Early years educators' interpretations of a bilingual literacy curriculum implemented in Content Language Integrated (CLIL) classrooms in the United Arab Emirates: A phenomenological approach to investigating learning

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This thesis has been submitted to the University of Stirling in partial fulfilment for the degree of **Doctor of Education**
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Declaration

I declare that none of the work contained within this thesis has been submitted for any other degree at any other university.
The research conducted and the contents of this thesis have been solely composed by the candidate Antoinette Charmaine Brown.

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated in honour and memory of my beloved father, William Walter Bradley, and my dearest mother, Maria Bradley. Thank you for sharing your love and passion for bilingualism through stories, the endless reading of *Janet and John, The Wind in the Willows, The Secret Seven, the lyrics of songs, and the musical instruments you played* throughout my childhood. Your love, encouragement, and prayers sustained me throughout my life and guided me to experience that bilingualism is another name for success. This dream and the journey would have been meaningless without you by my side and in my thoughts.

Acknowledgements

Abstract

This qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study (Baxter and McMaster 2009, p. 549; Byman 2016, p. 60; Creswell and Poth 2018) drew from a paradigm of interpretivism (Bryman 2016; DePoy and Gitlin 2020) that "examined, explained and described" (McKenney and Reeves 2011, p.30) what sixteen multilingual early years educator participants have in common (Creswell and Poth 2018) as they experienced a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) with a Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) pedagogy (Nikula, and Smit 2010, cited in Arnó and Mancho-Barés 2015, p. 740; San Isidro 2021) at a private school in the UAE. The study explored the bilingual experiences of twelve Arabic early years pupils engaged in language transfer (Cummins 2017; Genesee and Jared 2008) through emergent "translanguaging" (Garcia 2009, p. 157). The study addressed the lack of research evidence concerning descriptive bilingual literacy programs in Arabic Early Childhood Education and the inclusion of early years educators in the UAE education reform and decision-making policies (Aljazeari and Alchalabee 2019; Boles and Dillon 2019; Gallagher 2011; Mohamed and Medhammer 2014; O'Sullivan 2015; O' Leary and Thompson 2019). Qualitative data was analysed using a reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) approach (Braun and Clarke 2021), and conceptual findings were explained using an interpretive phenomenological approach. The results revealed that the multilingual early years educators evidenced the integration of the BLC with CLIL through translated children's literature and an emergent translanguaging approach (Garcia-Lopez, Mor, and Tesconi 2020) valuable within "classroom curricula" (Deng 2010, p. 386) to develop English language skills, specifically, oral fluency amongst early-years Arabic pupils. Hopefully, this study's findings will inform the practices of in-service early years educators and ECE policymakers in the UAE engaged in education reform (Gallagher 2011) and the decision-making initiatives concerning early years bilingual literacy, curriculum design, and pedagogy in Arabic settings.

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08/03/2021

Dear Antoinette

Ethics Application Form: English Language acquisition through bilingual literacy initiatives in an Early Years Arabic environment. A phenomenological approach to investigating learning 0474

Thank you for your submission of the above ethics application and subsequent amendments.

The ethical approaches of this project have been approved, and you can now proceed with your project. The Panel noted 2 points that you may wish to address:

- On the Early Years Teachers Consent Form and the Deputy Principal Consent Form,
- the word 'Suggested Text' still appears on the last item to be initiated. You may want to delete this.

The dates on the various forms indicate a start date of yesterday (7th March). You may want to change these.

Please note that should any of your proposals change, a further amendment submission will be necessary.

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Yours sincerely,

General University Ethics Panel

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Chapter 1

Introduction: A Journey to Bilingualism

I understand myself to be a social constructivist because of the way I see and experience reality. Ontologically, I view reality as subjective with multiple truths. Epistemologically, I gain knowledge through my cultural background and the influences of present and past experiences, personal views, thoughts, impressions, and interactions with many complex multilingual humans who crossed my path. As a phenomenologist, I gather people's experiences to find the essence of their truth, to guide and support me in becoming more experienced through understanding the essence of their experiences. I believe in knowledge that is creative, innovative, and potentially transformational. These interactive processes help me be fluid and reflexive when making interpretations and provide me with a social environment where I could engage and excel as a former bilingual educator, education consultant, principal director, and inspector of schools surrounded by Gulf English and Arabic diglossia.

As a learner of English as a foreign language in the early 1970s and 1980s, I was exposed to traditional language learning strategies, including repetition of phonological, lexical, and grammar rules and drills with the target language. I grew up in a bilingual home, which was an advantage throughout my school and university career. My father, grandfather, and grandmother spoke English, while my mother spoke Dutch and Afrikaans.
I do not clearly remember how I acquired the three languages: English, Dutch and Afrikaans. However, I was reminiscing about the many lyrics of songs my mother sang, the musical instruments she played, and the bilingual pupils' stories she read to my brothers and me. We grew up in a milieu where pupils' literature, music, songs, my father's fabricated stories, newspapers, and exciting outdoor play experiences in ancient forts and the sand, snow, and rain formed part of our language development. The German Language was added to my linguistic repertoire when I was eleven, and I recall comparing and transferring core grammatical concepts, songs, lyrics, and the vocabulary of German and English languages to construct meaning. My German educator was monolingual and could not speak English or Dutch well. However, she taught German language vocabulary and grammar through colourful visual resources, poetry, German and English songs, rhymes, and picture cards of cities in Germany, which supported me with grammar structures, syntax, tenses, and the recognition of vocabulary. I have always been fascinated by the narrative and shape of

stories and how German literature and songs were used to express an understanding of the language. My German teacher's approach was similar to the approach mentioned by Gracia and Wei (2018) on translanguaging, where the two languages were not separated in instruction but instead taught in tandem, which helped me as a second language learner to regard German as a means of communication through my knowledge of English and Dutch vocabulary to make sense of the world and vice versa.

My passion for bilingualism led me to a Bachelor of Education and additional specialisation and diplomas in Remedial Teaching and Special Needs Education, which helped me explore new knowledge and thoughts to contextualise bilingualism in applied learning pedagogy. My experience in English language learning encouraged me to set up three private remedial practices where I supported children at a young age with English language learning, reading, phonics, syntax, and grammar. From an epistemological standpoint, my knowledge and experience of bilingualism are both personal and academic. As a result, I always longed for more meaningful activities and opportunities to enhance my English language skills that would nourish my path and understanding of how young children learn a second language.

Through my experiences with bilingual language, I observed that in their early years, children constructed meaning through their senses, movements, age-related literature, and the development stages of bilingual language. For example, my daughter Angelique's first experience with language before the age of four months was an introduction with picture books and animal illustrations printed in different textures. This engaging technique in language development is referred to as the picture labelling stage or the "interactive sharing of books" (Ping 2014, p. 146), where children are engaged in language by "pointing to illustrations" (p. 147) and active listening. Unintentionally, I played a game with her, recognising different illustrations of animals and vocalising animal sounds until she could point and touch the illustrations and identify the animal associated with the sound and vocabulary with a string of sounds. This powerful phenomenon is interactive book reading (Ezell and Justice 2005, cited in Lennox 2013). During these interactive picture book-sharing episodes between the ages of four and nine months, many different responsive answering and repeated picture readings and picture recognition episodes were instrumental in building a foundation for language development through the association of vocabulary and illustrations. At twelve months, Angelique was familiar with the world of pictures and vocabulary, and she became very excited when she saw real animals. She started to speak in short, recognisable phrases in English and Afrikaans. Similarly, children's literature, such as "Spot Goes to the Farm" by Eric Hill, a touch-and-flip-up series, was a peek-a-boo language development game for my son Corrie. The repetition of actions and vocabulary

associated with the illustrations in the picture book and the peek-a-boo games with the farm, wild animal flip-up illustrations, and hide and show of pictures became an extraordinary time on my lap with bilingual language development. During these lap moments and interactions with languages, both the children developed fine motor skills to page little picture books. They discovered the finer details in the pictures as I prompted them, asking questions in both languages while they predicted what would happen next. We had many memorable moments of laughter as they answered my questions about the colourful illustrations and settings and estimated and counted the storybook characters' toes, eyes, and ears.

At the age of two years, both Angelique and Corrie portrayed an extensive repertoire of bilingual vocabulary through our picture book moments and the audio-recorded children's literature on cassettes. They were eager to choose books from their bookshelves with a short text so we could "*read together".* Frequently, a familiar story, such as "The Little Red Hen" (Dodge 1984), was chosen. While reading the first phrase, I paused to allow them to contribute and repeat words such as, "Not I said the cat; Not I said the dog; Not I said the duck". Occasionally, they paged excitedly on and eagerly yelled the following phrase, "Then I will eat the cake myself," before they even took proper breaths. They could make meaning of the age-appropriate text and illustrations. They became imaginative language learners through the text and characters they met in the children's literature that was extended to their indoor and outdoor playing, and our collaborative story time included "make-believe and made-up song and vocabulary" as we read and sang along to the story's vocabulary, text, and phrases using familiar song lyrics.

When Angelique and Corrie were between four and five years old, our yellow wood dining room table, covered with blankets, make-believe tunnels, and paper leaves, became the misty forest where the troll was waiting on the three little goats. A decorative chair became the cave entrance where they could slip through and hide away from the troll. Both children developed a rich language base through engaging with bilingual pupils' literature, interaction with English and Afrikaans friends, songs, and imaginative worlds. They became participants in the fictional world and the use of bilingual language. Bilingual pupils' books were travelling with us, and they had no structured time and no restriction to become part of the two pupils' daily routine throughout their early years, teens, and young adult lives.

The urge to explore bilingual literacy strategies that may support pupils' language learning further led me to research and pursue a master's degree and an education doctorate in bilingual education in an Arabic early-years setting.
These experiences, including my university studies, teaching career, professional development, and early multilingual experiences as a foreign language learner and mother,

have shaped my English teaching skills and contributed to my passion for bilingualism among Emirati early-year pupils in a multicultural setting.

