Bilingualism in early childhood: Code-switching within family

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Zahvala

Hvala svim mojim dragim osobama koje su bile uz mene na svakom koraku do ostvarenja ovog velikog cilja. Svaka lijepa riječ i podrška bili su vjetar u leđa i dali mi motivacije i snage, ali i nadu kako će sve biti dobro čak i kada sam sumnjala u sebe.

Također hvala mojim mentoricama na predivnoj suradnji koju ću pamtiti po svemu lijepom, a rado ću vas se sjetiti i pamtiti vas po svemu što ste nas naučile u ovih pet godina studija. Bile ste nam profesorice, ali u vama smo vidjeli mnogo više. Bez vas ništa ne bi bilo isto!

Abstract

Bilingualism is the center of attention in much research, and bilinguals provide insights into understanding how the human brain works in different situations. When they are unable to express themselves in the appropriate or preferred manner, bilinguals often, consciously or not, use certain strategies that help them stay in the flow of a conversation. One of the most frequently used strategies for that purpose is code-switching. Despite lacking a universal definition, code-switching can be understood from many points of view.

The main objective of this thesis is to present various forms of bilingualism, with a special focus on early childhood and family. The first part discusses the advantages and disadvantages of bilingualism, including some of the negative myths people have about the ability to use two languages. Next, types of code-switching are introduced and discussed, describing typical situations within families. The following part of this paper brings some insights into parents' attitudes and practices in raising bilingual children. The concluding part of this thesis brings a discussion based on the described concepts and examples, followed by the conclusion.

Keywords: bilingualism, code-switching, language alternation, language interaction within a family, OPOL (one parent, one language), raising bilingual children

Sažetak

Dvojezičnost je često u središtu pozornosti mnogih istraživanja, a dvojezične osobe daju uvid u razumijevanje načina na koji ljudski mozak funkcionira u različitim situacijama. Kada se ne mogu izraziti na prikladan ili željeni način, dvojezične osobe često, svjesno ili ne, primjenjuju određene strategije koje im pomažu da ostanu u tijeku razgovora. Jedna od najučestalijih strategija primjenjivanih u tu svrhu je prebacivanje kodova. Unatoč nedostatku univerzalne definicije, prebacivanje kodova može se promatrati iz više perspektiva.

Glavni cilj ovog rada je prikaz različitih oblika dvojezičnosti, s posebnim naglaskom na rano djetinjstvo i obitelj. Prvi dio govori o prednostima i nedostacima dvojezičnosti, uključujući neke od negativnih mitova koje ljudi imaju o sposobnosti korištenja dvaju jezika. Zatim se govori o vrstama prebacivanja kodova, opisujući tipične situacije unutar obitelji. Sljedeći dio ovog rada govori o stavovima i praksama roditelja koji odgajaju dvojezičnu djecu. Zaključni dio diplomskoga rada donosi raspravu na temelju opisanih pojmova i primjera, nakon čega slijedi zaključak.

Ključne riječi: dvojezičnost, prebacivanje kodova, jezična interakcija unutar obitelji, odgajanje dvojezične djece, OPOL (jedan roditelj, jedan jezik)

1. INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, being bilingual is much more common than being monolingual. There is a constant increase in the number of people who can speak more than one language compared to those who only speak their native language, which is why more than half of the world's population is either bilingual or multilingual (Gration, 2021). Knowing more than one language is certainly an advantage, especially in this modern era, so people are encouraged to learn as many languages as possible, depending on their preferences or the environment in which they live. Consequently, some parents choose to raise their children to be bilingual because it can open many opportunities for them later in their lives and also because they were, most likely, raised bilingually themselves. Bilingualism is, according to Steiner and Hayes (2008), "the ability to speak, read, write, or even understand more than one language (Steiner & Hayes, 2008, p. 3). With that definition in mind, it is safe to say that parents would probably want their children to have a deeper understanding of their second language than simply being able to recognize some words.

As Steiner and Hayes (2008) stated, the level of fluency between two languages is affected by numerous factors, some of which are the languages spoken by their parents, the languages used within their culture and extended family, the language of their community, and the language taught in school. In addition to that, a child will gradually learn that each language they know serves a different function in their life. Since children's brains are easily adaptable and pretty flexible, they may switch between languages they are familiar with depending on the situation. This is called code-switching. According to Saunders (1988), code-switching, "or switching from one language to the other, in the course of a conversation, even in midsentence, is usually carried out by bilinguals without any significant pause in the flow of speech" (Saunders, 1988, p. 11). This linguistic phenomenon is something bilinguals and multilinguals experience very often. Saunders (1988) explains that the frequency of switching from one language to the other during interactions among bilinguals depends mostly on how they feel about it. While some prefer using one language over the other and keep switching to a minimum, others are comfortable switching more frequently depending on the topic of their conversation. When it comes to language switching at home, children are often influenced by their parents' preferences.

This thesis will present some language-related strategies used in raising bilingual children, how effective they are, what misconceptions people usually have about bilingualism

and whether they are accurate. It will also provide an overview of relevant research regarding bilingualism and code-switching.

2. BILINGUALISM

This chapter presents the most common definitions of bilingualism, together with its advantages and disadvantages. Special attention will be given to code-switching as a sociolinguistic phenomenon that depends on many factors. As it is considered a natural and typical way of communication in bilingual and multilingual communities, the final part of this chapter focuses on family as an environment for code-switching.

2.1. What does it mean to be bilingual?

Many people are uncertain about what being bilingual exactly means and what being bilingual includes. Steiner & Hayes (2008) pointed out some commonly asked questions: "Is a child bilingual if he understands a language, but won't speak it? Is a child bilingual if he shows much greater proficiency in one language than the other? In other words, does a bilingual child have to listen, speak, read, and write equally well in two languages to count himself bilingual?" Furthermore, they explain that there are only very few individuals who are so-called "balanced bilinguals" and possess equal proficiency in two languages. Most bilinguals prefer to use one language over the other. According to Wagner, Bialystok, and Grundy (2022), there are no universal criteria that can determine when an individual is considered to be "bilingual". They mention that language is a system of sounds and signs that have structure and meaning. Yet, one language is different from the other, and it is uncertain which of the differences can determine if that system is an individual "language". As Sandler (2018) writes, almost half of all the languages in the world have a separate writing system. However, some languages, mostly Indigenous or Creole, are exceptions. Sandler further wonders if it is a necessity for a spoken system to have its writing system in order to be classified as a language.

