



A CASE OF EARLY INTENTIONAL BILINGUALISM: A CLOSE EXAMINATION OF CONTEXT AND PRACTICES

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Abstract/Izveček

Intentional bilingualism is becoming increasingly popular in EFL countries, where many second-language speakers of English raise their children as a bilingual, with English alongside the local language. This article explores a case of intentional bilingualism spanning the first four years of a child, Ipek, who lives in Türkiye and has been exposed to Turkish and English since birth. As part of a longitudinal qualitative study, field and reflective notes were analysed to outline the key elements of Ipek's context, including the participants, tools, methods and techniques. The insights and experiences gained in the study may contribute to developing effective strategies for developing intentional bilingualism.

Keywords:

intentional bilingualism;
Child bilingualism;
Family language policy;
EFL; Turkish as L1.

Ključne besede:

namerna dvojezičnost,
zgodnja dvojezičnost,
strategije družinskih
jezikov, angleščina kot
tuj jezik, turščina kot
prvi jezik.

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Primer zgodnje namerne dvojezičnosti: analiza konteksta in strategij

Namerna dvojezičnost postaja vse bolj priljubljena v državah, v katerih mnogi starši, ki jim je angleščina drugi jezik, svoje otroke vzgajajo dvojezično, t.j. v jeziku okolja in angleščini. Prispevek obravnava primer namerne dvojezičnosti, ki zajema prva štiri leta deklice Ipek, ki živi v Turčiji in je bila od rojstva izpostavljena turščini in angleščini. V okviru longitudinalne kvalitativne raziskave so bili analizirani terenski in reflektivni zapiski, ki osvetljujejo ključne elemente konteksta, v katerem je Ipek izpostavljena dvojezičnosti, vključno z udeleženci, orodji, metodami in tehnikami. Izsledki in izkušnje, pridobljene dem raziskavo, lahko prispevajo k razvoju učinkovitih strategij za razvijanje namerne dvojezičnosti.

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Review of the Literature

Intentional Bilingualism

In broad terms, bilingualism is defined as the ability to possess and use two languages (Grosjean, 2010; Wei, 2020). Today, many children around the world are raised with exposure to two or more languages. When a second language (L2) is introduced after the child has acquired the first language (L1), this is called sequential bilingualism (Meisel, 2008). Children are also raised bilingually from birth, for diverse reasons, and this type of bilingualism is known as simultaneous bilingualism (Bermudez, 2019; David, 2013; De Houwer, 2009; Pettit, 2015). In simultaneous bilingualism, a child's main language sources are parents and/or the community and take various forms. For instance, a child may acquire two different languages in a multilingual household where the parents are L1 speakers of those languages. In another case, a child may learn one language from parents speaking the minority language and another language from the broader community representing the majority language. There is a less common form of childhood bilingualism where parents communicate with their child in a language other than their own, and this language is not the local or community language either. For example, Japanese parents raising their child as an English-Japanese bilingual in Japan exemplify this scenario. This particular case is referred to as intentional bilingualism (Štefanik, 1997), sometimes mono-cultural family bilingualism (Szramek-Karcz, 2014). Additionally, terms such as artificial bilingualism (Baker, 2010; Döpke, 1992; Saunders, 1990), home immersion (Saunders, 1990), and cultivated or elite bilingualism (Valdés & Figueroa, 1994) are also employed in the literature. Given the representation of the case, in this paper, "intentional bilingualism" will be used. Intentional bilingualism as a new trend is specifically evident among parents who are not native-speakers of but are fluent in English, living in monolingual countries where English is the most preferred foreign language due to its lingua franca status. Most of the time, the parent is a fluent English speaker, who feels a certain responsibility to impart his/her L2 skills to the child. Alongside L1, these parents choose to help their child in acquiring another language, specifically English, for the child's future academic and personal well-being in a globalized world. Other reasons may include inadequate English language instruction in public schools and high costs associated with private schools that provide extensive English language hours.

Parents thus develop English-friendly home environments and implement appropriate family language policies for their own situation. In this endeavor, they engage in various activities to naturally expose their child to the new language. The type and nature of home bilingualism practices are influenced by family language policy (FLP), which relates to the language beliefs held and how languages are managed within the family (King & Fogle, 2006; Liang et al., 2022; Spolsky, 2009). Curdt-Christiansen (2009) describes FLP as the family's deliberate decision to apply a specific language and literacy plan within the household.

Parents who decide to raise bilingual children have various methods and strategies to choose from. In intentional bilingualism, L1 refers to the community language, while L2 refers to the target language provided additionally at home. One communication strategy used by families is the One Person One Language (OPOL) method (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Grosjean, 2010; Romanowski, 2018; Smith-Christmas, 2016), where one parent addresses the child in one language while the other parent uses another language. Alternatively, parents may employ the Time and Place (T&P) strategy (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Pearson, 2008; Romanowski, 2018), interacting in L2 only at specific times and/or places. A subcategory of this strategy is One Language One Environment (OLOE) (Piller, 2001; Seo, 2019). Another method is the Minority Language at Home (ML@H) (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Romanowski, 2018), where both parents speak the L2 only at home. This could also take the form of Minority Language Immersion, where parents use the L2 everywhere until the child adequately acquires it. Lastly, parents may use both their L1 and L2 interchangeably while communicating with their child, known as the Mixed Language Policy (MLP) (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Grosjean, 2010; Romanowski, 2018).

