

وزارة التعليم العالي و البحث العلمي

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*Parental Perspectives on Early Childhood Bilingualism in a
Challenging Environment*

The Case of Ain Sefra Speech Community

*Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English as a Partial
Fulfilment for the Degree of Master in Linguistics*

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Academic Year: 2023/2024

Dedication

To MOM and DAD

Acknowledgements

First of all, my gratitude goes to Allah for enabling me to complete this research.

I was looking for the least pretext to quit because I doubted my capacities to prepare something decent and honorable; luckily she was there to prevent this to happen. She is the perfect example of commitment; she did not give up on me when I did. Without her, this would not be possible and for this I am very grateful. From the bottom of my heart, thank you very much Dr. BAGUI Hayat, my supervisor, for accompanying me during this journey. That was an experience I will remember for the rest of my life. I am very lucky to come across your path. I cannot thank you enough.

I would like to thank the board of examiners, Dr. MERINE Asma as an internal examiner and Dr. FATMI Fayçal as a president for their interest in my dissertation, time to assess my work, valuable observation and precious orientation but most of all their support and encouragement.

I also would like to thank those who accepted to take part in the interview and complete the questionnaires for their collaboration.

Last, but not least, I want to thank my daughter Maria for inspiring me to choose this topic.

Abstract

Early Childhood Bilingualism (ECB, hence forth) refers to the development of language proficiency in two languages during the formative years of a child's life, typically from birth to around age six. This period is crucial for language acquisition and encompasses various factors that influence bilingual language development, such as linguistic environments, cultural influences, and cognitive processes. The objective of this study research is to investigate early childhood bilingual parenting among Algerian families especially those residing in the city of Ain Sefra, a small town in the extreme west of Algeria. To achieve this goal, the researcher adopts mixed-method approach to study parents' perceptions of ECB, challenges they face and the strategies they use to overcome these challenges for fostering a successful bilingual child. To collect data the researcher conducted semi-structured face-to-face and online interviews with eight (8) parents, in addition to administering an online and paper-based questionnaire to forty seven (47) others among the citizens of Ain sefra. The gathered data were analyzed and the results obtained indicate that ECB is recognized as highly beneficial for children by the majority of parents and yet they are poorly informed about how it works which leads to negative impact on their decision making regarding bilingual children rearing.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

Ar: Arabic

BFLA: Bilingual First Language Acquisition

CB: Childhood Bilingualism

CPH: Critical Period Hypothesis

CS: Code Switching

ECB: Early Childhood Bilingualism

En: English

ESLA: Early Second Language Acquisition

Fr: French

L1: First Language

L2: Second Language

LA : Language Acquisition

LAD: Language Acquisition Device

NLNC: Native-Language-Neural-Commitment

OPOL (1P/1L): One Person One Language

SLA: Second Language Acquisition

STEM: Science Technology Engineering Mathematics

UG: Universal Grammar

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General Introduction

General Introduction

In today's increasingly interconnected world, bilingual parenting is gaining importance due to its acknowledged benefits for children's cognitive development, linguistic abilities, and overall proficiency. This global trend is also reflected in the rising inclination among Algerian parents to raise bilingual children, with a particular demand and emphasis on fostering English language skills. This shift is caused by the growing value of English within the Algerian community and a distinct political recognition of the significance of multilingualism, especially following Algeria's decision to introduce English into primary education and university graduation in Science Technology Engineering Mathematics studies (STEM). This strategic move matches with the country's commitment to preparing its citizens for success in the 21st century's globalized landscape.

However, there are some concerns about the potential effect of bilingualism on language development, cultural identity and the preservation of Algerian Arabic and Tamazight languages particularly in rural or marginalized areas with limited resources. This study is situated within the unique cultural context of Ain Sefra, Algeria, where Algerian Arabic prevails as the primary language spoken by almost all people of all ages, across all levels, and in every domain and situation, holding more traditional views on language, prioritizing the preservation of local dialects and cultural heritage over foreign languages. Nevertheless, more parents aspire to raise bilingual children with proficiency in Arabic and French but mostly English, motivated by the desire to provide better chances for them. Though, there exists a significant gap between parental expectations and the outcomes achieved in bilingual child upbringing.

Hence, the primary goal of this research work is to investigate how parents perceive and manage bilingualism in their children, and establish connections between parental perceptions and beliefs and the language outcomes of their bilingual children in order to provide insights to better support bilingual children and their families in challenging contexts.

Consequently, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

1. How do parents in Ain Sefra perceive early bilingualism?
2. What influence parents' choice of strategies they employ to support the bilingual development of their children?
3. How do parental perceptions and beliefs affect the language development and proficiency of their bilingual children?

In consideration of the above questions, it can be hypothesized that:

1. Parents in Ain Sefra may perceive early bilingualism positively, believing that it provides many advantages and benefits for their children's future success and integration.
2. The effect of misunderstanding and lack of practical information surrounding early bilingualism might shape parental strategies and approaches in fostering bilingual development for their children.
3. Misconceptions held by parents about acquiring a second language might pose big challenges to raising bilingual children and reaching high proficiency, surpassing their initial motivations and optimistic predictions for opting for bilingualism.

This research contains two chapters. The first chapter is concerned with the theoretical review where the researchers outline the basic concepts related to this topic such as key definitions of childhood bilingualism, types of childhood bilingualism and its diverse aspects mainly cognitive and social, and language development in bilingual children. The second chapter is practical in nature. It presents the different research instruments that are used to collect data; mostly questionnaire and interview, employing a mixed-methods approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative methods in order to obtain real data which is analyzed and explained in the same chapter.

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1.1.Introduction

Given its importance and value in today's world globalization, early bilingualism increasingly captures the attention of researchers around the world. In the past few decades, many informative analytical and theoretical frameworks were proposed to increase the understanding of bilingualism. This chapter reviews what previous research studies have offered regarding the issue under investigated. It contains two sections: the first one illuminates the different aspects that help better understand the phenomenon of early bilingualism. These aspects include the conceptualization of the term, a discussion its characteristics and types, as well as the distinction between its different aspects. Alongside the mentioned aspects, this section also highlights its significance and inspects the factors that influence its success.

1.2. Bilingualism

The answer to the question: “who is a bilingual?” is not a straightforward one due to different definitions and viewpoints, ranging from affirmations to denials. From Linguists to lay people, opinions differ, from simply speaking two languages to being equally proficient in both, covering aspects like language dominance, accent, and biculturalism as individuals may adapt their behaviours and values to multiple cultures, influencing their language skills and usage (Grosjean, 2022). This diversity reflects the evolving nature of bilingualism research.

1.2.1. Bilingualism Definition

Generally speaking, bilingualism is defined as the use of two different languages. Language scholars have shifted their perspective on bilingualism over time. Bloomfield (1933, p.55-56) defines bilingualism as "**native-like control of two languages**" which means that a bilingual uses both languages perfectly. Weinreich (1953, p. 73) defines bilingualism as “**the practice of alternately using two languages**” referring to the switch between two languages during communication, in a similar vein to Mackey (1962, p.52), who defines bilingualism as “**the ability to use more than one language**”. Others like Haugen (1969) suggest that meaningful communication in another language marks the start of

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bilingualism. Macnamara (1969) emphasizes the need to discuss the degree of bilingualism not as a single component but as degree of competence in sub-components. The sub-components are the four macro skills (speaking, writing, reading and listening). In this schema, competence in bilingualism is seen as a continuum with individuals showing varying degrees of competence in each of the macro skills. Thiery (1978) attempts to define an extreme form of bilingualism, which is fairly common among children but very rare in adults, and which he has called True Bilingualism, describing a true bilingual as "**someone who is taken to be one of themselves by the members of two different linguistic communities, at roughly the same social and cultural level**".

Since the 21st century, scholars have become less severe about language proficiency, admitting that many bilinguals do not possess equal proficiency in both languages. Luna, Ringberg, and Peracchio (2008) and De Houwer (2019) highlight effective communication in multiple languages as a crucial aspect of bilingualism. Grosjean (2013) advocates for a definition that prioritizes everyday language use over mere fluency, aligning with Weinreich's (1953) and Mackey's (1962) earlier emphasis on language alternation. Supported by Appel and Muysken (1987), Romaine (1989) and De Bot (2019) who define bilingualism as the regular use of two or more languages rather than equal fluency, Grosjean's approach (2022) allows many individuals living with multiple languages to embrace their bilingual identity and take pride in their linguistic abilities.

1.2.2. Describing Bilinguals: Complementarity Principle

Definitions have never replaced a good description of a phenomenon. Key aspects in characterizing bilingual individuals are language proficiency, use and dominance, characterized by higher proficiency and more frequent usage in a particular language according to Corvalán and Daller (2016).

Luk and Bialystok (2013) provide an empirical support for the multidimensional nature of bilingual experience, highlighting the dynamic interplay between language usage and proficiency. Grosjean (2010) introduces a grid method

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to visually represent proficiency and usage together, offering insights into how bilinguals manage multiple languages. Proficiency and usage can be assessed across various language skills such as speaking, listening, writing, and reading, as they may differ within each skill. He proposes the Complementarity Principle, which sheds light on language proficiency and dominance. Bilingual may display dominance in one language, as evidenced by its extensive use across numerous domains which suggest that bilinguals typically employ their languages for different purposes across different domains of life, adapting their language mode or choice to suit each context. (Grosjean, 2022)

Grosjean (2013, p.13) suggests the following presentation:

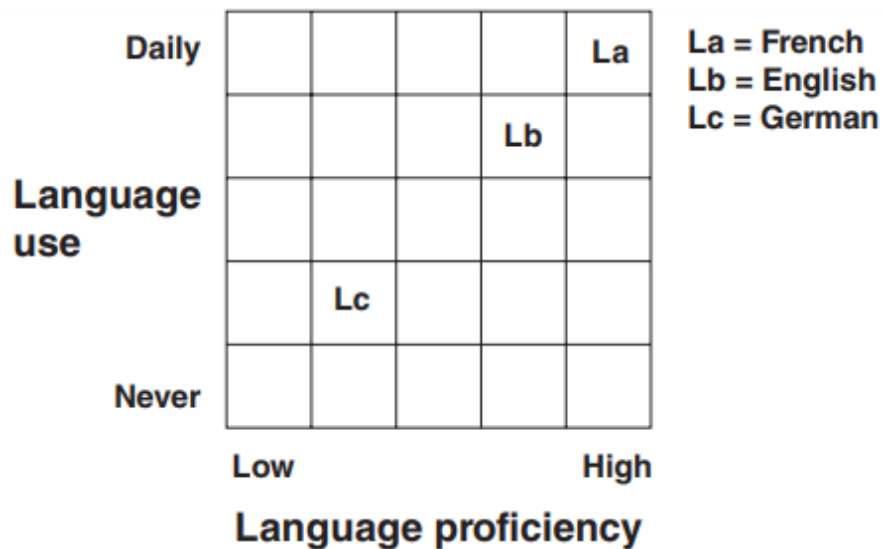


Figure 1.1. Graphical Representation of the Complementarity Principle (adopted from Grosjean 2013, p.13)

However, it is essential to recognize that language dominance can change over time, influenced by various factors such as life experiences and changes in language environment. Language mode is also influenced by proficiency, usage patterns, and language functions.

1.3. Types of Childhood Bilingualism

Based on the age factor of language acquisition, bilingualism encompasses various types:

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1.3.1. Early Bilingualism

According to Grosjean (2010), Children can become bilingual through either simultaneous acquisition of two languages or successive acquisition of them. There is divergence among linguists regarding the age that distinguishes these two modes of acquisition, but generally, it is agreed that children up to the age of four years old are in a phase of simultaneous acquisition, while those aged five and older are in a successive acquisition phase.