1.1 The balance between English and Arabic language development

There is a lively debate concerning the balance between English and Arabic in the Arab world. Raddawi and Meslem (2015) argued that an identity loss and a lack of balance between Arabic and English education threaten the UAE and that an alternative is needed to keep the country up with the rest of the world. The authors mentioned that a two-way bilingual program could help preserve the UAE's identity in a multicultural society and that Arabs should not see English as non-inferior but as an equally important language with multicultural benefits. In comparison, Alshammari (2015) mentioned that education should prepare pupils for the real world but should constitute a definite balance between cultural values and satisfying the increasing global linguistic needs. Raddawi and Meslem (2015) mentioned that a balance in "true bilingualism" (p. 92) could be obtained through instruction in two languages and using those two languages as a medium of instruction for any part or all of the school curriculum". The authors elaborated that schools should consider language, maths, and science classes early so pupils can grasp the fundamentals in strong English-language tuition and vocabulary. The current research study aims to provide information on a bilingual literacy curriculum offered by multilingual educators at an Emirati early years department of a private school in Abu Dhabi, where English and Arabic languages are taught through Content Language Integration (CLIL) and translanguaging.

1.1.2   The Research Purpose

The purpose of this qualitative phenomenological case study has two main objectives: a) to create new knowledge about the experiences of sixteen early-year multilingual educators engaged in a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) with a Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) philosophy in an Arabic early-years department of a private school in Abu Dhabi; and b) to investigate if the BLC with CLIL, and pupils' translated literature, leads to the experimentation of English receptive and expressive language skills, and developing of oral fluency amongst early-years Arabic pupils *(Refer to Figure 1.1 below, The Bilingual Literacy Curriculum with CLIL and cross-curricular approach).*

Figure 1.1 illustrates how the early years pupils used pupils' translated literature and experimented with language structures in both languages through content language in activity centres and small groups (ADEK bubbles Covid-19).

Equally important, Figure 1.1 below illustrates how peer dialogue and pupils' interaction through English and their spoken Arabic language a'amiya, and vice versa, were used to gain an understanding of vocabulary and oral fluency in both languages.

Arabic Early Years pupils' social interaction with the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum with Content Language Integrated Learning

Pupils gaining oral fluency, independence, and confidence in using the second language through BLC with CLIL and emergent-translanguaging.
6

Social environment with an activity-centred approach
Pupils engage In English and translated Arabic children's literature with Content Language Integrated activities
2

The BLC with CLIL:

Bilingual Oral Fluency through the BLC that includes pupils' literature, content-language-integrated activities, and emergent translanguaging.

Educators encourage and motivate pupils. dialogue in English Language with peers using repetition of children's literature.
5

Pupils use. emergent-translanguaging to communicate, "move in and out" of Arabic a'amiya and English language vocabulary.
3

Interactions with peers and educators take place through sheltered English and "Repair and Talk" to make sense of the world.
4

Figure 1.1: The Bilingual Literacy approach through pupils' literature, activity centres, emergent translanguaging, and Arabic a'amiya to gain oral fluency.

A'amiya, mentioned in Figure 1.1, is referred to as the Arabic spoken language, colloquial Arabic, dialects, or vernaculars used for daily spoken communication and not used in formal contexts (Ryding 2009), whilst fusHa, the more classical or Modern Standard Arabic (MSA) is referred to as the language of the Holy Quran and Islamic faith (Morrow and Castleton 2007, p. 202, cited in Al Allaq 2011) and used in meetings, written communication, pupils' literature, and school textbooks. The literature identified alternative spellings for MSA (**fusHa), such as**

fussha, foosha, or fusHa and spoken Arabic (Amiya**)**, as **aamiya, or a'amiya**. However, this study adopted the spellings Shendy (2019) described as "fusHa and a'amiya" and will refer to the adopted spelling throughout this research study.

This significant difference between the spoken and written Arabic language is referred to as the Arabic language diglossia (Jaspers 2016). The author defined diglossia as the differentiation of two varieties of the same language used in different domains and for distinct purposes. The literature identified the differences between the spoken a'amiya, the written and formal *fusHa,* and communication or interactions in Arabic (diglossia). Younis (2018), a well-known Arabic journalist, argued that moving from fusHa to a'amiya, and vice versa, provides freedom of expression with much richer images and meanings, which other languages cannot offer.

The mentioned literature is not decisive as the current study revealed that mothers are faced with difficulty in reading the formal *fusHa (classical content)* of children's literature and translating that orally in a'amiya, spoken Arabic (Eviatar and Ibrahim 2014; Schiff and Saiegh-Haddad 2018). Arabic educators face similar difficulties in teaching the language from the more formal classical Arabic text to young pupils (Al-Issa and Dahan 2011, p. 17; Al Sumaiti 2012; Badry 2012, p. 98). However, the early-years educator participants engaged in the study revealed that a'amiya was used to retell the pupils' stories during circle time to encourage conversation.

Palmer (2007, p.14) argued that Spoken Arabic (a'amiya) is often "stigmatised as a less prestigious" variety of Arabic, although it is used in everyday conversation. The author argued that the Arabic spoken language is essential for pupils' learning and should be integrated into their curricula to accommodate their linguistic needs, which concurs with the experiences of the early years educator participants engaged in the study.

The literature review section on language dualism in Chapter 2 provides an account of the influences of Arabic dialects on early years pupils' language development. It also examines the role of early-years educators in the UAE's education reform and decision-making. Chapter 2 further highlights the role of parents and the integration of education resources and bilingual language-integrated subject content that strengthen Arabic early-years pupils' bilingual language development.

1.2 The Research Problem

The lack of research that investigates bilingual education in the early years and the inclusion of early years educators in education reform and leadership decision-making, as well as the lack of clear expectations from administrators, are reflected in several research findings (Dillon 2019, p. 1559; O'Sullivan, 2015). Dillon et al. (2015, p. 28) elaborated on the UAE's state school co-teaching or team-teaching model, where two teachers alternately lead instruction, as a shared responsibility and mentioned that co-teaching is challenging and depends on each situation and cannot be prescribed. The author stated that co-teaching perspectives planned to benefit Emirati pupils' language learning in kindergartens should rely on a more democratic perspective where educators collectively share knowledge and have dedicated time to co-plan, co-reflect, and co-design differentiating instruction to benefit the higher- and lower-order thinking skills of younger pupils. The author concluded that "taking responsibility for young children's language learning includes learning from each other" (p. 1565).

This qualitative phenomenological single case study is concerned with the limited research investigating Arabic early-years language and bilingual literacy in the UAE and the inclusion of early-years educators' experiences with a bilingual literacy curriculum (Boles, Hess, and Woll 2010, cited in Howitt and Cramer, 2014, p. 247; Dillon 2019; Gallagher 2011; O'Sullivan 2015). Similarly, Al Hosani (2022, p. 294) acknowledged the lack of research concerning the influence of UAE culture on early years curricula where both English and Arabic are taught in classrooms. The current qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study under investigation aimed to close this research gap by examining bilingual literacy in an Arabic early-years department of a school in the UAE and providing research results concerning the implementation of Emirati pupils' spoken Arabic, a'amiya and culturally sensitive age-appropriate children's literature in a bilingual curriculum in Arabic early-years. The recommendations explore new knowledge on research in bilingual education in early childhood settings that UAE policymakers may use, the ECE authority and educators to develop a bilingual curriculum for early years Emirati pupils to develop their bilingual language skills and oral fluency.

The study highlights the inclusion and decision-making of educators in education reform and their contributions to an early-years bilingual curriculum design (Cekaite and Aronsson 2005; Dickson 2012; Mohamed and Medhammar 2014, cited in Garvis, Harj-Luukkainen, and

Flynn 2018). The study begins by emphasising a balance between the second and first languages as supportive of self-identification in the curriculum (Mohamed and Medhammar 2014 cited in Garvis, Harj-Luukkainen, and Flynn 2018).

1.2.1 The need for a bilingual curriculum framework for Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the UAE

The UAE "Emirati School" Framework (Al Hosani 2022, p. 287), viewed as part of the UAE national strategy (MOE 2019b), described the current early childhood provision with a focus on high-quality education in early years. The framework is characterised by curriculum content directly related to the Emirati pupils' environment, culture, and traditions. Even though English and Arabic are included in early years classrooms, the Emirati School framework contrasts the BLC with CLIL under investigation. It lacks the inclusion of an adapted bilingual language curriculum where early years pupils engage in bilingual education through a translanguaging approach, where English is taught in conjunction with Arabic language (Matsumoto 2019), with roughly equal amounts of input (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams 2013, cited in De Almeida 2016, p. 120; Urmeneta 2019).

The UAE Vision (2021) policy outlined the government's decision to adopt English as the language of communication in their quest to "take the country from an oil-based economy to a knowledge-based economy" (Barnawi 2017, cited in Siemund, Al-Issa, and Leimgruber 2021, p. 195). This initiative was aimed at introducing English earlier in the kindergarten curriculum and adopting English as a medium of instruction in higher education to raise education standards and become more competitive regionally and globally (Ridge 2014). The Author stated that to reach international educational standards, the UAE Ministry of Education (MoE) designed an academic plan where changes were made to the K-12 public school curriculum by adding bilingualism and including free schooling, modern textbooks, subject choices, and recruiting English-speaking educators to teach English in the public schools, whilst the medium of instruction is Arabic for most subjects such as mathematics, science, social studies, and Islamic studies. As a result, the value and status assigned to English increased, and many UAE parents and guardians were encouraged to send their children to private schools, where all subjects are taught in English, subsequently marginalising the status of Arabic (Nazzal 2014, cited in Ridge 2015, p. 70). In comparison, Karaman (2011) argued that parental awareness about children's home language is vital and stated that parents play a crucial role in early years children's language development. The author voiced concerns about parents' understanding of the influence of maids who speak multiple languages on early years' children's home language development. Whilst some

scholars highlighted that education quality assurance standards in the UAE have been raised, other scholars argued that there has been a slow development and limited empirical research publicly available in early childhood education related to a national bilingual curriculum framework for Early Childhood Education (ECE) (Al-Momani, Ihmeideh, and Momani 2008, cited in Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p. 253). Similarly, several scholars argued that English as a second language needed to be changed (Al Khaili 2009, cited in O'Sullivan 2015, p. 45) and taught in conjunction with the Arabic language (Matsumoto 2019). Recent studies have called for focusing on the impact of English on Emirati culture and learning (Llinares 2015; Al Issa 2017).

