

# LANGUAGE BARRIERS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD

Language Barriers in Early Childhood

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Throughout this course we have learned about many issues in early childhood education and one major problem through my eyes is language barriers. Being a native speaker I've both experienced and helped people with when it comes to not understanding English or even helping to translate. What people don't know is that language barriers start at a young age leading child to get left behind academically. In week 9 we learned about multiculturalism, language and bilingualism we were also able to experience what it felt like to being introduced to new language and take a test in a language we didn't even understand. We were given 3 minutes to answer a question and not knowing the answer made me feel anxious because I didn't understand. Image how a foreign child coming to a new country learning a new language would feel, how these language barriers can prevent the child from becoming successful later on in the future and some teachers/caregivers don't have the time to stop a lesson to take care of one in the classroom. Throughout the reading 3 articles are provided to support how being bilingual impacts children positively and how helping the child understand both languages give the child a higher chance of succeeding in the future when it comes to getting jobs, school, and in the real world.

Language barriers is an important topic in early childhood, language is the main source of communication for everyone both children and adults. According to Sanchez & Thorp (1998) "preventing children from developing their primary language can have a negative impact on academic achievement." Since English is a new language to foreign speakers' children are most likely to learn the language but throughout the process, they are most likely to lose the roots to their native language and being able to communicate with family at home. The child's native language isn't encouraged at school, so they have trouble communicating when at home, since

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parents see their child speaking English at school, they also try to develop the same language to push their child to do better and be able to understand at school.

Pushing a child to learn a new language isn't encouraged easy because it could cause their language development to lack and become shy. In the reading *Young English Learners Interlanguage as a Context for Language and early Literacy and Early Literacy Development* by Gregory A. Cheatham and Yeonun Ellie Ro there are examples how pushing a child makes them become shy and sometimes they don't end up learning the language in the article they mention a story with a little boy how when asked questions he would barely utter a word. You are also able to learn how children learn from just listening to conversations, in order to teach a new language a child doesn't necessarily have to be taught they learn from listening to others. Children are able to understand the language little by little by advocates such as teachers, and parents they learn the rules and laws about speaking the language like what words go in what sentences. Throughout this development of a new language children develop interlanguage a "transitory language". In the article since the new language is new, they may lose some type of understanding of their home language, but they still maintain some sort of understanding and proficiency. Although children are still getting to know the language code switching may be difficult for them, code switching means to differentiate the language and switching to a new one. However early childhood professionals should still be patient because learning is in the process it takes time.

While reading *Promoting Cultural & Linguistic Diversity* by Melissa Cavaluzzi here we talk about the benefits of being bilingual how it opens up job opportunities. According to Colin Baker (1995) "Learning another language enables a child to have two different world perspectives and cultural experiences" in addition this means the child is able to communicate with people from older generations. On the other hand both parents and caregivers must support this transition of

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languages because children are sent off to schooling as soon as the age of 4, caregivers are their main learning source and parents are there to encourage and support they have to help their child when not in school but should not force the child to speak the new language because it could cause a disruptions and even harm the learning bridge they have.

The specific problem being discussed is language barriers in early childhood, how when children learn a new language, most teachers hired are likely to be bilingual so they can help children interpret the lesson if not understood. Children are the ones who are affected by this because they are the ones who struggle they don't understand what's going on, put yourself in their shoes imagine taking an exam like in week 9 we had to take an exam in a different language and we were so anxious to get the the right answer knowing we only had 3 minutes to it. The children are being affective because they don't understand what's going on in class and have no idea on what to do next or understand the lesson/work. Families are being affected because not only do their child doesn't understand but they themselves struggle to support have an understanding in what's going on with schoolwork. The community is being affected by this because they have no idea what's going on with their child and it affects their child's language skills and ability to succeed because in the future, they won't understand what is being spoken about like a job interview and be completely lost. This issue needs to be addressed now because teachers and parents need to take action if teachers don't help the child with bot the new and native language the child can have language disruptions later on and have a chance of losing their communication with their family. Parents have to take be addressed too because if they don't help their child understand the language their child can be left back academically in the reading some parents usually take action and try to learn the new language themselves. The problem is the greatest in school and at home because at school they speak one language and at home another so the child

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will never get a good or proper understanding of the new language. Intervention is needed when it comes to code switching when the child communicates with others. Instead of the advocate correcting them and addressing the mistake they made for example a sentence they should just expand the sentence. For example, perhaps a child says “Batroom” instead of “Bathroom” just simply expand their sentence “Oh do you need to use the bathroom” so they can have a better understanding of how to say it next time, our goal is to expand their vocabulary. Teachers are needed here to help the child the teacher is there to teach and help children throughout their whole life that is why there are exams to see if the child is ready to move on to the next level/grade and if not just take the course over so it helps them have a better image of instructions.

Being a dual language speaker at an early age is usually the cause of getting left behind whether it is on homework, classwork and even getting left behind in a grade. According to some research it is known for failure to occur at a very young age. Some teachers are hired who at least speak Spanish because most kids are usually from a Spanish speaking country. Language is the most important development for a child it their way of communication their way of getting from place to place. Parents usually take into consideration that if their child is speaking English in school, they as well try to speak the same language at home to help their child. Not only do we need the support of our teachers and staff but we also need parents to help their child as well because learning a new language can be difficult and if tampered to much with at a young age the child has a risk of losing the lines of their native language and that’s when they lose their roots to family back home. Helping the child learn a new language take 50/50 from both parents and staff.

