein, I offer a review of extant literature focused on those on the Gülen-movement as well as a comprehensive review of the Hizmet Movement. The gist of the literature for both the Gülen and the HM movements is a sociological perspective. There
is a paucity of literature on either movement written from an educational perspective and none written to date that focuses on bilingual education.

Ebaugh (2010) offers a sociological analysis of the Hizmet Movement. Ebaugh conducts an extensive study drawn from visits to a number of HM schools, “including a university, and several hospitals that were built on ideals taught by Mr. Gülen” (p. xi). Ebaugh states that she “was able to visit approximately eight Gülen schools in Istanbul, Antalya, Izmir, Bursa, Ankara, Konya, and Urfa” (p. 10). However, she does not state the number of visits. Ebaugh does an extensive study and has data drawn from visits to those eight HM schools as well as interviews from the following HM institutions: Bank Asya, Samanyolu television station, Zaman newspaper, The Journalists and Writers Foundation, Fatih University, Sema Hospital in Istanbul, Bakar Hospital in Bursa, three HM schools, and Kimse Yok Mu Relief Organization (p. 10). Ebaugh interviewed “top administrators in Gülen-institutions…”, “individuals who contribute time and money to service projects…”, “two groups of businessmen who are major supporters of movement projects, one in Istanbul and one in Bursa”, [and] “focus groups with a local circle of engineers and doctors, as well as with two groups of blue collar workers” (p. 10). Ebaugh does not give the number, but it is likely that she conducted around a dozen one-on-one and group interviews.

Ebaugh suggests that the HM is unfamiliar to most Americans and that the organizations such as Dialogue Institute Southwest in the southern U.S. states, Niagara Foundation’s Center for Cultural Exchange & Interfaith Collaboration in the Midwest, and the Pacifica Institute in California conduct cultural trips to Turkey in order to inform the public more about the HM. Gülen is portrayed as an advocate for building bridges
between Islam and the West, someone whose focus is on four major cultural practices of his ancestors: “(1) the spirit of dialog; (2) the fact that the Ottoman state was multilingual, multiethnic and multireligious; (3) respect for women; and (4) the intellectual and cultural rapprochement between Ottoman society and the West begun in the nineteenth century” (Ebaugh, 2010, p. 33). According to Ebaugh, Gülen’s educational philosophy, Gülen strives to see a youth trained with modern knowledge that also possesses high morals and, “sees education as the primary solution to the three problems that plague developing countries, namely, ignorance, poverty and internal schism” (p. 95). Ebaugh continues, noting that the HM is, “a civic initiative, a civil society movement that is not a governmental or state sponsored organization [and] . . . focuses on the spiritual and intellectual consciousness of the individual, seeking to form and inner self that will empower the person to effect change in the society” (p. 45). Ebaugh concludes by remarking that the HM “advocates quality, modern education for all youth, interfaith and intercultural dialog, and mutual cooperation among cultural and religious groups” (p. 113). On education, Ebaugh notes “Mr. Gülen defends a progressive notion of Islam in which Muslims and Muslim nations are able to engage the world with the best of science, education, philosophy, social sciences and technology” (p. 30). However, remarks on education in her book do not go beyond a sociological analysis and lack a focus on the HM as a viable alternative to public. Importantly, this text offers insight into the philosophies and writings of Gülen but it does not extend this understanding to education nor apply it to HM schools.

By way of contrast, Hendrick’s dissertation is highly critical of the Hizmet Movement (2009b). His empirical study he carried out between September 2006 and
August 2007 includes more than 40 interviews with people in the HM in Turkey working at the HM educational institutions, media companies, and college students. There are also site visits and 1,000 hours of participant observation in places such as the Akademi “an all-in-one publishing house, think tank, library, theological training center, meeting center, school, and mosque” (p. 52) during their work hours. He also connected with Bank Asya, PASIAD (Pacific Businessmen and Industrialists Association), Zaman Gazetesi, FEM Dershanesi (a college prep course), Fatih University, the Journalists and Writers Foundation. They were all in Istanbul. He also did research in the U.S. such as at the HM Middle East Policy Luncheon. In his research, he asks

Has the tension between traditional Islam and modern secularism in Turkey given way to pluralism and cooperation? If so, what factors explain Turkey's recent political crises between its so-called "secular establishment" and its varying "antisecular forces?" If the GM is Turkey's most wide-reaching and most influential Islamic community, then what explains its acceptance and promotion of secular Turkish nationalism, democratic pluralism, EU integration, of neo-liberal restructuring? (Hendrick, 2009, p. 13)

Hendrick claims that the Hizmet Movement pushes for a rethinking between modernity and tradition in Turkey with an agenda to gain social and political power in Turkey. He rekindles that idea in his dissertation-to-book work, Gülen: The Ambiguous Politics of Market Islam in Turkey and the World (2013), and classifies the GM’s efforts as a “passive revolution” (p.8). Furthermore, the Hizmet Movement, in Hendrick’s view, contradicts with the cultural incompatibility arguments that define Islam as a unique culture that does not interact with the West in that the Hizmet Movement targets for
dialogue and integration. The motivation for this, he contends, including the Hizmet
Movement’s support for European Union accession, is part of that integration process
because it wants to “promote and expand the diversification of the Turkish elite”
(Hendrick, 2009b, p. 39). Accordingly, he views a new diverse upper class elite who also
will lead the Movement as synonymous with the same class that makes up the Justice and
Development Party (JDP). In other words the HM is “AKP’s (JDP) most important
collective partner…” (Hendrick, 2013, p. 18).

Hendrick draws political linkages to the HM has political links. He defines the
Hizmet Movement as “an example of non-contentious contentious action, or better still,
“nonpolitical” political Islam” (Hendrick, 2009b, p. 42). Furthermore, he develops a
socialistic argument and blames the Hizmet Movement for serving only the rich and the
smart intellectual while neglecting and overlooking the poor.

According to Hendrick, the Hizmet Movement is not a social movement because,
even though it makes claims on target audiences, it is very selective; that it does not
conduct marches or involve itself in protests and demonstrations, but forms organizations
and associations instead. Nonetheless he asserts that the HM “actors spend a great deal of
time and money advertising their worthiness to the Turkish and international public. They
do so, however, to advance their own interests, not to advance the interest of some larger
public good” (Hendrick, 2013, pp. 19, 20). He further criticizes the insistence of the
Hizmet Movement affiliated media, such as the Zaman newspaper, to call Kurdish
separatists as terrorists and the Alevi as Muslims. He oversees the fact that no official or
civilian media outlet, except a small minority supporting PKK activities, calls them as
Kurdish separatists. Hendrick’s home country, the United States, also officially regards them as terrorists (State, 2013).

Hendrick’s work, however, has a number of shortfalls. First, he fails to see that “in southeast Turkey, the schools are an alternative to PKK-organized terrorist training camps and intended to help improve the life of the Kurdish community” (Harrington, 2011, p. 12), and how much this education contributes to peace in the Kurdish region in Turkey as well as the northern parts of Iraq bordering Turkey. Second, he further overlooks the fact that how appreciative the Alevi leaders are of the Hizmet Movement’s support on their lobbying for the official recognition of Alevi Cemevis (places of worship for the Alevi community) as religious establishments. In addition, “Gülen was the first Islamic leader to open formal discussion with the Alevi, Christians and Jews in Turkey” (Harrington, 2011, p. 7). Third, he also fails to see how “Gülen appeals to well-off people to assist the poor, for the benefit of all” (p. 8), and how the HM schools fund the underserved, low socio-economic status children in the private schools with the money acquired by the fee-paying families in the same schools. He is also not aware of the substantial discounts offered to its working class personnel in those institutions. Finally, he overlooks the fact that the majority of the core personnel shouldering the volunteer network come from low-income homes, most of whom, to this day, only rely on their own salaries.

Hendrick does acknowledge that “after visiting several GM schools and after talking with a number of current and former teachers, I had little doubt that many GM-affiliated teachers were impressively devoted to their craft” (Hendrick, 2013, p. 138). Further, he claims that the HM schools have filled a market demand for “high quality,
low teacher-to-student ratio, science and math education” (Hendrick, 2009a, p. 146).

Additionally, the Hizmet Movement focuses less on social welfare and more on selling education as a product for financial gain. In a country where private education accounts for only 3 percent, the Hizmet Movement’s success to gain millions of followers and affiliates lies in the competitive education market. As stated above, Hendrick acknowledges the selfless dedication of the educators in the institutions, but reserves the real credit for the competitive structure of the Turkish educational system and the Hizmet Movement’s selective recruitment via “scholastic incentives” (Hendrick, 2013, p. 139). In sum, according to Hendrick, the HM achieves many of its overt and covert goals through education:

   Offering an alternative form of Turkish nationalism to Turkish and international consumers, education emerged as a key strategy in the GM’s transnational advocacy campaign, and ultimately functioned as the primary link between affiliated media, business, and public relations efforts in a complicated network of wealth, prestige, praise, and conspiracy (Hendrick, 2013, p. 143).

Hendrick’s foray into a discussion of the HM influence on education of youth is limited to a discussion of the political influences and admiration of teachers. Little salient information is offered to help the reader understand the role of HM schools within countries in which they are established and the lives of the teachers and students. Importantly to this review, Hendrick’s text also fails to make clear the philosophical perspectives of the teachers, the lingua franca of the teachers within the schools, and the opportunity afforded students to learn another language, i.e., Turkish.
Weller and Yilmaz (2012) offer an edited volume where various scholars share their understanding of the HM within a European context formed on post-9/11, post-Madrid train bombings in 2004, and post-London Transport attacks in 2005. The book contains papers previously presented at *The Muslim World in Transition Conference* in London in 2007, and at *The Peaceful Co-Existence Conference* in Rotterdam in 2007. The papers were later rewritten and updated to fit the focus of the book. The editors of the book state, “the religious discourse of Gülen has become global and adapted to local circumstances” (Weller & Yilmaz, 2012, p. xxiii). By doing so, the Hizmet Movement stays away from the divide that splits the world into two poles between the seculars and the radical Islamists because “Gülen does not see the world in political terms and does not draw imaginary boundaries” (Weller & Yilmaz, 2012, p. xxiv). In order to tap into the global religious discourse that adapted itself to local circumstances the editors state, they divide the book into four parts: Gülen’s perspectives on Muslim identity and community life, civility and co-existence, European contexts, and terrorism. In addition, this book approaches the HM from a sociological perspective, and the only paper in the book that touches educational views and activities of the HM to some degree is Krause’s (2012, pp. 55-64).

In a chapter in the same book, Weller (2012) highlights a number of issues regarding the management policies European countries have adopted on religious and cultural diversity. Weller states that those policies and debates revolving around them “have often been constructed in terms of a conflict between ideologically ‘secularist’ and ideologically ‘Islamist’ positions, as if these were the only alternatives” (Weller, 2012, p. 5). He introduces a number of key themes inspired by the Hizmet Movement and outlines
the middle way Gülen suggests, a way that avoids the extremes on anything—be it on money, power, worldly views, or fame. For example, Gülen, unlike some other radical Islamic scholars, does not see the world divided into two poles: *dar al-Islam* (the land of Islam) and *dar al-harb* (the land of war, non-Islamic states). He promotes living a life “according to the newly articulated concept of *dar al-hizmet* (country of service)” (p. 19).

*Dar al-Islam* is a land or country lived in and ruled by Muslim people. *Dar al-harb* is the very opposite. It’s a land or country lived in and ruled by non-Muslims such as Jews, Christians, Buddhists, and Atheists. However, *dar al-hizmet* covers the whole world regardless of beliefs systems and regards serving all humanity as the utmost priority. This is the HM participants’ understanding of *Hizmet* (Service).

Similarly, another paper in the same book states that “the Gülen movement is based on an Islamic philosophy that embraces a ‘common good’, and emphasizes the universality of values, spirituality and principles of justice—in short, the welfare of society…” (Krause, 2012, p. 56). The paper emphasizes how Mr. Gülen’s philosophy embraces the West and the East by being a “loose entity that transcends cultures, ethnicities and even religion over several countries” (p. 56). Additionally, “in Gülen’s educational philosophy, scientific learning is not divorced from the development of spirituality” (p. 59). Krause notes that Mr. Gülen’s teachings inspired his followers with desire and practice. This inspiration of the HM followers reflected itself in the charitable works they developed, and, to that extent, the HM helps build “civil societies as the bases of civilization, through individual empowerment and societal empowerment” (p. 60). Krause explains that this empowerment depends on the individual’s advanced skills, which is obtained through education. It also depends on others’ benefit from that
education. Krause concludes, “true civilization is premised on the empowerment of humanity” (p. 60). In sum, according to Krause, education becomes the sole focus of the HM.

In a more recent academic text that Johnson (2013) defines as an *exploratory research project*, he reflects on his visit to Turkey to conduct his research in 2006. He conducted interviews in Diyarbakir, Elazig, and Malatya. In Diyarbakir, he met with and interviewed four different groups of businessmen sponsoring the HM at an HM school, and a non-HM public school principal. In Elazig, he met with and interviewed two groups of sponsoring HM businessmen, a sponsoring HM businessperson, an educator, and an unspecified number of students. He also interviewed an unspecified number of teachers in Elazig. In Malatya, he met with and interviewed and unspecified number of businessmen, and university students living at HM dorms. He reports their answers to his questions and his findings in his project paper. He starts with a short biography of Mr. Gülen and states that Mr. Gülen “should clearly be seen as a charismatic leader in the Turkish Muslim world, but one whose influence extends well beyond this world” (p. 2). He highlights that the HM currently has two major projects: i) university preparation centers and study centers, and ii) sponsored and organized tours to Turkey to open and spread intercultural dialogue. He also points out in addition to private schools and hospitality tours of Turkey, many other types of social service and civic projects are sponsored by the Gülen movement, including hospitals, a television station (Samanyolu TV), a newspaper, a Journalists and Writers Foundation, and numerous local charitable activities serving the poor (p. 3).
Johnson grounds his study on Habermas’ rationality theory. Among different types of rationalities, Johnson identifies Hizmet Movement’s “goals of moral education and intercultural dialogue” (p. 6) with normative rationality, which “has to do with the realms of norms and values and would include efforts to assess their consistency, evaluate their behavioral and institutional manifestations, analyze their conformity with basic human needs or human nature…” (p. 6). According to Johnson, normative rationality fits the movement because people from various religious and cultural backgrounds “develop strategies whereby they hope to achieve a better mutual understanding of their different beliefs and customs” (p. 7). Johnson concludes by noting the following: i) the Hizmet Movement curtails terrorist activities by offering education to the low-income students (p. 15), ii) it develops charity by having the richer movement participants provide food and other supplies to the poor (p. 20), iii) it has teachers who really care about their students and are well-liked by them (p. 19), iv) although the participants are very religious, there is no religious education in the movement institutions (p. 18). In sum, Johnson believes that the movement can erase the misconceptions and stereotypical believes Americans have on Muslims (p. 22). He even suggests that the movement activities and participant behaviors should be emulated by others elsewhere.

Overall, Johnson had a positive experience during his visit to Turkey and has a favorable view on the Hizmet Movement. However, his study has limitations. Because Johnson did not speak any Turkish, a Hizmet participant selected the interview participants for him and the interviews were conducted “through a translator” (p. 9). All of the interviewees selected by the translator had high opinions on Hizmet. There are also low-achieving students within the movement’s institutions who may not share those
favorable views. However, we cannot be certain because these interviewees are not part of Johnson’s study. Likewise, there might be businessmen and teachers who might have different opinions on the movement. They should have been interviewed as well.

Johnson’s conclusions may be influenced by outside sources i.e. in a special section at the end of his report he thanks the efforts of the people and the financial support provided by them. Regardless of the limitations, the study largely reflects the core values of the HM and its participants as well as how things work in the HM. As such, this text offers a framework for future discussions on the potential influence and impact of the HM on education.

Yildiz and Verkuyten (2013) present a journal article that examines the Hizmet Movement from a European perspective. Their study seeks to understand how the participants of the Hizmet Movement and the Milli Görüş Movement (MGM) in Germany and the Netherlands “publicly define a morally acceptable identity by arguing ‘what we are not’” (p. 359). The Milli Görüş Movement is another conservative Islamic movement that was founded in 1969 and mainly operates in Europe, but does not have any ties with the HM. They suggest that there is a growing Islamophobia in Europe and, according to a research, “83 percent of the Germans associate Islam with terrorism…” (p. 360). This result, to them, is proof that Islamophobia is on the rise in Europe. They add that, since those many Islamic organizations are closely watched by the authorities and the media, and thus “need to do a good deal of ‘identity work’ to define a position that is morally acceptable for the wider society” (p. 360). However, they do not provide evidence to this claim. They use newspapers and magazine articles such as the HM’s Zaman Hollanda newspaper and the Zaman Benelux and Europe edition, and the MGMs
bi-weekly newspaper Dogus and monthly magazine Perspektif. They also conduct “in-depth interviews with the editors of these publications and with organizational leaders” so that the researchers could “get a better understanding of the publications” (p. 366). Regarding the interviews, “three interviews were carried out both in Germany and in the Netherlands for each of the movements” (p. 366). The findings pertaining specifically to the Hizmet Movement show that it clearly distances itself “from any form of terrorism” (p. 370) and also that “by discussing the ideas of their spiritual leader and their activities, the Gülen movement presents itself as a group of morally responsible Muslims. Not violence or radicalism but dialogue and teaching would express the ‘true’ nature of Islam” (p. 374). Furthermore “in the magazines the two Muslim organizations define terrorism as being incompatible with the Islamic faith” (p. 375). However, the results also show “there were a limited number of discursive strategies used by both organizations and in the two countries for managing this negative portrayal” (p. 376).

The study was a thorough review of both movements’ written media in Germany and the Netherlands. The only shortcoming I see is that, while doing research on identity and group conscience about the HM and MGM movements, it would have been also beneficial to interview randomly selected movement participants who are subscribers of the magazines and newspapers in addition to the editors. Instead, the researchers only interviewed the editors of the publications they used for the study and the organizational leaders of the two movements. The article cited here was written in English. The article offers important insight into how some people and news outlets globally are seeking more information on the HM with little actual interactions among people who are
intimately involved in the HM and virtually nothing about the influence of the HM on the education of students who attend the HM schools in Europe.

In the sixth and final academic journal article, Samuel (2013) reports findings from his interviews with nine Turkish student teachers and seven Turkish teachers working at the Cemal Karacan STAR College in Durban, South Africa. At the time of his research, the school has 550 students and 30 of them were living in the school’s dormitory. Half of the school’s teachers are Turkish while the other half are South African. He frames the school’s activities and philosophy as promoting

A harmonious interaction and co-existence of many faiths, cultures and social classes. The school seeks to balance the dual responsibilities of a locally situated (South African) curriculum infused with the ingredients of an imported (Turkish) philosophy. Instead of being exclusionary and exclusive (like most wealthy middle-class schools), Star College seeks to embrace the goals of serving the community selflessly and inclusively and epitomises post-apartheid democratic ideals. (p. 13)

Samuel poses the question “What potential do philosophical movements such as the Gülen Movement offer in relation to realizing a better quality education system?” (p. 10). His case study seeks to find answers in the research conducted as a case study. He questions the values-free education system and points out that there is a growing trend for the inclusion of character education into the system again in the United States. Samuel references all Hizmet Movement schools as “Gülen-inspired schooling” (p. 12). He resonates Gülen’s belief that there is “no necessary contradiction between scientific thought and religious values” (p. 12). By doing this research Samuel aims “not to
advocate a change towards Gülen-inspired schooling, but to point to how a qualitatively different curricular ethos is established within schools based on alternative philosophies” (p. 13).

Samuel draws four major findings from his interviews: first, the interviewees are “arguing for a dismantling of the disciplines into deeper specialist areas” (p. 15). Second, there is a strong support system for junior students through the senior and more experienced students of the school and the Turkish student teachers. The support happens after school hours. Samuel calls this as extended learning and a peer mentoring system. A third finding is that the teachers are truly dedicated to lifelong learning and start way early even before their career life kicks off. Samuel notes that “the teacher interviews reveal a view that teacher professional growth expands well beyond pre-service teacher education qualification” (p. 16) and that those interviewee teachers “suggest that their ‘induction’ into the profession began during their own schooling years, where the strong role models of teachers surrounded them and influenced their decision to become teachers” (p. 16). The fourth finding is that all Hizmet teachers have “personal interconnections with the community of Star College…” (p. 18) even before they came to South Africa and such support networks help those teachers feel at home, which in turn enables them to preserve their culture. Samuel calls this as inter-nation building. He concludes that the Gülen-inspired schools and teachers “are also a way of re-educating the wide global community about the varieties of conceptions of Islam” (p. 18) and help develop an anti-terrorist image of it.

Although the Samuel study was about the philosophy, perspectives, and experiences of the teachers and student teachers at the school, it lacks the students’
perspectives of those attending the Cemal Karacan STAR School. Of the literature reviewed, this final study appears to offer a more in-depth understanding of the philosophy of the HM and its influence within the HM schools from teachers to student teachers perspectives. No study however sufficiently addresses the philosophical perspective of neither the HM nor its impact within the HM schools.

The review of extant literature on Gülen and the HM reveals that researchers have approached their work from a sociological perspective. Although numerous scholars have conducted research among educators, within schools, and interviewed teachers and students, education as a site and source of personal and national growth – as perpetuated by the HM - has not surfaced as a salient issue. I seek to fill in this gap in my research.

What follows is a section that covers the perspectives of various philosophers on education in general and bilingual education in particular. These perspectives, mostly socio-cultural in nature, inform current research and applications in bilingual education in the U.S. and are important components of the study. In this section, Lev Vygotsky, Mikhail Bakhtin, and Paulo Freire’s philosophical standings are followed by the Gülenian thought. The philosophical discussion is relevant to the study because current practical applications on education, particularly language education in the U.S., are partly informed by those philosophies.

**Philosophical Perspectives on Education, Language, and Bilingualism**

**The Vygotskian Perspective**

The Vygotskian perspective on education is built on Lev Vygotsky’s (1896-1934) sociocultural theory (1978). His scholarship includes multiple theoretical positions. Chief among them are: the theory of cognitive development, and sociocultural theory.
Of many stances, one that appears important to this study is the notion of a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). This zone is described as a distance “between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978, p. 86). Learning that occurs within this zone facilitates “a variety of internal processes that are able to operate only when the child is interacting with people in his environment and in cooperation with his peers” (p. 90). Thus, from the sociocultural perspective, “the natural environment for humans is comprised of society and culture and nothing more” (Lantolf, 2007, p. 32). In the process, children use word meanings that are initially developed in their first language as foundational framework.

In terms of language processes, native and foreign language acquisition belong to the same class of speech development processes, hence the children’s learning of another language enhances their comprehension in their native language. Vygotsky interprets language knowledge by analogy with algebra. He states that “one may say that the knowledge of the foreign language stands to that of the native language in the same way as knowledge of algebra stands to knowledge of arithmetic, enhancing it into concrete application of the general algebraic laws” (Vygotsky, 1986, p. 160).

An example for the use of Vygotskian theory in biliteracy and bilingual education is Heath’s (1982) ethnographic study on Black students in Trackton (pseudonym). In that research, Heath aimed to find the reasons why the Black children in the classroom she conducted research in did not perform as well as their mainstream peers. She observed that teachers in those classrooms utilized questions as a crucial part of their instruction,
and, aware of the differences between Black English and Standard English, looked into
the types of questions they asked. For the mainstream teachers, questions had a number
of functions in their adult-child interactions while they were at home with their own
preschool children. Those questions allowed them “to hold pseudo-conversations with
children, to direct their attention to specific events or objects in the array of stimuli about
them, and to link formulaic responses [and] . . . trained children act as question-answerers,
as experts on knowledge about the world . . .” (p. 110). They used questions recurrently
in the socializing process of their children. On the other hand, Trackton parents did not
“attempt to engage children as conversational partners until they were seen as realistic
sources of information and competent partners [and] … the children were talked “at” than
“with”” (pp. 114-115). However, at times, Trackton parents used questions as story
starters, where the children were allowed to come out of their submissive roles and
assume temporary authority. Heath also found out that Black children would not talk
about intimate topics and that questions in class targeting home life were not appropriate
for them. Furthermore, Heath points out that Trackton children “were not viewed as
information-givers in their interactions with adults, nor were they considered appropriate
conversation partners, and thus they did not learn as such” (p. 119). I conclude from the
research that, because the teachers were not aware of the home-school culture difference
in questioning, there was no ZPD in class for Trackton children where those teachers
could utilize their independent thinking by asking the right questions. As a result, there
was not sufficient collaboration needed for learning. Moreover, the wrong way of
questions did not initiate the variety of internal processes that operate only when the child
is interacting with people in his environment according to the Vygotskian theory.
A more recent study drawing its strength from the Vygotskian theory is Orellana and Eksner’s (2006) ethnographic research on Cultural Modeling. They examine two major minority populations in two major cities: Mexicans in Chicago, and Turks in Berlin, Germany. They use cultural modeling, where instruction “highlights the generative role of funds of knowledge, and the specific ways in which one set of skills can be transformed for use in another setting” (Orellana & Eksner, 2006, p. 2). In practice, teachers support their students in making connections between how they reason in the context of these familiar texts and how they do so with texts from the academic domain. They identify strategies for meaning-making as they move from analyzing personally meaningful texts to canonical works of literature. (p. 2)

Orellana and Eksner compare Mexicans and Turkish students because they believe the commonalities can be applied to a wider range of teaching environments. While they observed Mexican children’s translation practices, a meditational process, at home and at school, the Turkish children were observed in cultural centers and in their neighborhood for contestation. The Berlin part of the study shows how a Turkish child linguistically challenges the prejudiced views on Turks by using standard German while talking to old Germans, and how those Germans immediately change their perspectives, which in turn gives him status and power within that particular discourse. Another example shows how a Turkish teenager uses Stylized Turkish German, “a situational code that is almost exclusively reserved for interactions during conflict situations with Germans” (p. 5). This, again, gave them power under such situations. On the other hand, Mexican youth in Chicago exercised practices of mediation that involved soft talk and had advanced
knowledge of English. They assumed a role of language-brokering by serving as 
translators for their parents in their daily interactions with English speakers and, at times, 
softened the xenophobic language they heard during translation. Practices of contest and 
mediation in these two significant minority populations are interpreted as representing 
various ways dealing with structures of power. These ways are further regarded as 
literacy skills students acquire in their natural socio-cultural environments and bring to 
school, where teachers can potentially transfer them into classroom instruction. They 
serve as source texts for persuasive writing, which can be seen as “an academic version 
of the marriage of contestational and meditational practices” (p. 8). From the Vygotskian 
perspective, use of such literacy skills can serve as social-cultural capitals that trigger 
internal processes for learning.

The Bakhtinian Perspective

In the Bakhtinian point of view, Mikhail Bakhtin (1895-1975) takes language “not 
as a system of abstract grammatical categories, but rather language conceived as 
ideologically saturated, language as a world view, even as a concrete opinion, insuring a 
maximum of mutual understanding in all spheres of ideological life” (M. M. Bakhtin, 
1981, p. 271) (italics by author). According to Bakhtin, within this language, everything 
we say, our every utterance “partakes of social and historical heteroglossia (the 
centrifugal, stratifying forces)” (p. 272). Bakhtin believes this is so because language is 
heteroglot from top to bottom: it represents the co-existence of socio-ideological 
contradictions between the present and the past, between differing epochs of the 
past, between different socio-ideological groups in the present, between 
tendencies, schools, circles and so forth, all given a bodily form (p. 291).
Consequently, Bakhtin summarizes that “as a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The world in language is half someone else’s” (p. 293).

That ‘someone else’ consists of people in the society the individual lives in. Following the footsteps of Bakhtin, Moraes (1996) assumes that children start school with a developed verbal consciousness they built upon their social interactions with the aforementioned ‘someone else’. This usually occurs in the special context of the child. Words and their meanings, as acquired by the child, form as a result of their cultural environment. Language is a constructed entity within that culture, and that identity takes form with the use of words strictly defined within the meanings constructed by its users. When children come to school, they bring their language that carries their worldviews within those meaningful words. In the event of second language acquisition of Spanish speaking children, Moraes claims, they need to know words like mesa (table) have gender, however, in English they are neutral. That eventually represents “changes in the way in which the world is classified or, in other words, changes in a speaker’s consciousness” (p. 40).

In the Bakhtinian philosophy, as a result of those changes, children make choices in order to situate their selves and claim their own positions within the society accordingly. Social relationships occurring in the different social worlds are determining factors for this claim, and during this process, children engage in a dialogic discourse, that is
The speaker strives to get a reading on his own word, and on his own conceptual system that determines this word, within the alien conceptual system of the understanding receiver; he enters into dialogical relationships with certain aspects of this system. The speaker breaks through the alien conceptual horizon of the listener, constructs his own utterance on alien territory, against his, the listener’s, apperceptive background (M. Bakhtin, 1934/1981/2000, p. 274).

The dialogic discourse helps them articulate who they are in relation to others, in other words, who they are in the society, because “we perceive ourselves through the lenses of others” (Moraes, 1996, p. 25). In bilingual education, as a result of these Bakhtinian perspectives, there is a more expansive understanding of the ways in which children create meanings. Furthermore, “when language use is regarded from a dialogical point of view, it is not a formal exercise: As utterances are directed to somebody and await response from someone, they are also necessarily about something and exist for a purpose” (Dufva, 2012, p. 4). In highlighting this, Dufva points us to the heteroglossic aspect of language and language learning. That is, language is an entity that goes beyond its formal linguistic structure and it “incorporates the multitude of different usages that can be called dialects, variants, registers, modality-specific usages, learner language and so on” (p. 4).

One study on bilingual education adopting the Bakhtinian view is on cultural modeling that serves as a “vehicle for identifying substantive ways of connecting everyday practices to academic skills . . .” (Orellana & Reynolds, 2008, p. 50). The researchers aim to identify “points of leverage from para-phrasing, as one component of bilingual youths’ largely untapped repertoires of practice, to school literacy practices” (p.
49). The research looks into the para-phrasing practices of a group of fifth, sixth, and seventh grade bilingual students for their families. A finding is that students themselves do not value these outside class practices they possess and are not aware of the benefits that they give them in class. The study also finds that, in the language arts class, those bilingual students are never asked to summarize or paraphrase beyond sentence level and that teachers expect a certain type of para-phrasing that does not tap into the resources students bring with them to class because “school paraphrasing activities are structured in ways that ignore bilingual students’ strengths” (p. 62). In sum, students, who come to class with their already formed verbal consciousness at home, and whose para-phrasing skills reflect the result of their real world practices they bring with them, are strictly restricted into paraphrasing, that is, a practice that allows them to be involved in that particular literacy activity to the extent of the limitations the teacher sets. As a result, students are involved in a monologic discourse rather than a dialogic one where they cannot get a reading of their own words, but rather read and situate the words of others only.

**The Freirean Perspective**

Paulo Freire (1921-1997) adopts an educational philosophy that strongly criticizes a system where there exists “a conventional distinction between teachers as expert and learner as an empty bio-physiological shell” (Freire, Freire, & Macedo, 1998, p. 6). The Freirean pedagogy considers education as an arena where concerns, mostly political in nature, come to the fore and are motivated and directed by the oppressors in charge of it. The solution lies in a dialogical method where the sharing of experiences “must always involve a political project with the objective of dismantling oppressive structures and
mechanisms” (p.10). Education is a political art that will help the oppressed to break away “from the archaic, authoritarian, discriminatory, elitist, and interdictive tradition…” (p. 18). Furthermore, as a result of such traditions, the oppressor, who has dehumanized the oppressed, dehumanizes himself as well. The oppressed eventually stands against his oppressor to reclaim his humanity, replace false charity with true generosity, and liberate everyone. However, since the oppressed has not been given a group conscience, he may act from an individualistic point of view, which may turn him into an oppressor as well. Thus, this pedagogy of the oppressed “is an instrument for their critical discovery that both they and their oppressors are manifestations of dehumanization” (p. 49). The (re)humanization of the oppressor happens through liberation, a powerful process that achieves human freedom. A liberating education requires, in place of systematic education, various educational projects that involve the oppressed and is a means that organizes them. It consists of two stages; the first stage unveils oppression and begins the transformation, and the second stage turns pedagogy to the property of all. As a result of this process, Freire aims to alter the death-affirming climate of oppression into a life-affirming humanization.

Regarding the application of the Freirean approach in bilingual education, what I was able to locate has been mostly through helping the bilingual learner gain consciousness and become critical of her/his learning environment rather than specifically designed instructional strategies. One related research in the area is on antiracist pedagogy. The research is conducted in a 9th grade math classroom with a Spanish speaking bilingual teacher in a Southwest state in the U.S. Lopez (2008) argues that schools create and enforce racial meanings that minority students face on a day-to-
day basis. The math teacher situates herself as a social justice and human rights activist for her minority students and encourages them to stand out for their own rights by doing walk outs from class to join a rally. Within this context, Lopez inventories “how physical space, discourses, and pedagogy were utilized in the classroom” (p. 44). The teacher is perceived as effective in improving the educational environment for the racially radicalized youth because she was able to create a welcoming and safe space for Latino children, communicate her antiracist stance with parents and community, and maintain an academically rigorous as well as respectful learning space.

A more recent study drawing its strength from Freirean pedagogy is Brown’s (2011) empirical research in a New York City school. The College Preparatory Academy (CPA) as she names it, has 465 students who are predominantly African-American and Latino. The staff, however, is mostly white and receives huge monetary support from companies through the school’s nonprofit organization. The school has a 93% graduation and 97% college matriculation rate. According to Brown, the problem is the administrators’ and teachers’ pressure on students to get them into college so that the school can maintain its reputation and keep on receiving money. This includes disciplinary actions and forced instruction that aim to impose middle and upper class qualities and skills on the students. Students, in turn, were apathetic and impassionate toward learning. Some teachers in the school “relied on deficit discourse, faulting students for their lack of engagement” (p. 2). Within such a context Brown asks the following question: “what might a critical, democratic, or humanizing education look like in the context of neoliberal education reforms?” (p. 3). She uses Freire’s cultural circles method, which Freire developed “as a generative approach to teaching literacy that
honored participants’ background experience and knowledge and moved them to *conscientizacao*, or critical awareness for transformative political action” (p. 3) (italics by author). She started a summer cultural circle and encouraged all students in her English class to attend. She started with 40 students, but ended with 5. There were seven meetings altogether. Meetings were audio recorded and interviews were conducted with parents in the fall. Students discussed the urban fiction books they had selected on their own.

Students wanted to talk about race, gender, and power in the books. Brown found out that through the cultural circle

Students constructed themselves as intellectuals and academic strivers as they aligned, repeatedly, with the African-American female characters in the books that displayed values of intelligence, groundedness, drive and independence and against the characters that displayed ignorance, materialism and greed (p. 6).

Brown emphasizes that the students were not critical of issues like racism and classism, and believed “regardless of their experiences with oppression, that agency grounded in education and ambition could trump social structure” (p. 6). After two years of the cultural circle experience, Brown talks with the same students during graduation and concludes, “students were uncritical of meritocratic and mainstream models of success to overcome structural forms of oppression” (p. 9).

**The Gülenian Perspective**

Gülen takes language as an indispensable element of culture and states “language is one of the main dynamics of culture. The power of a nation is directly related with the power of its language and thought” [and] “…no matter what point of view you look from, it is obvious that language has a defining power in our cultural life” (M. F. Gulen, 2004,
p. 35). To him, the richness in speech translates into the degree of one’s ability to think, and vice versa. He asserts that unless a language is able to voice the needs of its time, it’s doomed to fail. Furthermore, language plays a crucial role in the formation of national thoughts and ideals. Thus, it is important that language goes beyond the limitations of history and is equipped enough to meet the requirements that come along with the modern times. Those who have both stayed loyal to the roots of their language and carried their language as described have become the most local, the most articulate and the most dynamic in terms of thought (M. F. Gulen, 2004).

