



POSUDEK OPONENTKY BAKALÁŘSKÉ PRÁCE

Studijní obor: **Anglický jazyk a literatura (dvouoborové studium)**

Název práce: **Growing up bilingually: A survey into the aspects of language acquisition when two different languages are learned at the same time.**

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Short characteristics of the thesis

The present thesis addresses the topic of bilingualism. Specifically, it surveys the linguistic aspects of bilingual education with the aim to find out more about early bilingualism in children living in bilingual families, to explain the bilingual experience from the perspective of both parents and bilingual children, and to provide a comparison of these two interrelated viewpoints. After a short introduction, the author discusses the concept of bilingualism generally and then focuses on various aspects of bilingualism in children, everything based on relevant secondary literature. Chapter three explains methodology of the thesis, data collection and their processing. The analytical part describes bilingual families who took part in the research and interprets the collected data. The actual findings are summarised in the Conclusion. Questionnaires used for data collection may be found in the Appendix at the very end of the thesis.

Overall assessment

The topic examined in the present thesis is interesting, but not very original. There are many theses devoted to this theme. Even though bilingualism is a global phenomenon, which is definitely worth exploring, I have certain doubts about the investigation of this topic at the level of a bachelor's thesis. Research in the field of bilingualism is interdisciplinary and thus necessarily linked to other disciplines, such as psycholinguistics, an area in which BA students do not usually have enough research experience. Nevertheless, my assessment of the present thesis is overall quite positive. It is well structured, the text itself is written in very good English and it reads well.

Chapter two provides a relevant literature review to the topic examined in the thesis. The author states in Section 2.2 that "bilingualism has been studied by many linguists...", but they offer only two definitions of this concept. What I would therefore expect in this section is more definitions of bilingualisms, which would be critically compared. The major part of Chapter two focuses on various issues connected with bilingualism in children, such as types of early bilingualism, factors affecting bilingualism in children, typology of bilingual families, etc. These parts are interesting; however, some claims and widely known facts are stated several times throughout this chapter, which results in a rather repetitive nature of this section. Another reservation concerns direct citations from secondary literature occurring in Chapter two. All of them are written in italics, which is considered a mistake in citation practices unless italics occurs in the



original text, which is, I believe, not the case here. Furthermore, the author quotes several times Jan Průcha's monograph written originally in Czech, but the citations appear in English in the text of the thesis, which is again a mistake. The author should have added a footnote somewhere that these are translations, who made them, etc.

Section 2.3.4. presents methods and strategies for raising bilingual children. The author states that "they can have a future impact on the language development of the child" (p.15 at the bottom). Could the author perhaps address this question when defending the thesis and be more specific about this future impact on the language development of bilingual children? Which method(s) or their combination do they regard as the most effective in this process?

Chapter three describes methodology employed in the analytical part of the thesis. The longest section of this chapter focuses predominantly on data collection, whose main tool was a questionnaire. It is not clear whether this questionnaire was compiled by the author themselves, or whether it was inspired by secondary literature and somehow adopted, or both. When describing the research sample consisting of 14 respondents, the author did not explicitly state whether they knew them or not, and how they contacted them for the first time.

The analytical part (Chapter four) is devoted to the description and subsequent interpretation of the collected data. Each of eight bilingual families is described in terms of their linguistic background, the process of language acquisition, bilingualism of the children, and other observations. One of the tasks for bilingual children was to assess their language skills, which is however a highly subjective issue. In general, more confident individuals assess their skills higher compared to not so confident people who tend to underestimate themselves. The results of this part of the research may therefore be biased and should be interpreted carefully. In this connection, see for example the statement of the oldest son in family C, who considered his knowledge of both languages to be equivalent, which is quite unlikely. Moreover, from some of the figures in this chapter it follows that some families use three languages altogether. Again, this requires further explanation.

What was also not explicitly stated and clarified is which language the parents speak to each other when they do not share their mother tongues. Is it the language of one of them or a third language?

Family F: Both parents are native Germans living in Germany. Why are the children German-Czech bilinguals?

The interpretation of the results of the analysis and conclusions drawn from them are interesting and inspiring. What I appreciate is the author's attempt to examine both bilingual perspectives and to interrelate them. Nevertheless, some general assertions and widely known facts are repeated throughout the whole text of the thesis (e.g. bilingualism is a complex process, influenced by many factors, linked to the society and culture, ...), which should have better been avoided.

Despite the above-mentioned reservations, I do recommend the thesis for defence and suggest that it be marked very good.



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