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Primary school pupils' views on refugee peers: are they accepted or not?

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the situation of Syrian refugee children, their acceptance by their peers, and their socialisation with one another were examined. The research was conducted using a case study design and a qualitative research method. Twenty-nine Turkish pupils were selected using a purposive sampling method. The school with the highest number of Syrian refugee pupils was selected from the public schools in Kocaeli. Semi-structured interviews and short stories created by the researchers were used as data collection tools. The data were analysed using content analysis. Results showed that the in general, Syrian pupils were accepted by their Turkish peers. The fact that the speech of Syrians was different, and the belief among Turkish students that they were inclined to physical violence, were other results of the study.

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Introduction

Migration is a dynamic population movement with distinct social, economic, political, and cultural consequences. In recent years, multiple migrations have taken place globally due to war, famine, and political unrest. One of the most recent and notable migration waves took place in Syria due to the ongoing civil war there, with the greatest number of migrants from Syria ending up in Turkey. According to UNUCEF (2022), 3.7 million Syrians, including over 1.6 million children, presently live in Turkey. Some 680,000 of these Syrians are of school age and enrolled in Turkish schools. There are approximately 100,000 refugee children studying alongside Turkish pupils, 98% of whom are enrolled in primary schools.

Refugees may experience difficulties interacting with locals in the regions that they have emigrated to, and consequently they may feel marginalised due to different cultural and social realities in their new country (Grech and Cheng 2010). Additionally, if these refugees' basic needs for food and shelter are not adequately met, they may face additional issues adapting to the local educational system, communication expectations, and culture. Migrant children face pronounced social-emotional, medical, and educational risks. Thus, they may be

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deprived of the knowledge and skills necessary to truly thrive and to overcome difficulties in their host countries. Educating and integrating refugees into the culture of the host country may enable them to develop not only individually, but also socially. Various studies have been conducted to understand refugees' experiences, but little is known of the views from the other side. Gaining insight into the situation of refugees from the perspectives of citizens of the host countries can help facilitate integration. In the present study we focus on the experiences and opinions of Syrian pupils and their Turkish peers, asking the question: does the integration of these refugees pose problems for their local classmates?

Refugees and schooling

Discrepancies or deficiencies in refugee education can cause many hardships. Social and physical problems experienced by young migrants can disrupt their schooling and hinder their adaptation to the educational context of their new region (Vedder and Horenzcyk 2006). The failure to integrate into a new society by children who have fled from war, combined with lack of education, alienation, as well as prejudices and unemployment, may pave the way for future social problems. However, pupils and their families can more easily perceive and adjust to social rules, traditions, and culture within a structured school environment (Rah, Choi, and Nguyen 2009). If such an environment fosters positive and constructive conditions, it can improve refugee pupils' social and psychological outcomes. Conversely, a destructive school environment can heighten refugees' social exclusion (Oikonomidoy 2010). Organising activities that allow children to socialise within the school, which in turn cultivates peer relations and enables them to develop social support and empathy, can facilitate more efficient adaptation, since friendships support the development of self-confidence, socialisation, social competence, and a sense of justice in children (Nguyen-Gillham et al. 2008, Deegan 2003, Pescaru 2019).

Many challenges must be addressed to successfully integrate refugees into the social environment of the regions where they have newly settled. Awareness of cultural structures and traditions, paired with the capability to speak the language of the newly settled region, are important requirements for adaptation to such a new context. Studies have revealed that the language barrier is the most commonly faced problem by refugees, and that it can cause feelings of alienation and consequently limited communication (Akay, Hamamcı, and Kurt 2017; Başar, Akan, and Çiftçi 2018). Therefore, the academic success of refugee pupils depends, among other things, on language and communication. The greater the problems they experience in these areas, the weaker the social relations they form, creating a sense of alienation from their native peers. This situation can

set the stage for disruptive behaviour from refugee pupils, as well as provoking feelings of inadequacy and conflict (Akay, Hamamcı, and Kurt 2017; Başar, Akan, and Çiftçi 2018).

