

Educating Emergent Bilingual/Multilingual Children

Course 210: Samantha Diaz

Mairelis Dilone

### **Abstract**

This paper will talk about how and why it is important to educate emergent bilingual/multilingual children in early childhood education and how this has impacted many families and children in these past years. Emergent bilinguals are childrens that know more than one language, which is the language they speak in school and their native language. Many of these childrens at home are exposed to multiple languages. These young children have the capacity and are prepared to learn more than one language. Have you ever experienced any type of isolation? Can you imagine how these children feel when they are not engaged enough in the classroom? These bilingual/multilingual children should always feel welcomed and they all should feel very proud. We as educators should understand how important it is to have different languages in a classroom setting. This will help them to engage in the class, It will also help them to feel excited about it and not feel terrified, and they are able to embrace this .

### **EDUCATING EMERGENT BILINGUAL/MULTILINGUAL CHILDREN**

Educating emergent bilingual children is an important topic in Early Childhood because these childrens from a young age are able to develop communication skills, and have a better understanding on how language works. According to *Promoting cultural and linguistic Diversity*, “ Learning another language enables a child to have two different world perspectives and cultural experiences” (Cavaluzzi, 2010). This article

discussed how these childrens are capable of experiencing their own culture because they can engage with their native language and how they can see different points of view around the world. “ In other words, with the knowledge of the heritage language, the child will be able to communicate with their older generations of family and those that live in their native country, keeping the child connected to forebears” (Cavaluzzi, 2010). This shows us how these childrens are able to communicate with families that they are not able to see because they live in their native country but it is very important when you are able to speak to them and get to understand each other. “The child is also able to maintain a close relationship with the immediate family because parents often are more comfortable expressing love in their native language” (Cavaluzzi, 2010). These childrens are able to make their parents feel excited and special when they are showing love in their native language and the children are capable of returning the same love and responding back in their native language because it shows the connection they have with one another. “Raising a child to be bilingual requires a conscious effort from a child’s educators and guardians” (Cavaluzzi,2010). This shows us as educators how we should make sure that they emergent their native language in school because many of this childrens spent a lot of their hours in school, and when they are only engaging their native language in their home it makes it harder for the parents, and even more difficult for the child, we should not have this radical changes in the child’s language environment.

### **Statement Of the Problem**

The problem with educating emergent bilingual/multilingual children is that if educators don't do it, it will cause changes in the language environment of the child which would disrupt the child's language development and make it more difficult. The parents as well would be affected by the issue, and the child's surroundings as well because it will make it harder to communicate with the child.

This issue needs to be addressed now because there are still many childrens that are not able to even communicate correctly with their parents and families because either they not familiar with their native language, or even because they forgot, and the reason why childrens can remember one language more than the other is because they hear that language more, If the parents are speaking to them in their native language but then they go to school for 8 hours a day, is not really working. I believe that intervention is needed at a young age, especially when you see the children speaking one language more than the other. The audience for this issue is the parents and the educators, they can work together to ensure consistency and success in the child's communication.

### **Research**

Research suggests that educating emergent bilingual/Multilingual children is very important to the early childhood fields. These researches show us how these childrens can gain so much communication skills, and understand how important language is to us.

**Article 1**

In the article “Challenges and Benefits of Early Bilingualism in the United States’ context”, Linda M. Espinosa talks about how children learn their first language when they are very young and even before they are born. She says, “Infants’ earliest language learning exposure begins by attending to the sounds of their mothers speech even before birth, during the last trimester of pregnancy” (Byers-Heinlen, Burns, & Werker, 2010). This shows how children in school are not too young to understand how important their native language is, which is why we should educate it. She continues with, “They rapidly continue to learn about the sounds of speech and features of language through all their language interactions, in the home, in the community, with adults, with peers, and in their ECE settings” (Espinosa, 2015). This shows us as educators how play a very important role in the children's language and how we should continue educating emergent Bilingual/multilingual children. Also it shows how the children’s environment, including the parents and family members play a huge part in it which is why it is important for them to work together for this.

Espinosa also shows how these childrens are capable of learning many more languages than what we think. For example, “We have current and compelling scientific evidence in the United States that young DLL children are quite capable of learning multiple languages during the early childhood years” (Espinosa, 2015). This shows how this is a very important age for these children to engage with their Native language and how they can learn multiple languages at this age. She also said, “There is an urgent need in the United states to provide all ECE providers with professional development on

the characteristics of young DLL children, their developmental needs, successful family engagement strategies, and most importantly specific instructional and assessment strategies that they can implement across ECE settings" (Espinosa, 2015). This piece is very important because it explains some things that ECE educators might need to support these children. Even though in the United States to be prepared for K-12 you need to learn English, it should not place ongoing development on these children's home languages. This source gives a lot of information for ECE educators on how important languages are for these children and what can be learned from this is ways on how you can support their parents for children to practice their native language at school.