The importance of integrating language and content (CLIL) in language curricula is highlighted by many scholars (Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, and Smit 2010, cited in Arnó-Marcia and Mancho-Barés 2015, p. 740; Pavon et al. 2014). Urmeneta (2019) concurred that CLIL fits in well with influential language learning theories as the curricular content is taught through the medium of a "foreign language" (p.183) while it is "interwoven" (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010, p. 1; cited in Urmeneta 2019) in bilingual language learning.

Research has identified many unsolved questions about the most effective instructional approach to promote language learning amongst dual language learners. As such, this qualitative phenomenological study on bilingual education in an early-years Arabic setting investigated a bilingual curriculum in early childhood education that is taught in conjunction with translated children's literature in Arabic and English. The study further explored how the integration of CLIL with BLC, pupils' engagement, and dialogue during activity centres, ADEK bubbles, and a translanguaging approach implemented by early-year educator participants can be interpreted for future progress and success in developing oral fluency amongst the three-to-four-year-old Emirati pupils.

1.2.2 Including educators in education reform and curriculum design

The UAE "borrowed" (Ridge 2009, p. 6) curricula reforms from abroad that specifically included those from the United States and Australia. The author stated that such borrowed curricula may impact the Emirati context and the cultural dimension of educational reforms in the UAE (Ridge 2017). Fourteen curricula are licensed in Abu Dhabi (Refer to The Parents' Guide to Curricula in Abu Dhabi 2019). The foreign curricula offered in Early Childhood have several different foundational philosophies for 3-4-year-old pupils, which include the Montessori Curriculum, British EYFS model, Creative Curriculum model, International Primary Curriculum (IPC) that provides for early years, International Baccalaureate

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Curriculum (IB), and the American Common Core Adopted Curriculum. These curricula aim to develop independence, confidence, self-esteem, and a love for creative learning (Edarabia Best Nurseries in Abu Dhabi 2020). However, most early years educators teaching the mentioned curricula are expatriates, and only 5.4% are Arabic speaking (Ministry of Social Affairs 2009), which gives reason to believe that Arab pupils' development in the Arabic language is overlooked and not receiving the status that it should. Creese and Blackledge (2010) affirmed that education reform, particularly the need to include bilingual education in the early years, starts from the ground roots without a one-size-fits-all curriculum (Walpole and Mc Kenna 2007). The authors argued that education reform, particularly an education framework, should include the voices of those in curriculum practice at the early childhood level. Research identified that educators working together with a bilingual curriculum with co-educators (Arabic and English educators) to enhance emergent bilingual language development amongst young children revealed the need for professional development and administrative support to gain more academic skills and urge for the inclusion of their contributions to curriculum change, and re-design (Al Momani et al. 2008). Dillon and Gallagher (2019, p. 1570) concur that "the teaching experiences of co-teaching and well-informed co-teaching relationships" can contribute to the pedagogical practices and the development of dual language amongst early years pupils. The authors concluded that "flexible translanguaging" is seen as supportive in emergent biliteracy. Intrinsically, this current research study concurred with early-years educators' experiences with a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) within a Content and Language Integrated philosophy (CLIL). The curriculum emphasised the involvement of early-years educators as an essential and integral part of bilingual curriculum design and the bilingual language development of the early years Emirati pupils.

The literature identified new initiatives by the UAE Ministry of Education in 2020 concerning the purpose of early years institutions highlighted through national safety and compliance standards included in the MoE Compliance Inspection Manual for ECIEs (MoE Regulatory Compliance Manual for ECI 2020). The manual emphasises quality assurance standards measured by key indicators that assess the organisation and management of institutions, child safety, services, care, buildings and resources. It further directs how ECEIs may raise compliance standards across the UAE without mentioning a national bilingual curriculum framework for ECEIs that concurs with the ADEK strategic plan for 2009-2018 on dualism. On the contrary, Middlewood and Burton (2005) identified a quality-driven curriculum as critical in teaching and learning. They stated that it forms the core value embedded in a quality institution's education standards, policy, and procedures. The authors argued that the

prime purpose of education institutions is to "facilitate effective learning" (p. 59) and make improved curriculum decisions that turn it into operational reality. Middlewood and Burton (2005) identified three institutional values essential for quality assurance and the development of new knowledge. These institutional values are based on educator-centred, pupil-centred and partnership-centred approaches to facilitating learning and contributing to the quality of institutions.

This qualitative phenomenological single case study aims to provide new knowledge to the curriculum framework of ECI in the UAE, where the experiences and interpretations of early-years educator participants with a BLC within CLIL philosophy are introduced. Scholars have urged early-years educators to participate rather than accept decisions made through hierarchy leadership models (Al Momani 2000; Meyer 2005; O'Sullivan 2015). Scholars identified that for reform to show positive results in education (Cekaite and Aronsson 2005; Mohamed and Medhammar 2014, cited in Garvis, Harj-Luukkainen, and Flynn 2018), leaders and policymakers must stop doing it to people or for people *but instead with them* (Dickson 2012). The study contributes to new knowledge by including the voices of early years educators and their experiences with a bilingual curriculum in an Arabic setting.

The study explains how early-years educator participants experienced the BLC standards and the translated English and Arabic children's literature to develop early years pupils' bilingual language skills *(Refer to Figure 1.1. The BLC with CLIL cross-curricular approach).* The study examined how the early-years educator participants integrated language and subject content activities and creative constructions of play with second-language vocabulary and linguistic forms to encourage pupils' dialogue in both languages. This study further included early-years educator participants' experiences with pupils' engagement in their language learning and exposure to activities and conversations with their peers and mentioned higher well-being and language development through pupil-led activities rather than with educator-cantered approaches (Randler and Bogner 2006; Schaal and Bogner 2005). Pupil-lead experiences indicated that Arabic early year's pupils drew from their spoken language, a'amiya, to support their peers through translanguaging to make sense of the phenomenon.

A step-by-step language development approach was included in this qualitative phenomenological study on BLC with CLIL with a five-step curriculum plan, where early-years educator participants' interpretations revealed their contribution to a bilingual literacy curriculum design and integrated technology, language, and subject content material *(Refer*

to Appendix B: 1.1 Early years five step BLC with CLIL curriculum with activities). The language and integrated subject content approach included translated pupils' literature, educators' modelling of phrases and vocabulary to encourage pupils' dialogue through a strategy adopted by the school and referred to as "repair and talk", the use of technology (Bers 2008), integrated English and Arabic language vocabulary, and a variety of subject content vocabulary practised through activities that develop second-language conversation and dialogue (Banegas 2020). Research that highlighted pupils' "emotional and social engagement in the present-day understanding" (Davies 2011, p. 50) stated that the experiences and contributions of educators to enhance pupils' early language learning must not be underestimated.

1.3 The Study and Background of the Research

The study began by recognising bilingualism in early years CLIL classrooms as significant to a constructivist pedagogy, which indicated that pupils learn through play experiences, self-exploration, inquiry, peer-to-peer, educator engagement and a bilingual literacy curriculum in social learning environments. The study investigated how multilingual early-year educators plan bilingual curriculum resources and activities that allow early-year Arabic pupils to engage and develop oral fluency in English and Arabic.

The study under investigation identified that the BLC with CLIL and a translanguaging approach implemented in the school in Abu Dhabi made pupils more receptive, developed a deeper understanding of English and Arabic vocabulary through dialogue with peers, and enhanced their levels of participation, engagement, and contribution when pupils' translated literature. The study aimed to identify gaps in existing studies concerning bilingual curricula in the early years and suggested areas for future research on pupils' mother tongue-bilingual education, with content language integrated learning and a translanguaging approach in the early years. The rationale for the study was to develop further bilingual curriculum practices and theories that can help educators and UAE policymakers formulate policies and principles that support bilingual literacy and emergent translanguaging amongst Arabic early years pupils without "removing Arabic from a place of prestige and power, academically, educationally and socially" (Al-Issa and Dahan 2011, p. 3, cited in Hopkyns 2014, p. 7).

Research has identified that most nations are bilingual or multilingual (García and Wei 2014; Lewis, Jones, and Baker 2013), and approximately 7000 languages are spoken worldwide (Lewis, Jones, and Baker 2013). The UAE is described as a "super-diverse" linguistic landscape (Blommaert 2016, p. 9 cited in Hopkyns, Zoghbor, and Hassall, 2020, p.

12), where approximately 100 languages are spoken by bilingual and multilingual citizens across the seven emirates of Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah, and Um Al Quwain (Hussein and Gitsaki 2018). The research identified the Arabic Semitic language as the lingua franca of the Arab world (Karolak, 2020). Arabic is the sole official language, as stipulated in Article 7 of the UAE's constitution (The Federal National Council 2009). It is regarded as the Arab's pride, strength, and an integral part of their culture (Bassnett 1998, cited in Al Allaq 2007, p. 2). The Arabic language has its own identity, intertwined with the UAE Arabs' solid religious identity, also referred to as the inseparable "Muslim Identity" (Morrow and Castleton 2007, p. 202). It is emphasised as the "language of the Holy Quran and Islamic faith" (Morrow and Castleton 2007, p. 202, cited in Al Allaq 2011) and mentioned as the "chief instrument and vehicle of the sacred message of Islam" (Maamouri 2000 p.19, cited in Hamzaoui 2017). Although Arabic is the official language of the United Arab Emirates, other scholars would argue that English has a "de facto lingua franca status" (Randall and Samimi 2010) and that only a few expatriates speak Arabic. The focus of English at all levels of education is to "prepare pupils to succeed in today's globalised world" (Al-Issa and Dahan 2021, p.235) and culturally diverse society.