Socialisation plays an important role in child development. Although a child's relationships with his/her friends may not be as extensive as the ones with his/her family, these bonds still offer important opportunities for socialisation outside of the home (Rohrbeck et al. 2003). The relationship of a child with his/her circle of friends is very important for his/her social, psychological, and emotional development. A sense of belonging, acceptance by others, and the need to be a member of a group are among the basic components of healthy social development (Maslow 1970). Additionally, the interactions experienced one's social environment play an important role in a person's psycho-social development (see Bronfenbrenner et al. 2006). Weak relationships with peers in school can lead to loneliness, absenteeism, incompatibility with the school and its surrounding environments, and a decrease in motivation. Moreover, children who are exposed to verbal abuse or emotional violence by their peers may also experience future mental or social problems, such as exclusion (Gibb and Abela 2008; Haan 2000). Since refugee children often experience difficulties adapting to the educational system and establishing friendly relationships with their peers, their families and educators are tasked with finding remedies (Fazel et al. 2012).

One of the most essential factors influencing pupils' adaptation to their educational environment are their peers. Some researchers have observed that host pupils communicate less with groups of children who are different from them, and therefore develop negative feelings and opinions about them and the social groups they belong to (Spencer-Rodgers and Mcgovern 2002). Refugees' inadequate communication skills can also lead to prejudice against them on the part of among local pupils. Thus, refugees may feel that they do not belong to the local pupil group and may isolate themselves as a strategy (consciously or unconsciously). Directing children to appropriate behaviours such as co-operation, empathy, socialising with each other on the basis of moral and emotional solidarity, and developing healthy coping mechanisms are important roles for the school environment (Cekaite 2013; Kandemir et al. 2018). For children, the school can play a key role in developing necessary social and emotional skills, and it can provide comprehensive and coordinated programs that transfer to real-world contexts (Elias and Weissberg 2000). Most of the work in this area has investigated the status of refugees in schools; but little is known about the perspectives of members of the communities hosting these refugees. The present study examined the acceptance of Syrian refugees studying in Turkish schools, seen from the perspective of their native peers. This research sought to answer the following questions:

(1) Are the Turkish pupils aware of their Syrian classmates and their past experiences?
(2) What makes Syrian pupils different in the eyes of Turkish pupils?
(3) Are the Syrian pupils socially accepted within this context?

Methodology

This research was conducted using a case study design and qualitative methods. A case study examines one or more phenomena in-depth within their real-life framework(s), revealing common themes from these examinations (Creswell et al. 2007, Yıldırım and Şimşek 2016). The case study method was deemed appropriate for this research since it aimed to conduct an in-depth investigation of the socialisation of Syrian refugee children with their peers.

Participants

The study sample consisted of 29 third grade pupils, who were receiving education together with Syrian refugees, as well as their primary teacher. The setting was a public school in Kocaeli, a province in northwest Turkey. Since the Syrian refugees were clustered in certain schools throughout the region, the criterion sampling method, a model of sampling, was employed to identify study participants. The participants recruited for the study were: 1) Turkish pupils who were 2) studying together with Syrian refugee children. The participants were studying in two third grade classes in the public school with the highest number of refugees in the area. One teacher also volunteered to participate in the study. Both selected classes (henceforth referred to as Class 3A and Class 3B) had four Syrian pupils. The refugee pupils were present in the classroom while the research was conducted. While they responded to the questions provided, their answers are not reported in this study.

Measures

A semi-structured interview and set of stories developed by the researchers were used to collect data for the study. The interview questions and stories were formed by reviewing the relevant literature and soliciting the opinions of five different experts who specialised in refugee education. To assess whether the data collection tools were appropriate and understandable for the purpose of the study, three pupils who had been excluded from the main study were interviewed in advance and asked questions about the stories, after which the study instruments were finalised. The 25 study participants participated in face-to-face interviews with the research team, which lasted an average of ten minutes each.

Interviews were conducted in a quiet and non-invasive environment and audio recorded. The questions related to the stories were answered within two hours by the pupils in their own classrooms during normal lesson time.

The stories used in this study addressed the pupils' feelings of empathy, acceptance, and socialisation. The common themes in the stories implicitly emphasised what Syrian pupils may have experienced on their journey to Turkey, as well as their attempts to integrate into Turkish schools and social life. These stories were designed to address key difficulties that the refugees had experienced. For instance, in one story a family of squirrels had to move away from their home, while in another story a parrot spoke a different language and felt insulted by others. The main aim of each story was to place children into the shoes of refugees and to interpret whether they empathised with refugees. Thus, the stories were used to solicit the pupils' reactions and thoughts about refugees in their community. At the end of each story, the pupils were asked questions about the story, and their answers were recorded (See Appendix).

