



## The Role of Pre-school Teachers (educators) in Developing Verbal Communication of Bilingual Pre-school Children

*Original scientific paper*

Osman Buleshkaj and Amantina Pervizaj Kelmendi

*Kosovo Pedagogical Institute*

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### Abstract

This study explores language development in bilingual children aged 3-6 years, focusing on both their native and secondary languages. It highlights educators' understanding of bilingualism's phases and their strategies, such as targeted questioning and interactive activities, to foster language proficiency. Parental insights, gathered through interviews, reveal concerns about language preferences, consistent use, and supporting dual language development. The research emphasizes the importance of creating supportive environments and adapting educational materials to enhance bilingual children's verbal skills. It also advocates for fostering community engagement and peer collaboration to strengthen educator competencies. The findings suggest a need for comprehensive support systems that address both educators' and parents' challenges, facilitating the integration of bilingual children into educational and social contexts.

**Keywords:** *Bilingual Children, Language Development, Educator Strategies, Parental Perspectives, Language Acquisition*

Managing diversity is one of the biggest challenges facing educational systems today (Sierens & Avermaet, 2010). Schools and educators have the responsibility to adapt to and reflect societal realities. Therefore, the aim of this research was to clearly identify the issues through specific objectives and provide support with recommendations and suggestions based on the conclusive results from measurement

instruments and carefully selected samples. This study is an attempt to unravel the intricate dynamics surrounding the role of preschool teachers in fostering verbal communication skills among bilingual preschool children, with a specific focus on the context of Kosovo. Recognizing the multifaceted challenges and unique opportunities that arise in a society marked by linguistic diversity, this research aims

**Correspondence to:** Osman Buleshkaj, Kosovo Pedagogical Institute.

Email: osman.buleshkaj@rks-gov.net

Tel:+38344673777

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0967-4370> (<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6595-2374?lang=en>)

to provide a comprehensive understanding of the strategies employed by preschool educators. By delving into the intricacies of teacher training programs, existing language policies, cultural inclusivity practices, and collaborative efforts with parents, the study seeks to shed light on the current landscape of bilingual language development in Kosovo's preschools. Moreover, it aspires to contribute valuable insights that can inform educational policies, pedagogical practices, and ultimately optimize language development outcomes for the diverse group of preschoolers in this setting. This research is not merely an academic pursuit; rather, it serves as a practical guide towards fostering inclusive, effective, and culturally sensitive early childhood education, promoting both linguistic proficiency and cultural appreciation among Kosovo's young learners. Exploring the landscape of related studies in the context of our research in Kosovo, it becomes evident that the work of Kryeziu (2018) serves as a valuable foundation. Kryeziu (2018) unravels the intricate dynamics of effective techniques in stimulating healthy growth and development in preschool children. Building upon this insight, our study delves into the realm of teaching two foreign languages, particularly English, and its impact on the narrative skills of preschoolers. This exploration is deeply rooted in the global context, recognizing its significance for contemporary parents facing the challenges of imparting language skills in a dynamic cultural landscape. Anchored in psycholinguistics, our research underscores the interplay between genetics and intentional practices, highlighting the potential of purposeful growth techniques in shaping the overall development of preschool children.

In a related aspect, Kryeziu (2019) further contributes to the discourse on early childhood development, particularly in the context of linguistic diversity within Kosovo. Kryeziu (2019) emphasizes the substantial impact of effective communication techniques, guided by teachers, on the developmental journey of young children. With a heightened focus on the increased prominence of English language teaching in Kosovo's educational curriculum, this psycholinguistic study seeks to unravel standard Albanian language acquisition levels and the influence of English exposure on the

linguistic development of preschoolers.

The bilingual preschool environment poses unique challenges and opportunities for the verbal communication development of young children. Despite the growing importance of bilingualism, there is a gap in understanding the specific role of preschool teachers in facilitating effective verbal communication in this context. Identifying the challenges faced by teachers and the strategies they employ is crucial for optimizing language development in bilingual preschoolers. This research seeks to address the problem of knowledge gap regarding the precise contributions and challenges faced by preschool teachers in nurturing verbal communication skills in bilingual preschool children.

The primary aim of this research is to investigate and comprehend the role of preschool teachers in the development of verbal communication skills in bilingual preschool children. This study aims to explore the strategies employed by teachers, the challenges encountered, and the collaborative efforts with parents in creating an enriching linguistic environment. By understanding the dynamics of teaching bilingual preschoolers, the research aspires to provide insights that can inform educational practices and contribute to the enhancement of verbal communication abilities in this specific demographic. Ultimately, the goal is to shed light on effective approaches and interventions that can optimize language development in bilingual preschool children within a preschool setting.