The high percentage (88.52%) of culturally diverse and highly transient foreigners strongly impacts the local linguistic landscape of the UAE (Salama, 2022). Foreigners contribute to the complex linguistic texture of multilingual communities and foreign languages (Siemund, Al-Issa, Leimgruber 2020) with their own sets of grammatical, Lexile, pragmatic, and sociolinguist conventions (norms) competing in the public sphere. Although Arabic is the official language of the UAE, English is used in conjunction with Arabic in most government departments and businesses, with some tension between English and Arabic (Dorsey 2018, cited in Siemund, Al-Issa and Leimgruber 2020, p.191). Similarly, as described by Hopkyns, Zoghbor, and Hassall (2018), Emiratis increasingly use multiple forms of linguistic hybridity such as "white dialects" (p. 166), "Arabizi" (p.167), with "translanguaging", and "code-switching," (p.165). "Arabizi" refers to a creative mix of Arabic and English (O'Neill 2016, p. 26) to maximise communication potential and is popular amongst young Emirati teenagers due to advances in technology and the use of social media communication (Al-Shaer 2016). These forms of linguistic hybridity are changing the unique classical Emirati language use, influencing their pupils' local identities and downplaying their roots (Onley 2014). The literature has identified that Arabizi disturbs the profound grounded relationship between the Arabic language and the Quran (Esmail 2016). Hopkins (2017) and O'Neill (2016) concur that using Arabizi causes concern and argue that Emirati teenagers prefer Arabizi and focus on English over Arabic in informal social media contexts, which might impact their younger

siblings' language development. As a result, English has also become a "lingua franca" that allows the UAE's various migrant communities to communicate (Siemund et al. 2020, p.191) and understand each other. The evolution of the English Language into the "de facto lingua franca" has a long and rich history created over decades by political, economic, and scientific influence. It is also the UAE's official language in business, tourism, and global trading (Dorsey 2018).

Clarke, Ramanathan, and Morgan (2007) mentioned that the UAE has "accommodated globalisation" (p. 584) and its policy of linguistic dualism, where English is viewed as the language of "business, modernity, and internationalism," while Arabic is constrained to the domain of religion, tradition, and localism. However, it should be noted that English is hybridised, resulting in the many native English varieties that form a potpourri of what is heard in the UAE and referred to as "Pilipino English, Indian English, Pakistani English, and African English" (Siemund, Al-Issa, Leimgruber 2021 p.192). Early years Emirati children are surrounded by English not only in public schools that implement a bilingual curriculum or elite Emiratis who attend English medium private schools (Kennetz and Carroll 2018, p. 180) but also in early years settings, kindergartens, and their homes through nannies, the internet and television. The literature review identified that these hybridisations result in alternative phonological and grammatical formations where, in some instances, these speakers of English with several differences in dialect are defined as "second, additional, or foreign language speakers" (Siemund, Al-Issa and Leimgruber (2020, p. 191) that potentially impact early-years pupils' English language acquisition and development.

According to the Dubai Statistics Centre (2014), almost 94% of Emirati families hired multilingual nannies. These nannies use basic English or a variety of English to communicate with the children in their care. These hybridisations result in alternative phonological and grammatical formations. Bruce and Spratt (2011) argued that "it takes a whole village to bring up and educate a child" (p.100), and school-parent partnership (Morrow 2020) was identified as essential in the development of young pupils' language. The author mentioned that schools should "communicate with parents" (p. 68) and create a school-parent connection where parents share their culture and language to support educators in developing pupils' language. The sharing of culture helps to understand a pupil's home and school literacy experiences and supports educators in responding to young pupils' linguistic and pragmatic needs (Allen 2017). The current research conducted on BLC with CLIL and an emergent-translanguaging approach implemented by the school in Abu Dhabi emphasised the importance of parent-educator partnerships *(Refer to Chapter 2.6, the*

description of Epstein's Parental involvement model; Epstein 2002, cited in Oates 2017, p. 3) as essential to pupils' bilingual language development. Such partnerships between educators and parents have the potential to support the identification of the linguistic needs of the early-years child and emphasise the balance between early-years second language learning, their Arabic identity, and utilising pupils' mother tongue (a'amiya) to develop their English language. The following section examined how lexical borrowings may impact or complicate the cultural identity of early language experiences of Arabic early-years pupils.

1.4 The influence of a nation's cultural identity on educational policy and language development

The literature review identified that the language and words in the early language experiences of young pupils' development can be influenced by cultural experiences (Shonkoff and Phillips 2000) and the traditions its language conveys (Trudgill 2000). Cultural experiences can support language development by planning well-integrated, developmentally age-appropriate curricula and engaging opportunities for young pupils to build the foundations for listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Strickland and Shanahan 2004). Matsumoto (2019) articulated that cultural identity influenced educational policy and the development of language curricula. Al Hosani (2022, p. 284) mentioned that Emirati culture and heritage are core elements of the early childhood education (ECE) curriculum, which is influenced by global practices. Cultural influences are evident in the use of English in Dubai, which is subsumed under Gulf English. Gulf English comprises several English varieties mixed with Arabic vocabulary and phrases spoken in the UAE, a new trend amongst many young Arab children (Fussell 2011). The Gulf English, with substantial lexical borrowings (Weber 2011) from different domains, included the Arabic religion "Alhamdulillah, which means "Praise to God," "Inshallah," which means God willing, and "Mashallah," which means what God wishes. Other lexical borrowings are from food such as "biriyani," which means flavoured rice, geographical features such as "Jabal," which means mountain, and from clothing such as the "dishdasha," which means long robe for men. Another is "abaya" that is the black cloak for women, and "hijab" that is a religious veil worn by many Muslim women (Boyle 2011, 2012; Fussell 2011). Hopkyns, Zoghbor and Hassall (2018) and Taha-Homure (2008, p. 190) described lexical borrowings as a semi-new trend in Arab cultural societies that transforms English into the lingua franca. Fussell (2011) asserted that Arabic speakers gave English, used in the UAE, a local flavour.

Conversely, globalisation has several adverse effects on bilingual education in the UAE. Baburajan (2019) mentioned that globalisation has resulted in a rush of educational

institutions to the country, making it an overcrowded marketplace and posing the potential for declining quality education and preserving the Emirati culture. It concurs with Shohamy (2007, p. 132), who mentioned that "globalisation is multilingualism" in programs and curricula.

The substantive impact of stimulating early-years bilingual language curriculum plans, improving early childhood policies, and bilingual learning experiences on future education and language development has been documented in many studies (Baker 2011; Colón 2019; Garci 2009; Garcia 2014; Shonkoff and Phillips 2000). This qualitative phenomenological single case study on a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) with CLIL under investigation sets an insight for practitioners and researchers in the frame of shared experiences in bilingualism. The BLC with CLIL may serve as a potential alternative curriculum for early years and kindergarten institutions in bilingual education in the UAE. It further investigates whether the phenomenon of bilingual literacy in the early years is fit for purpose by adding to the primary goal of the UAE, where education stakeholders are not only preparing Emirati high school pupils for the local and international workforce but also providing the necessary bilingual and multilingual skills and experiences from an early age in Emirati Early Childhood Education (ADEC 2012: The Road to 2030).

1.5 Research Questions

 The study aims to answer the following questions:

What experiences do multilingual early years educators hold regarding teaching a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) with Content Language Integrated pedagogies (CLIL) in Emirati early years classrooms?

In what ways (if at all) do Content and Language Integrated pedagogies (CLIL) support a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum in the UAE and develop oral fluency amongst Arabic early years pupils? *(Refer to Figure 1.2, The Weekly Plan for Early Years Bilingual Literacy Plan with CLIL).*

1.6 Summary of Chapter One

In chapter one, I discussed how Emirati early years pupils use their mother tongue, specifically their spoken language, a'amiya, and emergent translanguaging to gain bilingual literacy skills. This qualitative phenomenological case study has noticed an increase in the importance of fostering bilingualism and multilingualism in international countries and cities such as Dubai and Abu Dhabi. The literature highlighted that educators and pupils need to acknowledge bilingualism and multilingualism in societies and should learn more than just English (Kubota 2016).

The qualitative phenomenological case study that was conducted aimed to investigate and understand the experiences of educators and pupils through the exploration of Arabic and English literacy lessons and Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) (Garrido 2000; Lawson 2002; Nikula 2017; San Isidro 2021) in Arabic early years classrooms.

The aim was to investigate whether children's translated literature text, vocabulary, subject content, and bilingual language integration through translanguaging provide effective practical strategies and methods that can be successfully implemented and included in a bilingual literacy curriculum in the early years.

It is mentioned that limited research has been conducted on sustainable bilingual literacy in the early years of the UAE (Dillon 2019; Gallagher 2011; Hess and Woll 2010; O'Sullivan 2015).
Thompson (2019) highlighted that investing in a bilingual literacy curriculum requires Emirati early years pupils to be exposed to English and Arabic simultaneously to benefit cognitive control, problem-solving, memory, and thought processing (Al Subaihi 2016).

Before proceeding with Chapter 2, the Literature Review and Conceptual Framework; Chapter 3, The Methodology; Chapter 4, The Research Findings; and Chapter 5, The Discussion, Limitations, Recommendations, and Conclusion, I describe the following terms and abbreviations mentioned in the study.