A similar situation exists when it comes to bilingualism. Deciding whether someone is bilingual can depend on many factors that vary from person to person. As Kremin and Byers-Heinlein (2021) explain, someone's status in bilingualism cannot be measured and determined in the same way as, for instance, someone's height. Macnamara (1969) points out that being competent in one language and having the ability to understand more than one language is not a single skill. It is a combination of several skills, and it is necessary to consider this when evaluating a bilingual speaker. More specifically, it is crucial to decide which of the skills should be assessed. Norris-Holt (2002, p. 67) adds that "in terms of listening, speaking, reading, and writing; and the different contexts in which language can be used, it becomes apparent that the measurement of bilinguality is indeed a complex issue." She continues by explaining that

measures that would determine if someone is indeed bilingual and identifying the variables on which the focus would be are often challenging. Because of that, simple measures are frequently used to represent different aspects of bilingualism, dominance, regression, and skill level. Mackey (1967) agrees that there is doubt as to whether or not these measures are actually effective. Kremin and Byers-Heinlein (2021) confirm that when it comes to psychometrics literature and bilingualism, it can be measured only indirectly because it is one's ability to speak, read, write, or understand more than one language and it is specific to each person. That is why some indirect methods are used for that purpose (self-report surveys, language proficiency tests, or objective measures of language use).

By using various ways to measure bilingualism, it is becoming clear that researchers see bilingualism as "a number of interrelated attributes or dimensions" (Law, Wong, and Mobley 1998, p. 741). But Wagner, Bialystok, and Grundy (2022) believe that because all bilingual people have different levels of proficiency in different skills, it is difficult to set universal criteria for determining whether someone is bilingual or not.

2.2. Benefits of bilingualism

Bilingualism is, without a doubt, a valuable skill in today's world. Knowing languages is something that is appreciated more and more every day, which is why parents decide to incorporate L2 into their children's everyday lives. Demirci and Güven (2020) argue that being bilingual comes with great benefits by stating that "foreign language education is a very challenging and long process, so it can be considered a great advantage for individuals to be raised bilingually by certain methods, immediately after birth or starting from a young age, thus gaining a second language apart from their mother tongue" (p. 116). Diamond (2010) adds that learning a second language from birth has many advantages and benefits that differ from those that come from learning a language later in life. Why is that so? Demirci and Güven (2020) explain how fast human brains absorb languages in the first year of life and how it comes naturally to all humans. As part of this process, people can be exposed to more than one language either naturally because they are surrounded by it or artificially and learn them simultaneously. As it is already mentioned, the first years of life are crucial for language acquisition, and, according to Ramirez and Kuhl (2017), they offer a great opportunity to learn a foreign language. More specifically, if a child is learning their mother tongue and another language at the same time, they will be able to use both languages well and communicate easily

using both. According to Ellen Bialystok (2011), speaking more than one language has a positive effect on our brains; it increases our cognitive abilities and can even help with delaying symptoms of dementia. She explains how, when doing a study at the Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care in Toronto on 200 dementia patients with cases of Alzheimer's disease, the bilingual ones, in contrast to the monolingual ones, were four years older when their families noticed that something was wrong and when they were diagnosed. When repeating the study, the results were exactly the same. "It was possible that bilingualism protected the brain and they didn't get Alzheimer's disease as soon" (Bialystok, personal communication, June 12, 2011).

Steiner and Hayes (2008) "believe that promoting bilingualism is one of the best things a parent can do for his or her 21st-century child" (p. 11), and here are the reasons why: knowing another language is an advantage when one is applying for a job; it contributes to a deeper understanding of other countries, as well as other cultures; and, the most important one, evidence shows that learning another language early in life is accompanied by some advantages for brain development, such as an improved ability to handle distractions, with proficiency in one language, it is easier to master a third language, attention, spatial intelligence, as well as memory are enhanced when one gets older, and one can use language more creatively. Overall, being bilingual can provide many benefits, and that is why "most parents have a gut feeling that teaching their child a second language is the right thing to do" (Steiner & Hayes, 2008, p. 16).

2.3. Negative myths about bilingualism

Even though bilingualism offers many benefits, some people, unfortunately, have the misconception that it is detrimental. Steiner and Hayes (2008) presented the most common negative myths that people have about bilingualism and also debunked them with scientifically based facts and stories from different families that find bilingualism to be, as they said a "truly a wonderful gift to give your child" (Steiner & Hayes, 2008, p. 3). The following are 7 negative myths about bilingualism:

- *Myth 1:* Only really intelligent children can be bilingual.
  - *Fact:* Every child can learn multiple languages from birth.

The authors confirm that in today's world, knowing more than one language is necessary. In many countries around the world, such as Algeria or Spain, people are bilingual or multilingual

because their lives demand it by having more than their mother tongue present in their everyday lives. Some countries even have a mix of different languages in use, and people decide to learn English in addition to these languages to be able to communicate with people all around the world thanks to globalization. With that in mind, comes the question of how people can speak multiple languages. The answer would be that nature made us the way we are. It has been proven that babies can learn any language as long as they hear it from an early age. The human brain is designed for babies and children to learn languages (even up to seven different languages without getting confused by them). Children are like sponges. They can learn and absorb information very quickly, but still, some factors have to be taken into consideration. These factors are age, environment, and innate language ability. So, to a certain extent, a child's ability to learn multiple languages depends on genetics. To elaborate on that, some individuals have a natural talent for language learning, while others are gifted in something else such as math, music, science, etc. With that in mind, it does not mean that someone who maybe does not have a natural talent for music cannot learn to play an instrument, and as Steiner and Hayes (2008) explain, "you don't have to be linguistically gifted to learn how to speak more than one language" (Steiner & Hayes, 2008, p. 5). A talent certainly makes it easier for someone to learn a language, but "motivation, instruction, and practice can carry you quite far when it comes to learning anything, languages included" (Steiner & Hayes, 2008, p. 5). It is just important to practice and expose children to different languages through reading, listening, and speaking. That is crucial for improving language proficiency.

- *Myth 2:* Bilingualism leads to confusion, causing children to mix languages and never become proficient in either.
  o *Fact:* It is normal for children to mix languages as they learn them.

It was already mentioned that people usually do not have the same proficiency in both languages. "Balanced bilinguals are the exception, not the rule" (Steiner & Hayes, 2008, p. 6). That means that children can speak a language they hear better than the one they occasionally do. It is a common misconception that, even if someone is still learning a second language but can think or speak it, that person is considered proficient. Another misconception is that if someone is bilingual, they will be able to express their thoughts and ideas perfectly in both languages, which is impossible and demanding to expect from someone. That is where this myth arises. If a bilingual person mixes languages, they must be confused about them, resulting in their being unable to express themselves correctly. When it comes to children, it is natural for them to mix the languages they are learning because of the simultaneous usage and

acquisition of both. Genesee (1989) adds that "in one case, mixing might occur because the language system in use at the moment is incomplete and does not include the grammatical device needed to express certain meanings" (Genesee, 1989, p. 168). It is unclear if children know that they are learning and speaking different languages, and the question arises: Are children just storing words they hear at first and starting to separate them (and languages) later in life? Even if they mix languages, it does not matter to them because their main goal in using language is to get what they ask for and want. Bilingual children, with time, start to differentiate languages, not because they have to, but because their brains allow them to as they mature. But mixing languages is not alarming. It is just a natural process of language learning, especially in early childhood.