### **Literature Review**

Multilingualism is considered a valuable asset that contributes to the identity of children in an increasingly interconnected world. Additionally, societies are becoming more diverse, and this diversity in cultural, ethnic, religious, and linguistic backgrounds introduces a sense of complexity. The changes and challenges posed by these diversities become apparent in the classroom, where children with different approaches and linguistic repertoires are expected to achieve the same educational objectives within the same timeframe and to be treated similarly or in parallel with their peers (Carton & Rosenback, 2020).

There is a self-fulfilling prophecy effect when a student is led to believe that they will not succeed, and they may

unconsciously work to confirm that belief (Stukas & Snyder, 2016). Therefore, a positive and appreciative attitude from the educator towards the balance between multilingualism and the mother tongue is a powerful way to support multilingual children (Herzog-Punzenberger, Vorstman, & Siarova, 2017).

Bilingual communication is a fundamental aspect of the development of 3-6-year-old children in preschool institutions. These children are in a critical period for language and communication development. They are in a phase where they learn and develop their language skills, starting from basic vocabulary and everyday terminology to the ability to express their thoughts and use language to resolve conflicts and express their feelings. In preschool institutions, bilingual communication plays a key role in improving children's language skills. The use of two languages—the language of parents and the language of the institution—can help achieve a broader spectrum of words and concepts for children. Furthermore, bilingual communication promotes children's awareness of linguistic and cultural diversity (Yow & Li, 2023).

In cases of children speaking two languages, selective mutism may occur, and it is more common among children who speak a second language. Being bilingual does not cause selective mutism, but for children who already have an anxious temperament, the expectation to use a language with which they are less comfortable may put them at additional risk (Toppelberg et al., 2005). Bilingual children also usually begin to develop language skills more slowly. To support the multilingualism of children and their socio-emotional learning, such as self-esteem and emotional resilience to cope with language anxiety, it is crucial to work together with families. There are also practices in schools to encourage multilingual children with anxiety to use their heritage language (Cummins, 2001).

Some bilingual children remain silent and wait to speak only when their second language is spoken. For other children, their fear of speaking may generalize, so they will not speak in their native language either. Diagnosing children who use a second language should be done with care. Children should not be diagnosed with selective

mutism if their failure to speak can be explained by difficulty in understanding or using a second language. Bilingual children usually experience a silent period while gaining their new language, so psychologists must be careful not to mistake this learning phase for selective mutism (De Houwer, 2021).

The silent period, considered a phase of second language learning for children (Bligh, 2014), presents a challenge for educators in these environments or specific cases. Their approach and reflection in relation to bilingual or selectively mute children due to bilingualism should be realized through several basic strategies. Professionals responsible for a child's education, including psychologists and speech specialists, should know how to manage and guide them in professional circles, recognizing that it is not their duty to diagnose the issue but to provide the most effective and appropriate approach. Research shows that educators' attitudes and perceptions have a significant impact on children's achievements. If an educator has low expectations for a particular student and lacks confidence in their potential, that attitude can negatively affect the student (McGuire, 2015).

The role of the educator is crucial in the development of verbal communication in preschool bilingual children. Educators must have the ability to identify the individual needs of each child to provide appropriate support. In the case of bilingual children, it is important for the educator to take the time to observe, listen, and assess their language abilities. In addition, educators should create a supportive environment that encourages bilingual children to feel comfortable and motivated to communicate. This includes using positive reinforcement techniques, boosting self-confidence, and encouraging free and spontaneous language use (Adami, 2004).

Educators should employ differentiated teaching methods to meet the needs of bilingual children with speech difficulties. This may involve using visual aids, multilingual materials, interactive games, and alternative communication methods such as gestures and visual communication (Levy, 2008). Additionally, the neurocognitive aspect of educators' involvement in vocabulary communication

with bilingual children is equally important for the effective and targeted development of language and cognitive skills in children (Bialystok, 2017).

According to Tsokalidou and Skourtou (2020), communication between educators and bilingual children aged 3-6 is of great importance in the linguistic, cognitive, and emotional development of children. This is evident in various aspects, emphasizing the significance of educator-child communication for the educational and academic progress of bilingual children, with regard to certain aspects and approaches such as language and communication development, support for cultural and linguistic identity, promotion of social and emotional skills, enhancement of cognitive skills, and preparation for school and better adaptation to the demands of a new environment (Tsokalidou & Skourtou, 2020). According to Yoon and Onchwari (2006), the presence of bilingual children in a classroom of 3-6-year-olds can have considerable implications for both educators and students. A larger number of bilingual children within a group may require extra efforts from educators to understand and meet the individual needs of each child. Educators must be capable of providing personalized assistance to bilingual children when helping to develop language and express their thoughts. In addition, they should provide a stimulating language environment and create activities that encourage communication and the development of the second language. Finally, educators need to be careful in creating an encouraging culture and adopting joint educational practices that promote social interaction (Yoon & Onchwari, 2006).