Term	Description
Emirati	Emirati citizens are Arabic speakers born in the United Arab Emirates and referred to as UAE nationals or locals.
MSA	**Modern Standard Arabic** (fusHa) is also referred to as Maki.
NSA	Non-standard Arabic (a'amiya) is also referred to as Madini.
Translanguaging	Translanguaging is an approach that transforms and extends traditional bilingual education programs by including multiple languages for social justice. Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) and Creese and Blackledge (2010) refer to bilingual education as the umbrella term for multilingual education constructed through a translanguaging approach.
Emergent-translanguaging	It is an interactive developmental bilingual language approach in which Arabic pupils in their early years use the linguistic resources of their Arabic spoken language, a'amiya, to identify and recognise the second language vocabulary and language structures and bring them to life to understand the world.
Diglossia	Arabic language diglossia is when the language has different varieties, registers, or styles that people produce and recognise (Jaspers 2016). Arabic speakers within a specific community simultaneously use two varieties of Arabic, one for everyday communication *(a'amiya)* and the other for writing and formal interactions *(fusHa).*

BLC	BLC refers to a bilingual literacy curriculum built on translated children's literature texts to enhance English as a second language vocabulary and encourage English and Arabic language communication and oral fluency.
CLIL	Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a pupil-centred pedagogy where pupils gain knowledge of content and language through a few methodologies ranging from communicative language teaching to integrating subject content and language learning through interactive and engaging activities.
NAEYC	National Association for the Education of Young Children
UAE	United Arab Emirates
ECEI	Early Childhood Education Institutions (UAE)
ECE	Early Childhood Education
MoE	Ministry of Education (UAE)
Protective Bubbles	ADEK (2019-20) school reopening guidelines for small groups of six to ten pupils working together to avoid health and safety risks during COVID-19.
EY	Early Years
KHDA	The Knowledge and Human Development Authority Dubai
ADEK	The Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge
L1 and L2	L1 refers to pupils' first language, and L2 refers to pupils' second language usage.

Chapter 2

Literature review

This chapter provides an introduction and theoretical framework with a literature review related to the current study on early-year bilingual language development. It is organised into ten themes. The first theme examined a theoretical and contextual framework; the second theme examined a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) with CLIL and language transfer; the third theme examined linguistic dualism and language content integration; the fourth theme examined how translanguaging extends traditional bilingual education programs; the fifth theme examined children's literature in bilingual curricula; the sixth theme examined internal and external language development through play-based learning; the seventh theme examined the gradual release of pupils' responsibility towards independent learning; the eight themes examined global perspectives on bilingual education; the ninth theme examined parents as pupils' first educators to develop language, the last theme reviewed the influence of a social-cultural environment on bilingual language development.

Introduction

Multiple theories on bilingualism suggest that young pupils exposed to equal abilities in two or more languages not only show an advanced development in each language than their peers exposed to one language but have the potential to support them to become fully bilingual (Albareda- Castello, Pons and Sebastian-Galles 2011).

Conboy (2013, p.36) agrees that early childhood is the critical period for language development and is an ideal phase for young pupils to acquire multiple languages, but that educators should include the long-term outcomes of sound recognition, grammar, and meaning-making in language to benefit dual language learning socially, linguistically, and cognitively. Espinosa (2015, p. 47) emphasised young pupils' home language as essential and mentioned that incorporating children's literature with familiar cultural content and various resources in each language will contribute to bilingual language learning. The author elaborated that when young dual language learners with proficiency in their home language are exposed to literature with cultural content, it leads to a "strong cultural identity" and the development of strong family relationships and future bilingual language success.

Despite the theories and robust research on the benefits of early bilingualism, many pupils still need to receive an enriched early childhood curriculum that develops bilingualism (Espinosa 2015, p.50). Chang et al. (2007, p. 244) concurred and noted that early childhood curricula face the challenges of young pupils developing proficiency in their home language

and English. To reap the benefits of bilingual education and explore the potential of pupil-centred pedagogical frameworks in Arabic early childhood without replacing the home language, it is the goal of this thesis to examine the experiences of early years educators involved in a bilingual literacy curriculum with content language integrated learning in Arabic early years classrooms. The current qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study under investigation further aimed to close the research gap by examining bilingual literacy in an Arabic early-years context in the UAE and providing research results concerning implementing a bilingual curriculum in an Arabic early childhood setting.

2.1 Theoretical and Contextual Framework

The literature highlighted a bilingual approach where language skills and knowledge are transferred from one language to another and vice versa through a process referred to as transfer theory (Genesee and Jared, 2008).

Cummins (2005) described the process of language transfer as a developmental interdependence hypothesis. The author stated that literacy skills and knowledge may be transferred using the mother tongue (L1) to understand the second language (L2) through what he called the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) of the mother tongue.

Cummins argued that pupils with a strong foundation in the mother tongue (first language) will grasp the second language when they have proficiency in the mother tongue. The author argued that such development will depend on the school's and educators' contributions and how they address the curriculum and tasks supporting pupils in developing both languages. According to the theory of Cummins (2008), bilingual educators' experiences and bilingual education focusing on the mother tongue can be used as an instrumental strategy in pupils' language development as pupils concurrently learn English (L2) and transfer knowledge from L2 to L1 and vice versa.

Accordingly, the theory emphasises the activation of conceptual knowledge and the development of proficient language skills through differentiated tasks created by educators and taught through effective teaching strategies, which include listening, visuals, visual illustrations, and conversations.

Followed by the theory of Cummins (2005), which described the process of language transfer as a developmental interdependence hypothesis, is the theory of Tabors (2008, p.38) that refers to pupils' language development as moving through the *"four-phase developmental sequence."* The author mentioned that the first phase is when pupils use their

home language to learn to distinguish between the home and the new language. This is followed by the *"non-verbal or observational period,"* where they use alternative methods of communication such as hand gestures, pointing, or touching objects to make sense of the second new language. Pupils acquire receptive understanding as they listen and observe during conversation. Pupils then start with using labelling and employing common phrases that refer to the "*telegraphic and formulaic phase,"* where they use short phrases repeated by educators and peers of the new language, engage in the activities in the classroom, and start to communicate with their peers. The young pupils then construct their new sentences and enter the *"productive use of the new language"* in the fourth development sequence. The author revealed that language learning differs for all young learners, as motivation, age, exposure, and personality impact their development. Considerable research evidence reported by August and Shanahan (2006, p. 260) revealed that cognitive abilities, previous learning experiences, cultural background, and pupils' knowledge of the second language play an integral part in their language development.

Both the mentioned theories described the process of language transfer as a developmental interdependence hypothesis which concurs with the BLC with CLIL under investigation that is built on pupils' listening, children's literacy, children's literature (storybook) illustrations, visual cards, and visual props with the integration of subject content and language to support the cross-linguistic transfer of both languages to improve oral fluency. The literature review identified that children's literature is crucial to scaffolding language skills and developing pupils' text comprehension (Gunderson, D'Silva, and Odo 2014). The authors determined that solid parental involvement in children's literature can improve their reading outcomes and positively impact their literacy skills.

Cummins (2005) argued that the conceptual knowledge in L1 and L2 is interdependent. The author identified five types of transfer that can occur during language transfer, depending on the sociolinguistic situation (Cummins 2005, p, 5).

I explained the five types of transfer through pupils' literature used in this thesis by early years educators, particularly how Ian Whybrow's pupils' book Harry and the Bucketful of Dinosaurs fits into a two-way transfer across Arabic and English within the BLC with the CLIL curriculum under investigation.

The author described the first type of transfer as a transfer of *conceptual elements; for* example, pupils understand the concept of a bucket full of dinosaurs and can identify the visual illustrations. The second transfer type explained is *the transfer of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies; for* example, pupils use vocabulary acquisition strategies to make

sense of the illustrations *of Harry and the* Bucketful *of Dinosaurs* by using their mother tongue and vocabulary taught by the educator and the interaction with their peers to visualise and make sense of the illustrations. The next type of *transfer mentioned by the author is the pragmatic aspects of language* use. This is referred to as the willingness to take risks in communication through L2 and the ability to use paralinguistic features such as gestures to aid communication. With the pupils' literature, *Harry and the* Bucketful *of Dinosaurs*, it was observed that pupils will take risks to retell the story, using translanguaging, where they move in and out of Arabic and English vocabulary to demonstrate their understanding of the visual illustrations, or use "repair and talk" where their peers or educator will support them with the sentence phrases. They now learn to make connections and transfer meaning, for example, with the Arabic vocabulary "*dlw,*" *which is "bucket"* in English. The last type of transfer explained by (Cummins 2005, p.5) is the *transfer of phonological awareness, for example*, *identifying distinct sounds* used in words. The transfer of phonological awareness is complex in Arabic as it does not correspond with English phonemics awareness. The author asserted that there is empirical evidence that language transfer, particularly the extensive use of the spoken language of pupils with L2, serves many pedagogical purposes and can be instrumental in the language development of monolingual language users, such as Arabic early-year pupils exposed to bilingual instructional strategies.

The educator participants revealed that the *transfer of metacognitive and metalinguistic strategies, in other words, translating English vocabulary to Arabic vocabulary,* supported pupils to make sense of the children's literature and to use phrases to retell the stories in both languages.