Compared to research on other types of bilingualism, fewer studies have been conducted on intentional bilingualism. Although not a new phenomenon, research has documented that many parents in EFL countries have only recently begun to apply intentional bilingualism and share their experiences related to it. The following review presents findings from these studies.

Research on Intentional Bilingualism

As one of the earliest reviews, Saunders (1990) presented case studies of intentional bilingual families. One case involved Past and his wife, who were English speakers but spoke Spanish to their daughter during a specific time of the day.

Another case was Facey, an English speaker in Australia, and her husband, who spoke German to their two children, resulting in both children becoming bilingual due to the parents' efforts and the bilingual environment created at home. Saunders (1990), who was English dominant and highly proficient in German, raised his three children in Australia as bilinguals using the OPOL method, with the father speaking only German and the mother speaking only English.

In a project conducted in Poland, Szramek-Karcz (2016) explored 48 families that practiced intentional bilingualism to reveal parents' views, factors influencing successful bilingualism, and the outcomes. The project also followed longitudinally an Austrian family and found that intentional bilingualism was not affected by factors such as the child's and parents' temperament or gender, political preferences, religious beliefs, or researchers' opinions. While some parents received negative feedback from their environment, many participants were motivated to adopt intentional bilingualism after encountering another family that had successfully implemented it.

For evaluating the effectiveness of early bilingual education in Poland, Romanowski (2018) interviewed 22 families to understand their reasons, rewards, and difficulties in using an L2 with their children. It did not lead to confusion and was successful, however, each family's circumstances were unique, and family-based factors influenced the timing and strategy for communication in the L2. The families predominantly used OPOL and MLP, followed by T&P, and ML@H, respectively. The researcher also highlighted critical times during home bilingualism: the first occurs when parents or the child face resistance, the second arises when a second child is born, and the third occurs when the child enters a monolingual school. Additionally, Romanowski (2018) warned parents about potential dangers of early intentional bilingualism, like parents' imperfect competence in the L2, difficulties in finding appropriate words, the child's rejection of L2, and hostility from the environment.

In an overview of a Slovak child's bilingual development due to regular exposure to English and L1 by his mother, Vozníková (2021) presents an experimental context where linguistic development was influenced by the degree of contact with the two languages. In the same context, Hurajová (2022) conducted a case study and noted that despite prejudices, it was a common practice among Slovakian parents to raise English-speaking children.

The same interest in Spain is reported by Álvarez-Sotomayor & Hidalgo-Clérico (2022), who studied parents' perceptions of raising Spanish and English bilingual children. Analyses of interviews before and during the intentional bilingualism process showed that parents perceived the journey as adventurous, with rewards and challenges. Similarly, Utrera & de Diezmas (2023) carried out a study to investigate the most dominant language strategies and practices used in Spanish families implementing Spanish-English intentional bilingualism. They interviewed 17 parents who raised 32 children between the ages of 4 and 18. The families used ML@H, T&P, and OPOL, with the support of bilingual siblings and practices such as storytelling or apps.

Inspecting intentional bilingualism in Brazil, de Oliveira (2022) conducted a study surveying 24 families, most of whom chose English alongside Portuguese. Parents were asked about their practices and views regarding raising their children bilingual. Despite fears and challenges that families faced, the study revealed positive aspects of intentional bilingualism. Parents reported using various methods such as storytelling, nursery rhymes, games, cartoons, and online platforms like YouTube and Netflix as frequently used tools in their bilingual upbringing. The researcher notes that negative opinions from society vanished once they observed the child's L2 competence.

Recently, intentional bilingualism in English has gained popularity in other countries with non-Indo-European languages such as Korean and Turkish. Seo (2019) investigated the bilingual parenting path of a family raising their seven- and five-year-old children in Korea with an "English at home, Korean outside" (OLOE) method since birth. This qualitative case study delved into how the positive language learning experiences and language ideologies of the parents positively influenced their efforts in raising their bilingual child. The study also highlighted socio-cultural and familial factors that contributed to this pursuit, although challenges such as differing levels of English proficiency among parents and societal misconceptions were reported. In another study by Seo (2021), mothers' experiences during bilingual parenting were examined through an analysis of blogs posted in an online community. The study addressed questions about the extent of parental involvement in their child's English education, the challenges faced, and coping strategies. Results indicated that mothers aspired to achieve intentional bilingualism despite their limited English proficiency and educational expertise.

They relied on their network for information on bilingual child rearing, seeking advice on improving their own language proficiency, handling resistance from their children towards English, and selecting appropriate tools and techniques.