- *Myth 3*: If a child does not speak English by the time she enters kindergarten, she will have trouble learning to read and have difficulty in school.
    - *Fact:* A child's brain adapts to her language environment, and a child can learn language well beyond 5 years of age.

Learning a language is easier at an early age. According to Steiner and Hayes (2008), the ability to learn multiple languages starts to decrease after puberty, and it becomes harder and more demanding. Moreover, people who decide to learn a language after puberty may develop an accent while speaking a second language. So, the earlier that parents decide to raise their children bilingually, the better (easier) it will be for them to acquire it. But doing so later in life is not a mistake because "there is absolutely no deadline beyond which the human brain fails to learn a new language" (Steiner & Hayes, 2008, p. 10).

- *Myth 4:* Bilingualism leads to language delay.
    - *Fact:* Children learning two languages sometimes start talking a little later, but no research has shown that bilingualism typically leads to anything more than a temporary language delay.

Language delay is not so rare. According to Steiner and Hayes (2008), it affects between 5 and 10 percent of children (more common in boys). It is important to emphasize that language learning difficulties have nothing to do with bilingualism, nor does bilingualism affect them. Children learn language from the people they are surrounded by. So, if a child speaks one language in school and the other at home, they will learn vocabulary used in each of the places; therefore, if that child is not able to find the right word for some word at school, they will stand out and the teacher might interpret it as being unable to communicate properly. They will not

be able to manipulate vocabulary from multiple languages in the same way, but they will properly use words. Bilingual children often have the same number of words stored in their memory as monolingual children. By kindergarten, that tends to fade away, and bilingual children may end up having better comprehension than monolingual children. Normally, bilingual children experience mild delays in their expressive language (there is no indication why), but there is no need to panic because it is mostly temporary and disappears before 5 years of age. Some monolingual children start speaking well at 18 months, while others do so later, which is completely normal. When it comes to bilingual children, parents and teachers often believe that that happens because of the simultaneous learning of two languages. But if parents are concerned with their child's language development, they should ask someone specialized and let them assess if there is a problem. If a child indeed has a language delay, there is no need to stop learning a second language; in that case, it is best to change some things when it comes to the language plan (an approach to learning a second language).

- *Myth 5:* Parents must be fluent in more than one language before raising a bilingual child.
  - o *Fact:* Monolingual parents can raise a bilingual child.

If parents speak more than one language, according to Steiner and Hayes (2008), they may have one they prefer over the other or others. With that comes the dilemma of which one to use when speaking to their child. Steiner and Hayes (2008) suggest that, in that case, parents should speak the one they are most fluent in. An advantage of parents being fluent results in providing children with "more expressive, diverse words and phrases and help them develop a full vocabulary and range of expressions" (Steiner & Hayes, 2008, p. 14), along with correct grammar. On the other hand, is it possible to raise bilingual children if no parents are bilingual? The authors agree that this is surely possible.

- *Myth 6:* Children absorb a language passively, "like a sponge."
  - o *Fact:* A child's brain is wired to learn different languages, but adequate language stimulation is a must. A poor language environment can lead to a child becoming a "passive" bilingual.

It was already mentioned that children learn and absorb information very quickly, just like sponges. That means that "children do go through an apparently sponge-like "vocabulary spurt" in the second year of life in which word learning accelerates dramatically" (Jipson et al., 2014, p. 151). Steiner and Hayes (2008) add to that by saying that children need stimulation for a

second or third language; otherwise, they will lose the ability to learn a language to which they are not actively exposed to. For example, if children only listen to a second language, they will be able to understand it, but they will not be so good at other language skills (reading, writing, and speaking). That is known as passive bilingualism, and it is not necessarily unfavorable. A child that is passively bilingual has a good, firm foundation for becoming bilingual, so that should not be neglected and considered negative, but parents should rather engage more and build upon that so that their children could profit more from it.

- *Myth 7:* The English language is losing ground in the United States and elsewhere.
  - *Fact:* English is far from disappearing. In fact, the English language is expanding rapidly throughout the world.

A popular belief among American citizens is that English is slowly becoming less spoken because many immigrants from all around the world have been coming to America and "taking over" the country. Along with that, they fear that English will no longer be the lingua franca ("any of various languages used as common or commercial tongues among peoples of diverse speech" (Merriam Webster, 2023)). But that is, of course, far from true. Immigrants have been learning English even though that means giving up their native language. After a couple of generations, children could no longer speak their native language but only English. It has become normal in schools throughout the world to teach English from a young age. English is and will remain, without a doubt, a lingua franca.

2.4. Types of childhood bilingualism

As mentioned before, bilingualism does not have one universal definition. Each family raising bilingual children has its unique perspective on what it means. Rosenberg (1996) confirms that what is considered bilingualism varies from one family to the next. To some, it is purely the ability to listen in two languages and speak in one, and others expect their children to be able to read and write in both languages to be considered bilingual. However, families with a well-thought-out "language plan" tend to be more successful in raising bilingual children. Such plans involve considering how their children will develop two languages and making necessary commitments to their bilingual language development, and the first step in that would be for parents to clarify their definition of bilingualism.

Furthermore, Rosenberg (1996) points out that language proficiency can be assessed through four main skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing, but also through the ability to use language for reasoning, which is described as "the process of thinking about something in a logical way in order to form a conclusion or judgment" (The Britannica Dictionary, 2023). There are many combinations of what bilingual people are able to do with the mentioned skills, such as only speaking one language but understanding both, or being able to speak and understand both languages but only read and write in one. That can be explained through two terms: *balanced bilingualism* and *semilingualism*. Rosenberg (1996) defines balanced bilingualism as the ability to use both languages fluently, and, on the other hand, semilingualism is a lack of the ability to do so in both languages. More specifically, semilingualism can result in some deficiencies such as reduced vocabulary, grammatical errors, difficulty thinking or expressing emotions in one of the languages, etc. However, the term semilingiualism is considered controversial by many researchers because it implies derogatory connotations and possible prejudices toward language minorities (Salö & Karlander, 2018). However, it is rare to find someone who is balanced in both languages because, according to Rosenberg (1996), one language is usually dominant.

It is possible to learn a second language later in life; however, as previously stated, it is easier to do so during childhood because, that way, one can develop a pronunciation more similar to the native one. Rosenberg (1996) further acknowledges that there are two types of childhood bilingualism. The first one is the *simultaneous* learning of two languages, affected by four key factors: parents' ability to speak one or more languages (some parents may only speak their mother tongue, while others may have proficiency in more than one language); parent's language use with the child (parents may choose to speak a certain language with their child, despite having the ability to speak multiple languages); other family members' language use (other family members (siblings, grandparents) may speak a different language with the child); and the last factor is a language used in the community. The second type of childhood bilingualism is *sequential* or *successive*. That stands for learning one language first and then learning another one later in life (the age of three is usually when simultaneous language learning stops and sequential language learning starts). Experts suggest that it is easier for children to learn a language by separating them. When children are acquiring two languages simultaneously, parents should apply certain language strategies that will set boundaries between the two languages.