1.3.1.1. Simultaneous Bilingualism

As explained by Lebrun & Martinez (2013), simultaneous bilingualism occurs when a child is exposed to two languages from a young age. Early bilingualism is called 'simultaneous' when children are in contact with two languages in their immediate environment from birth until around three years old. It typically develops in an informal learning context. The child may develop proficiency in both languages, considering each as a 'first' language. For this type of bilingualism to be successful, the linguistic and cultural codes of each language must be in equal status, allowing the child to acquire each language non-competitively or in a conflicting manner, with each language corresponding to a specific register and domain of expression.

1.3.1.2. Successive Bilingualism

Lebrun & Martinez (2013) add that Successive or 'Sequential' early bilingualism, on the other hand, occurs when the second language is introduced to the child's environment after the age of three, typically through educational intervention, such as entering preschool. In this case, the dominant language remains the child's first language, allowing them to acquire the second language without losing their first language.

1.3.2. Late Bilingualism

It occurs when contact with the second language begins after the age of six. After this age, the ability to acquire a second language intuitively decreases, and the process becomes less natural. (Lebrun & Martinez, 2013, p.12)

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1.4. Cognitive and Neurological Aspects of Childhood Bilingualism

When referring to research on neurological aspects of language acquisition that has been rapidly expanding, Krashen (1988) says that one key area of focus is cerebral dominance, which refers to the specialization of functions in the two hemispheres of the brain. Generally, the left hemisphere is responsible for linguistic functions, while the right hemisphere handles spatial relations (geographic contexts) and certain aspects of perception, such as visual perception and musical perception.

1.4.1. Brain Plasticity and Phonetic Acquisition in L2

Advancements in brain imaging techniques have opened up new avenues for studying the brain's involvement in speech and language processes. Cognitive studies reveal the existence of "memory traces" for language-specific sounds indicating an infant's ability to discern phonetic differences and strong neural dedication to the sounds and patterns of one's native language. Zhang & Cheng, (2011) propose The Native-Language-Neural-Commitment (NLNC) theory which suggests that early neural sensitivity to phonetic categories predicts later language proficiency.

1.4.2. Bilingualism and the Brain

Models of experience-based neuroplasticity explore the impact of Bilingualism as a cognitively demanding experience that requires continuous monitoring of linguistic cues and suppression of non-target languages which necessitates ongoing exercise of skills related to language control, leading to increased proficiency and fluency over time. Consequently, research has revealed structural changes in various cortical and sub cortical brain regions, as well as their connections, associated with bilingualism. These brain regions implicated in language processing and control, show activation during tasks related to bilingual language control. This suggests structural brain changes resulting from L2 acquisition (Korenar & Pliatsikas, 2023)

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1.4.3. Models and Perspectives of Bilingualism Processing

Various models of bilingualism were discussed by scholars who transcended traditional boundaries. Several key issues and constructs emerged across these models, shedding light on the mechanisms of bilingual processing. One significant aspect addressed by these models is the partition and integration of languages in bilingual speech. Scholars like Clyne, Green, Grosjean, and De Bot (mentioned in Walters, 2014) explored how bilinguals maintain separate languages while also engaging in fluent code switching. This involves processes such as separation, adaptation, and mixing, influenced by factors like lexico-semantic transference and phonological elements. Additionally, while approaches vary, all models recognize the importance of sociolinguistic and pragmatic factors in bilingual language use. However, there is a lack of consensus on how to integrate sociopragmatic information into theoretical frameworks which requires interdisciplinary collaboration for advancing understanding of bilingual language processing.

1.4.4. Cognitive Effects of Code-Switching

The cognitive effects of bilingualism have received extensive attention, but research on the relationship between code-switching (CS) and cognitive development is limited. While early bilingual experience, including CS, could potentially foster greater cognitive flexibility by utilizing language's self-regulatory functions, empirical evidence for this remains insufficient. Chloros (2009) cited Döpke's and Sinka's studies. Döpke (2000) suggests that the tension between bilingual systems aids language acquisition by prompting bilingual children to notice and exploit linguistic contrasts, a process observed in both children and adults. Sinka's study (2007) on CS between typologically different languages suggests that children can separate language systems early, primarily manifesting lexical mixing. Additionally, bilingual children often demonstrate enhanced abstract concept handling, possibly stemming from the need to distinguish between signifier and signified early on. Overall, while CS's exact cognitive implications require further investigation, it likely plays a role in shaping cognitive processes within bilingual individuals.

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1.5. Environmental and Social Influences on Early Bilingualism

The development of early bilingualism is significantly influenced by environmental and social factors that encompass linguistic exposure, cultural contexts, and familial language practices

1.5.1. A Brief History

Ronjat's "One Person, One Language" (1P/1L) approach (1913) (mentioned in De Houwer, 2018) to bilingual language input, though lacking empirical support, has been widely adopted by parents aiming to raise bilingual children. Early research examined parental language choice patterns and their impact on bilingual development. Studies in the 1990s explored input frequency and verb forms' roles in bilingual language acquisition. Since then, research has expanded, but diverse perspectives persist, leading to varied interpretations of findings. Overall, understanding how language input influences bilingual development remains a key focus, particularly among young children without formal literacy instruction.

1.5.2. The Role of Language Input Environments

In bilingual settings, language input to young children is complex and influenced by various factors. It involves the totality of language they hear, encompassing various environmental factors such quantity and quality of language exposure, types of questions, reading habits, and parental reactions. These factors are influenced by broader psychosocial and cultural factors like maternal language ideologies, parental beliefs, socioeconomic status, and the social status of languages factors such as parental speaking rates, exposure to media, and mixed utterances influence the cumulative and absolute frequency of language input. Despite the notion of "reduced input" for bilingual children compared to monolinguals being challenged by empirical research, understanding the language models children are exposed to remains crucial. Additionally, children's interlocutors, language choice patterns, communicative settings, media use, and interactional styles all play significant roles in language acquisition and development in bilingual children. (De Houwer, 2018, p. 129-145).

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1.6.3. Formal and Informal Linguistic Environments

While formal instruction typically involves presenting rules and providing feedback, informal environments lack these features. No studies counter the idea that formal environments are beneficial. However, new insights suggest informal language learning environments must be intensive and directly involve learners. Recent studies explore the best language learning environment for second language learning, comparing formal classroom settings with informal ones. Classrooms can serve as informal environments if the target language is used realistically, contributing to both learning and acquisition. Overall, there are two hypotheses: informal settings can aid adult learners, and formal study is more efficient for improving second language proficiency.

However, children primarily rely on language acquisition, so "intake" informal environments are usually sufficient for them. Additional classes are often unnecessary when children have access to rich language environments. (Krashen, 1988)

1.6.4. Social Impact on Language Acquisition

Given the consistent success of first language acquisition despite diverse learning environments, Chomsky's theory (1991) (cited in Meisel, 2011, p. 62-63) proposes an innate capacity in a form of specialized brain module called Language Acquisition Device (LAD), with "Universal Grammar" (UG) facilitating swift language learning. This means that children, regardless of their upbringing, typically become skilled in their native languages, indicating a natural aspect of language acquisition.

Noam Chomsky (1999), (quoted in Ahearn, 2012, p.74), views language acquisition as:

A process over which children and their caregivers have very little control: Language learning is not really something that the child does; it is something that happens to the child placed in an appropriate environment, much as the child's body grows and matures in a predetermined way when provided with appropriate nutrition and environmental stimulation.

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Conversely, others advocate for a broader cognitive approach, suggesting language acquisition parallels other cognitive tasks. Linguistic anthropology underscores the importance of social interaction in language learning, challenging assumptions about its UG. Research in Western Samoa illustrates how social dynamics shape language acquisition, revealing that children's linguistic development is influenced by social contexts and their active participation in language formation. Furthermore, studies across various languages, such as Sesotho-speaking children in southern Africa, demonstrate how social settings impact language development; prompting a reconsideration of presumed universals in language acquisition. (Ahearn, 2021)

1.7. Language Development in Bilingual Children

Many studies exist on the issue, but there appear to be more arguments in favour of the existence of two distinct language systems very early in the development of bilingual children.

1.7.1. Sound Acquisition and Speech Perception

In less than three years, children master their mother tongue and develop innate abilities to process speech sounds from a very young age. At birth, monolingual children can discriminate between all sounds of all languages, but their sensitivity decreases over time and focuses on the phonetic contrasts of their mother tongue. However, exposure to a second language can redirect their attention to other phonetic contrasts and improve their skills in both languages. Bilingual children are exposed to a greater number of sounds and signals, which requires differentiation between languages, avoiding interference, and learning to categorize acoustic inputs. Simultaneous language development is not significantly longer than that of a single language, although variability between children may exist. Two main scientific hypotheses concern the construction of linguistic systems in bilingual children: one postulates the existence of a single language system, while the other suggests two distinct systems. (Lebrun & Martinez, 2013)

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1.7.2. The Acquisition of Vocabulary in Early Bilingual Children

The language development of simultaneous bilingual children has been and continues to be a topic of interest for many authors and scientists. Lebrun & Martinez (2013) review conclusions from various studies indicating a significant similarity in the key stages of vocabulary acquisition between early bilingual children and monolingual children. The first words typically emerge around twelve to thirteen months of age, and a lexical explosion occurs during the child's second year. However, a phenomenon called the "balancing effect" has been observed among bilingual children, where vocabulary enrichment in one language may stagnate in the other. This suggests that the two languages do not develop at the same pace.

An essential characteristic of bilingual children is the distribution of their language skills across both languages. To accurately compare bilingual and monolingual children's vocabulary, researchers introduce the "conceptual score", representing the number of concepts present in the child's vocabulary across both languages. Bilingual children tend to perform equally or even better than monolingual children when their combined lexical performance is considered. However, the quantity and quality of language input received by children play a crucial role.

1.7.3. Bilingual Child's Language Production

According to Grosjean (2015), children's language production depends not only on whether they are in a monolingual or bilingual mode but also on the stage of their bilingualism, whether they are in the process of becoming bilingual or have achieved a certain stability. They quickly learn to navigate along the continuum between monolingual and bilingual modes. Regarding language choice, for very young children, the interlocutor remains the most important factor, followed closely by the context and purpose of the interaction. Language mixing in bilingual mode is common. It could be partly explained by the fact that they have not yet fully differentiated their two languages or have not yet acquired second language sufficiently. Another reason is that they may be using their complete linguistic repertoire when they communicating with someone who knows their languages.

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1.7.4. The Typical Path of Language Development in Children

Grosjean & Heinlein (2018) maintain that children, regardless of their language background, follow similar patterns of language development, where speech perception and comprehension develop alongside speech production. Early language includes babbling, with bilingual infants likely displaying unique babbling patterns reflecting their native languages. First words typically emerge between 10 and 14 months, followed by two-word combinations. Research suggests that bilingual children's speech development aligns with that of monolingual children. Language perception and comprehension precede production with infants tuning into native language features and segmenting speech into words early on. Children use grammar knowledge to deduce word meanings. Bilingual children also excel in mastering pragmatic aspects, such as interpreting tone and navigating conversations.

1.8. Age Factor and Language Acquisition

The age at which individuals are exposed to and begin acquiring languages plays a critical role in shaping their linguistic development and proficiency, influencing both cognitive processes and language learning outcomes.

1.8.1. Younger Learners Vs Older Learners

The influence of age on second language outcomes has long been debated in the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Different studies report advantages for both younger and older learners. Although younger learners typically achieve higher proficiency levels in the long term, adults often show quicker progress in the initial stages. Younger learners benefit from brain plasticity, while older learners possess advantages such as greater learning capacity, analytical skills, and pragmatic knowledge. Younger learners may excel in informal learning settings, while older learners may thrive in formal educational environments. Younger learners tend to be less inhibited and may receive simplified language input, while older learners are subjects to real-world knowledge and transferable skills from their native language. (Troike, 2006).