In general, the role of the educator in the development of verbal communication in preschool children is to provide a stimulating and supportive environment, use differentiated methods, and collaborate with specialists and parents to ensure successful language and communication growth for children. These aspects, analyzed in research, bring forth significant results for integrating necessary fundamental changes in this aspect, both in current documents and in creating others with a specific focus on this studied subject (McQuiggan & Megra, 2017).

## Method

Employing a mixed-methods design, this study integrates qualitative and quantitative methodologies to capture a nuanced understanding of the linguistic development processes. The triangulation of data through observation, interviews, and questionnaires enabled a holistic exploration, shedding light on both the qualitative intricacies and quantitative patterns inherent in bilingual language acquisition.

Five questions guided this inquiry:

1. How do preschool teachers (educators) perceive their role in facilitating the verbal communication development of bilingual preschool children?
2. What strategies do preschool teachers employ to support the language development of bilingual preschoolers in a multicultural environment?
3. What are the perceptions and attitudes of preschool teachers towards bilingualism, and how do these influence their teaching strategies?
4. How do preschool teachers differentiate their approaches to address the diverse linguistic needs of bilingual preschool children?
5. How do preschool teachers collaborate with parents to enhance the verbal communication abilities of bilingual preschool children?

Observational method provided an in-depth examination of natural language use in diverse contexts within the pre-school environment. By systematically observing the language behaviors of bilingual children during various activities, we aimed to uncover the nuances of their communication patterns. Semi-structured interviews with educators and parents offered valuable qualitative insights into their perspectives on bilingual language development. These interviews aimed to uncover nuanced details about the strategies employed by educators and the experiences and perceptions of parents regarding language exposure and proficiency. Structured questionnaires, distributed to parents, complemented the qualitative data with quantitative insights. This method allows for a systematic collection of data on language usage at home, contributing to a more comprehensive understanding of the bilingual language landscape.

In adopting this mixed-methods approach, we seek to triangulate findings, providing a richer and more nuanced perspective on the intricate dynamics of bilingual language development in the preschool context.

### Participants

This investigation encompassed a diverse cohort comprising 34 educators, 20 children, and 18 parents. Inclusive of 22 preschool institutions, the study encapsulated 11 public and 11 private preschool institutions, strategically chosen from 9 municipalities in Kosovo—specifically Prishtina, Prizren, Podujevë, Fushë Kosovë, Malishevë, Rahovec, Gjakovë, and Suharekë. The research meticulously engaged a comprehensive pool of 34 educators employed in preschool institutions, specifically catering to the developmental stages of children aged 3 to 6 years. This group comprised 17 educators from private

preschool institutions and an equivalent number from public preschool institutions.

### Data Analysis and Interpretations

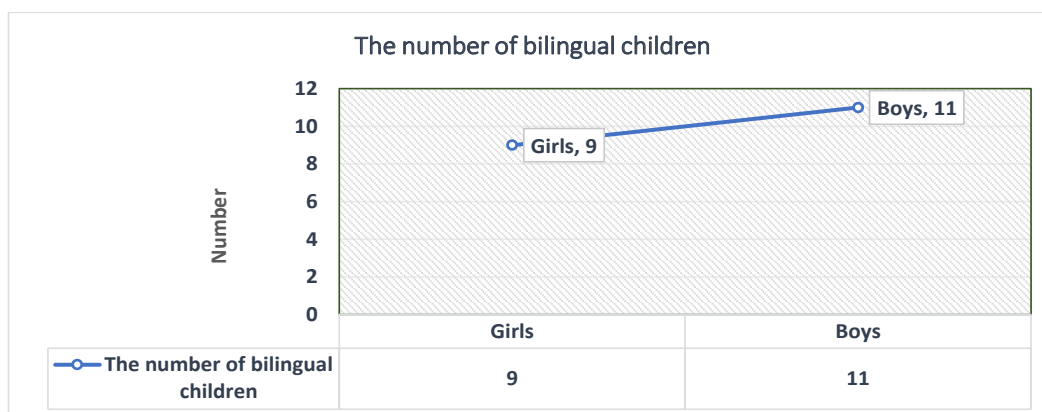
This study applied a mixed methodology approach using thematic analysis of data to obtain participants inputs and contributions. In addition to the features of the issues analyzed through qualitative data, the statistical analysis presents guiding element and key findings of the study. A number of themes were identified, and data were compared and interpreted in contrast with relevant literature.

### Working with Bilingual Children

Educators play a crucial role in creating a supportive and encouraging environment for bilingual children. Educators should have in-depth knowledge of the needs and challenges of bilingual children and create personalized strategies to help them integrate into the class and fully develop their language and emotional potential.

**Figure 1.**

*Number of Bilingual Children in Relation to Gender*



In the observed groups of children with bilingualism, out of 20 observed children, the number of boys (11) is higher than the number of girls (9). This indicates a significant predominance of boys in the observed group of bilingual children. The number of boys and girls in a group of 3-6-year-old bilingual children does not indicate something important about their language abilities or their overall development. Language development and other developmental skills vary for each child and are not directly related to their gender. Differences between boys and girls in the examination of bilingualism may be useful in

understanding the individual preferences and needs of each child, but they are not a key factor in their development. For the language and cognitive development of children, it is more important to consider how educators and families provide support and stimulation for each child, regardless of their gender.