Pursuing difficulties, Seo (2022) discussed main challenges of bilingual parenting in a monolingual context, noting that these become more pronounced as the child grew older: inadequate English proficiency, societal misconceptions and differing perspectives among spouses, especially when both are actively involved in the process. She suggests that successful intentional bilingual parenting necessitates familial cooperation, a language-friendly home environment, and ongoing parental self-reflection. In the Turkish context, Turhal (2020) documented his successful experience in raising his daughter as a Turkish-English bilingual. He authored a book titled *Bebeğimize İngilizce Öğretin (Teach Your Baby English)* to share his family's bilingualism journey and conducted interviews with three other parents. One of the parents had two daughters raised with English and Turkish interchangeably from an early age. Another parent, an English teacher, used English in daily life with her daughters starting from when her eldest daughter was 1 year and 6 months old, and emphasizing the importance of books in developing their English competence. The third parent, also an English teacher, used English with his son while the mother spoke only Turkish, leading to his dominant language becoming English. In the same context, Demirci and Güven (2020) evaluated the communication abilities and vocabulary proficiency of a Turkish-English bilingual boy in both languages. The child primarily received exposure to English from his father and Turkish from his mother and the community. Güven (2021), in his book *Anne bu Cat değil mi? (Mom, isn't this a Cat?)* shares his experience of initially using Turkish for communication in the family and gradually transitioning to using English fully with the OPOL method. The child continued to receive Turkish from his mother and the community. However, when the father presented Turkish after the age of 3, the child rejected speaking it with his father and preferred using only English. Akgül et al. (2019) documented parents raising their children bilingually while living in their hometown resort to audio-visual means like TV shows and family activities like conversing. Most parents reported not experiencing disadvantages, although some mentioned resistance from children towards the L2, a lack of importance on the L1, and challenges with the country's education system. Recently, Karagöz & Erdemir (2022) interviewed eight English teacher parents in Türkiye about raising a bilingual child, along with the practices they employed.

Most parents utilized materials designed for very young learners, while some used homemade products. Parents did not adhere to a certain bilingual parenting method but acted intuitively, focusing on enhancing their children's oral skills as well as vocabulary knowledge. Disadvantages mentioned by families included language delays, societal prejudices, and discouragement from family members.

Studies described above demonstrated various difficulties encountered in intentional bilingualism. However, they also showcased successful outcomes, parental contentment, and community appreciation as a result of this difficult endeavor, which indicates that intentional bilingualism is a worthwhile journey for the stakeholders, making it a new trend among families in monolingual countries.

However, as a research area, there is a noticeable gap in the literature regarding intentional bilingualism compared to other types of bilingualism. More documentation is needed to explore different aspects of intentional bilingualism. Most of the studies summarized above focus on views reported by families, while fewer studies provide a lengthy analysis of the actual process. Therefore, there is a need for studies that depict the exhausting process of intentional bilingualism comprehensively across various family types and languages.

At the same time, existing studies indicate varying family beliefs and practices. There is a pressing need for more research on early intentional bilingualism, to gain a better understanding of the experiences and processes involved. Álvarez-Sotomayor & Hidalgo-Clérico (2022) note that knowledge on this issue is found in anecdotal books or social network posts, emphasizing the necessity for analytic treatment. De Oliveira (2022) adds that “a longitudinal study that could accompany these children and assess their bilingual development over the years, their linguistic competence and potential influences in their language production would immensely contribute to the field.” (p. 276). Such longitudinal studies can provide valuable insights into the long-term effects of intentional bilingualism, helping researchers and parents make informed decisions.

To our understanding, intentional bilingualism typically occurs in monolingual countries. In such contexts, the additional linguistic environments created by families for their children are particularly crucial and require careful study. Therefore, one of the initial steps in studying intentional bilingualism is to investigate these contexts. This article aims to address the aforementioned needs by presenting details of a case of successful early intentional bilingualism.

Specifically, the article will describe in detail the language environment created for one child, Ipek, and the bilingual practices that were employed.

Methodology

The Participant

Ipek, the focal child, was born and raised in Türkiye by her two Turkish-speaking parents. She can be labeled as an English-Turkish simultaneous bilingual since she was exposed to both languages from infancy. Her mother, an English teacher and the first author of the article, chose Ipek for analysis based on convenient sampling. However, Ipek's case is unique because English was neither the mother's nor the father's L1. Ipek grew up hearing both languages mainly from her mother, while being exposed to Turkish primarily from her father and other people in the community.

A longitudinal descriptive case study was conducted to describe Ipek's bilingual exposure and communicative abilities during her first four years. Although the study primarily focused on her bilingual development rather than her emotional, social or cognitive development, recordings and regular face-to-face interactions indicated that her overall development in these areas was in line with her peers. Ipek rapidly and consistently became proficient in Turkish and English. By the end of the data collection period, at age four, she could effectively communicate in both languages, although her Turkish proficiency was naturally more dominant due to living in Türkiye. Nonetheless, she demonstrated the ability to comprehend complex English sentences and engage in successful English conversations, which the researchers took as indicators of her fluency and competence in the English language.

Data Collection

Longitudinal case studies are useful for providing an in-depth understanding of a case over a long time, giving a detailed idea of the process (Creswell, 2014; Stake, 1995). The data presented in this paper is derived from the longitudinal qualitative case study and focuses specifically on Ipek's exposure to the languages. Details regarding her bilingual development, including the various phases of her comprehension and production in both languages, will be shared elsewhere. This paper focuses on the language environment created for the child and the bilingual activities provided to her, mainly by her mother.

Mom's approach emphasized incidental learning through daily interactions, such as conversations during breakfast preparation or shopping, expecting bilingualism to occur naturally rather than implementing specialized activities to teach the target language. This methodology resulted in naturalistic data, which involves gathering information from participants in their authentic environments without influencing their behavior (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Schostak, 2023).

Naturalistic data were collected over four years through recordings, field notes, and reflective diary entries by the first author on a monthly basis from Ipek's birth until she was 4 years and 3 months old (4:3). The complete data set comprises 41 video recordings, six audio recordings, and 66 fieldnote entries. Video and audio recordings captured naturalistic daily activities, while field notes included observations and specific utterances by Ipek.