Data analysis

The study data were analysed using content analysis methods and organised by creating specific themes according to the topics that appeared. To begin this process, the researchers gathered and read all the data multiple times. After arranging the answers to both the stories and interview questions, the researchers coded them separately. The codes were then grouped to create themes, before identifying the main and sub-categories that described the codes at a general level. The main dimensions of classroom management were also taken into consideration while determining the categories. Finally, the findings were interpreted employing the induction method. To increase the reliability of the research, the data and themes were reviewed several times by both the researchers and experts in refugee education. Additionally, pupils' responses are presented in their own words whenever possible in the findings of this research, to illustrate the study concepts as faithfully as possible.

Results

Study 1

During the first round of data collection, the researcher read the stories aloud to the pupils after providing them with paper copies. The pupils were then asked questions about the stories. The findings of this exercise are explained below.

Table 1. Answers related to the squirrels' new life.

	Positive	Negative	Both
Girls	3	6	5
Boys	5	8	2
Total	8	14	7

Q1: what do you think the squirrel family faced in the neighbouring forest?

Table 1 shows the descriptive explanations according to the pupils' answers to the question about the squirrel family's experiences in the neighbouring forest where they have recently moved.

While remarks of the pupils such as '*the squirrel family cannot stay alone in the new living area, they cannot find friends and may fight with other animals*' were categorised as 'negative', responses like '*good things about squirrels and the neighbouring forest*' were evaluated as 'positive'. Reflections that highlighted both pros and cons of the situation, like '*squirrels had both good and bad experiences depending on the neighbour and area*', were evaluated as 'both'.

As seen in Table 1, most of the pupils stated that the squirrel family could not survive alone, but they also struggled to find new friends in the neighbouring forest. These results can be interpreted as reflecting social exclusion of newcomers. When children have a bad experience or when they think someone else has, they perceive it as non-acceptance by the external environment. Thus, when they empathise, they can comprehend the difficulty of such adversities when they are experienced by others. Given this context, the pupils' responses were quite clear in reflecting their peers' challenges in their new home.

Q2: do you think that the squirrels can make friends in the new forest?

Table 2 shows the descriptive explanations of the pupils' answers to the question of whether the squirrel family can make friends in their new forest.

Table 2. Answers related to squirrels' making friends.

	Positive	Negative	Uncertain
Girls	8	4	2
Boys	12	2	1
Total	20	6	3

While pupils' remarks such as the *'squirrel family cannot make friends'* were categorised as 'negative', remarks like '*they can make friends'* were categorised as 'positive' answers. The pupils who provided no response were categorised as 'uncertain'. As seen in Table 2, most of the pupils believed that the squirrel family could make friends in their new forest home. Considering the pupils' answers, Table 2 demonstrates that they have harmonious and tolerant

attitudes when it comes to personal relationships with their newcomer peers. Although it is challenging to settle in a new place, making friends in a new environment may not be as complicated as was previously thought.

Q3: what do you think the polar bear faced in its new living space?

Table 3 shows the descriptive explanations of the pupils' answers to the question about the polar bear's migration due to glacial melting.

Table 3. Answers related to the polar bear's new life.

	Positive	Negative	Both
Girls	5	7	2
Boys	7	5	3
Total	12	13	5

While remarks that '*the polar bear feels alone due to its appearance or exclusion by the brown bear*' were categorised as 'negative', answers such as '*he makes friends despite discrepancy*' were considered 'positive'. Responses like '*it had both good and bad experiences*' were considered as 'both', respectively. As seen in Table 3, 13 pupils stated that the polar bear experienced bad things in its new living environment, while 12 pupils stated that its experiences were positive. It is noteworthy that these findings were almost equally split, unlike the results of Q1. Although the pupils believed that the polar bear would experience negative situations in its new environment, like in the squirrel story, a larger number of pupils referred to positive experiences in the bear story. This result led to the following interpretations of the story characters. The bear symbolises power among animals, at least when compared to a small or weak creature like a squirrel. If we approach the responses from this point of view, when we encounter a squirrel, it will probably run away from us. However, the same may not be the case for a bear. This is because the bear is a strong and predatory animal, as portrayed in many fairy tales and movies. Thus, for these children, they perhaps perceive someone who is strong as less likely to face the same challenges as someone who is weak.