Troike (2006) summarizes age differences in SLA in the table below:

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Table 1.1. Age Differences in SLA (adopted from Troike, 2006, p.82)

Younger advantage	Older advantage
• Brain plasticity	• Learning capacity
• Not analytical	• Analytic ability
• Fewer inhibitions (usually)	• Pragmatic skills
• Weaker group identity	• Greater knowledge of L1
• Simplified input more likely	• Real-world knowledge

1.8.2. The Critical Period Hypothesis

Penfield & Roberts (1959) suggest The Critical Period Hypothesis (CPH) concerning age and language acquisition. It refers to the idea of biologically determined timeframe during which language learning is easier, and after which it becomes progressively more challenging because brain's flexibility diminishes. Examples like Genie, who lacked language exposure until age thirteen, support the notion of this critical period (Curtiss, 1977, as referred to in Troike, 2006). There is speculation about whether this critical period extends to second language acquisition, with some proposing multiple constraint periods instead of a definitive cutoff. (Troike, 2006, p.82-84).

Brown (2014) states that initially, the notion of a critical period was linked with first language (L1) acquisition. In recent years, substantial research has explored the potential applicability of the CPH to second language (L2) acquisition contexts. The prevailing view is that there is a critical phase for L2 acquisition around puberty, beyond which individuals may face greater difficulties in learning a new language. However, assumptions about reduced capability for successful L2 learning after the age of twelve or thirteen should be examined in light of what constitutes "success," like pronunciation, grammaticality, fluency, and functional competence, particularly concerning accent.

1.8.1. Age and Second Language Success

To thoroughly investigate what constitutes "success" in SLA, it is important to consider various factors such as neurological, phonological, cognitive, affective, and linguistic aspects of language acquisition across different age groups.

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1.8.1.1. Neurobiological Considerations

One of the most interesting areas of inquiry in age and language acquisition research has been the study of the function of the brain in the process of acquisition. Decades ago, researchers leaned towards the Brain Lateralization Theory (Broca's and Wernicke's Areas) that suggests that language functions predominantly reside in the left hemisphere even if some researchers emphasize the significant role of the right hemisphere in second language acquisition, particularly in the early stages. Brain plasticity before puberty allows children to acquire both their first and second languages, but the finalization of lateralization might hinder fluent control of a second language. (Brown, 2014)

Accent-related critical period by Thomas Scovel's (1969) suggests that there may be a critical period during childhood for acquiring native accents in language. According to this idea, individuals who learn a language and its associated accent after a certain age, particularly after puberty, may struggle to fully acquire the native accent of that language.

Additionally, Walsh and Diller (1981) propose that different aspects of L2 learning are optimally acquired at different ages. They suggest that pronunciation, a lower-order process, relies on early-maturing brain functions, making foreign accents challenging to overcome after childhood. However evidence for its impact on communicative fluency and other higher-order processes is less substantial. (As stated in Brown, 2014).

1.8.3.2. Cognitive Considerations

Human cognition undergoes rapid development throughout the first sixteen years of life, cognitive arguments remain compelling. Young children typically acquire language implicitly, without conscious awareness, in contrast to adults who may exhibit greater awareness of the language learning process.

The lateralization hypothesis posits cognitive processing differences between children and adults language acquisition, suggesting that left hemisphere dominance in adults may hinder language learning. Piaget's Concept of Equilibration (1977) suggests that periods of cognitive disequilibrium may

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motivate language acquisition until equilibrium is reached in adulthood. (Brown, 2014)

1.8.1.2. Affective Considerations

The developmental progression of egocentricity in children underscores the importance of self-awareness and inhibitions in shaping language learning experiences. Children's relative lack of awareness of language forms and concern when making mistakes, the adaptable and flexible nature of their egos may facilitate adaptation to a new language, further contribute to their perceived advantage in language acquisition. As children progress into adolescence, increased self-consciousness and inhibitions, compounded by physical, cognitive, and emotional changes, affect their willingness to engage in language learning activities. Psychologist Alexander Guiora introduced the concept of the Language Ego (1994), suggesting that one's self-identity is intricately tied to their language use, potentially explaining the challenges adults encounter in L2 learning when transitioning to a new language ego.

Peer pressure also emerges as a strong motivator in language learning, particularly during adolescence. The desire to conform to peers in a bilingual setting can propel language learning efforts, while resistance to standing out or sounding different may hinder language acquisition. (As reviewed by Brown, 2014)

1.8.1.3. Linguistic Considerations

Children acquiring two languages simultaneously employ similar strategies, treating both languages as their first languages while learning to discern appropriate contexts for each language's use demonstrating navigating between languages without difficulty. Code-switching, a common phenomenon among bilinguals is observed, particularly in interactions with other bilinguals. (Brown, 2014)

1.8.1.4. Social Considerations

Troike (2006) considers age as a social factor influencing L2 acquisition. Younger L2 learners are inclined to acquire the language in naturalistic settings rather than formal classrooms. They tend to engage in face-to-face interactions with

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high contextualization, contrasting with older learners who may initially encounter de-contextualized academic settings involving reading and writing. These social dynamics may not necessarily favor children over older learners in L2 acquisition but entail distinct learning demands and tasks

1.9. Family Involvement and Societal Dynamics

An increasing number of families are concerned about the support, methods and assistance required to raise bilingual children. The term "family" encompasses not only parents and grandparents but also extended family members and other caregivers involved in children's upbringing.

1.9.1. Family Strategies

Many parents contemplate how best to raise bilingual children, driven by diverse reasons such as facilitating inter-parental communication, connecting with extended family, preparing for schooling in another language, or providing linguistic advantages. Grosjean (2010) lists five main strategies that exist for fostering bilingualism in children:

- The OPOL approach involves each parent exclusively speaking their language to the child.
- The "home-outside the home" strategy entails using one language at home and another outside, typically spoken in the community.
- The "one-language-first" tactic introduces one language initially before adding another later.
- The "language-time" method designates specific times for each language's use.
- The "free-alternation" strategy allows languages to be used interchangeably based on context.

Each strategy has its challenges and benefits. Grosjean (2018) insists on continuous monitoring of language use and exposure is crucial for maintaining bilingualism. Family must ensure regular practice of each language in an encouraging atmosphere. Moreover, children benefit from exposure to monolingual

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speakers of each language to navigate language modes effectively. Parents can facilitate this by creating natural opportunities for language use in various settings. Yamamoto (1987, p. 20-23) emphasises on their role saying:

In order to raise bilingual children successfully, it must be remembered that bilingualism is a dynamic condition, not a static attribute. It is important to keep supplying as much bilingual stimulation to the children as possible. If society cannot offer a bilingual environment, this requirement is placed onto the parents' shoulders. However, it is not possible for the parents to provide every single possible linguistic condition. In that case what should and can be done is to maximize the opportunities to supply the most influential inputs.

1.9.2. Community Support

Bilingual children rely not only on familial support but also on assistance from extended family and other caregivers, friends, and professionals like teachers, doctors, and psychologists. However, widespread misconceptions about bilingualism often lead families to receive misguided advice, potentially hindering their children's bilingual development. Some parents, influenced by external pressures, may unintentionally impede their children's bilingualism by prioritizing the dominant language over the minority one, as seen in the experience of Ray Castro (Agudo, 2018) who lost his Spanish language and cultural ties. Thus, it is crucial for parents to seek informed guidance from professionals to navigate the complexities of bilingualism, including understanding phenomena like language refusal periods and code-switching. Additionally, parents must recognize the impact of peer influence on language preferences and understand the cultural adjustments their children may face, especially when relocating to new environments. Encouragement and assistance during challenging moments, such as communication barriers or academic difficulties, are essential to ensuring that bilingual children feel supported and empowered in their linguistic journey. Furthermore, parents should advocate for their children's educational needs, collaborating with teachers and educational institutions to address challenges related to literacy skills and cultural adaptation. Ultimately, bilingualism and

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biculturalism should be celebrated as enriching experiences, with informed support from caring adults guiding children through their linguistic and cultural exploration. (Grosjean, 2010)

1.10. Conclusion

The reviewed literature in this chapter has provided a theoretical overview of ECB. The first section has highlighted the key definitions of the concept of childhood bilingualism proposed by famous linguists who dedicated their researches to this topic. This was followed by describing bilingual children by distinguishing between the types of childhood bilingualism. Moreover, this part of the study has presented the foundations underpinning the diverse aspects mainly cognitive and social then delved deeply into the language development in bilingual children with a special focus on the age factor to clarify and explain the concept.

The next chapter is a practical in form. It will focus on the methodology of this research, including data collection, what instruments are utilized to gather data, and which sample is addressed. Then, data analysis and interpretation methods and processes are going to be described in detail in order to answer the research questions and confirm or disconfirm the hypotheses raised in this research.

Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Data Analysis and Interpretation

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- 2.1. Introduction
- 2.2. Research Design
 - 2.2.1. Research Methodology
 - 2.2.2. Ain Sefra Speech Community
- 2.2. Sample Population
- 2.3. Data Collection
 - 2.3.1. Parents' Interview
 - 2.3.2. Parents' Questionnaire
- 2.4. Data Analysis
 - 2.4.1. The Analysis of Parents' Interview
 - 2.4.2. The Analysis of Parents' Questionnaire
- 2.5. Data Interpretation and Discussion
- 2.6. Recommendation
- 2.7. Conclusion

Chapter Two: Research Methodology, Data Analysis and Interpretation

2. 1. Introduction

Unlike the theoretical chapter, this chapter is purely practical as it will explain the methodology used to conduct the current study that aims at investigating parental perspectives of early bilingualism in the city of Ain Sefra in Algeria. Within it, the researcher is going to analyse the collected data and interpret them to draw conclusions regarding the issue under investigation. The methodology chapter is of a greatest importance for the research questions to be answered as it represents the research design and the guidelines that connect the theoretical framework to strategies of inquiry and methods for collecting data.

2.2. Research Design

A case study, as Yin (2002) explains, is apt to explore any kind of contemporary phenomenon within its real life context. The case study approach is employed in this research to provide an in-depth exploration of early bilingual parenting within the specific context of Ain Sefra.

2.2.1. Research Methodology

Compiling data is among the systematic steps that researcher goes through while conducting their research study. It implies the use of different methods to elicit and obtain data from informants. Choosing the adequate tool for gathering data highly depends on the research design that underpins the methodology followed in research itself. With adopting a mixed method approach, as William (2007) asserts, the researcher combines the incorporation of both quantitative and qualitative methods of collecting and analysing data. This mixture offers complementary data that result not only in statistics but also impressions. Thus, it provides a complete vision for the studied phenomenon.

2.2.2. Ain Sefra Speech Community

Ain Sefra is a small Algerian town in the extreme west, where Algerian Arabic prevails as the primary language spoken by almost all people of all ages, across all

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levels, and in every domain and situation, holding more traditional views on language, prioritizing the preservation of local dialects and cultural heritage over foreign languages. Nevertheless, more parents aspire to raise bilingual children with proficiency in Arabic and French but mostly English, motivated by the desire to provide better chances for them.

Many Socio-economic, cultural, and educational factors make the town of Ain Sefra a very challenging environment for ECB such as:

- Algerian Arabic prevails as the primary used language.
- Limited access to bilingual resources and support systems.
- Conflicting societal attitudes towards foreign languages and bilingualism.
- Pressure for assimilation into a dominant linguistic culture.
- Educational systems that may not adequately provide bilingual education or support.

2.2.3. Sample population

In terms of the target population, the researcher is interested in drawing conclusions about parental attitude towards early childhood bilingualism in the city of Ain Sefra. However, studying the whole population happens to be impossible in such a short period of time. Therefore, examining a smaller group known as the sample is a prerequisite to save time and efforts while undertaking the research. In this vein, the population is simply defined by Dörnyei (2007) as **“the group of people whom the study is about”** and the sample as **“the group of participants whom the researcher actually examines in an empirical investigation”**. Indeed, selecting the appropriate sample with the convenient size is not easy. Methodologists discern probability and non-probability sampling as two sampling methods that can be used while undertaking a research. Probability sampling/ random sampling is the method through which the researcher seeks to make generalizations; it implies that every member of the population has an equal chance to be selected, i.e., the inclusion or exclusion of a member is a matter of chance (Cohen *et al*, 2007, p.99). Non-probability sampling, on the other hand, entails the purposive selection of the members of the sample.