In addition, Mr. Gülen sees language and culture closely related and believes that language protects culture from the invasion of other cultures. In return, the culture of a nation protected by the language forms the basis of a solid education. In other words, culture is a strong social signifier that draws its strength from language and serves as a resource in the education system of that nation. Moreover, he

Affirms that the cultural dimension is a necessary component of collective or national consciousness, without which a people cannot move forward along a path recognized and valued as their own. He argues that there is a close relationship between the harmony and stability of the ways in which a people conduct their affairs and their cultural resources (Cetin, 2012, pp. 102, 103)

Furthermore, “the cultural heritage of a nation inherited from the past is of paramount importance for them. Because of the values and morals from their heritage can they think like themselves, act like themselves, and feel the comfort of being themselves…” (Incetas, May 27, 2011).
In the Gülenian school of thought language and culture are interwoven with education, and thus Hizmet movement’s priority is education. Back in the 1990s, there was actually an internal campaign to encourage the brightest college prospects to get into teacher-training programs. I am personally a product of that era. In that regard, Gülen’s vision is that “the lack of well-rounded education hinders the establishment of justice, recognition of human rights and attitudes of acceptance and tolerance toward others” (Cetin, 2012, p. 23). Furthermore, in his view education merely for employment blinds many people to raising spiritually and bodily healthy children. In conclusion, value-free, job-oriented education in global competition meets children’s physical needs but it never meets their spiritual or ethical potential” [and] “…thus, in terms of a healthy intellectual and spiritual enlightenment of the students, inner and outer knowledge should not be separated (Albayrak, 2010, pp. 749,750).

Mr. Gülen believes that schools have a mission; they must provide education that improves not only the cognitive and analytical skills, but also the moral and mental well-being of the child. Schools offer methodological thought and work, but need to provide character education as well. Culture, morality, and divine wisdom are great assets and should be included in one’s education. In sum, the heart and the mind both need education (Incetas, May 27, 2011).

Before proceeding to a comparative analysis of the approaches of these philosophers, I offer a collapsed history of bilingual education in the U.S. to highlight the political and philosophical impacts on bilingual education and how those impacts contributed to the present condition of bilingual education in the U.S.
A Short History of Bilingual Education in the U.S.

Today, bilingual education, within the educational context, needs a new approach that will bring in new perspectives and solutions into the field. At the turn of the millennium, Hakuta and Cancino (2001) stated that, in a thirty year time period, second language acquisition research went through four stages: contrastive analysis, error analysis, performance analysis, and discourse analysis. Although the first publication of the Hakuta and Cancino article on second language acquisition cited above dates back to 1977, “it is interesting to note that much of contemporary second language research still falls under their final paradigm, discourse analysis” (Beck & Olah, 2001, p. 223). Moreover, Bernhardt and Tedick (2010) note that more recent research on second language acquisition also indicates the involvement of “native-language background, sociolinguistic context, and communicative intention” (p. 441) in language learning. I claim that one’s native-language background and sociolinguistic context are deeply impacted from the culture he/she comes from. In that regard, I argue that discourse analysis may have met the needs of ELLs to an extent then, but it is not sufficient enough to address the current issues of the bilingual children in the new millennium. A more popular idea within the bilingual inquiry research is discursive sociocultural learning. The term “calls for explorations of children’s actions, contributions, social relationships, and cultures, and for seeing these as worthy of study in their own right…” (Orellana, 2009, p. 16). However, before we look into the future, we need to remember the past first. What follows is a collapsed historical outline in bilingual education in the U.S. I have added it here to offer insight on how the educational philosophies steered language and bilingual education practices to where they are today.
Contrary to current and commonly held current beliefs in the United States, during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, multiple languages other than English were used as the language of instruction in the U.S. schools. Around 600,000 children were receiving bilingual education in German in the early 1900s. Many states, depending on their language minority population were offering bilingual education in languages such as Danish, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Swedish, and a number of others (Ovando, Combs, & Collier, 2006, p. 58).

The seemingly tolerant linguistic policies began changing with WWI because “bilingual education in the United States has been determined partly by federal government and partly by the state government, partly by local initiatives and partly by individuals” (Baker, 2006, p. 189). According to Del Valle (2003), the mixed message about native language use resulted in “the US policies on language have been practical, assimilation-oriented and tolerant only to the extent necessary” (Del Valle, 2003, p. 9). On the other hand, this idea of Americanization coincided with an era when millions of new immigrants, mostly from eastern and southern Europe, flocked to the U.S. with their American Dream in mind. The authorities and other stakeholders, albeit resistant to this new immigration wave because of language, religion, and class differences, soon realized the lack of English in those newcomers as a source of concern and started to enforce an English-only education in schools. New laws, such as the Siman Act in Nebraska in 1919 that prevented foreign languages at private and public schools, were passed. Soon, 15 states passed laws calling for English-only instruction in order to Americanize the children of those immigrants (Ovando et al., 2006, p. 59). Furthermore, the World Wars I and II led to awareness on national unity and tightened the measures on English-only
education. For example, many U.S. citizens grew hostile to the German language and saw it as a threat to the country. Thus, many Germans changed their names as well as their languages. Language policies grew more heated and enforced when Japanese internment camps were created and 120,000 Japanese were placed in them in 1942. Colonies like Puerto Rico suffered as well: by 1925, as a result of the English-only instruction, 84% of children were dropping out of school by the 3rd grade. People of Latino origin on the mainland also were placed into segregated schools where they were systematically ‘Americanized’ between 1850-1950.

On the other hand, there is a history of protest that has accompanied cyclical mandated English-only education. For example, one of them was the Meyer v. Nebraska (1923) case where the U.S. Supreme Court rendered invalid the notion that language was connected to rights. It meant that language minorities would be protected by the Constitution. Another important case that protested English-only efforts was the 1931 Alvarez v. Lemon Grove Board of Education court case. It resulted in the decision that Mexican children were of Caucasian race and therefore couldn’t be applied segregation laws that were applied to African-Americans and Native Indians. This was the first successful desegregation of schools court decision and happened when over half a million Mexicans were deported as part of the 1931 The Mexican Repatriation Act. Although the Lemon Grove case was not specifically a language rights case, it prepared favorable grounds for minorities to pursue their language rights legally in the future. Another significant improvement was when soldiers came back from WWII and the state realized that it needed bilingual speakers to be able to compete in the world’s political and
technological arena. This need reached its peak point when the Russians scored a success over the U.S. and went to space first.

For language minorities, their language rights were mostly addressed in or around other laws. A major landmark decision for minorities was the 1954 *Brown v. Board of Education* case. The segregated education practices until then had created inequalities in the education of Black minority children. For example, “before *Brown v. Board of Education*, per-pupil spending for black students was lower than that of white students” (Diette, 2013, p. 320). As a consequence, “the lower per-pupil spending experienced by black students translated into larger class sizes for black students during this period” (p. 321). This helped language minority groups make a case for equal opportunity rights in language education. Eventually, in 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act passed. In 1968, Bilingual Education Act (BEA) was enacted as Title VII of ESEA. With BEA, the first national attention rose towards linguistic minorities. However, the BEA “neither legislated for a particular language policy or instructional approach nor guaranteed the rights of ELL students based on language” (Banks & Banks, 2007, p. 305). The first landmark case for language minorities, *Lau v. Nichols* came in 1974 when a group of Chinese parents in San Francisco sued the school district for not providing reasonable accommodations for their children ("Lau v. Nichols," 1999). As a result of this case, school districts were required to make some accommodations for their ELL students, and thus, a door was slightly opened for bilingual education. Unfortunately, *Lau v. Nichols* remained vague and did not include specific requirements. The *Castaneda v. Pickard* case in 1981 established a three-part test for school districts and stipulated that their language plan be based on sound language theory supported by qualified experts,
had sufficient resources, and helped students actually learn English (Haas & Gort, 2009, p. 117). This actually opened doors for structured English immersion, something that CA and AZ required. Consequently, it limited bilingual education. Moreover, almost twenty years later, the *Proposition 227*, “a state-level proposal in California spearheaded by the millionaire businessman Ron Unz and passed by California voters in June 1998, outlawed bilingual education in the state of California” (Banks & Banks, 2007, p. 307). At the time, other states such as Arizona and Massachusetts took similar steps to ban bilingual education.

Today, the state of bilingual education is a highly complex issue. There are elements that impact both policy and application at federal, state, and local levels even though proper implementation of bilingual education programs in recent history resulted in great success. One of them, the dual language education (DLE) program, produced positive outcomes such as

(a) students in DLE programs perform at or above grade level on standardized reading and mathematics tests in English; (b) they score similar to their statewide peers by about grades 5–7, if not sooner; (c) ELLs close the achievement gap with NES students in English-only classrooms by about fifth grade; and (d) they achieve at or above grade level in reading (and math) tests measured in the partner language. (Lindholm-Leary, 2012, p. 257)

At federal level a “preference for developing ESL rather than bilingual programs becomes apparent in many ways” (Pregot, 2013, p. 51). For example, there is a “higher level of funding for English as a second language (ESL) instruction over transitional bilingual. Dual language program often receive the least amount of financial support” (p.
Even so, at state level there are initiatives to support bilingual education. In Massachusetts, a state that had formerly banned bilingual education, “the law permits student participation in dual language bilingual education programs, in which students are a combination of emergent bilinguals and English monolinguals, and where instruction is in both English and another language” (Menken, 2013, p. 162). Yet, there is a catch: “the vast majority of emergent bilinguals in US schools receive English-only instruction…” (p. 161), and such English-only policies “run counter to the increased popularity of two-way dual-language programs that provide access to bilingualism for monolingual English-speakers…” (Ortiz & Fránquiz, 2013). Last, at local and school level “bilingual education programs are blamed by the administrators interviewed for the poor performance of emergent bilinguals on high-stakes tests administered in English” (Menken, 2013, p. 164).

In sum, there is a growing body of research that has focused on Gülen’s life and teachings. Most of that research adopts a sociological approach and does not connect his life and teachings with education. The extant literature also does not adequately explain his life, philosophy or teachings and their linkages to the Hizmet Movement or education. Missing from this body of research is an adequate review of Gülen’s philosophy, teachings, and their influence on the establishment and widespread growth of the HM and schools. Additionally, there is a body of research focused on HM schools. This latter body of research offers insights that include a review of schooling in Turkey, the HM schools in various global locales, and a paucity of research on teachers, teaching and instruction in HM schools in the US. Important to this study, the research does not adequately link Gülen’s philosophy and teachings to HM schools in general, and specifically to HM schools in the US. This study seeks to fill in the missing gaps in both
bodies of literature by adding to what is known about: Gülen, his philosophy and teachings, and their influence in the HM schools; the HM school experience in the US; and bilingual language policies in HM schools in the US.
Chapter III
Methodology

Overview

In this study, I have positioned myself as a bricoleur. As an (interpretative) bricoleur, as described in the Introduction, my labor “is a complex, quiltlike bricolage, a reflexive collage or montage, a set of fluid, interconnected images and representations. This interpretive structure is like a quilt, a performance text, a sequence of representations connecting the parts to the whole” (Denzin, 2012, p. 85). I do not consider myself as a person who set out change the world with one dissertation, however, in being in the business of bricolage “the goal is to provoke change, to create texts that involve readers and audiences in this passion, moving them to action (p. 85). In addition, a phenomenological perspective offers a complimentary stance in which to analyze, consider, engage, observe, and reflect upon the data within life experiences.

This research study employs a two-fold design, the methodology section describes them separately, after sharing competing, detailed, and varied definitions of phenomenology by scholars below. The first approach, or pathway, is a phenomenological approach that engages me as the researcher in a narrative description and phenomenological interpretation where I analyze my own lived experiences and how they have shaped my view of the world and educational institutions. The second approach is a single-case study using phenomenological analysis of data collected using ethnographic techniques. In this single-case phenomenological study, I employ qualitative research and software in my analysis of interview data about bilingual education in HM schools. This
methodology section outlines both approaches separately after an introduction to the

Phenomenological Method below.

References to the charts and forms are located in the appendices. These contain interview questions (A), the Van Kaam method of analysis (B), and the full transcriptions/translations of interviewee responses to the interview questions (C).

The Phenomenological Method

The research design is based on qualitative research methods because the qualitative interviewing approaches seek “to capture how those being interviewed view their world, to learn their terminology and judgments, and to capture the complexities of their individual perceptions and experiences” (Patton, 2002, p. 348). In that regard, a qualitative research method, phenomenology, was adopted as a methodological tool. The phenomenological method and process also helps to understand how Gülen’s philosophical thought is applied in HM schools in the U.S.

My theoretical grounding for the study is embedded in phenomenology and is an important component both in this section and the rest of the study. An ideal description to start with is that

Phenomenology, or the science of consciousness, is the truly immanent philosophy in contrast to the immanent positivist philosophies that speak of immanence and the need to circumscribe immanence, but do not understand genuine immanence and the phenomenological reduction that yields it. It has the task of analyzing pure phenomena, insofar as this is in general within reach, of setting up the categories of their elements and of the forms of their relations and the accompanying laws of essence (Husserl, 2008, p. 216) (italics by Husserl).
The research design is constructed to reflect Husserl’s thinking and stance toward a phenomenological approach. In phenomenology “a phenomenon is that which shows itself to the consciousness of the perceiver, precisely as it is given” (B. Giorgi, 2006, p. 75). Giorgi continues by asserting that the main purpose of phenomenological design is “to discover, articulate and make explicit the psychological meanings being lived by the participant that reveal the essential nature of the phenomenon being studied” (p. 72). While a helpful definition, Starks and Trinidad (2007) extend Giorgi’s observations as they write: “in phenomenology reality is comprehended through embodied experience. Through close examination of individual experiences, phenomenological analysts seek to capture the meaning and common features, or essences, of an experience or even” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1372). My position is one in which I have tried to capture the philosophical position of Gülen, the overall perception of the Hizmet Movement, and the bilingual educational practices by its participants as they encounter those practices in different parts of the U.S. as well as globally.

To be clear, phenomenological study does not end with the perceptions of the observer. Giorgi (1997) extends our understanding of phenomenology to include the notion that it “thematizes the phenomenon of consciousness, and, in its most comprehensive sense, it refers to the totality of lived experiences that belong to a single person” (Giorgi, 1997, p. 235).

In the first pathway of this study, I draw on Leedy’s (1997) notion that “in phenomenological research, the researcher seeks to understand how a subject understands ‘reality’ however he, she, or they so perceive” (p. 161). In other words, the first pathway follows an interpretative phenomenological approach. My study is focused on how Mr.
Fethullah Gülen understands the role of education/schooling, in general, and bilingual education, more specifically. I began with a thorough review of academic and non-academic texts, observations, close reading of his work, an exchange of ideas (direct quotes) about education – shared with him, and corrected, extended, revised by him. In addition, using semi-structured in-depth interviews, I have sought to understand if several Hizmet Movement school administrators throughout the U.S. and Turkey embraced and applied his thinking.

In the second pathway of this study, with a focus the Hizmet Movement, that I perceive as a social, cultural, and glocal phenomenon; it calls for a holistic approach as well as the observation and review of first hand contexts and discourses, phenomenology was therefore the most appropriate. More specifically, the second pathway adopts a descriptive phenomenological approach. In support of this stance Creswell (2013) observes: “a phenomenological study describes the common meaning for several individuals of their lived experiences of a concept or a phenomenon. Phenomenologists focus on describing what all participants have in common as they experience a phenomenon” (p. 76). The Hizmet Movement is also spread across the globe as a result of its objectives and loose network structure that needs to be dealt within its natural environment and cannot be simplified and fit into a few research variables.

There are a number of different ways to conduct phenomenological research. For example, Finlay (2009) considers a research as phenomenological when it involves both rich description of the lifeworld or lived experience, and where the researcher has adopted a special, open phenomenological attitude
which, at least initially, refrains from importing external frameworks and sets aside judgements about the realness of the phenomenon (p. 8).

Giorgi (2012), on the other hand, adopts a more structured approach. As a descriptive empirical phenomenologist, he follows the footsteps of Husserl. According to Giorgi, in order for the researcher to conduct a phenomenological study, one has to set an attitude first. That is, the researcher “has to assume the attitude of the phenomenological reduction which means that she must resist from positing as existing whatever object or state of affairs is present to her” (p. 4). In addition, one only uses the present knowledge and refrains from bringing in the past. Once that is completed, there are five more steps. In step one, the researcher adopts a holistic approach and reads all descriptions to build an understanding of the data. In step two, the researcher returns to the beginning and conducts a reread. She involves herself in the “process of constituting parts” (p. 5) and creates meaning units. This cuts down on the lengthy descriptions and helps with the analysis of the data. In step three, which Giorgi considers as the heart of the process, the researcher “transforms the data, still basically in the words of the subject, into expressions that are more directly revelatory of the psychological import of what the subject said” (p. 5). Step four involves a revision and elimination of the “psychologically sensitive expressions” through “free imaginative variation” to build a “more essential structure” (p. 6). In the final step (step five), the essential structure from step four is utilized “to help clarify and interpret the raw data of the research” (p. 6).

At the other end of the spectrum lies the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) by Smith (Eatough & Smith, 2008). This approach is “concerned with the detailed examination of individual lived experience and how individuals make sense of
that experience” (p. 179). The influence of hermeneutics is present in IPA and unlike Giorgi’s approach; IPA does not attempt “a pure Husserlian phenomenological psychology” [and] “… emphasizes the interpretative features of analysis” (p. 182). Moreover, IPA is idiographic because “idiographic methods explicitly address the subjective and interpersonal involvedness of human emotion, thought and action, and the messy and chaotic aspects of human life, in the hope of getting a better understanding of the phenomena under investigation” (p. 183). While conducting an IPA study, some researchers explore the “existential matters of considerable importance for the participant” while others might “attend to bodily experience asking ‘what is it like’ in relation to a range of topics e.g. emotion” (p. 186). An IPA study concentrates on small sample sizes attained through purposive sampling. The researcher constructs a question that is “usually framed broadly and openly” (Smith & Osborn, 2003, p. 55). Personal accounts, diaries, semi-constructed interviews, and structured interviews are ideal ways to collect data. The interviews questions should be like questionnaires and consist of open-ended questions. Interviews should be tape-recorded and transcribed for analysis. Analysis focuses on meaning and one should “try to understand the complexity of those meanings rather than measure their frequency” (p. 66). Themes are found by “finding expressions which are high level enough to allow theoretical connections within and across cases but which are still grounded in the particularity of the specific thing said” (p. 68). Once the theming process is over, they are translated “into a narrative account” (p. 76). Those accounts can be presented in a results section that contains “the emergent thematic analysis” and a discussion section that “links that analysis to extant literature” (p. 76).
Alternatively, Van Manen (1990) describes phenomenological research as “to question the way we experience the world, to want to know the world in which we live as human beings” (p. 5) [and] “…phenomenology is, in a broad sense, a philosophy or theory of the unique; it is interested in what is essentially not replaceable” (p. 7). The intent researcher can conduct a hermeneutic phenomenological research in six steps. However, those steps are not in consecutive order and the researcher travels between them as his study progresses:

(1) Turning to a phenomenon which seriously interests us and commits us to the world; (2) investigating experience as we live it rather than as we conceptualize it; (3) reflecting on the essential themes which characterize the phenomenon; (4) describing the phenomenon through the art of writing and rewriting; (5) maintaining a strong and oriented pedagogical relation to the phenomenon; (6) balancing the research context by considering parts and the whole (p. 30, 31).

In step one, the researcher turns to the lived experiences of a person and turns that into a real project in order to “make sense of a certain aspect of human existence” (p. 31). In step two, the researcher “explores the category of lived experience in all its modalities and aspects” (p. 32). Step three requires the researcher to reflectively bring “into nearness that which tends to be obscure, that which tends to evade the intelligibility of our natural attitude of everyday life” (p. 32). In step four, the phenomenological researcher brings his research to speech by writing it. Step five encourages the researcher to uphold a strong contact with “his or her orientation to the fundamental question or notion…” (p. 33). Step six tries to keep the researcher in line with his/her research because “it is easy to get so buried in writing that one no longer knows where to go, what to do next, and how to get
out of the hole one has dug” (p. 33). Thus the researcher steps back and examines the whole and parts of the research.

In sum, philosophers and researchers understand and conduct phenomenological research differently which leads to various interpretations of this research method. Herein, I “aim for fresh, complex, rich descriptions of a phenomenon as it is concretely lived” (Finlay, 2009, p. 6). In my first pathway, I follow in Finlay’s footsteps, but also bring in Smith’s (2008) understanding of interpretative phenomenology. I look at my own lived experiences and those of Mr. Gulen’s within the Hizmet movement. Furthermore, I adopt a transcendental phenomenological approach that “moves beyond the everyday to the pure ego in which everything is perceived freshly, as if for the first time” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 34). In doing so, I go from idiographic analysis to the general description, and from description to interpretation based on empirical work (Finlay, 2009). Furthermore, Moustakas’ interpretation of the Van Kaam method of analysis enables me to do so in my second pathway especially. In addition, I found the method easy to follow and navigate between the whole and the parts of the research I am conducting. Also, the method helps me bring my thoughts and understandings from especially the interviews to speech and thus makes it easier to put to text.

**Pathway I: Narrative Interpretation and a Phenomenological Analysis**

First, I have no intention to claim that I am an expert on phenomenology and its variations. My knowledge of this qualitative methodology developed in time, and as I went on with my research and applied the method to my study, I have made better use of it. I initially wanted to work with a method that prescribed what I needed to do step-by-step, and hence the Van Kaam Method for my second pathway. However, my *lived*
experiences within Hizmet were hard to classify, so I adopted an interpretative approach. Surprisingly, this helped me cross into other areas of qualitative methodology and I found myself acting, as Denzin put it, an interpretative bricoleur; working on a sequence of different representations that made up the whole.

The first pathway is divided into two parts: my lived experiences within the Hizmet Movement and Mr. Gülen’s lived experiences, which I mirror onto mine during an interview process and subsequent transcriptions. As I tell my Hizmet history in the form of a narrative, I interchangeably voice how I situate myself within that history. Oddly enough, I noticed that, while Hizmet as a movement evolved from being the initiative of a group of people into a collective and systematic institution and then into a global organization, I evolved from being a poor college student into a Hizmet teacher and then into a global citizen. While narrating Mr. Gülen’s responses and his own experiences, I reflect on my own as well.

The only participant in the first pathway is Mr. Gülen himself. He is a hard-to-define individual because, aside his spiritual leadership, he is a Muslim scholar, a poet, an author of more than fifty books, and an advocate of education. He lives in rural Pennsylvania and spends his days, amongst many other things, on scholarly work. Gaining access to him personally is an excruciating task and mine was no different. One needs to know the right people, contact them with referrals, and convince them that what you are doing is worthwhile. I had to get in touch with a number of people and do a presentation to gain access. Once that is done, a day needs to be decided on. There is also no guarantee that you will meet him on that day. People usually end up in guesthouses inside the compound and on average wait for three days. I waited for three days as well.
Data collection during my encounter with Mr. Gülen was through a short interview that lasted about 45 minutes and gathering responses to my questions from his published works. Herein, it is worthwhile noting that before that there was the Internal Review Board (IRB) issue. It took some time to get the necessary permissions, as the board was very particular and stringent in its procedure to approve research. Forms such as consent letters, interview questions, and amendments traveled back and forth with countless revisions, editing, rephrasing, and eliminations. All this was accompanied with e-mails and even in-person visits to the IRB office. After everything was approved, part of the interview happened with him while I was there. I took notes during the interview and then; upon returning home, compiled my notes by expanding them with excerpts from his previous works, and sent them back to him for review. Later, it came back with corrections. Those compiled responses were sent back to him and were revised, edited, and corrected by him. The questions I asked had been previously approved by the IRB board, however, as would be the case in phenomenology, I could not do follow-up questions to expand the responses because I was not sure if that would be a violation to the IRB policies. I was able to do observations as a data collection method as well during my visit to get the feel of the circumstances and conditions he lived.

Data analysis of the interview turned into a form of bricolage that intersected phenomenology. Regarding bricolage, Kincheloe (2005) states that

As one labors to expose the various structures that covertly shape one’s own and other scholars’ research narratives, the bricolage highlights the relationship between a researcher’s ways of seeing and the social location of his or her personal history. Appreciating research as a power-driven act, the researcher-as-
bricoleur abandons the quest for some naïve concept of realism, focusing instead on the clarification of his or her position in the web of reality and the social locations of other researchers and the ways they shape the production and interpretation of knowledge (p. 324).

I interviewed Mr. Gülen in many subjects related to language and education. He touched many areas such as a child’s education, school’s role in moral education, culture, language, intercultural dialogue, and second language acquisition. While analyzing his responses, as Kincheloe stated above, I interpreted his responses through my own social location of my personal history. To be more specific my analysis fits into the methodological bricolage category that employs numerous data-gathering strategies from the interviewing techniques of ethnography, historical research methods, discursive and rhetorical analysis of language, semiotic analysis of signs, phenomenological analysis of consciousness and intersubjectivity, psychoanalytical methods… (Kincheloe, 2005, p. 335).

My phenomenological stance and data analysis took on a necessary bricolage positioning because the interview analysis focused on understanding and bringing out the lived experiences and psychological understandings of Mr. Gülen on the Hizmet phenomenon. I read, reflected, and studied his writings from various perspectives. Through his vision on those perspectives, I connected my own experiences that are in common with his and other Hizmet Movement participants.
Pathway II: A single-case study with Van Kaam Method of Analysis of Data and the NVivo Software

The second pathway is a modified version of a very structured and step-by-step method of analysis. As outlined in Moustakas (1994) I employed the Van Kaam Method to analyze the responses of eight participants. First, I conducted the analysis as stated in Moustakas (1994), but later I modified it in order to inform the reader in a more presentable and comprehensible way. Later, I ran a secondary analysis using the NVivo software program. The objective of this step was to diagnose the bilingual education practices in charter schools with Hizmet Movement administrators and HM private schools. Also, I wanted to look into the level of awareness of those administrators on bilingual education. Last, I wanted to see how the perspectives of participants matched those of Mr. Gülen’s. In order to start, I worked on my research question first, and developed the interview questions later. I framed my research question as: “How do administrators and school directors in Hizmet Movement schools offering bilingual education at some degree perceive and apply the Gülenian perspective on bilingual education into the school practice in the U.S.?” Once the research question was clear, I went out to the field and recruited my research participants.

Participants. Nine individuals participated in the study. Each participant was interviewed once. So there were nine interviews altogether. Recruitment of these individuals happened through purposive sampling. I chose purposive sampling because it “groups participants according to preselected criteria relevant to a particular research question” (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest, & Namey, 2005, p. 5). My particular research question called for the recruitment of participants according to the following
criteria: length of involvement in the movement, familiarity and experience with the educational practices in Hizmet Movement schools, bilingualism and multicultural background, and accessibility. The process turned out to be a lengthy and arduous one because finding initial participants, interviewing them, getting names and referrals, and gaining access involved lengthy waiting periods, traveling long distances, and sometimes led to dead-ends. Although I used purposeful sampling, I did employ snowball sampling that “identifies cases of interest from people who know people who know what cases are information-rich, that is, good examples for the good interview subjects” (Patton, 2002, p. 243) as needed. In the end, however, I located eight participants, all of whom met my criteria and were positioned to respond to my research question(s).

**Data collection.** The initial step before going to the field and collecting data was to maintain the approval of the Internal Review Board (IRB). Scope of the research, research design, data collection methods, consent forms, interview questions, and time management were some details submitted to the review of the board. Once the board granted approval, I went out to the field to collect data. During the study, a reauthorization was acquired from the IRB. Both the initial paperwork and the reauthorizations took significant amounts of time due to the modifications and change in the scope of the study. There were two major strategies for data collection in the study: site-visits and interviews. One more data collection source was the school websites to collect test scores and any other academically related information.

During site-visits, I observed the environment to get the feel of the environment and as supporting evidence during the analysis stage of the interviews. The visits lasted between 1 to 2 hours on average while the interview portions were around 45 minutes. I
combined the site visits with experiences I gained and observations I made while working in other HM schools. I conducted site visits/observations because “in phenomenology observation of how participants live in their environment through time and space provides clues about how they might “embody meaning” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1375). All site visits were only held once. They consisted of three private HM schools, a charter school headquarters, and sites outside the school environment because of the convenience to the research participants. The initial intention was to visit and collect data from some charter schools with Hizmet Movement educators across the U.S. because of their significant success in the national exams. I was able to secure access to administrators in private schools and foundations, but some administrators in a charter school group in a southern state were reluctant to grant access, which, in turn, impacted the outcome of the study since there were fewer research participants.

The data sources for site-visits were selected in relation to the geographical proximity to the researcher’s home institution, his connections with the staff and families in those organizations and schools, and his historical background and expertise on the movement in the Midwest region.

Regarding interviews, in phenomenological study “the objective of the interview is to elicit the participant’s story. Both the researcher and the participant assume that their words will be understood as spoken and intended (i.e., their words will speak for themselves)” (Starks & Trinidad, 2007, p. 1375). I am aware that my own background and experiences were assets that supported entry into sites and helped participants feel at ease with me and my intentions. Moreover, my research questions and positive attitude made it possible for the participants to trust and share their stories with me. The intended
words, I believe, were understood sufficiently since I have had a long history within the movement and that helped establish empathy with what they said. Interviews were completed in March 2012. Also, each interview was translated and transcribed where needed and follow-up correspondence was conducted to clarify any misunderstandings or to add missed data.

The researcher attempted to collect data on test scores in two ways: the school websites on the Internet, and during visits and follow up correspondence with the interview participants. Some data on test scores was unavailable because of the relocation of one school and some others were not shared.

**Data analysis.** In data analysis, I followed Moustakas (1994). The steps include the epoche, phenomenological reduction, and the Van Kaam method of analysis. After data collection was complete, I first engaged in the epoche, which is a process where, as researchers, we

Set aside our prejudgments, biases, and preconceived ideas about things [and]

…gives us an original vantage point, a clearing of mind, space, and time, a

holding in abeyance of whatever colors the experience or directs us, anything

whatever that has been put into our minds by science and society, or government,

or other people, especially one’s parents, teachers, and authorities, but also one’s friends and enemies. (Moustakas, 1994, pp. 85, 86)

This constituted a challenge to me as the researcher because of pre-formed ideas and notions about the Hizmet Movement. The next step in phenomenological research, which is phenomenological reduction, helped me overcome the challenge to an extent. In phenomenological reduction, “the task is that of describing in textural language just what
one sees, not only in terms of the external object but also the internal act of consciousness, the experience as such, the rhythm and relationship between phenomenon and self” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 90). Phenomenological reduction involves two steps:

1. The researcher has to bracket personal past knowledge and all other theoretical knowledge, not based on direct intuition, regardless of its source, so that full attention can be given to the instance of the phenomenon that is currently appearing to his or her consciousness, and
2. the researcher withholds the positing of the existence of reality of the object or state of affairs that he or she is beholding. (A. Giorgi, 2006, p. 355)

Drawing on these two steps, I tried to maintain an objective focus by neutrally describing the presence that was. I bracketed the focus of my research and put everything else aside. I then gave every statement in the transcripts equal value, which in phenomenological research is referred to as horizontalizing. Next, I applied the steps on The Van Kaam method of analysis of phenomenological data, as outlined in Moustakas (1994, pp.120, 121) with modifications during data analysis: 1) I first listed expressions relevant to the experience and eliminated those that were not relevant, 2) I clustered and thematized the ‘invariant constituents’ and double-checked their relevancy, and provided thematic analysis of the interview data, and 3) I summed up all data in a ‘composite’ description, and 4) I provided the ‘supra themes’ that emerged as a result of the rigorous analysis.

The process during data analysis was long and both physically and mentally challenging. The transcribing of data occurred on the go as I was conducting the interviews. The interviews took over a year to complete and were conducted in different states and abroad. Once the interview transcriptions were complete, I sent them to the
interviewees for verification. Then, I charted each interviewee’s answers for each question they answered. Next, I looked for recurring themes and codes. The next step was to create a visual idea of those responses. Then I prepared a one-page summary for each interview. Once again, I went through those one-page summaries searching for overarching themes. I composed a list of common themes and codes separately for each interview and went back to the interview transcriptions for examples. I analyzed the texts and created textural, structural, and textural-structural descriptions for each interview, which I later combined in my thematic analysis. Finally, I gathered the information that emerged as a result of the analysis of the nine interviews conducted and formed a composite description. Here I also recruited the help of qualitative research software, NVivo10 to provide a more in-depth analysis. The NVivo10 software enabled me to categorize, synthesize, and analyze the data from a different perspective. It helped me to catch the details that I might have overlooked because of my emic perspective and other details that might have gone unnoticed.

**Software data analysis.** The NVivo10 software helped me organize the interview questions and find the prevalent themes. I entered the interview transcripts and searched for words and phrases that were most commonly used by the participants. Some themes emerged and they were also grouped depending on their correlation. Intersecting ideas and themes were combined and individually interpreted. The software does not interpret results for you. Thus, it was up to me to infer meanings and relationships from participant responses.

During data analysis, a number of themes emerged as a result of the analysis: bilingualism and bilingual education in the HM, functions of the HM schools and charter
schools with Hizmet educators, perceptions of the interviewees on the HM and Hizmet teachers, and the correlation between language and culture in Hizmet families and institutions.

I also ran a simple word frequency query with the software. I searched for the most frequently used 50 words in the interviewees’ responses to my questions and words like education, language, schools, students, and bilingual appeared at the top of the list. However, the software also counts the words in the questions and therefore this analysis cannot be regarded 100% accurate. Yet, the query results still show that there is awareness on behalf of the interviewees toward bilingual education. Finally, I ran a text search query using two key words hizmet and bilingualism did not come up with a direct correlation result.

**Role of the researcher.** During the course of the study, my role as a researcher played a crucial part, in the data collection and analysis, especially in gaining access to audio-visual, personal, and resources. This was clearly an advantage since

An outsider-researcher tends to interpret action in relation to the observer because he or she may not have access to the actor. By contrast, the insider-researcher has that access because of the necessary rootedness, familiarity and mutual trust, refinement and sensitivity to nuances, in a particular location in the field of social relationships and discourses; this allows him or her to dig out the less apparent side of the issues. (Cetin, 2010, p. xx)

My own language skills, as a native Turkish speaker, someone who also reads and understands archaic Turkish, and English speaker, and university researcher were important to the study and its participants. Throughout the study, I assumed the role of
an insider-researcher studying the Hizmet Movement phenomena with an insider’s familiarity.
Chapter IV

Phenomenology, Bricolage and the Story of a Lived Experience:

An Emic Perspective

This chapter describes my life experiences with the Hizmet Movement, my interview with Mr. Gülen. As such, it constitutes a phenomenological self study and offer insights from my own experiences during the interviews as well as my past experiences within the Hizmet Movement. It includes my emic perspective and interpretation of data from the interview with Mr. Fethullah Gülen. In addition, I offer unique understandings drawn from my knowledge of archaic and modern-day Turkish, my life experiences within Hizmet schools, and through my interview with Mr. Gülen. My understandings also draw from my extensive readings of Gülen’s writings (including the ones in archaic Turkish) and the review of my interview by an expert reader/Gülen representative and Mr. Gülen himself. I begin with a site description and then go on with a short description of Mr. Gülen. After that I proceed with the interpretation of interview data. What follows is a preliminary analysis of Hizmet from an insider’s perspective. For ease in understanding, my experiences and reflective thoughts have been placed in italics. This precedes the data analysis because it is important to know what underlying dynamics might have had an impact when the interviewees responded to the questions.

My Foray into The Hizmet Movement

The Hizmet Movement started off as a small cemaat (group) and transpired into a loose organic entity known to many today not because it is a secret undercover organization. On the contrary, it has been transparent from day one and embraced all that would want to be a part of this initiative. It is also important to highlight at this point that
Hizmet “does not have a head or a chain of command; it is not organized, neither does it have any recruits. You just talk to people, it makes sense to them, and they light a torch wherever they themselves are” (2011, interview notes from Mr. Gülen). It is free and open to all.