Data Analysis

The data were first analysed with linguistic aims, focusing on areas such as the degree and nature of Ipek's comprehension and production in each language, her use of formulaic phrases, translanguaging and metalinguistic comments. Secondly, the data were analysed for the types of tasks, activities, materials, interlocutors, languages and situations that Ipek engaged in. The degree and nature of her exposure to and use of each language during different periods of her life were scrutinized. For the latter purpose, which is the focus of this paper, the data underwent qualitative analysis through reading, organization into categories and forming tables, with supporting information such as dates, ages, frequencies and additional details. For the coding process, the researcher used Notepad++ to streamline the counting and categorizing of the data.

To enhance trustworthiness, the second author, who specializes in language acquisition, served as an interrater. Initially, both researchers coded each data extract separately. Then they met regularly, both in person and online, to discuss and finalize the categories of analysis for each data instance. This collaborative process aimed to establish research credibility and utilized peer debriefing, also known as investigator triangulation.

Despite the qualitative nature of the study, percentages were included for clarity and comprehensibility, indicating the extent of exposure to and usage of each language. Consequently, the bilingual context in which Ipek spent her first four years and her progress in both languages were outlined and presented in the next section.

Findings on Characteristics of Ipek's Language Context

Interlocutors

Many participants from the close environment were involved in Ipek's bilingual development and contributed in various ways. These people and their roles in Ipek's life have been summarized below. For ethical purposes, pseudonyms were used.

Ipek's Mother/The Researcher, Mom

Mom had a dual role of being Ipek's primary caregiver and English-language provider. Mom, who is also the researcher and the first author of this paper, was in her mid-thirties and teacher of English with 12 years of experience. She comes from a monolingual Turkish-speaking family and started learning English at age 11 in a state school. She graduated from an English Language Teaching program of a state university in Türkiye and has not been to an English-speaking country but did work at private language schools with L1 English speakers. As an advanced-level English user, she made the decision to raise Ipek bilingually from birth. For this, she spoke Turkish when in the company of monolingual Turkish speakers and English exclusively when alone with Ipek because she did not want her to feel isolated in Turkish-speaking environments. Until nearly two years, Ipek's mother was her only source of exposure to English.

Ipek's Father, Dad

- Ipek's father was in his mid-forties. He is a history teacher at a university and grew up in a monolingual Turkish-speaking family, attending state schools. Dad speaks English at a C1 level according to the Common European Framework. He appreciated and supported Mom's efforts to raise their daughter bilingually. During the first three years of Ipek's life, Dad spoke to her only in Turkish. However, after Ipek turned three, he also started reading English books to her and having short conversations in English.

Ipek's Nanny, Sevgi

- Sevgi was hired as the nanny when Ipek was 1;3 and spoke Turkish with her. While her mother worked, Ipek was taken to Sevgi's house five days a week. Although Sevgi had no formal childcare education, she contributed to Ipek's Turkish language development through songs, nursery rhymes, and stories. Sevgi continued to work with the family when needed, even after Ipek started kindergarten.

Nanny's Daughter, Nehir

- The nanny's daughter, Nehir, was 17 years old when she worked with Ipek's family. Although Nehir was away at high school during the day, she spent time with Ipek during summer and semester holidays. Nehir became a role model for Ipek and was like an elder sister to her. When Nehir started studying at the university, she had more time to meet and communicate with Ipek, mainly in Turkish but sometimes also in English (e.g., chats during mealtimes and reading English books). Nehir had a B2 level of English proficiency.

English Tutor, Amaya

- Just before her third birthday, the family decided to hire a private tutor, Amaya, who was an L1 English speaker from the USA and lived in the same building. Amaya came to Ipek's home a few times a week for about an hour, during which they played games, read books, or chatted. Ipek's mother monitored the sessions from an adjacent room but did not interrupt them. In total, they spent ten sessions together in 45 days. Amaya often stayed longer after the session to chat with Ipek's mother, which further increased Ipek's exposure to English. This was Ipek's first exposure to an L1 English speaker in real life, and her mother noted it as an important period because it was the first time Ipek heard her mother speak English to someone else. The sessions had to end when the family moved to City B, and Amaya moved abroad.

The Second Nanny, Yasemin

- The family hired Yasemin as a live-in nanny for Ipek when she was almost four years old, after her kindergarten closed down for the summer. Yasemin, who was Dad's cousin and a preschool teacher trainee, spent about eight hours a day with Ipek and spoke only Turkish with her. They spent time reading books, doing activities planned by Yasemin, and playing inside and outside the house.

Kindergarten English Teacher, Ebru

- At age 4, Ipek attended a kindergarten where the main language of instruction was Turkish, so she spoke Turkish all day with her friends and the teacher. However, they had an English teacher named Ebru who taught them English for two to three hours per week. During these classes, they played games, sang songs, and did art activities in English.

The General Picture

Upon deciding to raise her daughter as a bilingual, Mom adopted a method where she let her daughter get exposed to English via already occurring routine home activities for a minimum of a few hours a day. Her goal was to make their English sessions not only productive but also enjoyable and captivating. She created for Ipek a bilingual environment where she was exposed to both languages regularly and consistently through activities and materials such as oral interactions and storybooks, all of which helped her comprehension and production skills. Day by day, Ipek was able to comprehend more input and produce more output in both languages. This progress was identified by the researchers through data analyses and verbal reports of Ipek's interlocutors. Mom had developed a general language policy (i.e., raising her with two languages), but no strict language plan to follow. When data were analyzed, it was seen that the linguistic atmosphere was influenced by the circumstances and people in Ipek's life (See Table 1).