Both non-probability and random sampling were used to conduct this

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research, ensuring that the chosen sample represents a diverse range of experiences within the community. First, non-probability sampling was used to select eight (8) committed parents from Ain Sefra, who consider their children bilingual. After observation of those children, it has been confirmed that they can be considered as bilingual. Some of them are even very fluent and with good listening and writing skills. Then, based on simple random sampling, forty seven (47) parents willing to raise bilingual children and residing in Ain sefra were randomly asked to take part in this research as the representative sample of the target population.

A transparent and ethical recruitment process is used to obtain informed consent from all participants, clearly explaining the purpose, procedures, and potential benefits of the study ensuring confidentiality and anonymity of participants.

2.3. Data Collection

In order to thoroughly explore the experiences and perspectives of Algerian parents on childhood bilingualism, it is required to use different research instruments for gathering data. Therefore, a paper based and online questionnaires were used, in addition to semi-structured face-to-face and online interviews.

2.3.1. Parents' Interview

Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998, p.102) describe the interview as **“a powerful method of data collection as it provides one-to-one interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee”**. The purpose behind the use of interviews in educational research is to collect qualitative data and to elicit participants' experiences, thoughts and perceptions in an elaborate way with respect to the topic being investigated. Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured depending on the depth of the information sought.

In this particular study, a semi structured online and face to face interviews were employed. After observation of their bilingual children, eight (8) committed parents were asked in Arabic a clear list of ten (10) open ended questions, flexible in terms of order. More profoundly, the questions were developed to investigate respectively parents' background, their understanding

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of the concept of childhood bilingualism and their personal experiences (see **Appendix A**). The interviewees were targeted according to their experiences, knowledge, and perspectives relevant to early childhood bilingualism in order to allow for rich, detailed responses and capture of individual experiences and provide insights that contribute to answering the study's research questions.

2.3.2. Parents' Questionnaire

In this current research, a questionnaire is used as an additional instrument to collect necessary data to draw conclusions regarding the matter being investigated. A questionnaire, according to Brown (2001, p. 6) refers to “**any written instruments that present respondents with a series of questions or statements to which they are to react either by writing out their answers or selecting from among existing answers**”. The purpose of using this research tool is primarily to elicit either factual or attitudinal data from a specific number of participants. It is exceedingly advantageous particularly when the researcher attempts to settle down findings and make conclusions from a sample of a considerable size.

The questionnaire was administered in Arabic to a larger sample of parents within the targeted population. Closed and open-ended questions, Likert-scale and multiple-choice questions were used to quantify parental perceptions and practices related to ECB.

An online and paper based questionnaire was developed to attain more reliable data. This questionnaire aims at investigating the same issues tackled within the interviews and many more. The paper based questionnaire was handed out to eighty participants and the link of the online questionnaire has been dispatched to parents via email, messengers, WhatsApp or SMS ensuring that they have convenient access to participate in it. The link has even been shared on some facebook groups and pages. Unfortunately, only forty seven (47) parents have responded.

The questionnaire was developed in terms of **s e v e n t e e n (17)** questions that are mainly closed-ended, open-ended, and multiple-choice questions. Closed-ended questions are easier to answer as they require answers with yes or no. Multiple-choice questions involve a set of pre-

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arranged responses and alternatives from which the participant is asked to choose one or more, while open-ended questions aim at collecting quantitative data. The questions were grouped into 6 sections, and each section has its own rubrics (see **Appendix B**). The questionnaire was written in Arabic; hoping that everyone can answer it without any difficulties.

2.4. Data Analysis

In this section, the results of the interview and questionnaire are analyzed.

2.4.1. The Analysis of Parents' Interview

The interview comprised ten (10) questions and involved eight (8) committed parents from Ain Sefra, who consider their children bilingual. These parents agreed to share their experiences and insights regarding ECB and bilingual parenting. This part of the chapter will analyze the results of each question of the interview independently.

➤ **How many languages do you master?**

This question aims at making sure that parents of those bilingual children are not necessarily proficient in foreign languages. All (100%) parents master Arabic, two (25%) have very limited proficiency in English and French. One (12.5%) parent is proficient in both Arabic and English with a low proficiency in French

➤ **At what age did you decide to raise your child bilingual? Why?**

All respondents (100%) revealed that their children began acquiring L2 even before starting to learn it at school. One pertinent answer was: *"I didn't mean to raise my child bilingually until I noticed that she speaks a different language,"* indicating a more spontaneous approach to bilingualism.

One parent referred to Quran saying: *"It is like learning Quran, the earlier, the easier"*.

➤ **What are the reasons behind your decision to raise your child bilingual?**

All parents (100%) related to English and emphasized on its importance as a global language for communication. One answered: *"English language has become the language of communication and transactions in all fields, you cannot avoid it"* A second one said: *"English is simply a must"*.

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Another one responded with a tone of regret in his voice: *"I don't want my children to commit the same mistake I did"*.

➤ **To what extent do you consider your child bilingual?**

Responses to this question vary with one (12.5%) considering his daughter native-like, three (37.5%) with high proficiency and the rest (50%) low proficiency. A catchy response was: *"My son's English teacher told: your son is impressive at such a young age and with such proficiency, where and when did he learn English? Definitely, not school!"*

➤ **What Skills do you associate with bilingualism?**

Responses differed, 25% associating all language skills (speaking, listening, comprehension, reading, and writing) with bilingualism, while 65% focused on comprehension and speaking.

➤ **Do your child's bilingualism outcomes meet your expectations?**

Most parents are quite satisfied with their children proficiency, thing they didn't expect. One parent expressed initial fears but was pleasantly surprised by the speed and strength of his child's language reception, especially before the age of ten. He attested: *"It was initially based on fears and concerns, but after the first steps, the surprise was at the speed and strength of reception of the child, especially before ten years of age, as their energy was amazing and the results were wonderful, especially in conversations."* Another one testified that *she is pretty satisfied but not as much as she wished.*

➤ **What strategies and methods do you use for successful bilingual parenting?**

Parents emphasized that successful bilingual parenting is more about the child's abilities and competence rather than a specific method used by them. One of them stated: *"The foundations and principles of education remain the same and cannot be linked to the method followed, but rather to the child's ability and competence, which greatly helps in his development and effectiveness in society."* Strategies mentioned include allowing the child to speak without correction and continuous stimulation and encouragement,

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early exposure to foreign languages and providing a fertile environment to help children acquire new languages.

➤ **What benefits do you see in raising a bilingual child?**

Responses highlighted future opportunities, cultural diversity, linguistic competence, enhanced problem-solving skills, and social interaction as benefits. One respondent said: *"The benefit of varying the language and gaining an advantage, expanding knowledge and enriching the individual culture, opening up to the outside world according to a scientific standard, developing his linguistic competence and his ability to expand, develop and diversify his future learning and not being satisfied with what is presented to him, developing and stimulating the efficiency of research and the desire for social interaction. To enable him to engage in future experiences with beneficial gains if he encounters a specific problem and to enable him to solve it and deal with it correctly and effectively."*

One parent added: *"The child grows up without complexes, faces all challenges and can find ways out in his interactions."*

➤ **What obstacles do you encounter when raising your child to be bilingual?**

Mentioned challenges include limited opportunities for language practice even inside the educational environment, potential conflicts between acquired ideas and cultural values, and concerns about educational facilities. Here are some answers:

"For a bilingual it's so difficult for him to practice his language outside his learning environment."

"Through my experience with my daughter, I see that acquiring languages, or rather another language is a beautiful and important thing and an experience worth it. However, there are some important things that must be addressed. For example, acquiring the English language, like other languages, at an early age may gain the recipient some ideas that conflict with her, with our religious and moral values, given that the child does not distinguish between what is right and wrong and what is consistent with our values or contradicts them."

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- **According to your experience, is it feasible for children to acquire a second language in Ain Sefra independently and without formal instruction? If yes, how?**

Explanations varied, with some expressing belief in the child's ability to master a second language independently, while others emphasized the importance of providing appropriate conditions and methods for language acquisition, particularly at an early age. However 100% of the interviewees agreed on the fact that children can acquire a second language in Ain Sefra. Here are some selected answers:

"I believe that the child can master the English language, especially because the environment, in my personal belief, does not greatly affect the child's learning of the English language. The pressing desire to learn the language and the love of the language itself remains the real influence on learning,"

"Absolutely, the reason is that the acquisition of a language in general is not directly affected by the learner's real environment and surroundings in light of the existence of a virtual world in which there are virtual means that enable the acquisition of this language and reach a native like fluency."

Another parent stated: *"Because the matter does not depend on the environment in which the child grows up, but rather on the extent to which the appropriate conditions and methods are provided for the process of acquiring the second language. In my opinion, early age is the main factor in the success of the process. Additionally, it has become clear that there is a possibility of acquiring the English language at an early age and mastering it."*

Overall, the data suggests a strong emphasis on the importance of bilingualism, recognition of its benefits, and acknowledgment of some challenges in raising bilingual children in Ain Sefra. These insights can inform strategies for promoting bilingualism and addressing parental concerns in similar circumstances.

2.4.2. The Analysis of Parents' Questionnaire

This part of the chapter is devoted to the analysis of the results of the

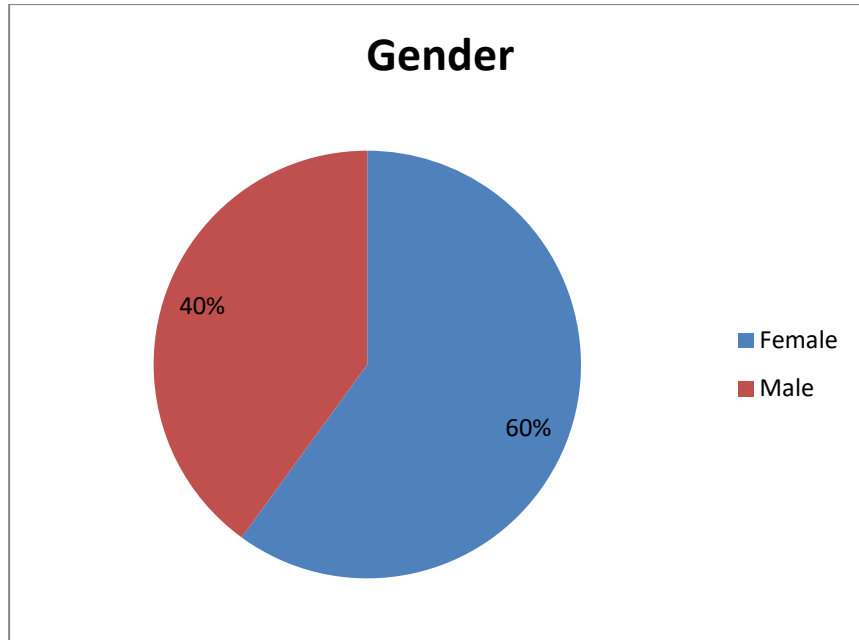
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questionnaire.

Section 1: Parents' Profile

This section aims at making sure the participants represent the targeted population.