According to Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2013), identifying the language spoken to a bilingual child at home by the parent is crucial for children in the age group of 3-6 years for various reasons. Firstly, identifying the language spoken by the child at home allows the educator to establish a strong connection

and communication with the child. This aids in the development of the second language for children and helps them feel secure and confident in learning the second language. Secondly, identifying the language of bilingual children helps the educator better understand their individual needs. This makes them feel more accepted and valued in the school environment and encourages awareness of cultural diversity in the group. Each child has different experiences and levels in the second language, so the educator can tailor instruction and activities according to their levels to encourage the growth of the second language. Thirdly, in a group where there are other bilingual children, identifying the second language of a child creates an opportunity to share experiences, communicate, and interact more effectively with others. This helps in the development

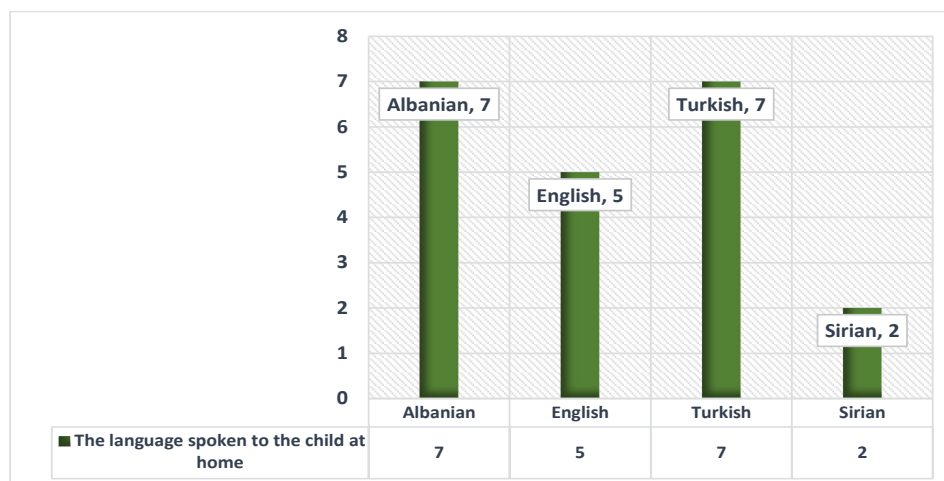
of social and emotional skills in children. Finally, the support and encouragement of the second language by the educator contributes to the increase of their self-esteem.

#### ***Dominant Language Spoken at Home***

When they see that their second language is recognized and valued in the class, they feel more secure and capable of participating in various activities. For these reasons, the identification of the second language of bilingual children by the educator in the age group of 3-6 years is crucial to provide a supportive and encouraging environment for children in learning the second language, developing their identity, and social integration (Byers-Heinlein & Lew-Williams, 2013). According to this study data, the dominant languages spoken to children at home are presented on the figure below.

**Figure 2.**

*Language Spoken to Children At Home*



Based on the data for the languages spoken by bilingual children at home we found that there were 7 of them speaking Albanian, 5 speaking English, 7 speaking Turkish, and 2 speaking Syrian. As such we can consider that the presence of Albanian and Turkish in the observed community of bilingual children is dominant. 7 children who speak Albanian at home and 7 children who speak Turkish indicated that these two languages are prevalent in the observed group of bilingual children as their native language but coexist with an existing second language. It should be noted that during the observation, we noticed that the languages

spoken to the children at home may result not to be the children's first languages. Because bilingualism in this age group is on the rise, all stakeholders should take measures to assist the process.

If an educator is not familiar with the language of a bilingual child in their supervision, it is preferable to follow some steps to support the child's learning and development, such as seeking help from bilingual resources, using visual materials, seeking assistance from peers, learning basic phrases in the language spoken by the child, involving parents or caregivers of the child, and using bilingual materials.

It is necessary to provide additional support and individualized attention to bilingual children to ensure they learn effectively in this educational context. It is crucial to create an inclusive and supportive environment where bilingual children feel valued and encouraged to learn and communicate, even if the educator does not speak their language perfectly (Tabors, 1997).