It was this philosophy that made me admire the movement. I was born in the early 1970s in the northern city of Hamburg. My parents were blue-collar guest workers in Germany. We were a family of four: mom, dad, my older brother, and I. I started elementary school in Hamburg, but was unable to finish it there: The German government, realizing that it did not need as many Turkish laborers after the economy picked up, offered incentives to Turks under the condition that they would go back to Turkey and never come back. My parents, both of them almost illiterate, fell for that small incentive, and all of a sudden packed everything and returned to Turkey for good. I was in fourth grade. We moved a lot and I ended up attending so many different schools that I do not even remember how many today. In high school, I was quite different from the others: I spoke Turkish with an accent because I had grown up in Germany and barely knew Turkish. My experiences in Germany expanded my views and thus I dressed differently, watched and listened to things others would not, in my small isolated Turkish town, Çankırı. It almost felt awkward and uneasy to be me. I was alienated and lonely. Yet, I was recognized and embraced by a Hizmet follower and introduced into the circle. I felt comfortable with those people around me; they did not pick on my differences and were very kind. I had barely received any religious education up to that point: My parents were Muslims and believed in Allah and his prophet Muhammad. They observed the religious holidays, and once in a while went to the mosque for Friday prayers, and
that was pretty much it. Through the HM, I learned what being a Muslim was really all about.

The Hizmet philosophy inspired many different parts of the society and they wanted to contribute. This brought a need for different Hizmets; artisans, academics, and doctors. It was the same Hizmet philosophy but varied in addressing the needs of different populations. The artisans usually provided for the poor college students and those college students, in turn, helped high school students in their studies. Businessmen also sponsored the first private K-12 HM schools. The private HM schools, however, eventually picked up and were able to fund themselves, without needing any external financial support. There is no aggregated data on the number of the HM schools in Turkey today. Some of those schools are only high schools, while others are PreK-12. They are, however, co-educational schools as mandated by the Turkish Department of Education. The schools do a good job in college placement of the students and advertise that success on their websites as well as other HM media organs to attract students. The websites I visited do not provide grade level progress, demographic data, or other academic data such as the curriculum. This seemed to be the case about the public schools in Turkey as well ("T.C. Milli Egitim Bakanligi," 2014). In general schools are five days a week Monday through Friday form around 8 a.m. until around 3 p.m. Last, there is no religious education in the HM schools neither in Turkey nor abroad.

The 1990s was also an era when the HM’s newspaper, Zaman emerged, albeit weakly.

My active involvement with the movement started during my junior year in high school in 1988. After returning from Germany some years back, we had been moving
around and the last place I had spent my life before moving to Çankırı was a desolate small town two hours away from the city. I was bored to death in that town all the time, I did not have many friends, and, after Germany, that place was like the far end of the universe. I could not wait to get out and any opportunity was welcome.

In Çankırı, a town of 40,000, I attended high school. It was a small city situated two hours northwest of the capital city Ankara. My friend took me to one of those homes where college students lived and introduced me to Abis (big brothers). The first visit, I remember, was filled with curiosity. Being born in the West, I had learned long ago that nothing came for free and there was always a payback. Mentally, I wondered: “What was I doing here? Who were these people? What did they want from me? Why were they offering free food to me?” The answers to those questions were many years away, but for the time being I was a little uncomfortable.

I was initially invited to lunches and dinners with those Abis, who themselves attended college and were practicing Muslims themselves. These brothers shared an apartment and would teach us the importance of morals, good character, and faith, combined with religion. We read interesting books and did our homework as well. I was failing at my high school and any help was deeply appreciated. In the small town that I lived, there was actually nothing else to do and going to the Abis was the most eventful thing.

Later, they responded to questions we had about religion and pointed us to the right direction. I remember having a sense of relief when I went to visit them each time. The air was somewhat mystical in a good way and the tranquility felt amazing. Maybe that was because I was away from home and all the problems it was nesting at the time.
To put in a very cliché way, it was like ‘breaking free’. Also, I was also introduced to the Zaman newspaper, which sold only 3,000 copies per day back then (today, it sells around 1,000,000 print copies a day). They had a very small office downtown Çankırı. I loved the downtown area with its artificial crowds during the day and glittering lights during the night. So I made friends with folks over there at the Zaman office as well. It was exciting to hear news from the media, follow subscription numbers, and just mingle with the folks over there.

The 90s witnessed the budding of dershanes (afterschool college prep centers) and more private colleges; Hizmet for Central Asia and the first Hizmet University, Fatih University was founded. One might not help but wonder how those things were achieved. This was the work of a large group of people; a network of people, that got even larger at the time. Those people did not see the institutions as moneymaking mechanisms, but as places that worked for the common good of people. Thus the money that came from those organizations became investments in other places. For example, the tuition fee from the child of a wealthy businessman in Turkey covered the education expenses of a Kazakh student in a Kazakh-Turkish school in Astana.

Later, my friend and I were given an extremely discounted rate at a Hizmet dershane in Ankara and thus made it to college. That came in as a blessing to me because as a family we were suffering from bankruptcy. To me it was an opportunity to get away from home on the weekends. In Turkey, the three-hour college entrance exams are conducted once a year, and if examinees do not score high enough or do not make it to the exam for some reason, they will have to wait for another year. I was lucky and had been prepared by my devoted HM teachers enough to get into a state college, Selcuk
University in Konya, at first take. I was ecstatic! Finally I could move away from the depressive mood at home and be free, make new friends, and be a college student. I moved to Konya and started school. This time, it was my turn to help. I taught English to middle school students, voluntarily contributed to Hizmet funds to help the others, and promoted the Sizinti magazine and Zaman newspaper. It was there and then when I started to become truly affiliated with the Hizmet Movement. I started praying five times a day, followed the Zaman newspaper, read the Sizinti magazine, attended the sohbets-talks on religious matters conducted in small circles of five to ten people, usually college students themselves as well. All this gave me a sense of contentment. I learned about Hocaefendi (Gülen), read his books, and listened to his taped sermons given in mosques. I also started reading the Risale-i Nur, a collection of religious books by Said Nursi, who was the forefather of the movement in the early 1900s.

The 90s witnessed a tremendous demand for teachers from Hizmet schools. Almost overnight, there was a new private school being opened at some part of the country and those schools needed English speaking, high caliber Hizmet teachers to meet their needs. There was another region hungry for teachers: Central Asia. The ‘forebrothers’ of Hizmet had left everything behind and headed to every Turkic as well as non-Turkic state in Central Asia a couple of years ago to set up schools and open institutions. Some of those Central Asian countries were Azerbaijan, Bashkirdistan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Nahchivan, Tadzhikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Yakutistan, to name a few. This initiative had started to bear fruit and new schools had started to emerge. The governments, except Uzbekistan, were especially keen on new schools with quality education too. The then President Turgut Ozal had also actively
lobbied for those schools in order to reestablish the historical ties Turkey had with the region. Thus the *Abis* in *dershanes* started channeling the college candidates into teacher education programs. Those who graduated from college and spoke English four years later were almost immediately sent to a Central Asian post. This was because the medium of instruction was in English for the Turkish side. Usually there were two sides in a school: The Turkish side that provided instruction in Biology, Chemistry, English, Math, Physics, and Turkish; and the Kazakh/Kirgiz/Tajik/Turkmen/Uzbek side that provided instruction in history, geography, language and literature, and philosophy. The schools were operating as either all-boys or all-girls schools, except elementary schools. The Turkish school personnel consisted of male Muslim administrators and teachers from the HM, except the girls’ schools where the administrators and teachers were female Muslim teachers and administrators from the HM. At some point, because of the need for teachers, there was an effort to employ some non-HM personnel, however, because of the distance and low-wages, this initiative mostly failed.

In the nineties, we also had an important practice. When I was in college between 1990-1994, the *Hizmet* people, who would also call each other *Shakirde* (a general word for 'student.' It also is a word which Bediuzzaman Said Nursi used to name his *Risale*-a large collection of ‘books’-reading disciples), would spend the semester breaks as well as the first two weeks of the summer break by reading books with religious and moral content. This was called “going to the *Kamp*” (retreat). The goals of retreat were to support the spiritual well being of the college students and protect them from immoral influences of the outside world. In other words, it was a mental and spiritual cleansing. Participation in this program was voluntary. The content was strictly on morality and
concentrated on disciplining the self to become a better individual. It would *in no way* include any politics, extremist ideas, or any kind of direct or indirect teachings that could inflict a dislike or hate towards other beliefs or systems. They would start with the morning prayer just before dawn; have a short reading of the *ilmihal* (the Muslim book of catechism) after the prayer until sunrise. There would usually be a break until breakfast, which people usually used to catch up with sleep. After breakfast, a two-hour silent reading would follow. Then there would be the noon prayer followed by lunch. Next would be the listening to Mr. Fethullah Gülen's tape-recorded sermons and the afternoon prayer. After that, another silent reading would take place. The final events of the day would be the evening prayer, dinner, a G-rated movie, and the night prayer. Then lights would be out. This was not a set schedule and it greatly varied from house to house. As times have changed and the mostly college-age, young, and single students started families and immigrated to other countries, that practice has also been modified accordingly.

*Four years later, I graduated from a teacher-training program as a certified English as a second language teacher. I did not have a plan on what to do next; I had gotten used to meeting deadlines at school so much. Now, all of a sudden, life had come to a standstill. So I figured I would go with the flow this time. After college, I was appointed to a movement school as an English teacher in Tashkent, Uzbekistan. It was an all boys’ high school where both Turkish and Uzbek teachers worked together. Turkish teachers taught classes such as biology, chemistry, math, physics, Turkish and English, and Uzbek teachers taught social sciences, citizenship, and language and literature classes in Uzbek. I shared my apartment with other teachers to save on rent. It also was*
an easier way to get used to the country and stay within the HM while going through a culture shock. I was quite upset with almost everything in Tashkent in the beginning. The country looked like the 1960s version of Turkey, I did not know anyone, the food was horrible, and I thought I was back at home every morning I woke up. The only thing at the time that kept me there was my dedication to the HM and Mr. Gülen’s leadership. I ended up spending three years there and made lifelong friends.

Along with new schools, new Hizmets started to emerge in Central Asia. For example, Zaman Hizmeti, Sizinti Hizmeti, Artisan Hizmeti, Student Hizmeti and so on. The new forms of Hizmet were important in that it helped spread the HM philosophy and attracted followers from all walks of life. Schools were packed with students and more teachers were needed.

When Central Asian states separated from the then Soviet Union, the Abis were sent there for Hizmet and to reestablish the long lost ties between the peoples. Soon after in the early 1990s, Turkish schools emerged in almost every city and state and provided very high, quality education. The graduates usually were accepted to the Ivy League colleges in their respective countries. Some also went to the U.S., Europe, and Turkey. However, events folded out somewhat differently in Uzbekistan. Although now a sovereign country, Uzbekistan was still under communist regime and there was no room for external impacts like the Hizmet Movement. Authorities were fearful of a rapid change in people’s minds and ideological ideas, so when there was a newcomer in town, the Uzbek government would let them do whatever they wanted to understand the true nature of their visit. If there were a conflict of interest, the local government authorities would collect everyone and deport those people in one night. And they did not like what
the Turks did. They did not like to see them come in, take over the schools, and educate their children the Hizmet way. That is, the HM’s way of offering the best science education, the teaching of English and Turkish, and mentorship that inflicted high moral values with Islamic origins.

At this point, three significant events happened there that hindered the Hizmet movement. First, because the demand was too high, under-qualified college students were put into classes to teach. Since they did not know the subject area, they would, with the best of intentions, teach their students moral values. The Uzbek department of education interfered. In 1993, they swarmed the schools and inspected them. Many of the Turkish college students had to leave and go back to Turkey. Later, new qualified and experienced subject area teachers came from Turkey. Second, the opponent of the president Karimov sought asylum in Turkey. Because Turkey was in the midst of an application to the European Union, it had to deny the return request from Uzbekistan as it would have an adverse effect in the EU entrance process. President Karimov took this seriously and targeted the Turkish schools even though they were an apolitical and non-governmental organization, and had nothing to do with the political tension. Third, tedbir (caution) was taken loosely by the Hizmet people. In Uzbekistan, a formerly communist country that was still under heavy communist influence, the FSB (the Uzbek secret service) would let foreign initiatives flourish and do what they want at first. It would quietly monitor activity and collect information during this 'silent period' and hit the 'enemy' in a moment they least expected. The course of action at this point was very fast and things were taken care of usually in just one night. Although the Turkish schools
were not closed down in one night, as a result of these three reasons, they were unable to renew their ten-year agreement to operate and ceased serving students in 2000.

*After three years in Uzbekistan, I asked for a reappointment and was sent to another Hizmet Movement school in Indonesia. It was a very hot and humid climate, and it was sometimes very difficult to give instruction because of the heat. I met a very welcoming staff, both Indonesian and Turkish, and received great support. I spent another two years in Indonesia before I came back to Turkey. In the meantime, I got married. In Turkey, I completed my master’s degree at Fatih University, the first higher education institute of the movement, and worked at Fatih High School as an ESL teacher.*

After the schools were closed in Uzbekistan, there was a surplus of highly qualified and highly sought after teachers. Back in the early 90s, the best teachers were selected for Uzbekistan because of the problematic nature of the country. Now they were waiting for an appointment. This coincided with Mr. Gülen’s self-imposed exile in 1999 to the United States. Hizmet suddenly had a new direction and the teachers began to come to the U.S.

*In 2003, I got my Green Card and migrated to the United States to set up my roots there. This felt like a gift from God. Finally I was going to see the new world and make my dreams come true. Before leaving Turkey, I had asked for an appointment and I was sure to get one. However, all my efforts were futile. I could not believe it because, up until now, I had always lived within the Hizmet circle and was sure that I was going to be embraced in the U.S. too. Later I would understand that Hizmet in the U.S. had a different structure; it was a very loose network that operated locally and independently from Turkey. Those who could be interested did not know I was available; the others I*
made contact with were simply not interested. I was extremely depressed. Eventually, I
got in touch with friends in Chicago and moved there. My efforts to become an English
teacher in a Hizmet school were not met favorably by the responsible Abi there and I
began to sell necklaces in the mall with minimum wage.

The U.S. chapter of Hizmet started at a time when the No Child Left Behind Act
came into effect. After NCLB, charter schools expanded their operations and many
Hizmet Movement educators found jobs in those schools and started to set their roots.
Soon, there were also private Hizmet schools across the country as well. They were
initially supported by the HM businessmen and businesses in Turkey, but eventually
earned enough to sustain themselves financially. The practices in those private schools
vary. While one in the U.S. Midwest is a K-8 co-educational day school operating from 8
a.m. to 3 p.m. daily five days a week and has a curriculum focused on creativity and
inquiry, another one on the U.S. east coast is all-boys boarding high school where the
curriculum focuses heavily on science. Both schools list their achievements on local and
international competitions and college entrance success rates, but do not provide detailed
annual yearly reports or demographic data.

The 2000s also witnessed a change in teacher and administrator demographics. At
the onset during the 1980s, the HM school administrators and teachers consisted of
college educated, all male, and all HM followers. An administrator or a teacher used to be
appointed during a council of elder brothers after a strict screening. Those teachers and
administrators were also exclusively Turkish. Today, in Turkey, one can see male and
female teachers and administrators from many different ethnic and national backgrounds
working together. They may or may not be followers of the HM. The latter, however, is
still a minority in number. In the U.S., charter schools with HM educators have demographics like any other U.S. public school, while the private schools may have variations. There does not appear to be a uniform process used by public charter schools for the selection process of educators and other employees. I have seen teachers with excellent credentials be appointed to a remote city in Central Asia, while the relatively less qualified could end up at an excellent school in a very desired location. One summer, for example, I volunteered to teach English to a group of new college graduates who literally had no knowledge in English. They did not have any teaching experience either. Those ‘teachers’ were later assigned to schools in the U.S. Midwest.

In addition, the 200s witnessed the American version of the Zaman daily newspaper, Today’s Zaman, and the English version of the Sizinti magazine, The Fountain, going into print. In 2006, Ebru TV, Hizmet’s broadcasting channel in the U.S., was launched.

My extensive involvement in the movement undoubtedly has led to some favorable views and opinions of the HM in me: that Mr. Fethullah Gülen is a unique religious leader, that the movement is the best Islamic movement there is, that schools produce excellent human beings with high moral values, and that the educational system and the curriculum in those schools are second to none. Throughout the study, I sought to adopt a phenomenological attitude that is unbiased. This attitude would enable me, as the researcher to act like a detached observer, but of course I also had insider information that only allowed a certain level of detachment.

In sum, my involvement in the HM was largely as a student in college and as a teacher in the Hizmet Movement schools throughout the world. This involvement serves
as an asset during this study, but also limits to a degree approaching the issue(s) objectively.

**The Present, Mr. Fethullah Gülen, and More Flashbacks**

Fast forward to 2014; I am doctoral candidate working on my dissertation. At this point, I now proceed to the details of an interview I conducted with Mr. Fethullah Gülen in 2011 as part of my dissertation data collection. The details of my entre were covered in the methods section.

The interview site was his home. The house he lives in is located in a small middle-class town on the east coast. As I enter the door I see shoe racks reaching up to the ceiling of the small hallway on the ground floor. It is a pre-Islamic tradition among Turkish people to take off their shoes when entering their home, and this place is no exception. After I put mine on the rack, I turn right and proceed to what seems to be a sunroom-turned-dining hall area. There are windows on all three sides soaking in the bright winter sun. I make my way up the stairs to the second floor. The second floor has a big family room and smaller rooms on each side across the hallway. The big room is carpeted; actually, the whole building is carpeted, and there are people sitting on the floors and sofas brought from Turkey. The sofas are lined up against the walls and there is barely other furniture. This style is reminiscent of the *dershane* (lighthouse) days and has two reasons for being like that. First, simplicity in decor is a sign of humbleness and frugality. Second, the large empty mid-area of the *salon* (living room) serves as a location for prayer. Back in the day, prayers would be conducted in the main living room to ensure everybody followed the routine and to tighten brotherhood ties five times a day.

As I enter, there are men -all men- reading books. The walls of the room are
adorned with names of Allah and Mohammad written in Arabic. The room faces the yard and the parking lot just beneath. It also gets plenty of sunshine, thanks to the big brown hardwood windows painted in white. There is limited access to the third floor as it is the living quarters of Mr. Fethullah Gülen. The stairs leading up to the third floor door is filled with men at certain times of the day when it might be opened and guests are welcomed, occasionally to conduct prayers with him and to listen to his talks on different issues. It took me three days to gain access and see him in person. In the meantime, I went with the flow, chased the Abis (big brothers) close to him to get access. The Abis are almost equally hard to reach and talk to because of their busy schedules. I only went to the guesthouse to sleep as the rest of my time was spent in establishing connections to gain access for the interview.

The following text represents a collaborative effort to capture Mr. Gülen’s thoughts. As such, it is a compilation of my interview notes (that I was not given permission to share verbatim), correction and expansion of my interview notes by a trusted colleague of Mr. Gülen’s, and excerpts from his many writings, as requested by Mr. Gülen and the condition I agreed to adhere to in order to conduct the interview.

Mr. Gülen is a soft-spoken individual and is very respectful to others. He has written many books on different subjects, but I assume that education is a very high priority area for him. The schools established by the HM all over the world confirm that. To him, education generates various mechanisms in humans that lead them to do good for the society. He notes, “the only means that will lead the human being into divine wisdom and have him serve the common good is education that starts in the family and continues in the society.” However, he also adds that schools fulfill an important mission once the
child is old enough to go to school: “The first and foremost responsibility of a school is to preserve and nurture the seeds of goodness dispersed throughout the spiritual and mental fields of the child’s world while weeding out the bad ones.” Moreover, he believes that “the utmost goal of the school must be to equip them with the highest qualifications, and by doing so to create individuals bound by virtues.” An education system that equips the individual with such virtues does not only benefit the person himself, but it also contributes to the larger society, and thus contributes to world peace.

How true, I thought. Two different filmstrips about my life from years ago ran through my mind. One was the life I was leading before I was introduced to Hizmet, and the other was my life after that. Before Hizmet, my formal K-12 education happened through public schools. Those schools did not contribute much to my physical, mental, and spiritual well being since neither the schools nor the teachers were equipped with the necessary tools to fulfill that. However, in college, the dersane (light house) I shared with other Hizmet volunteers and Abis (big brothers) served as a school that opened new spiritual realms to me that made me question the reason of my existence and find new directions.

Mr. Gülen emphasized that the human being deserves to reside in the kingdom of heaven and naturally possesses the seeds of goodness, and unless feelings, emotions, and thoughts are fed through schooling, they will vanish into thin air just to be replaced by other things. It is the schools’ and educators’ duty to protect the children’s conscience and help them flourish spiritually. He believes that regardless of what kind of school it is, be it private or public, they need to assume the same mission.

Again, in my filmstrip, I recalled that after I graduated from college, I went to
Uzbekistan and had a chance to observe and apply Mr. Gülen’s teachings in practice. The teachers there were working around the clock to educate the students both intellectually and spiritually. I personally saw how they shared everything that they had with the students. I saw how many times they worked until the early hours of the morning to deliver a good class to them. Last, but not least, I saw how well they carried themselves and became role models for many students. Those students are now grown-ups and carrying the torch for education and doing the same work themselves.

On schools and education, Mr. Gülen pointed out that there is a lot of hostility in the world and undesired consequences can be avoided by awakening people into virtues like dialogue, mutual respect, respect for the position of the others, and also coming together around universal values. Mr. Gülen highlighted that this could be the work of the souls that receive proper education supported both with science and spirituality.

Furthermore, regarding language, Mr. Gülen makes a referral to culture. He notes that if a nation’s language is not strong enough to guard the nation’s culture and its value system, then the invasion of that nation’s people by other cultures and the loss of their roots in time will be inevitable. In addition to his emphasis on a strong language, Mr. Gülen makes it apparent that he admires the Turkish language and culture. He voices his concerns on language and culture loss in a foreign land and emphasizes that those familiar with a foreign language, unless they know their mother tongue very well, will ultimately drift into the thoughts of that foreign culture that come from its print or audio-visual means; they will hear like them, think like them, and understand like them.

Once again, my thoughts took me back to my childhood years in Germany. Almost 10 years after the first Turkish guest worker set foot there, a second generation of
Turks began to emerge. They were the children of the first generation Turkish guest workers who were born there. I was one of them and personally witnessed the transformation that the second generation went through. Their parents were the first generation blue-collar workers, and did not speak the German language. While the German school system discouraged the Turkish language and culture, and everything around the emerging second generation Turks emphasized the greatness of Germanness, those parents were trying to make the ends meet, and unaware and uninformed about the education system their children were educated in. Eventually, the second generation that was educated in those schools began to ‘hear like them’, ‘think like them’, and ‘understand like them’. However, this pushed the second generation of Turks into identity crises that resulted in their neither fully being a Turk, or fully a German. In my opinion, formed as a result of my connections and friendship ties, the second generation unwillingly followed the footsteps of their fathers and mothers, and ended up as blue-collar workers at best and drug addicts at worst.

Soon after thinking these very thoughts, Mr. Gülen, in a way, confirmed my thoughts. He noted that children need to know their mother tongue well and possess a language for education also so that they can live in peace with their own values, acquire a positively strong personality in the society, can make smooth transitions between cultures without pressure, and lead a serene lifestyle by saving themselves from potential adversities. Later in the interview, he also added that a solid cultural foundation and mind is only possible with proficiency in a language, especially in one’s own language.

As it is apparent by now, Mr. Gülen prioritizes the conservation of one’s own language because it is a key factor in the preservation of one’s own culture and roots. He,
on a number of occasions and in a number of this writings, highlights the dangers of losing one’s roots and identity, and signifies the importance of language. He states that one of the imperatives for the individuals to sustain their roots and protect themselves is to properly learn, protect, and use their mother tongue.

*I can see now and better understand the sensitivity he displayed on language.*

*Some years back, while I was substitute teaching at a school district in a Midwest town, I had witnessed how easily American students were able to handle unabridged works of fiction from hundreds of years ago. Even more, I had also witnessed how ESL students were easily able to decipher the same texts with the help of an expert teacher. However, when I looked back at my own education and generation, I saw that we, as Turkish students in high school, could not understand a simple text in Turkish from only fifty years before. So much for the language revolution.*

On second language acquisition, Mr. Gülen believes that a sound knowledge of one’s first language is a key factor to the learning of the second. He emphasized that children with a solid first language will learn a second language very well; a child’s proficiency in his/her mother tongue will help improve his language of instruction. Children possessing a rich lexicon in the mother tongue will be able to express themselves more easily, will also be able to define words and concepts in the second language more easily, and will learn the language of instruction without difficulty. However, he almost equally weighs in on the second language; if the child is not familiar with the language of the others, and, especially does not speak the language of the dominant culture, then he/she won’t be able to communicate his/her needs, and will feel like others are alienating him/her. Mr. Gülen believes that children need to be experts on
the language of their host country and also believes that they should be preserved from
harmful effects of that society that might be detrimental to their own identity. He
therefore supports an education that is bilingual from day one in order to reach that goal;
the society needs to be sensitive and supportive in different ways also; for example, it
needs to develop bilingual education programs for early childhood education. In essence,
Mr. Gülen advocates the learning of two languages, but he is comfortable with the idea
only when the child receives a solid first language education. He finds it critical that
children who grow up in a multicultural environment with two languages respect
themselves. To him, this means that the child first explores his/her cultural roots through
first language and develops a sense of attachment, and next, involves him/herself in other
languages.

"I recall that growing up in a working class family, my father and mother tried
their best to prepare me to be a student in a monolingual and monocultural German
education. They spoke German with me all the time and exposed me to the German
culture as much as possible. When I started school, they thought all this would help me
with my education. They even signed waivers to keep me exempt from religious
(Christian) education. Nevertheless, it did not help. The education system was just not
designed to tolerate non-Germans. There were no bilingual teachers to assist second
language speakers with their lessons nor did any of the other German teachers had
cultural sensitivity. As a result, my brother and I were sent to a school for ‘challenged
children’. Eventually, we were sent back to Turkey.

My aforementioned emic perspectives, when joined with a review of Mr. Gülen’s
writings and scholarship, offers insight into the thinking of Gülen regarding education in
general, and bilingual education specifically. Furthermore, I gained nuances from the process of living, reading, and writing about Hizmet for this study. Overall, I understand where the idea to work for the common good and the sincerity that comes with it stems from. I have personally witnessed how Hizmet evolved from being a small group and than becoming an international community. I personally went through the phases with other Hizmet people and have seen how ideas, thoughts, and approaches have changed.

The review of related literature makes clear that there are written records and academic scholarship that details the Hizmet Movement. However, what I have offered is a first-hand vantage point, the unwritten lifeworld experiences I have witnessed. For example, when I used to stay at dershane (student homes or lighthouses) we would get accounts of what was happening in Hizmet and what Mr. Gülen’s thoughts were on different issues through Abis (big brothers). For instance, one view that was shared was how Mr. Gülen’s worldview about the West had changed over the years. One has to live through this to fully comprehend it.

Another example, in terms of bilingual education, evinces how the HM has already acknowledged and incorporated bilingualism into instruction. In Central Asia and in Indonesia, for instance, local teachers taught social sciences and literature classes in the local language, and others (Turks and foreigners) taught other science and technology classes as well as English in English. Some schools, especially the ones in Central Asia, even had Turkish instruction to help children become trilingual speakers in the modern world. The most interesting part about bilingual education in Hizmet schools is that the programs and the curriculum were not premeditated. That is, no parent had to fight to gain home language teaching rights for their children, no academics had to do research to
prove them that this was an important component of education, or no advocate had to file a case at the court. These insights and experiences I gained are missing from other works written and published on Hizmet so far.
Chapter V

A Phenomenological Case Study—Bilingual Education in Hizmet Movement Schools

The data presentation and analysis in this section contributes to answer the research question, which is “How do administrators and school directors in Hizmet Movement schools offering bilingual education to some degree perceive and apply the Gülenian perspective on bilingual education into the school practice in the U.S.?” What follows is the presentation of data drawn from my own understanding of the Van Kaam method of analysis. However, there have been modifications that reflect the researcher’s own understanding of the method and an attempt to draw from ethnographic research. Also, even though I followed the modified methods outlined by (Moustakas, 1994) for Van Kaam, in my data description I have removed some to the subheadings to add cohesion to the text.

First, I offer a “site description” for each site that includes an account of my vivid memories and provides a more grounded description of the context in which I entered for the interview. Second, I provide a description of each research participant. In order to respect their privacy these descriptions are kept short. Third, I list a number of emerging themes and invariant constituents. The number of emerging themes and invariant constituents for each interviewee are different. Invariant constituents are direct statements from the interviews that are directly associated with the themes. These are embedded in the theme report. In doing so, I tried to provide, “a vivid account of underlying dynamics of the experience, the themes and qualities that account for “how” feelings and thoughts connected with…” (Moustakas, 1994, p. 135) bilingual education. As a fourth and final step to the data presentation and analysis, I present a final section named as “Supra
Themes” which is a more refined analysis of the emerging themes with the interviewees.

The NVivo software I used also to analyze data increased the validity of the analysis, however, did not provide significant new findings. It was the first time I worked with such a tool and being a beginner with the software might have had an impact on limited analysis. The NVivo results are incorporated into the modified version of the Van Kaam Method of analysis.

Below is a table summary of the interview participants, their philosophical and intellectual views on education, language learning, and bilingual education, test scores, and observed sites. The numbers on the left indicates the participant number. In the study, instead of pseudonyms, the researcher chose to assign numbers to the participants. Available test scores were drawn from the official state board of education websites except the private school on number 2.

Table 1

*Interview Participants*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Test Scores</th>
<th>Philosophical Stance</th>
<th>Language Learning</th>
<th>Bilingual Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 White Turkish male in his 40s</td>
<td>East coast Private Boarding High School All-boys Unimpressive exterior</td>
<td>2013 Average SAT scores: 406 in Writing, 523 in Math, 400 in Reading 2013 Average ACT scores: 21.7 in English, 27.4 in Math, 21.4 in Reading, 23.2 in Science, 22.9 in Writing, 23.9 Composite</td>
<td>Knowledgeable in general education Experienced educator</td>
<td>Strong support to instruction in English only Positive about the learning of other foreign languages</td>
<td>Uninformed and indifferent to bilingual education Supportive and appreciative of the HM and its participants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Test Scores</th>
<th>Philosophical Stance</th>
<th>Language Learning</th>
<th>Bilingual Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 White Turkish male in his 30s</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>Strong support to the HM and its educators</td>
<td>In favor of instruction in English only</td>
<td>Negative views on bilingual education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Private K-8 school</td>
<td></td>
<td>New location-hard to reach data</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Well traveled HM administrator</td>
<td>Non-descript exterior</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Against the use of the home language at home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 White Turkish male in his 30s</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>Supportive of HM</td>
<td>Supports native language preservation and supports ESL</td>
<td>Against bilingual education and finds it unnecessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HM administrator or with advanced degree</td>
<td>Charter school administrator</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interview at resort</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 White Turkish male in his 30s</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>(One of the schools in the same city as the HQ)</td>
<td>Supportive of HM, some knowledge about bilingualism</td>
<td>Supports the learning of languages and is very conscious about first language preservation</td>
<td>A transitional approach is best in bilingual education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experienced HM administrator</td>
<td>Headquarters located at a large commercial building</td>
<td>In 2011 and 2012 combined: 45% met or exceeded state standards on ISAT, 49% met or exceeded state standards on PSAE, 73% graduate HS within four years, 21% achieved a combine score of at least 21 on ACT, 93% low income students, 15% ELL, more than 50% Latino, 30% Black, 4% White, 2% homeless</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Head of 30+ charter schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Favors a maintenance program that will maintain both home language and improve proficiency in English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1 continued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Test Scores</th>
<th>Philosophical Stance</th>
<th>Language Learning</th>
<th>Bilingual Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6 White Turkish male in his 40s</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>Strong support to HM education and teachers</td>
<td>Lives in a trilingual household and supports the learning of languages in general</td>
<td>Believes in bilingual education that helps preserve the home culture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 White Turkish male in his 50s</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>Strong supporter HM teachers and education</td>
<td>Supports native language and bilingual education</td>
<td>Not very knowledgeable on bilingual education, but strongly supports the implementation of such programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8 White Turkish male</td>
<td>Western U.S. Charter schools</td>
<td>Unavailable</td>
<td>Believes HM schools a role model for US public education, STEM foci</td>
<td>Supports bilingual education</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 HM administrator in a large private educational institution</td>
<td>Small rural city in Turkey, Large, state-of-the-art private high school</td>
<td>(High school where interview took place)</td>
<td>Believes HM schools a role model for all education</td>
<td>Considers English as lingua franca</td>
<td>Supports ESL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Most successful social sciences high school in Turkey according to data from State Student Selection and Placement System</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participant #2

Site description: The school is located in a small-sized middle class town on the east coast. It is a private, all-boys’ boarding high school. There are 122 students, of which 63 are international. As I make my way in, I see some students heading towards the school building on a Sunday. When I turn my head to the right, I see a detached two-story New England colonial style building with dark red brick walls on the northwest side of the school. I realize that this is the dorm that houses all of the students. The roof has black asphalt tar shingles stretching down to the freshly painted white gutters. The dorm has seven white double hung windows on the second floor and six on the ground floor. A barrel vaulted solid canopy entrance takes the place of the seventh window in the middle. There are steps leading up to the elevated white wooden double doors.

A well-kept lawn that houses a brown wooden sign in the middle sits in front of the building. The wooden sign has bright metal letters spelling out the school's name. The driveway around the lawn separates it from the dorm. I look ahead and once again face the school building. It is a two-story mid-century modern building with an industrial design style that has long gone passé. Later, I learn that the place used to be a church and was built in 1962. It was probably a catholic church, the choice denomination of the majority living in the area. Those buildings, when first built, were meant to be simple and integrate with nature, but the yellow enamel panels on the metal portion of the walls and windows makes it look out of place. The remaining front facade of the building is made of light cream color brick. Grey metal frames that reach up to the flat roof and connect with the exposed flashings surround the standard ribbon windows. On the right side of the entrance, there is an oval extension with stained windows that used to serve as a
chapel on its heyday. Now they are classrooms. I walk through the cement entryway and grey metal double doors, and make my way in. It is about an 8'-10' feet square-shaped room with windows next to the main school entrance. It has been housing the school since their opening in 2002.

The first thing that gets my attention in the room is the aquarium with some gold fish and slightly blurry water. This is reminiscent of the days in the 1980s and the 1990s when four to five students would be assigned to a dersane (house) or isikevi (light house) and, amongst some other things, would put their money together and buy an aquarium with gold fish to beautify the oftentimes barely furnished student home. I also see a semaver (tea maker) with tea ready in it. Tea is always part of meals, conversations, visits, and all other occasions in Turkey. Within my context, I take this as an established habit again from the dersane days. Back then, students would get together in the evenings and read the Risales-Bediuzzaman Said Nursi's books- before bed. Tea would always be served and, if the budget would allow, there would also be petite beurre biscuits.

There are pictures of Istanbul and Turkey on the walls. This might indicate his longing to the motherland or might be a remainder of his national affiliation. The room needs paint. The school director offers me tea in a glass from Turkey. I see the cultural attachment he is unwilling to let go. Turkish tea must be served in a Turkish tea glass (a very hard to find item in the U.S.). We conduct the interview in Turkish. Before entering the room, the principal had had a short conversation with an American teacher. As a language specialist, I could tell he did not have the proficiency to carry out the interview in English.

Participant description. The interviewee is an administrator in his early 40s with slightly greying and receding hair. He is medium build, has a fair skin tone, and is of
average height. He is wearing a clean shirt with neatly pressed trousers. His clothes remind me of an era when all the Abis would dress like this to resemble Mr. Gülen. Back in the day, Mr. Gülen was someone whose clothing style many HM followers emulated unquestioningly. The most striking was the dismissal of the tie. I have never seen Mr. Gülen wear a tie although he claims otherwise. In the past, for some time, this was hype among the HM followers. It came and went, but some administrators I interviewed seemed to be lingering in the past.

From my interview with Participant #2, two themes emerged: a) Tolerance promotes unity and creates better education opportunities and b) Charter schools with HM educators carry out a great mission and are assets for education.