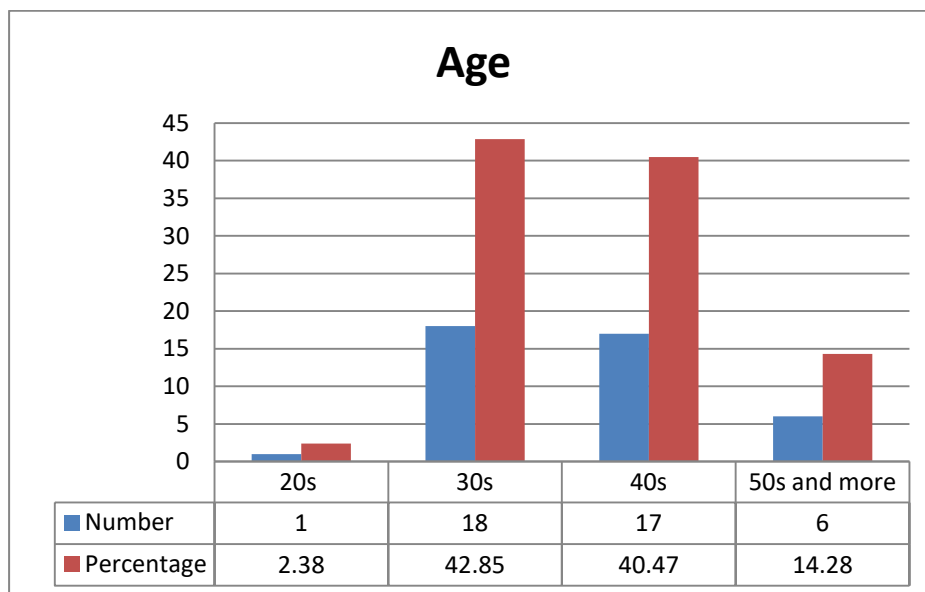
➤ **Gender:** Based on 45 responses



Pie-chart 2.1. Parents' Gender

There is a slight majority of female respondents (60%) compared to male respondents (40%). This suggests a slightly higher representation of females in the sample population.

➤ **Age:** Based on 41 responses

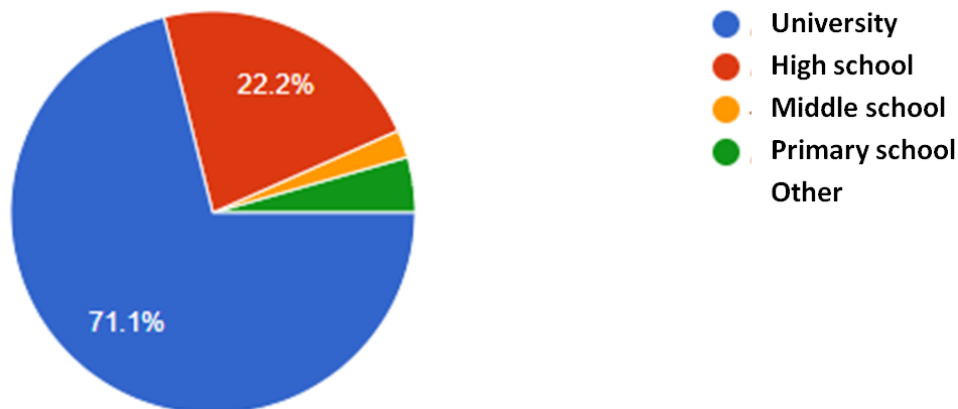


Bar-graph 2.1. Parents' Age

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The majority of respondents fall within the 30s and 40s age brackets, comprising a combined total of 83.32% of the sample population. The lower representation of respondents in their twenties (2.38%) and those aged 50 and above (14.28%) suggests a narrower range of age groups in the sample. This distribution could potentially influence the perspectives and experiences reflected in the survey results, as different age groups may have varying viewpoints and life experiences.

➤ **Educational Level:** Based on 45 responses



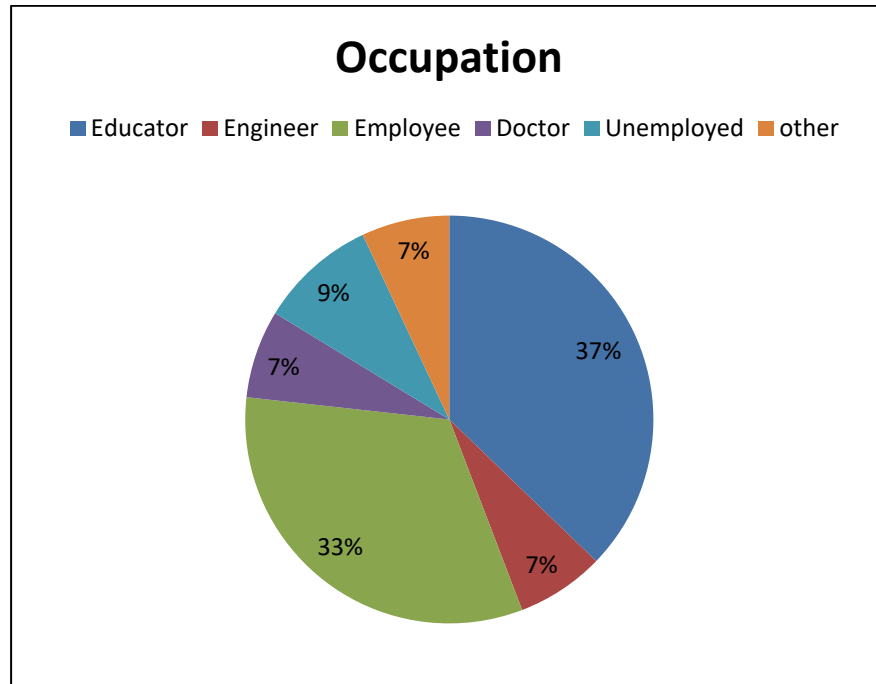
Pie-chart 2.2. Parents' Educational Level

The majority of respondents (71.1%) have attained a university-level education, indicating a well-educated sample population. High school graduates comprise a significant portion as well, at 22.2%. The representation of individuals with educational backgrounds below high school level (middle school and primary) is comparatively lower, at 6.7%.

This distribution suggests that parents who aspire to raise bilingual children have relatively higher levels of education, potentially influencing the perspectives and responses provided.

➤ **Current occupation:** Based on 43 responses

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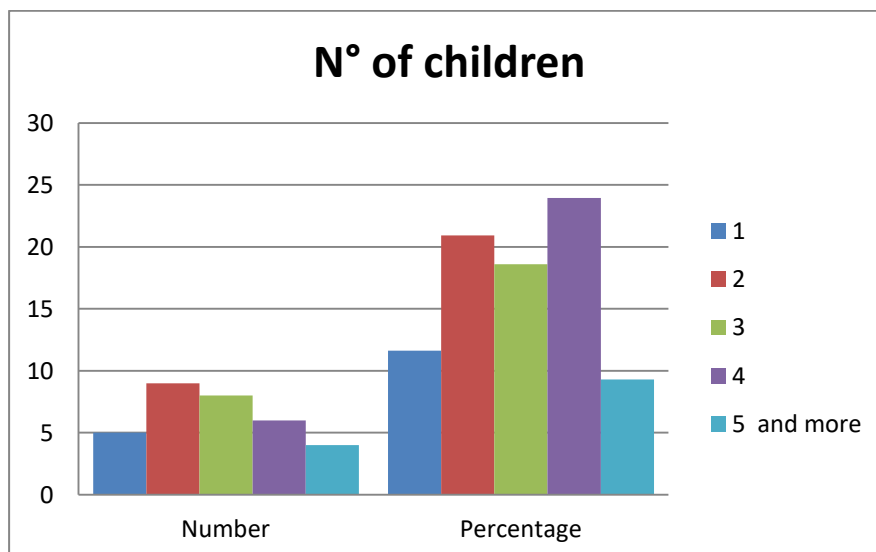


Pie-chart 2.3. Parents' Current Occupation

The majority of respondents (37%) are educators, followed by employees at 33%. Engineers, doctors, each comprise 7%, those who are unemployed 9%. Additionally, 7 % of respondents indicated "other" occupations.

This distribution suggests a diverse range of occupations represented in the sample, with educators and employees being the most prominent groups. The presence of individuals from various professional backgrounds may provide valuable insights from different perspectives when analyzing the survey results.

➤ **Number of children:** Based on 43 responses



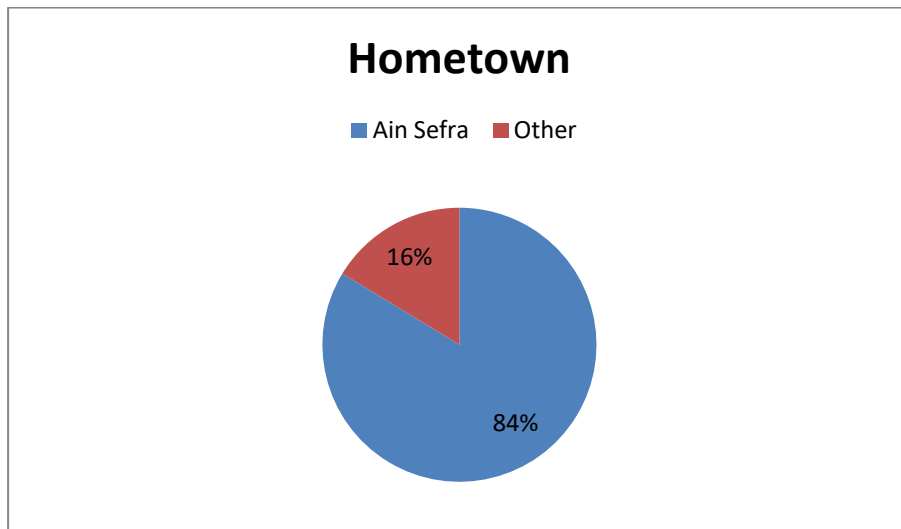
Bar-graph 2.2. Number of Children

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This distribution indicates that respondents have varying numbers of children, with a notable proportion having four children, followed closely by those with two children.

Understanding the number of children each respondent has can provide insights into family dynamics, lifestyle choices, and potential influences on their perspectives and responses to related survey questions.

➤ **Hometown:** Based on 43 responses

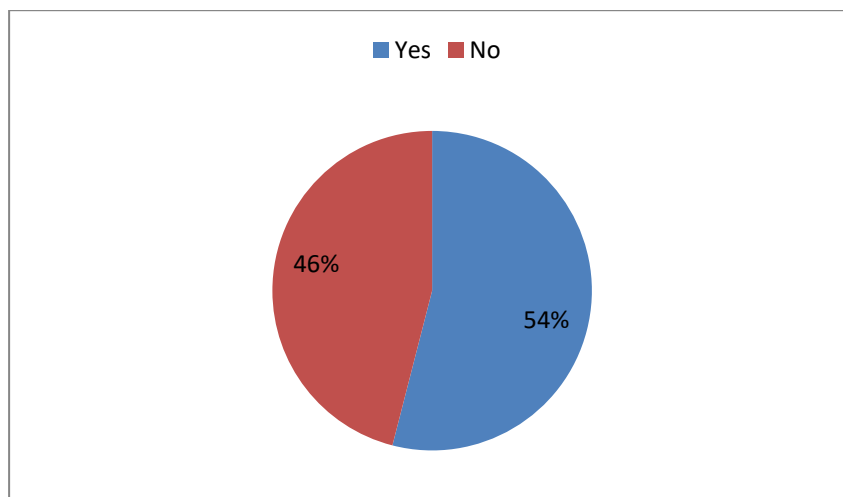


Pie-chart 2.4. Parents' Hometown

The vast majority of respondents (83.7%) are from Ain Sefra.