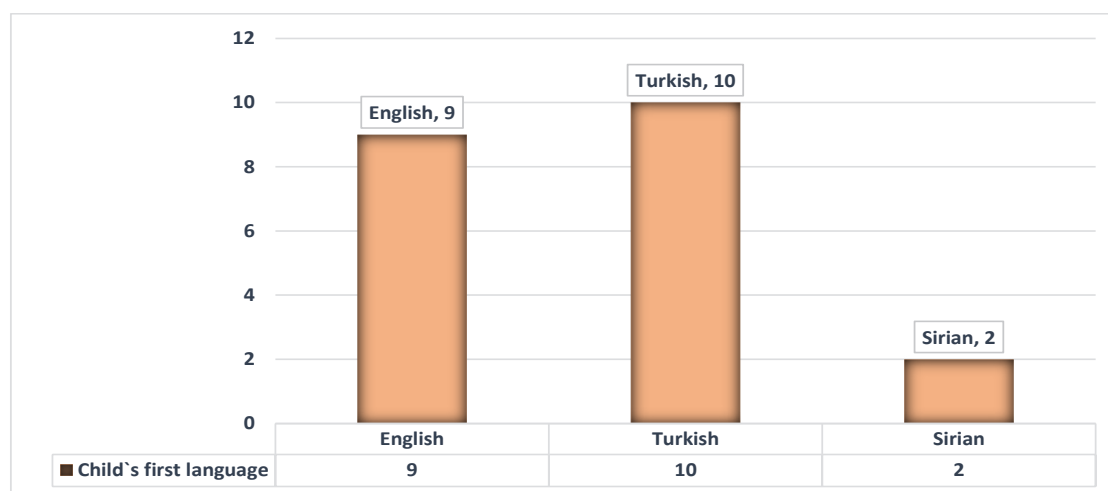
According to Genesee (1989), the identification of the first language is important for the age group of 3-6 years because it facilitates communication, aids in learning second languages, creates a

safe and inclusive environment, helps in the development of identity, and allows for personalized learning. To enhance the progress and development of children in this age group, identifying the first language and using it in teaching and communication is a key element in creating an effective and inclusive learning environment (Genesee, 1989).

In the graph presented, you can find the proportionally identified languages as the first language for bilingual children, although another language is spoken in the family – Albanian in 50% of cases:

**Figure 3.**

*Child's First Language*



Considering the circumstances and the research area, it is evident that Turkish is the dominant first language in Prizren among the observed groups of bilingual children. With 11 out of 20 children speaking Turkish, this indicates that Turkish is the most widespread and well-known language in the observed group (as a targeted group for analyzing educators' approach to bilingual children). The presence of a large number of children speaking Turkish reflects a significant influence of this language on their linguistic environment and may reflect the ethnic and cultural identity of these children in that region (Prizren).

The percentage of children speaking English is smaller (9 out of 20 as a numerical value), but it is worth noting that it had a broader usage spread with a linear extension in all kindergartens and age groups, in other municipalities such as Prishtina, Podujeva, Rahovec, Malisheva, except Prizren, where

the dominant language among bilinguals is Turkish. Therefore, we must say that, as a growing "phenomenon," it is influenced by the context and other social and environmental factors.

The presence of other languages indicates linguistic diversity in the observed group. The existence of languages such as Turkish, English, and in two cases, Syrian, shows a linguistic diversity that is existing and continuously growing (according to educators and parents) in the observed age groups. This is influenced by the ethnic, cultural, and linguistic background of children but also by other social and developmental factors.

#### ***Elements of the Second Language Observed in Bilingual Children***

According to Ramírez and Kuhl (2016), bilingual children in this age group exhibit a variety of elements of the second language that are noticeable in their communication. For example,

they demonstrate an extended ability to understand and use words and expressions of the second language in different contexts. They show creativity in using words from the second language and strive to employ more complex grammatical and syntactic structures. Additionally, bilingual children show sensitivity to cultural elements of the second language, such as idiomatic expressions, customs, and specific traditions. They express a willingness to learn more

about the culture of the second language and incorporate those elements into their daily communication. These elements of the second language, observed in children of this age group, indicate significant language development and successful adaptation in the context of bilingualism. During the observations conducted regarding the elements identified by the educator in bilingual children, we have obtained the following data:

**Table 1.**  
*Elements of the "other" Language Observed in Bilingual Children*

Category	Subcategory	Identification of the topic from subcategories	Topic/Initial interpretation
Elements of the other language	Elements from communication that the educator observes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words and short written sentences.</li> <li>I think, dream, and learn in the "other" language.</li> <li>Dictations and dictations of different words by an educator.</li> <li>Simple sentences that can be repeated.</li> <li>A child is taught to speak Albanian.</li> <li>There are children who speak only English but understand when spoken to in Albanian.</li> <li>There are children who speak English and also understand Albanian.</li> <li>A child understands Albanian but does not actively speak it.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Words and short written sentences: Children have knowledge of words and short written sentences in the "other" language. This includes the ability to read and understand written texts and to use words accurately and appropriately in their context.</li> <li>I think, dream, and learn in the "other" language: Children have the ability to think, dream, and learn in the "other" language. This indicates that they can use the language to express thoughts, imagination, and to acquire new knowledge.</li> <li>Dictations and dictations of different words by an educator: Children are familiar with dictations and dictations of different words in the "other" language. This shows that they have practiced writing and have learned to write sentences and words accurately and appropriately.</li> <li>Simple sentences that can be repeated: Children are able to formulate and use simple sentences and phrases in the "other" language. They can repeat them to clarify meaning and express their thoughts clearly.</li> <li>A child is taught to speak Albanian: A child has learned to speak the Albanian language and can use it to communicate and express their needs.</li> <li>There are children who speak only English but understand when spoken to in Albanian: There are children who have the ability to understand the Albanian language, even though they only speak English. This indicates that they can receive information and understand the spoken language in their context.</li> <li>There are children who speak English and also understand Albanian: There are children who have the ability to speak English and understand Albanian.</li> </ul>



