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**SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION OF BILINGUAL
CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL**

**SEKMĪGA BILINGVĀLU BĒRNU IEKĻĀUŠANĀS
PIRMSSKOLAS IZGLĪTĪBAS IESTĀDĒ**

MASTER THESIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper is devoted to the issue of successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool. The aim of the current study is to identify the key factors that enhance this inclusion. The methods of the research comprise literature review, case study on the basis of a questionnaire and expert interviews. Case study includes 8 ethnically mixed families with one Latvian parent residing in Czech Republic whose child(ren) have attended, are attending or plan to attend a preschool in the nearest future. The analysis of the obtained data identifies the major problematic areas in bilingual acquisition, bilingual parenting and the experience of inclusion of bilingual children in preschool. As a result of the study the author has developed a scheme that illustrates the key factors that could guarantee successful inclusion.

Keywords: bilingualism, bilingual education, bilingual parenting, diaspora education, family language policy.

ANOTĀCIJA

Šis darbs ir veltīts jautājumam par bilingvālu bērnu veiksmīgu iekļaušanos pirmsskolas izglītības iestādē. Pētījuma mērķis ir noteikt galvenos faktorus, kas uzlabo šo iekļaušanos. Pētījuma metodes ir literatūras analīze, gadījumu izpēte, pamatojoties uz anketu, un ekspertu intervijas. Gadījumu izpēte ietver 8 etniski jauktas ģimenes ar vienu vecāku latvieti, kuras dzīvo Čehijā un kuru bērns (bērni) ir apmeklējuši, apmeklē vai plāno apmeklēt pirmsskolas izglītības iestādi tuvākajā nākotnē. Iegūto datu analīze ļauj identificēt galvenās problemātiskās jomas divu valodu apgūvē, bilingvālajā audzināšanā un pieredzē par bilingvālu bērnu iekļaušanos bērnudārzā. Pētījuma rezultātā autore ir izstrādājusi shēmu, kas attēlo galvenos faktorus, kas varētu nodrošināt veiksmīgu iekļaušanos.

Atslēgvārdi: divvalodība, bilingvālā izglītība, diasporas izglītība, bilingvālā audzināšana, ģimenes valodas politika.

SOMMARIO

Questa ricerca è dedicata al tema del successo dell'inclusione dei bambini bilingui in scuola materna. Lo scopo del presente studio è quello di identificare i fattori chiave che migliorano l'inclusione. I metodi della ricerca comprendono la revisione della letteratura, lo studio del caso tramite un questionario e le interviste con gli esperti. Lo studio del caso comprende 8 famiglie etnicamente miste con un genitore lettone residenti in Repubblica Ceca il cui figlio(i) hanno frequentato, frequentano o intendono frequentare una scuola materna nel prossimo futuro. L'analisi dei dati ottenuti individua le aree problematiche nell'acquisizione bilingue, genitorialità bilingue e l'esperienza di inclusione dei bambini bilingui in scuola materna. Come risultato dello studio l'autrice ha sviluppato uno schema che illustra i fattori chiave che garantiscono il successo dell'inclusione.

Parole chiave: bilinguismo, genitorialità bilingue, istruzione bilingue, istruzione di diaspora, politica linguistica di famiglia.

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INTRODUCTION

Bilingualism in recent decades has seen an increased interest from researchers and scholars who have analyzed this issue in-depth, revolutionizing previous opinions.

Present paper analyzes the current literature that discusses the opportunity to expose your child to two languages from birth or preschool, discussing the highlights of some theories on learning a second language in childhood and accentuating the benefits that may result from this experience. The author tackles issues concerning the teaching methods of the second language in the family, the external and internal factors that can favor the acquisition of multiple languages and bilingual education.

As the author knows from her own personal experience, any bilingual family is unique. When two people with different mother tongues have children, the most natural thing would seem to raise them transmitting both languages. Stereotypes and prejudices can influence this choice, and frequently the attempts made by parents without much conviction can lead to failure of bilingual education project with the result that the child will know and mostly speak one language at the expense of the other, risking that the loss of a language will also accompany the dispersion of cultural heritage linked to it. Furthermore, preschool plays a crucial role in guaranteeing that both languages are valorised therefore teachers' competences should be enhanced. In order to achieve this, united education policy aimed to foster multilingualism and plurilingualism should be enacted at local, national and European level. Indeed, bilingualism is found in every country of the world, and **the aim** of the present study **is to identify the key factors for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool**. In order to achieve this goal the following **objectives** were set:

1. to analyze the literature that concerns different dimensions of bilingualism, language development in preschool bilingual children, advantages of bilingualism and bilingual education, bilingual parenting and family language policy, multilingualism and plurilingualism approach to language teaching, and diaspora educational needs;
2. to develop a case study questionnaire and identify the major problematic areas in the current situation of inclusion of bilingual children in preschool;

3. to interview a psychologist and foreign language teacher as well as expert in second language teaching in multicultural society in order to find out their views on bilingualism and inclusion of bilingual children in preschool;
4. to design a scheme that illustrates the key factors for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool.

In the current study both theoretical and empirical methods were used. The **theoretical methods** comprise studying and analyzing relevant theoretical materials. The total of 76 sources in three languages (English, Latvian and Italian) were used comprising research journals from various databases, books and official European Union and UNESCO publications.

In the **empirical part** of this paper the author explains why she has chosen **Smith's Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis paradigm** as the most suitable for this research. Consequently, **case study** was chosen as a research method and such research tools as **questionnaire** and **interviews** were carried out. The questionnaire was administered to ethnically mixed families with at least one Latvian parent residing in Czech Republic (author's place of residence) whose child (children) have attended, are attending at the moment of the study or plan to attend a preschool in the near future in order to figure out the problem areas in the inclusion of bilingual children in preschool. **The interviews** with two experts that are themselves bilingual (an Italian living in Czech Republic, a Latvian from Australia) were conducted later to deepen author's expertise in the field of study. As a result all the data gathered from the analysis of the case studies and the interviews provided a reliable basis for designing a scheme for successful inclusion of these children.

The paper consists of five chapters reflecting both the theoretical and empirical parts.

Chapter 1 deals with the problematic of defining bilingualism and explores psychological dimensions of bilingualism and bilingualism hypotheses. It also provides an overview of language development of bilingual preschool children and illustrates cognitive advantages that bilingual children may possess.

Chapter 2 investigates language acquisition process in terms of different language acquisition models, critical age and diverse memory types involved as well as describes weak and strong types of bilingual education. A best practice review for bilingual language acquisition in terms of when and how concludes this chapter.

Chapter 3 examines the concept of biculturalism and views on bilingual parenting as good parenting setting the importance of family language policy as crucial for attaining bilingualism and biculturalism.

Chapter 4 discusses the European Union's multilingualism and plurilingualism policy and stresses the key role the teachers of preschool play in children's successful inclusion. The state of art in diaspora education and diaspora educational needs are also reviewed.

Chapter 5 focuses on analyzing the present situation of bilingual families and their children in regard to inclusion in preschool in order to determine the fundamental factors to guarantee a successful inclusion.

1. BILINGUALISM AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Dwyieithrwydd

*Ymys yw'r genedl uniaith - ynys bur,
Ynys bell, anghyfaith;
Mwy croesawgar ei haraith
Ydyw un sydd a dwy iaith.*

*Hen alaw a chytelliant - a gafael
Ar gyfoeth myneglant
Trysor oes, heb loes, blant
Yw allwedd dau ddivvylliant.*

*Moe lle sbar lanth arall - yn y cof.
Mae'r cof yn anniwall:
Nid mwy yw dwy I'w deall -
Oni all un hogl'r llall?*

Bilingualism

*The country with one language is an island - a pure island.
A far, untranslatable island
The one which has two languages
Has a more welcoming speech.*

*An old melody and an accompaniment - and a grasp
Of the richness of expression.
The key to two cultures is
For children a lifelong treasure, without pain.*

*There is room for another language - in the memory.
The memory is insatiable.
Two are not harder to understand
Can one not stimulate the other?*

Iolo Wyn Williams¹

1.1. Bilingualism and its classifications

In today's ever-changing world knowledge of more than one language is seen as a valuable advantage. There is no doubt that being bilingual is a resource, not a burden. But who is a bilingual? How can a bilingual person be defined? Most people would say that a bilingual is a person who can speak two languages, but defining who is and who is not bilingual is more difficult than it seems. The scientific community has shown a lack of agreement about the answers to the following questions:

- Is bilingualism measured by how fluent people are in two languages? Do bilinguals have to be as competent in each of their two languages as monolingual speakers?

¹ These *englymion* (traditional Welsh four line verse form composed according to strict rules and including a combination of alliteration, assonance and internal rhyme) were written by the Dean of the Faculty of Education at the University of Wales, Bangor (Baker & Jones, 1998, p. x).

- If someone is less fluent in one language than the other, should that person be classed as bilingual? Are bilinguals only those people who have more or less equal competence in both languages?
- Is ability in two languages the only criterion for assessing bilingualism, or should the use of two languages also be considered?
- What about a person who can understand a second language perfectly but cannot speak it? What about a person who can speak a second language but is not literate in it? What about an individual who cannot speak or understand speech in a second language but can read and write it? Should these categories of people be considered bilingual?
- Is *bilingual* a label people give themselves? Should self-perception and self-categorization be pre-eminent? Often people who do not speak a second language very fluently, or who are not literate in that language, lack the confidence to describe themselves as bilingual.
- Is bilingualism a state that changes or varies over time and according to circumstances? Obviously a person can change from being a monolingual to being a bilingual by acquiring a second language. Can a person progress from bilingualism to monolingualism by forgetting a second language? Are there different degrees of bilingualism that can vary over time and with changing circumstances? Can a person be more or less bilingual? (Baker & Jones, 1998)

The above questions indicate that there is no simple definition of bilingualism. Baker and Jones (1998) state that bilingualism involves a number of dimensions (see table nr.1.1)

Table 1.1.

Dimensions of bilingualism

1. Distinction between ability in language and use of language.	A person may be able to speak two languages, but tends to speak only one language in practice or a person may regularly speak two languages but has a fluency in one language. This is sometimes referred to as the difference between competence (proficiency) and function (actual use).
2. Proficiency in a language may vary across the four language skills of	An individual may use one language for conversation and be fluent in speaking that language. However, the person switches to another language for reading and writing. Another person may understand a second language very well in its spoken and written

speaking, listening, reading and writing.	form, but may not be able to speak or write it well. Such a person has a passive or receptive competence in a second language.
3. Few bilinguals are equally proficient in both languages.	One language tends to be stronger and better developed than the other. This is described as the dominant language. It is not always the first or native language of the bilingual.
4. Few bilinguals possess the same competence as monolingual speakers in either of their languages.	The reason for this is that bilinguals use their languages for different functions and purposes
5. A bilingual person's competence in a language may vary over time and according to changing circumstances.	A person may learn a minority language as a child at home and then later acquire another, majority language in the community or at school. Over time, the second language may become the dominant language. If that person moves away from the area where the minority language is spoken, or loses contact with those who speak it, he or she may lose fluency in the minority language.

These five main issues show how difficult it would be to create any all-inclusive definition of a bilingual person. They also show that many degrees of bilingualism may exist, sometimes varying in the same person over time.

1.1.1. Psychological dimensions of bilinguality

Because of the complexity of the bilingualism, researchers have examined the issue from many points of view creating many different definitions for the same phenomenon. According to model proposed by Hamers (2004) bilingualism can be categorized in various dimensions.

Table 1.2.

Psychological dimensions of bilinguality

Cognitive organization	Coordinate bilingualism	2 representations and 2 meanings (in L1 and L2)
	Compound bilingualism	2 representations and 1 meaning (in L1 and L2)
	Subordinate bilingualism	Access to L2 subordinated to L1
Linguistic competence	Dominant bilingualism	Competence L1 > or < L2
	Balanced bilingualism	Competence L1=L2

Age of acquisition	Simultaneous bilingualism	L1 and L2 from birth
	Consecutive bilingualism	L2 introduced later
Social status of languages	Additive bilingualism	Complementarity L1 and L2
	Subtractive bilingualism	Competition between L1 and L2
	Elite bilingualism	Choice by a dominant group
	Folk bilingualism	Necessity or obligation for adaptation in community
Linguistic presence in territory	Exogenous bilingualism	Absence of L2 in the community
	Endogenous bilingualism	Presence of L2 in the community

Cognitive organization. Linguist Weinrich (1968) has described three types of bilingualism which, according to the author, correspond to different cognitive organizations (see figure 1.1). **Coordinate bilingualism** is developed in situations where two languages are learned in two different environments so individual words of the two languages are kept separate and have their own specific meaning. An example would be a person who has learned a language at home and then learned a second language in school. It is believed that in this case two independent linguistic systems are developed and that the speaker could choose the best communication strategy because the Italian word *libro* and the Latvian word *grāmata* ('book') would each have their own meaning. On the contrary, the **compound bilingualism** develops when an individual learns two languages in the same context where they are used simultaneously. In this case there the representations of the two languages would merge in child's brain. Child knows both terms *libro* and *grāmata*, but will have one common meaning for both. A representation of languages merge in the brain and are interdependent. According to this distinction there would be two different ways to process the two languages, the development of which would be intrinsically linked to age and type of exposure to the second language. However, this hypothesis has never been demonstrated scientifically since most of the observed bilingual speakers do not fall into one of two types categorically. A speaker can have a semantic organization of coordinated type for some concepts and have a composite type for another. Thus, it is concluded that an exclusively coordinated or composite bilingualism does

not exist. The third type, **subordinated bilingualism**, refers to a context where the subject has access to second language (L2) through the first language (L1) (Hamers, 2004)

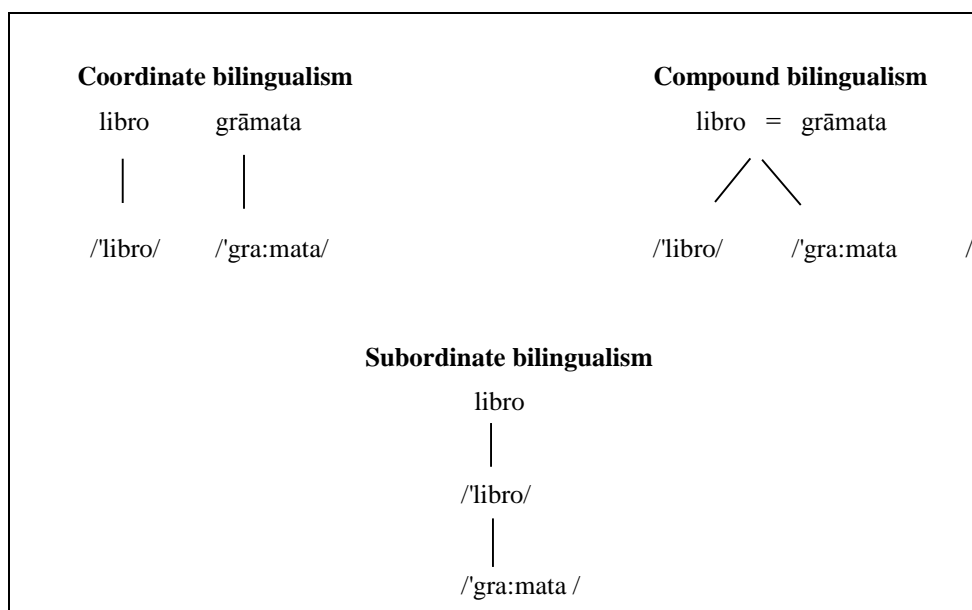


Figure 1.1. Coordinate, compound and subordinate bilingualism

Language proficiency degrees. The term **balanced bilingualism** is used to describe the same level of proficiency in both languages. It is considered ideal bilingualism because, in fact, no speaker can „possess” both languages 100%. From this assumption a clarification can be made that the term *balanced bilingualism* does not necessarily refer to a high degree of expertise, rather it is a balance reached between the two languages. On the other hand, **dominant** is the one who has a greater command of one language over the other; usually it is used in the early stages of bilingualism when the first language is stronger and preferred. Dominance and balance are not distributed in all the fields of language and functions in the same way. Indeed, every speaker has its own dominance profile linked to factors such as the context, age and exposure to languages (Hamers, 2004).

Age of acquisition of languages. An important factor that should be considered in defining the types of bilingualism is when the two languages were learned. In this case a distinction between simultaneous and consecutive bilingualism arises. **Simultaneous bilingualism** means that the languages are learned at the same time, that is, the child is exposed to both from birth. In **consecutive bilingualism** the second language is acquired after the first has been learned. Between

the two modes of acquisition, one that seems to lead to the proficiency similar to a native speaker is the simultaneous bilingualism. However, it must be pointed out that the age of acquisition alone will not guarantee success. Other factors that are crucial include the amount of exposure to the language and the stability of the communication strategy implemented by parents, concepts that author will see in greater detail in the next chapters (Hamers, 2004).

Social status of languages. Additive bilingualism is the one that offers opportunities for social development and that brings positive elements to child's development. It is called complementarity of both languages. The high social status of both languages will be an excellent element for the success of bilingualism, allowing the child to develop even greater cognitive flexibility. **Subtractive bilingualism**, on the contrary, does not offer resources and puts the speaker at a disadvantage. It is a situation of competition between the two languages. The prestigious language would suppress the native language, limiting the use to circumstantial situations. This form often evolves when an individual from a linguistic minority rejects his or her roots in favor of the culturally and economically stronger popular language (Lambert, 1974). Another useful distinction, proposed by Gaarder (1976) is between elite and folk bilingualism. **Elite bilingualism** refers to the middle or upper-class, generally with a good cultural level, that has made a conscious choice to become (themselves and their children) bilingual. Elite bilingualism is a means to achieve economically and culturally elevated positions. This type contrasts with **folk bilingualism** that refers to the conditions of the ethnic groups that have had to become bilingual in order to survive, so folk bilingualism very often is linked to mass immigration and historical changes.

Linguistic presence in the territory. According to the presence or absence of a community of speakers of L2, a distinction is made between **endogenous bilingualism**, where it is possible to trace both linguistic communities, and **exogenous bilingualism**, where just one language is present. The terms of presence and absence can also refer to the actual functions performed by the two languages in the community. In this case, the exogenous language is the one that, despite being recognized as official and used in institutional centers, is not spoken by the community in their daily lives (Hamers, 2004).

The author concludes that the diverse dimensions of bilingualism is a very complex issue and each bilingual person may possess a different set of them. Moreover, these dimensions may

vary in the same person over time. The ideal set, according to the author, would be compound (as it does not exist in exclusive form, then subordinate), balanced, simultaneous, additive and endogenous bilingualism.

1.1.2. Bilingualism hypotheses

Cultural differences must be taken into consideration as academic results appear to differ according to culture and society where some functions may be regarded desirable whereas in others they may not. In other words, values differ between cultures. Accordingly, children are taught and brought up in diverse environments with various methods which could influence the way in which measures are taken and the values attributed to certain language functions. In an attempt to identify the reasons why some bilinguals fail to achieve high academic results in school, Cummins (1984) introduced two theories.

He suggested that at the beginning of exposure to the second language (L2), the competence in L2 is a „function of the mother tongue” which he called the **Developmental Interdependence Hypothesis**. This hypothesis suggests that at the beginning of L2 exposure, L2 competence is a function of the competence of L1. If L1 language functions are adequately developed at the onset of L2 exposure, the child is likely to achieve high competence in L2 without affecting L1 in a negative manner. Conversely, if L1 is insufficiently developed when bilingual education begins, L2 competence will become low. In short, L1 and L2 literacy skills are, according to Cummins, interdependent (Cummins, 1984).

Cummins’ second explanation, **Minimal Threshold of Linguistic Competence Hypothesis**, holds that a threshold, or a certain level of linguistic competence in L1, must be crossed before the beginning of L2 education in order to prevent negative influence on cognitive development. If a child reaches this threshold, there will be no negative effects on his or her cognitive development. However, if the child fails to reach the first level (or threshold) he or she will not succeed in reaching average competence in each language. Furthermore, in order for cognitive growth to accelerate and be positive, a second and higher level of linguistic competence must be attained. Without reaching this level of increased competence, the influence will not become positive but remain neutral. This means that following sufficiently developed language

functions in L1, competence in L2 will benefit given that the child's exposure to L2 is adequate. Consequently, these hypotheses suggest that the cognitive functions acquired in L1 can be transferred to L2, and vice versa. In other words, high levels of competence in L1 enhance L2 acquisition and high levels of L2 competence positively affect L1 development (Cummins, 1984).

Cummins' hypotheses can be useful as they attempt to explain how bilingualism can be destructive as well as productive and beneficial for the child depending on his or her environment. If social surroundings are adequate and equally encourage the use of both languages (equally valorised), the child will benefit in his or her cognitive development. This is in turn important when considering the ways in which a child should be raised in a bilingual environment and sheds a light on the significance of parents' language behaviour and valorisation which appears to transfer onto the child.

However, there is data reporting these hypotheses being insufficient. According to Hakuta and Diaz (1985), a study revealed that the degree of bilingualism could predict cognitive changes in children who had low L2 proficiency, whereas such changes were less likely to occur to children with higher L2 proficiency. Based on these results, Diaz claims that an alternative hypothesis needs to be presented in order to explain how the degree of bilingualism predicts cognitive variance only before a certain level of second-language proficiency has been achieved. Lee also criticizes the hypotheses arguing that basing bilingual and monolingual cognitive performance on cognitively advantaged/disadvantaged conceptualization is not requisite. Instead, other factors should be taken into consideration, such as intellectual functioning combined with social context and its support system for acquiring linguistic and academic skills. These should be looked at as factors responsible for different performances on cognitive criteria (Lee, 1996).

As already mentioned, socio-cultural factors are big influences on bilingual children's scholastic and linguistic achievements, whether it is in positive or negative ways. In minority groups where one language is less valued than the other, supposedly poor academic results can be traced to socio-cultural considerations but only up to certain parameters. Many children come from diverse cultural backgrounds where L1 is not valorised in their school environment and yet many of them do not suffer from any cognitive or linguistic disadvantages. According to Hamers (2004) immigrant children who are not below average socio-economic standards perform just as well as

monolinguals on cognitive and linguistic tests. Attempting to explain these results, Hamers & Blanc (2000) introduced the **Socio-cultural and Cognitive Interdependence Hypothesis** (see figure 1.2). The two dimensions necessary in order for a child to attain an additive type of bilingualism are the development of language in its cognitive use and the valorisation of language and its functions. The differences between subtractive and additive bilingualism are considered on a continuum which are resultants of two dimensions. One dimension represents the cognitive aspects of language where the other concerns the amount of valorisation the child and society attach to language.