Section 2: Attitudes and Beliefs

➤ Do you believe that bilingualism causes language delay or confusion or impacts your child's sense of cultural identity? Based on 41 responses



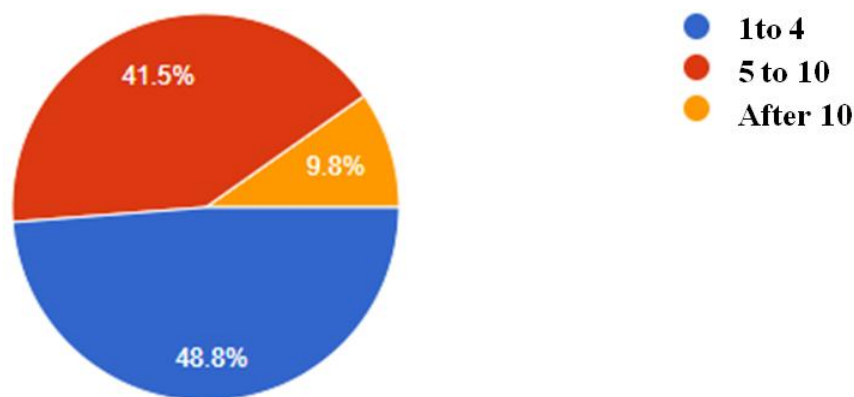
Pie-chart 2.5. Parents' opinion on potential effects of bilingualism

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The majority of respondents (54%) believe that bilingualism affects language development, (maybe delay and confusion), or impacts their child's sense of cultural identity, while 46% do not.

This suggests a somewhat divided perspective among the respondents regarding the potential effects of bilingualism on language development and cultural identity.

➤ When is the optimal time to acquire L2? Based on 42 responses



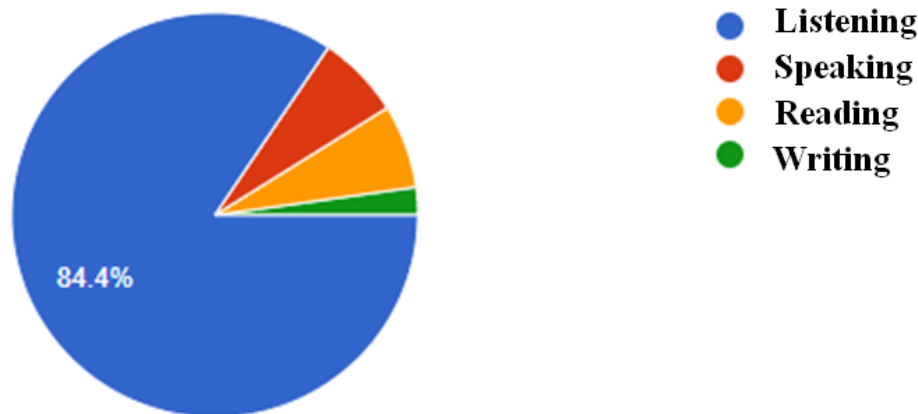
Pie-chart 2.6. Parental 'views on the optimal time to acquire L2

The majority of respondents (48.8%) believe that the optimal time to acquire a second language is under 4 years old. A significant portion (41.5%) also believes that the optimal window extends to between 5 to 10 years old. Only a small percentage (9.8%) believe that acquiring a second language is optimal at 10 years old and above.

These results align with the widely accepted understanding in linguistics and language acquisition research that early childhood, particularly before the age of 4, is a critical period for language acquisition (See 1.7. and 1.8.). This is maybe due to the strong conviction among the community that learning L2 relates to learning Quran.

➤ What is the initial step in the process of learning a second language? Based on 45 responses

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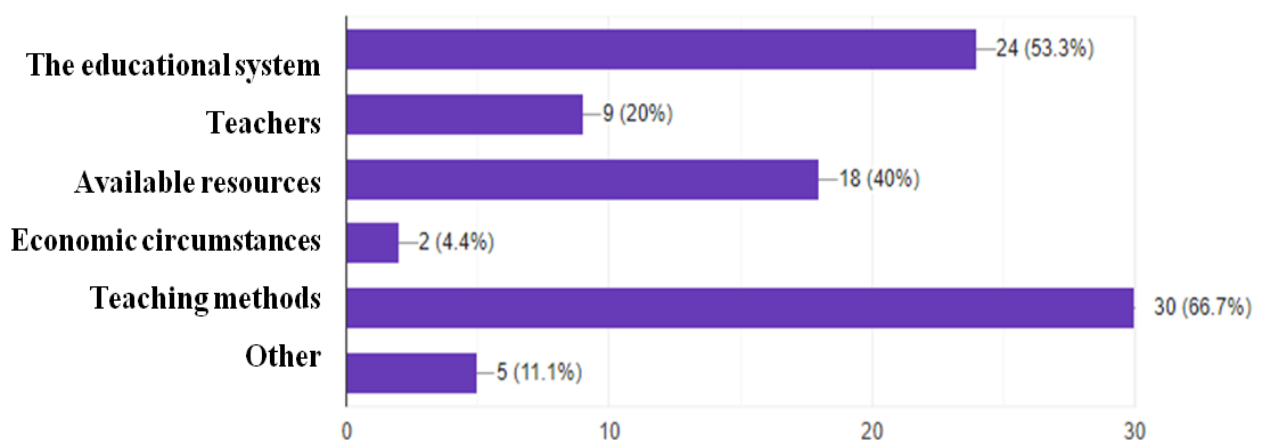
Pie-chart 2.7. Parental perspective on the natural progression of language acquisition

The majority of respondents (84%) believe that listening is the initial step in the process of learning a second language. This perspective aligns with the natural progression of language acquisition, where individuals typically first listen to and comprehend the language before actively engaging in speaking, reading, and writing.

While speaking, reading, and writing are also essential components of language learning, the emphasis on listening as the initial step reflects an understanding of the importance of auditory comprehension and language input in the early stages of acquiring a second language. (See 1.5.2.)

- What factors contribute to the success or failure of your child's bilingualism?

Based on 45 responses



Bar-graph 2.3. Parental Perceptions of Bilingualism Success or Failure Factors

The majority of respondents (66.7%) attribute the success or failure of their child's bilingualism to teaching methods. Additionally, a significant proportion

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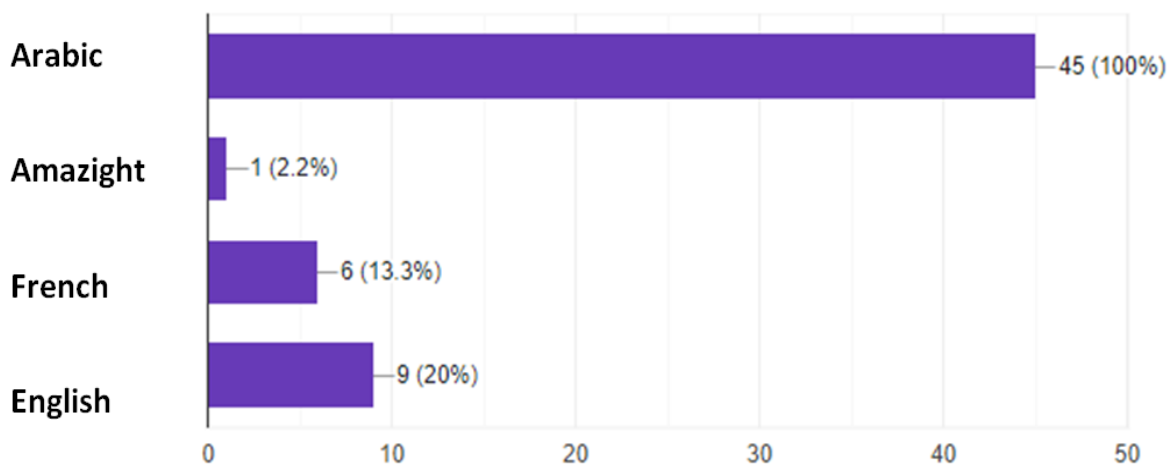
(53.3%) point to the educational system as a contributing factor, suggesting that acquiring L2 relies mostly on formal teaching. (See 1.5.3.)

Available resources, such as language learning materials, are also considered influential by 40% of respondents, highlighting the significance of access to supportive resources in facilitating language acquisition. Economic circumstances are identified by a smaller percentage (4.4%) of respondents as a factor impacting bilingualism. 11.1% mentioned different other factors.

Section 3: Language Practices

- What languages are actively spoken in your household on a regular basis?

Based on 45 responses



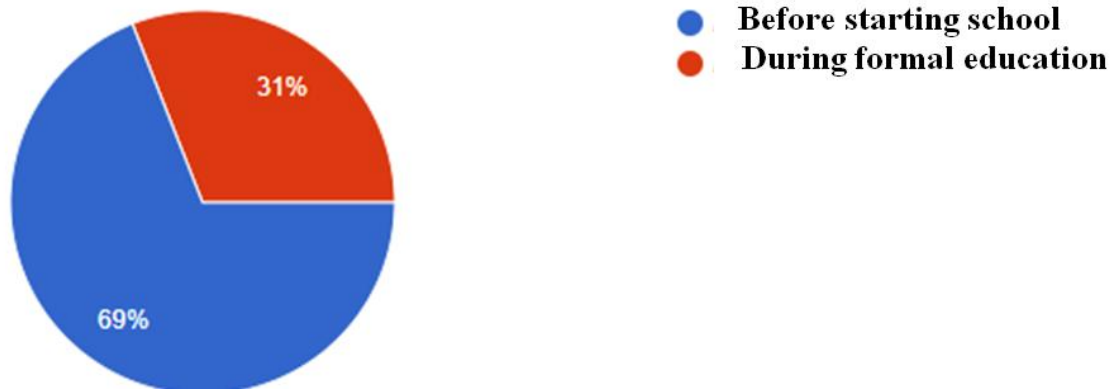
Bar-graph 2.4. Spoken Languages in Households

The majority of respondents (100%) report Arabic as a language actively spoken in their households on a regular basis. English is in second position with 20%, followed by French with 13.3% and 20%, respectively. Tamazight is spoken in a very small percentage of households, at 2.2%.

This distribution reflects the linguistic landscape of the households surveyed, indicating a prevalence of Arabic as the primary language spoken, with some degree of multilingualism evident through the inclusion of French, English, and Tamazight in certain households.

- At what age do you start raising your children bilingually? Based on 42 responses

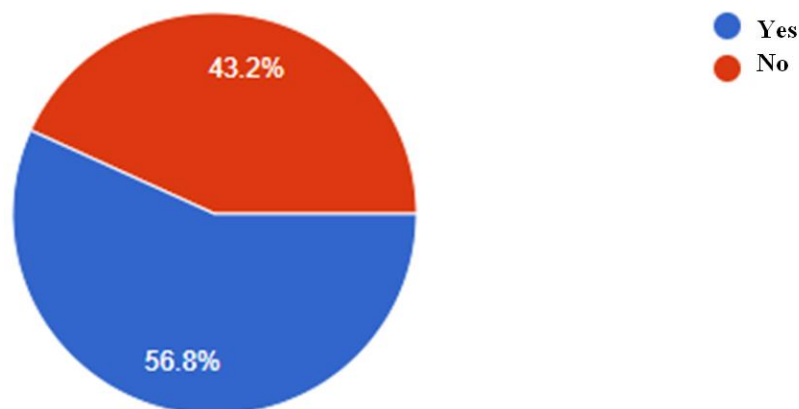
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Pie-chart 2.8. Age of Introduction to L2

A significant majority of parents with 69% choose to start raising their children bilingually before they begin formal education. This indicates a strong preference for introducing a second language during the early developmental stages of a child's life. (See 1.7.)