Ipek has been raised in a household consisting of her parents and her brother, who was added to the family when she was two-and-a-half years. Mom and Dad always used Turkish to communicate with each other. Dad was working during the day, therefore, Ipek spent her first 14 months hearing mostly English from her mother, except for family visits, where Turkish was used. After that, the family hired a Turkish nanny as the mother went back to work, which decreased Ipek's English exposure. After a period of 16 months (when Ipek was 2:6) her mother took maternal leave when Ipek's baby brother joined the family.

As outlined in Table 1, the amount of time Ipek was exposed to English and Turkish showed variation. The source of English was mainly her mother, and she was almost never equally exposed to both languages. The amount of language she heard changed depending on many factors such as family visits or working schedule of parents. Some months she was heavily exposed to English, especially when she spent most of her time with her mother, whereas other months, she heard Turkish much more. However, Ipek's English production started to decrease at age 3:7, due to attending kindergarten for seven to eight hours daily. Living in Türkiye, her dominant language has always been Turkish, and the fact that she began to spend time at school left less room for English.

Table 1: Ipek's Exposure to and Use of the Two Languages

Years: Months	Ipek's Exposure		Ipek's Production		Explanation
	to Turkish	to English	of Turkish	of English	
0:0 – 0:2	100% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	-	-	-	As a newborn, Ipek lived with her parents in City A and spent most of her time hearing Turkish from close family members.
0:2 – 0:6	20% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	80% Source: Mom	-	-	Ipek and Mom moved to City B, where Dad works. Mom was with Ipek all day due to maternal leave. Ipek's primary interaction was with Mom.
0:6 – 0:7	100% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	-	-	-	Ipek visited her grandparents with her parents during the semester break and was exposed exclusively to Turkish.
0:7 – 0:9	20% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	80% Source: Mom	-	-	Ipek and her parents travelled back to City B. Dad was working and Ipek typically spent time with Mom, who showed Ipek children's books, discussed the pictures in English, and sang English children's songs accompanied by gestures to clarify meaning.
0:9 – 1:0	60% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	40% Source: Mom	100% To: Mom, Dad Grandparents	-	Ipek and her family travelled back to City A for the summer holiday, during which Dad was also at home. This increased Ipek's exposure to Turkish. She began to say a few Turkish words such as "anne, kedi [mom, cat]", and showed comprehension of both languages through her actions or sounds. Mom continued reading picture storybooks, asking questions, and singing songs.
1:0 – 1:2	20% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	80% Source: Mom	90% To: Mom, Dad Grandparents	10% To: Mom	Ipek's Dad returned to work in City B while Ipek remained in City A with Mom, primarily hearing English. Dad visited them a few times a month. Ipek's usage of Turkish words increased. She also started forming two-word sentences like "Kedi gel. [Come cat]". Mom continued using children's books.
1:2 – 1:9	30% Source: Mom, Dad, Community, Sevgi, Nehir	70% Source: Mom, Nehir	80% To: Mom, Dad, Sevgi, Grandparents Nehir	20% To: Mom	During Mom's six-hour workdays, Ipek was looked after by the Turkish-speaking nanny and her daughter, while Dad was in City B for work. Ipek began forming basic Turkish sentences, such as "Ben temizlik yapıyorum. [I'm cleaning.]" She also understood basic instructions in English and started producing English utterances like "Ball, book, mommy." Mom continued using children's books and songs.

1:9 – 2:0	60% Source: Mom, Dad, Community, Sevgi, Nehir	40% Source: Mom, Nehir	70% To: Mom, Dad, Sevgi, Grandparents Nehir	30% To: Mom	Ipek spent her days with her Turkish-speaking nanny, and evenings with Mom and Dad, during Dad's summer holiday. This reduced Ipek's exposure to English. Mom continued to use children's books and songs.
2:0 – 2:6	60% Source: Mom, Dad, Community, Sevgi, Nehir	40% Source: Mom, Nehir	70% To: Mom, Dad, Sevgi, Grandparents Nehir	30% To: Mom	Ipek was looked after by the Turkish-speaking nanny while Mom worked eight hours a day, and Dad returned to City B. Although Ipek did not speak much English, her comprehension was improving, since she heard English from Mom in the evenings. Her Turkish production increased, and she could engage in daily conversations in it. Mom continued to use children's books and songs.
2:6 – 2:9	20% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	80% Source: Mom	70% To: Mom, Dad, Grandparents	30% To: Mom	Ipek's brother was born, and Mom went on maternal leave. The family moved to City B where Dad lived. Ipek primarily heard English from Mom. They started watching cartoons together for about 30-40 minutes daily. Children's books and songs were used by Mom.
2:9 – 2:11	50% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	50% Source: Mom	60% To: Mom, Dad, Grandparents	40% To: Mom	Ipek returned to City A with her parents for the summer holiday, during which Mom started working half-day. While Mom was at work, Ipek and her brother stayed with Sevgi, having exposure to some English from Nehir. In the afternoons and evenings, Ipek was at home with Mom and Dad. This period marked a rapid increase in her English production and self-confidence. Mom continued using children's books and songs.
2:11 – 3:1	30% Source: Mom, Dad, Community, Sevgi, Nehir	70% Source: Mom, Dad, Amaya, Nehir	55% To: Mom, Dad, Sevgi, Grandparents Nehir	45% To: Mom, Dad, Amaya, Nehir	Ipek began spending 40-50 minutes per session, three days a week, speaking only in English with her private tutor. They played games and read books together. This increased Ipek's eagerness to engage in English dialogues and initiate conversations in English. She also started addressing Dad in English. Children's books and songs continued to be used as English input.
3:1 – 3:2	30% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	70% Source: Mom, Dad	60% To: Mom, Dad, Grandparents	40% To: Mom, Dad	Ipek relocated to City B with her family. Mom was on maternal leave, and Dad worked during the day. Ipek mainly heard English from Mom and could engage in daily conversations in English with a few sentences (compared one English sentence and then switching to Turkish).