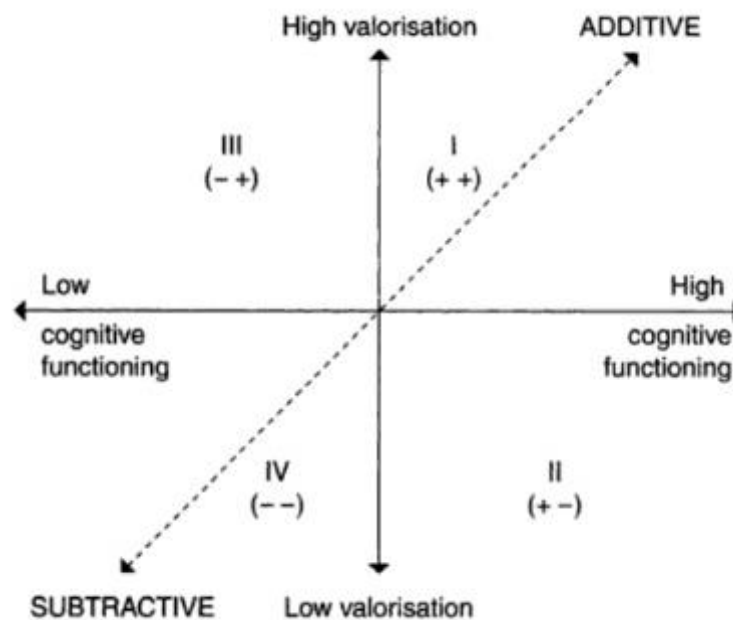


Figure 1.2. Sociocultural interdependence hypothesis

At the additive end of the continuum the child and society have attached high valorisation to the language and its cognitive function. More specifically, the ability to analyse language and control linguistic cues is well developed (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). On the opposite end of the continuum, the subtractive end, is a child who has not developed any literacy related skills in his or her first language which is also a devalued language. This child is required to attain these particular literacy skills in the second language which is the more valorised language in society but not the child's first language and so he or she has little or no knowledge in the particular language. Therefore, the child is more likely to develop a subtractive form of bilingualism. Hamers

and Blanc offer three reasons why a bilingual in subtractive situation scores less on cognitive demanding tasks:

- 1) because of the low valorisation attached by society to the child's L1, he or she has difficulties in perceiving the two languages as interchangeable and in turn incapable of using them for socially valorised functioning;
- 2) cognitive demanding tasks are introduced exclusively in the majority language, L2; the child may consider L2 as the only language appropriate for cognitive functioning;
- 3) the child is required to learn new language forms for language functioning he or she has not yet developed, as opposed to learning functioning before acquiring the form as is the case in first language development (Hamers & Blanc, 2000).

In summary, as a consequence of the increased attention given to bilingualism and improved methodology, most research indicate a positive effect of bilingualism on children's cognitive development. Some studies have demonstrated an increased cognitive flexibility; others have suggested better results on tasks requiring high control, selective attentional control, enhanced executive control and inhibitory control. All these factors have been investigated by researchers and supported by empirical evidence. Despite most studies illustrating positive effects of bilingualism on cognitive development, some demonstrate the opposite where the outcome is negative. These negative effects mostly affect children's vocabulary as bilinguals have been reported to have poorer vocabulary than their monolingual counterparts. It can be concluded that there is a strong link between balanced bilingualism and better academic results. Author also concludes that bilingualism has many complicated factors which need to be taken into consideration when investigated. Although the research up to date has not investigated all possible aspects of bilingualism it certainly is a valuable input in getting one step closer to understanding the field a little bit better.

1.2. Language development in preschool bilingual children

At times parents, teachers or other adults who are in contact with bilingual children worry whether a child is developing normally. Sometimes bilingual child may have a speech or language problem requiring intervention, but often worries may simply be based on a lack of understanding about how normal bilingual children develop. Specialists should accurately distinguish between

children whose development falls within the normal range of individual variation and, therefore, does not require special intervention and children whose development is pathological or impaired. In order to do accomplish this distinction, it is essential that they understand the normal variations of bilingual acquisition and how it is different (or the same) from monolingual development.

In this section, author provides a brief tutorial on the results of recent research about language development in preschool bilingual children.

Before turning to the research, it is important to point out that there is a variety of circumstances in which children become bilingual from parents, grandparents, childcare workers, or peer groups who speak different languages, and these different circumstances can influence child's proficiency. Their proficiency in each language can depend on a variety of factors including community support for bilingualism, the children's feelings of identity with the languages being learned and with the members of the language communities associated with those languages, sources of the two languages (e.g., from a source that makes it clear that different languages are valued and useful), the history of contact between the two languages and language groups, and the socio-economic status of the family (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997).

Unfortunately, despite the diversity of language learning contexts, most research has focused on middle-class families in which one parent usually speaks one language with the child while the other parent usually speaks another language, the so-called one parent-one language context (De Houwer, 1990; Lanza, 1992; Leopold, 1949; Quay, 1995; Volterra & Taeschner, 1978). Although research in such context can provide valuable insights, it is probably not the most common context worldwide in which children become bilingual. Indeed, there has been research in other contexts and author makes references to them in the next section (for example, see Vihman (1985) for a study that examined families that did not use the one parent-one language pattern; and (Genesee et al., 1995; Paradis & Genesee, 1996) for studies that included families from different socioeconomic backgrounds).

In the following sub-sections, author presents an overview of the basics of preschool bilingual development based on current research findings. The overview is organised in three topics: a) code-mixing, b) developmental milestones, and c) socio-cultural factors.

1.2.1. Code-mixing

Almost all children who grow up bilingually code-mix at some time. *Code-mixing* is „the use of two languages in a single unit of discourse, such as an utterance or a conversation” (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997, p. 259). Code-mixing includes:

- intra-utterance mixing - the use of two languages in a single utterance (for example, the utterance „*doggy andato*” ('doggy gone') has an English word and an Italian word);
- inter-utterance mixing - the use of different languages for different utterances in the same conversation („*give me some milk*” when the conversation is mainly in Italian) (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997).

When adults use two languages in a single unit of discourse, it is commonly referred to as *code-switching*, a term that implies that their use of the two languages is deliberate and systematic. Author therefore has decided to use the more general term *code-mixing* when referring to children because differentiation between deliberate and accidental code-mixing is impossible for children.

Children's rates of code-mixing vary widely. Redlinger and Park (1980) found that rates of code-mixing in bilingual children ranged from 0% to 45% and there was no relationship between the children's rates of code-mixing and their ages. The lowest rates of code-mixing were reported for a bilingual girl at 2;2 and 2;4 (Köppe & Meisel, 1995) while the highest rate of code-mixing was for a bilingual girl at 2;1 (Lanza, 1992). Although rates of inter-utterance mixing are less commonly reported, a similarly wide range seem to occur. Rates of inter-utterance mixing in two-year old French-English bilingual children ranged from 70% of total utterances to 0% (Genesee et al., 1995). It is clear from these findings that a virtually all bilingual children code-mix therefore it is a typical or normal aspect of bilingual development and there are large individual differences in rates of code-mixing.

The most frequent explanation as to why bilingual children code-mix is that they have a single or unitary language system (ULS) that does not distinguish between the two languages. Volterra and Taeschner (1978) have presented the most explicit form of this hypothesis. Drawing on data from three bilingual children, they suggested that there are three developmental stages in bilingual acquisition:

- stage I - all aspects of the children's two languages are undifferentiated; code-mixing is extensive;
- stage II - single lexicon but differentiated syntactic systems so that bilingual children are likely to use the syntactic structures of one language but words from both languages in the same utterance;
- stage III - there are distinct syntactic and lexical systems and thus very little code-mixing.

According to this view, it is only when children reach stage III that they are truly bilingual (Volterra & Taeschner, 1978). Above mentioned research is a clear contradiction to the ULS hypothesis because children's rates of code-mixing do not necessarily decrease with age. Furthermore, research has shown that there is evidence against the ULS hypothesis on all levels of linguistic analysis - phonological, lexical, syntactic and pragmatic. Research has shown that instead of initially confusing their two languages, bilingual children differentiate their languages from very early in development (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997).

Author now turns to the evidence for language differentiation in terms of phonological, lexical, syntactic, and pragmatic development.

Phonological Differentiation. Recent research has reported lack of phonological differentiation in the early word productions of bilingual children, suggesting a unitary phonological system. For example, Schnitzer and Krasinski (1994) found that a Spanish-English bilingual boy initially used the same set of consonants in producing Spanish and English words, and first showed phonological differentiation only at 2;3 and almost complete differentiation of consonants by 2;7. In contrast, this boy's vowels were always pronounced as clear approximations of the adult models in both languages.

In contrast to these findings, Ingram (1981) examined a two-year old Italian-English bilingual girl. On the basis of clear phonological differences in adult Italian and English, he predicted that the child would use more reduplicated syllables (baba, didi, gogo) in Italian than in English and more closed syllables (syllables that end in a consonant) in English than in Italian. He found that the girl's rate of reduplication was twice as high in Italian as English, and her use of closed syllables was more than twice as high in English as Italian. He concluded that „there is

evidence for two phonological systems in the sense that there are specific tendencies in the output that help identify words as belonging to one lexicon or the other” (Ingram, 1981, p. 103).

To sum up, bilingual children’s early phonological development can be interpreted as an initial lack of differentiation between languages, but this may reflect a universal pattern of acquisition exhibited by all language learners and may not be a lack of differentiation per se. Nicoladis and Genesee (1997) conclude that bilingual children have two distinct systems of pronunciation at least from the time they know 50 words, the same time that monolingual children’s phonology is thought to become systematic.

Lexical differentiation. There is evidence that bilingual children know translation equivalents (words in each language that refer to the same concept) soon after they begin to talk. Vihman (1985) reported that 10% of her Estonian-English bilingual son’s vocabulary was translation equivalents when he was 1;2 (a month after he started to say words). Quay (1995) examined a Spanish-English bilingual child’s translation equivalents from 1;5 to 1;10. The child had a stable rate of translation equivalents - about 40% of her vocabulary was in translation equivalents. Genesee, Nicoladis and Paradis (1995) compared the rate of translation equivalents in the first 50 words of 4 bilingual children’s vocabulary and the rate of synonyms in the first 50 words of monolingual children’s vocabulary. They found that there was no significant difference between bilingual children’s rates of translation equivalents and monolingual children’s rates of synonyms. Thus, it seems that in the beginning of language production, bilingual children might think that their translation equivalents are synonyms in the same language.

In short, bilingual children can know two words that refer to the same concept from very early in language development, possibly soon after they begin speaking. The author concludes that if there is a period in which they do not know that the words belong to two different languages, it is very early in language development, up to the first 50 words.

Syntactic differentiation. It seems that bilingual children use two distinct syntactic systems from the time there is evidence of syntax in their productions (children must be using verbs in order for their syntax to be described). Research has shown that bilingual children use the appropriate word order, pronoun forms, placement of negative markers relative to the verb, and complementizers in subordinate clauses for both of their languages starting as early as 1;11 (Paradis & Genesee, 1996).

General conclusion is that bilingual children acquire differentiated syntactic systems as early as the time they start using recognisable syntax. Furthermore, there is no reason to expect that the two syntaxes of a bilingual child will be exactly like those of two monolingual children because, by definition, the children's acquisition situations are different (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997) .

Pragmatic differentiation. An early form of pragmatic differentiation in bilingual children would be the use of the appropriate language with different interlocutors, for example, a Latvian-Italian bilingual child who speaks Latvian to Latvian speakers and Italian to Italian speakers.

Nicoladis and Genesee (1996) examined the language use of four French-English bilingual children in interaction with their parents from the time they were about 1;7 until they were about 3;0. Almost all bilingual children are more proficient, or dominant, in one of their languages and, infact, all children examined by Nicoladis and Genesee used more often their dominant language when talking to each parent. However, between 1;9 and 2;4, the children started to use more of their interlocutor's language.

Another way to test pragmatic differentiation without the possible interference of language dominance is to examine how they use translation equivalents with speakers of different languages („casa" to Italian speakers and „house" to English speakers). Studies conducted by Quay (1995) and Nicoladis and Genesee (1996) that have examined bilingual children's use of translation equivalents have shown that around the age of 1;7 to 2;4, they use almost all words for which they know translation equivalents appropriately. Bilingual children are able to make immediate adjustments in language use based on minimal prior knowledge.

Nicoladis and Genesee (1997) conclude that bilingual children may use whatever resources they have in both languages to express themselves until they acquire sufficient resources in each language to use only one at a time. On the one hand, pragmatic rules can vary among families and even within a family. Lanza (1992) gives an example of this: parents of a bilingual child in the beginning are happy that he or she can talk at all, so they are satisfied with any production, no matter what language, but, as a child gets older and gains proficiency in both languages, the parents may become more strict about one parent-one language rule.

Possible explanations for code-mixing. If language differentiation occurs at the beginning of language development, why do bilingual children code-mix? The research in the last 30 years has proven that the unitary language system hypothesis proposed by Volterra and Taeschner in

1978 is not correct. Nicoladis and Genesee (1997) offer two kinds of explanations for bilingual children's code-mixing:

- child-based explanations;
- input based explanations.

All **child-based explanations** have one common aspect - whether or not bilingual children know a translation equivalent in the language that they are trying to speak. According to this assumption, children code-mix because they do not know a particular word or expression in the language they are speaking. This idea has never been tested because the evidence would be only negative (Vihman, 1985). However, failure to find evidence of translation equivalents for code-mixed words is not very strong evidence in favour of this explanation because the children may have just chosen not to say that word at that time.

Leopold (1949) has pointed out that almost all bilingual children are dominant, or more proficient, in one of their languages, but dominance in one language implies a lack of translation equivalents in the other language, for example, an Italian-dominant bilingual child might know a lot of words in Italian for which he or she has no translation equivalents in Latvian. At least until 3;6 bilingual children tend to code-mix more when speaking to the parent who speaks their weaker language, supporting the idea that they code-mix when they do not have translation equivalents (Genesee et al., 1995; Lanza, 1992).

Bilingual children sometimes have domain-specific knowledge in one language only, for example, the words for colour might be learned in one language before they are learned in the other, so any time a bilingual child wanted to speak about that particular domain, he or she would use a particular language (De Houwer, 1990).

Author's observations show that adults sometimes have favourite words or phrases in one language and use them when speaking other languages. Research shows that these favourite words and phrases may be common among bilingual children as well, especially when translation equivalents do not exist in the other language. Nicoladis and Genesee (1997) give an example of French-English bilingual children they have observed. The French word „dodo” meaning *nap*, *sleep*, or *sleeping*, was commonly used even when children were speaking English because there is no simple translation in English. Authors suggested that „lack of translation equivalents might explain a lot of children's code-mixing, but it cannot explain all of their code-mixing” (p. 262).

Children occasionally code-mixed even when they have a translation equivalent. Bilingual adults occasionally code-mix for stylistic effect and not because they do not know a translation equivalent. There is no reason to think that bilingual children might not code-mix for stylistic effect as well (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997).

Input-based explanations. It is commonly assumed by researchers that bilingual children code-mix a lot if their parents code-mix a lot, but there is little evidence concerning the relationship between parental and children's rates of code-mixing. Parents in bilingual families are often advised to follow a one parent-one language rule in order to minimise their children's code-mixing. The evidence that exists suggests that the effect of parental code-mixing on children's rates of code-mixing may interact with children's proficiency in their two languages and the sociolinguistic context in which the family lives. Nicoladis and Genesee (1996) examined the relationship between child and parental code-mixing in seven bilingual French-English families in Montreal when the children were 2;0, 2;6, 3;0, and 3;6. They found that the rates of parental and child code-mixing did not correlate at 2;0 and 2;6 but did correlate at 3;0, and 3;6. Furthermore, they showed that children's language dominance was an important factor in their code-mixing at all ages - they code-mixed more when speaking their weaker language. They speculated that bilingual children must have a certain level of proficiency in both languages before they can learn the pragmatic rule to avoid code-mixing. Further evidence for this speculation was seen in lower rates of code-mixing between 2;6 and 3;0 in the two children who were relatively balanced in proficiency of their two languages.

Another way in which input might influence children's code-mixing is through parental speech. By responding to children's code-mixing as a valid form of communication, parents might indicate to children that code-mixing is acceptable and allow it to continue. In contrast, if parents respond to children's code-mixing by correcting their language choice or by pretending that they have not understood, they might discourage children's code-mixing (Lanza, 1992). Lanza has reported evidence for it in the case of a Norwegian-English bilingual child being raised in Norway, but Nicoladis and Genesee (1996) reported no link between parental response strategies and the code-mixing of French-English bilingual children being raised in Montreal, so this issue requires more investigation.

Nicoladis and Genesee (1997) point out that other factors that may contribute to children's code-mixing are their temperament, their willingness to accept a monolingual context, and ease of access to translation equivalents. The effect of input on children's code-mixing might not be seen until the age of three years. If the primary explanation of children's code-mixing is that they lack translation equivalents, then code-mixing can be seen as a creative approach and effective use of the language for communicating with others.

In summary, author concludes that learning two languages simultaneously is just as „normal” as learning one. Bilingual children differentiate their languages phonologically, lexically, syntactically, and pragmatically from the age of two years or even earlier. The only domain in which there is some evidence of differentiation is pragmatic, that is, choosing the „right” language with interlocutors. Bilingual children use their developing languages differentially and appropriately with different interlocutors starting around the age of two years, although there is considerable individual variation.

1.2.2. Developmental milestones

The question that often arises when dealing with bilingual children is whether there is any effect of bilingualism on language development in general. Nicoladis and Genesee (1997) suggest that there are three logical possibilities about the difference between bilingual and monolingual language acquisition:

- bilingual acquisition delays language development;
- bilingual acquisition speeds it up;
- there is no difference.

Since bilingual children learn one more language than monolingual children, it is widely believed that their language development is slower in both languages. On the other hand, parents of bilingual children often argue that having two words for a single concept might increase children's awareness of language and enhance their development. It is also possible that learning two languages has no significant effect in comparison to learning one language. The greatest challenge in research comparing monolingual and bilingual development is that even monolingual children show wide individual variation so a study should include a large number of both monolingual and bilingual children so that differences between individuals would not compromise any differences

between groups. Since this kind of research has not been done, author in this section reviews the existent evidence comparing monolingual and bilingual children.

Parents report that bilingual and monolingual children **say their first word** at approximately the same age. In a review of previous studies, Nicoladis and Genesee (1997) state that parents of bilingual children have reported the age of the first word somewhere between 6 and 13 months, with an average around 11 or 12 months, while a study by Capute et al. (1986) of 448 monolingual English-speaking children showed that the children's first words were produced on average at the age of 11.3 months, with a standard deviation of 2.3.

Bilingual and monolingual children have a **vocabulary of 50 words** at approximately the same age. Nicoladis and Genesee (1997) in a review of previous reserach conclude that bilingual children reach a vocabulary of 50 words between 18 and 21 months of age, while monolingual children reach this milestone at an average age of 18.5 months, with a range of 15 to 22 months. Capute et al. (1986) reported an average age of 20.9 months and a standard deviation of 3.2 months for the 448 English-speaking children in their study.

In terms of **overall size of vocabulary**, bilingual children have half the vocabulary in each language as an average monolingual child, at least until the age of four years. However, when the vocabulary in both languages is counted together, the size of the receptive vocabulary of bilingual children is the same or higher than that of monolingual children. These results suggest that there may be cognitive limits to the overall size of children's vocabulary at least in the preschool years (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997).

As for syntax, bilingual children like monolingual children pass through a one-word stage, then a two-word stage before forming multi word sentences. For any syntactic structure studied, the age at which it is acquired has been reported to be within the range for monolingual children (Paradis & Genesee, 1996; Vihman, 1985).

In summary, the comparison between bilingual and monolingual children's language development shows that there is no outstanding difference in the main language acquisition milestones of bilinguals and monolinguals. Bilingual children are not neither significantly delayed nor significantly advanced in any aspect of language development when comparing with the norms for monolingual children.

However, Nicoladis and Genesse (1997) point out some problematic issues concerning the research that focuses on developmental milestones. Bilingual children may seem delayed if only one of their languages is considered. For example, a child's first word in Latvian might be at the age of 11 months while her first word in Italian could be at 14 months so the child may seem delayed in Italian. Language dominance could be a valid explanation in this case - it is likely that this child heard more Latvian than Italian and, therefore, it is no surprise that her Latvian proficiency was more advanced than her Italian. Language dominance is extremely common in bilingual children and can shift very rapidly for young children therefore it is essential that the two languages of bilingual children are considered simultaneously bearing in mind language dominance and preference. Otherwise bilingual children may appear to be delayed compared to monolingual children.

Another aspect of children's language development that should be analyzed is the context of acquisition. Although this aspect has not been studied extensively, a widely-spread assumption is that monolingual children differ in language development depending on their families' background (working-class or middle-class). The author believes that it would be interesting to find out if there is a correlation in bilingual children's language development if their family is from working-class or middle class background and compare these results to those of monolingual children.

To sum up, there is no evidence that bilingual acquisition slows down language development. Although bilingualism apparently has no significant effect on children's language development, some advantages in cognitive development, for example, metalinguistic awareness, are enhanced by bilingualism. They will be reviewed in detail in the section 1.3. *Advantages of bilingualism*.

1.2.3. Socio-cultural factors and language valorisation

Learning a language or two languages means more than learning just linguistic structures. It also includes learning how to use the language in order to communicate and interact appropriately and effectively with others.

There are different ways of using language depending on the nature of the social situation, event, or interaction: face-to-face conversations are different from telephone conversations, talk between children is different from talk between children and adults; talk between close friends is

different from talk between strangers; and so on. When children learn the language, they learn the ways of expressing themselves and communicating with others in the social situations that are typical and important in their families and communities.

Language serves as a tool for both communicative and cognitive purposes. It does not have an independent existence but is used as basis for a meaningful overall behaviour which is considered appropriate in a given culture. Consequently, as language behaviour can be regarded as an outcome of societal factors on the individual level, so can language behaviour at the societal level be considered an outcome of individual language behaviour. Evidently, between these two types of language behaviours are constant interactions in which language valorisation plays a central role (Hamers, 2004). Hamers defines the concept of valorisation as „the attribution of certain positive values to language as a functional tool, that is as an instrument that will facilitate the fulfilment of social and cognitive functioning at all societal and individual levels” (Hamers, 2004, p.72). Norms and values are attributed to language by the people and the culture in which they exist. Families and other networks encourage certain language behaviours through language valorisation and institutions enforce norms which are prevalent in the society. Therefore, language behaviour is controlled by these values and norms which vary between different cultures. As a consequence, a child’s social environment adopts the appropriate language behaviour as implied by the culture in which they live, which the child then learns to value and put into function, or dismiss.

The ways parents use language with infants and children are closely related to their cultural beliefs about the status and role of children in society, the social organisation of caregiving, and understanding of how children learn language (Schieffelin & Eisenberg, 1984). In some cultures, children are not seen as appropriate conversational partners for adults and that the ability to learn language is not associated with the child’s active use of language. In these cultures, young children are usually not expected nor encouraged to initiate topics of conversation that are self-focused, and they are not encouraged to talk before a certain age (Schieffelin & Eisenberg, 1984). Children are often expected to learn by listening to and observing adults that demonstrate the behaviour or skill to be learned (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986).

On the contrary, in most Western cultures children are viewed as appropriate conversational partners for adults and it is believed that language learning is related to the child’s active use of language. Children are encouraged to talk with adults and to talk about themselves and

conversation topics for parents are often child-centred. So-called *babytalk* (a modified form of language) is simplified and repetitive and enhances the child's verbal skills.

In this vein, it is a child's environment, his or her social network, which serves as the most influential factor in a child's language behaviour and determines which features of a language the child will learn to appreciate and value. If one language is devalued in a bilingual child's social environment, the child will most likely value more the higher esteemed language and disregard the other, which in turn determines the type and level of L1 or L2 proficiency the child will develop (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). In this way, a child's social network plays a paramount role in the process of bilingual development. According to Hamers and Blanc (2000), a social network includes all interpersonal relations established by an individual. This means that a child's network consists of all the people with whom they interact in their closest environment, such as family, school and kindergarten, and can therefore be of various sizes. For example, a child who has many siblings, goes to school and plays sports most likely interacts with more people than an only child living on a farm. Therefore, social network sizes vary according to the child in question. Hamers (2004) mentions a mixed-lingual, well educated family in which both parents use each of their languages in communicating with the child. In this environment, both languages are used for social purposes, basic communications for everyday use, as well as cognitive functioning like for literacy-oriented activities which can enhance a child's cognitive organisation. Under such circumstances, both languages are used for multiple functions (social and cognitive) and are equally valued by both parents. Therefore, the child learns to attribute positive values to each language and in turn use both languages for all functions, both social and cognitive. The child will learn to valorise both languages and consider them interchangeable.