2.5. Code-switching

Code-switching is a linguistic phenomenon, or "the ability of bilinguals to move in and out of the two languages, even within a single utterance" (Kroll, Dussias, & Bajo, 2018, p. 61). It must be separated from language mixing since it is not the same thing, but "mixing is part of normal language development, even for monolingual children, who, in the process of learning, frequently mix up words and different grammatical rules" (Steiner & Hayes, 2018, p. 113). Young children are aware that they are speaking more than one language, but they cannot separate these languages, so that results in them mixing the languages. As they continue to grow and mature, they tend to mix languages less.

On the other hand, code-switching is something similar yet completely different. It refers to switching between languages to say certain words or a single word and "is an extremely common practice among bilinguals and takes many forms" (Bhatia & Ritchie, 2014, p. 34). For example, a child who speaks both Croatian and English may say something like, "Where is my pink *papuča?*" There could be various reasons why that child might say it this way. According to Steiner and Hayes (2018), "while research shows that a speaker might switch from one language to another when he does not remember a word in that language, it also shows that switching occurs when the speaker wants to emphasize a particular word or phrase" (Steiner & Hayes, 2018, p. 116). Except for that, there are some other reasons why a bilingual individual might code-switch. It can depend on relationships, as well as other social circumstances. For instance, bilingual children code-switch to overcome some communication barriers caused by not being able to properly communicate their thoughts at that moment (e.g., Popović & Cergol Kovačević, 2017). Someone might switch languages with a person they are close to or with a person who can understand both languages. If speaking to one's boss or in more formal circumstances, a bilingual individual might stick to one language and not switch at all. Saunders (1988) confirms that "switching may be due to a number of factors, both linguistic and extralinguistic" (Saunders, 1988, p. 11). When it comes to extralinguistic factors (motivation, attitudes, personality, and emotion), a bilingual or multilingual person will speak a certain language with a certain person they know can understand it. Another reason to switch languages may be because of style or topic. Bilinguals can switch between languages because they relate one language to some topic and the other language to some other topic, so they may be talking about work in one language and then switch to another to talk about their plans for later. Saunder (1988) also explains that bilinguals often switch languages while discussing or arguing, making points in one language, then switching to express themselves more effectively. In addition to

that, Lujić and Hanžić Deda (2018) documented the use of code-switching as a means of including others in a conversation.

When taking both code-mixing and code-switching into consideration, some authors, as Myers-Scotton (1989) mentioned, separate and consider code-switching *inter-sentential* and code-mixing *intra-sentential* alternation. Bokamba (1988) agreed with that by saying that "the two phenomena make different linguistic and psycholinguistic claims… (codeswitching) does not require the integration of the rules of the two languages involved in the discourse, whereas codemixing does" (Bokamba, 1988, p. 24). But Myers-Scotton (1989) argues with that and believes that both alternations can occur no matter if code-switching or code-mixing is in question. For instance, depending on what one wants to express or emphasize, a switch between languages can occur mid-sentence. Also, it can occur at the end to indicate a change of topic. Therefore, the author suggests that the distinction between the two alternations is not necessary since speakers switch depending on what they want to achieve or depending on the social context of certain conversations.

2.5.1. Intra-sentential code-switching

One of the two possible alternations that can take place is intra-sentential code-switching. But, before explaining the distinction between the two, we must know what it means to alternate, or what an alternation is. According to Collins Dictionary, alternation is a "successive change from one condition or action to another and back again repeatedly" (Collins Dictionary, 2023). When it comes to alternation and code-switching, intra-sentential code-switching is, as the name suggests, "switching within meaningful sentences" (Van Hell et al., 2015, p. 4). Most studies that studied switching between languages focused merely on words, pictures, and other unrelated items instead of switching within sentences. The authors further explain how "when processing a meaningful sentence, bilinguals seek to integrate individual words into a coherent semantic and syntactic structure" (Van Hell et al., 2015, p. 21). That means that bilinguals connect different words so that, in the end, it makes sense according to the semantical and syntactical rules of language. So, bilinguals do not just process words separately as units that have no connection but rather want to understand how these words fit together to make a meaningful sentence. This process requires not only knowledge of the meanings of individual words but also knowing how different words fit together when it comes to the grammatical rules and functions they convey.

For communication to be successful, bilinguals have to be proficient in both languages, as well as know all the grammatical rules that exist in every language they are familiar with. The authors touch upon other studies regarding intra-sentential code-switching, such as the one proposed by Clyne (2003), in which he studied the language use of seven nationalities of immigrants in Australia (German, Dutch, Hungarian, Italian, Spanish, Croatian, and Vietnamese). He confirmed that switches happened when one (or more) cognates were within a sentence. Cognates are, according to Merriam-Webster (2023), words "related by derivation, borrowing, or descent". An example that Clyne (2003) used was the word "tennis". It is read the same in Croatian and English (bilingual homophone), so, in this case, it was a trigger for switching to the other language. Clyne (2003) took this example from Hlavac (2000), "*Imam puno zadaca i sutra mi igramo* tennis… that's about all" ('I have a lot of assignments and tomorrow we are playing tennis… that's about all' (Hlavac, 2000, as cited in Clyne 2003, p. 164)). The trigger word, in this case, was the word "tennis", which resulted in the speaker switching to English at the end of the sentence. Along with this type of trigger, Clyne (1967) in his previous work mentioned two more triggering situations: anticipational facilitation (a code-switch occurs before the trigger), already mentioned sequential facilitation (a code-switch occurs after the trigger), and a combination (two trigger words and a switch that is surrounded by them). There is a correlation between triggering and cognates. Cognates are responsible for triggering bilinguals into switching languages, and that is the best example of intra-sentential code-switching.

2.5.2. Inter-sentential code-switching

Another alternation that can take place is inter-sentential code-switching. As Koban (2013) explains, it "is characterized by a switch from one language variety to another outside the sentence or the clause level" (p. 1175). In short, it occurs between clause or sentence limit whereas a complete clause or sentence are in one language, and the following clause or sentence are in the other language. The switch is done in the middle of the phrase without interruptions. A good illustration for this type of code-switching comes from Shana Poplack's paper title (1980), "Sometimes I will start a sentence in English *y termin ó in español*." (Sometimes I'll start a sentence in English and finish in Spanish).