## **Article 2**

In the article, "In quarantine, Kids Pick Up parents' Mother Tongues", Sophie Hardach talks about how important it is for parents that their kids know both languages and not just one more than the other, and this is one of the reasons why students should practice their native language in school. She said, "With schools and daycares closed, previously dominant languages . . . such as English . . . in the United States are not longer as overpowering . . . instead children are hearing more of their parents' mother tongues" (Hardach, 2020). This piece of evidence is important because it's letting us know how important it is for parents that their children know their native language and it also shows how important it is for these children to speak their native language in

school because if all they hear is english in school, then they struggling at home and this is shows how this parents are so happy that they children why school is school is able to speak and hear their native language. This is why schools should educate emergent bilingual/multilingual students.

She continued by stating, “ When you think about living in a different country and raising your child in your native language, some people think oh it’s the most natural thing and it’s easy because it’s your native language. . . . Instead, the language of the home becomes less important as children start school and make friends in the country’s dominant language” (Hardach, 2020). This piece of evidence tells us that educating emergent bilingual/multilingual children is very important because as they grow older they start to forget their native language, and it is hard for both the parent and the childreans, including the members around the child because it makes it harder for communication. What can be learned from this article is that not because they come from a different country, but because the parents can speak to them in their native language is going to be easy to keep these childreans to stay with their native language, this is why parents need help and support from school and educators.

### **Article 3**

In the article, “ Expert: Bilingual students more likely to succeed in school, go to college”, Brooke Crum talks about how important it is for children who come from a different country to still have access to their native language in school even though they have to learn english. He said, “Research has shown dual language learners have a

high rate of achievement and success if they stay with the program at least through elementary school” (Crum, 2019). This shows how important it is for students who speak both their native language and english at school, they can have a bilingual program which lets them still speak their native language.

He continued with saying “Dual language or bilingual programs use students’ native language as a vehicle to learn a second language, gradually transferring knowledge into the new language . . It also helps students with career opportunities, because they are both bilingual and bi-literate” (Crum, 2019). This shows us how these programs in school help and support the students when they are older, because it opens more opportunities for them if they continue to know and understand their native language because they are able to communicate clearly. What can be learned from this article is to always support these children’s and to never think their native language is important, For me it gives me an idea of what I can do to keep this going, maybe having a program in school which support these students, and this is why I though this article was going to be very important.

### **Small Advocacy Action**

One action that I can take and advocate as a future early childhood educators is to have a meeting with parents, educators and adults to bring awareness of how important it is for students to practice both languages at home and especially in school in which



We are planning a better structured organization of programs which will be held in schools and parents are able to guide us through this because their opinions matter and we could come up with different activities each week.

### **Large Advocacy Action**

The large advocacy action that I would take is to create a classroom culture, and to have bilingual something that is to be celebrated. This celebration can be once a year with parents and family members. With the support of the parents we can build a community in which we help each other support these childrens.

Language is something that helps us be successful, it is like a tool to us and we should teach this to our students. This can be done in our whole school and in our whole district, we can come together with other teachers from different school and the date of the celebration we can have a big screen in which we are on zoom and seeing what the other's school are doing on this specific date of celebration, by doing this we make the parents and the students feel excited and supported because it is a new beginning for them and a beautiful experience especially when they are coming from another country they should always feel welcomed, and parents should always feel engage in students activities, as well as the student in which should feel engage enough.

**Commentary**

I decided to choose this issue to advocate because I know how important it is to have your native language and being able to express, understand and speak it because you feel like you are back at home. I know how hard it is for these childrens especially when they come from another country in school. I was born in the Dominican Republic and in school being able to engage in my native language show me how important it is while you're learning a different language to always try to balance it because as I became older and I was able to translate even to teachers and students, also I was even able to support and correct my teacher in my spanish class when I thought something was spelled wrong, and she did not find this wrong at all she would just be so surprised and one day she told me "You know what, You should go to college and focus on something about translation, you can become big and one day maybe translate to bigger people like on tv." This topic impacts me as an early childhood educator because I want to help and support these kids and families. So I believe we should educate emergent bilingual/multilingual children and help them to never forget their native language.

## References

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