Q4: have you ever experienced this kind of situation in your school? What have you done?

Table 4 shows the explanations pupils gave to the question of whether they had experienced a situation like the polar bear's in their school.

Table 4. Experiences similar to the polar bear's situation.

	Yes			
	Positive	Negative	Uncertain	No
Girls	12	1	1	2
Boys	5	2	5	1
Total	17	3	6	3

First, the pupils were asked to provide a short yes/no response to whether they had ever experienced a situation similar to that of the polar bear. Pupils who replied 'yes' were asked to answer a second question asking how they responded to the situation. The pupils who remarked that they '*acted as a good friend and helped the newcomer*' were categorised as 'positive' respondents, while the pupils who gave responses that they '*felt uptight and fought with the new person*' were categorised as 'negative', and those who didn't provide any additional elaboration were placed in the 'uncertain' category. As seen in Table 4, the vast majority of the pupils stated that they had experienced a situation similar to the one in the story, while a few of them had not. Accordingly, most of the pupils had positive attitudes towards new peers from other countries. The Syrian refugees were mostly welcomed by their Turkish peers. Thus, it can be stated that the 3rd grade pupils in the school tended to help newcomers, and build positive relationships with refugees in their school and community.

Q5: what are the possible consequences of a parrot talking differently than other birds?

Table 5 shows interpretations of the pupils' answers to the question about the possible outcomes of a parrot talking differently than other birds in the story.

Table 5. Answers related to the parrot's speech.

	Difficulty in finding a friend and communicating with others	Bad quality of friendships, exclusion by others	No problem	Uncertain
Girls	6	6	1	1
Boys	7	3	3	2
Total	13	9	4	3

As seen in Table 5, 13 pupils stated that the parrot would have trouble finding friends and may not get along with other birds, nine pupils stated that the parrot might be excluded by other birds and their relationships could be strained, four pupils stated that it did not matter that the parrot did not speak like other birds, and three pupils gave no response. Accordingly, most pupils held the opinion that speaking a different language might cause communication difficulties. We can conclude that language barriers can cause difficulties.

Study 2

During the second round of data collection, pupils participated in structured one-on-one interviews with the researchers. The findings of these interviews are given below.

Participants' awareness of situations of refugees

In this part of the study, the Turkish pupils were asked whether they were aware of the Syrian refugees' migration, the reasons they had migrated, and the difficulties they had experienced. The interviews revealed that most of the pupils were aware that the Syrians had to leave their country due to the war and its consequences. A particularly noteworthy finding was the children's keen awareness of the phenomenon of war.

Some examples of pupils' answers included (genders indicated by 'B' for boy and 'G' for girl, respectively):

G9: '*I have friends from Syria. They ran away and couldn't get a good education there; that is why they are here now'.*

B12: '*I am so sorry for them because they lost their close relatives and friends in the war. And the police did not allow them to live in Syria'.*

Given these answers, it is obvious that the Turkish pupils are aware of the Syrians' histories and the difficulties that they had faced in their lives, as well as the obstacles that existed in their home country. The responses cannot be differentiated on the basis of gender since most of the boys and girls showed equal levels of awareness, as well as equal acceptance of their backgrounds.

Participants' opinions regarding differences

The pupils were asked how Syrians differed from themselves. Almost all the Turkish pupils stated that their Syrian peers' speech and behaviours were different. They mentioned that they were especially disturbed by Syrians' profanity, slang expressions, and disciplinary issues in school. Most of their complaints focused on the various behavioural problems associated with their Syrian classmates. Additionally, some of the natives noted that the alphabet that the refugees used was different from their own. Moreover, some pupils explained that all Syrians were not the same. One potential explanation for these responses is that these pupils did not expect their Syrian peers to have good communication skills, and some of the refugees exceeded their expectations. Thus, these pupils believed that Syrians were not so different from themselves, and that perhaps they were even better at some things. Pupils G1 and G6 noted that:

G6: *'I think their behaviour is bad. They don't obey the rules here and they are driving our teacher crazy. Their playing style and [manner of] speech are different'.*

G1: '*One of my friends from Syria is acting like they are Turkish. She hasn't attended any Turkish lessons, but she speaks it very well. I am surprised by that*'.