**Article 1- *Young Language Learners Interlanguage as a Context for Language and Early Literacy Development* by Gregory A. Cheatham and Yeonsum Ellie Ro**

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Children when learning a new language focus on learning what certain words mean that they tend to forget how to speak their native language or even end up having trouble understanding it later on in their future. In the article the author explains how children go through “*Interlanguage*”, which means the child goes through a transition where they start to figure out how and where words fit in sentences. The author also explains how when a child doesn’t understand a how to properly switch languages they will respond to the staff or other children in a language they know, known as code switching. In the article *Young Language Learners Interlanguage as a Context for Language and Early Literacy Development* by Gregory A. Cheatham and Yeonsum Ellie Ro there are two strategies that both parents and teachers should follow according to NAEYC recommend that support linguist and cultural diversity. The two strategies described in the article are pretend play and narratives because not only are children able to connect to their root through story telling but with pretend play, they can also reenact things they have seen in both their native country and at school which lead to narrative. The authors purpose of this article is to inform how difficult it is to teach a child another language, how each child process differently and to pay attention how the child communicates with others if you see that the child is speaking to you at a certain way instead of you saying that’s not how you say it simply elaborate on their sentence because if you inform them to much there is a chance you can mess with their language development and can cause an interruption with their native language in the future. I chose this research source because I was once a big hep to a student in fifth grade teachers depended a lot on me to translate for the student. It was a mentor, mentee partnering and even though I didn’t know much at the time the child was still able to get work done and understand instructions. What can be learned from this source is that language

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development skills are very delicate in the early age because too much can interrupt the understandings of a child's native language.

### **Article 2- *Promoting Cultural & Linguistic Diversity* by Melissa Cavaluzzi**

Being a bilingual student has its advantage in the child's future so encouraging the child to speak both languages at home and school can benefit the child. In the article the author mentions that being bilingual a child is able to have two different perspectives of the world because they are able to connect with family from their native country and build bridges. What it means by bridges is that the child will be able to communicate with others from part of their family and be able to communicate with people from the place they are learning the new language from. Not only this but the child is able to build a close relationship with others. In the article the author also explains how the child can take advantage of being bilingual in the future. The child has economic advantages because being able to speak more than one language can open up more job opportunities for them. This also has cognitive advantages because they would know more than a monolingual which means a person that only speaks one language. And last but not least bridge building, this means that you're able to connect with people of different cultural and color almost like building a bond with one another of the same language. When it comes to learning a new language yes parents should encourage it at home but not too much. Some parents choose to push the child to speak the new language and pushing them too much cause them to lose the connection to their native language. Who wouldn't want their child to succeed, every parent wishes nothing but the best for their child but pushing them doesn't always end well this can cause frustration and damaging the child's identity because a child gets an understanding of themselves and what they can do. The author's purpose is to inform people that being bilingual improve the child's future but if they are pushed it can damage their language development. I selected this

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research resource because I have my opinions on this, children are usually pushed to develop a way of communication especially in little kids a child goes through different stages of speech and one should encourage that speech if the child is just starting to learn if the child chooses to say “Batroom” instead of “Bathroom elaborate on their sentence like “Do you need to go to the bathroom” to improve their speech.

### **Article 3- *Learning in English, Learning in Spanish* by Joan Youngest and Barbra**

#### **Martinez- Griego**

Children when learning two different languages they tend to confuse them and mix the words up. Steps are explained on how staff used different step to excel the child’s primary and secondary language. In the article there are many step the author mentions the first step is the transition in language as children begin to develop a new language they tend to mix the primary language as well for instance let’s take a Spanish speaker they will ask “Vamos inside” or “go to baño” since they are first learning they tend to mix the words up but bilingual staff tare the to help. The next step is the staff the staff have to contribute to the transition where children are learning a new language. Questions should be asked when responding to the child encourage their home language as well, so they don’t lose their native language roots. Next step was to hire staff that are both bilingual and monolingual so they can both improve each other language skills as well as the students. Lastly testing new model teachers should encourage different types of centers one in specific would be the reading center teacher should include language books as well as different culture to show that each child belongs. The purpose of this article was that the author wanted to inform that encouraging new ways to help bilingual students as well as hiring staff so that children can have a source of help in the classroom when needed. Doing so will help the child’s education because when it comes to most bilingual speakers or monolingual speakers,

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they don't understand what is going on since the new language is a blur. I selected this research source because I completely agree with having some sort of help in the classroom beside yourself of course a teacher is capable of teaching a class of students but when some can't understand what a teacher can do.

The action needed to bring out this problem that I can do it have a group of kids who speak a different language and bring in the ESL teacher when needed so they can have a proper understanding of what is going in in the classroom. In the classroom we needed teachers and parents as advocates to help the children understand. I myself had an experience in 5<sup>th</sup> grade where we were paired with pre-k students and one child didn't speak English, so I was able to be paired with her to help out even though I didn't speak so Spanish.

In conclusion not helping a child understand anew language can affect them later on in the future whether is communicating either someone or a job interview. This topic is personally meaningful to me because at a young age I had to help a child understand English knowing I was bilingual and no one else wanted to because they either didn't understand or didn't want to do it so I had to step up. This impacts me as an early childhood professional because I don't want to see children struggle in a simple lesson knowing I could have the time to complete a lesson in both Spanish and English and if another language is introduced beside these two we can have a ESL teacher or translator in class such as a assistant teacher.

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### References

*Young Language Learners Interlanguage as a Context for Language and Early Literacy*

*Development* by Gregory A. Cheatham and Yeonsum Ellie Ro

*Promoting Cultural & Linguistic Diversity* by Melissa Cavaluzzi

*Learning in English, Learning in Spanish* by Joan Youngest and Barbra Martinez- Griego