2.2 The BLC with CLIL curriculum through the Lens of Language Transfer

According to Garcia (2009), in bilingual education, two languages are used for instruction and assessments of pupils. The author argued that children should be taught to become bilingual or biliterate in the multilingual, ever-changing world. There is a different school of thought surrounding bilingualism and specifically bilingual education in schools. In the United States, dual language schools where L1 and L2 are provided equal attention are getting much attention lately. In the UAE, in public schools, bilingual education follows a curriculum presented to pupils in two different languages, whilst in private schools, English is dominant and referred to as the target language where pupils are instructed to use English instead of their mother tongue (Baker 2000). A commemorative step has been taken by the UAE

government to shift towards dualism (ADEK strategic plan 2009-2018) and to invest in bilingual curricula in schools where pupils can learn to speak, read, and write in both Arabic and English (Gallagher 2010), whilst mathematics and science are taught in English, Arabic language, history, and Islamic studies are conducted by native Arabic speakers. (Kotter 2012, cited in Guilamo 2020, p. 74) mentioned a mismatch between what bilingual and dual-language pupils can do and the reality of what they are capable of if provided with adequate support and resources that can transform their language ability into significant opportunities. Castro (2011, p. 275) mentioned that for dual-language pupils to develop both languages, quality practices should be included, for instance, more individual, small-group instruction, presentations with visual material that is culturally and age-appropriate, and presented in a child's home language and English, as well scaffolding of concepts and the teaching of vocabulary in instruction.

The current study under investigation concerning the BLC with CLIL concurs with the theory of language transfer and the use of the Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) of the mother tongue or pupils' spoken home language, as mentioned by Cummins (2008). Through the lens of transfer theory, educators' experiences with a BLC with CLIL and pupils' spoken Arabic language "a'amiya" (Al Afnan 2021, p. 464) were seen as a vehicle and a critically important resource that allowed access to English through the transfer of content language and instruction mediated through concurrent teaching of English that took place through pupils' literature. Transfer theory, as implemented and examined in this study, views pupils' emerging bilingualism holistically (Grosjean 2010), permitting keeping to an instructional routine and encouraging access to their entire linguistic repertoire (García 2009; MacSwan 2017) as an ongoing resource to aid their oral fluency and bilingual success in Arabic early years education. This study investigated a BLC with CLIL curriculum and classroom pedagogy built on a range of children's literature and themes created for each term in the early years department of the school where the investigation was conducted (*Refer to Table 1.1 Early years literature and linguistic resources).* The study showed that the curriculum design consisted of the emergent features of English and Arabic Language vocabulary and grammar embedded in pupils translated linguistic resources, curriculum strands, standards, and activities integrated to develop receptive and expressive oral language skills *(Refer to Appendix B:1.2, Jack and the Beanstalk strands and standards).* Similarly, the BLC with CLIL fit four of five transfer types mentioned by Cummins (2005), where an emergent-translanguaging approach (Garcia and Wei 2014) was included, which refers to pupils transferring vocabulary by moving in and out of Arabic and English when they speak and make sense of the phenomenon. Research evidence supports the critical role of oral

language development in early childhood. It emphasises educators' instructional practises that include listening, speaking, and developing early decoding skills, which is the key to later reading proficiency (López and Paez 2021, p. 15).

Subsequently, the BLC with CLIL under investigation showed that it included a five-step developmental approach to language transfer used in both Arabic and English language development. (*Refer to the diagram Appendix B: 1.1 Early years five-step developmental Bilingual Literacy initiative through children's literature and CLIL).*

"The five-step developmental diagram" illustrated how the Arabic early years pupils at the school where the research was conducted develop a second language over time using translated cultural and age-appropriate children's literature, the mother tongue and a series of established steps. These steps encompass **Listening** attentively to children's literature (stories), **Responding to others**, using short phrases and taught vocabulary to repeat the story, **Display** understanding when questions are asked, **demonstrating** knowledge of vocabulary in both languages and lastly, **Applying Knowledge** where pupils use the language structures, phrases, short sentences and vocabulary that were taught and then developed their oral fluency in both Arabic and English. The first step included in the five-step BLC with CLIL curriculum implemented by the early years participants in the study highlighted listening to the educator reading English children's literature as an essential part of Arabic and English language development while looking at the illustrations during English and Arabic circle time and engaging in Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) through collaborative small group activities in protected bubbles (Handbook ADEK 2019-20 COVID-19 regulations) of six to eight pupils in mixed ability groups, while other groups were taught at different times, virtually.

To comply with the ADEK handbook on COVID-19 regulations, schools in the UAE had to teach a limited number of pupils. They had to adhere to the UAE COVID-19 and Abu Dhabi Health Services (SEHA) regulations on placing pupils in smaller groups, ensuring that they wore masks and that hands and resources during CLIL were sanitised consciously, and recording the names of the pupils in the groups, which of the pupils in a group tested positive for COVID-19, and who was placed under quarantine.

Similarly, pupils listened to a translated version of the children's literature during Arabic circle time and continued engaging in CLIL activities. Pupils responded to the text through educators questioning, modelling, re-telling, and repeating language phrases found within the text through a process referred to by the school as "repair and talk." During the step, educators and peers supported pupils to "talk" and use vocabulary in their target language,

rephrasing and repeating the sequencing of the story through the illustrations and discussions. Following these steps, pupils began understanding the story in both languages, using short verbal phrases and vocabulary during CLIL and hands-on language-integrated activities through translanguaging (emergent). During this phase, pupils moved in and out of Arabic and English to practice language structures and make sense of their world. In this fourth step, pupils use vocabulary independently, through conversations with peers and educators about events in the story, to make sense of the phenomenon.

Following these independent activities, pupils, in the fifth stage *of the school's five-step developmental Bilingual Literacy initiative*, use knowledge and understanding of the vocabulary taught in both languages in oral communication (sentence and phrase construction) across English and Arabic. The research has identified that Arabic early years pupils practised both languages through content language integrated learning (CLIL) and spent more or less equal time with both languages, which helped them to draw connections between the Arabic vocabulary they are familiar with and the taught English second language expressive and receptive vocabulary to make sense of the world (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams 2013, cited in De Almeida 2016, p. 120). The integration of language through content subjects such as English, science, mathematics, technology, and art are emphasised and form an integral part of practising and developing the target language in the early years of the school whilst focusing on their spoken Arabic less often during the fifth step.

The study showed that the integration of translated pupils' literature and the taught language through content subjects provided pupils with the opportunity to practice vocabulary and phrases during activities such as role-play, visual card activities, tiny mix ability bubbles, in activity centres, and hands-on activities to communicate with their peers through the process of "repair and talk".

Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2013) emphasised the focus on the quality of instruction, having a variety of resources, and providing opportunities such as exposure to both languages simultaneously, contributing to young pupils' language development. Strickland (2020) claimed that second language teaching involves engaging the whole child when teaching the target language. The author suggested that pupils should receive equal amounts of input in the two languages to reach a native-like proficiency, which the educators engaged in the BLC demonstrated with the CLIL five-step development plan used in the Arabic early years' classrooms. Similarly, Lightbrown and Spada (2013) highlighted that bilingual pupils should be exposed to adequate and more frequent practice of the second language. The authors mentioned that without practice, children can reach a plateau called

"fossilisation" (p. 43). The condition of fossilisation is referred to as the "inability to master the target language fully features" in the second language (Wei 2008, p.127). The author elaborated that this causes uncertainty in pupils' second language on all levels, including their phonological, grammatical, lexical, and pragmatic competence. The author further noted that fossilisation considerably influences English second language learning due to language transfer and the lack of formal instruction in English. The author argued that learning English through other second language learners and language transfer may lead to confusion and inaccurate use of lexical, grammatical, and syntactical patterns, which differ from Standard English. Research has shown that successful second language learning includes understanding vocabulary and meaning-making through cross-lingual comparisons and analysing the target language (Birdson 2003). The author further stated that natural exposure to the English language helps overcome fossilisation but argued that using a second language too early and before pupils have significant oral fluency in the target language can be problematic when still relying on the native language. Lightbrown and Spada (2013, p. 96) concurred that an early start is no guarantee that pupils can reach elevated levels of the second language as every individual is different with unlimited potential.

Thus, in the current study under investigation, cross-lingual challenges were found in Arabic diglossia, which refers to the two varieties of language used among Emirati early-year pupils. A'amiya, the Non-Standard Arabic, used in the spoken Arabic language and language teaching by Emirati mothers to their infants, and fusHa, the Modern Standard Arabic, which is the formal Arabic language of the Quran, children's literature, and textbooks (Jaspers 2016, p.181). The study's early years' educator participants revealed that the spoken Arabic language, a'amiya, was used when children's literature was translated into Arabic, and the English Standard language was used when translated into English. Eviatar and Ibrahim (2014) and Schiff and Saiegh-Haddad (2018) argued that diglossia, with the status of two separate languages in the cognitive system of their speakers, influences the vocabulary and comprehension of pupils in the early years and impacts their reading development (Shendy 2019, p. 126). Moreover, the literature highlighted a lack of research investigating the effect of Arabic diglossia (Schiff and Saiegh-Haddad 2018) on bilingual education (Dillon 2019). The literature instead highlighted bilingual curricula taught with the Arabic spoken language as an aid to self-identification (Mohamed and Medhammar 2014, cited in Garvis, Harj-Luukkainen, and Flynn 2018) to support the second language (Cummins 2017) or English as the "father tongue" (Suleiman 2011, p. 140). Therefore, the BLC with CLIL under investigation examined how the Arabic spoken language, a'amiya, was used to support

Arabic early years pupils in making sense of the translated English and Arabic children's literature included in the BLC with CLIL and emergent-translanguaging pedagogy.

Literature reviewed identified limited research results on bilingual education in Arabic early years in the U.A.E. (O'Sullivan 2005, p. 425; Galligher 2011, p. 69; Dillon 2019) and the language development of bilingual early years pupils where children's literature was included in curricula (Justice et al. (2010); and Westerveld, Gillon, and Boyd (2012); Uccelli and Páez 2007; Tagoilelagi-Leota Glynn et al. 2005). Therefore, the current research on BLC with CLIL was conducted to identify the development of Arabic early years language learning by investigating the implementation of the curriculum through pupils' translated literature and activities built on Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The literature identified that effective learning takes place when educators not only develop a curriculum that suits the needs of pupils but work collaboratively to create conditions "to make learning their own and young pupils' learning more effective" Carnell (2001, p. 54, cited in Guilamo 2020) and more student-centred (Reed and Lodge 2006) with appropriate material for bilingual language development (Rojas, Katter, Tian 2022). Scholars (e.g., Levitt 2001; Puskas and Anderson 2018) also identify educators' pedagogical experiences as instrumental in determining successful curriculum planning. For example, Al Momani (2000) and O'Sullivan (2015) highlighted the role and influence of early years educators within the UAE's education reform concerning curriculum planning and decision-making (Bradfield and Exley 2020, p.770; Heinemann, Chang, and Menninga 2005).