3:2 – 3:7	40% Source: Mom, Dad, Community	60% Source: Mom, Dad	60% To: Mom, Dad, Grandparents	40% To: Mom, Dad	Ipek began attending kindergarten half-day in City B, where she was exposed to Turkish at school for four hours a day. Since this kindergarten did not offer English classes, her exposure decreased slightly. Mom continued to communicate in English, also using songs and books.
3:7 – 3:10	60% Source: Mom, Dad, Community, Kindergarten teachers, Classmates	40% Source: Mom, Dad	65% To: Mom, Dad, Grandparents, Kindergarten teachers, Friends	35% To: Mom, Dad	Ipek returned to City A and started attending kindergarten for eight hours a day with three English hours per week. Additionally, English songs and books were used by Mom at home.
3:10 – 4:0	60% Source: Mom, Dad, Yasemin, Community	40% Source: Mom, Dad	70% To: Mom, Dad, Grandparents Yasemin	30% To: Mom, Dad	Ipek stopped attending kindergarten during the summer holiday, and the family had a new live-in nanny. Turkish was the dominant language at home used by parents. Mom was working, but continued to communicate with Ipek in English when they were alone, reading and singing to her in English.
4:0 – 4:3	70% Source: Mom, Dad, Community, Kindergarten teachers, Classmates	30% Source: Mom, Ebru	90% To: Mom, Dad, Grandparents, Kindergarten teacher, Classmates	10% To: Mom, Dad, Ebru	Ipek enrolled in a new kindergarten that offered English classes for six hours a week. Her new school conducted Turkish activities, so Ipek primarily communicated with her teacher and friends in Turkish. This preference resulted in a decrease in her English production.

Language Exposure through Daily Routines

Mom preferred to use English during their conversations with Ipek. When she was cooking or cleaning, Ipek accompanied her. With her expertise in education and teaching EFL, Mom used English in simplified and comprehensible ways, applying features of speech suitable for children to explain her actions. She consistently adjusted her language to match Ipek's age and cognitive level. Mom introduced new words in concrete and meaningful contexts, using objects, pictures, and real-life experiences to reinforce new vocabulary and phrases in both languages. When necessary, she recast Ipek's incomplete or erroneous utterances. Initially Ipek responded with gestures and sounds, followed by basic Turkish words, and soon after by simple English words. Gradually, she incorporated more English words and phrases into her speech. During Mom-child alone time interactions, if Ipek initiated in Turkish, Mom usually responded in English to provide exposure and encourage her to speak in English. Additionally, Mom did her best to engage Ipek in the activity she was doing, encouraging her to be as interactive as possible. For instance, picking and folding laundry was a fun chore for Ipek between ages 1:0 and 2:0, during which she heard Mom use various English structures and basic words. A sample dialogue is provided below:

Mom: Whose t-shirt is it? [takes a t-shirt from the pile]

Ipek: Dad.

Mom: Yes, it belongs to Daddy. Do you know what color this is?

Ipek: Green

Mom: No, it's blue. Do you know what else is blue?

Ipek: Sea

Language Exposure through Games

Mom and Ipek played lots of games during the day. During the first year, they mainly played games that do not require toys such as peek-a-boo, where Mom covered her face with her hands and suddenly revealed herself, announcing "peek-a-boo". There were also times when they played the "airplane" game, where Ipek pretended to be an airplane on Mom's legs when Mom was lying on the floor. The older Ipek got, the more verbal the games became. For example, when Ipek was 1:6 their favorite game was "Where are you?" Mom scattered plush toys such as a teddy and giraffe on the floor and covered each of them with small pieces of cloth.

Then she would start looking for a specific one by loudly saying “Teddy, teddy! Where are you, teddy? I can’t see you anywhere.” Then she would uncover one of the plush toys and say “Oh, you’re not teddy. You are the giraffe. Do you know where teddy is? We can’t find him anywhere. Have you seen teddy? No? Okay, then. We’ll keep looking.” In a way, Mom was modeling a question-answer dialogue on her own, later to include Ipek. Ipek was only watching her at the beginning, later laughing at Mom’s exaggerated actions and talk, and finally she would uncover the toys, too. Over time, Mom and Ipek enjoyed playing various mind, board and card games suitable for her age. These games could be played in either language, but they were mostly conducted in English with Mom.

Language Exposure through Books

Ipek has always enjoyed childhood activities like handcrafts, playdough and drawing. However, she loved reading books. She has been exposed to books since she was a newborn and has seen both parents reading frequently. Ipek got accustomed to hearing Mom and Dad read books to her, selected by herself, for 20-30 minutes as part of the bedtime routine. From the age of four months onwards, she has had a collection of children’s books that were read and told to her. Mom compiled a selection of authentic children’s books that were age-appropriate, focusing on those that matched Ipek’s developmental stage and interests. For younger ages, she chose books with colorful pictures and simple stories, progressing to more complex ones as Ipek grew. She did not engage with text yet viewed books as an exciting and engaging way to explore new concepts and stories. She showed particular interest in books with vivid illustrations and relatable characters. She preferred stories in the language they were first introduced to her, often associating English reading time with Mom and Turkish reading time with Dad. She also enjoyed retelling stories from her favorite books with Mom’s help. For example, when she was three years old, she recurrently recounted "Ellie the Elephant".