Myers-Scotton (1989) believes that both intra- and inter-sentential code-switching can take place in a dialogue and serve a similar function. Also, the author explains how humans

possess an understanding of two linguistic concepts, markedness, and indexicality, which allows them to recognize appropriate ways to express themselves. She further elaborates on that by adding how speakers "make the code choices" (Myers-Scotton, 1989, p. 334) mostly at a subconscious level, and they do so to navigate the conversation they are engaging in. For this to be possible, the author introduces the *markedness model* and theory of markedness and indexicality, which "underlies speakers' ability to assign to specific code choices readings of markedness for a specific exchange" (ibid.). In a study by Popović and Cergol Kovačević (2017), conducted with a 5-year-old trilingual, it was found that she used both intra- and inter-sentential code-switching for her communication purposes. During the analysis of audio recordings, there were 455 cases of code-switching, with 98 being inter-sentential. The authors believe that the reason for that is a less common usage of complex sentences, especially in Croatian and Ukrainian since these are her weaker languages, whereas German is the language of her environment, i.e., social interactions outside the family.

2.5.3. Tag switching

In sociolinguistics, tag switching is simply a sentence filler, interjection, or tag occurring in the other language. The insertion of such an element into a sentence has no effect on the rest of the sentence that is in a different language because it has no syntactic limitation (Poplack, 1980). For example, a filler *este* in Spanish would be translated as *umm* in English and it is used a lot, especially when a speaker is lost for words and is thinking. Another example that Poplack (1980) mentions refers to interjections, such as "*Dios mio!*", translated as "Oh, my God!" through which a speaker expresses shock or a strong reaction toward something. Tags are another example of tag switching and the most used ones are "*i entiendes?*" or "understand?" which are used at the end of a sentence or conversation and are used for confirmation mostly.

These elements are parts of sentences that are not associated with the rest of them, do not affect their meaning, and "may occur freely at any point in the sentence" (Poplack, 1980, p. 596). On the other hand, when it comes to intra-sentential switches, they are parts of sentences, therefore, must "obey sentence-internal syntactic constraints" (Poplack, 1980, p. 596).

2.5.4. Code-switching within the markedness model

Myers-Scotton (1989) suggests that bilingual individuals are aware of the social implications each of their languages possesses. In other words, a certain language variety can represent *unmarked* language (something that is expected), whereas another variety can represent *marked* language (something that is unexpected). More precisely, "marked" language stands out in certain social situations, while "unmarked" language blends in. As a marked choice, bilinguals often express anger, annoyance, or authority (Myers-Scotton, 1993). This model also includes indexicality[1] as meaning based on context. Overall, markedness and indexicality share a similar role of providing additional meaning in language use. To understand why both are important when it comes to communication, Myers-Scotton (1989) explains how all humans can recognize and use these two concepts when communicating. It is a natural part of effective communication and both concepts are crucial since they help people understand the meaning behind something that was said. According to Myers-Scotton (ibid.), and her markedness model rooted in sociolinguistics, there are four motivations for changes in code within the same conversation: sequential unmarked choices, switching as an unmarked choice, code-switching as a marked choice, and code-switching as an exploratory choice presenting multiple identities.

1. *Sequential unmarked choices*

When it comes to sequential unmarked choices, the switch from one unmarked choice to the other happens when some external factors, such as a new participant or a new topic, as the author suggests, force the conversation and unmarked choice to take place. "Having originally made an unmarked choice, speakers wishing to maintain the status quo switch to a new unmarked choice when circumstances change" (Myers-Scotton, 1989, p. 336). That way, sequential unmarked choices happen. A speaker switches between languages when he is speaking to two other speakers who do not have a single language in common. It is important to mention that "…such a strategy is not CS as defined in this paper (i.e., speaker-motivated) since the initial motivation for the change of varieties is a change in the components of the interaction" (ibid., p. 336).

2. *Switching as an unmarked choice*

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[1] In linguistics, indexicality is the phenomenon of a sign pointing to some element in the context in which it occurs. It relates to or denotes a word or expression whose meaning is dependent on the context in which it is used (such as pronouns *I, you, me,* etc., demonstratives such as *this* or *that*, deictic adverbs (*not, then, there*), and tense (Hanks, 1999).

If fluent bilingual speakers communicate with one another, it is almost certain for them to code-switch "but with no changes at all in setting, participants, topic, or any other situational feature." (ibid., p. 336). This means that for informal ingroup communication, alternating between languages is something completely normal and that code-switch is unmarked. By code-switching, speakers express their identities, and it is a normal practice in the modern world.

3. CS as a marked choice

In code-switching, it is common to make some marked choices. That can be used intentionally in positive or negative contexts. Making a marked choice inside a group is mostly a sign of solidarity, but on the other hand, it can also be a sign of increased social distance.

4. CS as an exploratory choice presenting multiple identities

In certain situations where speakers are not familiar with one another's identity, for example when they are meeting for the first time, and when they do not have an established way of communicating, people tend to code-switch. The goal is to find out what works for them and their further interaction because "Accepting a code as the basis for the conversation, of course, means accepting the balance of rights and obligations indexed by that code." (ibid., p. 338).

Then again, some researchers argued that code-switching does not need to be deliberate, which means that bilingual speakers are not always aware of their switching between languages (e.g., Woolard, 2005).

2.6. Language situations that take place at home

Language strategies (also called versions of "One parent, one language") that parents are advised to apply during their children's language acquisition can be, as Rosenberg (1996) writes, separated into four categories:

1. One parent, one language, where each parent constantly speaks only one language to the child, usually their native language.
2. One language is spoken only at home by both parents, and a second language is spoken outside of the home, at school.
3. One language is spoken at home and school, and the second only in the community.

4. Both parents speak both languages but switch from one to the other depending on the speaking situation or alternately.

What is important with these strategies is to be consistent. If parents mix languages while talking to their children, they will struggle with distinguishing between the vocabulary and grammar of the two languages, and the result will be learning the "mixed" language. A balance between languages is also important, Rosenberg (1996) explains. When a child is mostly exposed to one language and has little or no time to hear the second one, it is not unlikely that he or she will develop that language more quickly and easily than the other one. That is why parents should consider ways to incorporate the second language in different ways when their child is at home because it is crucial that children are exposed to both languages for them to develop them. Except for balance, the quality of interaction is also necessary. If one wants their children to learn a language, they should use a simple but varied vocabulary. It is also important that parents use words of approval and encourage them while speaking, as well as provide different materials that may help them acquire a language more easily and in a fun way.

3. PARENTING BILINGUAL CHILDREN

This chapter presents an overview of research related to raising bilingual children under different circumstances. Even though there are many bilingual settings based on geographic, political, cultural, or some other grounds, for the purpose of this thesis, a brief overview of parental practices and attitudes is given, along with three studies conducted in North America and Europe. The research overview is followed by an analysis, which includes pedagogical implications and recommendations for future research.