The study showed that the BLC with CLIL and emergent-translanguaging material created to support all Emirati early years pupils' second language learning was planned by the school's senior management team in collaboration with the early years educators and was built on age-appropriate pupils' translated literature (*Refer to Table 1.1 Early years children's literature and linguistic resources).* The curricula included language standards and strands that fit the development of the age group *(Refer to Figure 1.1. Refer to the BLC with CLIL Curriculum age-appropriate strands and standards).* The BLC with CLIL further included a Bilingual Language and Literacy Curriculum rubric that highlighted the bilingual language strands such as oral language, vocabulary, phonological awareness, letter knowledge and early word recognition, print and book awareness, writing and reading *(Refer to Appendix A:1.2 The Bilingual Language and Literacy rubric).* Secondly, the BLC with CLIL curriculum included teacher's bilingual curriculum manuals with English language and Arabic strands and standards for early years, weekly lesson plans, Big Book children's literature in English and Arabic, story sacks with visual props, visual charts in English and Arabic, and hand

puppets of the story characters, that match the literacy teachable units *(Refer to Figure 1.2 Early Years Bilingual Literacy with CLIL activities Day 4).* Therefore, the BLC with CLIL included simultaneous practising of the language structures and vocabulary of the two languages (Flynn, Foley and Vinitskaya 2005) through the mentioned Five Steps Bilingual Literacy Development initiative implemented during English and Arabic circle times.

The literature review identified that language integrated with subject content taught in collaborative groups with activities transferred across pupils' two languages (August and Shanahan 2006; Cummins 2017).

Knowledge transfer enabled pupils to engage effectively and meaningfully during English-mediated instruction and supported the "meaning-making" of the taught vocabulary (Martin and Miller 2012, p. 463; Mazak 2017, cited in Aghai, Sayer, Vercellotti 2020, p. 154) across all disciplines. The authors agree that language transfer through translanguaging in the classroom increases classroom management efficiency, establishes good relationships, and reduces disciplinary issues. The authors further mentioned that it alleviates pupils' anxiety, encourages English language learning, and gradually supports pupils to feel confident or comfortable using English vocabulary.

Subsequently, with more confidence, pupils engaged in emergent translanguaging, where the transfer of one language to another is taking place and where they make sense of a second language through "moving in and out of the "fuzziness of language boundaries" (Garcia 2009, p.157). Many scholars have studied translanguaging, particularly those in education (Colón 2019; Creese and Blackledge 2010; Garcia and Kleifgen 2010), and it is the focus of the phenomenon under study. Research has shown that not all scholars agree that second language development occurs through language transfer. Al-Issa (2017, p.13) argued that translating directly from English to Arabic, and vice versa, will urge Emirati pupils to use the colloquial Arabic (a'amiya) that impacts the proper use of MSA. Flynn, Foley and Vinnitskaya (2010) asserted that L1 does not play a privileged role in subsequent language acquisition of L2 and that patterns of acquisition in a new language will depend upon the nature of the linguistics pre-knowledge already represented in the brain. However, the authors mentioned that this calls for expensive L1, L2 and L3 research.

The current study highlighted educators' experiences with early years pupils' spoken Arabic language (a'amiya) that was used to transfer English language vocabulary to their known Arabic vocabulary and vice versa (MacSwan and Rolstad 2003, 2005, 2010; Rolstad 2015). The literature further highlighted a bilingual curriculum that included a content language integrated philosophy (Banegas 2019; Nikula 2017; San Isidro 2021), children's literature

(Bruce and Spratt 2011), and an environment with adequate resources and motivation to learn the second language or either. Even though educators "as the knowledgeable other" (Vygotsky cited in Keenan, Evans, and Cowley 2016, p. 45) guided pupils' knowledge within bilingual education, research pointed out that their experiences might be generalisations about cause and effect (Anderson, Johnson, and Saha 2002). The authors highlighted that educators may consciously or unconsciously influence new information based on pre-existing experiences regarding previous teaching and pupils' learning, which is difficult for the researcher to observe. These pre-existing experiences can often result in resistance to change in teaching practices. Language curricula are due to stress or personal and social experiences that participants do not want to reveal, making it hard to examine one without referring to the other. Finally, the literature highlighted L1 as a powerful resource to support the learning of L2 when used in tandem and when bilingual instructional strategies are planned to support the transfer of language that can encourage pupils to take risks and start talking.

2.3 Linguistic dualism and language content integration

The literature identified linguistic dualism as a learning environment that comprises half of native English speakers and half of native speakers of a language other than English. The literature identified that dualism provides equal opportunity for pupils to be taught through integrated content instruction that includes development in two languages, for example, in Arabic and English (Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri 2005; Gómez 2006, cited in Pimental, Soto, and Urrieta 2008) identified a few characteristics of a dual language program. The authors stated that it is a school curriculum taught in both languages without translation, and pupils with English proficiency and those with another language are integrated into most of the subject content. Moreover, pupils are exposed to the two languages equally to gain proficiency in both languages.

Language Dualism has been identified by several different names, including dual language education (DLE), developmental bilingual education (DBE), two-way bilingual education (TWBE), two-way immersion (TWI), dual immersion (DI), and enriched education (EE) (Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri 2005, cited in Pimentel, Soto, Pimentel, and Urrieta 2008). In this research study, the pupil participants were native Arabic speakers engaged in a bilingual literacy program with content language-integrated pedagogy. The pupils were involved in the academic subject content of both languages while developing their oral fluency and literacy skills in English. Their native language was taught in conjunction with the development of both languages. As identified in the literature, dual language programs

contribute to pupils achieving high proficiency in core curriculum content and knowledge, developing strong bilingual literacy, and cross-curricular skills (Calderón and Minaya-Rowe 2007; Collier 2002, 2003; de Jong, Howard and Christian 2002; Freeman, Freeman, and Mercuri 2005; Howard, Sugarman, and Christian 2003; Olmedo 2005; Senesec 2002; Thomas 2002). These dual language programs included all pupils from different language development levels without segregating language minority pupils. Instead, pupils worked together with other pupils to gain bilingual literacy competency (Collier and Thomas 2017). Calderón and Minaya-Rowe (2007) encouraged educators to be selective when choosing vocabulary to teach and integrate with content. The authors urged educators to look at vocabulary most suited to orally describe and verbally identify or summarise what pupils have learned.

Content Language integrated learning, or CLIL has been considered the sine qua non (Pavon et al. 2014) of cross-curricular and translingual synergies when language and other subject content are integrated to enhance language learning. It seemed to be the core of the pedagogy to develop the second language (Nikula 2017; San Isidro and Lasagabaster 2019b; San Isidro 2021). The authors (Nikula 2017; San Isidro and Lasagabaster 2019b; San Isidro 2021) mentioned that CLIL contributes to pupils' higher motivation concerning the second language while improving oral skills and developing compensatory strategies for communication in dual language.

The UAE government's initiatives and ADEK's strategic plan (2009-1018) included dual language development to invest in the increased use of bilingual curricula in schools where Arabic and English are taught across public and private schools. However, the classical Arabic language is still identified as mandatory in teaching and speaking in all schools (UAE Ministerial Decree No. 263 2017). Critics of reform claimed that the actions of policymakers led to bilingual education models aligned with the modern Western model at the expense of local, culturally, and historically rich Arab-Muslim education (Abi-Mershed 2010). The research identified that the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) (2009) policy on dual language or bilingual education should be re-examined as a matter of priority (O'Sullivan 2015).

Compared to first-world countries, the United Arab Emirates has a unique ambience, language, culture, and history (UAE Vision 2021 and Vision 2030). Arabic language in the early years department of the school under investigation and in all schools in the UAE is valued as a "national treasure" (Al Nuami 2017) and is regarded as the Arab's pride,

strength, and an integral part of their culture (Al Allaq 2011). In comparison, the English language (de facto lingua franca) is a simplified version of English used to understand the messages communicated (Al-Issa and Dahan 2011). English has many other native English varieties that form a potpourri of what is heard in the UAE (Siemund, Al-Issa, Leimgruber 2021, p.192). Therefore, schools are in a challenging yet essential position of preparing a highly multicultural and multilingual society for bilingualism and active global citizenship while protecting the local language through curriculum development (Singer et al. 2014) and other languages (Phillipson 2003; May 2014). Several scholars suggested that educators must be aware of their language practices in the classroom that influence pupils' language development and future linguistic skills. The authors highlighted the benefit of professional development in improving language competence (Calvo and San Isidro 2012) and supporting educators' language practices. The authors concurred with the UAE Education Policy Reform announced by MoE concerning bilingualism to be gradually incorporated into the curriculum to reinforce UAE national identity and similarly address educators' professional development as a critical challenge in pupils' 21st-century skills (Al Nuami 2017). Several scholars articulated the importance of educators' theoretical knowledge (Caena 2014, cited in Koteva-Mojsovska 2014, p. 41) in cross-curricular subject pedagogy Gallagher (2011) and Dillon (2019) developed through professional development that includes school base curriculum (Bradfield and Exley 2020), bilingual strategies and "continued training" (Exley 2020, p.770) with less confusion and tentativeness to build confidence and empowerment with the use of bilingual curricula (Heidemann, Chang, and Menninga 2005).