*Tolerance promotes unity and creates better education opportunities.* On a number of occasions during the interview, the interviewee commented on the unifying role of the school and how the atmosphere of tolerance enabled students to live and work together. For instance, he states: “When you enter a room or a classroom, you can see those students with different skin colors, religions, and cultures. They respect each other in this educational environment.” He notes that students who attend the school represent global and local geographic areas: “there are students in this school from many different countries. They live here altogether.” He continues by asserting that tolerance as a mission of the school and Hizmet, and emphasized its existence as a crucial part of the institution. He went on to state, “Students, regardless of their backgrounds, beliefs and skin colors, respectfully share this educational environment with each other.” In fact, he makes a clear reference to the importance of religious tolerance: “… a student from a
different denomination can freely express his thoughts without any reservations because people respect that.”

**Charter Schools carry out a great mission and are assets for education.**

According to the interviewee, charter schools with HM administrators address a low-income population that is in need of quality education. He commented during the interview:

“I see those charter schools as assets that support this particular population and doing a great job at it as well. I also see a good future ahead of them. Right now they are filling a great void. They should be supported and they should increase in number.”

Later, he continued this train of thought noting that charter schools seek to address the needs of students with smaller classrooms and more teachers per student: “In those charter schools there is an effort to increase the achievement rate of students through individualized education programs in smaller classrooms and with more teachers per student.” Moreover, he expressed the import and role of HM educators in charter schools as they provide the students with the best education possible” “...charter schools address each child’s needs, teachers there are caring and they try to educate the students the best way they can. Thus, they get great results.”

**Bilingual education in HM schools.** The interviewee considers his family as multilingual and has experienced the learning of a foreign language to some extent. The interviewee believes that “language is probably the best mean to understand the culture.” He continually emphasized the learning of a foreign language such as Spanish and French, and the mastering of English as the lingua franca. To him, language education consisted
of the learning of a foreign language rather than the teaching and learning in the first and second language.

He does not have a direct experience with bilingual education and most of the conversation has revolved around learning a language as a foreign language. In terms of English, he regards the learning of it as the utmost priority because of its importance in the world, but is also aware that Spanish has precedence as well.

In general, during the interview, I sensed that his impression is that both private HM schools and charter schools with HM educators have a positive approach toward new forms of instruction. However, bilingual education has not yet found a place in the conscience of the interviewee and is not a priority in instruction, either. The interviewee put instruction in English as the foremost priority since the school is located in the U.S.

**Participant #3**

**Site description:** The school is situated in a suburb of a large town in the Midwest. As I park my car in the parking lot of the L shaped plaza building, I notice that there are barely any signs marking the presence of the private HM school. The school occupies only one side of the building, and the other side belongs to a Christian charity organization. This reminded me of the Ottoman era tolerance that enabled mosques and churches to be built side by side. It is a PreK-8 school with developmentally based objectives in the lower grades and a focus on mastering important academic skills in the upper grades. A typical day runs from 8:20 a.m. to 3:55 p.m. The school provides before and afterschool care. The student-teacher ratio is capped at 1:20. I see the sign in front of the main entrance of the school and look around to make sure that this is the right entrance. I pull the door, but, unsurprisingly, it is locked. The school secretary buzzes me
in and I walk toward the reception. There is artwork of the students on the walls without which the walls would look a plain pale blue. The reception seems to perform a multitude of jobs; welcoming guests, serving as the secretary's desk of the school director, keeping track of attendance, and security. It is a school day and, except for one or two children, everyone is in class. I ask for the director's office, which, to my surprise, is right next to the secretary's and is only divided by two bookshelves. The director's office is smaller than my own living room, approximately 7' to 9'. Unbeknownst to many, the HM followers are in constant jihad with their *nefs* (the carnal self that relentlessly tries to push the soul into committing sin). Unlike the hyped media definition of jihad in the Western media, jihad in the Islamic sense means a spiritual war that the *soul* declares against its nefs. In this case, I got the impression that the school administrator was trying to keep his nefs under control by reserving himself a humble spot as his office. It also showed me the sacrifice these education pioneers were making. I enter the room through what seems to be a door built into a glass panel.

I find the director sitting at his desk. His back faces the exterior school window. He stands up and welcomes me by shaking my hand, a common gesture between men in Turkey. A large mobile lawnmower constantly produces noise throughout the interview. At some point, it disrupts the interview and I worry about being able to hear the audio recording later to transcribe the interview.

**Participant description.** The school director tells me he is a science major and has a college degree. He looks in his early 30s. He is average height and carries a few extra pounds on him. He has prematurely balding black hair. There is a calm and friendly expression on his face that tells me I am welcome there. He is clean-shaven, wears a tan
color shirt, and grey trousers. He has been to a number of countries due to Hizmet assignments. I am not surprised to hear that, as this is common practice in the HM institutions. Sometimes people are moved because of their circumstances such as the need for medical care, the desire to pursue advanced education, or the need for personnel in a new school. Other times they are moved simply because change is ‘good.’ He is very articulate in English, so we conduct the interview in English. I feel great relief because I won’t have to translate the whole interview later, the thought of which gives me headaches. He answers all the questions I asked with an open mind. At times, there is a tedbir (precaution) factor the HM followers adopt as a security measure. As a result, they can be extremely guarded in some situations, like granting an interview. I don’t see that in him. He is married, like the rest of the HM followers I interviewed in person.

From my interview with Participant #3, a single theme emerged: An acknowledgement and respect for Hizmet teachers.

**Dedicated Hizmet teachers are the key for success.** The administrator made it clear that he has strong faith in Hizmet educators. On many occasions, he highlighted the importance of the human factor in education. He shared his impressions: “And the instructors…what I can say is their character, the instructor’s character, the instructor’s, you know, background is very important.” More specifically, he speaks to their individual dedication to pedagogy: “So what I can say is from Hizmet point of view, those educators care, they love the kids, and try to help those kids because I have seen teachers that they were working up to 3 a.m. and then just study for their classes the next day.” He continues adding: “what runs the system is actually human beings.” As he concludes his admiration for the The Hizmet teachers he notes that in both private and
charter schools, the teachers are the ones who make the real difference in a child’s life, “those students in those charter schools would… could benefit a lot through those educators… through those educators, they start thinking going to college and finishing those, you know, degrees.”

**Bilingual education in HM schools.** He stated that bilingual education is not different than any other kind of education because it is the system you set up and the people behind the system make the real difference. The participant admitted that “we do not experience that kind of bilingual education in our school…” and added that “bilingual education is not that much productive …” The participant also stated that “It’s kind of confusing them, you know, when it comes to some, you know, specific topics. The concepts are not being understood well through these bilingual education.” Through these comments, the participant is conveying the message that his understanding of bilingual education is limited and that he does not hold a high opinion for the use of bilingual education in instruction.

The participant made contradictory comments regarding the use of bilingual education. While he made comments about what he understood from bilingual education he adopted a negative outlook. However, his comments on how bilingual education can be implemented and used in schools were different and his ideas deviated from negative to positive. For example he said “in order to create empathy, the instructors should be bilingual teachers as well.” And at some other point of the interview added, “bilingual education can help us, help the educators to make their kids be aware of the world, be aware of the other cultures and respect them”. This indicates premature ideas the participant had on the subject.
In sum, Participant #3 appears to have a positive attitude towards English as a second language instruction. At various points in the interview he suggested the restricted use of first language both at school and at home. He also made comments in favor of bilingual education. The controversy arises from the fact that he is a first generation Hizmet teaching traveling outside Turkey. The older Hizmet generations never had to leave Turkey for Hizmet and their issues were not related to bilingualism. They did, however, face the challenge of the changing of alphabet from Arabic letters into Latin letters. This change was still within the confines of Turkish and might be another point of interest in another study. The administrator admitted that he had never thought about bilingualism this much and that it reminded him “the deep part of education.” This indicated that bilingualism is a relatively new area for Hizmet educators.

Participant #4

Site description. Another interview I conducted was in a winter retreat program in a small-town resort in the Midwest. Much like the retreat events described in Chapter 4, this particular resort was fulfilling the same function. Nowadays, the HM followers in the U.S. usually go to resorts with their families and perform the same retreat during winter breaks. Participation, again, is voluntary. Families stay in hotel rooms and follow a set schedule for a week. Every activity and event on that schedule is voluntary as well and people join those at their discretion. There are age-appropriate activities and daylong classes for children so that parents will have a chance to read and contemplate with a peace of mind. Meals are served three times a day and volunteers do the cooking, serving, and cleaning and washing. The HM followers attending the program take extreme care not to disturb the other guests in the resort. Everyone pays out-of-pocket for all this and
nothing is funded by any organization or other entity. In this small Midwest resort, most of the rooms were reserved for the HM group. The conference rooms were used as prayer halls and *sohbet* (group talks of religious nature) locations as well.

This interview took place near the lobby, a 10-foot Christmas tree, Santa Clause decorations, and the front desk decorated again with Christmas ornaments were visible. We were there because the research participant I interviewed wanted to do the interview in a common area. It was also close to the daycare center and children were running around. Although the background noise level was a little high and interfered with our understanding each other at times, the interviewee wanted to go on with the interview there.

**Participant description.** The research participant was a male in his mid-thirties and held a terminal degree in his field. He did not disclose his major or the colleges he attended. He is an HM administrator in a charter school in the Midwest region of the U.S. At the time of the interview he was wearing trousers and a clean shirt. He looked in his early thirties, around average height, and was lean. His fair tone skin looked like it could easily burn under the summer sun. He was very reserved, and his answers to interview questions were short. I had the impression that he wanted to get done as quickly as possible and leave. I wondered why he had consented to the interview in the first place.

He only expressed his opinions on bilingual education and second language learning.

From my interview with Participant #4, a single theme emerged: Bilingual education is unnecessary and slows down the learning process.

**Bilingual education is unnecessary and slows down the learning process:**

During the course of the short interview, the research participant repeatedly emphasized
the uselessness of bilingual education in instruction. He did not favor instruction in two languages and thought learning English was more than enough for a second language speaker. However, he also admitted that his views on bilingual were “somewhat unorthodox” and that he “never worked in a school who offered bilingual education” [and] “…might be biased.” He did not share any information about his involvement in the HM, opinions and beliefs on the HM, and quickly dismissed the questions about bilingual education in the HM schools. He noted that “I mean I really don't see the point in bilingual education. I mean if the child is going to live in the States, let's say you know like use the United States for example, then all of the dealings is going to be mainly in English. Therefore the student or any other person for that matter will have to acquire the proficiency of the language.” He justified this opinion by adding “I mean let's say if I am to live in this country, all of my dealings is going to be basically in English. Let's say I just like come to this country in the second grade, what would be the point of me the learning science and mathematics in Turkish?” he did not believe that language learning can be a long and laborious process and believed that “language can be learned within a year provided that, you know like, one has the necessary facilities, teachers, and other support groups to learn the language.” He summed up his opinions on bilingual education as follows: “…if you mean by bilingual education, education in the sense of teaching math, science, I would say get rid of the bilingual education in that.”

Participant #4 strongly emphasized the need for second language education in lieu of bilingual education. He believed that second language education should be a priority for non-native speakers and it should be taught for a year or two before the child starts to receive her/his education. He noted that “so again, rather than spending funds, energy,
time in bilingual education, I would say put that child in the school, teach that child the
language then continue with the education in the English language.”

As a final comment, the participant bilingual education might only be used when
giving children cultural and religious instruction outside school. He had no faith in
bilingual education whatsoever. The interview with Participant #4 was very short and,
regardless of the nature of the questions I asked, he kept revolving around his opinions on
bilingual education, which were all negative.

**Participant #5**

**Site description.** The headquarters is located in a suburban/business area in the
Midwest. The plaza it is located at is the size of a large shopping mall with an even larger
parking lot. I see few cars parked outside. When I go inside, most of the offices look
either vacant or closed. I see this as a sign of the economic downturn. I take the stairs to
the second floor and an almost 1/4 mile long hallway welcomes me into the building
offices. The headquarter entrance consists of a glass wall with double glass doors. I go
inside and meet my interviewee in the office. It is a small room three times the size of a
cubicle. The walls are painted in a muted white color that is typical for workspaces. The
window I sit next to overlooks the pond and is the only green view in sight.

New places I visit usually remind me of the people, the events and the places I
had similar experiences with in the past. This place reminded me of Uzbekistan in a
peculiar way. I found the transparency here in stark contrast with the *tedbir* (precaution)
that was loosely practiced there in the beginning. I look back at the glass doors and the
transparent atmosphere. I remind myself that I live in a democratic country and take a
deep breath. I turn on my voice recorder.
**Participant description.** The interviewee is in his late-30s with greying hair. He is average height and weight and dresses very modestly. He wears a clean white shirt and grey pants. As a person who likes short hair, I think that he needs a haircut. He has taken up a number of administrative positions in the HM and currently serves as the head of a charter school chain in the Midwest. He is a college graduate and has teaching experience in the HM schools. For the past ten years, though, he has been assuming administrative positions. He has a very respectful manner and answers my questions diligently.

From my interview with Participant #5, three themes emerged: a) the HM private schools aim to serve all income levels, b) the HM educators heavily devote their time and energy heavily to educate their students, c) bilingual education should maintain the first language.

**The HM private schools aim to serve all income levels.** The interviewee believed that in the HM philosophy, people are good by nature and “the only way to bring out that good in people is through education.” He noted that the Hizmet institutions offered quality education and the tuition was there for the expenses. To him, the HM also offered scholarships and tuition assistance “to students who are not able to afford them” so that they can reach everybody and, “if the schools were able to maintain themselves financially, they would not charge, probably they would not charge tuition.” In general, the HM, through private schools, try to “serve the needs, meet the needs of as many people as possible, many students as possible, or, rich, you know, smart, and mediocre, and different races, and different religions. So they don’t target one specific, you know, population.” It appeared that the interviewee was very confident that the HM private schools served as panacea to educational issues of the larger society.
The HM educators devote their time and energy heavily to educate their students. Participant #5 strongly believed that the HM educators were sacrificing their time and energy to help their students. This is a consistent view expressed in my interviews and in the sources I used for my literature review in this study. The HM educators sacrificed a lot because “for them this is not only an institutional goal, but this is also a personal goal that they see that serving God is serving people and they, so they dedicate their life in that philosophy, in that service.” This mentality makes them call “students to the school on the weekends and they have volunteer teachers from the Turkish community who teach content areas to those students in their own language.” Those HM teachers even drive them to and from school on the weekends.

Bilingual education should maintain the first language. The interviewee noted that bilingual education should be part of the school curriculum. He laid out his plan as follows: “…a transitional bilingual education in the elementary grade…But once the student is proficient at both languages, then an intensive language education in literature, and grammar, writing, reading in both languages.” This form of instruction can be achieved through (meaning Spanish language speakers) “a transition in the first and then a literature education probably in their own language along with the English, along with the survey of the literature in English, then maybe a survey of literature in Spanish.”

In sum, the participant is a proponent of bilingual education and supports the implementation of bilingual education programs in schools. He believes that students should be able to receive education in their first language and also go through an intensive second language education. The participant actually does not advocate a transitional program, but rather a maintenance program that will offer education in both
languages until students graduate. He suggests an ongoing program where students receive education in two languages.

**Participant #6**

**Site description.** This interview happened in a major Midwest City. It is summer and there is a Turkish festival going on in the city’s busiest business district. I park my car in a nearby parking garage situated inside a high-rise building surrounded by glossy windows at all sides. The person is visiting the festival and wanted to see me there to make it happen. Within the Hizmet circle, sometimes business is taken care of immediately when the cause arises. If one tries to make an appointment, choose a meeting place, and arrange other formalities for an interview, things simply may not happen or take a very long time to complete. In those circumstances, one needs to be proactive and get the work done as soon as possible. This is one of those occasions and explains why the interview was conducted in a public place.

The Turkish festival happens once a year in that city and is a big deal both for the Turkish community and the locals. There are TV broadcasts, the Turkish department of tourism is there, and the state flagship airline, the Turkish Airlines, is one of the sponsors of the event. In the upcoming years there is going to be two Turkish festivals instead of one because the secularly indoctrinated event organizers do not give permission to the Zaman newspaper, Hizmet’s digital and print media corporation, to lease a spot in the event. It is extremely crowded and sunny with no shade in sight. My interviewee suggests we meet at the nearby fast food restaurant. It is located on the corner of an intersection and surrounded by theaters performing off-Broadway shows.

**Participant description.** The participant is in his late 30s/early 40s, married with
two children. He is a higher-level executive in an organization that one of the private HM schools I visited for my study is affiliated to. He is married to a Japanese woman and this makes the interview unique because this is the only bilingual family that speaks a language other than Turkish and English in this research. On the day of the interview he wears a suit and a shirt but does not have his jacket on. His formal wear on a weekend day reminds my past dershane (light house) days. Back then when I was still an undergraduate student we would not wear jeans and t-shirts. Instead we had neatly ironed shirts and pants. There were two reasons for this: first because of the deep admiration Hizmet people had for Mr Gülen, they would wear what he would wear. Second, there was the importance of temsil (representation). This came from the understanding that one needed to represent the movement in all the ways possible. From my interview with Participant #6, two themes emerged: a) Hizmet teachers denote quality education, b) bilingual education should tap into cultural resources.

**Hizmet teachers denote quality education.** The interviewee highly respects and admires the teachers and staff working in Hizmet schools or Hizmet-related schools. He pointed out that Hizmet institutions and schools do not only teach science, math, and other subjects, but they also improve the moral and spiritual depth of the student. A key component, in his opinion, is the teachers that work in those institutions. He stressed the quality of the HM teachers and how they go above and beyond their limits in order to help their students: “I see that, you know, they are spending their days and nights to perform the best education that they can to get ready for the classes.” He also highlighted that those teachers were ideal role models for their students and possessed high moral qualities: “…they are not just any people that can teach, but they are people who are, uh,
who take their cultural values seriously and who try to be good examples for their students.” Furthermore, he noted that those HM teachers loved their jobs and had a passion for teaching: “They are highly responsible educators, men and women, and they, first of all, love the job that they are doing, they love the children.”

**Bilingual education should tap into cultural resources.** The interviewee stated that language and culture were two components that could not be separated from each other. He believed that culture was represented in the language and language was a way for an individual to profess his/her own culture. He suggested the teaching of the culture with the language it belonged to. To him, these points should be taken into consideration in language education at school: “Because not only learning the language means just learning the grammar, or learning the vocabulary, but we also need to simmer into the culture” and added that “I think those cultural values also should be taken into consideration when you are teaching a specific language.” He summarized his views on the subject as, “I think the bilingual teaching experiences can be improved if we can fit in the cultural values that I mentioned before…”

In sum, regarding bilingual education, the interviewee’s own experience with bilingual education is limited. Regardless, he had a positive outlook into the practice in general. He pointed out that Hizmet educators were the ideal educators who could offer such education. Living in a trilingual household (Turkish, English, Japanese), he was well aware of not only the need for bilingual education, but also the cultural heritage that needed to be taught along with the child’s first language.

**Participant #7**

**Site description.** The institution is located in a major city in the Midwest. In the
past, it was managed by another Islamic group and operated as an officially recognized, private, not-for-profit, four-year college. However, their authority to grant 2-year and 4-year degrees was later removed due to inadequate management. Now it operates as an institution of the Hizmet movement and offers non-credit and non-degree classes. It also serves as a hub for different meetings, conferences, and as a guesthouse for newcomers or those who need accommodation while visiting city. The century-old building is currently shared with another private school, however, they will be moving soon and the Hizmet institution will take over the whole building. It is a brick building and a product of modern ecclesiastical architecture that carries a touch of historical forms. The T-shaped structure faces the south and has long rectangular windows framed in brick bevels on the first and second floors and arched windows on the third floor. When looked from the outside, they seem like long surfboards with slightly sharp tips. I enter the building from a side door and climb up the stairs. There is a short hallway with classrooms on both sides. I make a right turn and go down a second set of stairs. A landing leads to both to a conference room through double doors and to another hallway. I take the hallway and reach a narrow door right next to an exit. I expect to enter a small room, however, I see a fully furnished, spacious apartment. There are quite a few sofa beds around and a Turkish style chandelier hanging down the ceiling. We sit on one of the sofas against the windows and begin the interview.

**Participant description.** The interviewee has worked in a number of reputable universities in the U.S. and holds a doctoral degree. He chaired an HM interfaith dialogue organization in the U.S. and taught at a number colleges and universities. He focuses on interfaith dialogue events and is a well-known advocate of the Hizmet movement. He is
in his mid-fifties, has light skin with blue eyes, somewhat overweight. He wore trousers and a shirt for the interview. As is the case with all administrators interviewed in this study, he is also Turkish. His participation in this study is significant in that he is personally very close to Mr. Gülen.

From my interview with Participant #7, one theme emerged: a) the HM teachers are role models for students.

**Hizmet teachers are role models for students.** The interviewee regarded Hizmet teachers as a great asset to the schools and the reason behind their success. He regarded them as the single most important factor in the HM schools: “the most important part of the Hizmet schools are the administrators and the teachers. Not only they are good examples for the students, but also they have very good connections with the families so that they follow the students' behavior, not only in the school borders, but also in the whole life of the student.” To him, the HM administrators and teachers were also good role models that students should emulate: “Teachers and administrators are good samples; for the students are taking them as examples in their lives.” Lastly, he also saw the teachers and administrators as a bridge between the school and family.

Regarding bilingual education, Participant #7 believes that “it's better to learn the native language first and then learn the other language, the other country’s language because they will learn it anyways...” He believes bilingual education should start in the family and continue at school. To him, the family, school, and cultural centers complement each other when it comes to bilingual education. He further suggested that “some courses like mathematics and science, in which the language are not very imperative, can be taught by Turkish professors or teachers so that the students will have
a chance to be exposed by two languages.”

The interviewee appears to have very positive views both on the HM educators and bilingual education. Considering the high-rank position of this individual, this is a positive sign in that when available or requested, the mentality, and, hopefully, the effort will be there.

**Participant #8** (see Appendix C)

**Participant #9**

**Site description.** The school is located on the outskirts of a major Turkish city on the Midwest part of Turkey. Later, I learn that the land it sits on was donated by a widow and was named after her late husband. I also learn that people from the surrounding community provided financial support during the construction of the school. The main entrance has a guard post with a guard on duty 24 hours a day, including weekends. This security measure might seem standard operating procedure to the unsuspecting eye, but there are two reasons why almost each and every private and some public schools in Turkey has guard posts; the first is the heightened security measures in the 1980s as a result of terrorist bombings by the terrorist organization PKK, and the second is the veil ban that was at its peak in the 1990s Turkey. The ban prevented women wearing the Islamic veil from entering schools. The ruling parties of the time, forced and backed up by the Turkish military, justified this procedure by claiming that the veil was a political symbol that threatened the foundations of the Turkish state. An entranceway the size of a football field adorned with concrete step stones, flowers, and a lush lawn welcomes the guests. The school itself is a six-floor building that sits on a land as big as another football field. The exterior has a sleek look and there are clean large rows of windows on
each floor. In the middle, the building entrance has a slightly oval exterior with two steel columns that extend to the top floor on both sides. We enter the brightly lit lobby through the sliding doors. The spotlessly clean floor is tiled with black and white ceramic tiles. Straight ahead we see an engraving of Ataturk on the wall, the founder of the modern Turkish republic. On his one side, there is a Turkish flag with the national anthem behind it. On his other side, the school flag sits in front of his speech to the Turkish youth. The general director, cleanly shaven and wearing a crisp suit even in those late hours of the day, shakes my hand before we proceed to his room. The room is spacious and as brightly lit as the lobby. It is freshly painted and decorated the way a general director's room looks like. There is a large manager's desk with an executive style chair behind it. Behind the chair, a portrait of Ataturk hangs on the wall between the national anthem and his speech to the Turkish youth. Hanging an Ataturk portrait on walls is common practice in public and private institutions, organizations, and even homes in Turkey. I sit in a chair in front of the desk and the general manager takes the chair on the opposite. I take this as a gesture of courtesy. The general director offers some information about the school and the quality of education they provide there. After the interview, I also get a chance to take a partial tour of the school and interact with students. The dining hall covers half of the basement and, by any standard; it is big. The employees respectfully nod their heads when I look at them. The kitchen area is clean and does not smell of food. I talk to a number of students and they tell me about their future goals and about coming to the U.S. for college education. This pleasantly surprises me because, when I was their age, I was not that conscious about my own education. The school also has a sports complex that many colleges in the U.S. would be happy to have.
**Participant description.** He is currently the general manager of an organization that runs a number of private schools in a large size city in Central Anatolia. Participant #9 also participates as a coordinator for the Turkish Olympiads. Formerly he served as a teacher and an administrator at Hizmet connected schools in Central Asia. He is in his mid-forties, soft-spoken and well educated. The quality of his answers to my research questions shows his expertise in the field of education. From the interview with Participant #9, two themes emerged: a) The HM private schools are huge success and connect us to the world; b) Bureaucracy inhibits bilingual education.

*The HM private schools are huge success and connect us to the world.* The interview with participant #9 was particularly interesting in that he shed light on issues pertaining to the Turkish education system and how the HM private schools operate within that system. Regarding the performance of the private HM schools and other private schools in general, he noted, “Although only 3% of schools are private in Turkey, all these results resonate as if half of the country’s schools were private.” Particularly about the HM private schools he said, “…these private schools, wherever they are founded; be it a city, a town, or a rural community, are the most successful educational institutions of the place.” He added that, besides quality education, the HM private schools added to the student’s character by equipping them with high human values: “These students also attain good characters here. They learn to respect their traditions, national values, and moral values of their people. These children also learn to be open to dialogue with others. They are neither biased nor prejudiced.” He concluded his thoughts on the subject by stating “I can profess that these schools have acquired a prominent place in education.”
**Bureaucracy inhibits bilingual education.** The interviewee claimed that the HM private schools face a thick bureaucratic clot in Turkey that prevents bilingual education. He believed that, to some degree, their schools were offering bilingual education, that is, Turkish and English. However, he did not reflect on minority languages such as Kurdish, Yiddish, Armenian, and Arabic that are still spoken in Turkey. This is probably because it still is a sensitive issue in Turkey and there are legal constraints to offer bilingual education to maintain heritage languages in Turkey. I conducted an extensive search to see the official language policy in Turkey as of January 2014 and found out that “in educational institutions, no language shall be taught and used to teach Turkish citizens as their first language other than Turkish” (MEB, 1983). Participant #9 was aware of this: “since Turkish is the mandatory medium of instruction in Turkey, we are unable to offer more bilingual classes.”

The interviewee had a sound understanding on education and was eager to learn more on bilingual education. He is deeply interested in current policies and regulations regarding private schools and wants to see innovations in the private education sector. His experiences with bilingual are limited, but he appeared to be receptive to new ideas and approaches in language teaching.

**Composite Group Description**

**Sites.** The HM schools that I visited in the U.S. were all private schools. The HM school that I visited in Turkey was also a private school. Most of the U.S. HM schools were located in the Midwest and were in and around a large metropolitan city. One school was in a small town on the east coast. There also was one site in the western U.S. that I was unable to physically visit and unable to conduct a face-to-face interview with
the administrator (see Appendix C). The charter schools with HM educators in the US were located in non-descript buildings without outward signs of the school’s existence.

Participants. The center-point interviewee, Mr. Gülen, regards education as a way that will improve the child’s moral and spiritual strength in addition to science. Other interviewees concurred with him in this vision and expressed that “education should appeal to their hearts, not only for their brains” (Participant #6).

The HM school administrators were all male and the majority were administrators between 30-50 years old. All were college educated and two held terminal degrees. All were Turkish and spoke both English and Turkish. Responses by the administrators suggest that they understood the foci of HM schools, however, their understandings were reflective of their own experiences. Each administrator voiced strong support of HM education, seeing it as an excellent asset to U.S. public education. The HM administrators believed that the excellence of HM schools stemmed from their focus on moral education, the emphasis they gave on culture, and the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) courses they taught.

Each administrator also expressed an understanding and commitment to Gülen’s philosophical ideas. Some administrators even appeared to have adopted his conservative dress and mannerisms. All administrators voiced strong support of HM teachers, viewing them positively and as excellent instructors.

On the one hand, several administrators discussed bilingualism as a potentially positive addition to HM schools. On the other hand, several administrators drew from their own linguistic experiences when asked to consider bilingualism as a part of the HM schooling experience. Still, other HM administrators voiced either under-informed or
negative views of bilingual education. For example, one administrator clearly referenced ESL as an example of bilingual education while another administrator held that bilingual education was not necessary. In sum, there was no singular position on the role of bilingual education in the HM schools.

The interviewees, with the exception of one, had favorable opinions on bilingual education. However, they admitted that in none of the institutions do they offer such form of education. They also agreed that bilingual education should happen in schools. Cultural centers, families, and other formal/informal institutions should support what schools are doing.

Another interesting outcome from the interviews is that the research participants in general perceived education as a lifelong process that extends beyond the walls of any educational institution. Within this context, bilingualism is another element that needs to be mastered and well practiced throughout an individual’s life. Individual development is received as part of the daily activities like eating and sleeping. Mr. Gülen’s impact on this is apparent in that he advocates education as the number one priority in a person’s life.

Supra Themes

I interviewed nine people, eight from the United States and one from Turkey. When it came to the education of the individual, I felt that I heard the same response from almost all of my interviewees: the human factor in Hizmet. I wondered why there was such high emphasis on this idea and went back to my interview data. Mr. Gülen calls them (the teachers) “soul engineers”, another interviewee admires them for their “unquestionable dedication” (participant# 8), and yet another one claims they see teaching equal to “serving God” (participant# 5). The HM educators turn into such
exemplary human beings through their stay in the *lighthouses*. The HM conception of lighthouses are described best by Yavuz (2013):

Where same-sex roommates from different social and economic backgrounds live in a culture of harmony, brotherhood, and spirituality, provide a clean and safe alternative for university students from socially and politically conservative and/or insecure milieus in Turkey. (Yavuz, 2013, p. 100)

From personal experience, I found lighthouses appear to have improved character, instill high moral values, encourage the individual avoid sins, and challenge the intellect.

Another supra theme was that key to the effectiveness of the HM schools are teachers. They are very dedicated to what they are doing and thus bring success. Their existence ensures success and quality education. They set the example for students and become role models who the students emulate later in life. Probably, this feeling of attachment and character education attracts more and more people in to the HM.

In general, the interviewees see the HM schools as exemplary. The private HM schools are a huge success and connect us to the world. Furthermore, charter schools with HM educators carry out a great mission and are assets for education.

Finally, there is a heavy emphasis on family regarding education: It begins at home. Home is also where children gain cultural education and thus culture is an indispensable part of the language. This needs to be acknowledged and addressed in their formal education as well. Language use in schools should begin with one’s home language. However, there is also awareness English is the lingua franca globally and should be taught as well.
Chapter VI

Discussion

The original intent of the study was to find answers to the question “How do administrators and school directors in Hizmet Movement schools offering bilingual education at some degree perceive and apply the Gülenian perspective on bilingual education into the school practice in the U.S.?” The interview questions sought answers to the central research question, however, the results were indicative of other outcomes. I initially wanted to understand and analyze what the administrators understood from bilingual education, what their visions on bilingual education were, and how those visions were informed by the teachings of Gülen. The study ended up going beyond the focus of bilingual education and also looked into the HM and how it spread worldwide, Gülen and his educational philosophy, educational practices of administrators informed by their cultural backgrounds, the shortcomings of the HM educational institutions, role of bilingual education in HM schools, role of women in the HM, and perceptions of Islam in the West. However, I prefer to leave the research question as is in order to signify the changes that occurred in this study and how qualitative research methods empower the researchers while helping them branch out to additional fields of inquiry.

The review of literature covered extant literature that included extensive studies on the Hizmet movement sans bilingual education. The first text by Ebaugh’s (2010) research helped me understand the enormity of the movement and the good that it contributed to mankind. The second text by Hendrick’s (2009) study provided me with an opposing and non-objective view of the movement. The work by Weller and Yilmaz (2012) offered a collection of scholarly works conducted on Gülen. Johnson’s (2013)
thinking had a number of indications: It showed that the HM is still focused in education and interfaith dialogue as of today. These two have always been two pillars of the movement. Also, it has become clear that the HM, through its interfaith cultural tours and non-profit organizations, is clearly involved in lobbying practices in the U.S., both for Turkey and the HM. The study by Aslan and Verkuyten (2013) conducted in Germany and The Netherlands made it clear to me that the HM in Europe is using its media outlets to make it clear that terrorism is incompatible with the movement does not have a place in Islam. Finally, Samuel’s (2013) research supported my belief that, even though the HM has become a global phenomenon, it has been successfully implemented while retaining much of its original philosophical tenants, in its international educational institutions. Most importantly, a key finding in Samuel’s study, which appears to have been replicated here, is the respect for HM teachers’ caring attitudes, dedication to pedagogy, and impressive educational results (student test scores) as well as access to higher education.

My data analysis consisted of a dual pathway; the first one was a phenomenological study as a bricoleur that included my emic perspective interwoven into the interview with Mr. Gülen and the history of Hizmet while the second was a phenomenological single case study supported by the use of NVivo software program. **First Pathway**

My first path, a phenomenological self-study, helped me to situate myself within the study by making clear my understanding and life experiences of HM as well as afforded me a nuanced understanding of applications of the Gülenian perspective on bilingual education in HM schools. I have both outlined my personal history within
Hizmet and my academic thinking and insights as a follow-up to my interview with Mr. Gülen. The literature review of related literature reflects the history and views of the Hizmet Movement on education from the perspective of authors.

The question on bilingual education touches a very specific and concentrated area in education. My first path answers the question by developing a general understanding of the movement and its approach to education in general. It also details how movement participants perceive education outside school. Education is the Movement’s number one priority and therefore almost all future educators and administrators first go through the tutelage of light houses, which were solely established to provide housing to support college students. There they learn to be understanding and tolerant of different cultures, lifestyles, and languages. For example, in the heavily Turkish language dominant atmosphere of Turkey, these students share their homes with Kurdish and Arabic speakers who are minorities in Turkey (this is impressive because, as of July 2010, 72% of the ethnically Turkish population did not approve of the official recognition of the Kurds (KONDA, 2013)). Recently, the light houses started to include Uzbek, Kirghiz, Kazakh, Russian, Indonesian, Turkmen speakers as well. Thus, HM followers learn to accommodate the needs of second language speakers and non-Turks in their daily lives. Later, after graduation, many are assigned to teach in the HM schools throughout the world, including U.S. schools. For example, one of the private HM schools in the U.S. had a Kazakh assistant principal.

**Findings that are reflective of HM schooling in the first pathway.** The significance of this study expands what is known about the HM education and highlights the devotion that Hizmet participants put into education in general. To them, education is
a lifelong process to be pursued with passion and interest. It is also a form of worship. This goes beyond the traditional approach where the delivery of instruction and education of children happens in schools and consists of positive sciences. Education also occurs in light houses, cultural centers, weekend classes with mentor big brothers, family circles, and education centers. A solid back up to this claim is Cetin’s (2012) book in the field. In his book, he outlines the general structure of Hizmet and offers the reader a detailed analysis of the movement. He explains the history of Hizmet along with many of its other components such as activities, goals, participation, and efficacy of Hizmet.

Regarding education, Cetin (2012) states “Gülen holds that a new style of education is necessary. This education will fuse religious and scientific knowledge with morality and spirituality” (p. 23). His thinking aligns with the interview participants’ comments as well: “…our goal is to offer them an exemplary education in science and also make sure that, as they grow up, they keep and protect their own culture and are open for dialogue with others” (Participant #2).

Culture partially draws its strength from religion and therefore the statement supports the vision of Gülen. In addition, my emic perspective and interview with Mr. Gülen adds to an important finding to what I have already stated in this study and what is already known by public: Mr. Gülen stated the importance of first language and culture preservation. He also expects the HM supporters to take timely action. However, the HM participants and the HM administrators push those actions back until the need really arises or something catastrophic happens.