3.1. Practices and attitudes

Numerous studies have been conducted on the topic of bilingual children, many of which have focused on the way bilingual children code-switch while acquiring multiple languages. Researchers, other professionals, but also people that have no professional link to the field, according to Genesee (2002), have strong opinions about preschool children learning a second language because "it is thought to exceed the language learning capacity of the young child and, thus, to incur potential costs, such as delayed or incomplete language development or even deviant development" (Genesee, 2002, p. 170). The author adds that this kind of thinking is most common among people who are not bilingual themselves. When it comes to other research, bilingualism is neglected and seen as risky. But the author explains that there is no need to be afraid of bilingualism, whether it is potentially risky or unusual, because he agrees that in today's world, there is an equal or even bigger percentage of children who grew up bilingual. Thanks to his research efforts, along with many other similar contributions, views of bilingualism, i.e. multilingualism are becoming more positive nowadays, and bilingualism is becoming closer to a standard rather than a 'risky' or 'unusual' phenomenon. Due to extensive research resulting in language policy implementations, definitions of bilingualism have been transformed. For example, many non-English countries introduced English as a second language, which resulted in having almost 200 million people across mainland Europe competent to carry on discussions in English almost effortlessly (Special Eurobarometer 386: Europeans and their Languages, 2014). Moreover, some parents choose to ensure education in English for their children because of their careers that require frequent relocating from country to country thus keeping English as a constant in their children's lives (e.g., Hanžić Deda, 2022; Lujić & Hanžić Deda, 2018). While maintaining such lifestyles, families undoubtedly engage in code-switching. As mentioned by Popović and Cergol Kovačević (2017), the language a

child chooses in everyday life is influenced by parents and the preferred language they speak with a child, the level of knowledge in a certain language, as well as their character. It would seem that an extrovert would code-switch more since their main goal is to transfer their thoughts, and they do not mind and think about which language to use, as long as they can achieve that goal. Younger children tend to code-switch more and, as they grow up, that becomes less frequent.

In the following paragraphs, several examples of raising bilingual children in different language contexts are presented. First is the circumstance of raising English-French bilingual children in Canada, where two languages are in official use and where children's parents might also have another language as L1. Another is the circumstance of raising English-Spanish bilingual children in the USA, where English is official and bilingual children have different language contexts than the children in Canada. The third is the context of minority language speakers in Europe.

### 3.1.1. French-English bilingual children in Canada

Frank Genesee, a professor of psychology at McGill University who specialized in second language acquisition and bilingualism research, examined bilingual code-switching in English-French bilingual children from Montreal. In his meta-analysis from 2008, he covers a number of studies looking at the aptitude of early bilingual children for code-switching. In the city of Montreal in Canada, both languages are used in their everyday lives. For that reason, it is not unusual for parents to decide to teach their children both languages which, without a doubt, have "high functional and symbolic value in the community" (Genesee, 2008, p. 13). The author believes that Montreal is a suitable place to examine bilingualism in early childhood. Since both languages are equally respected and spoken, children have the opportunity to learn and use both of them, which subsequently provides an excellent setting for understanding how and when they tend to switch languages.

In some instances, children were observed with the focus on three occasions: when they were alone with their mothers, again when they were alone with their fathers, and, of course, with both parents as well. Since the children were young (in one or early two-word stage), it was investigated how they used English and French in different contexts. The frequency of intra and inter-sentential mixing and switching between languages, but also the ability to use the right language depending on which parent they are speaking to. "Even at this young age, these

children were able to use their two languages in a context-sensitive manner – they used significantly more French than English with their L1 French-speaking parent and substantially more English than French with their L1 English-speaking parent" (Genesee, 2008, p. 15). Figure 1 shows children's language use in their interactions with parents.

Figure 1.

Five children in Montreal and their use of French and English with their parents when together (Mothers were L1 English-speakers and Fathers were L1 French-speakers) (Source: Genesee, 2008)
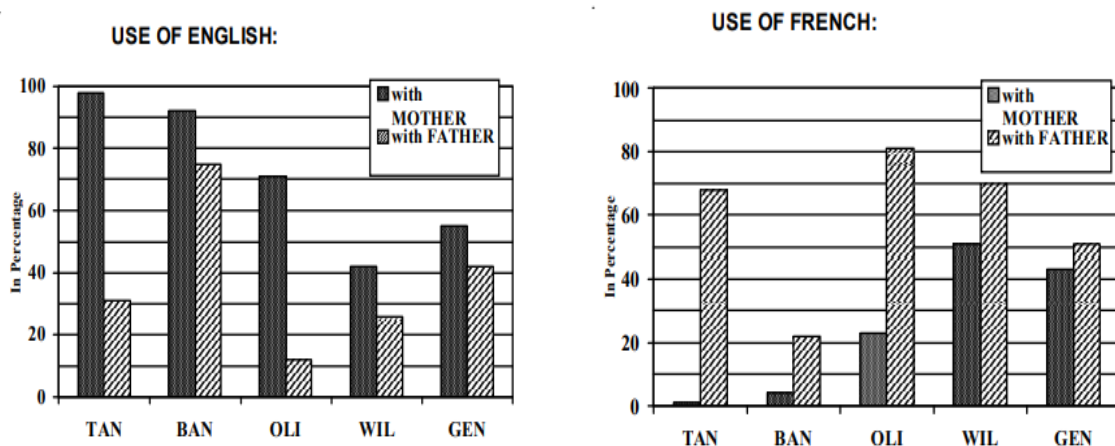

It is visible from Figure 1 that all five of the children, even with both parents present, used more English when talking to their mothers, and more French when talking to their fathers, confirming the efficiency of the OPOL (one parent, one language) strategy.

The author also attempts to reveal whether "bilingual children modify the language so that it is socially appropriate" and whether "they code-mix and code-switch due to lacking linguistic competence" Genesee (2008, pp. 19-21). To answer the first question, the author explains how bilingual and monolingual children share some communication challenges, such as "production of target-like language forms (including, words and morpho-syntactic patterns) that are comprehensible to others; getting one's meaning across when language acquisition is incomplete; and using language in socially appropriate ways" (ibid., p. 19). Furthermore, in communication with adult speakers, the children switched to the correct language roughly 25% of the time, with occasional clarifications requested by the children. Interestingly, the ability to switch between languages was more developed in 3-year-olds who used reformulation rather

than repeating the same sentence twice. Younger children, on the other hand, did not rephrase but rather used repetition, which is a less complex way of trying to repeat the breakdown. The other question regarding code-switching confirms that children who are bilingual often switch code within a single utterance or from one utterance to another due to the incomplete acquisition of one or both languages. According to the study's findings, bilingual children code-switch more often while using the language in which they are less proficient (Genesee, 2008). Figure 2 illustrates young bilinguals' code-switching with the purpose of extending their communicative competence when their proficiency in language is not complete.

Figure 2.