Since language learning is also cultural learning, all children (monolingual and bilingual) learn the sociolinguistic rules and sociocultural values that characterise life in their community. Bilingual children must learn the rules and values of languages and communities, and they must learn when they are appropriate. There can also be rules of language usage and ways of behaving that are particular to the social situations that characterise life in bilingual communities. Children learning two languages simultaneously learn patterns of language use, cultural values, and social behaviours that are characteristic of monolingual contexts as well as those that are specific to bilingual contexts. They develop rich and complex patterns of communication and interaction and

they use these resources in the new social situations they encounter as they grow older and extend their social lives (Nicoladis & Genesee, 1997).

Learning new language skills can be a challenging for bilingual children if the social behaviours and cultural values conflict with the values and social behaviours they have learned at home. Children from some cultures learn that it is inappropriate to initiate conversations with adults and to participate publicly in competitive ways with others. In comparison, children in most Western cultures learn that it is appropriate to initiate conversations with adults, to compete verbally with other children, and to make eye contact during conversations with others. Moreover, students are expected to display what they have learned in school through the use of these styles of communication. Teachers evaluate students by their ability to participate in classroom activities in these ways. (Crago & Cole, 1991).

However, sometimes bilingual children appear confused and not competent. This can occur if they are asked to use the language in social situations that are new to them, for example, Spanish-English bilingual children in the United States have had little opportunity to interact with monolingual English-speaking adults, so they may lack the linguistic and social competence to interact effectively with teachers or speech-language pathologists. They would either use whatever communication and social skills they have, probably in an inappropriate way, or simply not interact at all. Unfortunately such behaviour might be interpreted as delayed development, but it actually is just a lack of social experience in certain circumstances. Given sufficient time and experience, most bilingual children will acquire the skills needed to communicate and interact in new situations (Crago & Cole, 1991).

In some instances a child's bilingualism is carefully planned, as in some mixedlingual families. These kinds of bilingualisms are mostly found in middle-class families where parents often take great care in maintaining both languages and ensuring that they are equally valorised. This is done in order to urge the child to develop a balanced and additive form of bilingualism, often by applying Grammont's Principle. According to Grammont's Principle, the home environment should „introduce a strict *one parent - one language* correspondence" (Hamers & Blanc, 2000p. 62-63). Despite many people following this idea, there are few, if any, studies that have given support to it. Infact, Hamers and Blanc (2000) argue that its application to bilingual children will have no effect of their cognitive functioning. Far more important is the child's social network

where the child has access to both linguistic systems in both communicative as well as cognitive functions which must be sufficiently valorised in order for the child to gain an additive and balanced form of bilingualism (Hamers & Blanc, 2000).

Author concludes that infants and children in different cultures are exposed to different patterns of language use and through these experiences are exposed to different belief systems about their status and role in relationship to adults and to the world at large. The way in which children discover their place in the world is strongly influenced by the sociocultural values that are transmitted in the everyday conversations they have with parents and other adults in their community. The process of learning a language, which is influenced by cultural beliefs and values, implies that children learn the sociocultural values of the group into which they are being socialised and become good members of their cultural group.

If bilingual children are hesitant in using language in unfamiliar situations, it may reflect unfamiliarity with new sociocultural rules or contrast between new cultural values and existing ones. It is important that professionals working with bilingual children understand this and try to find alternatives at the same time bearing in mind all the skills that bilingual children have already acquired.

1.3. Advantages of bilingualism: cognitive prospective

After the publication of Peal and Lambert study in 1962 (see Chapter 2 *Bilingual education* for a historical review), further research was conducted implying a positive effect on children's cognition caused by bilingualism. Most studies have provided empirical evidence on the cognitive advantage among bilingual children compared with their monolingual counterparts, particularly in high control tasks requiring increased cognitive flexibility (Bialystok, 1999). Deák (2003) defines flexible cognition as „the dynamic construction and modification of representations and responses based on information (i.e., similarities, cues, relations) selected from the linguistic and nonlinguistic environment. That is, when there is a range of plausible ways to understand and respond to a problem, flexible thinkers select patterns that limit this range. The selected information must change over time as a function of shifting task demands. That is, as new problems and circumstances are imposed by the environment, the cognitive focus should shift to new,

pertinent information” (p. 275-276) This flexibility can be tested with changing task demands which are unpredictable or novel to the participant.

A study undertaken by Ellen Bialystok (1999) on cognitive complexities and attentional control among bilingual children supported the claim of bilingual cognitive advantages. Engle et al. (2004) define attentional control as a cognitive act applied effortfully and voluntarily in order to obstruct any information that is irrelevant or distracting, and suppress any response tendencies which are irrelevant to the task. The research by Bialystok (1999) consisted of 60 children who were equally divided into two age groups ranging from 3;2 to 6;3 years of age and represented two linguistic groups. Half of the children were bilingual speakers of Chinese and English where their mastery in English differed but their Chinese was fluent. The other half consisted of monolingual speakers of English. All the children had similar socioeconomic backgrounds and attended the same school. The children were given tasks in two separate sessions; PPVT-R and Visually-Cued Recall Task in the first session and the Moving Word Task and the Dimensional Change Card Sort Task in the second. The results correlated with Bialystok’s previously mentioned ideas as the children showed equivalent levels of receptive vocabulary (PPVT-R) and comparable capacity for working memory (Visually Cued Recall). Both these measures indicate a general equivalence of intelligence. However, when solving tasks in which the solution was made more complex with distracting information, the bilinguals showed better skills than the monolinguals. The study gives empirical support to the claim that bilingual children are more able to solve problems which are based on attention and opposing information. Consequently, this may indicate that bilingual children possess an increased advantage in problem solving requiring a high level of control, or selective attention (Bialystok, 1999).

Another study by Kovacs and Mehler (2009) on cognitive gains in 7-month old bilingual infants indicates enhanced executive control among bilinguals. According to the researchers, bilingual speakers are compelled to exercise their cognitive abilities in order to manage two languages in an effective manner. Furthermore, the same researchers refer to cognitive control or executive functions as “mechanisms involved in conflict monitoring, planning, attentional control, and the suppression (inhibition) of habitual responses” (p. 6556). They discovered that despite both groups performing equally on a task testing learned responses, the bilinguals showed an increased capability on suppressing this previously learned response and update the anticipated

action according to the changing demands of the task. This could indicate that even before language production begins bilinguals show better executive control than monolinguals. In addition, it appears that having to process more than one language from birth could be sufficient to improve executive control which can be considered a cognitive gain resulting from bilingualism (Kovacs & Mehler, 2009). These conclusions support the findings of Bialystok presented above.

Another research, by Martin-Rhee and Bialystok (2008), revealed an increased ability in control of attention among bilingual children. Testing inhibitory control on French-English bilingual children showed that despite scoring lower on tests on receptive vocabulary, the bilinguals held a significantly greater advantage in complex tasks demanding control of attention than monolinguals. In this part of the study, the children were given three tasks which differed in the amount of delay between the exposure to stimulus and the chance to respond. That is, the children were tested on the ability to respond to certain stimuli and the withholding of responses, or their attentional control. In contrast, when the same children were tested on inhibition of response which demands the execution of motor responses and less attentional control, the results were equivalent with the monolingual children. The authors explain the outcome by distinguishing „between bivalent displays which are comprised of two potentially conflicting dimensions, and univalent displays in which only a single feature is presented” (p. 85). Where the tasks in question were distracting and required a higher control over attention, or based on bivalent displays, the bilinguals outperformed the monolinguals whereas the univalent displays were equally resolved by both language groups. The researchers explain their findings claiming that bilingual children are constantly required to control their attention between two opposing and active language systems in order for communication to take place in the demanded language. Additionally, they maintain that some developmental psychopathologies, such as attention deficit disorder and autistic spectrum disorder, have been linked to ineffectual inhibitory control. Based on these assertions, bilingualism can be regarded as an important factor in children’s developmental processes. Bilingualism can enhance inhibitory control which in turn influences certain disorders in a positive manner. Therefore, bilingualism could possibly serve as a factor in limiting the progression of these disorders but it must be stressed here that further research on this subject is necessary for validity (Martin-Rhee and Bialystok, 2008).

Other studies have demonstrated results giving further evidence to these assertions, such as a comprehensive research by Carlson and Meltzoff (2008) on executive functioning. The researchers discovered that bilinguals outperformed monolinguals on tasks requiring the management of conflicting attentional demands (conflict tasks). However, the two groups performed comparably on delay tasks which demand impulse control (Carlson & Meltzoff, 2008).

These outcomes have all supported the claim of bilinguals' advance in their cognitive development and metalinguistic awareness resulting in a more advanced cognitive flexibility. Hamers and Blanc (2000) claim that it is the bilingual child's ability to alternate between and then manipulate two systems of symbols rather than one that causes this extensive cognitive flexibility and enhanced metalinguistic awareness. Other researchers maintain the same ideas, such as Hakuta and Diaz (1985) who claim that the bilinguals' flexibility could be a result of abilities related to language, for example the language use in observing cognitive functioning or an early perception of its structural properties and conventionality.

Although studies showing positive effects of bilingual development by far outnumber the ones indicating cognitive disadvantages, there are still some reporting a negative outcome. Hoff et al. (2011) have conducted a study on monolingually and bilingually developing children between the ages of 1;10 to 2;6. The monolinguals were exposed only to English whereas the bilinguals were surrounded by English and Spanish. The research showed that children who are exposed to two languages simultaneously do not typically acquire each language at the same rate as children only exposed to one language. Additionally, the study reported that dual language input affected both the children's grammatical development as well as vocabulary. Importantly, the data reveals that despite language acquisition requiring more time among bilinguals than monolinguals, the gap between the two groups closes in about three months. Therefore, even though it takes longer to acquire one language than two, it does not take twice as long. This same study indicates that if vocabulary knowledge among monolingual children is compared with bilinguals' vocabulary in both languages, the result is that both groups are comparable. The difference is that monolinguals possess whole vocabulary in one language as opposed to bilinguals who have a vocabulary divided between two languages (Hoff et al., 2011).

These results are in agreement with Bialystok's report concerning a study on 1700 children between the ages of 3 and 10, testing their English receptive vocabulary. Children who spoke

English along with another language scored lower on the tests than their monolingual counterparts. Despite these results, Bialystok (2010) maintains that there is no reason to believe that bilingual children have a smaller overall vocabulary (infact, their combined vocabulary may be larger than that of monolinguals) or that they have poorer communicative ability than monolinguals, but only that their vocabulary is distributed across two languages (p. 561). Following this further, Hamers and Blanc (2000) point out the importance of acknowledging the difference between monolinguals and bilinguals concerning the total amount of language exposure each group receives. They claim that it should not come as a surprise that monolinguals possess a richer vocabulary than bilinguals as their language input is limited to only one language. However, simultaneous bilinguals' single language productions in the dominant language are smaller than for monolinguals. Hamers and Blanc also maintain that in order for a child to develop a balanced form of bilingualism where the child possesses equivalent proficiency in both languages, between 40-60 per cent of exposure to each language is needed (Hamers and Blanc, 2000).

Despite some studies reveal negative effects of bilingualism on children's cognitive development, it is usually the child's vocabulary that has suffered. However, if vocabulary is measured based on the bilinguals' two languages as opposed to only one, their language production in both languages combined are comparable to the monolinguals' amount of vocabulary in their only language. The author would like to stress that this is only the case if all circumstances around the child are ideal and there are no first language interruptions during a child's early literacy development. If, on the other hand, a child is forced to change language while he or she is still preliterate, the interruption can lead to a change in language related cognitive development. Other reasons for negative effects of bilingualism on children's cognitive development can be traced to confusion where there are discrepancies between L1 and L2 language behaviour or even among children who do not have access to the necessary educational resources. The author concludes that if a child has access to all the necessary resources and bilingual development is continuous and stable, combined vocabulary acquisition should be comparable between monolinguals and bilinguals but the bilingual child would have a set of cognitive benefits that a monolingual would not possess, at least not at the levels that a bilingual child. Thus, bilingualism does not limit the child, on the contrary, it gives him or her a better, stronger cognitive basis for academic success.

We bring up children to be bilinguals, not for the sake of language, but for the sake of children.

Ioan Bowen Rees

2. BILINGUAL EDUCATION

Believing that bilingual education is a recent phenomenon is an illusion, in fact it has been practiced since ancient times. The wealthier classes in ancient Rome were starting early bilingual education of their children with Latin as the first language (L1) and Greek as a second (L2). The first reflections on the psychological effects of bilingual education come from *Confessions* of Saint Augustine, who said he preferred to write in Latin, because having learned Greek later he felt that he did not master it in the same way. Real discussions on this topic, however, became systematic only in the last century and at first the views in this regard were predominantly negative. In 1908 a German teacher named F. Jahn argued the impossibility of acquiring two languages perfectly without creating confusion in the child, with an assumption that the child might develop inner conflicts, behavioral disorders and childhood psychoses. This thesis was subsequently supported also by professor Otto Jespersen (1922), founder of the International Phonetic Association, who claimed that learning a second language diminishes the resources to be used in other school subjects. With rising interest in psychometric intelligence examinations in the early 1920s, systematic studies of the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence increased. To begin with, early research indicated a negative connection between the two, or even more drastically, „a language handicap” among bilinguals compared with their monolingual counterparts. Interestingly, the results were directly traced to bilingualism as the leading cause for the deficiencies and not to methodological issues or inaccurate tests. As the results were entirely based on psychometric tests, other variables such as the subject’s background and socioeconomic status were disregarded. These variables are today considered highly influential in a child’s cognitive development process. Additionally, the degree of bilingualism was determined by “foreignness of parents”, family names or even residency which are variables too unstable and inaccurate to be accounted for in a scientific research. (Diaz, 1983).

Therefore, due to several methodological errors, as often has happened in the history of science when research seems to confirm that very construct that the researchers wanted to find, the

studies conducted between 1920 and 1960 failed to demonstrate the positive effects of bilingual education and previous results based on imprecise measured tests have been criticized or even deemed invalid.

With the publication of Peal and Lambert's study on the comparison between bilingual and monolingual children in 1962, the ideology of bilingualism drastically changed. The difference between Peal and Lambert's research and previous ones was mostly in the accuracy of measurements and choice of subjects. Firstly, Peal and Lambert used examinations in an attempt to determine the level of the bilingual children's language proficiencies in each language. Secondly, they applied multiple intelligence tests as well as tasks on verbal and nonverbal abilities (Diaz, 1983). The results of their research showed the opposite of prior beliefs: there appeared to be a positive relationship between bilingualism and intellectual functioning as well as bilinguals scoring significantly higher on intelligence tests (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). The results served to allay commonly held fears concerning the products of bilingual education, namely, that it would produce „retarded, poorly educated individuals without affiliation to either ethnolinguistic group and incapable of functioning in either language. Bilingual education would not create a social or cognitive Frankenstein.” (Hakuta & Diaz, 1985, p. 320)

The reason for this different outcome has been traced to the care which was taken in the way the research was conducted; ensuring that each concept and aspect in the study was clearly defined. As a result, other researchers investigating bilingualism were forced to identify and define concepts as well as choosing participants with increased accuracy (Hamers & Blanc, 2000). With the Peal and Lambert study in the second half of the 20th century, an important contribution was given to the field of bilingualism and the methodological problems associated with it, mainly the clarifications of definitions (Hakuta and Diaz, 1985).

Later in the second half of the 20th century the advantages of bilingualism were finally demonstrated. Among others, two Italian linguists Titone (1972) and Francescato (1981) declared themselves openly in favor of early bilingual education, arguing that this kind of education is the one that not only allows a child to acquire relatively easily a very good command of the language but also allows the acquisition of habits and customs of the culture and mentality of other people. They also claimed that continued use of two languages before the age of ten in communicative contexts allow children to express themselves without an accent and with a normal fluency in both.

Most investigations have implied a positive link between bilingualism and cognitive development. These assertions have led to the encouragement of children becoming bilingual, whether or not the family is multicultural, which has resulted in bilingual individuals outnumbering monolinguals according to today's estimations (Hamers, 2004).

Given the vast research conducted in the domain of bilingual education, in the next sections the author reviews diverse aspects of language acquisition (memory, critical age for learning a language, different acquisition models) and examines weak and strong forms of bilingual education.

2.1. Language acquisition: memory, critical period and acquisition models

There are different strategies for learning languages, but the most natural and widespread allows to speak and understand a language automatically and fluently. The basis for this kind of language acquisition is **implicit memory** (also called **procedural** memory). It is present in many species, and in humans it is already active in the fetus and newborn. One of its primary features is the acquisition of knowledge that occurs randomly, without awareness. Thus, implicit memory is probably the most important form of memory in living things. Many studies seem to show that different sectors of the first language (L1) are stored through this process. In the specific case of early bilingualism, if the languages are included from birth, they both would benefit from the ease of acquisition due to the implicit memory. Another possibility is to learn the languages with the conscious acquisition of grammatical rules: in this case **explicit** (or **declarative**) **memory** is used. It covers all the information and knowledge the person is aware of, facilitated by focusing of attention. So far in schools in the teaching of a foreign language have been used particularly explicit strategies for grammar studies. Based on current knowledge, it is important to note that the use of conscious strategies in the acquisition of the second language shows significant limitations (Cecchinelli, 2013).

Several studies have suggested the existence of a critical period for the acquisition of the mother tongue, a period that lies between birth and puberty; after that time the brain would lose its elasticity and it would no longer be possible to acquire a language completely. According to Lenneberg (1967), who suggested and announced this hypothesis, there seems to be a physiological explanation for this decrease of elasticity. There is a period between the age of two

years and puberty during which the so-called lateralization occurs in the brain, that is, the specialization of the two cerebral hemispheres. As for the language, usually the left side is the one that is to be held responsible.

A proof of this limit beyond which the possibility of acquiring a language at a native level becomes almost impossible comes from the study of children who have lived the first part of their lives with insufficient input to develop a language. Although recovery attempts have been made immediately, they have led to satisfactory results only if carried out on children up to 12 years. It was also demonstrated that children with disorders in the left hemisphere can reorganize the language in the right hemisphere, but studies have confirmed that this can only happen in cases when subject's age does not exceed puberty; beyond that age the reorganization would not be possible. The theory of critical period was also later extended to the acquisition of the second language. Some studies have shown that young students of a second language reached better results when compared with those of older students, although the latter have made greater progress in less time. Maturation processes of different forms of memory and neurobiological aspects are the fundamentals of this *critical period* or *sensitivity* to foreign languages and, once exceeded this threshold, a person would tend to use the procedural schemes of the first language when he or she expresses in the second language (Cecchinelli, 2013).

However, some authors (for example, Singleton (1995)), emphasize the non-generalizability of the theory. Only certain linguistic aspects would, in fact, be affected by age (e.g., adult students even if they can express themselves in a grammatically perfect way in most cases keep a strong foreign accent). For general acquisition of a second language the doors are never closed; indeed, 5% of bilingual adults possesses an excellent command of the second language, even if they started to learn it in later life, therefore, linguist David Singleton suggests the existence of a critical young age only for learning phonology and syntax but argues that there is no critical period for learning vocabulary of the second language.

Language acquisition models. Suzanne Romaine (1995) has summarized the most common points of view on the acquisition of the second language within a bilingual family in six models that are described in the table 2.1. together with an example.

Table 2.1.

Language acquisition models

Model	Explanation	Example
1. One person - one language (OPOL)	Parents have different native languages, one of which is the dominant language of the community, and each of them talk to the child from birth in their own language.	Latvian speaks LV, Czech speaks CZ, live in Czech Republic
2. One language - one environment	Not dominant language at home. Parents have different native languages, one of which is the dominant language of the community to which the child is fully exposed only when outside the home (especially in school) but both parents speak to the child in a language that is not dominant.	Latvian + Czech living in Czech Republic, both speak Latvian to child
3. Non-dominant language at home without community support	Parents share the same native language, which is not the dominant one of the community, and speak their language to the child.	2 Latvians living in Czech Republic, speak Latvian to child
4. Double non-dominant language at home without community support	Parents have a different native language, which is not the dominant one in the community, and each parent speaks their own language to the child from birth.	Latvian speaks LV, Italian speaks IT, living in Czech Republic
5. Non-native parents	Parents share the same native language, which is also the dominant language in the community, but one of them speaks to the child in a different language.	2 Czechs living in Czech Republic, one speaks English to child
6. Mixed languages	Parents are bilingual as well as the community and exchange and mix the languages when they talk to the child.	2 Catalans from Spain speaking both languages to child

From the studies conducted it would seem that the first approach (OPOL) is the one that leads to better results, but Romaine argues that other research has shown the opposite: in the OPOL approach the child could understand both parents' languages, but speak only the one of the community in which he or she lives. One possible explanation might be that for children it is very difficult to master a minority language which is not spoken by the community. Not getting enough input and enough opportunities for practice and production could lead to the results that are not what parents expected. Romaine (1995) concludes that obviously many individual factors affect

the result. Among them, besides the quantity and type of exposure to the minority language mentioned above, there is also the parents' consistency in the choice of language, attitudes towards bilingualism by children and their parents and the individual personalities of all that are involved.

Undoubtedly, whichever acquisition model is chosen, it is essential to respect one general principle: if parents have a desire is to raise a bilingual child, the child must have be exposed to both languages in a constant and balanced way, parents have to use them in everyday life and in many situations so that child feel supported.

2.2. Weak and strong types of bilingual education

First of all, it is important to make a distinction between education that uses and promotes two languages from an education in which attention is focused on children of a linguistic minority, which results in formal education with an objective to promote bilingualism and, while including bilingual children, this type of education will no longer pursue the purpose of bilingual education. There are different types of bilingual education divided into 6 *weak* and 4 *strong* types. The division is based primarily on five parameters:

- type of program;
- type of child;
- language of the class;
- social and educational purposes;
- targeted language product (Swain, 1996).

Common denominator of weak forms of bilingual education is not having explicit objective of bilingual proficiency with a particular curriculum framework (Swain, 1996). The detailed description of weak forms can be found in table 2.2.

Table 2.2.

Weak forms of bilingual education

Education by submergence	The child is submerged in the new language without any previous base. During the day the child would learn the majority language and it is expected that pupils and teachers speak only that language. The stress is caused from learning a language in this way as this requires constant concentration at the expense of the curriculum content with a strong risk of a decline in self-esteem and disaffection.
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Education by submergence with separate classes	Classes are formed from the children from the minority language and they are temporarily separated from those of the majority language offering language courses.
Segregationist education	Implemented in the apartheid situations to keep the distance between dominating and dominated linguistic communities. Monolingualism of the minority becomes a tool of deliberate segregation policy.
Transitional bilingual education	Similar to submergence. It concedes student the use of the native language and part of the curriculum is in his or her language.
Education in the majority language with teaching foreign languages	Most often used form in Western countries. Curriculum is in the national language and the studying of a foreign language is on a par with other school subjects.
Separatist education	Extreme case of pursuit of monolingualism, organized by the minorities for religious or ideological reasons.