Findings that answer my research question in the first pathway. My emic perspective and the data sources, that is, observations, interviews, and available literature...
both in modern and archaic Turkish, contributed to answer the research question. In the countries that I taught, there was instruction both in the first and second languages. This sort of instruction is not typically classified as bilingual education; however, it certainly acclimatized me and many other teachers here in the U.S. to bilingualism. Most of the interview data, with the exception of one, reflects this positive attitude toward bilingual education and is on a par with Gülen’s views on bilingual education.

A recent study about the movement, Hakan Yavuz’s *Toward an Islamic Enlightenment* (2013), reveals the significance of the Hizmet Movement (Gülen Movement as he calls it) in that “it has not only vernacularized the ideas of Enlightenment, but that it has also turned them into a religio-social movement” (p. 6). Yavuz, drawing from Gülen’s writings, ties this Enlightenment to education, which is a combination of religious and moral values (albeit secular), and science. He further states, “the main goal of Gülen’s education is to teach students about the purpose of their communal life and to live according to Islamic morality” (p. 115). However, he also gets critical of the educational philosophy of the movement. He argues that although the movement is quite successful in instilling moral and emotional values of self-control, asceticism, discipline and self-sacrifice, the movement has fallen short of encouraging critical thinking being truly open to alternative lifestyles and modes of being. (p. 116)

He also includes gender inequality as part of his criticism on the Hizmet movement. In his opinion, Hizmet is a predominantly male-led/patriarchal movement and that women do not assume enough roles. The criticism that the movement is not inclusive of women might have some validity. While conducting my interviews none of the participants were
women and there was no mention of female administrators from research participants during the recruitment process. The movement seems to make no effort to assign women especially into administrative positions.

Mr. Gülen is very supportive of women’s participation in social and work life. Furthermore, regarding the criticism on alternative lifestyles and critical thinking, I would argue that Gülen himself does not oppose nor restrict that. On many occasions, I have witnessed his personal efforts for a pluralistic and inclusive society. He sees respect to women as a very important legacy from his Ottoman ancestors. It is more about how his followers in his immediate circle perceive and interpret his teachings and reflect them down the Hizmet chain to other Hizmet participants.

**Second Pathway**

A comparative analysis of the Hizmet movement’s potential contributions to bilingual education. The Gülen perspective on education distinguishes itself clearly from a number of educational philosophies that arose during the last century and were carried into the new millennium. Some of those philosophers that contributed into the field were Vygotsky, Bakhtin, and Freiere. They have influenced education in general and bilingual education specifically for over three decades in the West from socio-constructivist theorizing to research, to pedagogy, and to instruction. The Gülen approach offers a more Sufism oriented socio-cultural approach to education that includes altruism, inner ethics, morality, and tolerance.

Regarding Vygotsky, while the Gülen approach considers the cultural dimension as a “necessary component of collective or national consciousness, without which a people cannot move forward along a path recognized and valued as their own” (Cetin,
it differs from Vygotsky in that it believes “one should not be worried about individual development, but about the development of individuals with the motivation of other individuals” (Sevindi & Abu-Rabi, 2008, p. 44). Seemingly close to the Vygotskyan perspective, the Gülen perspective considers ethical and moral support of other individuals as an indispensable part for learning in addition to socio-cultural and pedagogical factors.

The Bakhtinian school of thought is constructed upon dialogical relationships that encompass culture and helps the individual break into the alien territory to form his/her own utterance. Bakhtin believes that we, as individuals in the society, perceive ourselves through the lenses of others. In other words, there is a transaction of utterances that goes both ways and affects us. While the Gülenian philosophy is in accordance with Bakhtin in this aspect, it takes those dialogic relationships one-step further and includes religion. Additionally, Gülen’s philosophy has a modified view on Bakhtin’s heteroglossia. Although Gülen agrees that language is more than a linguistic entity, the multitude of its usages include cultural preservation as well as the continuation of historical and national identity: “language is the most important constituent that defines the human being’s vision on how he/she envisions the matter and occurrences” (Incetas, May 27, 2011). In that regard, language serves as a medium to sustain cultural, religious, and national identity.

Gülen significantly differs from the Freirean approach because Gülen’s philosophy does not have any political motives. Politics is avoided to the highest degree since Gülen “is convinced that politics is not the upper value in our World. On the contrary, for him spiritual and moral development of individual is much more important
for humanity today” (Sykiainen, 2010, p. 4). Gülen adopts a Sufi-oriented message of love and compassion that does not challenge the system. On the contrary, it works within the system; it does not marginalize itself with protest and challenge, and supports a consensus rather than conflict among people with its new insights. Also, Gülen focuses on shared goals and interests people and groups can identify with. Gülen’s educational philosophy does not assign roles to groups to educate the others as in the way the oppressed assumes a role to domesticate the oppressor. In the Gülenian perspective, the so-called oppressed does not confront the oppressors, but willfully guides them to overcome their own challenges while setting the example by reflecting from his own internal struggle.

Furthermore, in his banking of education theory, Freire considers the teachers as narrators, who inject knowledge and serve as mediums of the system that turn students into objects; receptacles and containers of information. He claims that the banking of education is necrophilic, and, “based on a mechanistic, static, naturalistic, spatialized view of consciousness, it transforms students into objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads women and men to adjust to the world, and inhibits creative power” (p. 72). While the Gülenian thought agrees that the human being is a boundless force with an excellent mental creativity, and that s/he also carries the responsibility on the development and motivation of the others, it diverges from Freire because it suggests that “most sciences in the world, such as physics, and metaphysics are based on man; everything other than man has a value according to its relation to man” (Sevindi & Abu-Rabi, 2008, p. 29). The Freirean movement is rooted in the human-world relationship and believes that people exist within the world. There is no reference to her/his relationship
with a divine power. Moreover, the banking of education is regarded as an inhibitor to human creativity, but is not considered as an inhibitor to human spirituality or high morals and ethics resulting from her/his belief system or her/his religion. It is also worth looking into if the concept of organized religion was formed and consolidated by those following the Freirean ideology because the oppressor that domesticated the masses may have used it as a tool to further oppress the masses. Finally, the HM and the educational philosophy attached to it adopt the universal language, style, and tone accessible to even the least educated. Yet, the Freirean pedagogy manifests itself through the use of complex language, thoughts and ideas most probably comprehensible only to the oppressor that has dominated the elite educational strata of the (Brazilian) society.

Under the light of the Gülen philosophy that I compared with prominent philosophers in education above, my second pathway analyses the linkage that exists (or the lack thereof) between his philosophy on bilingual education and the opinions and practices of the HM administrators. Thus, my second pathway, the Van Kaam Method of analysis in conjunction with the NVivo qualitative data analysis software, looks to answer the question “How do administrators and school directors in Hizmet Movement schools offering bilingual education at some degree perceive and apply the Gülenian perspective on bilingual education into the school practice in the U.S.?” from a more technical angle.

**Findings that are reflective of HM schooling in the second pathway**

Regarding the Gülenian philosophy on education and the research results, there are parallels as well as differences. Mr. Gülen’s thinking on education has been informed both by Western and Islamic thinkers. The manifestational practices of Sufi Rumi to
connect with God take a different turn when re-interpreted by Mr. Gülen: “theoretical and verbally spiritual assertions about human-divine interface and its human-human counterpart are transformed into actual, practical, and physically spiritual deeds” (Soltes, 2013, p. 103). This way, he aims to materialize thoughts and turn them into action. In education, this is where Mr. Gülen starts in order to shape a society that not only has peace within itself, but also offers that to its neighbors. Educators in Hizmet-related schools represent this and serve as role models, which, to many, is very clear: “After visiting several GM schools and after talking with a number of current and former teachers, I had little doubt that many GM-affiliated teachers were impressively devoted to their craft” (Hendrick, 2013, p. 138). Mr. Gülen agrees:

Teachers who work in those schools, hopefully they comply with the moral values at maximum level; may have internalized the universal values and made that second nature to a certain extent. Moreover, those dedicated souls, if they don’t see teaching and learning only as a source of income, but as the most dignifying, the most important way and merit that will earn them Allah’s blessings and grant them eternal life, and even see it as a form of praying, then they will work without worrying about their work hours and salaries (Incetas, May 27, 2011).

Again, the HM administrators and teachers, “typically have far more than the usual level of talent and dedication. This contrasts with traditional American educators, who all too typically attend second-tier colleges and choose to work near their hometowns” (Maranto, Camuz, & Franklin, 2014, p. 112). The HM teachers and administrators take their job so seriously and are devoted to their jobs so much that they put their lives on the line. For example, they did not abandon their schools during the Bosnian war in the former
Yugoslavia, or the Taliban conflict in Afghanistan. In December 2013, while expatriates left South Sudan because of political tensions and a failed coup attempt, the HM personnel stayed behind to educate their students. To those who claim that the HM is after political power and material gain, one has to ask: Would anyone risk his/her life in the middle of Africa for such gain? Heroic actions of the HM educators are uncontested proof of dedication and the will to serve humankind.

I also found that the private HM schools and charter schools with HM administrators are different than the U.S. public schools in terms of philosophical and practical perspectives. Mr. Gülen, from the lens of Soltes (2013), believes that “education that trains one to function in a proper manner throughout this life also equips one to engage the reality beyond this one” (p. 106). Furthermore, schools “should also be places where the individual earns his/her hereafter and cultivate them morally, physically, and spiritually” (Incetas, May 27, 2011). Thus, the educational philosophy in HM schools display differences when compared to their public school counterparts in the U.S. Unsurprisingly, their educational practices are different from U.S. public schools in that, Turkish immigrants

May succeed as charter school founders because of their unique opportunities in recruiting human capital, because of their success at building and academics-first school culture, and –related to this- because of their ability to work with immigrant families. (Maranto et al., 2014, p. 108)

They further differ from the U.S. public schools because the HM regards “schools as operating best by having high moral standards; by demonstrating achievement through
external checks, such as academic competition; by knowing students as individuals; and by working with parents rather than keeping parents out” (Maranto et al., 2014, p. 108).

Another finding is the concept of *tayin* (assignment) that prevents the educators and their families from setting roots anywhere and take a more proactive stance on language education. Every couple of years a group of elders come together and shuffle the teachers around the globe. They assign them to different cities or countries. This prevents them from looking into language education more closely both as a practice in the schools they teach and as an option for their own children. Also, one of the downsides of *tayin* is that it prevents the educators to develop a sound understanding of the needs of students in terms of language education.

In addition to the *tayin* issue, another finding was, as I name it, the *charter school policy*. Since the interviewees working in charter schools were very cautious to make any statements that might bring up a charter school-Hizmet connection to light, they were unwilling to open up the issue and talk about it. Most of the time it was difficult to understand whether the interviewees were talking about charter schools in general or charter schools with Hizmet Movement educators (or HM charter schools). Education always involves politics and there are multiple stakeholders with different agendas. The caution Hizmet people display in this matter is because “despite Gülen’s development of a more inclusive humanistic look and apolitical stance, both he and the movement’s schools have come under attack in Turkey and abroad for allegedly harbouring secret agendas” (T. M. Johnson et al., 2013, p. 49). Hizmet Movement educators in charter schools are thus trying to avoid an *education* (educational execution). Additionally, recent developments in Turkey confirmed this concern: the Turkish Prime Minister is
actively seeking to close college prep courses because he believes they are largely
operated by the HM. Whereas, according to my recent information, only 22% of those
institutions are run by the HM. The public outrage forced him to postpone such action to
fall 2015.

This cautious manner was present in most of my interviewees regardless of their
responsibilities and positions. The administrators I interviewed worked at different types
of schools: one worked at a private school in Turkey, one at a private school in the U.S.,
and the rest worked at charter schools in the U.S.

In terms of bilingual education, none of them had any programs that qualified as
bilingual education programs. They all held instruction in English and English learning at
the center. Thus, I cannot provide a clear categorization for them here. To me, they would
all qualify as multicultural and/or multilingual schools in terms of student body with
educators offering education in a monolingual setting. Another issue that went
unaddressed is that how many educators were actually certified to be administrators or
teachers in the U.S. When I had first submitted my own overseas credentials for
evaluation in 2003, my transcript had a deficiency in special education. This is a course
that makes the future teachers aware that there are many types of students with different
learning needs. Since this is rarely addressed in Turkish colleges and universities, those
Turkish administrators may not have developed such awareness.

**Findings that answer my research question in the second pathway**

Herein, themes emerge from interviews that were very concentrated around
education from a pedagogical point of view with particular focus on bilingual education.
This perspective is not one found in the written resources that tend to approach the
educational initiatives of the Hizmet sociologically. Yet, the importance the Hizmet Movement gives to education, the dedication of teachers in Hizmet related schools, the selectivity of those schools, and the desire to coexist—be it with or without a hidden agenda as Hendrick (2013) claims, are some overlapping points. Ebaugh (2010) slightly touches bilingualism by highlighting Mr. Gülen’s desire for a multilingual society, while Hendrick adopts a general approach and criticizes the Hizmet Movement serving only the rich and the smart and pushing aside the rest. Yilmaz and Weller also have a general vision about the Hizmet schools and defend the idea that they are places where moral values are interwoven with science. Johnson gives a general feel of the HM’s educational practices while Aslan and Verkuyten focus on media. Last, Samuel portrays the anatomy of a HM school in South Africa. None of those works really address bilingualism and bilingual education in schools specifically. During the course of this research, most of the resources about the HM dealt with what it was, how it operated, and what the HM participants’ overt and covert goals were. None of them specifically approached the needs of second language speakers and the awareness of the administrators on the issue. Thus, this analysis is also unique and provides very valuable information on an area to be addressed within the Hizmet Movement yet. For example Participant #4, while he expressed his education philosophy was that each child in this planet deserves an education that’s going to help him realize his potential, he saw no point in bilingual education. To him, after all, if you live in the U.S., you need to be speaking English.

The abundance of sociological resources and the lack of pedagogical research call for a comparison of the results with the theoretical groundings of sociologists in Chapter II. This might shed light to answer the research question. The Vygotskian perspective on
education includes a focus on a zone of proximal development where the student faces a challenging task she might be able to complete with the slight push of her teacher. Also, the child makes meaning of her environment by using her socio-cultural capital that helps her initiate internal processes for learning. I have looked into how teachers in the Heath (1982) study failed to recognize and utilize these. A similar situation is valid for Hizmet administrators. Research results reveal that most of them, like the teachers in the Heath study, are unaware that non-mainstream minority and second language speaking students have different needs and learn differently than mainstream students. With the exception of one, none of the research participants appeared to realize that bilingual education is an important component in the education of children. This is, however, not because they were ignorant, but because it was a completely new area that they did not know about before.

In the Bakhtinian perspective, a child develops a verbal consciousness through her cultural environment. Children create meanings of those words and situate themselves according to those meanings when interacting with others. In alien territory, that is, different cultural environments, the child uses her meanings and establishes a dialogical discourse with the listener. This is a sort of negotiation process where the child also perceives herself from the lens of the other person. Orellana and Reynolds (2008) look into the para-phrasing practices of bilingual children to help their families outside home. Those students, drawing from their cultural meaning-making experiences, help their parents with their every need outside the home. However, those practices are not valued at school and teachers expect from them a different paraphrasing at school. That eventually, sets them up for failure. Regarding Hizmet administrators, tapping into the
verbal consciousness of the students that they developed in their own cultural environment is an area that most of them are unaware of. Participant #8 believed that educators should be aware of the cultural, demographic, socioeconomic, and linguistic background of the society they live. Whereas Participant #2 emphasized that the preservation of moral and cultural values was important. Those responses were stated as a general approach to the child’s culture and did not make clear how that could be addressed in the bilingual classroom.

The Freirean pedagogy, on the other hand, takes a more controversial route and calls for political action within education. Freire claims that students are regarded as empty biological shells by the system only to be filled by teachers with the system’s ideological beliefs. Freire challenges the system in various ways, one of them being cultural circles. Those circles try to help the students develop a critical consciousness and find their own ways to tackle the system. While it is true that education is not immune to political impacts, the Hizmet administrators do not believe in political action as a counter response. Involving students in political rallies, as one Freirean educator has done by letting her students walk out of the classroom, is not in their agenda. To them, instilling high moral and cultural values to students, preserving their traditions, offering equal education opportunities to everyone, and helping students achieve academically score by far ahead of any other political action.

Regarding bilingual education, Mr. Gülen’s thoughts have revealed that he sees bilingualism as an indispensable part of education. In terms of his ideas on education, research participants agreed in unison that education should equip the child with moral values. In bilingual education, however, Participant #3 suggested bilingual students
should not watch TV and should speak English only. Another participant, Participant #4, did not see any point in bilingual education. Participant #5 acknowledged that Spanish-speaking students needed support and that they had Spanish classes at school. It was not clear if those classes were on content area or second language teaching. In sum, there seems to be some level of awareness on the part of the Hizmet-related administrators toward bilingual education. Yet, the latter HM school administrators need to be informed on Mr. Gülen’s position on bilingual education as well as the urgent attention that their bilingual students need for instruction in their first language.

Another finding is that because some of the participants’ children struggled at school with English, they might be pushing the education of their children in the first language, Turkish in this case, away. That’s because the English learning experience for them as a family has been very unpleasant and bothersome. In addition, they are unaware that bilingual education might make the school experience for their children easier and enjoyable. One parent, Participant #5, was actually aware of this issue, and stated that his children did not speak English until they went to school where they went through “a culture shock, a language shock and they struggle in the first, you know, couple of months.” He added “their experience would have been different if there were some Turkish education in the school, in their language, so they would have felt more comfortable and then that transition would be less stressful on that as a four, five years old.” He gave bilingual education its due.

The findings, in conjunction with the review of related literature, also revealed that the West does not have a coherent and objective view on Islam and is largely misinformed by its ideological standing against the Muslim Orient. Islam is one, however,
the interpretations and applications of it by its followers creates different Islams. In Chapter II, those interpretations were categorized in three groups: radical Islam, moderate Turkish Islam, and secular Islam. Radical Islam, which is also the source of Islamophobia, is reflected (albeit with bias) in the works of populist authors such as Brigitte Gabriel, Ayaan Hirsi Ali, and Nonie Darwish.

In terms of radical Islam at one of the spectrum, Gabriel (2008) describes the members of radical Islam as extremists who impose the rule of Islam by sword or suicide bombings. In her opinion, they are worse than the Nazis because the Nazis had not put their children in harm’s way by planting them with bombs. Radical Islam is a staunch enemy of Europe and the U.S., and is a huge threat to their way of life. She also calls radical Islam a cancerous Islamofacism that originated from The Koran. The terrorist followers of the religion only have one goal in mind: bringing back the caliphate and restoring the rule of sharia. The Taliban, Al-Qaeda, and the Hezbollah are some of those terrorist groups included in this category. Gabriel, however, does not acknowledge the existence of moderate Islam and secular Islam, and labels every practicing Muslim in the world as a radical Islamist (Hoyt, 2008). She also fails to see that radical Islam, rather than being an Islamic movement, has political motives.

At the other end of the spectrum, Chernov-Hwang (2011) uses the term radical Islam and radical Islamists “to refer to groups that utilize violent strategies because they advocate drastic social transformation and are willing to use violence, intimidation, and destruction of property to achieve their end” (p. 8). In particular, the government, to counter-balance the rise of leftist movements has used radical Islamism as a political tool, as in the case of Turkey (p. 34). In sum, radical Islam is not Islamic; it is an illegal
political initiative encouraged and used by states and factions to solve issues that are irrelevant to any truly Islamic matter.

By way of contrast, moderate Islam, as this study claims, is rooted in the Sufi tradition and is represented by Mr. Fethullah Gülen in the Western world. In herkul.org (2013), Mr. Gülen expresses that a true Muslim

When dealing with others, should put the human being to the center of his attention first and make him/her his utmost priority. A true Muslim must not discriminate between his/her race, hometown, belief system, or part of the world where someone’s from: A Muslim should see them as human beings first and treat them as such (para. 9).

He further states, “since Allah shows compassion, then you have to show compassion as well. Since Allah’s mercy surpasses his wrath, then your feelings of anger, rage, violence, spite, and hatred have to be suppressed, crushed, and finally muted under feelings of tenderness” (para. 6). This is in sync with the core teachings of the great Sufi Mawlana Jalaluddin Rumi, someone whom Este’ Lami (2003) writes about: His “spiritual ladder is Love, which constitutes one answer to the unlimited number of questions” (p. 431).

Furthermore, although in describing Rumi as a true Muslim, Lami observes that he “believed in a type of universal faith, belonging to all religions” (p. 432). Thus, Mr. Gülen carries the same Sufi message of Love and stands as a pillar of moderate Islam today.

The third category of Islam, secular Islam takes its roots from the West. In the case of Turkey, secular Islam is a direct import from French laicism. Because of the
broadness of the subject, here I will look into secular Islam in Turkey only. According to Haynes (2010), secularism ideas in Turkey were originally laid down in the 1920s by the founder of the Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (1881-1938). Over the next nine decades, Turkey’s political circumstances have consistently reflected two key aspects of elite preference for secularism, focused in: (1) a strongly secularizing and centralizing state, and (2) political domination by the armed forces. (p. 314)

Since its inception in Turkey almost a century ago, secularism, staunchly guarded by the Turkish military, has rejected the practice of Islam in public and used everything within its power to curb it. This included the headscarf ban at universities and military installations in recent history, and the recitation of the Koran in Turkish starting in 1932 and the call to prayer in Turkish from 1932 until 1950 (Dikici, 2012, pp. 81, 83). Today, disturbed by the political momentum that Islam-leaning parties gained, secular Islamists in Turkey express their frustration over the conservative ruling JDP through protests such as the infamous Gezi Park incident. Those protests were also the “result of the desperation and helplessness the secular people of Turkey felt under the authoritarian rule of the AK Party” (Atay, 2013, pp. 41, 42).

Where does the explication of radical Islam, moderate Islam, and secular Islam leave us in relation to Hizmet Movement’s initiatives in education in the U.S.? Those secular private and charter schools of the HM and their future might depend on which category of Islams dominates the minds of the Western society both inside and outside Turkey. According to Edward Said (1995), “for Europe, Islam was a lasting trauma” (p. 59). Hence, according to Said, it created the Orient. The Orient is everything that the
Western world is not. It is a mirror in which the West defines itself. Among many other things, the Orient is feminine, exotic, weak, poor, mute, and inferior. The relationship between the Occident (West) and the Orient “is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of hegemony” (p. 5). Yet, since Said’s articulation the tables have turned. For example, “Muslims in Northern Europe grew from 0.8% of the population in 1970 to 2.9% in 2010 and are projected to increase to 3.2% in 2020” (T. M. Johnson et al., 2013, p. 49). Moreover, between 1970-2010 “Muslims have grown from 800,000 (0.4%) to 4.1 million (1.3%)” (p.63) in North America. Now, the remote and distant Orient has made a place for itself in the Occident. At this point, the Hizmet initiative can serve as a driving force for the practice of moderate Islam among the growing Muslim populations in the West. Furthermore, since the charter schools cater to predominantly non-Muslim populations, it may also represent itself as an example for moderate Islam. In sum, there has been no other educational initiative both in the 20th and the 21st centuries that generated from the Muslim East and is bound to leave a positive mark on the Western education system such as the Hizmet initiative led by Mr. Gülen.

As a result of the interview data analysis, a number of other issues and crucial points rose as well. An important result of the analysis is that even though the interviewees are concerned about first language loss and tied that to the loss of their ethnic culture, they were not aware of the existence of bilingual education. For example, Participant #6 was concerned about first language preservation only because it served as a medium to protect moral and cultural values. He indicated “language means culture” and in addition to the teaching of grammar and vocabulary, one needed to “simmer into the culture.” He did not make a suggestion on how this could be achieved. This actually
shows a duality and confusion in direction. On one hand, there is a concern on home language preservation, and on the other hand a strong effort to integrate into the host culture. However, there is no clear vision on how this might be achieved.

Another outcome of the study is that, in general, there is a positive approach for bilingual education programs. However, first language preservation among the families usually happens outside the school environment and it happens in three ways: families speak Turkish at home, they send their children to Turkey once a year, and they get together with other brothers and sisters once a year in winter retreat programs ('Kamp' as they call it). Families are not properly informed about the U.S. education system and do not know that they can actually request bilingual education services from the schools their children attend.

For the most part, language education for the in-coming pre-service Hizmet teachers consists of the learning and teaching of or in English. In orientation workshops for pre-service teachers, there are no programs that address the need for bilingual education. Thus, the new teachers go to the receiving countries without much awareness in bilingual education and, even if they realize that need afterwards, the frequent rotation of teachers and educators prevents them from developing a strategy that addresses that need. Furthermore, the two private schools included in this research study had a diverse population that might be preventing them from addressing a specific population in terms of bilingual education.

All interviewees and everyone I networked with to get the interviews at administrative level, including Mr. Fethullah Gülen’s, were male. This showed that a disparity between the number of the male recruits and the female recruits in Hizmet
institutions at administrative level and posed a contrast to what Mr. Gülen thinks about women’s roles in the society. While Ebaugh (2010) outlined some major characteristics of Gülen’s thinking such as multilingualism, respect for women, and intellectual and cultural relations with the West, I found a gap in the male and female ratio in administrative positions. The movement needs to be more proactive in areas such as women’s active participation in activities and multilingual education in schools.

During his lengthy interviews with Mehmet Gundem (2005), he stated that there was no such thing in Islam as limiting women’s role in the society and, if necessary, they could even handle tasks that would be hard even for men. They can become religious clerics, soldiers, doctors etc. Mr. Gülen further stated that women are not second-class citizens and that men and women are part of a whole that complimented each other. In Islam, heaven is under the feet of mothers’ and not fathers’. He wished that all human beings, regardless of gender, should live and work as freely as they want (Gundem, pp. 173-179). In another and more recent interview Mr. Gülen articulates that

The noble position of motherhood aside, our general opinion about women is that, while taking into account their specific needs, it should be made possible for them to take on every role, including the jobs of physician, military officer, judge and president of a country. As a matter of fact, in every aspect of life throughout history Muslim women made contributions to their society. In the golden age (referring to the years during Mohammed's lifetime) starting with Aisha, Hafsa, and Um Salama (the Prophet's wives), had their places among the jurists and they taught men. When these examples are taken into consideration, it would be clearly understood that it is out of the question to restrict the lives of women, narrowing
down their activities. Unfortunately, the isolation of women from social activities in some places today, a practice that stems from the misinterpretation of Islamic sources, has been a subject of a worldwide propaganda campaign against Islam. (Tarabay, 2013)

His thoughts contrasted those of the HM followers’ practices. Also, my observations matched Hendrick’s, who spent time doing research at Akademi (a Hizmet organization that oversees and produces publications on Mr. Gülen’s work). Hendrick (2013) mentions that “of the nearly one hundred employees at Akademi, nearly all were male” [and] “…were authors and senior editors…” So why is this so, one wonders. I believe there is a somewhat logical explanation to this: the cultural diversity in Turkey leads to some cultural biases. One of them is the bias toward sending girls to school in eastern and southeastern Turkey. Then there is the conservative population that would like to send their daughters to school but would like to do so only if the school is all female. First started in 1927, coeducational schools were encouraged by the Turkish state but not mandated. Single-sex education continued to be tolerated by the Turkish Department of Education under the National Education Fundamental Law of 1973 (MEB, 1973). However, that later changed in 1999 and the legal regulations in Turkey mandated coeducational schools to everyone at K-12 level (MEB, 1985; Ozer, 2012). One more time, conservative parents shied away from sending their daughters to school. Those who sent their daughters to school regardless were not able to do so when their children reached college age. Turkey witnessed a post-modern coup on 28 February 1997 as a result of the growing concerns by the military, a staunch protector of the secular regime, regarding the Islamic tendencies of the then current government. The coalition parties in
power thus dissolved and stepped down, and soon after policies regarding the headscarf were tightened (Wiltse, 2008). Wearing the headscarf was banned both in public and private schools, universities, government institutions, and at other bodies supporting the secular regime. This further diminished the number of girls receiving higher education. Again, those who temporarily took off their headscarf to finish school saw that their employment opportunities after school were limited regardless because they would not be able to work with their headscarf at government agencies.

In sum, the political climate and government policies in Turkey widely affected the female Hizmet Movement participants’ education and employment opportunities, which to some extent lowered the number of female personnel working at Hizmet institutions. An important point Hendrick does not see though is that there are many other institutions of the movement such as elementary schools and other schools consisting mostly of girls where male personnel in fact are the minority.

A final point is the new generation interval. Compared with more established movements and schools of thought, Hizmet is a relatively younger concept and so are its followers. Therefore, the new generation of Hizmet teachers has no one to look up to in terms of bilingualism and bilingual education. The older generations never had to leave Turkey for Hizmet and deal with language learning and language loss. The new generation of HM participants doing Hizmet abroad received only second language education and did not graduate from programs that informed them on bilingual education in any way.

In conclusion, this study followed a dual pathway: an emic perspective of the researcher and the Van Kaam Method of Analysis. I believe this dual pathway has
resulted in a stronger study because of a number of reasons: first, the first pathway; that is, the phenomenological analysis combined with my emic perspective, provided a background to what had already occurred in terms of bilingual education within the HM. It also provided a map of Mr. Gülen’s thoughts in education in general and bilingual education in particular as compared to the history of bilingualism, education, and bilingual education in general in the HM. The second pathway, the Van Kaam Method of Analysis with the NVivo software, made it clear about how the present day administrators at Hizmet institutions perceived bilingual education and how those views were compatible/incompatible with Mr. Gülen’s views on the issue. Together, both pathways validated the researcher’s analysis in the discussion section and his suggestions in the implications section of the study. Moreover, approaching and analyzing bilingual education in the HM schools with different pathways increased the reliability of the study.
Chapter VII

Conclusion, Implications, and Recommendations

The following narrative highlights snapshots from my journey while writing this dissertation. First, there is a brief summary and description of the study’s layout. Second, I offer findings that show what I am walking away with from the study. Third, are the implications, by which I mean what kind of inferences I made as a result of the study and what the study has revealed to me as important. I list the implications because they reflect the understandings of an insider and pinpoint to areas that call for action. The recommendations for future research, on the other hand, consist of suggestions I make for the HM and researchers interested in the HM in general, and bilingual education in the HM schools in particular. I provide these as areas of interest for future study.

Summary

A reiteration of the layout of the study follows in conclusion: Altogether, I built the study around seven chapters. In the 1st chapter, I introduced the reader into the case of the HM and provided general information. I also provided some vital information such as why I was conducting this study and why it was such a significant topic. In the 2nd chapter, I went into more detail and looked into the available literature on the HM. This chapter also included the philosophical approach of prominent scholars, including Mr. Gülen’s. There was an overview of the HM history as well. While not an expert in qualitative methods, I informed the reader about my research method, phenomenology in the 3rd chapter. There, I explained my dual pathway and modifications I made in the research method to fit the needs of the study. Chapters 4 and 5 consisted of my analysis of the data I collected in the field. Chapter 4 used an emic perspective while chapter 5
was a more structured phenomenological analysis. Chapter 6 was a discussion of the findings. I broke it down into two major sections: a discussion reflective of the findings in the first pathway and a discussion reflective of the findings in the second pathway. Each pathway looked into my findings on HM schooling and the research question. Before the second pathway, I provided the reader with a comparative analysis of the HM’s potential contributions to bilingual education in order to make better sense of the findings in the second pathway. Chapter 7, which is the last part of the study, included my inferences from the study, the recommendations I made as a result, and conclusion.

Methodologically, I approached this phenomenological study through dual pathways: an emic perspective of the researcher and the Van Kaam Method of Analysis. I believe this dual pathway has resulted in a stronger study because of a number of reasons: first, the first pathway; that is, the phenomenological analysis combined with my emic perspective, provided a background to what had already occurred in terms of bilingual education within the HM. It also provided a map of Mr. Gülen’s thoughts in education in general and bilingual education in particular as compared to the history of bilingualism, education, and bilingual education in general in the HM. The second pathway, the Van Kaam Method of Analysis with the NVivo software, made it clear about how the present day administrators at Hizmet institutions perceived bilingual education and how those views were compatible/incompatible with Mr. Gülen’s views on the issue. Together, both pathways validated the researcher’s analysis in the discussion section and his suggestions in the implications section of the study. Moreover, approaching and analyzing bilingual education in the HM schools with different pathways increased the reliability of the study.
Findings

The Gülenian educational philosophy is currently only a practical philosophy and needs a theoretical grounding to its practical applications. The Hizmet movement is largely considered as a social movement and attracts mostly the attention of sociologists. However, the movement’s priority lies in education and needs to be studied as an educational phenomenon also. This is also necessary because of a need to carry Gülen’s legacy into the future. Currently, there is no clear plan on what will happen when Gülen is gone. The next step is to put Mr. Gülen’s thoughts into practice. Hizmet educators need to take on this job and it needs to be addressed urgently, especially in the U.S. Moreover, the Gülenian philosophy regards education as a lifelong process that produces altruistic human beings equipped with high morals and scientific knowledge. It also looks at language as a means to preserve the home culture. These philosophical understandings are somewhat broad, and in terms of bilingual education, need to be revisited to provide direction in more concentrated areas.

The movement has fought against ignorance and illiteracy and the schools that are set up by the HM participants stand as proof to that through their students’ academic achievement. Many of those schools won medals in national and international science Olympiads. In addition to the dedication, altruistic lifestyle, and representation qualities of the teachers and the administrators, there are additional elements that make those schools successful: Turkish teachers and administrators in the HM schools are recruited among the best and the brightest, the founding boards “include college and university professors” (Maranto et al., 2014, p. 112), the schools offer “more potential for leadership stability” since they “face little meddling from school boards, central offices, and
teachers’ unions” and, as for the teachers, “there is no curriculum specialist micromanaging” (p.113) them. This is not a magic formula found and applied by HM schools only. Similar practices in Finland’s public school system elevated the quality of education radically and helped them make gains in education since the 1970s. The Finnish leaders

Attribute these gains to their intensive investments in teacher education – all teachers receive three years of high quality graduate-level preparation, completely at state expense – plus a major overhaul of the curriculum and assessment system designed to ensure access to a “thinking curriculum” for all students. (Darling-Hammond, 2009, pp. 17-18)

Another similarity lies in the autonomy of the teachers and school administrators. In Finland, education “has shifted from a highly centralized system emphasizing external testing to a more localized system in which highly trained teachers design curriculum around the very lean national standards” (p. 18). And, finally, “the notion of caring for students educationally and personally is a central principal in the schools” (p. 19).

Yet, the HM schooling system attracts criticism. A criticism by Yavuz (2013) is that those schools are focusing on science only and neglecting social studies, arts, humanities, and extra-curricular activities. That might be an area of improvement for the HM schools. A charter school chain with HM educators in the Midwest prided itself with its science, technology, and math focus in its 30+ schools, and dimly noted that subjects such as language arts were taught ‘as well’.

On a larger scale, the movement schools’ emphasis on humanities and social sciences has historically indicated a lack of support to the teaching of social sciences. As
part of my insider knowledge, I was told Mr. Gülen mentioned several times that the new millennium is the age of social sciences. This information is indirectly validated by a personal interaction I had with a university administrator during his visit to the U.S. During the foundation phase of a Hizmet affiliated higher education institution, he told me that, upon looking into the department concentrations at that higher education institution, Mr. Gülen asked him why there was no art department there. As of the 2013-2014 educational year, a department is yet to be established. Moreover, during my years as a teacher in Hizmet affiliated schools, both in and outside Turkey, I have witnessed a void in the area as well. For example, I taught in Uzbekistan between 1994-1997 and in Indonesia between 1997-1999. In both instances, social sciences were left to the management of the local educators and no significant effort was shown to support and strengthen social sciences. Also in Turkey, between 2000-2002 the schools with social sciences emphasis watered down curriculums and students with lower GPAs were placed there. On the contrary, top-notch science, psychics, math, biology, and technology teachers were recruited to teach students in the natural sciences. However, that is not something that the Hizmet schools started in Turkey. The Turkish Department of Education had the same policy for decades and this was probably subconsciously weaved into the minds of the whole Turkish nation. It is not all bad news in terms of social sciences, however. With a strong personal encouragement from Mr. Gülen, Suleyman Sah University, a completely social sciences institution, was established in 2010 and quickly became the most sought after private university in Turkey ("Bir bakista [At a glance]," 2013) (At a glance).
Additionally, be it a private or a charter school in the U.S., there is a huge confusion on those schools’ policies about bilingual education. In fact, there is no policy at all. In bilingual education, Mr. Gülen has already made his point, however, neither the charter schools nor the private HM schools appear to have a clear and concise policy on bilingual education yet. This, in the long run, may arise issues regarding diversity and equal education opportunities in the U.S. charter schools with HM educators. There is a lack of awareness on the teachers’ and administrators’ side. There are no bilingual education programs, ESL classes seem to be offered on need basis and is at the discretion of the administrator. If he/she is aware of a language education need, then the school offers assistance. If not, it does not. Regarding bilingual education, and maybe other education related practices, such random approaches might be because charter schools do not have to abide by or enforce state or federal regulations even though they can use funds from the public schools districts. This is the case for private schools as well (private schools do not use public funds). Nevertheless, the movement and its schools in the U.S. have a moral obligation towards their diverse student body to make it clear what their position on bilingual education is.