- Apart from school, do you involve your children in activities that promote language development in both languages? Based on 44 responses

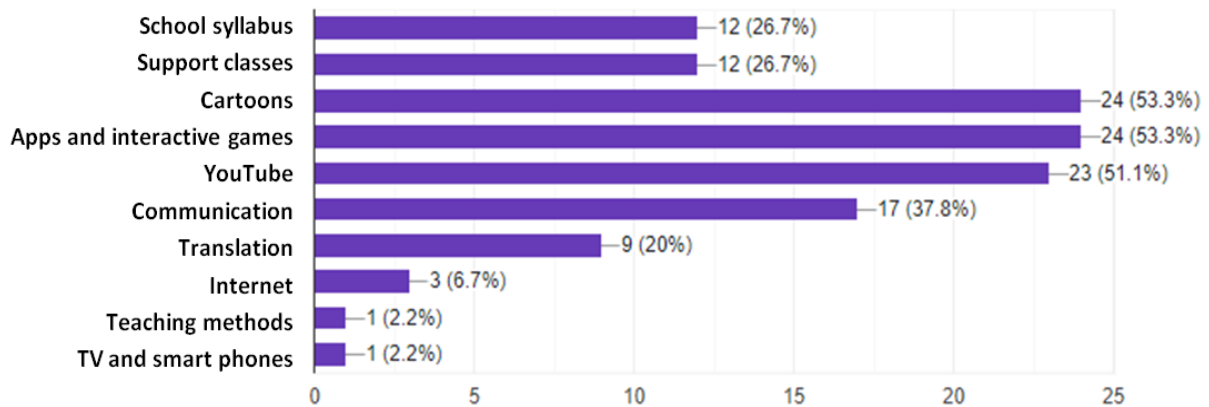


Pie-chart 2.9. Parents of children involved in extracurricular activities

On the other hand, for the 56.8% of parents do involve their children in extracurricular activities to support their bilingualism maybe because they don't really believe in the schools' effectiveness.

- What strategies are you using to help your child learn a new language? Based on 45 responses

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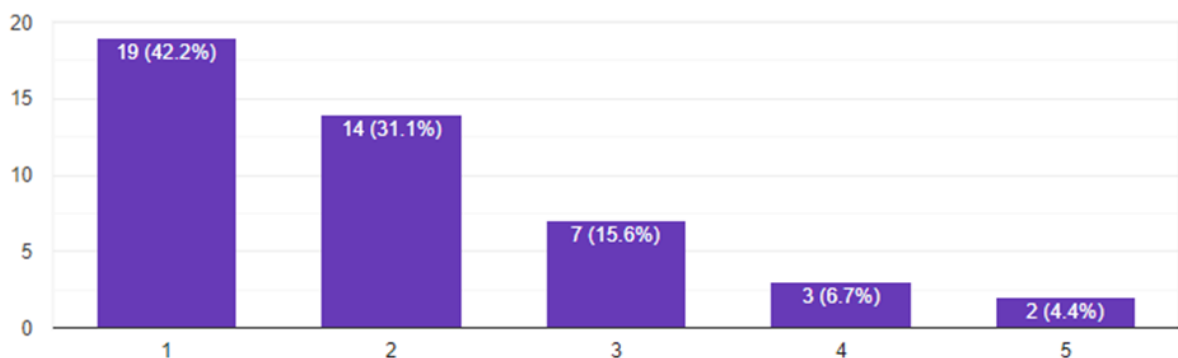


Bar-graph 2.5. Parents' strategies to support their children bilingualism

It's evident that parents are employing a variety of strategies to help their children learn a second language. With the highest percentage, Cartoons, Apps and Interactive games, obviously followed by YouTube, are a popular tool probably because they are fun and enjoyable. Small percentage prefer the formal way like schools or integrated language programs maybe because they seek immediate proficiency (see 1.5.3.). Apparently some families use L2 for Communication. Results also suggest that parents are employing a combination of digital resources to facilitate their children's bilingual development.

Section 4: Expectations and Realities

- On a scale of 5, how satisfied are you with your child's bilingual proficiency?
Based on 45 responses



Bar-graph 2.6. Parental satisfaction with their children's bilingual proficiency

Parents' satisfaction with their child's bilingual proficiency varies; with the majority (42.2%) expressing the lowest levels of satisfaction and a substantial

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portion of parents not fully satisfied. This indicates a potential misalignment between parents' expectations and the reality of their child's performance in L2.

Section 5: Challenges in Bilingual Parenting

- What challenges have you personally faced in raising a bilingual child? Based on 44 responses

The answers are grouped into four main themes, as described in the following table:

Table 2.1. Challenges Faced in Raising a Bilingual Child

Challenges faced in raising a bilingual child	N°	%
Social challenges (e.g., peer interactions)	17	38.63
Balancing exposure to both languages	11	25
Other	7	15.90
Comprehension	5	11.36
Limited resources and difficulty procuring appropriate materials	4	9.09

The challenges faced by parents in raising a bilingual child are varied and can significantly impact the language development process. Here's an analysis of the challenges based on the provided data:

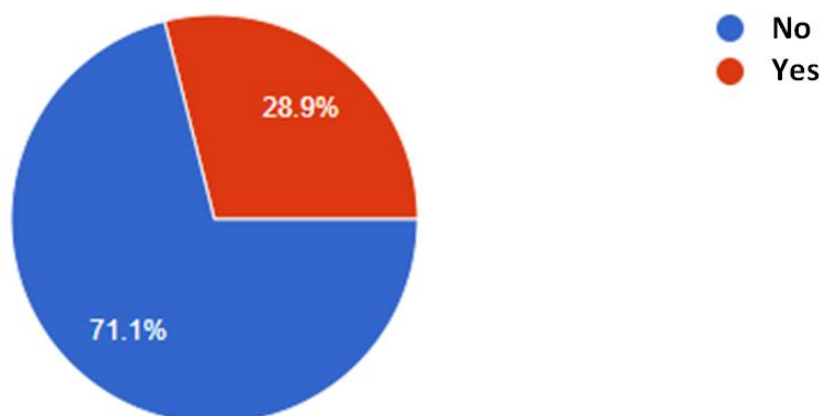
- **Social challenges (e.g., peer interactions)** (38.63 %): Difficulties in communicating with peers who speak only one language or feeling different from monolingual peers. This challenge underscores the importance of fostering a supportive social environment that values and respects linguistic diversity. (See 1.9.2.)
- **Balancing exposure to both languages** (25 %) Achieving a balance in language exposure and proficiency can be challenging for parents, especially if one language is dominant in the environment.
- **Other** (15.90%) This category likely includes additional challenges that vary widely

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- **Comprehension** (11.36%) This challenge refers to difficulties that children may face in understanding and comprehending the languages they are exposed to. It may include challenges in processing linguistic input, understanding vocabulary and grammar. Parents cited comprehension as a challenge because they lack correct information about how early childhood bilingualism proceeds. (See 1.6.)
- **Limited resources and difficulty procuring appropriate materials** (9.09%): This challenge highlights the difficulty parents' face in finding adequate resources and materials to expose their children to both languages effectively. It can include a lack of books, educational programs, media content, and language-learning tools in the target languages.

Section 6: Closing Thoughts

- Finally, and frankly, do you think that a child can acquire and master the L2 at an early age in an environment like Ain Sefra? Based on 38 responses



Pie – chart 2.10. Perceptions on early L2 acquisition in Ain Sefra

The statistics suggest a divided opinion with a majority (71.10%) believing that mastering a second language (L2) at an early age in an environment like Ain Sefra might be challenging.

2.5. Data interpretation and Discussion

With the analysis of the interview and the questionnaire at hand, this section aims to interpret and discuss the main findings in order to provide a detailed overview of parents' perceptions and experiences. During

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the process of comparing and analyzing the answers provided by interviewed parents of bilingual children and the majority of participants in the questionnaire who are not satisfied with their children outcomes, it can be understood that the paradox between them lies in their understanding of what makes a successful ECB. While the majority blame it on the educational system as if it's the only way to acquire L2, those who succeeded opted for a totally opposite approach based mainly on informal non instructional strategies and methods. By analyzing and interpreting these contrasting viewpoints, the complex interplay of factors shaping bilingual child-rearing practices and outcomes has been a bit clarified. These findings indicate that the gap between parents' expectations and children's outcomes regarding early bilingualism is possibly due to misconceptions surrounding bilingualism, stemming from a lack of understanding among parents. Insufficient research has been conducted to elucidate the multifaceted factors contributing to the failure to achieve high-quality bilingualism in Algerian children. Moreover, existing support for parents primarily consists of prescriptive methods and ineffective strategies.

In conclusion, the data reveal different attitudes, practices, and challenges surrounding bilingualism and language development in Ain Sefra. While there is a division among respondents regarding the effects of bilingualism on language development and cultural identity, there's a consensus on the optimal age for second language acquisition, emphasizing the importance of early exposure. Despite facing challenges such as social integration, balancing language exposure, and limited resources, parents demonstrate proactive engagement in raising bilingual children, underscoring the significance of supportive environments and accessible resources. Overall, with the right support and guidance, parents in Ain Sefra can overcome these challenges and help their children achieve proficiency in a second language, enriching their cultural and linguistic experiences.

2.6. Recommendation

This study focuses on parental perceptions of ECB in the specific demographic and cultural context of the city of Ain Sefra, which may limit the validity of the findings. However, the insights gained will provide valuable contributions to the

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broader understanding of bilingualism in early childhood, with potential applications in similar settings.

2.7. Conclusion

In order to collect data and test the validity of the proposed hypotheses, the researcher has used two instruments as research tools, which are interview and questionnaire, and the collected data from both of them have been analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively.

The questionnaire was intended to gather both qualitative and quantitative data, while the interview was focused on gathering qualitative data. Consequently, it had been found that the discussion of the main findings within this chapter has provided a general understanding of parental perceptions of early childhood bilingualism in the city of Ain Sefra. In a more elaborate manner, the findings of both interview and questionnaire played a decent role in answering the research questions and testing the suggested hypotheses.

All in all, this chapter outlines the procedures and techniques employed to conduct the study in an attempt to provide a clear understanding of how the research was carried out. It ensures the transparency and reliability of the findings that were used to confirm the suggested hypotheses and answer the research questions.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Primarily, the objective of this current research work was to understand the relationship between parental beliefs and perceptions of early childhood bilingualism and their children actual outcomes and the gap between their first expectations and reality. This led the researcher to investigate what strategies parents adopt to raise bilingual children.

In order to fulfill the aims of this study, a case study was undertaken with forty seven (55) parents from Ain Sefra aiming at raising bilingual children. As a matter of fact, the case study has adopted a mixed-method approach. Therefore, data were collected and analysed by means of a combination of quantitative and qualitative procedures.

As it was mentioned previously, this investigation adopts a combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches. A semi structured interview conducted with eight (8) parents from Ain sefra city was supplemented by a paper based and an online questionnaire that was administered to forty seven (47) other parents.

The main findings revealed that parents in Ain Sefra generally perceive early bilingualism positively, viewing it as advantageous for their children's future success and integration into society. Furthermore, decision-making regarding strategies to support bilingual development is influenced by misunderstandings and a lack of practical information about early bilingualism among parents which significantly impact the language development and proficiency of bilingual children, often posing challenges that surpass initial motivations for opting for bilingualism.

The current study can be considered as a step towards understanding bilingualism from the perspective of parents willing to raise their children bilingually. However, the findings of this study should be treated with caution as a result to the fact that the size of the sample should be larger than it was. Thus, the extent to which parental misconceptions influence decision-making regarding bilingual child rearing strategies, and the subsequent negative impact on outcomes that fail to meet parental expectations remains a critical area requiring further investigation and intervention. Therefore, the question that can be raised: What are the main factors contributing to the failure to achieve high-quality

bilingualism in Algerian children?

In conclusion, these findings suggest that while there is generally a positive perception of early bilingualism among parents in Ain Sefra, the practical challenges stemming from misconceptions and inadequate information can hinder effective bilingual upbringing and optimal language outcomes for their children.

It is essential to mention that the current study has some limitations that must be recognized. Taking for instance, the struggle during the process of data collection due to the non collaboration of the private school staff who were supposed to provide valuable data from their students' parents, which further complicated the execution of interviews and even the questionnaire. The researcher initially employed only a non-probability purposive selection method to gather data from parents of bilingual preschoolers. However, in order to enhance the representativeness of the sample and ensure a more resilient analysis, she transitioned to a random probability sampling approach. This shift allowed her to capture a wider spectrum of experiences within the community and improve the validity of her findings. The researcher handed the questionnaire in written format to 80 parents so that they could answer the questions at their pace. However, a few questionnaires were handed back. Moreover, the participating parents who agreed to take part in the study did not completely fill the questionnaires. Consequently, only some questionnaire results were included in the analysis. In addition to the previously mentioned limitations, it can be said that there is a lack of prior studies that delineate bilingual parenting in Algeria which made it difficult for the researcher to address it in the literature review.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Parents' Interview

Dear parent,

Thank you for taking the time to participate in this research interview which is centered on ECB. This interview aims at exploring your perception, opinion, and experience of ECB as an Algerian parent residing in Ain Sefra. You are kindly asked to read each question carefully and respond. Your answers are sincerely valued, and are going to be strictly used anonymously.

