

## The Effectiveness of Bilingual Education for Early Childhood Learners

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### Abstract

In Mongolia, there is no existing program designed to support bilingual (Kazakh–Mongolian) development for preschool-aged children with different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. The lack of a clear solution for implementing such a program has become an important issue. The root of this problem lies in the child’s need to learn and maintain their own language and culture, while at the same time, language serves as one of the main tools for further learning upon entering school. Acquiring both the mother tongue and a second language is essential for a child’s development and education, as well as for ensuring inclusive education. Aim. The purpose of this work is to identify the receptive and expressive bilingual language proficiency levels of 4–5-year-old Kazakh–Mongolian bilingual children before and after a bilingual instructional program and to evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. To assess children’s bilingual language levels, we used the ‘Test of Early Language Development (TELD- 3)’; along with individual interviews. A language-puppet- based instructional method was used in the intervention. The study involved 150 Kazakh–Mongolian bilingual children attending public kindergartens in Ulaanbaatar, representing 80% of all 4–5-year-old Kazakh children living in the capital city. Statistical results show that children’s receptive and expressive language abilities vary significantly depending on environmental language exposure, school language, and home language. The study revealed that daily language use has a strong impact on whether one language becomes dominant while the other remains underdeveloped. Among all participants, 35.9% required support in Kazakh, while 21.9% required support in Mongolian. Parental survey results showed that 73.3% of children first acquired Kazakh language at home; however, 52% still required Kazakh language support, indicating that school language and the dominant community language affect bilingual development. After the intervention, the average Kazakh receptive score increased from 75.63 to 97.60, a growth of 20.01 points. Expressive language scores increased from 69.7 to 87.95, rising by 19.64 points (Sig.(2-tailed) ≤ .000). Overall expressive language abilities increased from an average of 201.3 to 216.23, a 14.9-point improvement. These results demonstrate that bilingual education supported by the language-puppet methodology has a positive influence on children’s bilingual language development.

### Keywords

Language, bilingualism, receptive ability, expressive ability, speech, TELD-3.