Percentage of intra-utterance mixing with dominant and non-dominant language by five Montreal children (Source: Genesee, 2008)
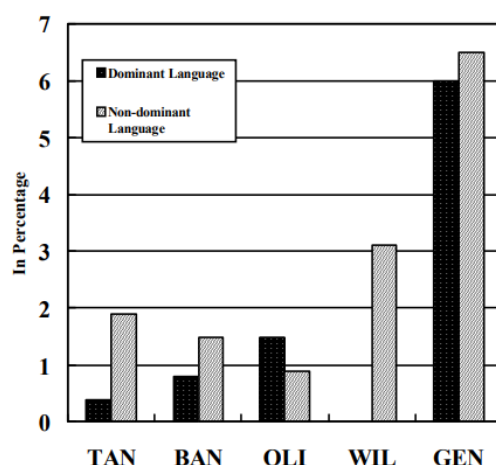
3.1.2. Spanish-English bilingual children in the USA

In the United States, according to Toppelberg and Collin (2010), children from immigrant families represent the most rapidly growing group. With that in mind, not much is known about their parents and the way they are raising them to be bilingual. In the research conducted by Lee et al. (2015), that focused on parental preferences when it comes to raising bilingual children, participants were parents of 3 to 7-year-olds whose first language was Spanish. They taught their children another language because they believed that with being bilingual comes many advantages. Their preferred way of teaching a second language was English-only school, and they spoke Spanish at home. The authors of this paper wanted to learn more about their attitudes and preferences so they formed two focus groups. The groups

consisted of Spanish-speaking parents and their 3 to 7-year-old children. Parents were recruited over the span of four weeks during which they attended sessions. Each of the sessions was audiotaped and later transcribed. The main areas of inquiry were the benefits and drawbacks of bilingualism, the variables that affect parents' decisions about parenting bilingual children, and the methods for assisting young learners (Lee et al., 2015).

When asked about the benefits of bilingualism, parents agree that bilingualism has many benefits, such as increased employment opportunities and the ability to help with English. However, some parents focus on only speaking and neglect other skills, such as reading, writing, and listening. To be truly bilingual, children should be able to read and write in both languages. Parents made their decision to raise their children bilingual based on their experience with older children, family members, school, and community. One parent noted that their children did not want to learn Spanish because it seemed too challenging. As for the techniques and methods of providing bilingual upbringing for their children, some parents wanted their children to see them as teachers and continue to teach them the language as they grow older. Others suggested using the vocabulary from both languages in a way that a parent would teach them a word in Spanish and they would have to do the same thing in English. Some parents prefer their children to speak Spanish with them at home, forbidding them to speak only in English. Parents are divided in opinion on bilingualism and language development, with some believing it is beneficial, while others believe it can lead to developmental delay. However, all parents reported using various resources to maintain their children's bilingualism: consultations with relatives, magazines, schools, teachers, community programs, television shows, internet sites, toys, bilingual books, pediatric office pamphlets, and personal experience (Lee et al., 2015).

3.1.3. Bilingual Children in Europe

As opposed to abundant research on children from minority families in North America, this topic gained momentum in Europe around the 2010s as the number of immigrant families in Europe increased (Cabrera & Leyendecker, 2017). The language landscape of the EU is quite diverse, and constant migrations make it even more dynamic. More specifically, there are 24 official languages in the EU (Languages, Multilingualism, Language Rules | European Union, n.d.). With that in mind, it is realistic to assume that new studies and research approaches will be conducted in the near future. Within the EU and beyond, many countries on the European

continent are bilingual or multilingual (e.g., Luxembourg, Belgium, Finland, Switzerland, etc.). Therefore, growing up bilingual or multilingual is a standard, rather than an exception or an option. In line with that, bilingual and multilingual education is provided to support all children's languages (e.g., Reljić, Ferring, & Martin, 2015). In their comprehensive meta-analysis, the authors once again emphasize that the maintenance of minority languages is vital for children's confidence and academic achievements, as well as their open-mindedness, social cohesion, and overall well-being, while preserving their language tradition and culture.

In *Handbook on Positive Development of Minority Children and Youth*, a Belgian linguist and author Annick De Houwer focused on bilingual children and their well-being in the 28 countries of the European Union (EU) back in 2015. In her meta-analysis, she looked closer at some challenges that parents from minority language backgrounds face potentially causing them to feel insecure in their role as parents.

According to De Houwer (2017), most children in the EU speak the language they use at school, which is also the official language of that country and the so-called majority language. Except for the majority language, most children in the EU also learn another one, a minority language, at home. In most cases, for children to acquire another language and become bilingual, parents are the ones in charge of that process. Depending on their background and whether they speak another minority language, their children may be able to learn it and become bilingual, i.e., speak both a majority and minority language.

The studies that De Houwer examined confirm that children in the EU often hear and learn a minority language at home or speak only the majority language. The question that emerges here is whether the early use of minority language, but also the non-use by children in minority language families is related to their socioemotional well-being. There are some cases, as De Houwer (2017) mentions, where parents and children felt embarrassed, even angry when they could not communicate properly in a certain minority language with their family in their country. On the other hand, bilingual children that can speak both languages, as was the case with Spanish-English children, feel proud. When it comes to parents failing to raise their children bilingually, "they blame themselves for being a bad parent, feel guilty for failing to transmit their language, feel depressed, feel rejected by their children, feel embarrassed and ashamed towards their own parents, feel that they have failed as a person, and are dissatisfied with their bilingual child rearing" (ibid., 2017, p. 238). That proves how important it is to parents that their children know both languages. If parents speak their native languages at home,

children often acquire only one of these languages, the majority language. Children in ESLA (English as a Second Language Acquisition) settings hear and speak only the minority language and when they start school, they learn the majority language there. That way, they tend to speak both of them without any problems.

Many parents think that learning two languages from early childhood will confuse their children, and that is why they choose to speak only the majority language with their children. Some other parents believe that if one of them does not understand nor speak that majority language, they should not teach their children to speak it either. When some parents who are not as proficient in the majority language decide to speak it with their children, the result is them having certain difficulties in communicating together, but it may have an impact on their parenting as well.

The author mentioned three factors that have an effect on bilingual proficiency: "(1) parental attitudes and beliefs regarding languages, early bilingualism and parental impact on children's language learning are crucial in (2) shaping parental language use towards children and ultimately, (3) children's bilingual language use and proficiency" (De Houwer, 2017, p. 241).

3.2. The importance of planning and parental approaches in raising bilingual children

In mentioned research, especially in the case of Montreal children, the effectiveness of the OPOL approach confirms that for parents to teach children another language, but also for children to acquire it successfully, they need to form and follow a plan. The case with Spanish-English children confirms that a plan is certainly necessary so that children can master all language skills: speaking, reading, writing, and listening. When either is neglected, a child is not likely to develop balanced bilingualism. Moreover, all parents agree that knowing more than one language is an asset and it offers advantages in early childhood, but also later in life.