In all cases listed one of the languages is relegated as a minority language. With the strong forms (see table 2.2.) of bilingual education a majority role is kept (or trying to keep) for both languages (Swain, 1996).

Table 2.2.

Strong forms of bilingual education

Bilingual education by immersion	It pursues bilingualism and biculturalism without loss in performance levels.
Maintenance of ancestral languages	Pupils of linguistic minority use their ethnic or ancestral language as medium of education, pursuing the aim of full bilingualism (e.g., Catalan in Spain). Normally 50% of the curriculum is taught in these languages.
Two-way bilingual education	In a class there is balanced number of children who speak the majority language and the minority language. The philosophy is that the borders between both languages are maintained separate.
Bilingual education in majority languages	Joint use of two or more prestigious languages. The result is often multilingualism.

The author concludes that the strong forms of bilingual education would bring to life all of the advantages and benefits discussed in the previous chapter, while the weak forms are likely to create a situation of subtractive bilingualism or, in worse cases, the complete abandonment of the minority language.

2.3. Best practice - when and how?

One might ask what is the best time to start bilingual education. There is no time limit: anyone and at any time of life can learn a new language. However, the level of knowledge and the effort required to learn a foreign language depend on the age at which the individual is exposed to language and how steady and continuous this exposure will be.

The best time to start bilingual education in the school environment coincides with **nursery school (0-3 years) and kindergarten (3-6 years)**. The languages acquired in these early years, however, must be used later throughout all education stage with elementary education being of a crucial importance. The extensive research in neurolinguistic suggests that the best way to learn a language is **not to study it, but to use it**. It is exactly what happens in the nursery school and kindergarten where the child will be able to easily learn the language through play and communicative interaction (Cecchinelli, 2013).

In the teaching of a foreign language it is important to pay attention to a certain human characteristic, particularly in children: laziness. Indeed, a child will learn one or more languages if necessary; if he or she realizes that the teacher is able to understand the language he or she speaks at home, he will have no reason to make an effort to use the second language. Therefore, it is very important that the **teacher speaks to the child only in the foreign language**. If it is not possible to stick to one language, equally important is that the **teacher avoid mixing** (code-mixing or code-switching), as this would prevent the formation of independent linguistic systems at the neurofunctional level, each tied to specific contexts or people. In order to achieve this, the quality of teacher training is fundamental. Teachers will have to learn the language they teach well in order to be a good model of learning grammar and pronunciation. As Titone (1972) has claimed, linguistically imperfect teachers can teach errors hardly corrigible, as these would be stored in the procedural memory systems that are the oldest and most durable memory systems.

Another important aspect in bilingual education is the time dedicated to the language. As previously mentioned, languages should not be studied, but mastered through communication; this is the case of **bilingual education by immersion**. For good results with children in nursery school or kindergarten they must have **at least thirty minutes a day** of activity in the second language (Cecchinelli, 2013).

Investing in preschool and early childhood has great advantages in terms of future academic performance: it is more efficient to invest before than correct deficiencies and shortcomings later. Education in the years before the school is critical to academic success and greater integration on a social level. Why such a premise is connected to the preschool bilingualism is obvious: early childhood is the most fertile ground for learning and the child's ability to assimilate and develop the language is, indeed, at the highest level.

Until a few years ago it was believed that the teaching of a foreign language in compulsory education was more than enough. Today things have changed. Knowing just one other language is not enough, infact, the need to speak well at least two languages besides one's mother tongue is ever-present. But which languages should be taught to children? The author believes that, firstly, it is essential to protect minority languages and, secondly, **two foreign languages belonging to different linguistic families than the mothertongue** should be chosen since the early acquisition of these will later facilitate the acquisition of any other language of the European Union. Furthermore, a question of how many languages a child is capable of learning might arise. For a child it is enough to have **4 to 10 hours per week of foreign language stimulation** to acquire a language fully. Given that children spend on average 35-45 hours per week in preschool adequate immersion programs that allow acquisition of up to four foreign languages could be designed and implemented.

Another question parents might ask themselves is whether the acquisition of two languages is likely to cause confusion and adversely affect learning of the first language. Recent studies have shown that maintaining distinct use of the two languages (one person-one language) gradually decreases the confusion. Why then many of these children, evaluated with language tests, especially vocabulary tests, have negative results? The author believes that it is a normal thing that bilinguals may have in mind certain concepts in one language but not in the other. However, this is not an issue, because in these cases one should assess the language proficiency as the sum of the two languages (L1 + L2), but, unfortunately, schools rarely evaluate and take into account this factor.

It is hard even today to eradicate this belief that learning a second language causes confusion and so bilingualism is seen as a problem; infact, many teachers refuse to consider bilingualism as an enrichment and further cognitive growth. The scientific community generally agrees on the

feasibility and ease of bilingualism, but parents of bilingual children have to address the myths about bilingualism full of negativity and pessimism on everyday basis. Precisely from this false assumption that two languages create confusion arise most of the failures in this field. A child can easily grow bilingual; if this will not happen, negative external causes could be blamed. If the situation of bilingualism is seen as deviant from the norm people will tend to provide interpretations of the real facts selectively to confirm the stereotype.

In conclusion, providing the right motivation and the right external input positively encourages natural acquisition of two languages.

Raising a monolingual child has a 100% chance of success (except some specific cases), raising a bilingual child seems to have only 75% chance of success.

3. BILINGUAL PARENTING AND FAMILY LANGUAGE POLICY

This chapter investigates how parents explain, frame and defend their particular family language policies. The author focuses on families' attempts to achieve bilingualism for their children, an aim which in many cases requires parents to use and to teach a language that is not their first language, nor the primary language of the wider community. The author explores how parents make these decisions; how parents position themselves relative to expert advice and other members of their extended families; and how these decisions are linked to their identities as *good* parents.

3.1. Bilingualism and biculturalism

The acquisition of a language, being a member of a linguistic community so means absorbing some cultural aspects of that community. The culture and way of life of the community in which we grow up influences our habits and the worldview determines how we dress or what we eat, what is our moral code, or what we perceive as beauty. We may not realize this fully until we are confronted with the cultural differences of people from different parts of the world.

The concepts of bilingualism and cultural identity are interrelated and the development of a bilingual linguistic competence necessarily affects the cultural identity of the child, which in turn is determined by its behavioral variables of the bilingual personality. The early bilingual develops a unique identity, different from that of the monolingual because the child is not maturing two parallel cultural identities, but the aspects of both constituent cultures are closely interrelated and integrated into one harmonic personal synthesis. If the bilingual positively identifies both with social groups that speak their languages and is actually recognized by both cultures as one of them, this person may be called not only bilingual but also bicultural (Bialystok, 2001).

A bicultural person brings two cultures within itself. The child who is born in a particular social group acquires all the rules, the compatible behaviors, habits, culture of that group and also the language. A bilingual child will then take all these features and the language skills of another

social group, the one speaking the L2 and will grow with an awareness of cultural differences that a monolingual does not necessarily possess (Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003). When parents decide that they desire their child to be bilingual, most likely the intention is also to pass on a part of their cultural heritage so parents speak to the child about their customs, they feed the child typical food of the cultures of both parents, celebrate holidays or birthdays including aspects of both cultural worlds. Bilingual individuals then present various combinations of two separate cultures, but they will feel at ease in both and identify with both of them. The worldview of someone who moves easily across languages and cultures is necessarily different from that of a person confined to a single point of view (Bialystok 2001).

Biculturalism may give a certain advantage, such as being more cosmopolitan. On the other hand, bilingual children, when they grow up, have to address the question of identity. Bialystok (2001) writes „I am what I say”, arguing that speech is fundamental for the construction of our identity.

In conclusion, speaking a second language means seeing the world with different eyes; to know a language means get to know the people who speak it. Language is the very expression of the culture and speaking the language of a group means to be recognized by its members as one of them. Knowing and feeling as their own different cultures often frightens parents who fear that their children, approaching different customs and ways of living, would be unable to have their own native culture. It could happen that a bilingual child passes through a phase of cultural loss but if helped and supported by the family and other people important to him or her, to the gift of a second language they could add another: being at ease in both cultures, thus becoming a multicultural person and generally open to new knowledge and new understandings.

3.2. Family language policy

A growing number of parents in Europe and elsewhere view bilingualism as a laudable personal and family goal and strive to provide their children with the opportunity to learn a second language at a young age.

One clear measure of this parental desire to promote child bilingualism is the increasing demand for bilingual preschools and bilingual education programmes. As further evidence of this trend, there is an increase in the production of CDs, videos, flash cards and books geared at babies

or toddlers and marketed at parents who want their children to acquire a second language. Many parents are no longer satisfied by traditional high-school level, foreign-language approaches and are eager to provide language enrichment activities for children at a young age. Language-minority parents, in turn, are increasingly vocal about desires for their children to maintain their first language and more assertive about educational rights and opportunities to do so as indicated, for instance, by the growing number of heritage language programmes for Spanish speakers in United States (King & Fogle, 2006). Bilingual parenting activities, such as toddler maths, art and music classes, baby sign language instruction and infant gym classes are now commonplace in middle class circles (Piller, 2005).

Nevertheless, raising children who become competent, active users of two languages has remained a challenge. Even within families adhering to the so-called one person-one language (OPOL) strategy, children often become passive (receptive) rather than active (productive) bilinguals (Döpke, 1992, 1998). In explanation, researchers point to the high status of majority language, national and local language policies that fail to support minority languages, the lack of high quality bilingual education, and the role of peers and siblings, among other factors (King & Fogle, 2006).

Given the many challenges to raising bilingual children, it is important to find out how do parents attempting to meet this ambitious goal understand, explain and defend their decisions. In other words, how do they come to establish their family language policy, that is, decisions about how language is allocated within family communication. Such family language policy decisions merit careful investigation as the linguistic, psychological and emotional stakes for both children and parents are high. Family language policy impact children's bilingual development and, for example, Piller (2002) has shown how the aim of *perfectly balanced* bilingual children can result in both parental disappointment and children's sense of failure.

Family language policies, like all language policies, are shaped by beliefs and ideas about language. One potentially important source of input for parents in establishing family language policy is the increasingly prevalent parenting literature and popular press. Indeed, parenting books now represent the largest category of self-help resources. While the quality and accuracy of these publications is questionable, parents, and in particular middle-class parents, actively incorporate expert advice on parenting from literature and childcare professionals into everyday parenting

practices (King & Fogle, 2006). First- or second-hand information from bilingual advice books is important in the formation of a pro-activist mothering style, that is a child-centred, minority-language focused and pedagogically oriented approach to mothering (Okita, 2001).

Parents' language policy decisions are also inextricably connected with other aspects of parenthood, including culture-specific notions of what makes a *good* or *bad* parent, mother or father. In this way, public discourse regarding *good* or *bad* parenting also potentially influences parental beliefs and practices. Okita (2001) describes how the *good mother* identities of Japanese mothers (living in England with English spouses) were vulnerable to public advice and recommendations and little recognition of the (invisible) work that bilingual parenting entailed, often resulting in maternal guilt, stress and personal trauma.

Other studies, in contrast, note the limitations of public discourse on parenting. King and Fogle (2006) highlight the fact that more private or intimate sources, such as family and friends, provide key advice and support in decision-making. For instance, female kinship networks in a working class London community were closely intertwined with new mothers' identities. Similarly, while many British mothers relied on the internet as a nonjudgemental site for identity formation and practical advice, offline support systems of family and health professionals were still important to these women. In establishing family language policy personal networks and public discourses on parenting come into play. For instance, mothers who are raising their children bilingually may have their identities as *good mothers* called into question as bilingual child-rearing is viewed as unusual in many communities; conversely, one might be considered a *bad mother* by family members for not teaching the child the minority language before or with majority language.

While in many communities fathers play an increasingly visible and active role in parenting, the brunt of the work of parenting and the bulk of the expectations still fall disproportionately on mothers' shoulders (King and Fogle, 2006).

In conclusion, parents draw on a variety of sources, including popular literature, expert advice, friends and family members, as well as their own personal language learning histories, in explaining and justifying their family language policies. Parents draw from each of these sources in different ways in order to construct themselves as *good* parents. Parents, and mothers in particular, position themselves against the advice and opinions of others in framing their *good-parenting* decisions.

3.3. Challenges of bilingual parenting

Although family language policies are so crucial to guarantee a balanced bilingualism and biculturalism for the child, bilingual families often face serious challenges while implementing their decisions in everyday life.

One of the obstacles faced by families who decide to follow the path of bilingual education of their children, could be that the child begins to reject one of the languages. It does not happen to all bilingual children, but has been observed in several cases. Some children around the age of three or four years, are reluctant or refuse to fully use the minority language, that is, the language that is not spoken by the community. Harding-Esch and Riley (2003) state that it is crucial to understand if the child's refusal to talk is long-term or if it could only be temporary or occurs in particular situations. They suggest six possible explanations of the child's refusal to use a language:

1. The child might be stubborn or rebellious, or refuse to answer. All children have moments like that and are transient.
2. The child's refusal to speak in that language could only be a sign of protest for the failure of linguistic rules on the part of parents. The parent, for example, for some reason would be using at home the language that is normally used for communication outside the home or vice versa.
3. Presence of someone who does not speak the language and the child does not want to exclude him or her from the conversation. Similarly, it could be due to the presence of his friends who do not speak the language and he does not want to be seen as different.
4. The child may be asked to say something to demonstrate his or her ability to use the other language and he/she does not want to feel like a *trained monkey*.
5. The child could be a passive bilingual, that is, a person who understands a second language, but is not able to speak it or write it.
6. The child may be in a phase of life still trying to establish their own identity and this can also affect the relationship with the language.

The scenarios 1 to 4 are a temporary problem, while 5 and 6 may be a long-term challenge for the parents and other care-takers. However, in all cases it is preferable not to force the child to

use a language; this does not necessarily mean that parents have to change their use of language models, but it would be enough to pay more attention, for example, continue to speak the language without being disappointed; this will allow the child to learn it, beginning even passively, then, once acquired, the transition to active bilingualism to be able to express themselves at last would be natural. A good incentive is also finding opportunities in which the child has the opportunity to experience the language with peers. Another advice is to share their experiences with other families, not to feel discouraged and isolated, and associating the language with the child's favorite activities will help to appreciate it more (Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003).

Another challenge of bilingual parenting is code-mixing. Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert (2004) offers five possible ways a parent can react to the mixing of language by the child:

1. Minimal comprehension - parent uses the other language, asking for clarification („What did you say? I didn't understand!") so the child has to repeat in the right language;
2. Expressed hypothesis - parent's answer indicates that he/she has understood, but asks questions in his/her language to understand better the child's message;
3. Repetition by adult - parent simply repeats the phrase said by child in his/her own language with hope that the child will follow in this direction;
4. Move-on strategy - child says something in one language, parents listen and understand, but reply in other language
5. Code-switching - bilingual parent prefers whatever language child uses to achieve the bilingual situation.

Which of these is the best strategy depends mainly on the educational goals that parents have set. However, the practice of continually stop or correcting the child, which could well develop negative affectivity for deciding that language in the most extreme cases of not wanting to speak (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004).

In summary, the success of the child, as mentioned above, will depend on his or her belief about the need and interest to learn new languages and the real possibility of having enough opportunities to do so. This aspect will be strongly influenced by the attitude that the parents themselves have towards the child and not just about language. More specifically, what should be taken into account by parents is what the child says and not how it is said: the content is more important than the form. Constantly correcting the child will only lead to a decrease in confidence

and negative associations with the language, making the communication with the parent even more unpleasant.

The author would like to point out three factors that can contribute to an appropriate linguistic development of the child. Firstly, the opportunity to speak the languages: the input must be sufficient so that the languages develop in an appropriate manner. Secondly, the child must feel the need to speak the languages without switching to the one he or she knows better. In a bilingual family both languages should be present in equal measure. Parents have to create suitable situations so that the child feels the need and want to talk in that language. And, finally, the pleasure, that is, the child should enjoy speaking a language, because only then the child will be better able to get in touch with parents and will share with them the cultural baggage that each language carries. In short, the transmission of the linguistic code will be guaranteed more easily if it is connected to sensations and positive feelings.

Author also would like to offer some guidelines for bilingual parenting. First of all, those who want to proceed with bilingual education at home should do a preliminary analysis of what is their motivation, circumstances and objectives to be achieved. Parents must consider the need to put more effort in order to overcome the present obstacles. In this case, the communication network is a key question: relatives and friends who speak that language, supporting courses, activities to be performed in the weak language. Moreover, parental motivation must be evaluated continuously since greater motivation and belief in the project of raising a bilingual child would make the task easier. Closely related to the reasons for bilingual education is the behavior, that is, what attitude is shown towards bilingualism. There are still people or entire communities that assess bilingualism negatively. Positive attitude towards the cultures in play will support bilingual acquisition. It must be kept in mind that when language is considered useful, then it is prestigious. In this case it will be easy to maintain that language, while the acquisition of the weaker language could be considered of a lesser importance. Finally, another aspect for balanced bilingualism to be achieved is visiting the places where non-territorial language is spoken. It could be beneficial to program travels to these countries from the child's first years. Communication with local children would increase child's interest and motivation to learn the language. Inviting family and friends to spend time together is another beneficial situation. And, finally, it is crucial that both parents understand the languages spoken at home to avoid situations where someone can feel excluded

from conversations. Author feels that in a similar environment child could be brought up with confidence and positive valorisation of both languages.

These suggestions by the author should not be considered as strict rules, but rather guidelines. It is necessary to evaluate the family language policy from time to time. Parents have to review the actual situation, assess the child's progress, analyze what has changed and what has been changing in an unexpected way, the strengths and weaknesses. After a careful evaluation, a new plan should be elaborated that would consider actions to enhance three fundamental factors for bilingual education: possibility, need and pleasure.

To conclude, author has chosen a rather humorous assertion: Raising a monolingual child has a 100% chance of success (except some specific cases), raising a bilingual child seems to have only 75% chance of success. Therefore, parents aiming to achieve bilingualism for their children should not put too much pressure to themselves.

4. BILINGUALISM IN EUROPEAN UNION AND DIASPORA

EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

The quality of bilingual education is directly influenced by the education policy both at international and national level. Since this research paper analyzes inclusion of bilingual children with one Latvian parent in preschool in Czech Republic, the author has chosen to examine the views of the Council of Europe and European Commission on modern languages, multilingualism and plurilingualism as well as teachers' competence. The third section of this chapter will review the educational needs of Latvian diaspora children.

4.1. European Union and plurilingualism approach

In March 2002, the Heads of State or Government of the European Union meeting in Barcelona called for at least two foreign languages to be taught from a very early age. The Commission's long-term objective is to increase individual multilingualism until every citizen has practical skills in at least two languages in addition to his or her mother tongue (European Council, 2002). The achievement of Barcelona objective goes hand in hand with EU's multilingualism policy. Multilingualism refers to both a person's ability to use several languages and the co-existence of different language communities in one geographical area. The European Commission's **multilingualism policy** has three aims:

- 1) to encourage language learning and promoting linguistic diversity in society;
- 2) to promote a healthy multilingual economy;
- 3) to give citizens access to European Union legislation, procedures and information in their own languages (European Commission, 2005).

Responsibility for making further progress is given to the Member States (at national, regional or local level), but the European Commission reinforces awareness of multilingualism and improves the consistency of action taken at different levels (European Commission, 2005).

One of the main documents about the language acquisition in the European Union is the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment* (2006), or *CEFR*, that provides a common basis for the elaboration of language syllabuses, curriculum guidelines, examinations, textbooks, etc. across Europe. It describes in a

comprehensive way what language learners have to learn to do in order to use a language for communication and what knowledge and skills they have to develop in order to be able to act effectively. CEFR is intended to overcome the barriers to communication among professionals working in the field of modern languages arising from the different educational systems in Europe. It provides the means for educational administrators, course designers, teachers, teacher trainers, examining bodies, etc., to reflect on their current practice, with a view to situating and co-ordinating their efforts and to ensuring that they meet the real needs of the learners for whom they are responsible (Council of Europe, 2006).

CEF R reaffirms the political objectives of the Council of Europe in the field of modern languages:

- to equip all Europeans for the challenges of intensified international mobility and closer co-operation not only in education, culture and science but also in trade and industry;
- to promote mutual understanding and tolerance, respect for identities and cultural diversity through more effective international communication;
- to maintain and further develop the richness and diversity of European cultural life through greater mutual knowledge of national and regional languages including those less widely taught;
- to meet the needs of a multilingual and multicultural Europe by appreciably developing the ability of Europeans to communicate with each other across linguistic and cultural boundaries, which requires a sustained, lifelong effort to be encouraged, put on an organised footing and financed at all levels of education by the competent bodies;
- to promote methods of modern language teaching which will strengthen independence of thought, judgement and action, combined with social skills and responsibility (Council of Europe, 2006).

It is clear that languages are viewed as an important requisite to make all Europe a more united and tolerant place to live. The objectives mentioned above asked for reviewing of the Council of Europe's approach to multilingualism introducing the concept of plurilingualism. In recent years, the concept of plurilingualism has grown in importance in the Council of Europe's approach to language learning. Plurilingualism differs from **multilingualism**, which is „the knowledge of a number of languages, or the co-existence of different languages in a given society” (Council of

Europe, 2006, p.4). Multilingualism may be attained by simply diversifying the languages on offer in a particular school or educational system, or by encouraging pupils to learn more than one foreign language, or reducing the dominant position of English in international communication. Beyond this, the **plurilingual approach** emphasises the fact that as an individual person's experience of language in its cultural contexts expands, from the language of the home to that of society at large and then to the languages of other peoples (whether learnt at school or college, or by direct experience), he or she does not keep these languages and cultures in strictly separated mental compartments, but rather builds up a „communicative competence to which all knowledge and experience of language contributes and in which languages interrelate and interact” (Council of Europe, 2006, p.4). In different situations, a person can call flexibly upon different parts of this competence to achieve effective communication with a particular interlocutor. For instance, partners may switch from one language or dialect to another, exploiting the ability of each to express themselves in one language and to understand the other; or a person may call upon the knowledge of a number of languages to make sense of a text, written or even spoken, in a previously unknown language, recognising words from a common international basis in a new light. Those with some knowledge, even slight, may use it to help those with none to communicate by mediating between individuals with no common language. In the absence of a mediator, such individuals may „achieve some degree of communication by bringing the whole of their linguistic equipment into play, experimenting with alternative forms of expression in different languages or dialects, exploiting paralinguistics (mime, gesture, facial expression, etc.) and radically simplifying their use of language” (Council of Europe, 2006, p.4).

From this perspective, the aim of language education is profoundly modified. It is no longer seen as simply to achieve mastery of one, two or even three languages, each taken in isolation, with the *ideal native speaker* as the ultimate model. Instead, the aim is to develop a linguistic repertory, in which all linguistic abilities have a place. This implies, of course, that the languages offered in educational institutions should be diversified and students given the opportunity to develop a plurilingual competence. Furthermore, once it is recognised that language learning is a lifelong task, the development of a young person's motivation, skill and confidence in facing new language experience out of school comes to be of central importance. The responsibilities of educational authorities, qualifying examining bodies and teachers cannot simply be confined to

the attainment of a given level of proficiency in a particular language at a particular moment in time (European Commission, 2008).

Furthermore, plurilingualism should be seen in the context of **pluriculturalism**. Language is not only a major aspect of culture, but also a means of access to cultural manifestations. Much of what is said above applies equally in the more general field: in a person's cultural competence, the various cultures (national, regional, social) to which that person has gained access do not simply co-exist side by side; they are compared, contrasted and actively interact to produce an enriched, integrated pluricultural competence, of which plurilingual competence is one component, again interacting with other components (Council of Europe, 2006).