In the current situation, the group of bilingual children in the age group of 3-6 years shows various levels of knowledge regarding the elements of the second language. They have the ability to understand the "other" language and use words and sentences accurately and appropriately. Children express their thoughts, dreams, and lessons in the "other" language, demonstrating knowledge of dictations and dictations of various words, and practicing communication with simple sentences and words. They also show the ability to use the Albanian language, both speaking and understanding in their context. It is essential to note that some children (4 out of those observed) only speak English but understand when spoken to in Albanian, while others (many children within the observed groups not identified as bilingual - 11 in total across all kindergartens) speak Albanian but also understand English. These language abilities indicate positive progress in the verbal communication development of bilingual children in the 3-6 years age group.

**Evaluation of the Bilingual Phase in Children**

As an educator of 3-6-year-old children, it is crucial to have specific knowledge about the phases of bilingualism in children. This general knowledge can help you understand

and support the development of children's language skills in this age group. According to Caplan and Caplan (1984), some of the phases of bilingualism that can be considered include: the passive voice phase, the active voice phase, the language development phase, and the perfection phase. Educators should be familiar with these phases of bilingualism and understand that each child may progress differently. This knowledge allows them to assess the development of children's language skills in the 3-6-year-old age group and tailor their approach and activities appropriately to each child's needs. Educators need to acquire knowledge through training (or through studies if this topic is included in the study syllabuses) about the phases of language development in children and understand that each child may be in a different phase of bilingualism. This helps assess their proficiency in the second language and determine their specific needs. Educators should continuously observe children to assess how they use the second language in different activities. This helps identify individual strengths and challenges for each child regarding verbal communication. During the observations conducted regarding the evaluation of bilingual phases of children, we have obtained the following data:

**Table 2.**  
*Educator's Knowledge of the Bilingualism Phases of Observed Children*

Category	Subcategory	Identification of topics from subcategories	Topic/Initial Interpretation
Is the educator aware of the phase of bilingualism the child is in?	Elements of bilingual phase observed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using their first language;</li> <li>Not speaking (silent period);</li> <li>Using their first language and using memorized phrases and sentences;</li> <li>Producing more complex structures and vocabulary.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Using their first language: The child is in a phase where they use their first language, in your case, Albanian, English, and Turkish. This is the language they have learned and naturally speak at home.</li> <li>Not speaking (silent period): The child goes through a phase where they feel quieter and do not speak often or express themselves in a limited way at times. This may be a period when they are exploring and further developing their language skills.</li> <li>Using their first language and using memorized phrases and sentences: The child is developing a more advanced ability to use their first language and may start using more complex phrases and learning different titles. This indicates that they are gaining new knowledge and building their language level.</li> <li>Producing more complex structures and vocabulary: The child is showing a high level of language development, where they can produce more complex language structures and have an expanded vocabulary. This indicates that they have reached an advanced stage in their language development.</li> </ul>

In this situation, bilingual children in the age group of 3-6 years are developing their language skills in their first language (Albanian, English, and Turkish). They use their first language naturally at home and demonstrate a high level of language development. In this phase, they may show further improvement in using their first language, producing larger words and phrases, and gaining new knowledge. During this process, they may also experience silent periods, where they may be more reserved in their expression and explore their language abilities further. This phase of language development indicates that they are building more complex language structures and enriching their vocabulary, reaching an advanced level in using their first language. **Educator Strategies for the Development of Bilingual Children's Language (Ages 3-6)**

Effective teaching strategies include inclusion, modeling, interactive activities, the use of visuals, and encouraging group communication. Inclusion ensures that all learners, regardless of their backgrounds or abilities, have access to meaningful education (Ainscow, 2005; Slee, 2011). Modeling is

essential for demonstrating complex concepts and behaviors, helping students grasp new material by seeing it in action (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976; Hattie & Yates, 2014). Interactive activities promote student engagement and collaborative learning, which significantly enhances comprehension and retention (Prince, 2004; Michael, 2006). The use of visuals, such as charts, diagrams, and infographics, supports visual learners and aids in simplifying abstract concepts (Mayer, 2005; Sweller, Ayres, & Kalyuga, 2011). Lastly, encouraging group communication facilitates peer learning and allows students to share ideas and perspectives, fostering deeper understanding and critical thinking (Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 2007). These are just a few of the strategies that can be used. It is important for the educator to have knowledge and skills to choose appropriate strategies based on the individual needs of the children and to follow a flexible and adaptive approach to assist in their bilingual language development.