Social acceptance of Syrian refugees

The final interview questions focused on the social acceptance of the Syrian refugee pupils by their Turkish peers. The pupils were asked, 'What has changed since the Syrians came, and what do you think of them'? The resulting responses showed a binary pattern: pupils who were happy about the presence of the Syrians and those who were not. Most pupils made affirmative statements. Some mentioned they were pleased because they had gained more friends. Others explained that they did not get along with the Syrian children at first, but that later they became good friends. Such results are promising, since they indicate that many local children found ways to get along with their refugee peers. Some pupils did mention that their Syrian classmates played with other Syrians more frequently and avoided interactions with their Turkish peers. Such responses point to the long-term nature of cultural and social adaptation. Examples of pupils' responses include:

B10: '*Nothing happened after they came. Actually, I'm so glad because I have so many friends now*'.

G8: '*I have positive thoughts and feelings about them. I can teach them if they want. I think we will get closer in time. They sometimes play with their Syrian friends but they sometimes play with us*'.

B8: '*We invited them to play with us, but they wouldn't join us. They want to play with their friends and siblings. They usually don't join us*'.

All the pupils in class 3B stated that they accepted the Syrians and became good friends with them. It is hopeful that these Turkish pupils described very positive feelings towards the refugees in their class. Some of these pupils were also genuinely upset by the previous experiences of their new Syrian classmates. Some replies point to clear empathy with the Syrians' hardships.

B6: '*I am so curious about their lives, houses, dishes . . . I wonder if they live in a bad situation. I am upset for M (a Syrian) especially. Her father died in the war. I can't even imagine that . . . '*

One of the pupils, G10, unexpectedly expressed a grudge. She worried that the teacher cared about the refugees more than the other pupils.

G10: '*I am angry with them. Not because they invaded country, because of their behaviour. My teacher behaves so nicely to them, instead of us!*'

This response represents a noteworthy outlier, as G10's sentiments were not shared by any of the other Turkish pupils. We consider this feedback as indicative of the jealousy of a child who wants and needs her teacher's care. This feeling could reflect her feelings about the teacher or about the refugee pupils. Teachers are expected to play a major part in the acceptance of children from different cultures and backgrounds; hence, future studies like this one should also incorporate interviews with teachers, to record and interpret their thoughts about refugees in the school.

Conclusion and discussion

The present study reported on the acceptance, socialisation, and empathy of a group of Turkish pupils towards their Syrian refugee peers. The pupils' responses to several stories indicated that they thought migration to a different location could have negative and potentially dangerous consequences. Despite cultural differences, the responses of the children illustrated how they can learn from their peers' experiences, communicate effectively, live according to new social norms, and engage in intercultural experiences productively.

Turkish pupils did express that they believed it could be difficult to establish positive relations with people who spoke a different language. Many studies have focused on such language barriers between pupils (for the Turkish situation, see: Bölükbaş 2016; Türk et al. 2018; Şimşir and Dilmaç 2018). According to Taskin and Erdemli (2018), the main problems faced by Syrian pupils during their educational integration in the Turkish system can be categorised as language barriers, cultural problems, and disciplinary issues. The results of their study align with the findings of the present research.

In the one-on-one interviews, we aimed to gauge the Turkish pupils' awareness of the phenomenon of migration and the concomitant difficulties experienced by refugees. The majority of the pupils knew that the Syrians had been forced to leave their country, that they had to cope with the difficulties associated with war, and that they faced many difficulties in their new lives in Turkey. The Turkish pupils also mentioned that Syrians spoke a different language, had different handwriting and behaviours, and were more inclined to use profanity, slang expressions, and physical violence at school. Several previous studies have also pointed to violence as the most important school disciplinary issue arising from the integration of refugees (Qouta et al. 2008; Taskin and Erdemli 2018).

Two distinct groups emerged regarding the acceptance of Syrian pupils by their Turkish peers: one group that was satisfied with the presence of the Syrians, and another that voiced disapproval. Most of the children made positive statements about their Syrian refugee peers. All pupils in the 3B group had positive views of the refugees in their class – potentially because the refugees in this class were all girls who displayed fewer behavioural problems than the pupils in the other group. Though some pupils mentioned minor negative experiences throughout the study, when all the findings are taken into consideration, it becomes clear that the Turkish pupils generally had positive views about their Syrian peers. This could be due to familiar cultural characteristics, the geographical closeness of the countries, or a shared religion as well.