The author completely agrees that multilingualism approach does not reflect entirely the needs of a modern individual in today's Europe therefore it has been substituted by plurilingualism and pluricultural competence that enables an individual to enhance his or her potential for successful communication in all Europe both in private and public sector as well as in more private contexts, such as ethnically mixed families and friends from other countries. Plurilingualism and pluriculturalism is the key concept to bear in mind when designing education programs for bilingual children.

It is a priority for Member States to ensure that language learning in kindergarten and primary school is effective, since it is there that key attitudes towards other languages and cultures are formed, and the foundations for later language learning are laid. The European Council in Barcelona (2002) called for „further action to improve the mastery of basic skills, in particular by teaching at least two foreign languages from a very early age”. The emphasis on *a very early age* means that the European Union has understood that the success of language learning depends greatly on the preschool and primary education.

In implementing this commitment, most Member States are expected to make significant additional investments. Initiatives to make language learning available to an ever-younger group of pupils must be supported by appropriate resources, including resources for teacher training. The advantages of the early learning of languages, which include better skills in one's mother tongue, are seen if:

- teachers are trained specifically to teach languages to very young children;
- where class sizes are small enough for language learning to be effective;

- where appropriate training materials are available;
- where enough curriculum time is devoted to languages (European Commission, 2004).

Early learners become aware of their own cultural values and influences and appreciate other cultures, becoming more open towards and interested in others. This benefit is limited if all pupils learn the same language: a range of languages should be available to early learners. Parents and teaching staff need better information about the benefits of this early start, and about the criteria that should inform the choice of children's first foreign language. In implementing the commitment to teach at least two foreign languages from a very early age, Member States should consider whether adjustments are necessary to primary school curricula, and whether provision for the training and deployment of additional specialist teaching staff and other teaching and learning resources in primary and pre-primary schools is adequate (European Commission, 2004).

4.2. Language teaching and teachers' competence in EU

The Council of Europe (2006) states that any form of language use and learning could be described as follows:

„Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of **competences**, both **general** and in particular **communicative language competences**. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various **conditions** and under various **constraints** to engage in **language activities** involving **language processes** to produce and/or receive **texts** in relation to **themes** in specific **domains**, activating those **strategies** which seem most appropriate for carrying out the **tasks** to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences” (p.9).

If the different dimensions highlighted above are interrelated in all forms of language use and learning, then any act of language learning or teaching is in some way concerned with each of these dimensions: strategies, tasks, texts, an individual's general competences, communicative language competence, language activities, language processes, contexts and domains. Therefore, in order to guarantee a successful inclusion of bilingual children in education system these, there should be a harmonious relation among these components:

- the identification of needs;
- the determination of objectives;
- the definition of content;
- the selection or creation of material;
- the establishment of teaching/learning programmes;
- the teaching and learning methods employed;
- evaluation, testing and assessment (Council of Europe, 2006).

The designers of education programs should bear in mind that the learner of a second or foreign language and culture does not cease to be competent in his or her mother tongue and the associated culture nor is the new competence kept entirely separate from the old. The learner does not simply acquire two distinct, unrelated ways of acting and communicating. The language learner becomes plurilingual and develops **interculturality**. The linguistic and cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness, skills and know-how. They enable the individual to develop an enriched, more complex personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning and greater openness to new cultural experiences. Course designers, textbook writers, teachers and examiners have to make very detailed concrete decisions on the content of texts, exercises, activities, tests, etc. This process can never be reduced simply to choosing from a pre-determined menu. That level of decision must, and should, be in the hands of the practitioners concerned, calling on their judgement and creativity (Council of Europe, 2006).

Language teachers have a crucial role in building a multilingual Europe. They, more than teachers of other subjects, are called upon to exemplify the European values of openness to others, tolerance of differences, and willingness to communicate. It is important that they have all had adequate experience of using the target language and understanding its associated culture. All teachers of a foreign language should have spent an extended period in a country where that language is spoken and have regular opportunities to update their training. There is a significant disparity in modes of training, however, and not all teachers have lived or studied in a country whose language they teach. Whilst the initial and in-service training of teachers of a foreign language is the responsibility of Member States, there is a role for the mobility programmes to

complement their actions, where there is a European added value. The skills and personal resources required to teach languages well are considerable. Initial training should equip language teachers with a basic ‘toolkit’ of practical skills and techniques, through training in the classroom; language teachers need the advice of trained mentors as well as regular opportunities to keep their language and teaching skills up to date via e-learning and distance learning (European Commission, 2004).

Language teachers may often feel isolated, unaware of developments elsewhere with the potential to improve their work; they may not have access to adequate professional support networks; it is therefore important to facilitate contacts and effective networks between them at a regional, national and European level. More work is required to make sure that the results of research into language pedagogy, and the evidence of good practice and successful innovation, are disseminated to the people who can make use of them. Therefore, Member States have a crucial role to play in ensuring that all teachers of bilingual preschools have:

- appropriate initial training including practical training in the pedagogy of foreign languages;
- experience of living in a country whose language they teach;
- regular paid access to in-service training (European Commission, 2004).

The author of this paper believes that successful inclusion depends greatly on the teachers’ competence wherever they teach: preschool, elementary or secondary school, professional and higher education, life long learning programmes, etc. For example, the preschool teachers that are working with bilingual children should ask themselves such questions as:

- Can I predict the situations in which these children will operate?
- What objects will they need to refer to?
- What sort of things will they be listening to or reading?
- What knowledge of the world or of another culture will they need to call on?
- What skills will they need to have developed?
- How can they still be themselves without being misinterpreted?
- For how much of this can I take responsibility?
- How can I best prepare them to use the language for communication without over-training them?

- What can I give them that will be of lasting value?

Clearly, the answers depend entirely on the learning/teaching situation. All the needs, motivation, characteristics and resources of the bilingual children and their parents must be taken into consideration. For example, in the context of preschool education the use of language for playful purposes often plays an important part in language learning and development. Moreover, imaginative and artistic uses of language are important both educationally and in their own right. Aesthetic activities may be productive, receptive or interactive. They include such activities as:

- singing (nursery rhymes, folk songs, pop songs, etc.);
- retelling stories;
- listening to, reading and speaking imaginative texts (stories, rhymes, etc.) including audio-visual texts, cartoons, picture stories, etc.
- performing unscripted plays;
- performing and watching/listening to recitals, drama, opera, etc.(Council of Europe, 2006).

In summary, the promotion of language learning and linguistic diversity involves a real investment and commitment by public authorities at local, regional, national as well as European level. The objectives set out in CEFR and different action plans should facilitate better-informed decisions on language learning and linguistic diversity, more efficient and effective sharing of information and ideas amongst all the personell involved in the education process.

4.3. Latvian diaspora educational needs

The European Union in its education policy has stressed the importance of early start and teachers' role as key factors for sucessful language teaching in the home country. As a logical consequence the question about expatriates arises. Are their children's educational needs taken into account when designing educational policy at national level? In this section, the author will examine the Latvian diaspora education needs.

In the case of families with children, one of the most powerful drivers of the international movement of contemporary populations is the search for better opportunities for the younger generation. Inevitably, spending time in another cultural environment, as well as returning home after a prolonged absence, causes fundamental changes in the lives of individuals and families.

Indeed, in view of the large-scale geographical mobility Latvia has experienced after accession to the European Union, diasporic life must be seen as significant to social, economic, political, and cultural change (Lulle, 2015).

Diaspora in today's Latvia is an ideological, ethical, or cultural-political classification, an attempt to create awareness and actions where people are free of divisions that are restrictive and promote further fragmentation. Lulle (2015) claims that the concept of diaspora is simultaneously a definitional requirement and the hope that people may look past the divisions and see those living outside the territory of Latvia as an integral part of one nation. Furthermore, she agrees with the conceptual view that looks at the geographical mobility of people holistically – as embedded in our diverse social relationships, as an integral part of the processes of our modern world (Castles et al. 2014). This view is fundamentally different to the approach, that sees migration as an isolated phenomenon; one that operates according to a certain set of rules, defined systems, while other relationships and the lives of the rest of the local population are separate from migration realities (Lulle, 2015).

In regard to the creation of opportunities for the development of diaspora children and youth, an explanation of the term development should be precised. Development in this paper is meant as „a comprehensive concept that expresses positive change in society” (Sinatti & Horst, 2015, p.139). The question of how to create opportunities for positive change requires a careful, open-minded examination of the diversity of modern-day mobility. Although children starting school is a strong incentive for parents to settle in one place, due to job opportunities or variable family ties, migration cannot be seen as a one-way process. Migration isn't simply leaving one's homeland or returning to it with no further movement for the rest of one's life (Lulle, 2015). Since childhood and the school years comprise the most institutionally structured stages of a person's life (Vanderbeck, 2008), schools must also seek to understand and be open to caring for children who have experienced a life on the move.

Free movement offered by the European Union and the European Economic zone, is characterised by liquid migration (Engbersen & Snel, 2013). **Fluid migration** includes families with children, so a child's place of residence might change over the course of several years (Moskal, 2011). Even if European and other international schools experience such movement as routine, the reality of short-term, ambiguous, and multiple migration is a challenge for general

education institutions, especially if thought and action are based on the assumption that the migrant child ought to be integrated into the Latvian system as quickly as possible because this is the environment in which he or she will remain permanently (Lulle, 2015).

The most recent studies analyse the mobility of children and young people and the creation of opportunities for diaspora children and youth in the context of the individual, the community, and the broader society if we take a respectful approach based on the understanding of each member of the diaspora as a part of the joint value of the nation (Lulle, 2015).

Over the last ten years an increasing number of studies on how children experience life in another culture have been published. Most contemporary researchers are advocating for the use of the relational approach (for example, Jeffrey, 2010). The **relational approach** is based on the understanding that the society exists and develops through relationships. This understanding rejects the assumption that we are only growing up during childhood, youth, and school years; that our early years are merely preparation for real life. Instead of automatically accepting the expectation that children have a duty to grow into adults who represent the values of the community, each lifetime can be seen as a constantly unfolding process that begins at the very beginning as a process of becoming, in which people actively work to create their individual and collective identities (Worth, 2009). At the same time, we must take into account the fact that there are crucial differences in the social and spatial relational frame for children growing up in different countries or locations: their material environment is in flux (Lulle, 2015).

In recent years migration researchers look at children as taking an active role as social agents. Children are also active cultural mediators and decision makers. They choose in which situations to use their language skills. For example, they express their preferences by resisting their parents' wish that they attend a diaspora school, or, perhaps in the early teenage years, notify their parents that they no longer want to speak in their native language, or at some point a young person starts to reflect and to search for links to his or her parents' native language and culture (Lulle, 2015). They can resist and overcome the labels placed on them, for example, *other*, *foreigner*, or *migrant*. On the other hand, children want to belong, to feel the same as other children (Ungure, 2015).

In summary, a framework should be built in which the development opportunities for all children and youth, including the diaspora, are perceived as a common public good. This would

mean recognising that the diaspora is an integral part of the material, spiritual, political, and cultural development and continuity of the Latvian nation (Lulle, 2015).

In regard to diaspora educational needs today, the attention must be paid to the actions that address the creation and maintenance of ties with diaspora children and youth, and the ways in which opportunities for them are created.

Acquisition of the Latvian language is the primary goal that teachers, parents, and the children and young people themselves talk about. Parents the world over, but especially parents who are bringing up children in ethnically mixed families, are faced with the problem of choosing how to support children in the active use of two or more languages. This is also a characteristic problem for families residing in a country or region in which they were born, but where one of several languages used there is widespread and dominant. The choice to actively use several languages, and the work needed to support that choice, may be even more difficult for parents who raise their children outside their native land and language-learning environment. The study and experience of language learning has gradually overturned erroneous historical assumptions that the use of two or more languages, which is an intrinsic part of life on the move, causes confusion, impedes intellectual development, or leads to a situation where a child or does not fully learn either language. These myths arise from the experience of a living in a single culture; they are the normative assumptions of homebodies, and are not only stigmatizing, but are also based on flawed research (Margeviča-Grinberga, 2015).

The author has faced the consequences of these myths in her daily life being in contact with families of Latvian and mixed-Latvian origin in a number of countries around Europe. Such myths can act as a language-learning deterrent for parents who end up choosing a language learning experience for their children that is not as rich as it might be. Moreover, they are sometimes used as an excuse for assimilation into the new country of residence and the rejection of the Latvian language. This myth has no basis in linguistic or neurocognitive research.

Parents and grandparents, teachers and the general public should be encouraged to feel more secure and open to using multiple languages, even if some of the languages are not spoken freely. The most important thing is not to cut off the path to linguistic development and to allow human beings to grow through human contact in an environment where multiple languages are used, and

where, with practical wisdom and compassion, Latvian (and other) language skills can blossom (Lulle, 2015).

Mellupe and Vaickovska (2015) have conducted the analysis of the basic needs of diaspora children and youth in the field of education. Currently, the acquisition of Latvian is ensured by weekend Latvian schools organised by diaspora communities. Cooperation with these schools on behalf of the Latvian State is organised by the Latvian Language Agency (Latviešu valodas aģentūra) together with the World Free Latvians Association (Pasaules Brīvo latviešu apvienība) and the European Latvian association (Eiropas Latviešu apvienība). In order for children and young people to be able to learn the language, and also to familiarise themselves with history, geography, culture, and the Latvian way of life, the State also finances summer schools, camps, and various cultural activities for the diaspora both in Latvia and abroad.

As the number of émigrés has increased, so has the need for leaders in cultural life, people who are willing not only to teach Latvian to the local children, young people, and adults, but who could also teach subjects such as music and dance, and introduce members of the community to the Latvian way of life. To ensure the security and sustainability of diaspora schools within the framework of mutual responsibility, financial aid from the State is necessary. For many children attending Latvian weekend schools is impossible due to the various circumstances in which they live; therefore there is an urgent need for part-time distance learning programs in a virtual environment (Mellupe & Vaickovska, 2015).

In summary, in regard to diaspora educational needs a great deal of work is still required so that the words „every child and youth of the diaspora shall be welcomed back” do not remain just an empty sentence. Mellupe and Vaickovska claim that school intake should become easy and systematic, grades and diplomas should be uniformly translated, and a dignified, inclusive support system should be created.

Author agrees with the above mentioned experts that in the sphere of diaspora education the overall focus must be the prosperity and well-being of the child.

5. SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION OF BILINGUAL CHILDREN IN PRESCHOOL

The purpose of this study is to determine fundamental factors for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool. In some countries, inclusive education is thought of as an approach to serving children with disabilities within a general education settings. Internationally, however, it is increasingly seen more broadly as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners (UNESCO, 2001). The argument developed in this paper adopts this broader formulation. The author presumes that the aim of inclusive education is to „eliminate social exclusion that is a consequence of attitudes and responses to diversity in race, social class, ethnicity, religion, gender and ability” (Ainscow, 2005, p.109). As such it starts from the belief that education is a basic human right and the foundation for a more just society.

5.1. Research methodology

After careful consideration the author has chosen **Smith’s Interpretative phenomenological analysis** (IPA) as a paradigm for this research. Jonathan Smith’s IPA is a recent type of phenomenology, and since its emergence in 1996, it has become increasingly popular in psychology, producing hundreds of studies. As its name suggests, IPA „concur with Heidegger that phenomenological inquiry is from the outset an interpretative process” (Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009, p. 32). IPA aims to explore in detail how participants make sense of their personal and social world and the meanings particular experiences or events hold for participants (Smith & Osborn, 2008). In seeking to capture and convey the richness of a particular person’s experience, Smith has argued for single case studies where a single participant is used to push the idiographic logic of IPA (Smith, 2004). While IPA can employ observations and focus groups, as they are helpful for researchers to understand particular contexts (Smith et al., 2009), data collection usually occurs through semi-structured interviews (Gill, 2014).

Smith and Osborne (2008) outline four key stages of inductive analysis where a researcher attempts to make sense of the participant’s sense-making activity:

- 1) a researcher reads one transcript closely for familiarity and then looks for emerging themes, annotating significant points, then develops his or her notes into concise themes that capture the „essential quality” of the respondent’s comments;
- 2) a researcher clusters together connected or related themes to create master (superordinate or overarching) themes;
- 3) a researcher uses the emergent themes from the first transcript to orient the analysis of subsequent transcripts, in an iterative fashion; once each transcript has been analyzed, a final table of superordinate themes is constructed;
- 4) the outcome of the analytical process is a narrative account where „the researcher’s analytic interpretation is presented in detail with verbatim extracts from participants” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 4).

Case Study as a research method. When a researcher decides to carry out a research, the task usually begins by choosing a topic or behaviour to study and then focusing on a basic method that will gather the information in the most efficient and effective manner. Understanding the strengths and weaknesses of each method plays an important role in deciding which one to use in a particular study. The research method chosen by the author for the current research is the case study since it is suitable to small-scale investigations. According to Yin (2003), a case study is a research strategy that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, which includes an explanation of a situation, providing a basis for solutions to situations as well as exploration or description of an object or phenomenon, that is, a single instance or event or a group of instances or events, a case or a group of cases. The case of the present research is successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool. Thus, the case study is appropriately chosen for the present research as by conducting the case study research the author may investigate the problem areas in the inclusion of bilingual children in preschool and collect data necessary for designing a scheme that illustrates the fundamentals of successful inclusion. Moreover, since the author personally knows all the participants, she has attained an additive benefit of **direct observation** of all participants in their natural environment on a long-term basis.

The study is approached from the qualitative perspective, but it employs selected elements of the quantitative perspective as well. In short, the **determination of the data and interpretation of the findings** is as follows:

- 1) the questionnaire is administered to ethnically mixed families with one Latvian parent residing in Czech Republic in order to find out the major problematic areas in the bilingual acquisition and inclusion in preschool;
- 2) the interviews with two experts are conducted in order to figure out the broader context for successful inclusion in preschool education;
- 3) the results of the questionnaires and expert interviews are analyzed with the help of MAXQDA 12, the qualitative data analysis software.

5.2. Analysis of case studies

Data collection. Eight families participated in online questionnaires. The online form was preferred instead of face-to-face interviews due to two reasons: first, author is a new mother herself so organizing meetings with other new mothers or fathers is a real challenge due to children's ever-changing schedules and busyness of the parents, secondly, written form facilitates the data analysis, and, since the author personally knows all the participants, she is convinced that participants did not include the answers that are socially desirable.

Although the intention was for both parents to complete the questionnaire together, in most cases, mothers only were interviewed and in just two instances fathers participated. This, however, is not a constraint since one parent could complete the personal information, such as name, age, occupation and languages spoken at home with children, about the other parent. While parents were given a choice to conduct the interview in English or Latvian, all but one chose English.

Parents were recruited through personal connections of Latvian community in Prague, Pilsen and Brno, Czech Republic in aim of reaching a diverse group. Parents' eligibility was evaluated by the author before approaching them - only ethnically mixed families with one Latvian parent whose child (children) are raised bilingually were deemed eligible. Eligible parents had at least one child under the age of seven years who has already attended a preschool, or is attending a preschool facility at the moment of the interview, or is planning to attend a preschool in the nearest future (in 4 months time, September 2016). The inclusion of families with children who have not

attended a preschool yet has been motivated by the author's desire to explore if this choice could be a consequence of ineffective inclusion policy.

All of the interviews covered a similar set of topics. Parents were asked to begin with personal information about their age, occupation, level of education and languages that they use at home with their children as well as basic information about their child (children). Then they were asked a set of question about their family's language policy, such as

- What is your motivation to raise your child (children) bilingual?
- Who in your family decides about language use?
- What sources influence your decisions about your family's language policy?
- How do you facilitate your child's bilingualism?

before turning to more specific questions, for example:

- What language acquisition type have you adopted? or
- What is your reaction to your child's code-mixing?

Then, a set of questions about their social experience in regard to their choice of bilingual upbringing of their children followed:

- How do other people react to your choice to raise your child (children) bilingual?
- Do the teachers from the preschool your child (children) attend (have attended) have a positive approach towards your child's bilingualism?
- Do you take part in diaspora activities?

To conclude, the main question of this reserach has been asked in order to see if parents have some ideas on the subject matter:

- In your opinion, what are the key factors that could guarantee successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool?

The questionnaires were filled by using personal computers in families' living rooms or other areas of the secure environment of one's own home and the language used had a relaxed and conversational tone.

Data analysis. Interviews were reviewed for meaningful, relevant discourse units (phrases or longer expressive units), grouped and then coded into conceptual categories. These codes were created, expanded and refined throughout the multiple rounds of coding. Using MAXQDA 12, a

database was created so that each coded discourse unit was logged as an individual record, together with background information concerning the speaker (e.g., languages spoken with the child, education level, child's age and gender). This system allowed the author to review discourse on a wide range of topics systematically, to compare discourse on similar topics across speakers and speaker-groups, and to identify recurrent themes across the interviews. The focus here is primarily on qualitative description of how parents' discursively construct their initial parenting decisions concerning language use in the home and their experience of children's inclusion in preschool. The author, however, recognizes that that family language policies and practices are dynamic and may change over time.

Participants. All 8 participating families lived in either Prague (6), Pilsen (1) or Brno (1) at the moment of the study. As evident in table 5.1. , fathers tended to be older and less educated than mothers. Nevertheless, only 4 of the mothers were employed out of the home in full-time jobs, while all of the fathers were. The sample is very well educated relative to the total population (with 100% of mothers and 63% of fathers reportedly holding university degrees). Nevertheless, a minority of the parents fit the image of elite bilinguals, with most holding down traditional working and middle class jobs.

Table 5.1.

Parents' mean age, education level and employment

		Mothers	Fathers
Age	Mean	35.8	38.4
	Range	29-43	30-55
Education level	Basic	-	1
	Secondary	-	1
	Professional secondary	-	1
	Bachelor's degree	5	2
	Master's degree	3	2
	Doctor's degree	-	1
Employment	Full-time	4/8	8/8

Five families had only one child, two had two children, and just one family had three children. Detailed information about children can be seen in the table 5.2.

Table 5.2.

Children's age, sex and preschool attendance

		Male	Female	Total
Age	Mean	6.4	3.6	5.4
	Range	2-14	1-7	1-14
Preschool	Have attended	3	1	4
	Attending now	1	2	3
	Plan to attend	3	2	5
Total		7	5	12

In all families, both parents were living together with the child (children). None of the participants were members of same-gendered unions/households. All of the families were mixed with one Latvian parent and one non-Latvian parent. Altogether, sixteen parents represent 6 different nationalities.

The parents spoke to their children in a variety of languages (see table 5.3). Almost half of the 16 parent group (seven) used more than one language when speaking to the child, with four parents reporting the use of two languages, while three parents use three different languages when communicating with their children.

In seven families children were exposed to both languages from birth, only in one case the other language (Czech) was introduced later.

Table 5.3.

Parents' spoken languages at home

	Mother-tongue	Advanced level	Intermediate level	Basic level	Total
Latvian	8	2	-	1	11
Czech	4	1	1	1	7
English	1	3	-	-	4
Russian	2	-	-	-	2
Italian	1	1	-	-	2
German	-	1	-	-	1

Although all families are residing in Czech Republic, only half of the families represent a household where one of the languages used is that of the community (Czech). At the other end of the continuum were families in which both parents were native speakers of languages that are not dominant in the community. Of the latter, just one family had attempted to incorporate Czech into children's home: mother has self-reported basic knowledge of Czech.