Even though parents generally agree on many aspects, there are a few differences in their beliefs and approaches. As mentioned, Montreal is known for its simultaneous usage of two languages that are official there and parents understand the importance of including both in their children's lives, but it is not very likely that children master both equally at the same time. Since they find the OPOL approach to be the most effective, they hold on to that and the

results reveal that children understand when it is necessary to switch between languages or what to do when they receive feedback that their message is not comprehensible. Although the participants were children between 3 and 7 years of age, they were able to recognize where and why the communication was no longer possible so they either reformulated or repeated their utterances. On the contrary, among Spanish-English children, some could not use all language skills equally (they could only speak the language) which was potentially a problem and a child could fail to recognize when a situation requires any kind of change in communication. Besides that, parents disagreed in their approaches to support their children's bilingualism. While Montreal parents preferred OPOL, immigrant parents who raised Spanish-English children used a variety of strategies some of which were more effective than others. Another important thing to mention is that even though not all parents agreed that bilingualism was something beneficial, the Montreal parents did not even consider raising their children other than bilingually. Circumstances certainly differ among the two cases, and it is every parent's right to choose the way they want raise their children.

As the analysis revealed, the practices of raising bilingual children in Europe vary, mainly due to numerous factors that might affect parents' views of what languages would be the most beneficial for their children from social, cultural, economic, and similar standpoints. However, it could be said that parents in all three situations presented hold certain beliefs and attitudes toward bilingualism, which may affect their choices and approaches to raising their children.

To sum up, the presented research demonstrates how children, even in early childhood, can learn and differentiate between two languages. Many people still view bilingualism as something negative, but parents who decide to incorporate bilingualism into their children's lives find it very useful and practical for numerous reasons. They all agree it can help them career-wise, but it is important to them that they stay close to their roots, do not forget where they came from, and also adapt to what is expected and typical in the community. Parents used various approaches, from OPOL, to learning one language at school and the other (their native one) at home. It has all proven effective, and children could successfully acquire another language. What was also important to parents was consulting a diverse range of sources before starting to teach their children a second language. Children could communicate effectively, switch between languages, and recognize when it is necessary to use which language. With a proper approach, methods, and devotion, children can be bilingual, which invalidates that common misconception about what bilingualism is.

3.3. Pedagogical implications and future research

Growing up bilingual might affect educational practices in several ways. For example, bilingual children may need additional support in differentiating and using their languages appropriately in different contexts. Educators can facilitate that by providing clear language models, setting guidelines for language use, and creating a supportive, language-rich environment that encourages the use of both languages. Also, bilingual children frequently receive language input and support from their families. Involving families in the educational process is key for fostering language development, and educators can provide resources, workshops, and strategies for families to support their children's bilingualism at home. When it comes to minority languages, "educators and parents can support the minority language in the school by pushing for programs that aim at promoting bilingualism for minority language children and mainstream families" (Rodríguez, 2015, p. 191). But when something of this sort is not possible, "(…) early childhood centers should display a positive attitude toward the choices of language minority families by acknowledging, accepting, respecting, and promoting not only English but their native language, as well" (NAEYC, 1995). Schools can also contribute to promoting bilingualism by hiring bilingual staff or motivating others who are bilingual themselves to use both languages while in school, not just for translating but to communicate or use them in class. Educators should incorporate strategies that promote cultures and languages of students because they are, along with parents, an integral part of children's upbringing. Kennedy and Romo (2013, as cited in Rodríguez, 2015, p. 191-192) believe that "these strategies would send the message to young children that speaking the native language is important because it allows for interaction with extended family members (e.g., grandparents) and is valued by important people in their lives, including teachers, even if they live in a society that sees itself as monolingual".

In future research, favorable teaching practices promoting early bilingualism could be investigated through case studies and other qualitative research methods. This type of research would be important to learn the most adequate ways of supporting children's bilingualism. Also, it could help gain more insight into the quality, regularity, and trends of parental input that promote the development of bilingualism, which would facilitate active speaking of a minority language, not only understanding it (e.g., De Houwer, 2007; Rodríguez, 2015).

4. CONCLUSION

The main objective of this thesis was to present the concept of bilingualism along with its many definitions and common misconceptions. Furthermore, the main components of children's bilingualism were explained through the examples of relevant studies that focused on bilingual children and their parents' views of their children growing up bilingual.

Bilingualism has become ever more common and is perceived as an advantage in today's world. Parents often choose to raise their children bilingually to provide them with more opportunities. Parents aim for their children to achieve similar proficiency and knowledge in both their languages. While children learn a second language, they may mix languages due to simultaneous acquisition. Despite some prejudices and myths, being bilingual is a valuable lifelong skill. Parents play a critical part in promoting bilingualism, using different methods and strategies tailored to their children's needs. Proficiency in a language involves listening, speaking, reading, writing, and reasoning skills. Some bilinguals achieve balanced bilingualism, using both languages fluently, while others may have a clearly dominant language. Starting bilingual education early is recommended as children acquire languages more easily at a young age. Separating languages during instruction is often recommended, but children may still mix or switch languages for various reasons. Researchers have explored code-switching in bilingual children, but there is still much to be discovered about bilingualism and language acquisition. Two main types of code-switching include intra and inter-sentential code-switching, with tag switching as another possibility. Since that kind of language switching happens effortlessly, knowledge of vocabulary and grammatical rules is required. Parents play an important role in raising their children to be bilingual and the success depends on the strategies they choose to implement. The most commonly used strategy is OPOL (one parent, one language) where each parent speaks a different language with their child. People sometimes have divided opinions about bilingualism, but bilingualism is broadly accepted nowadays, which might not have been the case in the past.

Parents all around the world, without a second thought, decide to raise bilingual children, and the overview of studies examining such situations confirms how beneficial for children it might be to speak more than one language. In politically determined bilingual settings such as Montreal, parents feel obliged to teach their children both English and French. Bilingual children can indeed understand when it is necessary to switch and what to do when a communication barrier appears. Other research discusses the importance of selecting a proper

approach for children to benefit. Immigrant families believe that knowing the language of their ancestors and being able to communicate with extended family is something all immigrant children should be able to do. However, certain families find that speaking that language is enough, disregarding the other three skills. When it comes to minority languages in the EU, most children use the majority languages every day, which their parents are not so fond of.

Nurturing bilingualism requires more than having only parents put all their efforts toward raising bilingual children. An important factor that should contribute is the education system: teachers, educators, and schools. They should provide both, children and parents with adequate strategies and resources that display a positive attitude toward bilingualism.

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Tekst izjave o izvornosti diplomskog rada

Izjavljujem da je moj diplomski rad izvorni rezultat mojeg rada te da se u izradi istoga nisam koristio drugim izvorima osim onih koji su u njemu navedeni.

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(vlastoručni potpis studenta)