With regard to higher education institutions, it appears that there is a shift from opening K-12 schools in the 80s and 90s to opening universities in the new millennium. There is no research or published literature in this area and no one makes a list. A reliable source close to Mr. Gülen told me that whenever an elder/senior visits him, his first questions him on what is happening with the akademisyen hizmeti. All this is my own insider’s intel. Most of them came to me through my attendance of winter retreats, weekly meetings with Hizmet participants, intensive web search, and my personal
connections with those working in those institutions. There was also word of mouth from close friends who have access to such information. Some of the higher education institutions linked to Hizmet are Mevlana University in Konya, Suleyman Sah University in Istanbul, Sifa University and Gediz University in Izmir, Zirve University in Gaziantep, Qafqaz University in Azerbaijan, International University of Sarajevo in Bosnia-Herzegovina, International Turkmen Turk University in Turkmenistan, Suleyman Demirel University in Kazakhstan, Zaman University in Cambodia, Nile University in Nigeria, Epoka University in Albania, and Ishik University in Erbil, Iraq.

**Conclusion**

There are some personal outcomes as a result of the study. I have learned the magnitude of the HM schools and charter schools with HM educators in the U.S. I have also learned about the level of support as well as the animosity that exists in the U.S. against Islam and the HM schools. Moreover, I saw that, when it comes to pedagogical ways that might benefit the student, the HM administrators and educators keep an open mind. They are eager to try methods they were not aware of before. I realized that this study was a learning experience for them as well and might impact them in their future decisions on first language support. However, I also realized that they abide by the rules and regulations, and as long as there are official restrictions and limitations, their hands will be tied. I was delighted to see the non-discriminatory policy the HM has and how the HM educators go above and beyond to provide equal opportunities in education for everyone.

On a societal level, the HM schools may benefit all levels of the society. The public education in the U.S. is secular, but there are many religious private schools
parents send their children to. To some, these options are sufficient while others would like to have more. The HM schools and charter schools with HM educators might be one of those options: They are secular, very successful, do not indoctrinate, yet impose the morals and values almost every religion or humanist approach would want to equip the individual with. Furthermore, most charter schools are established in areas with low-income and minority populations. Bringing up their education level will result in higher economic incomes for them in the future and hopefully help lower the crime rates in those areas.

I, at some point, was also somewhat skeptical about the HM even after a lifetime of experiences with the HM. I asked the same questions everyone did: “What’s behind all this?” “What are their real intentions?” I know that after reading this dissertation, many people will still ask those questions, but I found the answers to mine. This study further exposed me to the true essence of the HM. Behind all this are the Ottoman tolerance, love, multiculturalism, and service to humanity mentality.

**Implications**

In terms of professional outcomes, I see that there is more need for research about pedagogical approaches of the HM educators implement in class, both in bilingual education and other fields. There needs to be a shift from the field of sociology to the field education regarding research on the HM. Thus, this study is an open call for academicians in the field of education to take this research further. The HM educators also need in-depth and in-service training on multiculturalism and bilingualism in education. This is because the teacher education programs lack this aspect in Turkey and the most of the HM teacher population in the U.S. hold their first degrees from Turkey.
There is no data to prove this, but this is a diagnosis that resulted from my unofficial inquiries. I suggest that the HM administrators create a team that will assist the educators in the HM schools on bilingual as well as language education through in-service trainings.

The study also brought out the population that is not in favor of the HM; such as Joshua Hendrick (2013) and Suzy Hansen (2014), who are skeptical and have concerns about the HM, particularly about the HM transparency. Recollecting her visit in 2010 to Mr. Gülen’s compound in Saylorsbug, Pennsylvania, she notes:

The Gulenists I met at the compound were relentlessly charming, friendly and intelligent. They also engaged in self-protective obfuscation, something the sociologist Joshua Hendrick, an assistant professor at Loyola University in Maryland, calls “strategic ambiguity,” which shrouds some of their activities. This lack of transparency, they say, is justified by their past persecution at the hands of the Turkish military. (p. MM34)

This is a curiosity she has carried since her visit in 2010: “So little is known about how the movement is structured, or whether it is structured at all” (Hansen, 2010). They are, in fact, not the only ones. On a recent interview, Mr. Gülen was found to be “surprisingly elusive” and that “the interview did not make his intentions altogether clear” (Franks, 2014). Their views may or may not have validity, however, I suggest that future researchers investigate the transparency matter in more depth.

**Future Research**

I recommend future research in the following areas: a) As the shift in education shifts from No Child Left Behind to the Common Core Standards, it would be interesting to see how the HM institutions and educators in the U.S. modify their instruction to
accommodate the needs of second language learners; b) a comparative study that looks into the curriculums of various HM schools and charter schools with HM educators to see what is being done on first language education of their minority populations; c) a qualitative study using a feminist qualitative approach to diagnose gender inequalities within the HM educators; d) parental perceptions of second language learners in the HM schools regarding education in general and home language learning at those schools in particular; e) As the interest toward opening higher education institutions in the U.S. grows in the HM, an accredited HM college in the Midwest being the first of such interest, future program offers related to language education in those institutions could be another area of potential research.

Last, I intend to pursue more research on the HM in the future. I would like to do classroom observations to get a real sense of instructional methods and interview students to get their perspectives about the education they receive at the private HM schools and charter schools with HM educators. Regarding this dissertation, I intend to publish it as a book as the first of a series that cover the HM from a pedagogical perspective.
Footnote:

The study came to fruition as a result of the discussions I had with my adviser, Dr. Arlette Ingram Willis. I initially got in touch with my connections in the HM, and once I saw that they were also supportive, I started to work on it. In collaboration with my adviser, I determined the method of study, phenomenology. Since the HM is a new and fairly undiscovered movement in the U.S.A., seeing it as a new phenomenon seemed as the best option. I wanted to connect the HM activities to my area of study, bilingual education. Thus, my research question finally shaped like this: “How do administrators and school directors in Hizmet Movement schools offering bilingual education at some degree perceive and apply the Gülenian perspective on bilingual education into the school practice in the U.S.?” After that, in order to conduct the interviews to find answers, I wrote the interview questions. A lot of work happened at the same time: for example, while writing the literature review, I was conducting the interviews. Taking advantage of digital resources such as online databases, I conducted an expansive literature review. I also benefited from print and audio-video resources. Using those tools, in addition to the literature review, I put together the history of the HM, the life story of Mr. Gülen, the theoretical stances of prominent scholars and how those are applied in practice, the methodology and so on. In the meantime, I worked on my emic perspective and decided to intertwine it with the HM history. At this point, it felt like we grew up together like two brothers. The emic perspective was particularly hard to write because it involved a lot of personal information I was reluctant to share with the ‘world’. During data collection, I physically traveled to a number of Midwestern and Eastern U.S. states as well as to Turkey. It was an enlightening experience to see the familiarity/unfamiliarity of the HM educators with bilingual education. It was also interesting to see how some administrators expressed their reluctance to participate in the study and even requested that I change my style, wording, and interview questions (and still denied interview requests). During data analysis, I also wanted to make use of qualitative data analysis software and ended up using NVivo. In the long run, I see it as an indispensable part of my future research projects. Regarding my method of analysis, phenomenology. I found out that there were many different ways to apply it in a qualitative study. Thus, I ended up using two separate pathways. The first was the emic part and the second was the modified version of the Van Kaam method of analysis. What I found, I shared in the discussion section. There were quite a few findings and some I personally found more important than the others, for example, women’s representation at administrative levels in the HM.
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Appendix A

Interview Questions

In order to address the research questions, I asked the following interview questions during my visits. Not all of them were addressed to all interviewees, but selected accordingly depending on the context, scope, and involvement of the participants in the movement. Interviews with school administrators and leaders lasted between 30-45 minutes.

1. Share with me your philosophical stance toward education in general, and public versus private education specifically.

2. From your perspective, where does Hizmet’s educational institutions rest on this continuum?

3. Several philosophers like Mikhail Bakthin, Paulo Freire, Edward Said, and Lev Vygotsky, among others expressed very different views on education and society, function of schools, and language development of the bilingual child. Their views reflected the needs for educational reform during the times they lived and their ideas were made known to public. Regarding the current times, as well as in the light of educational debates in the near future, what would be an ideal policy for bilingual education?

4. How should different languages be addressed in order to improve the bilingual minority children’s school performance?

5. What approach, in your opinion, is the best approach to bilingual education? Where, that is, in which institution (cultural centers, home, schools) should it be taught?
6. If it is currently taught, how might the bilingual educational practices be improved? Who should the instructors be? What role and place does bilingual education have and should have in the curriculum?

7. There are charter schools in the U.S. that employ educators and staff with a high regard for Hizmet. What kind of mission are those schools fulfilling in the name of bilingual education?

In addition to the aforementioned outcome objectives, these interview questions enabled me to compare instructional, administrative, curricular differences between private schools and charter schools, in bilingual education in particular. School history, programs, teacher demographics, locations of the schools and the reasons they were opened there, instructional materials indicative of school’s program secularity, types of bilingual programs, for example, if they are additive or subtractive, are among data pieces I tried to obtain and to use for analysis in the study.
Appendix B

The Van Kaam Method of Analysis

1. Listing and Preliminary Grouping
List every expression relevant to the experience. (Horizontalization)

2. Reduction and Elimination: To determine the Invariant Constituents:
Test each expression for two requirements:

   a. Does it contain a moment of the experience that is a necessary and sufficient constituent for understanding it?

   b. Is it possible to abstract and label it? If so, it is a horizon of the experience. Expressions not meeting the above requirements are eliminated. Overlapping, repetitive, and vague expressions are also eliminated or presented in more exact descriptive terms. The horizons that remain are the invariant constituents of the experience.

3. Clustering and Thematizing the Invariant Constituents:
Cluster the invariant constituents of the experience that are related into a thematic label. The clustered and labeled constituents are the core themes of the experience.

4. Final Identification of the Invariant Constituents and Themes by Application: Validation
Check the invariant constituents and their accompanying theme against the complete record of the research participant. (1) Are they expressed explicitly in the complete transcription? (2) Are they compatible if not
explicitly expressed? (3) If they are not explicit or compatible, they are not relevant to the co-researcher’s experience and should be deleted.

5. Using the relevant, validated invariant constituents and themes construct for each co-researcher an *Individual Textural Description* of the experience. Include verbatim examples from the transcribed interview.

6. Construct for each co-researcher and *Individual Structural Description* of the experience based on the Individual Textural Description and Imaginative Variation.

7. **Construct for each research participant a Textural-Structural Description** of the meanings and essences of the experience, incorporating the invariant constituents and themes.

*From the Individual Textural-Structural Descriptions, develop Composite Description of the meanings and essences of the experience, representing the group as a whole.*
Appendix C

Translations and/or Transcriptions of Interviewee Responses

Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #1 (Mr. Gülen)

Q1 The human being, contrary to other creatures, comes to this world as a very poor and needy entity that heavily depends on the help of the others in order to grow and learn. In contrast, an animal, as soon as born into this world, adapts itself. Either in two hours, two days, or two months, it learns the rules of nature, its own relevancy to the environment, and develops the skills it needs to survive. While the human being needs twenty years to develop those survival skills and the various abilities that he needs in order to perform a task, an insect or an animal such as a bee or a sparrow masters it in twenty days, in other words, those skills are revealed to them. Consequently, the animal is not tasked with perfecting itself through education. It is neither tasked with improving itself by mastering a profession. Nor is it tasked with showing its shortcomings, asking for help, and praying. It is exclusively tasked with acting by instinct and exercises its servitude.

The human being enters the world as a needy creature and totally illiterate and unaware of the laws of life. He is so needy that it takes 20 years to learn the living conditions, mayhap till the end of life. He is sent to the world destitute of skills; he hardly learns to walk in 1-2 years, he learns how to take care of himself in 15 years, and can only maintain its well-being and avoid damages with the help of modern life.

Thus, the human being, who is born into this temporary guesthouse with a pure nature, has to prove that he deserves to reside in the kingdom of heaven. For that, he must find direction and clarity in thought, in introspection, and in faith; and by fulfilling his
servitude, he must progress his heart and soul. Consequently, he must embrace the
kingdom of God full of unrevealed secrets in order to understand the secret of existence.

The only means that will lead the human being into divine wisdom and have him
serve the common good is education that starts in the family and continues in the society.
The child; as a child, may not be able to grasp that the deep meanings that leave a mark in
his conscience will, in time, reach even deeper and branch out to other dimensions.
Nevertheless, this kind of subliminal acquisition is very important in that those small
conceptions will blossom when the time comes and define his character.

However, unless the colors, voices, and utterances we feel during childhood and
adolescence are carefully protected, they will vanish into thin air just to be replaced by
other things. The child indifferently glances at the beauties and the goodness that form
the essence of divine truth. Those beauties should be reworked into the child’s mind the
same way one would go over a dim writing. Otherwise, they will disappear and won’t
lead to the fruitful results much hoped for. Yes, unless those feelings, emotions, and
thoughts are fed through schooling, consolidated in adolescence, and preserved and
protected in one’s conscience in adulthood, they will cease to exist even before getting a
chance to emerge.

The first and foremost responsibility of a school is to preserve and nurture the
seeds of goodness dispersed throughout the spiritual and mental fields of the child’s
world while weeding out the bad ones. Thus, the good and the beautiful flourishing in the
child’s subconscious do not get spoiled, nor do seeds of evil grow and inhabit. And thus,
the child shall become the builder and representative of feelings coming to him/her in
veiled memories and, by making sense of the colors and shapes evolving within and
putting together the traces and shadows of the feelings and thoughts he/she indifferently gazed at and was not able to enjoy to the same degree once, he/she will eventually weave his/her own honeycomb of life just like bees hopping on and off the flowers to get honey essence.

It can be said that however perfect the first impressions, observations, and allusions of the child in this alley might be, teachers are the ones who will improve the components of the child’s soul and give him/her quality education. It is because of these soul engineers that the child finds his/her own self, aligns his/her thoughts, merges with the culture of his/her ancestors, and sets sail to divine ideals.

The school is the only institution where children are trained to think and work methodologically not only in scientific fields, but also in religious life, national matters and world issues. It is also a place that grooms and flourishes the good and beautiful seeds that first blossomed within the family. Methodological thought and methodological work are crucial fundamentals in science and divine wisdom. Divine wisdom, which means that the mind becomes perceptive to inspiration and is utilized forthright, also proves to be the most venerable and paramount support for religion, morality, and art.

Thus, idealized within this framework, the utmost goal of the school must be to equip them with the highest qualifications, and by doing so to create individuals bound by virtues.

When we look at the issue from such a perspective, the comparison of public and state schools seems superficial. The quality of education may change depending on the country and place. What counts most is to provide quality education, train educators who
will provide quality education, and use the resources at a maximum in order to provide the most affordable education to the most number of people.

When the school, environment and the media act together on this shoulder-to-shoulder, then we will have positive and sound results. If one or two of those remain outside this chain, generations will be lost in the midst of an unholy atmosphere created by controversies and differences where conflicts and rivalries abound. It is absolutely imperative that the school be perfect, the family capable, and the environment and neighborhood clean; publications and broadcasts that appeal to the eyes and the ears be supportive of the public conscious and fundamental human values; and, additionally, with control of government when necessary, there be an affirmative and target and direction.

An educational system without a goal and a direction will only confuse new generations, and, when not given enough consideration and thought on what to teach and what methods to follow for their moral education, the same system will turn those generations into nothing more than bellboys of knowledge.

Each individual making up the nation more or less influences others or gets influenced by them. Accordingly, traditions and customs, and someone’s inner-outer circle take up an important place in education. Those dealing with the education of new generations, under whatever title that might be, must not even for a split second forget the magnitude and scale of the responsibility they have. We seek all the different ways to guarantee a future for our children, make use of every opportunity, face all hardships to provide them for, and endure all difficulties to give them a heavenly world. Wouldn’t all that go into waste if we fail to embed them with their real capital, high morals and divine wisdom; and fail to give them stability with consciousness and culture?
Yes, the best capital is the capital of culture, morality and divine wisdom, and robust willpower flourishing in the bosom of education. Nations that possess such capital own a weapon that can conquer worlds and a secret key that can unlock world’s most valuable treasures. On the other hand, those masses unable to lift themselves up to this morality and mentality will get knocked-out and eliminated in the first rounds of their life struggle in the future.

If we manage to equip the minds of young generations with the modern sciences of their times and their hearts with heavenly breezes, and also have them look into the future with lessons from the past like lantern to guide them, believe me, the sacrifices we made to achieve this won’t go in vain. On the contrary, we will harvest results in manifold. I can furthermore say that every single penny spent to raise our new generations will turn into a revenue in those dedicated hearts and well-disciplined souls, and will return to us people as a never-ending treasure.

Q2 A reporter from the New York Times had asked a similar question recently. With your permission, I would rather not call them “Gülen schools,” but instead call them private schools founded by non-profit voluntary organizations and follow the state mandated curriculums while delivering instruction.

I can say that behind our endeavors in the field of education lies a desire for a peaceful and harmonious world. For years and years, be it in mosques, conference halls, or in my writings, I have stressed the need for a class that is full of love for the living, has great respect to human beings, and is open to live together with others. I encouraged those who found value in what I said to establish educational institutions. I told them that
the road to world peace and reconciliation was through the education of new generations that read, contemplated, loved human beings and offered their experiences to their service.

One of the factors that impacted me and made me come to such understanding was this: some years ago while reading Bertrand Russel’s “My World View,” I stumbled upon a sentence: In response to the question, “If there was a third world war, how would it end?” Russell was saying this: “The deceased will be buried, and the murderer put into jail.” This is quite an old comment. However, when we look at the complicated hydrogen bombs and atom bombs today as well as the possibility of different nations capable of using those against each other, we can openly see what he had meant back then. Sadly, it is not possible to take those weapons away from people and destroy them; organizations such as the United Nations can’t control that. Consequently, I pondered, “Can we avoid undesired consequences by awakening people into virtues like dialogue, mutual respect, respect for the position of others, and also by coming together around universal values?” and felt an inclination toward educational initiatives. I expressed this feeling both in writing and in my sermons; I tried to channel the public into education. Those who this made a lot of sense to and believed in the importance of such an initiative founded schools in different places; at the moment they still carry on this mission with the same belief, love and enthusiasm.

As for the madrasahs and secular schools: toward the end of their lifespan the madrasahs, in other words a Sufi and mystic lifestyle, shut their doors tight to the positive sciences just as they did to the true Islamic spirit. Eventually, everything except religious teachings was ripped off the madrasahs. They did not take into consideration that not only the Koran, but also ayat-i tekviniye (all creation that shows the existence and
Oneness of Allah had to be mastered and used as a structural basis for physics, chemistry, mathematics, and astrophysics. Before myself, scholars like Muallim Cevdet had questioned the deficiencies of the madrasahs. The madrasahs were not able to stand up to the challenge of scientific and technological thoughts and improvements; however, on the other hand, the modern schools could not save themselves from the biases and prejudices of the modernist ideology, either. They couldn’t make use of the madrasah experience and knowledge; they followed modernism and neglected the human soul, his/her philosophical and emotional depth, lucidity of thought, spiritual inclinations, and cultural wealth; and they turned into mass production facilities for a global economy.

Were the “Gulen Schools”, namely the peoples’ schools, able to fill in this void? This is a point of argument. However, in such issues one needs to look at the intent. At the onset of this initiative if the intent was cultivation of the soul and the logic, the marriage of the brain and the heart, and the illumination of the mind and with the light of the heart, then one needs to substitute pure intent with success. That’s because in our faith, Allah will reward human beings based on their intent, and treat them as such.

Q3 In a way, we have four thousand years of history as well as a glorious history of one thousand years. We have developed many skills, for example, we have a very sound understanding of aesthetics. It is a duty both for our people and us to display these beauties and open exhibits. Those exhibits today are our educational institutions, schools.

At the end of the day both friends and adversaries appreciate this volunteer movement. This movement is welcomed and appreciated all over the world. However, it does not have a head or a chain of command; it is not organized, neither does it have any
recruits. You just talk to people, it makes sense to them, and then they light a torch wherever they themselves are. People say, “We are the offspring of a glorious nation. At one point in history we have coached the world. Why should we confine ourselves into a narrow space and hide in our shell? Why shouldn’t we let the world know about us and teach our language? Why shouldn’t that beautiful language of ours become the lingua franca? Why shouldn’t the foreign emissaries in our country speak Turkish?” That’s what they say and act on it. The Turkish nation has always strived to express him/herself from a different perspective; a perspective and visionary performance only parallel to a nation’s fight for independence.

So you saw on TV yesterday; the Afghan ambassador to Turkey was speaking Turkish and was highly praising the Turkish schools in his country. It was also recently on the news that the president of a country called our prime minister and secretary of the state and said, “There are entrepreneurs from Turkey here opening schools; those are our future; please open one or two more here and there.”

In sum, the success of Hizmet schools in a world and time where people are extremely polarized; where skin color, ethnicity, and gender inequalities abound, is a result of a work done for the common good and happiness of all human beings. That’s why they are very welcomed and accepted in more than 140 countries. The success in those schools is humanitarian.

In addition to these highlighted points, the following factors can be mentioned on why those schools are unique and different from other schools:

We see extreme polarizations in a number of currents as well as in philosophical, political, and social ideologies that emerged in the modern times. There are also
pedagogical currents standing at the opposite ends from each other, and cannot save themselves from those philosophical, ideological, and even political polarizations, either. The schools you are asking about may have made it a priority to keep away from such philosophical, ideological, and even political influences, and might have opted for teaching and learning in a common ground without going into the extremes.

Secondly, these schools are welcomed and accepted by people from different geographies, faiths, colors, and ethnicities in every country because they work for the common good of people, prioritize teaching and learning, see that as the most essential part of human existence, and do not intend to use that for any kind of ideological, political, or religious divergence.

Thirdly, no matter what the philosophical arguments about morality, morality determines the basics of the human character. Teachers who work in those schools, hopefully they comply with the moral values at maximum level; may have internalized the universal values and made that second nature to a certain extent. Moreover, those dedicated souls, if they don’t see teaching and learning only as a source of income, but as the most dignifying, the most important way and merit that will earn them Allah’s blessings and grant them eternal life, and even see it as a form of praying, then they will work without worrying about their work hours and salaries. They will become one with teaching and learning and everything within. Of course, that will make a difference.

Q4 No child comes to school without any education. The environment influences the human being from the moment he/she is born. The child comes to school being able to speak and with knowledge on many things. The family influences the child between the
ages 0-6 more than the school later does and a child’s character begins to form in the family.

From this perspective, the goal of education should be to raise spiritually and intellectually developed individuals able to contribute to world peace. This is a crucial point because, as modern pedagogy highlights, lust, anger, greed, and canons of descent affect the individual immensely; for example, even among well-raised young people, albeit less powerfully, those can influence and force them to for down the wrong road. A true human being must not harm anyone and should be a responsible person; he/she has obligations to Allah, his/herself, the society, and the environment. While making use of his/her freedom, the human being may harm him/herself and the others. This is because of his defeat to his nefs (own desires, lusts). That’s why we need education; we need to be cultivated. However, schools in these modern times engage with the mind mostly and are regarded as places to train for a job. One’s cultivation is not a priority. Therefore they get little attention from the students and the society. However, in addition, schools should also be places where the individual earns his/her hereafter and cultivate them morally, physically, and spiritually. Taking these points into consideration while training them for a job will result in well-qualified individuals. Nowadays, while good schools do offer quality education, they may not be able to cultivate the individual fully. Even access to those schools is very limited and removes equal opportunity. This is the result of a mindset that considers education only for training for a job.

On the other hand, we grew up with yesteryears culture; tomorrow’s generations will be the children of the culture of the scholarship we have/will create(d) for them. The
present is an extension of the past, and the future is potentially the depth of the present, there is neither a present without a past nor a present without a future.

The cultural heritage of a nation inherited from the past is of paramount importance for them. Because of the values and morals from their heritage can they think like themselves, act like themselves, and feel the comfort of being themselves; they will live their lives profoundly and with absolute clarity.

When we consider the issue from the language perspective, language is the most important constituent that defines the human being’s vision on how he/she envisions the matter and occurrences. If a nation’s language is not strong enough to guard the nation’s culture and its value system, then the invasion of that nation’s people by other cultures and the loss of their roots in time will be inevitable. They will eventually take on that foreign culture as their own. The human being develops a thought system by reading books, knowledge he/she puts in his mind, and the lexicon he/she possesses. Those familiar with a foreign language, unless they know their mother tongue very well, will ultimately drift into the thoughts of that foreign culture that come from its print or audio-visual means; they will hear like them, think like them, and understand like them. In time, this will cause an inferiority complex and cultural conflicts within the individuals, and will blur their identity. Therefore, one of the imperatives for the individuals to sustain their roots and protect themselves is to properly learn, protect, and use their mother tongue.

Yes, it is very important that children who grow up in a multicultural environment with two languages respect themselves. That is because individuals who respect their own roots and values, and consciously develop their own cultural identity will equally
respect the culture of the society they live in and values of other people, and thus, they will live in harmony. Children need to know their mother tongue excellently and possess a language for education very well also so that they can live in peace with their own values, acquire a positively strong personality in the society, can make smooth transitions between cultures without pressure, and lead a serene lifestyle by saving themselves from potential adversities.

Children with a solid first language will learn a second language very well; a child’s proficiency in his/her mother tongue will help improve his language of instruction. Children possessing a rich lexicon in the mother tongue will be able to express themselves more easily, will also be able to define words and concepts in the second language more easily, and will learn the language of instruction without difficulty. However, a word of caution is that efforts made only within the family and support provided by the mother and the father is not enough for a child receiving bilingual education to read and write. The society needs to be sensitive and supportive in different ways also; for example, it needs to develop bilingual education programs for early childhood education.

Additionally, curriculum design should primarily include rhetoric and discourse, ability to elaborate purpose, and ways for self-expression in speech. It is a very sad situation and a destruction of the language when students with 11-12 years of education use words like, “uh, I mean, thing is, er” to fill in the blanks. Teaching composition in remedial classes is not sufficient; students need to take improvisational speech classes. Each student has to be able to present an assignment to his teacher and to the class; then take turns to express his/her opinions on another issue; some other time speak to the
public to gain confidence and aptitude; and eventually, upon graduation, he/she should be able to take the stand and address anyone with ease.

**Q5.** A solid cultural foundation and mind is only possible with proficiency in a language, especially in one’s own language. As I pointed out before, if a child develops robustly in terms of culture, namely, if that child learns his/her knows, accepts, and owns his/her core values, in other words—as pedagogy experts would put—possesses a cultural identity, he/she won’t have difficulty in adapting him/herself to a different culture. On one hand, if that child has not sufficiently learned and accepted his/her core values and formed a cultural identity, then he/she will lose self-confidence, fear assimilation and change, and distance him/herself from the culture he/she lives in. On the other hand, if the child is not familiar with the language of the others, and, especially does not speak the language of the dominant culture, then he/she won’t be able to communicate his/her needs, and will feel like others are alienating him/her. Moreover he/she will remain an outsider, cannot establish good and profound friendships and end up being alone. It is imperative that children learn the language of instruction in addition to their native language so that they will form a strong personality, their identity will flourish and mold into core values that we call cultural identity, then make positively smooth transitions between different cultures and won’t drift away from their own culture nor face psychological issues.

When we look at Turkey, we can say that instruction in a second language and the teaching of a foreign language have not been very successful. That’s because instruction in a second language is not as natural as it would be in the first language; it needs a lot of support and use of other means. Unfortunately, this issue has not been resolved in Turkey.
As far as I observe, children living abroad cannot learn their first language well enough and do not get sufficient attention from families, schools, and the social environment. Parents and educators need to address this issue with utmost attention and find a method to help children learn their native language as well as the language of the country they live in.

Q6. Even though there are thousands of different languages in the world, the process of learning a language is the same among all human beings; the process is universal. The first teacher of the child is the mother, he/she engages with the sounds and symbols of the language his/her mother speaks the very first time. Children have the skill to learn language at birth; however the environment, family, parents’ educational attainment, number of brothers and sisters, and visits and length of stays from extended family members such as grandmothers, grandfathers, and aunts impact language learning greatly. The positive interaction between the child and his/her environment accelerates and enriches his/her language.

In that regard, parents shoulder some responsibilities. The second Khalifa of Islam Hazreti Omar, for example, had pointed out to the value of teaching poetry to children because it fills the heart with love and compassion, and helps them communicate in their language with ease. Also, our heavenly mother Hazreti Aishe, who was reported to have known thousands of verses by heart and spoke beautifully, recommended, “Teach poetry to your children; it sweetens the language.”

Thus, parents who want to teach their mother tongue to their children well need to use it exquisitely and ideally in order to set the example to their children. For example, it
is unnatural to use words from both languages in one sentence. Researchers say that using Turkish and English in the same sentence with pre-school and elementary school children would harm their mother tongue and education. Parents should talk with their children on each and every subject, choose words carefully, and strive for embedding them into the child’s mind, and by repeatedly using the same sentence patterns to naturally teach the grammar of the language.

Especially families that live abroad need to exercise more caution on this. They should read appropriate, interesting, and nicely written books; recite poems and proverbs they would love; and let them watch TV shows that help protect the purity of the language such as Sırlar Dünyası, Büyük Buluşma ve Şubat Soğuğu on Samanyolu TV. On top of these, parents should send their children to their motherland during summer breaks, and have them stay in a decent environment to listen and mingle with people who use the language neatly. At least this would help them familiarize with their language.

Q7. Firstly, I would like to stress that I am extremely uncomfortable with the phrase “Gulen movement.” When people refer to ‘movement’ these days, they refer to a social and mostly to a political trend. You cannot attribute such trends to a poor person like myself. However, if we really, really have to give a name to those activities in order to describe them, and, then we can speak of a ‘movement.’ Nevertheless, giving my name to it and calling this movement a “Fethullah Gulen Movement” would be wrong as well as a great injustice to a lot of people. That’s because this poor guy has a very limited contribution to it; there is no leadership, headquarter, and neither any affiliation to a command center, or an organization.
At some point in time, you suggest the public to follow some ways; call them to fight against illiteracy, poverty, and secession; encourage them into starting educational initiatives, helping the needy, and aiding victims of disasters wherever in the world that might be. Probably, people with the same mindset value those ideas and consequently there you have a volunteer movement. When those succeed, people in other places in search of such initiatives start doing things in the same line. As a result, you have a service, a form of “market of consent,” which solely depends on the voluntary contribution of people with no center, organized structure, by-laws, officiality, and neither needs one. Naturally, some people with high respect to you ask for your advice or you express your ideas either orally or in writing through the means of communication of our times. People, who feel the need to benefit the humankind in their nature, internalize those ideas and come together with others around rationality. Maybe the humane and rational ideas influence those people.

Therefore, attributing all that service to just one person is injustice and blasphemy in our faith. I do not really know how many people are involved in the movement, let alone those who direct many important institutions in different places. I don’t know how many countries the service has reached, or how many teachers and students there are. I have been away from Turkey for the past 11-12 years; I can hear the services through the media only. In that regard, even though some call it the “Gulen movement,” I call it, at times, the “Service,” Movement of Volunteers,” and other times “souls dedicated to humankind,” or a “Movement in its Own Right.” It can also be called, albeit a little long in definition, a “movement of the people who come together around high human values.”
The movement, perhaps, has a smiling face as well; welcoming everyone with a smile, open the hearts to everyone; turn the other cheek and not hold any grudge to those who break hearts. These maybe more of the qualities of the movement but they are not small enough to be attributed to just one person. That is a case of a nation professing its character one more time. If we tie all this in with the aforementioned thoughts; this is a movement that would get the consent of people all the way from elite classes to the most illiterate individuals for the sake of controlling the diplomatic conflicts in the world, preventing turmoil, standing against radical positions and behavior, triggering humanly emotions and unearth them, and creating “peace islands” where everyone can live like a human.

The starting point of this lies in the respect for other thoughts, respect for everyone, and coming to an agreement with them through dialogue. The end point is to respect different positions, and, whoever it is, whatever faith or philosophical belief they might have, is to show respect to the individual. Nevertheless, real respect in our religion is the respect to the individual since he/she is a part of Allah’s creation. Yes, because humans are Allah’s art and creation we respect the person no matter who he/she is. Hazreti Mevlana, with this faith, had called upon 72 nations and said, “Come, come, whoever you are come again!” Perhaps our age is a little different; we might do it like this: If you would like to come, please do, our hearts are wide open for you; but wait, don’t bother, let us come to you instead. If you will allow us, we would like to come to your country, to your home, just listen to us once; we will listen to you too; you might have beautiful things we might like, you might want some of the beautiful things we have
as well; let’s get together around a new union on humanistic thought and come up with a new synthesis.

Yes, I only see myself as part of this movement. There might be educators both in private and public schools in the United States who read my books and listen to my sermons on humanism, peace, mutual love and tolerance, co-existence with other cultures, and revitalization of humanistic values. I follow those in press just like everyone else does.

I do not have any idea about the number of those educators. I also do not know the academic excellence of the schools they work at. However, if those schools benefit humanity, and contribute to the love, peace and harmony in the society, then I applaud this. Actually, be it in the field of education or not, I applaud all endeavors that add up to the common values of humanity. I do not discriminate any ethnicity and or religion. This is an essential requirement for being human.
**Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #2**

**Q1** Thank you very much for doing this interview with us. I have been working as an educator in many different places for the past 25 years and I can say that a society needs educated individuals most. While we strive to offer quality education such as in science and math, we also try to preserve the students’ own values, cultures, and thus, educate them properly. I mean this is, as a school, our utmost goal. I mean our goal is offer them an exemplary education in science and also make sure that, as they grow up, they keep and protect their own culture and are open for dialogue with others. This is our goal. I hope we will succeed in this mission.

**Q2** As I explained in the beginning, our goal here is to grow exemplary human beings. To train and educate our students in science and have them respect universal values. Our school is an international school and we have students from all over the world that come from different cultures and belief systems. They have different skin colors and different religions. Yet they attend the same school, receive the same education, share the same dorm rooms, and become friends for life. When you look at all this and witness the interaction, you can see the application of my philosophy I told you about in the beginning. When you enter a room or a classroom, you can see those students with different skin colors, religions, and cultures. They respect each other in this educational environment. Actually, not just in this school, I have been an educator for the past 25 years; I worked in Central Asia, the Balkans, and now I am here in the U.S. When put all those together, I can say that we succeeded with this philosophy in all those different places. Students, regardless of their backgrounds, beliefs and skin colors, respectfully
share this educational environment with each other. I can say that this school is very successful doing that. For example, on Fridays the Moslem students, students from Turkey can freely conduct their Friday prayers and the others highly respect that.

Or, a student from a different denomination can freely express his thoughts without any reservations because people respect that. No one takes that as odd. Teachers educate this diverse body of students in classrooms.