The enculturation of Syrian refugees can be facilitated through teachers' positive attitudes and acceptance of these migrants. Since 2017, Turkey has conducted a project called 'Promoting the Integration of Syrian Kids into the Turkish Education System (PIKTES)', which extends from the primary to the high school level. This initiative aims to train in-service teachers to help refugee children adapt to the Turkish education system, as well as to contribute to Syrian citizens' adjustment and integration by providing access to education across Turkey (PIKTES 2018). Since Syrians have settled in different parts of the country, the project has been conducted in various cities and regions.

It is also important to note the present situation of refugees as a disadvantaged group amid the COVID-19 pandemic. More than half of the refugees in Turkey have experienced difficulties accessing basic needs, such as hygiene supplies. They have also been affected by the adverse circumstances resulting from living in a country with low economic standards. These issues have compounded the difficulties that refugee pupils have experienced when transitioning to distance learning due to the pandemic. Refugee pupils faced a digital divide due to insufficient access to technological resources, such as computers and high-speed internet connections (ASAM 2020). School closures and course cancellations have posed additional obstacles, such as enrolment in Turkish language lessons. Before the pandemic, refugee children were exposed to the Turkish language in schools, which consequently created greater opportunities to develop their communication skills. However, since these children largely speak Arabic at home, they had little opportunity to practice their Turkish during the pandemic, thus causing their language skills to lapse. This could potentially widen the communication gap between refugees and their Turkish-speaking peers. The fallout from these issues will likely continue for refugee pupils and their families, even after the pandemic ends.

This study examined the acceptance of Syrian refugee pupils by their Turkish peers, to address the gap in previous research investigating the experiences of refugee children from the point of view of their host nation classmates. However, the limited sample size forms one of the most critical limitations of the study. We recommend that future research involve different age groups,

such as teenagers or kindergarten-aged children. Moreover, such studies should incorporate the perspectives of not only host nation pupils, but also those of their refugee classmates. Another limitation of this research is its focus on a single city, school, and grade level. We recommend that researchers conduct future studies in other parts of the country with larger refugee populations, as well as collecting opinions from children at other grade levels. Although the Syrian pupils in this study were well accepted by their Turkish peers, there are still critical problems to be solved in this area. The refugees involved in this study have been living in Turkey for quite some time, which could also be a limitation since these migrants and their native classmates have grown accustomed to each other. Therefore, we recommend that researchers conduct further empirical studies on the integration of refugee pupils who have come to Turkey more recently. The results of this research can play an important role in developing new teaching strategies to improve the school environment for refugees. Future research should also be designed to directly address problems faced by refugee pupils, with particular attention paid to their interactions with their native peers. Lastly, we hope that this study, and others like it, will accelerate the growth of research on refugee education in Turkey and beyond.

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

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Appendix

Story 1: There was once a squirrel family living in the biggest tree called the Great Tree, in the forest. Unfortunately one day the forest was destroyed and the Great Tree was cut down. By this way the squirrel family has to search for a new nest. As a family, they decided to live in one of the big trees in the neighboring forest. So they moved to the neighbour forest and built a new nest there.

Question 1: What do you think the squirrel family had faced in the new forest?

Question 2: Do you think baby squirrels can make friends in the new forest? Why? And have you or one of your peers ever experienced this kind of situation in your school? What have you done?

Story 2: A polar bear living in the Arctic decides that he can no longer live here because of the melting of glaciers and he starts looking for another and safer place to live. He eventually found a very far area and settled in that place. But at this region there were no polar bears, only grizzly and black bears were living there. When the gray and black bears saw the polar bear with his white fur, they thought he is different than themselves.

Question 1: What do you think the polar bear faced in his new living area?

Question 2: Have you or one of your peers ever experienced this kind of situation in your school? What have you done?

Story 3: There was once a parrot with colorful feathers, singing. But after a while she learned to speak like humans and so she no longer sing like other birds. She was just talking when all the birds were singing. This became a problem with other birds and the parrot. They began to think and see the parrot as bizarre.

Question 1: What could be the possible causes of the parrot's talking different among the other birds?