In regard to the adopted language acquisition model (Romaine, 1995), the distribution amongst families is quite diverse (see table 5.4). This diversity is a good representation of actual situation in Prague and Brno where a lot of multinational companies in commerce and IT sector have their European headquarters so these cities are full of expatriates that either have had children or are having them while residing in Czech Republic.

Table 5.4.

Language acquisition model adopted by families

Model	Description	Families
Type 1	One person — one language. Parents have different native languages, but each has some competence in the other's variety, the community language is one of the parental varieties, and the strategy is for parents to each speak their own language to the child.	2
Type 2	Non-dominant home language/one language — one environment. The same as above, except that both parents to speak to the child in the language not dominant in the community. The assumption is that the child will necessarily acquire the dominant community language because of extra-domestic pressure, at kindergarten, playground, etc.	-
Type 3	Non-dominant home language without community support. In this case both parents have the same language which is not, however, dominant in the community. The strategy is obviously for the two of them to use their native language with the child.	1
Type 4	Double non-dominant home language without community support. Each parent has a different native language, neither of which is dominant outside the home. Each speaks their own language to the child.	2
Type 5	Non-native parents. Parents have the same native language, which is also dominant in the community, but one parent (mainly a professional linguist) always talks to the child in a non-native language.	-
Type 6	Mixed languages. Parents are bilingual, the community may also be bilingual, and each parent switches and mixes languages with the child.	3

When families come from such different backgrounds, it is no surprise that the language acquisition models they adopt can be so diverse since this decision is based not only on the division of community and home languages or dominant/non-dominant language prevalence at home but also on personal beliefs and values that parents incorporate in their family language policy in order to achieve the goal of raising their children bilingual and bicultural.

After the initial detailed description of participants' background, author now turns to in-depth analysis of family language policy and experience of inclusion of bilingual children in preschool. The author grouped all the topics covered in five groups as follows:

- 1) motivation;

- 2) family language policy;
- 3) myths and fears about bilingualism, other people's reactions;
- 4) biggest challenges of bilingual parenting;
- 5) experience of inclusion in preschool.

In order to guarantee the privacy of the families, in the excerpts to each has been assigned a number from 1 to 8.

Undoubtedly, when studying the bilingual families and children the fundamental question that arises is that of the **motivation**: what is the parents' motivation to raise their children bilingual? Why is it important to them? In context of the current study, the author also inquired if, according to parents' beliefs, attending a preschool would be a crucial step for achieving the aim of being bilingual.

The motivation of the parents is mainly that of the child to be able to speak the languages of both parents and know and appreciate their respective cultures:

Fam#6: *„It is important for both of us; if he (the child) has two citizenships, two nationalities, he must know also the language and cultural heritage that both sides carry.”*

Fam#3: *„It is important for us to raise them with confident ability to speak their native language.”*

Two parents explicitly accentuate the importance of being able to communicate with the grandparents that do not understand the language of the other parent and one family mentions the communication with all the relatives. Furthermore, the question of identity arises, with three families stating that bilingualism and biculturalism would give their child a choice of where to live when he or she grows up:

Fam#2: *„It's natural for both parents that the kids obtain the knowledge of both languages „gratis”- naturally without hard studies. It is important for living in both cultures, for communication with grandparents, possibilities to use the language in the further life, children's identity at the end of the day.”*

Fam#5: *„(..) so the child can choose in which country to live.”*

Fam#7: *„(..) to be able to live in the country of her choice in the future.”*

However, some parents who come from a household where none of the parents is Czech, see bilingualism as the only way how to pass on their language and culture:

Fam#4: *„As we do not live in our countries, that is the only way to learn languages - from us.”*

On the other hand, one mother sees bilingualism as a value that will enrich her children in the way that she could not in her own childhood:

Fam#8: *„It’s something I never had and I want him to be different. Nowadays it is not a big deal to know 2 languages, it is 3 and more, or exotic languages as Japanese or Chinese (..) (that make children outstanding).”*

Nevertheless, the father in this family (of English nationality) is the only parent amongst all that does not understand the need for children to acquire more than one language:

Fam#8: *„Dad’s opinion is different. Everyone speaks English in the whole world, why would he (their son) need to know Czech or Latvian. Sometimes it irritates him.”*

In regard to attending preschool as an important factor to achieve the goal of bilingualism, surprisingly, half of the families believe that it is not crucial in order for their children to be successfully bilingual either due to the fact that it would add another language or, in the case of Latvian-Czech family, Czech preschool would make one language more prevalent than the other:

Fam#1: *„ Since we live in a country that is not the one of either parent, preschool actually would make our life more complicated since the child will be exposed to 3 or 4 languages depending on which (state of private) preschool we will choose. She is just 1 year old so 3-4 languages seem too many for such a small baby!”*

Fam#4: *„In preschool they are adding a third language (English).”*

Fam#2: *„I don’t think preschool will be crucial. (..) the Czech language will prevail since the environment will be mostly Czech. At least it will be difficult for me to keep a proper level of Latvian.”*

Fam#7: *„Attending preschool made the result that the child saw all other children use just one language and she is sometimes not ready to communicate in the language not spoken at preschool as her friends also do not speak it.”*

On the other end of continuum, two parents made it very clear that they see preschool as a valuable resource for achieving the aim of bilingualism:

Fam#5: „*If I would have a chance, I would send my child to preschool where a minority language is spoken (in Czech Republic Latvian, in Latvia Czech), so the child can practise both languages in the same intensity.*”

In summary, parents have a wide range of reasons for raising their children bilingual or even multilingual. The main motivation, however, is that of passing on both parents’ cultural heritage and enhancing the child’s identity of belonging to two countries and cultures (biculturalism), and to guarantee an easy communication with all the relatives. The importance of a preschool varies on the circumstances of the family. The current study leads to a conclusion that if one of the parents is speaking the community language, then there is a chance that preschool is seen as a good resource for fostering the child’s bilingualism, while in other language combinations parents do not view it as a beneficial factor.

2. Family language policy. The achievement of balanced bilingualism, that is the desire of all parents who have participated in the current study, depends greatly on the decisions made by parents about the language use both at home and outside (preschool, communication with relatives, friends, etc.).

To a delight of the author, seven families’ language policy is decided upon together by both parents, and in most cases there is no formal decision-making time or process. Families see this as a natural process:

Fam#1: „*We have never actually discussed family language policy, it just somehow happened naturally. But my wife sometimes gets angry that I do not know her language so well that we could switch in our communication and when speaking with our child freely between both languages as we wish.*”

Fam#2: „*It happens naturally due to person talking and a bit due to environment.*”

Fam#5: „*Both parents, but mother more actively.*”

However, some families have a different approach, more situation-based than a general rule. This is illustrated by two excerpts, one coming from a family with mixed-languages acquisition model (see table 5.4.), one from strictly OPOL (one language-one person) model:

Fam#7: „*Each speaker decides about the language spoken at each separate moment.*”

Fam#4: „*Dad always uses German, mom - Latvian, even if we are all talking together about the same topic. Just sometimes when we have guests, playdates or are visiting an English speaking family we use English so other kids could understand.*”

Unfortunately, the same English father from family #8 cited in the motivation section, is again the only negative example in regard to family language policy:

Fam#8: „*Our home language is English, father insists we speak English when we are all three together.*”

When asked about how they decided on a preschool language, most parents assume a slightly fatalist approach that it is not their decision to make but the environment decides for them:

Fam#2: „*(..) we do not have any other choice. We live in Czech Republic.*”

Fam#1: „*The language in preschool will be English or Czech, neither of which is our native language.*”

Furthermore, some parents are completely disinterested:

Fam#8: „*We didn't care what the preschool language would be. We couldn't get in government preschool, so we ended up in English-Czech nursery.*”

This unwillingness to assume a more active approach towards such an important decision as the language used in preschool could be explained by the fact that in families with a Czech parent is has never been viewed as an issue, the parents automatically assume that when living in Czech Republic the children should attend a Czech preschool. However, this is not the case with other families that face the additional challenge of introducing the child to the third (Czech) or third and fourth language (English/Czech) when the child starts to attend a preschool.

The author proceeded by asking the parents about the sources that they used as a basis for their families' language policies. The detailed results of this question are seen in figure 5.1. Unexpectedly, research was the most popular source. Extended family members, friends with bilingual children and online forums and blogs for new parents were also reported as reliable sources of information for the parents. Arguably, the parents prefer sources that are personal connections (extended family, friends) as well as personal experience from other parents in similar situation (parenting forums, bloggers).

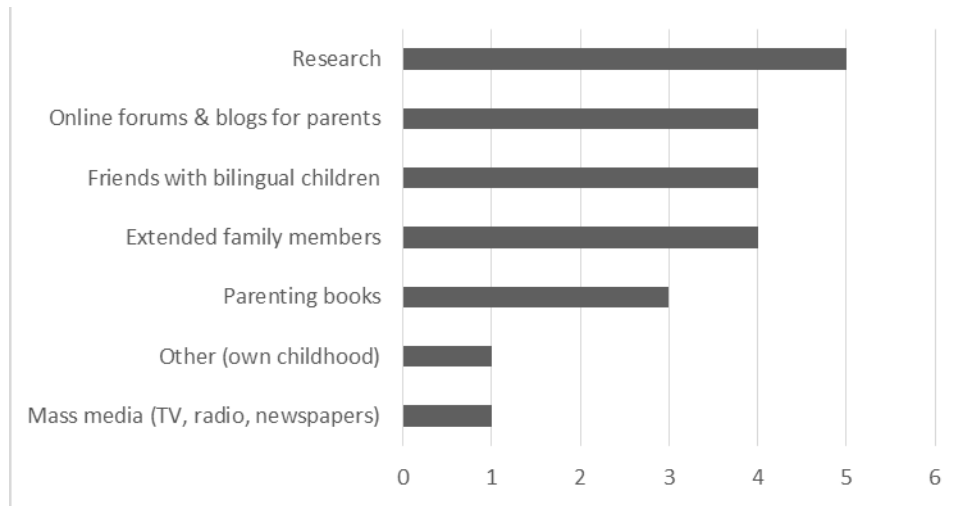


Figure 5.1. Sources of information for family language policy

Another question that the author wanted to examine was how the parents facilitated their child’s bilingualism and if they considered local diaspora activities as a useful means to get additional support in their journey of raising bilingual children. As evident in figure 5.2., almost all parents have adopted a multi-tool approach in order to balance the child’s exposure to the languages.

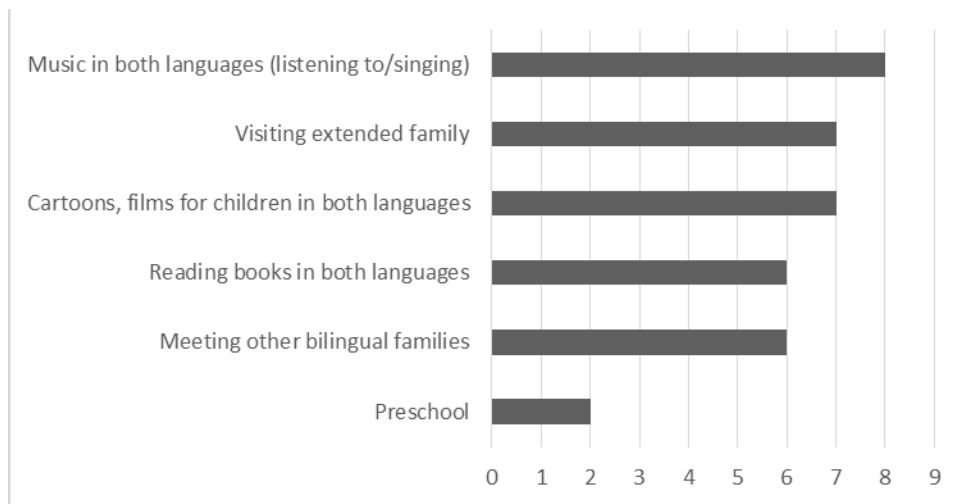


Figure 5.2. Families’ chosen tools to facilitate child’s bilingualism

Unexpectedly, singing or listening to the songs in both languages is the only tool all families rely on to facilitate their child’s bilingualism, with cartoons, films and books following close by. Meeting other bilingual families and visiting extended family in other countries are equally popular as the

three previously mentioned tools. Author feels regretful over the fact that only two families have mentioned preschool as a way to enhance their child's bilingualism. This may be due to previously described issue of an ethnically mixed family residing in a third country (for example, a Latvian and an Italian living in Prague), or this could be a methodological problem of questionnaire design since not all families have had the experience of their children attending preschool yet (indeed, five children out of twelve will start preschool from September 2016) so these parents, obviously, did not state that they have used this resource to foster bilingualism and, hence, in sum preschool seems of minor importance. However, two of these five children come from families that have other children, so author concludes that, nevertheless, parents do not see preschool as a valuable resource.

In regard to diaspora activities as a practical help to meeting other bilingual families and exposing the children to the parents' culture, the responses vary from minimal interest to great appreciation. Here are some examples that illustrate the importance that the families attribute to participation in diaspora events:

Fam#4: *„Yes, we do take part in (Latvian) diaspora activities. For German, we do travel a lot to Germany, visit German friends, go to museums.”*

Fam#5: *„Yes, we organize meetings with expat families. I together with my son attend ethnical singing group in the Embassy. I have also made a facebook group called Latvian families in Czech Republic where we communicate with each other. This group is not very active, though. Everyone expects others to organize something.”*

Fam#1: *„Sometimes I join in the activities organized by Latvian community in Prague. I really enjoy to see how Latvian diaspora celebrates the most important celebrations, such as Ligo, Christmas and Easter. Latvian embassy is very active and informs my wife via e-mail about other Latvia-related activities and we try to go almost always. On the other hand, Italian embassy is inactive in this regard, but I have Italian colleagues and my wife has found an Italian mothers' support group that meets regularly so we have also contact with Italian community in Prague. I think it is very important to have friends from both of our countries so there is a balance in the languages that our daughter hears outside of home.”*

In rare cases the participation in Latvian diaspora activities is obstructed by lack of information about these activities:

Fam#7: „*Diaspora activities are very rare, but we try to participate.*”

Another reason for inactivity could be the place of residence, that is, families from Brno and Pilsen are more likely to say that they are not very active since most of the cultural demonstrations (art exhibitions, films, concerts, meetings with book authors) as well as celebrations of Easter, Midsummer and Christmas are organized in the Latvian embassy in Prague and, regrettably, rarely and selectively the same or other cultural events are held in other cities.

In summary, parents rely on many different sources to make decisions about the languages that their child will use, but a common family language policy is seen as a natural consequence of having children in an ethnically mixed family rather than an issue that needs a special time devoted to it. Mutual respect and balance are the key concepts that parents adopt when deciding about the language use at home and elsewhere. The parents facilitate their children's bilingualism in a variety of ways, but do not regard attending preschool as being a priority. The author concludes that parents see themselves as the main, if not only, actors in achieving the goal of balanced bilingualism and, therefore, are active users of all possible sources and tools to make deeply thoughtful decisions about their children's bilingualism and biculturalism.

3. Myths and fears about bilingualism and other people's reaction. The author asked the parents in separate questions what myths have they heard about the bilingual acquisition and what concerns and fears do they have about their own child's bilingual acquisition. Later on in the interview, a question about other people's reaction to their choice of raising the child bilingual was asked, followed by an additional inquiry on their feelings about the comments and suggestions they have received.

The question about myths needed several rounds of re-grouping of the codes during the data analysis phase since the parents used very diverse expressions to describe the same concept. The most common myths according to the parents are shown in figure 5.3.

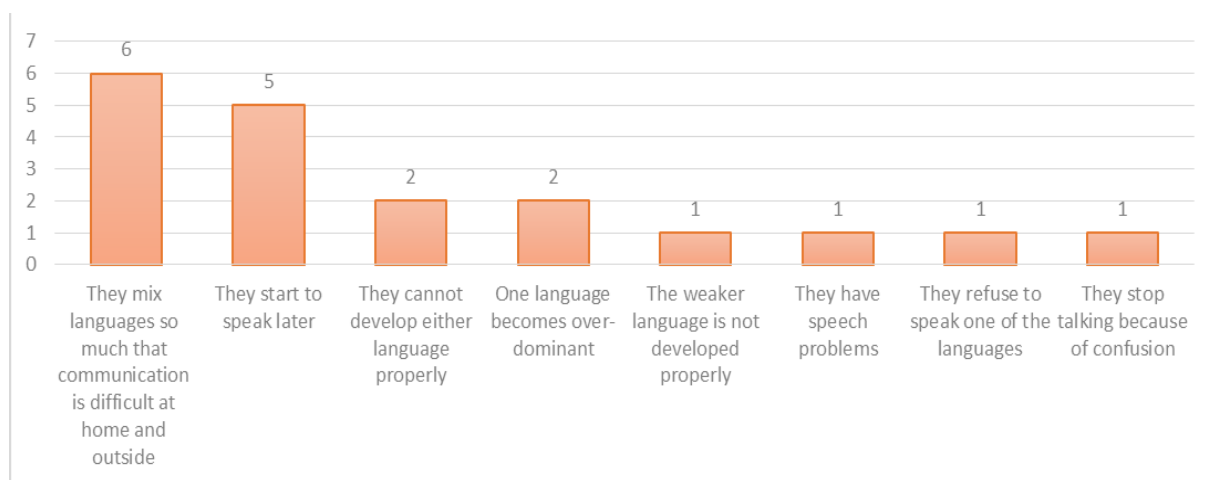


Figure 5.3. Myths about bilingual children

The author in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this paper has discussed extensively the up to date research that defies these myths with scientific evidence. Even though some of these myths can be true at some point of a child's life (bilingual children actually tend to start talking later than monolingual children, or, some children reject one of the languages at a particular moment of their lives), it is essential to point out that any difference is usually balanced out by the time the child is four or five years old.

In regard to the weak and dominant language, this is an important concern for the parents:

Fam#1: *„I don't have any fears. I will encourage my child to learn even more languages. (...) My wife fears that our child will prefer the language that she hears the most (Italian). I think that if it would be the other way around (Latvian as the main language), she would not mind that there is a dominant language in our household.”*

Fam#2: *„I regret a bit the unbalanced environment in the sense of languages.”*

Fam#3: *„I'm afraid that one language overcomes the other.”*

Another family understands that the biggest concern will be how to balance out the home languages against the dominance of English:

Fam#4: *„As our kids are attending English speaking preschool, it will be hard to keep up Latvian and German.”*

Other concerns that parents have expressed include a fear that the child will start to speak later and might refuse to speak one of the languages, a fear of not being accepted by his peers in preschool

because of different pronunciation, or a fear that the child might end up mixing languages just as the mother:

Fam#8: „*I speak 4 languages and sometimes I find the sentence said in all four of them.*”

Only one family admitted that they have no concerns about their decision of bilingual upbringing of their child. The author would have wished that more families felt so confident but, on the other hand, it is true that bilingualism and biculturalism are extremely complex life choices that can create a lot of insecurities, if not in the beginning, then along the road in the long journey to achieve bilingualism. The author assumes that often these insecurities are caused by other people's reactions: extended family members, distant relatives, friends, colleagues, passers-by in a park or people sitting near them in public transport can say something that could potentially lower the parents' confidence. Families' experience, however, is in clear contradiction with this assumption. All families have stated that they receive *only* positive or *mostly* positive comments from others around them. Only two parents have received also negative feedback, but demonstrated a great confidence:

Fam#2: „*Some (educated part) accept our choice, some are giving stupid advice. I do not care. Nevertheless, I love old ladies in tram asking for what language do we talk.*”

Fam#5: „*My parents are very supportive and proud we have a bilingual family, they are interested and want to learn about the other language and culture. The parents of my husband were more confused, especially husband's mother who was upset she doesn't understand what I speak with my child or what my child says. She has been asking me to speak her language at her home. I didn't listen and continued to speak my native tongue to my child everywhere.*”

In summary, although a lot of information is easily accessible there are still too many false assumptions about bilingual children. The author concludes that more often relevant research results should be disseminated to the general public in order to educate them that these myths have no scientific basis. This would decrease even more the negative comments that some parents have received from other people. The concerns and fears that parents have pointed out should be incorporated in the regular evaluation sessions of family language policy so that accurate changes could be made accordingly to the problematic areas. Government-provided parental counselling

specifically designated for bilingual families, for example, in a preschool facility after working hours, in a municipality social centre or psychologist's office could be another option to increase parents' confidence about the choices they have made.

4. Challenges of bilingual parenting. Some of the challenges that parents face on everyday basis have been indirectly described in the previous sections. Here the focus will be on most frequent challenge that parents have to deal with: code-mixing and code-switching. The incidence of code-mixing and code-switching is reported in table 5.5. Two families have not dealt with the issue, in one due to child's age (just 1;1 at the moment of the interview), in the other due to the fact that the other language was introduced later so, presumably, the children had already made L1 a solid base for the onset of L2.

Table 5.5.

Children's code-mixing and code-switching

	Families
Code-mixing	3
Code-switching	2
Code-mixing AND code-switching	1
Total	6

Table 5.6.

Parents' reactions to child's code-mixing

	Families
Minimal comprehension	1
Expressed hypothesis	2
Repetition by adult	2
Move-on strategy	1
Code-switching	-

Consequently, the author asked what reaction parents had towards code-mixing and code-switching and offered five options by Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert (2004) that are described in more

detail in section 3.3. of this paper (*Challenges of bilingual parenting*). The results can be seen in table 5.6.

In summary, code-mixing and code-switching represent the biggest challenges for parents that raise their children to become bilingual. The diversity in parents' reactions shows that there is no consensus, each family does as they please. Moreover, although it was not explicitly asked to state each parent's reaction, the author presumes that the reactions could differ between two parents of the same family. The author concludes that code-switching is not deemed a valid and beneficial option by parents when dealing with code-mixing/switching since that would not make any change.

5. Experience of inclusion in preschool. Last set of questions examined if the child's overall experience in preschool has been positive and what is their personal opinion about the research question, that is, what are the key factors that could guarantee successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool. Since some of the children are yet to attend preschool, these questions had fewer responses than others. Of the families that have had experience with inclusion in preschool, more precisely, with the teachers' reactions, the parents' overall perception is that the experience is positive or neutral:

Fam#7: *„Teachers do not really care about this and they have not really noticed that as she has no problems with the Czech language and she understands that at preschool she needs to speak Czech only.”*

Fam#4: *„No advice from teachers, as they are doing a third language there. (..) I have never been suggested to quit some language at home to help them learn English.”*

Fam#8: *„Yes, teachers have given advice to dad, to accept that the child will be bilingual and understand that it is good for the future of the child.”*

Teachers' competence and readiness to work with bilingual children is a crucial factor, as illustrated by two negative experiences:

Fam#3: *„One preschool teacher advised to talk to kids Czech only. We rejected that preschool and chose the one that had great adaptation for no-Czech speaking kids.”*

Fam#2: *„My middle son has a bit worse command of Latvian because he has been prohibited in school to present books that he has read in Latvian at lessons of*

literature, which is a pity. The teacher is stubborn even though he himself has studied in the United Kingdom.”