In the observation conducted regarding the strategies used by the educator, we have obtained the following results:

**Table 3.**  
*Strategies used by the Educator*

Category	Subcategory	Identification of topics from subcategories:	Topic/Initial Interpretation:
The strategies used by the educator	Strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask simple questions</li> <li>• Engage in activities with songs, rhymes, or known verses for the child</li> <li>• Use figures/flashcards as a model for communication</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask simple questions: The educator uses simple questions to stimulate responses and engage the child in communication. This helps develop language skills and boost the child's confidence in using language.</li> <li>• Engage in activities with songs, rhymes, or known verses for the child: The educator conducts suitable activities for the child using songs, rhymes, or verses that are familiar to them. This creates an enjoyable and attractive environment for the child and aids in the development of communicative and language skills.</li> <li>• Use figures/flashcards as a model for communication: The educator utilizes figures or flashcards with images to assist in communication with the child. This visualization of words and concepts helps build vocabulary and understanding of their usage.</li> </ul>

It is evident that the educator uses simple questions to encourage responses and engage children in communication. This helps develop language skills and increases the children's confidence in using language. She also conducts activities with songs, rhymes, or known verses for the child, creating an enjoyable and attractive environment. Another strategy employed by the educator is the use of figures or flashcards to assist in communication with the child. This aids in building vocabulary and understanding the usage of words. These strategies contribute to promoting the linguistic and communicative development of children, making them actively engage and feel confident in using their language.

**Verbal Communication**

In this study, the group of bilingual children in the age group of 3-6 years old demonstrates varying levels of verbal

communication skills in their first and second languages. They exhibit an advanced level of linguistic development, using their first language naturally at home and acquiring new knowledge. Children express thoughts, dreams, and lessons in the other language, demonstrating considerable abilities in reading, understanding, and writing in both languages. Meanwhile, the educator uses strategies such as simple questions, activities with songs, rhymes, or known verses, and figures/flashcards to encourage communication and linguistic development.

To influence the development of verbal communication in children who speak two languages, the educator employs several strategies. Statistically analyzed data from observations provide crucial details that guide and justify our research. The gathered data in various aspects are as follows:

**Table 4.**

*Verbal Communication Strategies*

Strategy	Findings
Simple Questions	6 out of 17 observed educators use simple questions to encourage responses and engage children in communication. This helps them express their thoughts and learn to use words accurately.
Activities with songs, rhymes, or known verses	3 out of 17 observed educators conduct activities with songs, rhymes, or known verses for the child. This creates an entertaining and appealing environment, helping the child learn and practice language appropriately.
Use of figures/flashcards	2 out of 17 observed educators use figures or flashcards with images to aid in communication with the child. This visual representation of words and concepts assists in building vocabulary and understanding their usage
Creating and encouraging a safe environment	4 out of 17 observed educators partially succeed in creating an environment where children feel encouraged and safe to communicate. This may involve choosing games and activities that encourage communication and expressing thoughts.
Use of educational materials	3 out of 17 observed educators manage to use appropriate educational materials to help develop verbal communication with bilingual children. These materials may include books, flashcards, word charts, dictations, etc., promoting the practice and advancement of children's language skills, and children's participation in these activities is part of it.
Creating communication situations	6 out of 17 educators attempt to organize communication situations where children can practice language and express their thoughts. This includes role-playing, discussion-appropriate situations, and activities that encourage collaboration and communication among children. However, not all bilingual children actively participate, as two of the observed children silently nod without taking part in activities, or three of them play alone without engaging with the group

By utilizing the mentioned strategies adequately and relying on suitable environments and educational materials, the educator can influence the development of verbal communication in children who

speak very little and those who speak two languages. Encouraging them to use language, express their thoughts, and feel secure in the communication process.

In our case study, out of the 17 observed educators, evidently, 65% of them did not exhibit sufficient preparedness and skills to implement appropriate approaches or approaches approximately acceptable for this category of children. These approaches aim to involve bilingual children in communication. Still, those included in a dilemma provided alternatives to teach them the Albanian language, with very few attempts to change the approach or seek help for communication with this category of children.

### ***Communication Between Educators and Parents of Bilingual Children***

This aspect addresses the essence of communication between parents and educators, emphasizing a specific issue such as the engagement of bilingual children. This helps us understand that the conversation focused on the challenges and opportunities related to this specific topic. Open communication between parents and educators is an essential part of collaboration in the development of children in the school environment. In our study, 7 out of 10 parents express that, although they have generally good communication with educators, they have not shared specific information regarding their child's particular issues. For example, they did not mention the level of problems their child might be experiencing, their assessment in the school context, or the impact of any pedagogical alternatives applied that influenced his development.