1. How many languages do you master?
2. At what age did you decide to raise your child bilingually? Why?
3. What are the reasons behind your decision to raise your child bilingually?
4. To what extent do you consider your child bilingual?
 - Native like
 - High fluency
 - Low fluency
5. What Skills do you associate with bilingualism?
 - Listening/ comprehension
 - Speaking
 - Reading
 - Writing
6. Do your child's bilingualism outcomes meet your expectations?
 - Yes
 - No
7. What strategies and methods do you use for successful bilingual parenting?
8. What benefits do you see in raising a bilingual child?
9. What obstacles do you encounter when raising your child to be bilingual?
10. According to your experience, is it feasible for children to acquire a second language in Ain Sefra independently and without formal instruction? If yes, how?

Appendix B

Parents' Questionnaire

Dear parent,

The present questionnaire is designed to gather information regarding Parental Perspectives on Raising Bilingual Children in Ain Sefra, and the different factors that promote or inhibit its success. You are kindly asked to read each question carefully and tick (✓) the convenient answer, check all that apply or provide a short answer. Your answers are going to be kept confidential, and only used for the purposes of this research study.

Section 1: Demographic Profile

➤ **Gender:**

- Male
- Female

➤ **Age:**

- 30s
- 40s
- 50s
- Over 50

➤ **Educational Level:**

- Primary
- Middle School
- High School
- University

➤ **Current occupation**

➤ **Number of children**

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5 or more

➤ **Hometown**

- Ain Sefra
- Other (please specify)

Section 2: Attitudes and beliefs

- **When is the optimal time to acquire L2?**
 - Under 4
 - 5 to 10
 - More than 10
- **What is the initial step in the process of learning a second language?**
 - Listening
 - Speaking
 - Reading
 - Writing
- **What factors contribute to the success or failure of your child's bilingualism?**
 - The educational system
 - Teachers
 - Available resources
 - Economic circumstances
 - Teaching methods
 - Other.
- **Do you the belief that bilingualism causes language delay or confusion or impacts your child's sense of cultural identity?**
 - Yes
 - No

Section 3: Language Practices

- **What languages are actively spoken in your household on a regular basis?**
 - Arabic
 - French
 - English
 - Tamazight

- Others
- **At what age do you start raising your children bilingually?**
 - Before starting school
 - During formal education
- **Apart from school, do you involve your children in activities that promote language development in both languages?**
 - Yes
 - No
- **What strategies are you using to help your child learn to speak two languages?**

Section 4: Expectations and Realities

- **On a scale of 5, how satisfied are you with your child's languages grades at school?**

Section 5: Challenges in Bilingual Parenting

- **What challenges have you personally faced in raising a bilingual child?**
 - Limited resources and suitable materials for language exposure
 - Difficulty procuring appropriate educational materials
 - Social challenges (e.g., peer interactions)
 - Balancing exposure to both languages
 - Other (please specify)

Section 6: Closing Thoughts:

- **Finally, and frankly, do you think that a child can acquire and master the L2 at an early age in an environment like Ain Sefra?**
 - Yes
 - No

Thank you for your collaboration

Arabic version of Appendix A

مقابلة الوالدين

الأباء الأعمام،

نشكرك على الوقت الذي أمضيته للمشاركة في هذه المقابلة البحثية التي تتمحور حول البنك المركزي الأوروبي. تهدف هذه المقابلة إلى استكشاف تصورك ورأيك وتجربتك مع البنك المركزي الأوروبي كوالد جزائري مقيم في عين الصفراء. ويرجى منك قراءة كل سؤال بعناية والرد عليه. إن إجاباتك موضع تقدير كبير، وسيتم استخدامها بشكل صارم دون الكشف عن هويتك.

1. كم عدد اللغات التي تتقنها؟

2. في أي عمر قررت تربية طفلك ثنائي اللغة؟ لماذا؟

3. ما هي الأسباب وراء قرارك بتربية طفلك ثنائي اللغة؟

4. إلى أي مدى تعتبرين طفلك ثنائي اللغة؟

• الأصلي مثل

• طلاقة عالية

• انخفاض الطلاقة

5. ما هي المهارات التي تربطك بثنائية اللغة؟

• الاستماع والفهم

• تكلم

• قراءة

• كتابة

6. هل تلبى نتائج ثنائية اللغة لدى طفلك توقعاتك؟

• نعم

• لا

7. ما هي الاستراتيجيات والأساليب التي تستخدمها لتربية أبوية ثنائية اللغة ناجحة؟

8. ما هي الفوائد التي تراها في تربية طفل ثنائي اللغة؟

9. ما هي العوائق التي تواجهك عند تربية طفلك ليكون ثنائي اللغة؟

10. حسب تجربتك، هل من الممكن للأطفال اكتساب لغة ثانية في عين الصفراء بشكل مستقل ودون تعليمات

رسمية؟ إذا كانت الإجابة بنعم، كيف؟

Arabic version of Appendix B

استبيان أولياء الأمور

الوالد العزيز،

تم تصميم الاستبيان الحالي لجمع المعلومات المتعلقة بوجهات نظر الوالدين حول تربية الأطفال ثنائيي اللغة في عين الصفراء، والعوامل المختلفة التي تعزز أو تمنع نجاحها. يرجى قراءة كل سؤال بعناية ووضع علامة (✓) على الإجابة المناسبة أو تحديد كل ما ينطبق أو تقديم إجابة قصيرة. ستبقى إجاباتك سرية، ولن تستخدم إلا لأغراض هذه الدراسة البحثية.

القسم 1: الملف الديموغرافي

1. الجنس:

• ذكر

• أنثى

2. العمر:

• ثلاثينات

• أربعينات

• الخمسينيات

• أكثر من 50

3. المستوى التعليمي:

• أساسي

• المدرسة المتوسطة

• المدرسة الثانوية

• جامعة

4. المهنة الحالية

5. عدد الأطفال

1 •

2 •

3 •

4 •

5 • أو أكثر

6. مسقط الرأس

• عين الصفراء

• أخرى (يرجى التحديد)

القسم الثاني: المواقف والمعتقدات

7. ما هو الوقت الأمثل لاكتساب اللغة الثانية؟

• أقل من 4 سنوات

• 5 إلى 10

• أكثر من 10

8. ما هي الخطوة الأولى في عملية تعلم لغة ثانية؟

• الاستماع

• تكلم

• قراءة

• كتابة

9. ما هي العوامل التي تساهم في نجاح أو فشل ثنائية اللغة لدى طفلك؟

• النظام التعليمي

• معلمون

• الموارد المتاحة

• الظروف الاقتصادية

• طرق التدريس

• آخر.

10. ما هي الفوائد التي تراها في تربية طفل ثنائي اللغة؟

11. هل تعتقد أن ثنائية اللغة تسبب تأخرًا لغويًا أو ارتباكًا أو تؤثر على إحساس طفلك بالهوية الثقافية؟

• نعم

• لا

القسم 3: الممارسات اللغوية

12. ما هي اللغات التي يتم التحدث بها بشكل نشط في أسرتك بشكل منتظم؟

• عربي

• فرنسي

• إنجليزي

• الأمازيغية

• آخرون

13. في أي عمر تبدأ في تربية أطفالك ثنائي اللغة؟

• قبل البدء بالمدرسة

• أثناء التعليم الرسمي

14. بعيدًا عن المدرسة، هل تقوم بإشراك أطفالك في الأنشطة التي تعزز تطوير اللغة في اللغتين؟

• نعم

• لا

15. ما هي الاستراتيجيات التي تستخدمها لمساعدة طفلك على تعلم التحدث بلغتين؟

القسم الرابع: التوقعات والحقائق

16. على مقياس من 5، ما مدى رضاك عن درجات طفلك اللغوية في المدرسة؟

القسم 5: التحديات في الأبوة والأمومة ثنائية اللغة

17. ما هي التحديات التي واجهتها شخصيا في تربية طفل ثنائي اللغة؟

• محدودية الموارد والمواد المناسبة للتعرض للغة

• صعوبة شراء المواد التعليمية المناسبة

• التحديات الاجتماعية (مثل التفاعلات بين الأقران)

• تحقيق التوازن بين التعرض لكلتا اللغتين

• غير ذلك (يرجى التحديد)

القسم السادس: الأفكار الختامية:

18. أخيرا، وبصراحة، هل تعتقدون أن الطفل يستطيع اكتساب اللغة الثانية وإتقانها في سن مبكرة في بيئة

مثل عين الصفراء؟

• نعم

• لا

شكرا لتعاونك

Summary:

The objective of this study research is to investigate parents' perceptions of early childhood bilingualism, challenges they face and the strategies they use to overcome these challenges for fostering a successful bilingual child parenting among in the city of Ain Sefra, a small town in the extreme west of Algeria. To achieve this goal, the researcher adopts mixed method approach. To collect data the researcher conducted a semi structured face to face and online interview in addition to administering an online and paper based questionnaire The gathered data were analyzed and the results obtained indicate that ECB is recognized as highly beneficial for children by the majority of parents and yet they are poorly informed about how it works which has a negative impact on their decision making regarding bilingual children rearing.

Keywords: Bilingualism, early childhood, challenges, parents, L2 acquisition

المخلص

الهدف من هذا البحث هو دراسة تصورات أولياء الأمور حول التربية ثنائية اللغة في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة والتحديات التي يواجهونها والاستراتيجيات التي يستخدمونها للتغلب على هذه التحديات من أجل رعاية طفل ناجح ثنائي في مدينة عين الصفراء، وهي بلدة صغيرة في أقصى غرب الجزائر. ولتحقيق هذا الهدف، يتبنى الباحث منهج الأسلوب المختلط لدراسة. لجمع البيانات، أجرى الباحث مقابلة شبه منظمة وجهاً لوجه وعبر الإنترنت بالإضافة إلى إدارة استبيان ورقي. تم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها وتشير النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها إلى أن ثنائية اللغة في مرحلة الطفولة المبكرة معترف به على أنه مفيد للغاية للأطفال من قبل غالبية الآباء ومع ذلك فهو غير مطلع على كيفية عمله مما له تأثير سلبي على اتخاذ القرار فيما يتعلق بتربية الأطفال ثنائيي اللغة.

الكلمات الدالة : ثنائية اللغة، الطفولة المبكرة، التحديات، الآباء، اكتساب اللغة الثانية

Résumé:

L'objectif de cette étude est d'étudier les perceptions des parents à l'égard de Bilinguisme Précoce Chez les Enfants , les défis auxquels ils sont confrontés et les stratégies qu'ils utilisent pour surmonter ces défis afin de favoriser la réussite d'un enfant bilingue dans la ville d'Ain Sefra, une petite ville de l'extrême ouest de l'Algérie. Pour atteindre cet objectif, le chercheur adopte une approche de méthode mixte pour étudier Pour collecter des données, le chercheur a mené un entretien semi-structuré face à face et en ligne en plus d'administrer un questionnaire en ligne et sur papier. Les données recueillies ont été analysées et les résultats obtenus indiquent que bilinguisme précoce est reconnu comme très bénéfique pour les enfants par la majorité des parents et pourtant mal informé sur son fonctionnement, ce qui a un impact négatif sur leur prise de décision concernant l'éducation des enfants bilingues.

Mots-clés : Bilinguisme précoce, petite enfance, défis, parents, acquisition d'une langue seconde