Finally, what do the families think of successful inclusion? What are the key factors that make the inclusion of bilingual children in preschool successful? Can it be achieved at all? Since this is the main question of the current study, the author has chosen to cite all answers ranging from a point of view that there are no issues with inclusion to more detailed description of fundamentals of successful inclusion, according to parents:

Fam#5: *„I dont see **any problems** for bilingual children to be included in preschool.”*

Fam#8: *„I don't think there are **any key factors**, the **younger the child** is, quicker he will get used to language.”*

Fam#4: *„There is **no guarantee for anything**. But **learning a language of preschool** would be a good point to start. We are supporting German and Latvian even at school, continuing to use it in our communication. Our daughters love their "secret" languages and are very proud.”*

Fam#7: *„**To speak the language of preschool** community or at least to be communicative and ready to learn it.”*

Fam#6: *„Before preschool the child must attend several child centres, lessons where **child should meet other children** so that there is no shock in the preschool that others speak in that or another language.”*

Fam#3: *„**Interest of teachers**.”*

Fam#2: *„**Positive approach** of all sides, not making up a problem out of nothing, **patience**, explanation to preschool teachers that there is a **need of respect** on both sides. **Avoiding to put a kid under a pressure** of language. Children are very capable of learning and they do not need any extra pressure.”*

Fam#1: *„Firstly, **parents need a lot of courage**... especially if the child later on starts to boycott one of the languages. Secondly, be able **to speak the local language** so that she can freely communicate with other children. Thirdly, I believe that a lot depends on the **teachers and their experience** with bilingual children. They should see bilingualism as a choice that is similar to raising a child vegetarian or atheist - when parents have made the choice, teacher's task is to **respect the parents' choice**.”*

In summary, the parents' views on successful conclusion are influenced by their current experience; if there is no experience with preschool yet, it is more likely that a parent would say that there are no issues, but if there have been problems with a teacher that was unwilling to accept the child's other language, consequently the parent could mention interest of teachers as the main factor for inclusion. Amongst parents, however, three fundamental principles prevail for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool: knowing or willing to learn the preschool's language, teachers' competence and, finally, positive approach and respect from all sides.

5.3. Analysis of expert interviews

The author had chosen five experts to conduct interviews with, but just three showed interest. Unfortunately, the busy schedule of one university lecturer that had done research on Latvian diaspora children forbid her to participate, so the experts are:

- 1) Sandris Žeivots, Ph.D., doctoral thesis „Lived experience of emotional highs in experiential learning”, lecturer on teaching English as a second language in multicultural society at Sydney Technical University, Australia;
- 2) Sara Cecchinelli, M.A. in psychology, master's thesis on bilingual Italian-Czech families, an English language teacher in Prague, Czech Republic.

Since the experts were not in the same country as the author, the interviews were conducted via Skype on May 20-25th 2016 and then transcribed, divided in meaningful units and analyzed. The interviews consisted of either 9 or 12 questions (Sara Cecchinelli was not asked about Latvian diaspora education) and afterwards for a more structured review were divided in 4 sections:

- 1) bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism;
- 2) diaspora education policy;
- 3) bilingual education;
- 4) successful inclusion.

When asked if they see bilingualism, multilingualism and plurilingualism as an added value that children from mixed families can benefit from, S. Žeivots asked for a change in perception of bilingual children as better than monolingual and to shift the focus to the assistance to bilingual families:

„(..) it is essential (..) to move away from traditional discourse about multilingual children and the benefits they possess. There has been extensive research done around this topic. (..) the discourse we should be moving closer to is how can we assist these children, their families(..).”

S.Cecchinelli provided a psychologist's perspective that *„growing up in a multilingual environment is no longer just an added value in work, relationships and travel, but it contains concrete and real benefits”* and proceeded to mention research on various cognitive benefits, such as improvements in attention and concentration areas of the brain, the executive functions, meta-linguistic competence. Also long-term benefits were mentioned, for example, *„those who master a good level of bilingualism can have on average a five years delay of the onset of Alzheimer's disease”*.

Since this research focuses on mixed families with one Latvian parent who have bilingual children that attend or are planning to attend preschool in Czech Republic, the author asked about the help the parents of bilingual children need the most to achieve the goal of bilingualism. S.Cecchinelli focuses on the importance of being informed (both parents themselves and the society in general), more support and more varied educational offer:

„Parents have to be mainly informed. Too many false beliefs and myths still floating around bilingualism; language delays, confusion, problems in learning the first language are just some of the fears that still plague many uninformed multicultural families. A massive information campaign, support and a wider choice of schools (unfortunately, still few schools offer bilingual programs) are a strong basis for facing a bilingual life.”

On the other hand, S. Žeivots, as his professional interest is in positive learning experience, highlights some emotionally-oriented aspects that should be taken into account in regard to supporting bilingual children:

„Safe space, especially learning space. Ability to make mistakes. Celebration of multilingualism. Not to be corrected when using code-switching. Acknowledgement from parents, family friends.”

Diaspora education policy. Next section of questions, as mentioned above, were asked only to S. Žeivots. Since he is Latvian expatriate in Australia the author presumed that he might know

about Latvian diaspora education policy. However, this assumption turned out to be erroneous since he is not familiar with the current legislation or practices in regard to Latvian bilingual children. The author concludes that if an active member of the local Latvian community in Sydney does not know anything about diaspora children education it could mean that either a) there is a great need for an information campaign, as S.Cecchinelli pointed out in first part of the interview, or b) Latvian Government should diversify its educational offer to diaspora children, including more activities for preschool children.

Bilingual education. The most part of twelve-question interview covered the topics of bilingual education, choosing the preschool and teacher's competence. When asked about the most effective model of bilingual education, both experts were eagerly supportive, with S. Žeivots noting that *„the models and their effectiveness vary significantly depending on the needs of the children, family or school”*. He proceeds to give an interesting advice to foster bilingualism at home environment but that could be transferred also to a preschool:

„An interesting technique (..) is that family uses different languages in different rooms, e.g. French in kitchen, and English in other rooms. Depending which language has more priority, this may be a beneficial technique based on mutual agreement.”

S. Cecchinelli points out some basic parameters that a good bilingual education program must take into account:

„Firstly, early exposure to the language, starting already in nursery schools and kindergartens. Early childhood is the most fertile ground for learning, the child's ability to assimilate and develop the language is, in fact, at the highest level. For a good learning process, languages must be used to communicate and not meant to be studied. Secondly, a high-quality training of teachers who need to know very well the languages they teach. Thirdly, 30 minutes daily is the minimum so that the learning can be effective. Therefore a bilingual education program 'immersion', which pursues bilingualism and biculturalism appears to be the most effective.”

Experts offered precise advice when asked what are the most important aspects that should be evaluated when parents are choosing a preschool for their children. S.Cecchinelli once again accentuates the importance of being informed and to balance the languages:

„The informed parent that wants to offer his/her child a chance to grow up bilingual will make sure that the school program really supports the learning of both languages in an equivalent manner and that the child is equally exposed to both languages.”

S. Žeivots gave a more detailed response:

„These aspects should be decided based on family needs and goals. In general, I see these aspects as important: 1) values of the school; 2) experience with multiculturalism/multilingualism in the school; 3) quality of teaching (support the language of LOI (language of instruction), support for code-switching, 4) the level of education and whether that is close to the level of the child.”

Experts disagreed on the view if monolingual or bilingual preschool is preferable, with S. Cecchinelli strongly advocating for a bilingual one, while S. Žeivots accentuated that preschool alone is not a guarantee for achieving bilingualism:

„(..) Preschool is not always a matter of choice and neither choosing monolingual or bilingual preschool will always determine the success of the children.”

Since half of the families that participated in the case study represent households where a community language is not spoken (for example, Latvian and Italian residing in Czech Republic), the author asked the interviewees for recommendations. S. Žeivots, in concordance with the parents' responses in case studies, stressed the importance of learning the local language as a means to achieve inclusion:

„(..) Depending on how long parents are expecting to live in the third country, prioritise the learning of the third or community language.”

Furthermore, S. Cecchinelli shows her preference to OPOL principle of language acquisition:

„Each of the parents should speak his/her own language with the child and eventually support those languages with school or courses. The country language will be learned at school and with other local people. This child will be very lucky to grow as multilingual.”

In the next two questions, the author wanted to find out what competences should the teachers have if they are working in a preschool with bilingual children. Experts pointed out several competences but the great knowledge of the language is seen as the most important:

- *„Training on English as a second language. Depending on the country, training on how to teach the language of the country the person lives in.” (S.Žeivots)*
- *„Knowing very well the language they teach is a must in order to be a good model of grammar and pronunciation learning. A non-perfect linguistically teacher can teach mistakes that are hard to be eliminated, since those would be stored in the procedural memory systems that are the oldest and most durable memory systems.” (S.Cecchinelli)*
- *„Soft skills development, e.g. intercultural awareness, openness, tolerance.” (S.Žeivots)*
- *„There should be guidelines from the stakeholders (school, government, etc.) on how to deal with bilingual children.” (S.Žeivots)*

Is there something that should be changed in teacher preparation and/or further education? Experts preferred not to examine the issue thoroughly, but gave a rather vague answers:

- *„This very much depends on which country we are talking about as experiences across the world differ significantly.” (S.Žeivots)*
- *„Prevent unqualified people to access children's education and ensure balanced bilingual curriculum.” (S.Cecchinelli)*

Successful inclusion. The last question was the same both for families of the case studies and experts: What are the key factors for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool? S.Cecchinelli admitted that she needs to reflect on this question more and said only that successful inclusion *„depends on whether the preschool is bilingual or not and if che child speaks a language that is the one of the preschool.”* S.Žeivots looked at the question more philosophically:

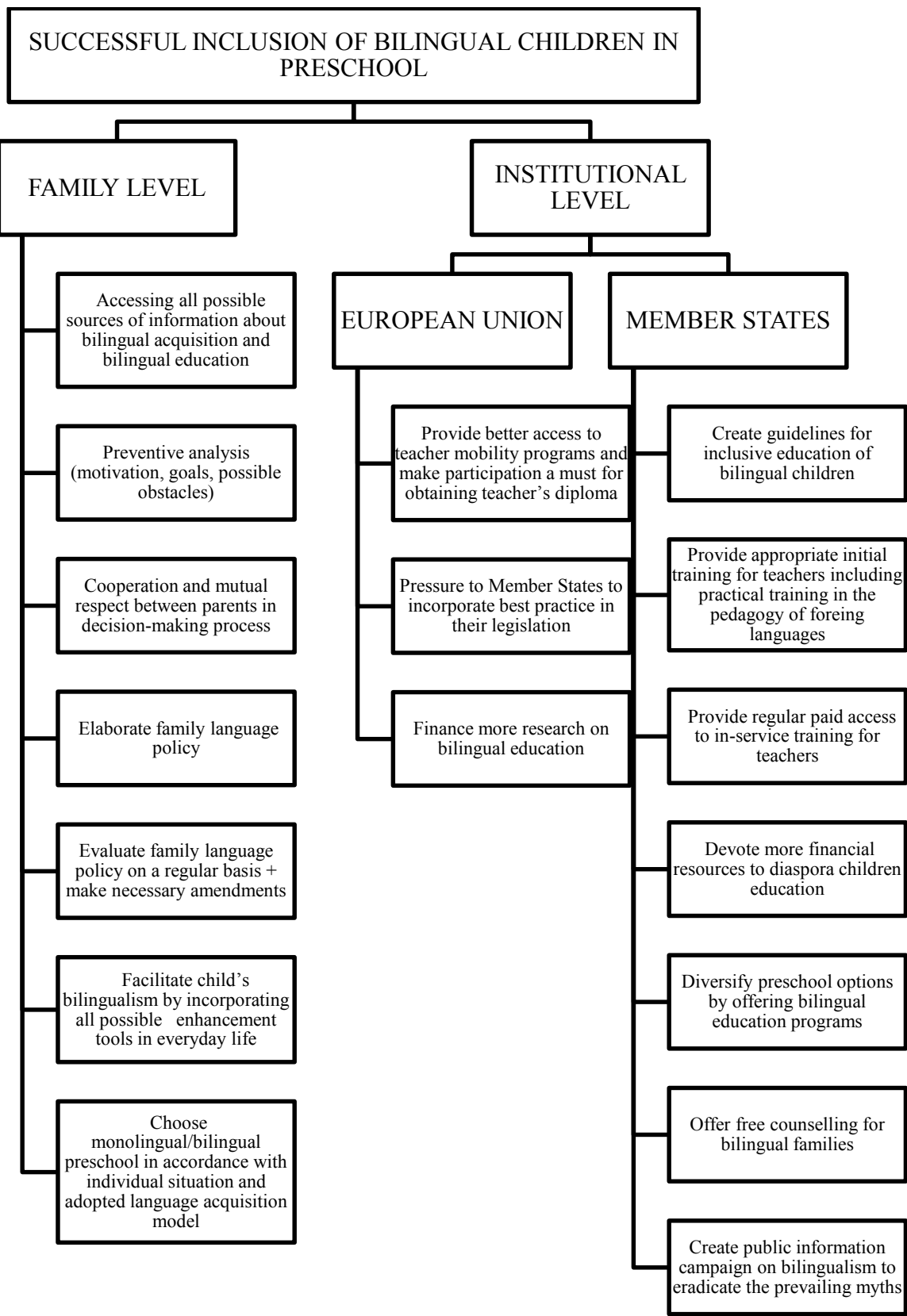
„What is understood by ‘successful inclusion’ (acceptance, opportunity to use both languages, etc.)? In very general terms:

- *Intercultural literacy by teachers and parents;*
- *Guidelines/training for teachers with English as second language, multilingual children;*
- *Incorporation of different cultures into curriculum;*
- *Authentic assessment possibilities when they get older.”*

The question about the constituents of successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool actually is the one that the author herself has reflected on for a long time. Since Jonathan Smith's Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis that is chosen as a conceptual paradigm for this paper states that the researcher's task is to make sense of participant's sense-making activity (Smith & Osborne, 2008), the author concludes that there is not one definition for successful inclusion, but many and they depend greatly on each family's situation at a particular time and can change over time.

5.4. Scheme for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool

With an extensive research as a theoretical basis for the complex issue of bilingualism, language development, bilingual education and bilingual parenting, case studies for in-depth view of other families' experience and expert advice the author decided to create a scheme that illustrates the key factors that could enhance the experience of bilingual children's inclusion in preschool attributing it a long-lasting and positive effect.



CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study is to determine fundamental factors for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool. Internationally, inclusive education is seen as a reform that supports and welcomes diversity amongst all learners.

The diverse dimensions of bilingualism is a very complex issue that make it difficult to create an all-inclusive definition of a bilingual person. They also show that many degrees of bilingualism may exist, sometimes varying in the same person over time. The ideal set would be subordinate, balanced, simultaneous, additive and endogenous bilingualism.

Bilingual children differentiate their languages phonologically, lexically, syntactically and pragmatically from the age of two, although there is considerable individual variation. The only domain with some evidence of differentiation is pragmatic (choosing the *right* language with interlocutors). There is no evidence that bilingual acquisition slows down language development . The right motivation and right external input positively encourages natural acquisition of two languages.

Most research indicate a positive effect of bilingualism on children's cognitive development: an increased cognitive flexibility, better results on tasks requiring high control, selective attentional control, enhanced executive control and inhibitory control. Thus, bilingualism does not limit the child, on the contrary, it gives him or her a better cognitive basis for future academic success.

The process of learning a language, which is influenced by cultural beliefs and values, implies that children learn the sociocultural values of the group into which they are being socialised. If bilingual children are hesitant in using language in unfamiliar situations, it may reflect unfamiliarity with new sociocultural rules or contrast between new cultural values and existing ones.

The strong forms of bilingual education would bring to life all of the advantages and benefits, while the weak forms would create a situation of subtractive bilingualism or even complete abandonment of the minority language. Languages should not be studied, but mastered through communication so the bilingual education by immersion is the best model.

The best time to start bilingual education is nursery school (0-3 years) and kindergarten (3-6 years). It is very important that the teacher avoids code-mixing and code-switching, as this would prevent the formation of independent linguistic systems at the neurofunctional level, each tied to specific contexts or people. Children must have at least 30 minutes a day of activity in the second language with a total exposure of 4 to 10 hours per week to acquire a language fully.

It is hard to eradicate the myth that learning a second language causes confusion so many teachers refuse to consider bilingualism as an enrichment and further cognitive growth. A child can easily grow bilingual; if this will not happen, negative external causes could be blamed. If the situation of bilingualism is seen as deviant from the norm people will tend to provide interpretations of the real facts selectively to confirm the stereotype.

The quality of bilingual education is directly influenced by the education policy. Preschool plays an important role in guaranteeing that both languages are equally valorised therefore teachers' competences should be enhanced. In order to achieve this, united education policy aimed to foster multilingualism and plurilingualism should be enacted at local, national and European level.

In regards to diaspora educational needs a great deal of work is still required: school intake should become easy and systematic, grades and diplomas should be uniformly translated, and a dignified, inclusive support system should be created.

Parents' motivation for raising their children bilingual is diverse: passing on both parents' cultural heritage, enhancing the child's identity of belonging to two countries and cultures (biculturalism) and guaranteeing an easy communication with all the relatives are the most popular reasons.

Parents see themselves as the main actors in achieving the goal of balanced bilingualism and, therefore, are active users of all possible sources and tools to make deeply thoughtful decisions about their children's bilingualism and biculturalism. Parents draw on a variety of sources, including popular literature, expert advice, friends and family members, as well as their own personal language learning histories, in explaining and justifying their family language policies. However, they do not regard attending preschool as being a priority.

Author provides guidelines for bilingual parenting that include a preliminary analysis of motivation, circumstances and objectives to be achieved. Government-provided parental counselling specifically designated for bilingual families could be a good option to increase parents' confidence about the choices they have made.

The parents views on successful conclusion in preschool are influenced by their current experience. If there is no experience with preschool yet, it is more likely that a parent would not see any issues, but if there have been problems with teachers unwilling to accept the child's other language, the interest of teachers could be mentioned as the main factor for inclusion. Amongst parents, three fundamental principles for successful inclusion prevail: knowing or willing to learn the preschool's language, teachers' competence and positive approach and respect from all sides.

Experts asked for a change in perception of bilingual children as better than monolingual and to shift the focus to the assistance to bilingual families. They focus on the importance of being informed (both parents themselves and the society in general), more support and more varied educational offer. Positive learning experience should also be taken into account: safe learning space, ability to make mistakes, celebration of multilingualism, not to be corrected when using code-mixing, acknowledgement from parents and family friends. Experts also accentuate the importance of balancing the child's exposure to languages, while the most valuable competence for teachers is a great knowledge of the language they teach. Experts call for special guidelines to be made by the stakeholders on how to deal with bilingual children. Successful inclusion could be achieved if teachers have intercultural awareness and tolerance, by incorporating different cultures into curriculum and providing authentic assessment possibilities.

With an extensive research as a theoretical basis for the complex issue of bilingualism, language development, bilingual education and bilingual parenting, case studies for in-depth view of other families' experience and expert advice the author created a scheme that illustrates the key factors that could enhance the experience of bilingual children's inclusion in preschool attributing it a long-lasting and positive effect.

The author concludes that there is not one definition for successful inclusion, but many and they depend greatly on each family's situation at a particular time and can change over time.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX 1. Case study questionnaire

Information about father

Name *

First

Last

Age *

Nationality *

Education *

Occupation *

Father's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1 *

Level *

Language 2

Level

Name *

First

Last

Age *

Nationality *

Education *

Occupation *

Mother's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1 *

Level *

Language 2

Level

Language 3

Level

Information about father

Name *

Age *

Nationality *

Education *

Occupation *

Father's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1 *

Level *

Language 2

Level

Language 3

Level

Information about your children

Please, indicate how old is your child (children), their sex and if they are they attending preschool?

Child 1

Age *

Child's sex *

Preschool *

Child 2

Age

Child's sex

Preschool

Child 3

Age

Child's sex

Preschool

Is your child (children) raised bilingual from birth? *

If your child (children) is not attending preschool, could you explain why?

Family language policy

What is your motivation to raise your child (children) bilingual? Why is it important to you? Is attending preschool crucial for achieving that aim? *

What myths have you heard about bilingual children? *

Do you have any concerns or fears about raising bilingual children? *

Who in your family decides about language use? (Which language will be used in which occasions? Which will be the preschool language? etc.) *

What sources influence your decisions about your family's language policy? *

- Extended family members
- Friends with bilingual children
- Research
- Parenting books
- Mass media (TV, radio, newspapers)
- Online forums & blogs for parents
- Other

What language acquisition type have you adopted? *

- Type 1: One person — one language. Parents have different native languages, but each has some competence in the other's variety, the community language is one of the parental varieties, and the strategy is for parents to each speak their own language to the child. (Example: English-speaking mother, Russian-speaking father, each using their own language, bringing up the child in England.)
- Type 2: Non-dominant home language/one language — one environment. The same as above, except that the strategy here is for both parents to speak to the child in the language not dominant in the community. The assumption is that the child will necessarily acquire the dominant community language because of extra-domestic pressure, at nursery, kindergarten, playground, school, etc. (Example: English-native-speaking bilingual mother, Russian-speaking father, both using Russian at home, in England.)
- Type 3: Non-dominant home language without community support. In this case both parents have the same language which is not, however, dominant in the community. The strategy is obviously for the two of them to use their native language with the child. (Example: Russian spoken by both parents in England.)
- Type 4: Double non-dominant home language without community support. Each parent has a different native language, neither of which is dominant outside the home. Each speaks their own language to the child. (Example: German spoken by the mother, Russian by the father, each using their own language, in England.)
- Type 5: Non-native parents. Parents have the same native language, which is also dominant in the community. However, one parent (mainly a professional linguist) always talks to the child in a non-native language. (Example: the father and the mother are both native Russian speakers, but father speaks English to the child, in Russia.)
- Type 6: Mixed languages. Parents are bilingual, the community may also be bilingual, and each parent switches and mixes languages with the child. (Example: French/English bilingual parents in Montreal, Canada or Catalan/Spanish bilingual parents in Barcelona, Spain.)

Is your child code-mixing/code-switching? *

- Yes, code-mixing (alternates between two or more languages in the same phrase)
- Yes, code-switching (alternates between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation)
- No

What is your reaction to code-mixing/code-switching?

- Minimal comprehension - parent uses the other language, asking for clarification („What did you say? I didn't understand!") so the child has to repeat in the right language
- Expressed hypothesis - parent's answer indicates that he/she has understood, but asks questions using his/her language to understand better the child's message.
- Repetition by adult - parent simply repeats the phrase said by child in his/her own language with hope that the child will follow in this direction.
- Move-on strategy - child says something in one language, parents listen and understand, but reply in other language.
- Code-switching - bilingual parent prefers whatever language child uses to achieve the bilingual situation

How do you facilitate your child's bilingualism? Please choose all options that apply to your family *

- Preschool
- Meeting other bilingual families
- Visiting extended family
- Reading books in both languages
- Music in both languages (listening to/singing)
- Cartoons, films for children in both languages
- Other

Do you take part in diaspora (local community of expatriates from your home country) activities? *

How do other people react to your choice to raise your child (children) bilingual? How do you feel about their comments and suggestions? *

Do the teachers from the preschool your child (children) attend (have attended) have a positive approach towards your child's bilingualism? *

- Yes
- No
- Not applicable (Child is not attending preschool yet)

Have the teachers given any advice? Please, specify.

In your opinion, what are the key factors that could guarantee successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool? *

ANNEX 2. Examples of submitted case study questionnaire

Privacy policy: Author asked participants for permission to publish their submitted questionnaires as they contain very personal information about the parents and the children. Four families gave their consent. Their questionnaires are shown with the number that has been assigned to them in the paper.

Questionnaire #1

Information about mother

Name
B.

Age
29

Nationality
Latvian

Education
Higher education (Bachelor's degree)

Occupation
Teacher

Mother's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1
Latvian

Level
Mothertongue

Language 2
Italian

Level
Advanced

Information about father

Name
D.