By the age of four, Ipek’s bookcase contained over 200 children’s books. These books were categorized as stories “read in English only” and “read in both languages”. Some were originally written in English, while others were written in Turkish but used by Mom for English as well. Since authentic English books were costly and hard to find, Mom typed and glued English translations next to the Turkish text in some books to create bilingual versions.

This allowed Ipek to access her favorite books in both languages. It is notable that there were no materials solely read in Turkish, as Mom sought to maximize every opportunity to expose Ipek to English.

Language Exposure through Songs

When Mom occasionally did not receive an immediate response from Ipek she found simple children's songs in English to be beneficial, and she often sang to Ipek using gestures to expose her to meaningful and natural language. Like most parents who sing to and with their children, Mom also aimed to help Ipek develop linguistic, motor, social and emotional skills. She also played these songs from a specific YouTube channel throughout the day, avoiding screen time while providing scaffolding for Ipek to comprehend. Mom had a diverse repertoire of English children's songs, stemming from her experience as a former young learner teacher. Ipek continued to listen to nursery rhymes and children's songs until she reached the age of 2:9, at which point she was allowed to watch the video clips as well. Mom also integrated nursery rhymes and children's songs into their daily routine to familiarize Ipek with various aspects of the target language, such as expressions, vocabulary, and pronunciation. She sang common children's songs suitable to her age, as well as songs that were relevant to each situation, such as waking up or taking a bath. For instance, while Ipek was brushing her teeth, Mom sang the song "Brush your teeth". Whenever Mom was getting Ipek ready to go out, she would sing the song "Put on your shoes". As a result, Ipek memorized the lyrics of several English and Turkish children's songs.

Language Exposure through Cartoons

In this paper, the term "screen time" refers to the duration during which Ipek watched cartoons or movies on electronic screens such as television or tablet. Ipek's screen time began after the age of 2:5, shortly after her brother was born, and was primarily centered around materials selected by Mom. Initially, Ipek's screen time in English involved watching video clips of songs she was already familiar with from listening during the day. Subsequently, Mom and Ipek watched videos featuring animals and cartoon characters together. Mom selected cartoons in either language based on age appropriateness, content appropriateness, Ipek's interest areas, language simplicity, and authenticity.

Ipek particularly enjoyed watching *Peppa Pig*, a British animated series for preschoolers, and became a big fan of the show. She identified with the “Big Sister” character and related to the relevant topics. Additionally, the clear pronunciation and supportive visuals helped her comprehend much of the content. Mom ensured that they always watched the series with English audio to expose Ipek to more English, as there were not many suitable audio-visual materials available to them.

Community Support

Parents who engage in intentional bilingualism may face discouragement due to negative comments from others regarding their choice to interact with their children in another language. It is noteworthy that Ipek’s mother never encountered such negativity, which might be attributed to the family’s commitment and Ipek’s contentment with the situation clearly observed from the outside. Instead, she received continuous encouragement and praise from individuals in her immediate environment, particularly from her husband, parents and parents-in-law, regarding her efforts in raising Ipek bilingually.

Furthermore, shortly before Ipek turned two, Mom joined the “Bilingual Children Türkiye” group on Facebook. This decision proved to be motivating as she connected with other Turkish parents, many of whom were also English language teachers, raising their children as Turkish-English bilinguals. Moreover, the group provided a supportive environment for parents of bilingual children in a monolingual society. It offered a platform for sharing experiences, seeking recommendations, and addressing specific problems and concerns, which was a valuable source of comfort for Mom. For example, members shared recommendations for bilingual books and educational tools, and parents discussed common challenges such as balancing the two languages at home, ensuring consistent exposure to English despite living in a predominantly Turkish-speaking environment, and dealing with children’s resistance to using any of the languages. They also addressed issues of finding suitable bilingual schools, strategies for maintaining children’s motivation to learn both languages, and handling criticism or lack of understanding from the community.

Discussion and Implications

The descriptive overview in this article illustrates how one family implemented and experienced intentional bilingualism to raise their child as a Turkish-English bilingual. Ipek developed into a simultaneous bilingual through exposure to both languages from infancy by her parents. The linguistic environment she grew up in was shaped by the circumstances and individuals in her life, all of whom contributed in various ways to her bilingual development. Although Mom, who was an English teacher, did not follow a predetermined plan or strategy, she consistently exposed Ipek to English and Turkish. While Turkish naturally existed in their environment, extra effort was dedicated to providing English. Ipek received English from her mother for a few hours every day during activities such as daily conversations, gestures that accompanied interactions, watching cartoons, reading storybooks, singing songs, and playing games. Due to everyday practical household issues, one language sometimes dominated over the other. However, considering the overall picture, both languages were offered in a balanced manner. This was evident throughout Ipek's life as she continually heard and used both Turkish and English during her first four years and beyond, albeit variations in the quantity and variety of exposure. This confirms the importance of maintaining consistent and ample use of both languages for genuine communicative purposes, even if the methods and levels of exposure vary (Grosjean, 2010). Ipek, the bilingual child, was not observed to experience any significant challenges. On the contrary, she seemed quite proud of her bilingual abilities and enjoyed demonstrating her skills to others. Her positive attitude towards languages, encouraged by Mom's support, contributed to Ipek's confidence and enthusiasm in becoming a bilingual. At the same time, her cognitive, social and emotional development progressed normally, without any concerns for the family. However, Mom faced challenges throughout this process. For example, she consistently communicated with her child in a foreign language while also maintaining Turkish at home. Living in an EFL country, she had limited access to authentic English materials, leading her to translate children's books and invest time and resources in finding English-medium materials, facilities and communication partners, such as hiring English-speaking babysitters and enrolling in a kindergarten with English lessons. These efforts required conscious planning and resourcefulness. Nevertheless, the most crucial role was that of Mom as the primary caregiver and provider of the non-native language.