**Q3** I do respect different perspectives and, also drawing from my own years of professional experience years in education, I can attest to the importance of speaking a different language, a foreign language. Since I have lived in many different continents with my family, I can say that we are multilingual. For example, my eldest son can speak five languages. The younger ones can, may be, speak three languages. I can say that this is how we grew up; with multiple languages. I mean the world is not as it used to be; it is a smaller place. People do not stay where they are; they travel. There are intercontinental travels from Asia to Europe and all over the world. Now we are in the United States and may different people live together here. There is multiculturalism. And of course language is probably the best mean to understand the culture. If you know the language, speak the language, then you understand the culture it belongs to. Thus, I mean, thus, we, as the Putnam Science academy, we have international students from all over the world; China, Africa, Central Asia… and they all speak different languages. Of course we teach them English because it is the medium of instruction. That is the case in the world as well. The language of science, globally, is English. They must learn English first. On top of
that we teach French and Spanish in our school. We are aware that Spanish is very important in the U.S. However, since we encompass a student body mostly coming from Europe, we also teach French because of its importance. As a result, when our students graduate from this school, they graduate as multi-linguals speaking at least three languages. Language education is crucial. However, when we speak of the medium of instruction, we mean English of course… because English is the language of science. Therefore we make sure students learn English perfectly. We also teach other languages in addition to that.

**Q4** Actually this also relates to the previous question. We have this saying in Turkish, “one language one person, two languages two people.” Therefore speaking as many languages as possible is critical because of the fact that many different societies live together, that they are close to each other, and that people travel all over the world. Therefore foreign language education is very important. A student must speak two languages at least. More is even better. Now, a student from China can speak Chinese as well as English here. He/she learns Spanish or French as a third language on top of that. The more languages you speak, the better. I can say that we are a multilingual school. We have students from Mongolia. They speak their own language. Then the Chinese have theirs. African students have their own languages also. We have students from Europe and Germany. This is a multilingual school, but we choose some core languages and we teach them here. However, as I had pointed out, the medium of instruction is English. But we also support the use of other languages.
*How is that? Can you elaborate?*

For example, now, we talked about Spanish. It’s a very important language in the U.S. a good portion of the population speaks Spanish. In order to reach that population and show them our potential, we also teach Spanish in our school. Similarly, those coming from Europe feel closer to French. I mean Europe… since France is in Europe, those coming from that region choose French. Accordingly, in order to address their needs, we teach French as a second language. However, that’s not in the sense of a second language as the medium of instruction. I gave it as an example only as a foreign language. English is the language of instruction and we enforce this 100%. Other than that, we have Turkish, in addition to French and Spanish. We have French classes and we have Turkish classes. We teach Turkish. Foremost there are those from Turkey who came to the United States and can’t speak Turkish well because they grew up here. We try to teach them Turkish. That way they grow up as multilingual individuals.

**Q5** It depends on. I mean this can change according to the environment, but to me the best place for education is the school. Students learn from each other just as much they do from the teacher. I mean, the teacher teaches some rules and basics such as the grammar. However, when we look at the majority of the students, we witness that they learn a lot more from each other outside class hours. I mean the best environment for education is schools. Why am I saying that? Because there exists a social life in schools, there are student groups, and they live together. Look, this is a boarding school, which means they spend their entire time here, and consequently learning goes on both in and
outside of school hours. There are striking examples; say, you pair the student with a teacher and he teaches for days, but nothing happens. Then you throw that student inside a group and all of a sudden, three months later he/she starts learning the language. Why is that? Because there is peer effect, he/she hears and learns through communication with them. Thus he/she learns. I mean schools are very ideal places to learn a language. Aren’t there other places? Of course there are; language centers and others places for example. I think that language centers are good for teaching some basics, but as you might know, those who go there are complete novices in language. Namely, they are from different countries and cannot talk with each other. Then they have a slim chance to improve the language through communicating with each other because none of them are proficient yet. They will learn later. They go to the language center to learn the language. However, we have an already proficient group here in the school. And what happens when there is a newcomer? He/she communicates with others and learns the language fast. Did I make myself clear?

Q6 As I had previously mentioned, there are many varied cultures in the U.S. A lot of different cultures. Same here. Our school is the same way. When I think of the school sometimes I call it small America. Because there are many different cultures in the U.S. migrated from different countries. Likewise, there are students in this school from many different countries. They live here altogether. I mean methodology in language education is very important for sure. Many different and useful language teaching methodologies. But, the teacher’s role is limited. I am not saying the teacher does everything. The teacher has a limited role; he/she can influence the student to a limited extent. Maybe they can
influence students on guiding them to the right direction, however language education depends more on the environment of the student and his/her motivation to learn it. As you know, language learning entails word memorization and vocabulary learning. The student has to hear a lot, use a lot, and want to learn a lot… and needs patience. And all those need to be there at the same time. I can’t say that with only one of those it would be possible. The teachers will lead, ideal environmental conditions will be set, and student will want to learn and that way it will happen.

Q7 Now, this school is of course a private school. However, I also had the opportunity to work at a charter school for a couple of years. I would say that I had teaching experience, but when I came to the U.S. I ran into a totally different environment. I could say that I was able to understand the education system here through my experience at charter schools. Likewise, there are public schools here and every now and then I go there and have a look; I see the environment and get a chance to compare. Of course charter schools address a certain population. With that I mean charter schools established in areas falling behind education with permission from the states they are in. As if they targeted a certain community or a group… while open to all, they are established in areas where education conditions are difficult. I mean, when you look at the demographics, there are different kinds of students. What can we say? I can say that those are the students that come from low-income families living in the cities. In those charter schools there is an effort to increase the achievement rate of students through individualized education programs in smaller classrooms and with more teachers per student. I would say they achieve a good mission. I say this because if you put those children into public schools,
they would probably go unnoticed and slip through the cracks. But charter schools address each child’s needs, teachers there are caring and they try to educate the students the best way they can. Thus, they get great results. While I used to work at a charter school, I also had the opportunity to meet the families. I went to their homes. Their living environments are not ideal and do not support the school life. Accordingly, they need more attention and help. Teachers in charter schools will need to make more effort and spend more time on those students. While in a regular public school parents follow and monitor the success of their children, parents of charter school students do not have the means to support their children’s education outside school times. Accordingly, I see those charter schools as assets that support this particular population and doing a great job at it as well. I also see a good future ahead of them. Right now they are filling a great void. They should be supported and they should increase in number.

**Is there anything else you would like to add?**

Here is what I would like to say. We are truly dedicated to provide quality education to students here. We strive to provide the best education to our students here with a different model, a model that we claim ownership. And we tell them that… I worked in Central Asia, the Balkans, and now I am in the U.S. Our first goal is to educate them in science and math the best way we can of course. However, while teaching them science and math I used to say… I mean while in Central Asia I used to say, “your job is to serve Kyrgyzstan when you graduate.” In Albania I would say, “your job is to serve Albania when you graduate.” I would also tell my students that “you will receive a good
education here, but your job is to never ever forget who you are and where you come from. Protect and cherish your own country and culture and serve your country in that light.” Inshaallah we are trying to uphold to this mission the best way we can. Inshaallah we will succeed.

*Thank you very much.* Inshaallah I was able to respond to your questions satisfactorily.

It was great, thank you very much.
Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #3

Q1 My education philosophy is each and every child is unique and as long as you provide a caring and rigorous atmosphere for those kids, they can… each and every child can learn. So public and private difference I can say is, in private schools, or in private education atmosphere, we provide more individual attention. So we can see each and every school strength and the weaknesses so we can work on those, you know, weaknesses and strengths by providing individualized learning plans. So we are trying to accomplish the uniqueness of each and every child so we can progress, you know, after their desired level actually. So this is my philosophy.

Q2 Based on every child is unique and every child is an human being and they have a great potential for the future. By educating those kids actually kind of you know we are working for our future as well, because we will be getting old, they will be getting adults. In the future they will be who are taking care of us. So for a safer future we have to educate them. Plus each and every individual is a human being and we try to help each and every individual as long as they are human beings. And we love each and every creature because of the creator. So we are trying to help each and every individual in that perspective. So if we apply this philosophy to education we cannot neglect any child regardless if it is even public... Even if I worked for a public school, I could not neglect any individual that because I know that each and every individual is worth teaching them... is worth sharing what I have. And other than that if I have, in Hizmet philosophy, if something I have to share it with the others. It is not just given to me because it is from God. If it is knowledge, I have to share it with other people. If it is wealth, I have to share
it with the other people who are in need. And if I have a piece of bread, I have to share it with someone who is in need. So if you apply this education or a school place, I have to share whatever I have with the kids, with the teachers, with the students, with the parents as well. So this philosophy makes us to work more, it makes us to work enthusiastically, to work each and every individual one by one so to see their weaknesses and try to fulfill, you know, this gift. So this is...

**Q3** So when I say bilingual education like students who need, you know, who are ESL students if I am not mistaken. Or what you mean by bilingual education is like here teaching here in Turkish or Spanish and English... Is this what you mean or like bilingual kids?

*Bilingual education has many forms. It’s… when you speak of bilingual education all I refer in my research is teaching students content area classes in their first language.*

and?

*and giving them support... So instruction, part of the instruction is in Turkish or Spanish, whatever the first language of the student is.*

Okay. So we do not experience that kind of bilingual education in our school, but what I can say from my experience is… its kind of helping for those kids to help get fluent in both of the languages. But as far as I know in some major, you know, subjects like math, like science. It’s kind of confusing them, you know, when it comes to some, you know,
specific topics. The concepts are not being understood well through these bilingual education. But, now I cannot say that this is applying for each and every child, but from this our school setting we have… we are teaching Turkish, you know, plus we are teaching Spanish. For younger kids, it’s been very easy for them to catch these two languages because they are still young. What I have realized after the fourth grade and maybe after the fifth grade, it's been a little bit challenging for us to motivate them to learn a second language. It’s been a challenge for us. In younger grades we have not observed those kinds of challenges. It’s maybe because the way of the teacher is teaching to them, or the how rigorous actually that curriculum is… because, you know, it's kind of light for the younger kids. It may be that. And actually, from those philosophers’ point of view as far as I understood that they are, their concern is like the bilingual education is not that much productive as far as, you know, I know. And what would be the ideal policy we are asking here I think I can say that again, individual attention maybe may help, and, what we are working here is the individualized learning plans cause in those plans that we are working with the workbooks, special workbooks, specific workbooks that they can work, they can take home, and we are having meetings with the parents, and parents sign and the teachers sign so they kind of agree on a kind of intervention to work, you know, to make it work, and our dean of students, dean of academics, they are signing that contract as well, to see actually how that child progress. And, in… its… it should not be different than any other education, you know, the education, you know, whether it is bilingual or, you know, just, you know… same thing apply, you know, I would say the same thing for that.
Q4 How should different languages be addressed in order to for the bilingual minority children’s… Okay, so we last year we got a few students from abroad and they were ESL students. When we spoke with their parents, the first thing that we mention is they should not be watching any TV channel, which is like in their language. So they should be teaching, learning. They should be watching cartoons or movies in English… so this was the first thing that it really helped them to, you know, to get accustomed with the new environment here. And the second thing is whenever they come, we assign a teacher to them; a kind of mentor teacher. How they can improve their English, like what books they should read, what, you know, the music they should listen, what channels they should watch, and what activities they should participate other than the school activities, other than the, you know, school curriculum so that mentor mentoring by a teacher, not other than the ESL teacher, mentoring by a teacher did really help to those kids because they were minority and then they were kind of feeling a little bit awkward here. So when they come because they can speak the language very efficiently. So in order to explain, in order to express their feelings, we found that these mentor teachers are a great, actually opportunity for them, they were. It helped a lot, and… but I cannot say that this is 100% efficient. It depends on the character of the mentor teacher, and it depends on the child as well. Last year we got, a child, a student from South Korea and she was very shy at the beginning because she could not speak. And at the end of the year, we realized that she learned the language and she outgoing now. After eight months… you know, it took eight months for us to talk to her actually because of that. But, you know, before they get in the classes, we used to talk with our own students, the former students, each and every one saying that, and “okay, a new child is coming to class. We know that you are all
welcoming kids, we want you to help her because she doesn't English well. Do not tease her because she can’t say, you know, the words right. So sometimes her pronunciation is gonna be funny for you, but you will not laugh because it's kind of discouraging,” so before she gets into the class we were... all teachers were making these kind of, you know, warnings or suggestions to the kids. And since we are a small school each and every child knows each other very well. So she… she felt comfortable here, you know. If it was like a different school or if a bullying, you know, a bully school was the case, she could maybe, she could be discouraged more through that. So mentor, finding a mentor teacher, and talking to the kids before they start school… because even if they are very clever, even if they are very smart, their emotions are very important in those days, you know, in these ages. So if they are discouraged to the school, they are kind of discouraged from the language as well. They don't want to learn because, you know, they are emotionally like breaking down... So I could say that emotional support would be a bigger strength in this, you know, case.

Q5 I see. I think each and every center, you know, should have all these education, but what I think is… schools should be the main, you know, center, which is organizing all of those stuff. Like, I should be able to talk to the parents, talk to the cultural centers, talk to the, you know, anyone who is around that child because our main purpose is that child to raise that kid with that education or take her or him or her to the desired level by you know whatever it takes... Even if it is necessary to talk to the cultural center, I have to call them and say that; “okay this is the child… he is coming to you so you need to be careful because he or she needs these. Can you please just help us,” and the mentor teacher
should be just calling home; “this is what happened today, please just do this try that etcetera,” because they need extra time from us. This is obvious. Since we are a small school, we could do that actually. It really helped, and, but I can say the most professionals around the child are from the school area, like from the school setting. Teachers, the mentor teachers, the administrators; they should be the main people who are organizing all this bilingual education around the child, so they can crate a you know more rigorous educational environment for the child. Otherwise, you know, I am sure each and every one will try to help that child, but if… because she spends more time in school, you know. And if that system is not, you know, organized through school, it may cause some problems for the child. So I can say that, you know, schools, the main thing is schools, and school will organize home, cultural centers, and the environment so that may help.

Q6 Okay. I think many companies are working, you know, about the curriculums, and the mentor teacher and the administrators should be aware of, you know, improvements, new kind of technology, curriculum, all those CDs, resource books etc. They should be aware of those and, you know, by searching more and by learning more, we can help those kids more. Because the more we learn actually, the better we teach to the kids. And the instructors… what I can say is their character, the instructor’s character, the instructors, you know, background is very important. Instead of having a fluent or Native American, I realized last year that the ESL teacher of our school is actually originally Spanish and she came here maybe when she was seven or eight and she learned English well and she is a teacher; she is a ESL teacher. And because she also struggled as that child and then
she kind of creates, produces a kind of sympathy, or empathy I can say, and she tries to help more to that child. So instructors can be also bilingual teachers; that may help because sometimes the things that what a Native American sees very simple, maybe very difficult for the other kid. So in order to understand, you have to put yourself into his shoes otherwise, you know, that will be a little bit difficult. So it comes to again the motivation, it comes to again the instructor’s personality. Otherwise, if a teacher keeps saying that, “Oh, this is very easy and you cannot even do,” that the child will be discouraged, but if he says or if she says that, “I was also like you when I was seven years old or ten years old, but I worked hard I tried all of these and now look at my English it’s like, fluent I speak well,” and stuff. So in order create that empathy, the instructors should be bilingual teachers as well, I say. And for the last part of the question it says what role and place does bilingual education have and should have in the curriculum. This, you know, bilingual education can create a better understanding of different cultures, I can say, and, so in order to live in harmony and in peace, in the class setting as well, because we are living in America and there are seventeen different backgrounds in my school. So in order to make them live in harmony, each and every child has to get that knowledge of respecting other cultures, others’ cultures. So bilingual education can help us, help the educators to make their kids be aware of the world, be aware of the other cultures and respect them, you know. So that can play, you know, a vital in creating that harmony in the school actually.

Q7 Okay the teachers were coming for Hizmet. Since they are bilingual teachers, bilingual educators; when they come here, they are coming here with a different culture
and, with their own culture they are trying adapt to this new culture. And since the most of the American kids in the charter schools that I have seen, I have observed, most of the kids are minority kids actually. So what I feel that, since they have that empathy, they can actually help more to those kids, to those you know the minority kids because they already created, they already experienced that being a minority. And plus if we add all that educational philosophy like each and every child is unique, and each and every child can learn, and I have to help that child because he or she is a human being and then they need help… So if you add all these, you know, morals to that experience that, you know, those students in those charter schools would… could benefit a lot through those educators because what I feel from my experience in the United States that even if you know math very well, even if you know science very well, if you do not have heart to teach the kids, they don’t care about what, how much math you know, or how much science you know. They have to see that, “okay this teacher actually loves me and cares (about) me, and he really wants me to succeed.” So they have to see that to be more enthusiastic about their studies. Otherwise, they keep failing and people will keep making the new movies like, “Waiting for Superman” or you know, those kinds of movies. And, they don’t realize that, okay, maybe system can solve, but what runs the system is actually human beings, and if you do not invest on human beings, they won’t be able to succeed whatever they do. Even if you get the best technology, the best books, but the real educators… if they don’t care, the kids they won’t be succeeding. So what I can say is from the Hizmet point of view, those educators care, they love the kids, and they try to help to those kids because I have seen teachers that they were working up to 3 a.m. and then just to study for their classes the next day. And, they were kind of not sleeping by
thinking that, “what am I gonna do tomorrow? How am I gonna teach to these kids, and how can I make them better in the future.” And it makes a difference. Through those schools I see that like they have 100% college acceptance, and in those minority, you know, environment, they haven’t got any college credit in their family, but, you know, through those schools, through those educators, they start thinking going to college and finishing those, you know, degrees, and then finding a better position for them in the future. So that mission is caring each and every individual and having the bilingual background that helps to understand those kids. And I can say that that is a great asset for the United States.

*Is there anything else that you would like to add?*

Thank you very much for asking these questions. I have never thought these questions before. Like, it reminded me the deep part of education and I am sure it is gonna come up a good result with you.

*Thank you.*

Thank you.
Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #4

Q1 Well, let me begin with the second part of the question first; public education versus private education. Well, both of them have their advantages and disadvantages at the same time. Public education is public and free, so that's the advantage, but your child learns what the state mandates as far as the curriculum is concerned. In private education, disadvantages, well, you know like you have to pay for it. On the other hand, you will have a say on what the curriculum is, what your child needs to be taught, especially if you prefer a religious education then the private is the way to go. My philosophical stance towards education is that each child in this planet deserves an education that's going to help him to realize his potential. That's what I would say for this question.

Q2 Well, I am not really qualified to answer this question for I don't know the big picture, so I really don't know what to say.

Q3 Well, you know like my views are somewhat unorthodox in this regard, I will have to say. I mean I really don't see the point in bilingual education. I mean if the child is going to live in the states, let's say you know like use the United States for example, then all of the dealings is going to be mainly in English. Therefore the student or any other person for that matter, will have to acquire the proficiency of the language. So why not do the whole thing in the language? Take a year or two if necessary, teach the child the language of the country wherever they might be, then continue I mean continue with the education in that language so I really don't know what would the point for bilingual education would be.
Can you elaborate more on that? That's interesting...

I mean sure, I mean let's say if I am to live in this country, all of my dealings is going to be basically in English. Let's say I just like come to this country in the second grade, what would be the point of me the learning science and mathematics in Turkish? I mean like, I think it would be wiser to take a year or two and learn the language, then continue with your education. One might argue that you might be losing a year or two, but on the other hand, you know like during bilingual education, you might not be, at the end of the day, be proficient in this language to have a successful career in this country. So in that regard, bilingual education does not make much sense to me. On the other hand, I will have to say that I never worked in a school who offered bilingual education, nor did I live in a community where the minorities were the majority, so I might be biased.

Q4 Uh, well, I guess coming back to what I said, I really don't see the bilingual education. I believe the language can be learned within a year provided that, you know like, one has the necessary facilities, teachers, and other support groups to learn the language. So again rather than spending funds, energy, time in bilingual education, I would say put that child in the school, teach that child the language than continue with the education in the English language. So in that regard I guess there won't be many differences in regards to the child's native language. Teach the child English first, then teach math, science, whatever later. Does it make sense?
Well, I am here to listen…

Q5 I mean when you say bilingual education if you are talking about, I mean like, in a more specialized way such as you know like, if you mean by bilingual education, education in the sense of teaching math, science, I would say get rid of the bilingual education in that. But, if you are talking education in a much more general sense, let's say the religious sense, cultural sense, then I guess the better approach would be to teach them in an outside institution. That's kind of like devote the school time to the learning of the basic material for one's success in a college such as math, science, foreign languages, and the like. So in that sense, I guess if there has to be bilingual education, it will have to be outside the school, not inside. And I will be repeating myself for the third time; take a year, teach the child the language of the country, then proceed with the regular education.

Q6 And again I have never worked in a school in which there was bilingual education offered so, I really don't know, you know, like how it might be offered. So my guess is as good as yours there. who should the instructors be? well, obviously, it's got to be someone who speaks both languages... and what role and place does bilingual education have and should have in the curriculum? And again in the standard curriculum, school curriculum, I guess there should be no role for bilingual education. Whereas outside the school, it depends on the families' interest and the cultural background. So that's what I would say.
Q7 I have no idea. I am, um, I don't know any school, I never worked in a school who offered bilingual education. So I don't know.

*Thank you very much.*

You are welcome.
Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #5

Q1 I mean I believe in public education. The reason for that I can share same philosophy with… you know, Horace Man and some other educators in the history, including Fethullah Gulen. That philosophy is that the people are good by nature. They have those common values and morals in them by nature. But the only way to bring out that good in people is through education. So once people are educated, then they all have, to a certain extent, the values and morals and they can become better citizens and better people.

Therefore people, you know, should be educated. Therefore, you know, I believe in public education or the mandatory education that we currently have… Until certain age, everyone you know has to be educated. When it comes to public and private… versus public education, I think regardless of how good public schools are and how largely they serve students, there will still be needs for private school. Because parents... because public schools will not be able to meet the needs of everyone that comes to their doors.

So in order to meet different needs of different communities and students whether religious or cultural or specific theme or focus such as music, art, sports, there will be private schools, and there will be need for private schools. And it's also good that people have options that they can choose to send their kids to public schools or private schools if they want. For example, you know, myself, I... my kids used to go to a public school in where I live and which has good public schools, successful schools... while I chose to send my kids to a private school there, you know, there are more students like them… like from the community where I am from; from the Turkish community. So they go to a private school that has a lot of Turkish students. Because I want that cultural aspect and approach was important for me. Academically, my students were you know, their needs...
were being met at the public schools, but I chose for that cultural reason, I chose to send them to a private school. So therefore I kind of believe in both that they provide different options.

Q2 I mean I have never worked in a private school before… or actually no, I worked, I was principal in a private school; so let's redo that question or you can revise it. The Hizmet, the schools that are opened by people it's by Fethullah Gulener or private schools. So they lay on, you know, one end of the spectrum. However, I think the way that they reach out to people and offer scholarships and offer financial support to students who are not able to afford them, this kind of shows their intention of reaching out to as many as students and people as possible. However, from the financial perspective, they have to charge tuition. I think, you know, based on my experience within the Gulen movement, I think if the schools were able to maintain themselves financially, they would not charge, probably they would not charge tuition. The main reason that they charge tuition I believe is because of the financial reasons; to make the ends meet and to run the school financially. Otherwise, the overall philosophy is to be able to reach out as many people as possible…. And to serve the needs, meet the needs of as many people as possible, many students as possible, or, rich, you know, smart, and mediocre, and different races, and different religions. So they don’t target one specific, you know, population. But at the same time I understand why they have to charge tuition.
Q3 I mean my experience with bilingual education is kind of limited for... or just limited to my own experience with my own kids, and also the schools that we manage. So let me start with the schools that we manage. Or, I think they are going to answer them their… but let's talk about the ideal policy. To me the ideal policy for bilingual education should be a transitional bilingual education that the student is supported in his or her own language as well as an intensive language education in the language of that particular society. So for example, I shared my experience that my kids, they knew a lot within the context before they went to school. They could tell the numbers and letters and they could express themselves, but when they went to the school on day one, they were at zero because they knew nothing... because of the language... because they did not have the language skills. At home we speak Turkish, we don't speak English so, although they were five, six years old, they have never been exposed to English before until they go school. So they go through a shock, you know, a culture shock, a language shock and they struggle in the first, you know, couple of months. They don’t, you know, they barely speak, and then they don't wanna go to school and cry in the mornings. I think their experience would have been different if there were some Turkish education in the school, in their language, so they would have felt more comfortable and then that transition would be less stressful on that as a four, five years old. To me that’s too much to deal with emotionally for a child. And... so, for that reason I think, they should be support in the student’s own language to a certain extent along with an intensive education in this new language that they have been exposed to. But at the same time, as they move on, what I experienced in the schools also, the students that we have, they speak Spanish in our schools, but the language that they have... it is basically speak language; daily
language, daily conversations and expressions. So they don't really know much about the
literature in their own language, and they sometimes, most of the time, they cannot write
in their language or they have never read a book in their language. So, as to me, the ideal
of bilingual education would be, you know, a transition in the first and then a literature
education probably in their own language along with the English, along with the survey
of the literature in English, then maybe a survey of literature in Spanish. They learn both
languages and they learn both literature, and to me that's a plus. That's a plus for them;
it's gonna increase their comprehension, it's gonna increase their vocabulary and
imagination, creativity, creativity, uhm, critical thinking… because they are gonna be
double educated in those skills. So, so if we summarize it, a transitional bilingual
education in the elementary grade... But once the student is proficient at both languages,
then an intensive language education in literature, and grammar, writing, reading in both
languages. So when they finish high school, for example, they will be proficient, they
will be excellent writers in both languages. They would have have read so many books in
literature in both languages. To me that's the ideal.

Q4 Okay, so what we, I think offering a different language you know as a foreign
language. Because to me, like if you are talking about a Hispanic child, English is not
really, not necessarily a foreign language for them. It's like bilingual, they are bilingual.
So offering a third language, you know, a French, or, you know, German, Russian,
Turkish, which we do in our schools... To them I think would be better for those kids. So
they will be bilingual, proficient in both Spanish and English, at the same time they will
learn a third language throughout the high school years. So that's what we do. So, and we
usually guide or, you know, channel those students, the bilingual students, to take another language rather than taking Spanish because sometimes kids choose Spanish because they think that it's an easy grade, because they know Spanish it's an easy grade for them. But, our philosophy being, you know, like challenging students and pushing them toward their full potential... we usually channel them through a third language; a foreign language, and ask them to rather take this than take any Spanish classes just, you know, getting an easy grade. So offering a third language I think would be an ideal for those students. So when they finish high school they will be proficient in two languages, and plus, they will be somehow proficient, depending on the intensity or rigority of the language. If they have taken it four years, for example, they may be proficient. But if they have taken it for one or two years, they may not be proficient. So let's talk about a four-year language because our school, being college prep schools, we encourage language education when the kids go to apply for colleges. The colleges look for the language education that they most colleges look for at least two years of language. So we make sure that our students take at least two years of a foreign language and... and, for the minority students... they feel for Turkish in our schools. And the same thing; we don't want the Turkish descendant students to take Turkish. We want them to take Spanish instead. So they can learn more.

So when you speak of Turkish or Spanish, you mean Turkish as a second language?

Turkish as a second language. Like as in... as for Spanish students, you know, Turkish as a second language class, foreign language class... or French as a foreign language class.
For a Turkish student taking Spanish 101, 102 at the high school level as a foreign language class. I don't know if that makes sense?

It does make perfect sense.

Q5 I mean I think no instruction would be as effective as the one given in the schools. Because, I mean, it’s given by the professionals in a structured environment, the students come there with the intention of learning in the first place. There is not, no one is really pushing them to do it. They kind of do it on their own, so I think ideal education should... would be in the schools... in that environment, where education take place. And the cultural centers, homes, and when I value the education given in cultural centers, but most of the time they are given by volunteers or, you know, the parents. It's not as structured or it's not as professional as a school environment. So, to me, that's not ideal. Should there be some? I think they should, they complement each other. For example, I will give you another personal example. As students, my kids go to private school. They also go to a weekend school at the cultural center. They complement each other. They don't... for example, they don't get any cultural, any educational instruction on Turkish culture or religion. So they get that on the weekend school at the cultural center. They get, you know, education on religion, the values and, you know, Turkish culture, history... those kind of stuff at the Turkish cultural center and then the rest of the regular instruction in the private school. So they... to me they complement each other, but ideally, I would be... to me it would be a school environment. For… home to me is not, is probably the worst place because... if you look at those immigrants, you know, they still,
to a large extent, struggle whether financially, culturally… in the society try to acclimate to this new culture that they are in. In that situation, it would be really difficult for them to establish a structured environment at home to educate their kids. Like, some parents here in this country do homeschooling. It would be difficult, it would be challenging for an immigrant family to do so. I mean again like anything that we do at home is complementary to what they do in the school, what they do at the cultural center on the weekends. For example, they read books every night for the school. They also read some Turkish books on the weekends that they get as homework, you know, assignments from the cultural center. So we as parents sit down with them at home and read with them. But it's all like complementary to the education that they receive during the day or on the weekend.

Q6 I think they… the instructors should be professionals maybe people with, you know, licenses, people that have been through training and education on how to teach. Like… what I mean by that, just because I am Turkish, you know, I cannot teach Turkish language. It would be better someone who received the training of how to teach Turkish language, or how to teach bilingual. What's one thing that’s important I think in this context is that the teachers who teach bilingual education should not just be proficient in the language, but also in the culture as well. You know, they should understand the culture of that particular language that they are teaching… because, particularly in bilingual education, we deal with the culture, you know more than the language initially and how to approach the student, and how to respond to certain things and so it's not just language skills; there is a lot to deal with the culture. So I think the bilingual teachers
should be immersed in the culture as well, that they teach... the culture of the language that they teach. So the students can relate to, for example, I mean like let's say a Hispanic student goes to the school and runs into this white American teacher who happens to speak Spanish. But, unless there is a cultural connection, the students will not be able to relate to that teacher because he doesn't look like one of them, you know, and his probably Spanish would have some accent, you know, it’s not gonna, the teacher is not gonna sound like them and probably, you know, not gonna eat like them, or you know, dress like them. So in order for students to... you know, to be able to relate to that teacher that should be immersed in the culture. He should know so much about the culture that the students will think, "Okay, now, he doesn't look like us, but he knows us. He knows our community, he knows our food, how knows we respond to things, he knows our religion, he knows our traditions, and other things." So they can feel close and they can relate to the teacher. So the cultural piece, I think is, if not more, is equally important as the culture... as the language part. And how might bilingual education practices be improved? Ehmm... I mean this... this has a lot to do with the finances of the school, you know, for example, if we have 40-50 students who need bilingual services, that means we need two teachers. If that's not financially possible, then the school ends up with hiring one full-time teacher and so that means students getting less services. And, particularly with the recent economic downturn, a lot of schools including our schools that we manage, we look at the budget and see where we can cut and shrink. Usually what happens is you end up cutting from specials; art, music, gymnasium, language education rather than cut from the core subjects like math, science, English, and social studies. Or... or like you wanna do more, you wanna service the students fully and more
comprehensively, you wanna, you know, dedicate a lot of resources to those students who need those services, but you may not, you are not able to do it financially. So... in order to improve bilingual education, the schools need, we need more funding and a particular focus. You kinda make that a priority. Sometimes that, you know, depending on the school, that may not be a priority. It depends on your philosophy and approach... whether you are there to serve every single student or not. A lot of traditional public schools, they are there, you know, and then they are not really... they don't make meeting the needs of every single student a priority for them. So like for them, it's no big deal if some students fail, if they drop out, if they don't get educated in their own language, or if they have some cultural barriers... you know like, "This is what we do and if that doesn't work for you, there is nothing else we can do..."-as opposed to charter schools, you know, we have a different philosophy, a different approach. We are like, "What can we do, what else can we do for that child?" because this particular child needs this particular service. How can we make sure that we are able to provide that service? So this kid needs bilingual education, what can we do with the resources available to us to best serve that child? This child needs special education services, this child needs some additional math support, this child needs something else… because we, the charter schools have more like the customer service mentality… that we are here to serve, we are here to make sure that our customers; being students and parents, are happy with us because our maintenance... maintenance of our business depends on our customers. If they are not happy, for a public school, if they are not happy, then they go to another school. It doesn't make much difference for them. They still maintain their business, so to save their organization. But for us, the maintenance of our business, our organizations, depend on those students. If
we lose them, that means we lose the organization. By law, we have a contract with the
authorizers, and if we are successful, if we have enough students, enough financials, then
we maintain our business; we renew contract. If not, then you close down. So that’s why
many charter schools, if not all, will have that customer service mentality. That also
applies for bilingual education and other things. So just finding, you know, remedies to
meet the needs of those students at the bilingual or the special education or whatever in
the school with the resources available to you.

Q7 I think it again goes back to number six, the answer I gave for number six, that
mentality. People… so I mentioned that all charter schools will have that mentality, but
they don’t have it at the same level. People that I worked with whether as a teacher or as
a school leader that who has the Hizmet mentality, that… so we see that at the maximum
level. Those people have that customer service mentality at the highest possible level...
because for them this is not only an institutional goal, but this is also a personal goal that
they see that serving God is serving people and they, so they dedicate their life in that
philosophy, in that service. So they will, because of that philosophy, they will go
additional steps. They will go extra miles to make sure that their students are being
served and their needs are being met. To me that's the difference that they will take that
extra mile and make sure that, so for example, I will give you an example; one of our
schools has a large immigrant population who immigrated from Russia. They are
Turkish-Russian immigrants. I think they have about 60-70 students in that school. The
school population is about 250 and then so 60 of them, 70 of them are, you know, from
that community. The school employs all the resources available within the… during the
week. But, what the school did, they partnered with the Turkish cultural center in that community in Dayton, and then they bring additional services to the students on the weekend. So they call those students to the school on the weekends and they have volunteer teachers from the Turkish community who teach content areas to those students in their own language. To me that is an example. Like, a typical school would do what's necessary during the week, but someone with the Hizmet mentality would take that extra mile and build the partnership and make sure that those students are served regardless of the time and place, you know, weekend, school, or somewhere else. I know teachers and principals who drive those students to the cultural centers, or go pick up the teachers and bring the teacher to school because the teacher may not have transportation. So, and, that Hizmet mentality or philosophy lets people take that extra mile and go beyond what a typical… even a typical charter school would do for the students.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

No, I think that's all unless I missed something you want me to reemphasize. That's pretty much it.

*Thank you very much for the interview.*

You are welcome.
Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #6

Q1 In my opinion the education that we have in our schools, especially, you know, since I come from Turkey, there is an educational stance that children should be educated based on their mathematical and scientific knowledge. However, what I think is that education is not only teaching our children about math and science and social studies. Those are the things, of course are important in their daily lives, for their future, for their career, but I also think that we should be thinking of the, not only the material needs of our children, but also our education should appeal to their hearts, not only for their brains. But, it should also be, you know, appealing to their, to their hearts. With hearts I mean, we shouldn’t only see that, our children do they score high in their tests or are they successful in their studies? But we should also be aware that since they are in the school all the time some of the parents only consider children when they come back home, but they spend most of their time at schools. So we should also make sure that our children also become some, err, a good person with their education that they get they receive at school. So I was I would think that you know the teachers should be good at their majors, at their areas of study, but at the same time they should also see if the children are behaving well, if they are gonna be useful to the society when they finish their schools. That’s also important in my opinion.

Q2 I think as I expressed my feelings, the children should not only get their math and science education, but at the same time they have to be good, um, men and women in the society. Hizmet also tries to take care of that. In Hizmet’s education institutions the teachers are, um, are always they are picked up from, those teachers, who also take their
cultural values, they are serious. So they are not just any people that can teach, but they are people who are, uh, who take their cultural values seriously and who try to be good examples for their students. So I think Hizmet’s education institutions differ in that sense from the other schools. In their curriculum, they don’t necessarily, um, (unintelligible) on the religious values or the maybe the ethical values, but certainly their teachers are very dedicated. They love teaching, they love children, and they want to educate them as good people for the community.