Age
33

Nationality
Italian

Education
Higher education (Bachelor's degree)

Occupation
IT engineer / Programmer

Father's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1
Italian

Level
Mothertongue

Language 2
Latvian

Level
Basic

Information about your children

Please, indicate how old is your child (children), their sex and if they are they attending preschool?

Child 1

Age
1

Child's sex
Female

Preschool
Plan to attend

Is your child (children) raised bilingual from birth?

Yes

If your child (children) is not attending preschool, could you explain why?

She is too young now. She is just 13 months old at the moment so we plan that she will attend from 18 months.

Family language policy

What is your motivation to raise your child (children) bilingual? Why is it important to you? Is attending preschool crucial for achieving that aim?

It is important that our daughter knows the languages and cultures (traditions, celebrations, music, dances, food etc.) of both of her parents. It is also important to let my child to be able to speak with her grandparents. Since we live in a country that is not the one of either parent, preschool actually would make our life more complicated since the child will be exposed to 3 or 4 languages depending on which (state or private) preschool we will choose. But she is just 1 year old, so 3-4 languages seem to many for such a small baby!

What myths have you heard about bilingual children?

The child starts to speak later than the monolingual children. They mix the languages a lot. Grandparents and other people besides the parents who do not speak both languages are unable to understand what they are saying.

Do you have any concerns or fears about raising bilingual children?

I don't have any fear. I will encourage my child to learn even more languages.

Who in your family decides about language use? (Which language will be used in which occasions? Which will be the preschool language? etc.)

Since the father does not know the mother's language (Latvian) very well, the language used when we are all together is mainly Italian. But each of us generally speak to her in our native language. The language in preschool will be English or Czech which is not native language.

We have actually never discussed family language policy, it just somehow happened naturally. But my wife sometimes gets angry that I do not know her language so well that we could switch in our communication and when speaking with our daughter between Italian and Latvian as we wish. I think for my wife that is important - that Italian is not the main language, but that the languages are balanced. She fears that otherwise our child will prefer the language that she hears the most (Italian). I think that it would be the other way around (Latvian as the main language), she would not mind that there is a dominant language in our household.

What sources influence your decisions about your family's language policy?

Research
Parenting books
Friends with bilingual children
Online forums & blogs for parents
Mass media (TV, radio, newspapers)

What language acquisition type have you adopted?

Type 4: Double non-dominant home language without community support. Each parent has a different native language, neither of which is dominant outside the home. Each speaks their own language to the child. (Example: German spoken by the mother, Russian by the father, each using their own language, in England.)

Is your child code-mixing/code-switching?

No

How do you facilitate your child's bilingualism? Please choose all options that apply to your family

Meeting other bilingual families
Reading books in both languages
Music in both languages (listening to/singing)
Visiting extended family

Do you take part in diaspora (local community of expatriates from your home country) activities?

Sometimes I join in the activities organized by Latvian community in Prague. I really enjoy to see how Latvian diaspora celebrates the most important celebrations, such as Ligo, Christmas and Easter. Latvian embassy is very active and informs my wife via e-mail about other Latvia-related activities (films, concerts, art exhibitions) and we try to go almost always. On the other hand, Italian embassy is inactive in this regard, but I have Italian colleagues and my wife has found an Italian mothers' support group that meets regularly so we have also contact with Italian community in Prague. I think it is very important to have friends from both of our countries so there is a balance in the languages that our daughter hears outside of home.

How do other people react to your choice to raise your child (children) bilingual? How do you feel about their comments and suggestions?

I receive only positive comments about this choice. The suggestion is that each of us has to speak the native language to the child.

Do the teachers from the preschool your child (children) attend (have attended) have a positive approach towards your child's bilingualism?

Not applicable (Child is not attending preschool yet)

In your opinion, what are the key factors that could guarantee successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool?

- 1) Parents need a lot of courage....especially if the child later on starts to boycott one of the languages.
- 2) Be able to speak the local language so that she can freely communicate with other children.
- 3) I believe that a lot depends on the teachers and their experience with bilingual children. They should see bilingualism as a choice that is similar to raising a child vegetarian or atheist - when parents have made the choice, teacher's task is to respect the parents' choice.

Questionnaire #2

Information about mother

Name

I.

Age **Nationality**

42 Latvian

Education

Higher education (Master's degree)

Occupation

translator

Mother's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1 **Level**

Latvian Mother tongue

Language 2 **Level**

Czech Advanced

Language 3 **Level**

English Advanced

Information about father

Name

J.

Age **Nationality**

43 Czech

Education

Higher education (Doctor's degree)

Occupation

judge

Father's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1 **Level**

Czech Mother tongue

Language 2 **Level**

Latvian Advanced

Language 3 **Level**

English Advanced

Information about your children

Please, indicate how old is your child (children), their sex and if they are they attending preschool?

Child 1

Age **Child's sex**
3 Male

Preschool

Plan to attend

Child 2

Age **Child's sex**
11 Male

Preschool

Have attended

Child 3

Age **Child's sex**
14 Male

Preschool

Have attended

Is your child (children) raised bilingual from birth?

Yes

What language is used in preschool?

Community language (Czech)

If your child (children) is not attending preschool, could you explain why?

He is still almost 3 years old and will be attending from September onwards.

Family language policy

What is your motivation to raise your child (children) bilingual? Why is it important to you? Is attending preschool crucial for achieving that aim?

It's natural for both parents and the kids obtained a knowledge of both languages "gratis" – naturally without hard studies. It is important for living in both cultures, for communications with grandparents, possibilities to use the language in the further life, children identity at the end of the day. I don't think preschool will be crucial. As to my mind the Czech language will prevail, since the environment will be mostly Czech. At least it will be difficult for me to keep a proper level of Latvian. My middle son has a bit worse command of Latvian because he has been prohibited in school to present books that he has read in Latvian at lessons of literature, which is a pity. The teacher is stubborn even though he himself has studied in the UK. The eldest son is reading a lot in Latvian and he has maybe better word stock than kids back in Latvia.

What myths have you heard about bilingual children?

they do not know either language properly
they never learn proper writing in either language
bilingualism makes a mess in family communication
people get confused hearing a weird language

Do you have any concerns or fears about raising bilingual children?

Actually not, maybe I regret a bit the unbalanced environment in the sense of languages.

Who in your family decides about language use? (Which language will be used in which occasions? Which will be the preschool language? etc.)

It happens naturally due to person talking and a bit due to environment. For preschool language we do not have any other choice. We live in the Czech Rep.

What sources influence your decisions about your family's language policy?

Research

What language acquisition type have you adopted?

Type 1: One person one language. Parents have different native languages, but each has some competence in the others variety, the community language is one of the parental varieties, and the strategy is for parents to each speak their own language to the child. (Example: English-speaking mother, Russian-speaking father, each using their own language, bringing up the child in England.)

Is your child code-mixing/code-switching?

Yes, code-switching (alternates between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation)

How do you facilitate your child's bilingualism? Please choose all options that apply to your family

Visiting extended family
Reading books in both languages
Music in both languages (listening to/singing)
Cartoons, films for children in both languages

Do you take part in diaspora (local community of expatriates from your home country) activities?

Very little

How do other people react to your choice to raise your child (children) bilingual? How do you feel about their comments and suggestions?

Some (the educated part) accept our choice, some are giving stupid advices. I do not care. Nevertheless I love old ladies in tram asking for what language do we talk.

Do the teachers from the preschool your child (children) attend (have attended) have a positive approach towards your child's bilingualism?

Not applicable (Child is not attending preschool yet)

In your opinion, what are the key factors that could guarantee successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool?

Positive approach of all sides, not making up a problem out of nothing, patience, explanation to preschool teachers that there is a need of respect on both sides. Avoiding to put a kid under a pressure of language. Children are very capable of learning and they do not need any extra pressure.

Questionnaire #4

Information about mother

Name

A.

Age

43

Nationality

Latvian

Education

Higher education (Bachelor's degree)

Occupation

Librarian

Mother's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1

Latvian

Level

Mother tongue

Information about father

Name

D.

Age

55

Nationality

USA

Education

Higher education (Master's degree)

Occupation

Teacher

Father's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1

German

Level

Advanced

Information about your children

Please, indicate how old is your child (children), their sex and if they are they attending preschool?

Child 1

Age **Child's sex**

4 Female

Preschool

Is attending now

Child 2

Age Child's sex

2 Female

Preschool

Plan to attend

Is your child (children) raised bilingual from birth?

Yes

What language is used in preschool?

English

If your child (children) is not attending preschool, could you explain why?

Family language policy

What is your motivation to raise your child (children) bilingual? Why is it important to you? Is attending preschool crucial for achieving that aim?

We want them to learn language we speak and love. As we don't live in our countries, that is the only way to learn languages - from us. In preschool they are adding 3rd language.

What myths have you heard about bilingual children?

Late speech development

Do you have any concerns or fears about raising bilingual children?

As our kids are attending to english speaking schools, it will be hard to keep latvian and german up.

Who in your family decides about language use? (Which language will be used in which occasions? Which will be the preschool language? etc.)

Dad always use german and mom - latvian. Even if we are all talking together about the same topic :) Just sometimes if we have guests, playdates or visiting english speaking family we use english, so other kids could understand

What sources influence your decisions about your family's language policy?

Online forums & blogs for parents

Extended family members

Friends with bilingual children

Research

What language acquisition type have you adopted?

Type 4: Double non-dominant home language without community support. Each parent has a different native language, neither of which is dominant outside the home. Each speaks their own language to the child.(Example: German spoken by the mother, Russian by the father, each using their own language, in England.)

Is your child code-mixing/code-switching?

Yes, code-switching (alternates between two or more languages in the context of a single conversation) Yes, code-mixing (alternates between two or more languages in the same phrase)

What is your reaction to code-mixing/code- switching?

Repetition by adult - parent simply repeats the phrase said by child in his/her own language with hope that the child will follow in this direction.

Move-on strategy - child says something in one language, parents listen and understand, but reply in other language.

How do you facilitate your child's bilingualism? Please choose all options that apply to your family

Meeting other bilingual families
Visiting extended family
Reading books in both languages
Music in both languages (listening to/singing)
Cartoons, films for children in both languages

Do you take part in diaspora (local community of expatriates from your home country) activities?

Yes, we do take part in latvian diaspora activities. For german we do travel a lot to Germany, visit german friends, attend museums

How do other people react to your choice to raise your child (children) bilingual?How do you feel about their comments and suggestions?

People around are curious , but supportive. Never really had bad comments about it

Do the teachers from the preschool your child (children) attend (have attended) have a positive approach towards your child's bilingualism?

Yes

Have the teachers given any advice? Please, specify.

No advices from teachers, as they are doing 3rd language there. That is what they are working on at school, and there are lot of kids in the class learning english. Never been suggested to quit some language at home to help to learn english.

In your opinion, what are the key factors that could guarantee successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool?

There is no guarantee for anything :) But Learning a language of preschool would be a good point to start. We are supporting german and latvian even at school, continuing to use it in our communication. She loves her "secret" languages and being very proud.

Questionnaire #5

Information about mother

Name

Z.

Age Nationality

36 Latvian

Education

Higher education (Master's degree)

Occupation

Massage specialist

Mother's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1 Level

Latvian Mothertongue

Information about father

Name

J.

Age Nationality

33 Czech

Education

Higher education (Bachelor's degree)

Occupation

Restaurant manager

Father's languages (spoken at home with children)

Language 1 Level

Czech Mothertongue

Information about your children

Please, indicate how old is your child (children), their sex and if they are they attending preschool?

Child 1

Age Child's sex

2 Male

Preschool

Plan to attend

Is your child (children) raised bilingual from birth?

Yes

What language is used in preschool?

Community language (Czech)

If your child (children) is not attending preschool, could you explain why?

I think it is still time for him to be with his parents. I would like that he attends preschool where my native language is spoken

Family language policy

What is your motivation to raise your child (children) bilingual? Why is it important to you? Is attending preschool crucial for achieving that aim?

I think my child has to be fluent in both languages, Latvian and Czech. We also speak English between parents. So the child can choose in which country to live. He also will be possible to understand both cultures. If I would have a chance I would send my child to preschool where is spoken minority language (In Czech Republic Latvian, Czech language in Latvia), so the child can practise both languages in the same intensity.

What myths have you heard about bilingual children?

That they are starting to speak slower, that they mix both languages, that one of languages is becoming dominant in family and child refuses to speak the second language. That the level of minority language is not enough to read, write and study in high school.

Do you have any concerns or fears about raising bilingual children?

- 1) that he will start to speak slower
- 2) that he will refuse to speak one of the languages

Who in your family decides about language use? (Which language will be used in which occasions? Which will be the preschool language? etc.)

Both of parents, but mother more actively

What sources influence your decisions about your family's language policy?

Extended family members
Friends with bilingual children
Online forums & blogs for parents

What language acquisition type have you adopted?

Type 1: One person one language. Parents have different native languages, but each has some competence in the other's variety, the community language is one of the parental varieties, and the

strategy is for parents to each speak their own language to the child.(Example: English-speaking mother, Russian-speaking father, each using their own language, bringing up the child in England.)

Is your child code-mixing/code-switching?

Yes, code-mixing (alternates between two or more languages in the same phrase)

What is your reaction to code-mixing/code-switching?

Move-on strategy - child says something in one language, parents listen and understand, but reply in other language.

Repetition by adult - parent simply repeats the phrase said by child in his/her own language with hope that the child will follow in this direction.

How do you facilitate your child's bilingualism? Please choose all options that apply to your family

Meeting other bilingual families
Visiting extended family
Reading books in both languages
Music in both languages (listening to/singing)
Cartoons, films for children in both languages

Do you take part in diaspora (local community of expatriates from your home country) activities?

Yes, we organise meetings with expat families, going for a singing in embassy

How do other people react to your choice to raise your child (children) bilingual? How do you feel about their comments and suggestions?

My parents are very supportive and proud we have bilingual family, they are interested and want to learn about other language and culture. Parents of husband were more confused. Especially husband's mother who was upset she doesn't understand what I speak with my child or what my child speaks. She has been asking me to speak her language at her home. I didn't listen and continued to speak my native tongue to my child everywhere.

Do the teachers from the preschool your child (children) attend (have attended) have a positive approach towards your child's bilingualism?

Not applicable (Child is not attending preschool yet)

In your opinion, what are the key factors that could guarantee successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool?

I don't see any problems for bilingual children to be included in preschool.

ANNEX 3. Transcripts of experts interviews

EXPERT INTERVIEW #1 - SARA CECCHINELLI

1) The number of mixed families in European Union and worldwide is continuously increasing. These families raise children who are exposed to 2 or more languages from birth. Do you see bilingualism/ multilingualism/ plurilingualism as an added value that children from mixed families can benefit from? If yes, in what way? Are there long-term benefits?

It has been amply demonstrated by numerous research and studies that growing up in a multilingual environment is no longer just an added value in work, relationships and travel, but it contains concrete and real benefits. I am referring mainly to the cognitive ones. Specifically, improvements were demonstrated in attention and concentration areas: the executive functions in fact are better trained in bilingual than in those who speak only one language, allowing in this way to choose between two possibilities more quickly, efficiently and above all without any efforts. It was also demonstrated bilingualism improves meta-linguistic competence, ie the ability to think about how it works and how to use a language, so that bilingual children learn other languages more easily. Also long-term benefits are shown, in fact, a study conducted a few years ago in Toronto proved that in those who master a good level of bilingualism, this can cause a five years delay on average of the onset of diseases such as Alzheimer. The fact of constantly switching from one language to another may in fact be an exercise that helps the brain to compensate for gaps created from Alzheimer.

2) This reserach focuses on mixed families with one Latvian parent who have bilingual children that attend or are planning to attend preschool in Czech Republic. In your opinion, what help do the parents of bilingual children need the most to achieve the goal of bilingualism for their children?

Parents have to be mainly informed . Too many false beliefs and myths still floating around bilingualism ; language delays , confusion , problems in learning the first language are just some of the fears that still plague many uninformed multicultural families . A massive information campaign , support and a wider choice of schools (unfortunately, still few schools offer bilingual programs) are a strong basis for facing a bilingual life.

3) What is your opinion about bilingual education? What is the most effective model to guarantee that both languages (or all, in case of multilingualism) are learned and used?

Bilingual education is a great opportunity and a big advantage from which children can take benefit. A good bilingual education program must take into account some basic parameters such as:

- Early exposure to the language, starting already in nursery schools and kindergartens. Early childhood is the most fertile ground for learning, the child's ability to assimilate and develop the language is in fact at the highest level. For a good learning process, languages must in fact be used to communicate and not meant to be studied;

- a high-quality training of teachers who need to know very well the languages they teach;

-30 Minutes daily is the minimum so that the learning can be effective .

Therefore a bilingual education program ' immersion', which pursues that bilingualism and biculturalism, appears to be the most effective .

4) What are the most important aspects that parents should evaluate when choosing preschool for their bilingual child/children?

The informed parent that want to offer his/her child a chance to grow up as bilingual will make sure that the school program really supports the learning of both languages in an equivalent manner and that the child is equally exposed to both languages.

5) Would you recommend monolingual or bilingual preschool?

Bilingual, of course, for all the reasons I mentioned before.

6) What would you recommend if both parents have different languages but they reside in a third country (for example, Latvian + Italian residing in Czech Republic)?

Each of the parents should speak his/her own language with the child and eventually support those languages with school or courses. The country language will be learned at school and with other local people. This child will be very lucky to grow as multilingual.

7) What specific competences should the teachers have in preschool with bilingual children?

Knowing very well the language they teach is a must in order to be a good model of grammar and pronunciation learning. A non-perfect linguistically teacher can teach mistakes that are hard to be eliminated, since those would be stored in the procedural memory systems that are the oldest and most durable memory systems.

8) What should be changed in teacher preparation and/or further education?

Prevent unqualified people to access children's education and ensure balanced bilingual curriculum.

12) Which are the key factors for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool?

This question made me reflect for a while... I do not know what to say... Successful inclusion depends on whether the preschool is bilingual or not and if the child speaks a language that is the one of the preschool, etc.

Thank you very much for your responses!

EXPERT INTERVIEW #2 - SANDRIS ŽEIVOTS

1) The number of mixed families in European Union and worldwide is continuously increasing. These families raise children who are exposed to 2 or more languages from birth. Do you see bilingualism/ multilingualism/ plurilingualism as an added value that children from mixed families can benefit from? If yes, in what way? Are there long-term benefits?

Before I answer my question, it is important to stress that it is essential in our society to move away from traditional discourse about multilingual children and the benefits they possess. There has been extensive research done around this topic.

We live in a society that is diverse, multicultural and multilingual and the discourse we should be moving closer to is how can we assist these children, their families, how does it affect their learning, cognitive processes, relationships etc.

As I am not a researcher in the specific area, I cannot showcase the explicit benefits, however they can be easily found on international journals, e.g. International Journal of Multilingualism etc.

2) This research focuses on mixed families with one Latvian parent who have bilingual children that attend or are planning to attend preschool in Czech Republic. In your opinion, what help do the parents of bilingual children need the most to achieve the goal of bilingualism for their children?

Not sure what is understood by this question as there can be and are many goals of bilingualism. In terms of research these goals can range significantly even into polar extremes. Discussing this

in general, these can be aspects that in my understanding should be taken into account in regard to supporting bilingual children:

- *Safe space, especially learning space;*
- *Ability to make mistakes;*
- *Celebration of multilingualism;*
- *Not to be corrected when using code switching (when kids language abilities transfer from one language to another)*
- *Acknowledgement from parents, family friends;*

It can be also risky to give any further answers not knowing what age groups of children this is referred to.

3) What role should the Latvian Government play in diaspora children education?

I am not familiar with the current legislation in regard to Latvian bilingual children. I would need more elaboration on this question.

It also appears that the author has specific perspective that the Latvian Government is supposed to play a role in this development. What diaspora children are we talking about? Which generation diaspora (first, second, third)? What age children? Formal or informal education? Is there an organisation (non-profit) in this country?

4) Is there a short or long-term program for fostering the knowledge of Latvian language for diaspora children?

I'm not aware of this.

5) Is Government providing enough support now? If not, what are the reasons?

As per question 3, I would need more elaboration to answer the question.

6) What is your opinion about bilingual education? What is the most effective model to guarantee that both languages (or all, in case of multilingualism) are learned and used?

I am supportive of bilingual or multilingual education. I don't think there is the most effective model or way to support bilingual education. The models and their effectiveness vary significantly depending on the needs of the children, family or school.

An interesting technique I've heard from a colleague is that family uses different languages in different rooms, e.g. French in kitchen, and English in other rooms. Depending which language has more priority, this may be a beneficial technique base on mutual agreement.

7) What are the most important aspects that parents should evaluate when choosing preschool for their bilingual child/children?

These aspects should be decided based on family needs and goals. In general, I see these aspects as important:

- *Values of the school*
- *Exprience with multiculturalism / multilingualism in the school*
- *Quality of teaching (support the language of LOI (language of instruction), support for code-switching)*
- *The level of education and whether that is close to the level of the child.*

8) Would you recommend monolingual or bilingual preschool?

In my opinion, this question is very problematic. Preschool is not always a matter of choice and neither choising monolingual or bilingual preschool will always determine the success of the children.

9) What would you recommend if both parents have different languages but they reside in a third country (for example, Latvian + Italian residing in Czech Republic)?

The question needs elaboration as there can be recommendations in very different areas (family, school, values, learning, goals, language development)... Depending on how long parents are expecting to live in the third country, prioritise the learning of the third country language.

10) What specific competences should the teachers have in preschool with bilingual children?

- *Training on ESL (English as a second language). Depending on the country, training on how to teach the language of the country the person lives in;*
- *Soft skills development, e.g. intercultural awareness, openness, tolerance;*
- *Guidelines from the stakeholders (school, govenrment etc) on how to deal with bilingual children*

11) What should be changed in teacher preparation and/or further education?

This very much depends on which country we are talking about as experiences across the world differ significantly.

12) Which are the key factors for successful inclusion of bilingual children in preschool?

I'm having issues with the question. What is understood by successful inclusion (acceptance, opportunity to use both languages etc)? In very general terms (that may differ when the context is more specific):

- *Intercultural literacy by teachers and parents*
- *Guidelines / training for teachers with ESL, multilingual children*
- *Incorporation of different cultures into curriculum*
- *Authentic assessment possibilities when they get older.*

Thank you very much for your responses!

Maģistra darbs „Successful Inclusion of Bilingual Children in Preschool/
Skmīga bilingvālu bērnu iekļaušanās pirmsskolas izglītības iestādē”
izstrādāts LU PPMF Pedagoģijas nodaļā.

Ar savu parakstu apliecinu, ka pētījums veikts patstāvīgi, izmantoti tikai tajā norādītie informācijas avoti un iesniegtā darba elektroniskā kopija atbilst izdrukai.

Autors: Baiba Ziemele De Santis _____ 07.06.2016.

Rekomendēju darbu aizstāvēšanai

Vadītājs: *Dr.paed.* Ieva Margeviča-Grinberga _____
/ paraksts un datums/

Darbs iesniegts Pedagoģijas nodaļā

Metodiķis: _____
/vārds, uzvārds, paraksts, datums/

Maģistra darbs aizstāvēts pārbaudījumu komisijas sēdē

Datums un protokola numurs: _____

Vērtējums: _____

Komisijas sekretāre: _____
/vārds, uzvārds, paraksts