In parallel with Seo's (2021) findings, it was primarily Mom's conscious efforts that played a pivotal role in this process. It was observed that Mom's strong motivation and determinism facilitated Ipek's acquisition of an L2 alongside her L1 in a monolingual context. This endeavor proved successful because Mom used every opportunity and made considerable efforts to create a rich language environment for Ipek.

Research-wise, it must be acknowledged that Mom's multiple roles in the study - as language provider, researcher, primary caregiver, and mother - might have influenced the collection, analysis and the presentation of data, with both advantages and disadvantages. This situation allowed for rich, naturalistic and convenient data collection, and deeper interpretation as an insider, but also carried potential biases. To mitigate these biases, extensive data was collected, an interrater was employed, and structured data analysis methods including transcription, coding, constant comparison and reflection, were utilized.

Mom made use of her English language teaching expertise to support Ipek in acquiring the new language as observed in several prior studies (Karagöz & Erdemir, 2022; Seo, 2019; Seo, 2021; Turhal, 2020). She ensured the entire family remained focused on Ipek's language acquisition process, prioritized meaning during their interactions, adhered to principles of natural child language acquisition, and emphasized genuine language use and enjoyment. In other words, her background as an English teacher enabled her to provide effective English input and output opportunities for Ipek. It is important to note that Mom always paid special attention to provide language content suitable for Ipek's level. Whatever Ipek could acquire about the languages was based on her understanding of the world, and her social, emotional, biological and cognitive development. Therefore, whether it was conversing, singing songs, playing games, watching series, or reading books, all activities were tailored to her abilities, needs and interests. Care providers without language teaching backgrounds may find it useful to adopt successful strategies mentioned in this article. Additionally, exploring how the situation unfolds in families where parents are not language professionals or have limited English proficiency would be valuable for further research.

In terms of communication strategy, Ipek's language environment was composed of the Mixed Language Policy practice, where there was free alternation between the two languages (Grosjean, 2010; Romanowski, 2018). MLP proved to be a suitable style for this case, and as a result, Ipek had varied meaningful bilingual experiences.

Future research could investigate the differential influence of various bilingual provision strategies on the development of intentional bilingualism.

In the present study Mom had a general goal to provide two languages for Ipek but did not create a fully structured syllabus for achieving this goal. Other parents who have this aim can prepare and plan more deliberately and follow a more structured plan as part of their family language policy before starting this adventure. Future research can explore the effects of varying routes to home bilingualism, diverse plans and practices, as well as different family structures, to understand if different outcomes are achieved.

Intentional bilingualism parenting is often acknowledged to involve various concerns of the wider community, confirmed by relevant literature (de Oliveira, 2022; Seo, 2021; Seo, 2022). Fortunately, these challenges did not appear in Ipek and her family's journey. Throughout this process, Mom received support, highlighting the significance of partner and societal cooperation. Both Ipek's immediate and extended family were supportive of Mom's decision to raise her as a bilingual child. Additionally, Mom found encouragement through social media platforms where she felt reassured knowing that she was not alone in her efforts. These platforms should be made more accessible to allow parents to exchange experiences and valuable information more easily. Research could explore the various effects of such online communities on parenting and language development.

Ipek was the first-born child in the family. Her younger brother, who grew up in the same linguistic context, also presents an interesting case to be studied, regarding his own bilingual development as well as its effects on Ipek's language development. Seo (2019) notes that "The effects of additional children were not systematically examined" (p. 230), highlighting the need to investigate how the presence of additional siblings affects bilingual children.

During her preschool years, Ipek was guided and had her language exposure controlled by her parents, leading to her successful bilingual development. It is worth noting that bilingual development can be negatively affected when children begin schooling in the majority language (Döpke, 1992). After age 4, Ipek attended kindergarten, where she was predominantly immersed in a Turkish speaking environment, resulting in a decrease in her English production. Further research is warranted to see how Ipek's situation evolves during her school years, in terms of the influence of schooling on family members' reactions, preferences, and practices as well as her bilingual development.

Many parents who desire early bilingualism for their children might be hesitant due to concerns about potential delays in language acquisition, fears of confusing the child, or worries about their own proficiency in the second language (Seo, 2022). Some parents may also lack access to adequate resources or support systems, making the process seem daunting. Additionally, societal or familial pressure to prioritize the community language over the second language can be a significant barrier. Documenting the contextual dimensions present in cases like Ipek's will provide guidance and serve as a valuable model for parents who wish to foster bilingualism. The insights and experiences will aid both parents and researchers in determining useful and appropriate strategies.

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