To make communication more effective and address the needs of parents, it is essential for educators to have a more specialized approach in discussions with parents. For example, they can encourage parents to share specific concerns, share their experiences with the development of children at home, and provide concrete examples of pedagogical interventions that have helped advance children in school. It is also important to create an environment where parents feel encouraged and supported to share their thoughts and concerns. This can be done through organizing regular parent-teacher meetings or by preparing periodic reports on the progress and overall development of children. Improving communication in this way can help create better collaboration between parents and educators, ensuring better care for the needs and overall development of children in this

early stage of education.

The analysis of responses indicated a pronounced lack of specific proposals and suggestions from educators to improve the language skills of bilingual children. Several parents highlighted that improving communication with the child by avoiding the use of the phone has been a successful practice. This conscious approach to technology use has created a more open environment for conversation and closer communication with the child. This discussion emphasizes the importance of receiving suggestions from educators and how conscious practices at home can impact the language development of bilingual children. However, this level of commitment encounters an expressed lack from educators, whom parents describe as not sufficiently interested in the child's progress.

On the other hand, one parent expresses satisfaction with the approach and treatment of the educator towards her child. This parent emphasizes that the educator has shown closeness and has helped in the child's socialization with other peers. This aspect has increased the child's self-confidence and influenced his progress in socio-emotional aspects and language skills. It was emphasized that through regular and joint coordination amongst educators and parents, significant progress can be made in addressing the needs and challenges of children with speaking difficulties. In this regard, one parent emphasizes that intensified collaboration can be successful and achievable in addressing the specific needs of the child.

On the other hand, another group, consisting of four parents, expressed specific requests for changes. These parents would like more closeness and gentleness in the educator's communication with children, without significant changes in her approach and work methods. Two parents are entirely dissatisfied and express a desire for drastic changes. They would have mentioned that everything would need to change in how the educator communicates with children, including individual approach, individual treatment, and how she collaborates with parents according to the presented needs.

This spectrum of responses shows that parents have different perceptions of the role and abilities of the educator. Based on their specific needs and preferences, they

formulate different expectations regarding how the educator's engagement should change when working with children with speaking difficulties.

### Conclusions

The exploration of bilingual development in children aged 3-6 presents a dynamic intersection of linguistic abilities, educator strategies, parental involvement, and institutional leadership. This study has significantly enriched existing literature by providing a comprehensive view of the language development of bilingual children in early childhood education, offering insights into the various challenges and strategies that contribute to their development. It adds depth to our understanding of bilingualism, particularly in the context of how educators' approaches, parental perspectives, and institutional support can positively influence language acquisition.

Observations revealed diverse linguistic abilities among bilingual children, showcasing progress in both their first and second languages. The study highlighted critical phases of bilingualism—passive voice, active voice, language development, and perfection—which serve as useful markers for assessing children's language progression. Educators' roles in shaping these phases through targeted strategies, such as using songs, rhymes, visual aids, and posing simple questions, were shown to be effective. However, the findings also underscore variability in the use of these strategies, suggesting the need for more consistent professional development among educators.

Furthermore, parents' roles were found to be vital in the linguistic and cultural development of bilingual children. Their involvement, particularly in communication with educators and cultural insights, plays an essential role in fostering a conducive learning environment. However, challenges such as selective mutism concerns, difficulties with language lessons, and the influence of technology were identified, highlighting areas where better communication between parents and educators could improve child development outcomes.

### Shortcomings and Future Directions

While this study offers valuable insights into bilingual child development, it acknowledges several limitations that must be addressed in future research. The sample size, while providing meaningful data, limits the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, this study primarily focused on kindergarten settings, and future research could expand to investigate bilingual development across various age groups and educational contexts to gain a more nuanced understanding of long-term language acquisition processes.

Moreover, the variability in educator strategies highlights the need for further investigation into the most effective teaching methods for bilingual children. A more diverse range of educator experiences and strategies should be considered to refine best practices. In terms of parental involvement, the study suggests that future research could explore how different cultural perspectives influence bilingualism, particularly in households with varying levels of education and resources.

The role of technology in bilingual language development is another area that requires further exploration. While this study identified potential challenges posed by technology, including excessive screen time and its impact on language development, future studies could explore how technology can be better integrated into educational settings to enhance bilingual learning experiences.

### Recommendations

To build on the findings and address the challenges identified, the following recommendations are proposed:

- Ongoing professional development for educators to strengthen their ability to support bilingual children effectively.
- Establishing structured communication channels between parents and educators to foster collaboration and ensure the holistic development of children.
- Tailored teaching methods that take into account the cultural and linguistic diversity of children, based on insights from parents and educators.
- The development of guidelines for balanced technology use in both home and school environments, to ensure technology supports rather than hinders language development.

- Workshops for parents to educate them on effective strategies for stimulating language development at home.

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