Q3 Well I think, as you expressed, bilingual education is very important, especially in this time because everything is so much global, uh, (me) coming from again from Turkey, I, my hometown was surrounded with many visitors from all over the world, and everyone felt the need that, you know, we need to not only be sufficient in our own language, but also we need a second or even third language that we need to be able to communicate with other people. So, is it enough learning it at school as a second language or as a third language? From my own experience it really takes a lot of time, and sometimes, you know, we still have lots, to, to be perfect in communication with other people. So, as you mentioned, I think bilingual education is a must in this, in these times, and because we are so much global and we have so many chances, you know, to go, going overseas and take different possibilities… So I wish I also had bilingual education so that I would increase my opportunities, my world vision in my teacher career.
Q4 I think, sometimes if we concentrate too much on just teaching the language, it also has some downturns for the children. Because not only learning the language means just learning the grammar, or learning the vocabulary, but we also need to simmer into the culture. So when we are doing the bilingual language, especially for the minority, we also should make them learn about, let’s say if they are learning about Chinese, they should learn about China, they should know about how the country is administered, what are the cultures, what is different than the country that they live in… So I think those cultural values also should be taken into consideration when you are teaching a specific language. If my child is gonna learn, let’s say, Turkish in America, since they are already proficient in English, I would want them to learn the Turkish grammar, the vocabulary, but at the same time I would like them to learn about Turkey, about the culture, the specific issues. I think they would just, you know, make them have a broader vision in regards to the language. Because language means the culture. So you cannot separate those two from each other.

Q5 Well, if we are talking about the bilingual education, I think it has to be in the schools. Because I am also from long years in the culture center business and as a community activist, we are dealing with our in the community, and we are giving them some Saturday classes to backup with their languages. But we see that, you know, only learning two or three hours a language in a week is not enough… And you cannot really do the bilingual education. So what should be done is the bilingual education should be taught at the schools. It has to be the same curriculum. I mean, of course, professional people know this better, but I think the same curriculum should be taught or they have to
complement each other... You don’t need to maybe necessarily teach the same subjects in two different languages, but these what you teach in two languages should complement each other so that its gonna be more effective, you don’t have to repeat everything you teach to the, the students. So but, I don’t think this is gonna be done at the cultural centers. And then, for homes, I think if there is an environment that the parents can speak that second language, of course it is a big advantage for the students to practice that language at home. So I think the parents also have a big responsibility. Like myself, my wife is Japanese, I am from Turkey, we lived in Japan, we live in the U.S., and my children are going to school at in the U.S. right now. They are learning their English, and then at home I try to speak in English, and my wife tries to ..., sorry, at home I try to speak in Turkish, my wife does the same in Japanese, but I still see that you know, its not like the bilingual education you can have in other school. So I think parents should be supporting their children, but the main teaching will be at the schools.

**Q6** I think, maybe I will repeat myself, but since this is another question, I would say that... I think the bilingual teaching experiences can be improved if we can fit in the cultural values that I mentioned before so that its gonna complement the education, the language education that we have, plus the cultural values... Then you are gonna have perfect environment for the children. And the instructors in my opinion, if we have some native instructors from that... from both languages, of course its gonna be better for the children. If not, then we need to have some professional teachers who are sufficient in that second language. And, I think different universities are working on the best curriculum available for bilingual education. As I told before, you don’t need to maybe
teach, let’s say, social studies in both languages, but if you can teach social studies in English, and then you know, you can do your mathematical studies in Japanese, let’s say if it’s an English-Japanese bilingual school, and then if you are doing science in English then you do art in Japanese so that these, you know, can complement each other or maybe subjects can be divided; half of the subjects you can teach in English, the other half you can teach in Japanese, so I think, I am sure the professionals are working on it for the best curriculum. That’s what I think.

Q7 I also have some friends who are teaching in the charter schools. I know some friends who are administrators in the charter schools. I see that the educators that they are employing are highly dedicated people. (They) are highly responsible educators, men and women, and they, first of all, love the job that they are doing, they love the children. I think that’s the most important thing that these charter schools and their staff having high regard for Hizmet are doing. So first of all dedicated people. I see that, you know, they are spending their days and nights to perform the best education that they can to get ready for the classes. And more than that, they even spend their weekends, you know, Saturdays and Sundays, maybe while other, their colleagues are spending their free time; these people are working with the children. It doesn’t necessarily mean they are helping them with their academic studies, which they are certainly doing, but they also be like, you know, brothers and sisters to these children. Because as you know, the charter school philosophy is opening these schools in those places that the children need, maybe the children are coming from some less privileged areas, and they are the minorities are often dominant. So these children do not only have problems with their academic studies, but
also in their social environment, they need some support, whereas at the public schools, you may not always have enough time for so many children to dedicate your time, you know, one-on-one. In the charter schools, we have less number of students, as I said, and there is a different type of management and the educators are very dedicated for their work and for their students. They can have more time for their social issues that they are encountering. So I see that these teachers do home visits. They visit their students homes, and you know, get together with the parents because as everyone says, parents are very important when the child’s school education is mentioned. So the parents should be aware of their children, what they are having at school, and they also should be open to the educators if they need any support on the social aspect of the upbringing of the children. So I think these schools are offering a very unique educational philosophy. It’s not only, “okay, we give you the best education, you are gonna score the best in your tests, and then you are gonna go into best the university.” That’s not it, and that’s what I was telling from the beginning; I don’t want my child only having great academic studies or having the highest scores at school, but whenever I go to school to talk to my children’s teachers, I ask them, “okay, before the tests, how is he doing at school? Is he getting on well with his peers? Is behaving well to his elders? Is he behaving good in the classroom environment? Is he, I mean, taking turns to talk about something? Is he disturbing the class?” I think these are more important to me so this is the basic philosophy in these schools that they do maybe, quote and quote, full education, which means academic plus the social aspect.
Is there anything else you would like to add?

Well, I think the questions more or less covered everything. I wish you good luck. I hope your study is gonna shed some light on, you know, this bilingual education, and I am very glad that you asked us about these schools that are named under the Hizmet movement, let’s say. So I wish that your study can put forward the different approach that these schools are offering to the American people and also to the people all over the world.

Thank you.

My pleasure.
Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #7

Q1 Education is the most important thing in the world and I believe that education must start from the cradle until grave. So education is not only carried out only in the institutions, the physical institutions, but also everywhere; through television, through radio, newspapers, and all kinds of magazines, journals. And the environment is a good educational facility for everybody to learn and to teach. Also I believe that education cannot reach the good points in every aspects I can say. So education is a must for me. And private education, in terms of physical education, physical education institutions, I believe the importance of private education because generally mostly in general across the world it is not possible for the governments to provide education for everybody in every comfortable, and in a very modern way. That is why we need some private education. And also in some countries education, public education, is very limited to some very, uhm, governmental limitations so that the students could not have opportunity to learn everything about, eh, in different aspects, in different topics. That's why I believe private education is very crucial. But in some countries, private education is not permitted to teach privately what the community wants to teach. Like, for example in Turkey, we are supposed to follow the curriculum of the ministry of education. Even where having the private education institution, private school, private high school, (private) university, we are supposed to follow the structure and the curriculum of the government. But in the United States, I appreciate what they are doing. For example, in Catholic schools they can have a chance to teach their pupils what the Catholic teachings are. So I believe it is very important and imperative for the communities to teach their
own values, their own cultures and the, the religion, everything through their private education institution. Otherwise in public schools there may be limitations, government limitations... Like, for example, in the United States, the public school must be secular. But in private schools you can teach religion, but in public schools you cannot. So that's why I give very much importance and emphasize to the private education.

**Q2** Actually when we come to the Hizmet schools, we must separate into two parts. One, the ones in Turkey where you are supposed to limit yourself with the Turkish curriculum, and the others are the ones in abroad, not in Turkey, where you can be more free to educate students and train students in the ways that we want to train them. But in general, the Hizmet schools, we can say, quote and quote, they are secular, they are not teaching religion. But most important part of the Hizmet schools are in that they have great teachers and administrators. Teachers and administrators are good samples; for the students are taking them as examples in their lives. And also after school activities, and extra curricular activities are very imperative in educating the kids in Hizmet schools. Other than that Hizmet schools are very sensitive about teaching the students in the curriculums of those, their own countries, their respective countries. They don't want to be controversial. That's why they are everywhere complying with the education and curriculum of those countries. Like, for example, if it is in Kenya, they are following the curriculum of Kenya. If they are in Kazakhstan, they are following the curriculum of Kazakhstan. Ministry of education, what they mandate, they are done by the Hizmet schools. As I told, the most important part of the Hizmet schools are the administrators and the teachers. Not only they are good examples for the students, but also they have
very good connections with the families so that they follow the students' behavior, not only in the school borders, but also in the whole life of the student. 24 hours, 7 days, 52 weeks etc. So they also organize extra curricular activities, in which they also have a chance to teach and train students outside of the school. Like, for example, they are organizing picnics, they are organizing some excursions in their respective countries or cities. And they have some other circles, we call them Halaqa circles or reading circles, so that they can teach and train students other than the limits of the school. Also, the families are also important point in the Hizmet schools. The school administration has good connections and ties with the families so that they follow the students' behavior in their houses. So they also advise families, the parents, how to act, how to behave to the student so that the student will have a dichotomy, and double standards; one in school, one in the house. So they are trying to unify the structure, the behavior towards the student so that will understand what to learn, what to behave, how to behave, and how to act, how to, what to learn. So the Hizmet schools are also very imperative on that.

**Q3** Bilingual education actually I am experiencing it now through my children. As far as I'm not a linguistic professor, I am just a miserable math professor, so I do not have much idea about bilingual education etc. But as far as I heard from my friends, they said it's better to learn the native language first and then learn the other language, the other countries language because they will learn it anyways... in the school, in kindergarten, preschool, in the primary school... they can easily learn in their own ages... in their young ages in childhood. They can easily learn it. For example my children came to the United States... one of them was in her ten, other one was eight. So in one year they learned how
to speak English kind of like a native person. So but I am very happy to say that they speak Turkish in a very good way, but I see some of my friends' children cannot speak Turkish very well. They are having very much difficulty in speaking Turkish. This is really very odd and very difficult situation for Turkish families because they are generally nationalistic people and they would like their children to speak Turkish very well, and to read Turkish very well, and to write Turkish very well. But to be able to reach that goal and aim, they are supposed to teach first their own language to their children, and then in the school and in the environment, they will learn the other language anyways. This is my own ...

Q4 As I told you in the previous question, first we are supposed to teach our own languages, the native languages to our children and then let them learn the language of the countries that they live in a very good way through their education in the kindergarten, preschool, and in the school. And then they can study all kinds of books and novels, and that watch the television films and play; like we can speak about America, play English games etc. with their friends and also through computer or some different play games. So this is my idea that... but after they... after the students part schooling in primary schools, some families leave them alone so that they will forget their own culture, their own language. In my perspective the families, the parents must pursue to teach the culture, and the language, and the religion of their own... to the students, to the children when they are learning the country's language and when they are pursuing countries own education through primary school, secondary school, and high school. So they must go together.
Q5 Actually all of them are complimentary to each other. Family is very important point. Aside of teaching on language and schools are good for teaching the language of that country, and the cultural centers of that community also good for, especially not only language but also the culture and religion of that country. Like for example, the Turkish community here in the United States and the Bosnian community as far as I know they are sending their children to regular public schools. And the kids are learning very good English there and they are pursuing the American education there. They are learning writing, reading, listening and they are perfectly learning English language there in the public schools. But at the same time they are coming there for Saturday schools, in which they are learning their religion and culture and also they are practicing their own languages with their peer. And the people from their own countries so like they are talking to each other in Bosnian in the cultural center. And also they are learning their religion and culture in their own language. In the families I must say that it is very important to speak the native language in the families because the students already are exposed to the country's language everywhere, other than families. So it's very imperative to speak the native language in families so that the kids do not forget their own languages. So I can not give priority one to the others.

Q6 As I told you, if the students are going to public schools, they are English anyways... so they are learning the country's language which is English in the United States, very well, and they are learning maybe culture, religion, literature, social sciences, and biology and all kinds of sciences in the public school. So they have respective teachers, science
teacher, religion teacher, moral values teacher, and literature teachers in the public schools, who teach students and train them in a very well manner. But in the cultural centers, I believe the teachers must be from that culture. Like, for example in Bosnian cultural center, the teachers must be Bosnian so that they can speak native language in Bosnian, and they teach students their own culture and religion in their own languages. So also the curriculum must be very comprehensive... not only for example just religion and culture, but also literature is also very important. The students must learn how to read, how to write, how to... may write novels even, like for example or stories in their own languages so that they will be educated really bilingually in public schools, English in cultural center and families in their own native languages. So both must be very comprehensive and should not leave any part of the language behind. As I told you, science, literature, religion, culture, moral values all must be taught in both schools, in their respective languages.

Q7 Actually I don't know... (if) the schools are biologically linked with Hizmet, but as far as I heard, there are some schools whose administrators and teachers are having some sympathy to Fethullah Gulen and Hizmet. So in terms of... in terms of the teachers and the administrators being from Turkey, that's a good opportunity for the students to learn bilingual education not only in the cultural centers and the families, but also shift and bring that opportunity to the school as well. So far in answering all other questions in the previous questions, I always emphasized on the public schools where the students learn only English, but now when we come to the Hizmet schools, as you call, as you name them, there are teachers both coming from the United States and from like for example
Turkey so that the students will have an opportunity to be exposed to two languages.

That's a big opportunity for the students I can say. But, I should say that to be able to not
to lack the students from the native English language, the English literature, social
science and government classes must be taught by Americans... native people. Turkish
must... can be an elective course. Some courses like mathematics and science, in which
the language are not very imperative, can be taught by Turkish professors or teachers so
that the students will have a chance to be exposed by two languages. Especially in the
break times and in the extra curricular activities if those students are having some extra
curricular activities picnics, meetings with those Turkish teachers, and the students will
have an opportunity to learn Turkish from the native people in the American school, in an
American school. That's also a very different opportunity for the students. So the charter
schools gives opportunity, not all charter schools, but the charter-Hizmet schools, as you
name them, can give this opportunity to the students who are attending those schools.

This is the last question that I asked. Is there anything else you would like to add?

As far as I understand, you are making research in bilingual. Actually, I mentioned in
different parts of this interview, but, since it is very important, I would like to emphasize
it again. I strongly, I strongly advise to the parents and the families that (they) teach their
kids their own culture, religion, literature and everything in their own languages... and
then get them be very good at reading, writing, listening their own languages. Otherwise,
really in the future, they will be very repentant on that because they will see their children,
and they are grown up and they come to their 30s, 40s, they will have some difficulty in
speaking their own native language, which will give very much pain to the parents, I believe. That's why it's very important to have cultural centers and very intellectual families who are giving very much importance to teach their children their own culture, religion, language. If some parents are not aware of this fact, the community leaders must take this opportunity to advise to softly force, maybe I can say, and advise those families to send their children to the cultural centers so that they will not forget their own culture, religion, and language.
Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #8

Q1 I believe that any educational institution should try to meet the needs of the students and community they serve. Educators need to be aware of the cultural, demographic, socioeconomic as well as linguistic background of the community they are working with and provide an education that opens and broadens the opportunities available to the students.

I don’t necessarily see a difference between private and public schools or charter schools in serving a community. Historically the academia, educators and governments have focused on the proficiency level of students, ignoring the growth and value added over time to the students. This, many times results with a wrong perception of relative success in private schools, that serve an affluent and already well educated population, with little insight on whether these schools are actually adding more to the growth of the students they serve compared to public schools that serve similar populations.

I am a strong proponent of looking at growth over time that students achieve, which provides a better picture of teacher and school performance that is irrespective of the demographic differences in the communities they serve. The main difference between private and public schools is in the different perceptions of students and parents, in that the former sees them as customers and thus tries harder to achieve customer satisfaction.

One should also keep in mind the huge differences in public education and perceptions of educators between different countries, when making these distinctions and not make universal generalizations. There may be a bigger difference between private and public schools in countries like Turkey compared to the US. One mistake that is common in some states and districts in the US is mainstreaming of children. There are vast
differences between the student populations even within the same district that districts need to develop different programs in different schools. In this regard some charter schools have filled a gap that districts failed at.

I believe all schools and educators should be held accountable for meeting the specific needs of their children and the academic growth of the students they serve in comparison to similar demographic populations and that no single educational model can be equally successful in meeting the needs of different geographic, cultural and demographic areas.

Q2 In answering this question one should know that there are some differences between the private schools that the Hizmet movement has opened in Turkey and the private schools in other countries. These differences may be due to the differences of the educational systems of those countries, the communities they serve as well as the changes in philosophical perceptions of the educators due to the experiences they have gained over time.

Due to the unquestionable dedication of the teachers in the movement, these schools have been significantly more successful in understanding and meeting the needs of the communities they serve. Considering that teacher quality in the classroom is the single most important factor influencing student outcomes, one can see why these schools will naturally produce better results considering the devotion of the educators in the movement.

However even the Hizmet schools in Turkey have not been able to get away from the shortcomings of the educational system in Turkey that values proficiency and passing the University entrance exams over everything else. Although these schools have relatively
been more successful in connecting to the communities they serve and meeting the needs of different student populations, private or public, most schools in Turkey have traditionally not served the needs of the lower end of the achievement spectrum. Little attention is paid to extracurricular activities, sports, music, or social needs of the students. The movement’s private schools in other countries have done a better job in meeting more than just the academic needs of their students.

One thing that these schools have done a better job worldwide is in meeting the needs of minorities in their communities and building bridges between the different cultural, religious and ethnic groups they serve.

Many private schools in Turkey select their students through entrance exams and pride themselves with high number of college admissions, with little attention to how much they have added to the already strong academic and intellectual capacity of their students. Since school achievement in the public eye is also based on college admission in Turkey, the schools do very little for the students who have little or no chance of passing the college admission tests, leading to low morale and motivation due to few extracurricular activities and support programs. This also leads to an elitist approach amongst Turkish educators and schools, who tend to work well with highly motivated and high achieving students but fail in motivating and working with struggling students and providing remedial support. This may be true for many educators in Europe and Asia as well as the US, however the public perspective and expectations here is that schools serve all their students equally, taking into account the inherent differences they bring with them. This was not always the case in the US but the nation has come a long way since the civil rights movement, which has helped the shape of education in terms of equity. While
Turkish and European educators have fallen into one extreme in working well with high achieving students, with the enactment of NCLB and a focus on proficiency, many US districts and schools have moved towards another extreme in focusing on failing students only and bringing them up to the detriment of high achievers. Almost a decade later, today the shift is more towards growth models and meeting the needs of all students, with accelerated programs for gifted and talented students together with academic support and remedial programs and more use of data and value added assessment systems.

Q3 Being born to an immigrant family in Germany, attending schools in different educational systems and having worked in several countries and continents have helped me understand a few things about bilingual education. First of all I must say that the mindset in the United States in terms of accepting and respecting the fundamental needs of the different ethnic groups the schools serve is far beyond what European and Asian countries are doing for immigrant children.

Traditionally most countries have not given any support to immigrant children in neither overcoming the language barrier nor means to learn their native language. Some countries have even attempted to ban students from speaking their mother tongue during recess. We have seen a number of negative examples in Germany with their immigrant Turkish population, in France with immigrants from Northern African, or Turkey with its native Kurdish population. None of these countries have had any support program for nonnative speakers nor any bilingual program allowing them learn both languages.

Although education is not a constitutional right the US and is left to the states, case law based on the 5th and 14th amendments have established that districts and schools need to
establish support to immigrant children to provide an equal opportunity and access to free and private education. As a result of this districts have started to provide remedial and support classes for bilingual students in order to overcome the language barrier. Moreover some districts have tried bilingual education in Spanish and English and provided training and professional development to teachers to be more aware of the needs of bilingual students and to be sensitive to the needs as well as cultural differences of the populations they serve. Schools have been encouraged to hire bilingual staff and create documentation and websites in several languages in an effort to better communicate with the parents and the larger community. Yet there are still very few examples of really bilingual schools that teach different subject areas in two or more languages. US schools also have not been very successful in teaching foreign languages, starting foreign language education very late in high school and with little emphasis and lack of intensive language courses. Historically students from certain ethnic backgrounds have been over identified for special education not only in the US but also in many European countries with high immigrant populations, mostly due to the lack of language support programs or bilingual education.

I believe that bilingual education should start at an early age, preferably at the elementary level, and allow students to be exposed to both languages and cultures in different subject areas.

**Q4** There cannot be one-size fits all model or policies for bilingual education and the programs districts develop should be based on the demographic, socioeconomic realities and needs of their respective students populations and communities. A school with an
80% Hispanic population will naturally have different needs than a school with only a 20% Hispanic or Chinese population and the programs and the intensity of language classes should be based on the different strengths and weaknesses of the students served.

**Q5** I believe that it is the duty of public schools to serve the needs of their students. However the communities can also help in supporting the efforts of districts by establishing community centers to teach their own language and culture. This may not be possible in areas and communities with low socio-economic and educational status and local governments and districts need to take responsibility in providing support. As in the example given above, in a school where the majority consists of immigrant children the need for support and remedial classes in English may be larger, whereas in a school with just 15% of immigrant children the needs and exposure to their native language may be more prominent. Districts need to work with local schools in assessing the needs of the students and developing programs unique to the respective communities.

**Q6** Bilingual schools should have language teachers that are fluent in both languages in order for them to relate and better understand the students they teach. Successful language acquisition usually happens at earlier ages and through intensive use of the language outside the language classes and therefore bilingual education should start as early as the KG level and include other subject areas. Bilingual schools are successful at teaching languages both due to the amount and intensity of the language classes as well as creating a need for the students to use the language meaningfully outside the language class.
Q7 There are a variety of charter schools that serve very different purposes and missions. Some are focused on providing academic support to students with high poverty and traditionally underachieving communities, while others may have a focus on athletics, technology, arts or dramatic performance. There are even bilingual charter schools that teach in two languages in districts with dense immigrant populations. Some educators that have worked in the private schools of the Hizmet movement, have joined public charter schools in the US and brought with them the experience in bilingual education. Some of these charter schools provide foreign language education much earlier than the traditional approach and as early as the elementary or middle school level. Though this is a good attempt in providing better foreign language education, it still falls short of providing any bilingual support. Unfortunately most foreign language class that meet 3 to 5 times a week with no exposure the foreign language outside the classroom are doomed to fail. Therefore, though these charter schools may take foreign language education one step further compared to traditional public schools, their chances of raising students that are fluent in more than one language is slim.

The main focus of these charter schools is STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) education and to prepare students for college and careers in these subject areas. Some of these schools attract a number of gifted/talented students due to the STEM focus and therefore offer accelerated programs teaching higher level math, science classes at lower grade levels.

I draw a line between bilingual education and foreign language education. Bilingual education is teaching students two languages simultaneously and using both languages to
deliver content in other subject areas as well as use of the languages outside the
classroom. To my knowledge, none of the charter school offer bilingual education or
support in the native language of any immigrant children. Yet, most of these charter
schools start teaching a number of foreign languages as early as the 6th grade and in
some cases even at the elementary level. This is a significant improvement over the
traditional approach in most districts, where foreign language education starts only with
the freshmen year of high school. Despite all of the efforts, I believe that students still
lack mastery in any of the foreign languages taught, except for those students that are
already bilingual due to their home language.
Depending on their student population some charter schools provide ELL and ESL
support to different populations. Especially in schools with a high migrant populations,
students need more support in English, due to the fact that they have less exposure to
English and practice of it outside the classroom. In such schools there are usually special
reading support programs on top of the regular ELA classes to help these students
improve their English language skills. However in schools with small immigrant
populations, the need for such programs is less and even if offered they are less intensive.
Students who are struggling in English and reading skills are placed in reading support
programs that aren’t necessarily designed for ESL/ELL populations.
A Phenomenological Analysis of the Interview with Participant# 8

**Site Description:** The interview with this participant was conducted in a written form and therefore there is no site description available.

**Participant Description:** The participant was male and an administrator at a charter school in a state on the western part of the U.S.

From the written interview with participant #8, two themes emerged: a) Quality education is reserved for the selected few, b) Charter schools with HM educators and Hizmet schools equate the inequality in education.

*Quality education is reserved for the selected few.*

Participant #8 was very vocal about the rights of the underprivileged population. He believed that, at its current state, the education system was benefiting only the select few. He appeared to be criticizing the private HM schools as well and stated that “although these schools have been more successful in connecting to the communities they serve and meeting the needs of different student populations, private or public, most schools in Turkey have traditionally not served the needs of the lower end of the achievement spectrum.” Hendrick (2013) previously voiced the same concern as well.

Participant #8 believed that schools in general do not spend enough effort to accommodate the needs of the struggling learners and noted that the system prioritizes some student populations and offers them more opportunities at the expense of others: “…the schools do very little for the students who have little or no chance of passing the college examination tests, leading to low morale and motivation…” In that regard, minorities, low-achieving, low-income students are at disadvantage and are likely to fail because the system does not address their needs.
**Charter and Hizmet schools equate the inequality in education.** In unison with other interviewees’ responses, Participant #8 admires the dedication and personal sacrifice the HM educators make. He said, “due to the unquestionable dedication of the teachers in the movement, these (charter) schools have been significantly more successful in understanding and meeting the needs of the communities they serve.”

Although he had favorable opinions about the HM educators, he slightly criticized the selectivity of the schools, including charter schools with HM educators, in general. According to him, charter schools with HM educators mainly focus on “STEM (science, technology, engineering, math) education and to prepare students for college and careers in these subject areas,” and, although they provide foreign language education they still fall “short of providing any bilingual support.” On the other hand, he believes that “one thing that these schools have done a better job worldwide is in meeting the needs of minorities in their communities and building bridges between the different cultural, religious and ethnic groups they serve.”

Overall, he believed that they made a change in the system as well as in the lives of the students who attended those schools. Additionally, he emphasized his belief on the uniting role those schools fulfill and bring people from various backgrounds together. The interviewee has also expressed his positive opinions about the HM educators, the private HM schools, and charter schools with HM educators. He also provided constructive feedback. On the bilingual education issue, he thinks the schools are not making enough effort and that might generate issues in the long run. Only some of the charter schools with HM educators “provide foreign education much earlier than the traditional approach and as early as the elementary or middle school level.” The
participant was educated in the German education system and suffered from ethnocentric policies discouraging bilingual education. However, this has helped him differentiate between various education systems and evaluate the benefits as well as shortcomings of bilingual education systems in the U.S. His ideas might have been impacted by that his educational background while responding to my questions.
Interview Questions and Answers-Participant #9

Q1 I am…I am a Turkish language and literature major. Currently, I am the executive director of Atlantic Schools in Ankara. In Turkey, private schools have existed since the second half of the 1800s. We have come to know private schooling through the initiatives of the expatriates and the schools they established in our country. Some of those still run to this day such as Robert College, Saint Joseph schools, German schools, and Italian schools. They were among the first private schools established in Turkey. Eventually, private schools founded by Turkish entrepreneurs have joined them. In our city, there are prominent schools dating as far back as 100 years. One of them is TED College, which established by the Turkish Education Foundation. These are schools that had an important place in Turkish education. Today, private schools in Turkey make up only 3% of the total number of schools. 97 out of every 100 schools are public schools, and only 3% are private. Urbanization in Turkey has grown especially since the 1980s. Those were the times of growing urbanization led by the late president Ozal. People living in villages and towns started to migrate to bigger cities in search of better jobs, and better education for their children. Actually, we can say that urbanization process started with Ozal. That process reached another dimension in private schooling; I believe that the history of the schools I manage also date back to those days when people flocked into cities and kicked of an economic enterprise. Although private schools make up a very small percentage in the education system, they are extremely successful in national exams, high school entrance exams, and college entrance exams. They are also very successful in science contests, Olympiads, and various project competitions. Additionally, they lead English as a second language teaching and learning. Students from those schools perform well in
colleges with English prep schools domestically, get accepted more by colleges abroad, and show exemplary performances there. If we consider schools as places that prepare students for life besides education, we also witness outstanding performances in cultural activities, sports events, and artistic and theatrical skills. Although only 3% of schools are private in Turkey, all these results resonate as if half of the country’s schools were private. Therefore, I believe those schools contribute a great deal to the education system. We can argue and foresee that, as a result of the economic developments and structural changes in Turkey, the number of private schools are likely to increase and claim a prominent position within the Turkish educational system in the near future. The state and department of education hold a view as well. I attended the advisory council meeting in November. The department of education holds those meetings every 4-5 years. I was there as a participant. There was a common intent on Turkey’s vision in 2023. That year is the 100th anniversary of the Turkish Republic. The intent on that vision, expressed by academicians and deans of education was to increase private school ratio up to 25% among public schools. Same view was expressed by the department of education authorities, and by administrators of educational institutions from towns and rural areas. In addition, sector representatives also expressed enthusiasm for more private schools and stated that those schools provided quality education and increased student success. It was also strongly recommended that the state support private schools by providing land, helping with the construction of buildings, providing scholarships to students, and zeroing their tax burden. Currently, the department of education is doing some serious work on those issues. I commend that. The common vision is that, with the improving economy, the number of private schools will significantly increase by 2023.
Q2 I somewhat mentioned this already. Private schools already had a momentum regarding their performance. However, the late president Ozal had pioneered a vision back in the 1980s when the economic revitalization first started. He had expressed that one of Turkey’s core issues was education and that the state by itself would not be able to handle that issue. He had also stated that the people and citizens of Turkey needed to take the initiative and come up with solutions. He talked about this many times when he addressed the public. He was not the only one with such a view. Businessmen in the education sector and academicians shared his ideas. More so, after the 1980 military coupe, the then president Kenan Evren touched this. Statesmen and stakeholders pointed out the need for public support in education. During the time, Mr. Fethullah Gulen was also a prominent leader and encouraged his followers and people who loved and respected his ideas to invest in education. As a result, at first in the city of Izmir and later in other cities, people who listened to him and shared his ideas came together. They put their money together and opened a private school. The school was a success and set the example for people elsewhere in Turkey. They soon established private schools too. Mr. Gulen’s encouragement was on an idea level and people who admired and respected him took that further by building those schools. The schools I manage come from that initiative. Our schools, the Atlantic Schools Group, were opened in Ankara 7-8 years ago. There is also Samanyolu (Milky way) Schools Group in Ankara. The Samanyolu Schools emerged out of the belief that people should support education and contribute to the education of successful students without expecting everything from the state. The result was remarkable. Today, those schools have become a trademark both in the national and
international arena. Those schools sweep away most of the medals in national science Olympiads organized by TUBITAK (The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey). The Samanyolu Schools make up the national teams in international competitions. They are also one of the most successful schools in high school and college entrance exams. Furthermore, their graduates possess extraordinary life skills. Now, those who witnessed the success of Samanyolu Schools helped established Atlantic Schools. For example, a 60-year-old lady, Ulku Ulusoy, granted the land to set up a school in the name of her late husband. When you take a tour of the school, you will see nameplates on conference halls and classrooms. Those are the volunteers who contributed to the building of the school, some with a classroom, some with a brick, and some with a conference hall. Now those schools got under various associations. Our school is also a member of the national association of independent schools. These schools are members of it. The private school members of the association hold a very special place in terms of their achievements in 2011. A very special place. As I have already mentioned, these private schools, wherever they are founded; be it a city, a town, or a rural community, are the most successful educational institutions of the place. They are the most successful… From this standpoint, channeling this success to public schools and sustain the success there as well, is probably the most correct decision administrators can make. I mean, there is this successful experience with regard to exam preparation, socialization, cultural and athletic activities, and, beyond all, transforming the individual into a good human being. The community does not prefer those schools just because of quality education. These students also attain good characters here. They learn to respect their traditions, national values, and moral values of their people. These children also learn to be open to
dialogue with others. They are neither biased nor prejudiced. These are children who strive to represent their country the best way they can in the world on one hand, and endeavor to contribute to the universally humanistic values on the other. We believe that wherever the graduates go, they make themselves useful, be it in colleges and universities, private companies, or federal jobs. Thus, the state benefits from the services that those schools bring. Because it is not easy. The private school sector in Turkey is challenging; there are issues with in Turkey are not easy. I see it hard too, but I also believe that the state will not overlook this. It won’t dismiss this initiative because the results are remarkable already. I don’t believe the state will turn away from this.

Q3 Here is what I think on the matter. The medium of instruction in Turkey is Turkish. All the way from kindergarten to high school the language is Turkish. However, private schools should be categorized in a different group. Public schools mandate foreign language instruction. English is mandatory. Additionally, students can elect a second language in high school. All high schools, however, mandate the learning of English first. Regarding the teaching and learning of English in public schools… student motivation, parental interest, and availability of resources are not at the desired level. Private schools make up a different case here. They have more resources, different programs, and projects in comparison to public schools. I can speak of my school here. There are foreign teachers working for Atlantic Schools. In other words, we hire native speakers. In the 5 and 6 year-old group we assign one Turkish and one foreign teacher into each class. We cannot offer bilingual education in elementary and secondary school level, but we accommodate this in the 5-6 year-old group. Namely, this is the 0-6 year-old group where
language learning occurs. We try to teach English to those children along with their native language. When these children start elementary school, we substitute their study support hours with English classes. Thus, the weekly six hour English goes up to ten. We hire native English speakers in elementary school level as well. That is in addition to the Turkish teachers we already have in class. Starting in the fourth grade, we divide students to language proficiency levels because we are aware that, similar to other learning subjects, there are students who possess skills, possess better skills, or have the best skills to learn a language. Therefore we interview and test them; we evaluate their language proficiency levels with internationally recognized testing tools. This program starts in the fourth grade and goes all the way until graduation. We also hire native English speakers through all those grades for language instruction. On top of that, starting in the sixth grade we prepare our students to international certificate programs. For instance, our school has an agreement with Cambridge University. We run a program where they begin with Starters, then proceed to Rowers, and Fliers; which eventually leads them to CAT, PAT, TOEFL preparation. Students are placed into age appropriate programs as well as according to their language proficiency. We strive for two things here; 1. If the student is to attend college in Turkey, they should be able to pass the English test and thus not lose time in the one-year language preparation program; 2. If they are to attend college abroad, they will have a language proficiency certificate recognized in those countries. For instance, we have students who intend to attend college in the U.S. next year. Our senior year students are preparing for SAT exams at the moment. They have been attending programs at Harvard University and working with people there. MIT has also accredited our school. Accordingly our students go to those universities during the winter and spring
semester to study. This is an internal leg; another additive regarding our language
teaching practices. Furthermore, we import materials we use in schools from the UK. I
mean books and other materials come from abroad. There is SELT, a company in Turkey
that markets such materials. We work with them. We mostly buy Cambridge and Oxford
publications. Our student demographics consist mostly of businessmen’s children. In
other words, 65% of students in Atlantic Schools, namely 2/3rds of the whole student
population, are children of businessmen. Children of prominent politicians, bureaucrats,
and academicians make up the rest of the student body. Among all those, we also have
students on scholarships that exceed expectations significantly in national exams. These
people do not just do business in Turkey anymore. Those who are bureaucrats do not only
work in Turkey. The businessmen do trade in numerous countries. Turkey has been on a
fast track for the past ten years. Therefore those people want to have their children know
more than one foreign language. In order to meet this demand and overcome the language
barrier as a school, we do long-term summer schools and winter schools in English
speaking countries that are mostly in the U.S., but include the UK as well. I can profess
that these schools have acquired a prominent place in education. A large number of
students are planning to go abroad to pursue education. They go abroad now; there are
many students every year. We are in constant touch with other colleges and institutions
abroad. Domestic colleges and universities established in recent years also require a one-
year language preparation period. Some of those are English. Students want to gain
access to those prestigious institutions. Therefore they need to come over the English
language barrier. In our school, French is the second foreign language. French is a core
class in our school, not an elective. Our goal is to maintain an intermediate proficiency
level in French with our students. It is more of a preparation for college level French where they can further advance in this language. Our third foreign language is an elective. Most students wish to take a third language class as well. In sum, bilingual education is offered at pre-school level in Atlantic Schools. Since Turkish is the mandatory medium of instruction in Turkey, we are unable to offer more bilingual classes. However, as I have pointed out, because we are stretching beyond our country’s borders, and since English has become a lingua franca and parents heavily demand English instruction, we teach as though we were doing bilingual education.

*Okay. Thank you very much for the opportunity. Thank you really.*

Thank you too and good luck.