Besides the need for educators' language competence and professional development to enhance pupils' bilingual language skills, the literature reviewed has identified that schools that offer more opportunities for pupils and staff to develop through shared practices that continually change the social phenomena through social interaction in both languages have more success with bilingual education (O'Leary and Thompson 2019). Scholars have speculated that Emirati parents are sending their children to private schools to engage in bilingual education, not only to include the prestige of the "English brand" (Schneider 2003, p. 246) but to support pupils to gain a stronger foundation in English language (Kenaid 2011; KHDA 2011; Nazzal 2014, cited in Ridge 2015, p. 70; Pennington, and Rogerson-Revell 2019) and enhance pupils' Arabic language at the same time. Several studies supported the importance of language dualism, mainly teaching Arabic and English language in conjunction; however, how to teach it precisely has not been fully established, most probably given the difference between spoken and written Arabic and the difficulty in transferring

knowledge from one language to another without a specific curriculum and resources. For the study, a bilingual literacy curriculum with a content language integration pedagogy and a translanguaging approach has been selected from a school as a representative part of language dualism. As a result, it defined differences such as diglossia within an organisation or within a society that are often overlooked and incorporated effective bilingual Language strategies that support pupils in gaining oral fluency in both languages while respecting their culture at the same time.

Integrating English into linguistic dualism in the UAE creates challenges that are only sometimes well-received. Although the UAE government actively promoted bilingualism amongst its citizens by integrating English into its policy of "linguistic dualism" (Al Hussein and Gitsaki 2018, p. 102) to open parents and pupils' "eyes to aspects of another worldview" (p. 103) and prepare them for bilingual international education, many scholars disagree with such a policy. Ahmed (2019) argued that dualism had become an indicator of future problems as English is replacing Arabic as the autochthonous and official language of the territory in private schools. The author stated that subject content is delivered in English with Arabic spoken language, a'amiya, and not in (MSA) fusHa. Besides, Clarke (2007, p. 584) argued that integrating English into the UAE's linguistic dualism policy relegated Arabic to a secondary role or constrained domain of "religion, tradition, and localism."

The Ministry of Education (MoE) set clear expectations through the 2030 vision for private schools (2017, Article 18 of the Executive Council Resolution 2) to be instrumental in ensuring that the Arabic language and identity are provided with vital prominence. Article 18 includes mandatory subjects such as Arabic as the "official language" of Emirati identity, which is the language of instruction in public schools, with English as a second language (Al Ghefli 2016, p.1). Baker (2017) concurred that the Arabic language, with its distinctive features, distinguished Arab identity. In international schools in the UAE, which is the case with the school where the research took place, the teaching of Arabic language is mandatory, while English is the language of instruction and is spoken by many pupils across schools (Aljazaeri and Alchalabee 2019; Rosen-O'Leary and Thompson 2019). Literature has identified that culture can also be seen as the source of the hidden curriculum, which includes learning-related experiences that are not explicitly manifested in the curriculum description (Reimers and Chung 2016). It is evident that essential foundations are laid in early childhood when cultural values and Emirati identity are included through the integration of Social Studies, Arabic, and Islamic studies in the curriculum, which is referred to as "the hidden curriculum" (Ross 2000, cited in Alhosani 2022 p. 293). The hidden curriculum

incorporates teaching practises and topics on Arabic identity and Islamic values such as cleanness, appearance, self-care, committing to morals, speaking to adults, behaving with parents, treating siblings, and keeping good relations with relatives. Conversely, Hofstede (2011) argued that cultural values impact policies and initiatives on educational change. Several authors echoed the influence of a country's cultural values on decision-making and reflected on educational change and policy development (Sahlberg 2011, p. 12, cited in Matsumoto 2019, p. 10).

Matsumoto (2019) asserted that the UAE is struggling to align linguistic dualism, foreign and "market-driven academic goals with dominant Emirati cultural paradigms" (p,7) as 95% of graduating pupils in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi fail to meet university bilingual language requirements (Abu Dhabi Education Council's Road to 2030 data). (Blum et al. 2001; cited in Goldstein 2004) concurred that "there are some things that are culturally or educationally specific" (p.9), which makes them difficult to translate.

Al-Sabahi, Zhang, Long, and Alwesabi (2018) mentioned that in Arabic, a word can have up to "seven synonyms, each of which meaning depends on the context" (p.4) and makes it difficult to translate to English. Akan, Karim, and Chowdhury (2019) concurred that it is a "complex task" (p. 58), and the translator must have "critical linguistic knowledge" (p.59) of the underlying relations of language. The literature reviewed has identified that MSA has 36 phonemes, of which six are vowels, two diphthongs, and 28 are consonants written from right to left (Sabir and Alsaeed 2014). Regarding the use of personal nouns such as "he and she" in Arabic, personal Nouns may be either prominent or latent, as mentioned by Al-Sabahi, Zhang, Long, and Alwesabi (2018). The literature reviewed has identified that listening to translated children's literature with similar text is advantageous for the listener.

However, (Lane and Wright 2007; McGee and Schickedanz 2007, cited in Shendy 2019, p. 124) argued that connecting characters and events in discussions in both languages are equally important when using direct translations with similar pupils' literature. It concurs with Hojeij, Dillon, and Perkins (2019, p. 1218), who mentioned, "The quality of dual language books and the translation is a critical consideration for the success of bilingualism." The authors emphasised the "accuracy of translating for overall meaning" and the importance of cultural appropriateness of children's literacy, where children can see themselves in the book and relate to the characters. Their findings highlight the importance of picture and verbal text interaction in children's literature; however, the experiences of the early childhood educator participants engaged in the BLC with LIL revealed that using the illustrations of the

children's literature, Arabic spoken language (a'amiya) and translanguaging, encouraged conversation in dual language development.

The literature identified that Arabic diglossia (Jaspers 2016 p. 180) and resources not available in pupils' spoken language, a'amiya, hindered effective translanguaging. Horst, Parsons, and Bryan (2011) revealed that publishing children's literature in a'amiya is restricted to works of heritage and folk songs. Similarly, the authors mentioned that children's literature in both languages repeatedly showed increased pupils' learning enjoyment and ability to recall both languages and retain new vocabulary. The authors further argued that reading in fusHa, the Modern Standard Arabic (MSA), provided language development in due time. These findings were further supported across the literature reviewed (DeGraffs 2016; Tegegne 2015 cited in Shendy 2019; Siegel 2006; Walter and Dekker 2001), where supporting young children to understand their native language through children's literature and their spoken dialect was identified as a means by which to succeed in future careers. Shendy (2019) argued that "a'amiya would weaken pupil's later grasp of fusHa" (p.123), which is the formal language of education and Arabic textbooks and is needed for "better scholastic attainment" (p. 126). However, the author asserted that language diglossia in the Arab world must be acknowledged (Refer to Chapter 1.1, The research problem), and the effect thereof on Emirati pupils' Arabic reading and comprehension levels should be addressed. In comparison, (Baldauf, Kaplan, and Kamwangamalu 2010, cited in Belhiah and Elhami 2014) mentioned that a developing country like the UAE, which seeks a globalised economy, partnerships, global education ranking, and foreign praise, potentially leads to sacrificing the country's own culture and not addressing the value that its identity deserves. Ahmed (2019) emphasised that a developmentally and culturally appropriate curriculum is inevitable and suggested a bilingual curriculum where pupils receive instruction through subject content in both English and Arabic, which is not fusHa, to enhance Arabic pupils' language learning. The author further stated that policymakers at ADEK and the UAE government should not lose track of the essential values of Arabic traditions, language, Arab identity, and cultural values when considering a bilingual curriculum offered in English and Arabic. Arabic cultural identity is supported from generation to generation through "oral folktales, proverbs, history, religion (Islam), heritage and daily communication" (Almehairi 2015, p.8). It is taught in all schools in the UAE. Islam is a critical component in the Emirati pupil's cultural identity, which includes the central Islamic values of gratitude and charity.

However, the practice of Islam and its values are encouraged and must comply with the Islamic curriculum standards set by the UAE MoE. The study under investigation showed

that the early years department at the school where the study was conducted included Islamic studies in their curriculum that comply with the MoE standards; however, social studies components of Emirati heritage and culture with stories of Emirati pupils' personal lives, history, families, and community to build national awareness, were not included in the BLC with CLIL and children's literature that was used. The educator participants engaged in the current study under investigation concurred and mentioned that children's literature about Emirati heritage and culture with familiar vocabulary and content that was used in everyday conversation might contribute to a better understanding of the BLC with CLIL and translanguaging in the classrooms amongst pupils if included *(Refer to Table 1.1 Early-years children's literature and Linguistic resources).*

Equally important is the "authenticity of the language and text" (Gilmore 2007, p. 5), leading to pupils' interactive classroom engagement and participation in dialogue and oral discussion. Authenticity refers to the text itself, the participants in the social or cultural situation, and the purposes of the communicative act or combination of the mentioned. Lennox (2013) concurred and defined authenticity as authentic teaching approaches and language learning materials that emphasise constructing meaning through pupils' active participation and knowledge in learning (p.33). The author emphasised language text, real-life, meaningful interaction, and the use of pupils' different language development levels as valuable contributions to pupils' language learning. The author further stated that educators can play a significant role in building, refining, and extending literacy knowledge by ensuring that books open instead of closing learning opportunities. Educators can create possibilities by using books for a wide variety of purposes, which include inclusivity, age-appropriateness of the text and whether the text is relevant by its content and motivates pupils (Müürsepp 2013). Similarly, (Shavelson et al. 2008, cited in Henning, Tietjens, and Dreiskämper, 2022, p. 56) emphasised the need for various age-appropriate tasks that educators must include in the bilingual curriculum where pupils can apply what they have learned in the second language. The study under investigation highlighted children's literature translated text, hands-on resources, and curriculum age-appropriateness for early years pupils that support their bilingual literacy development through pupils' literature.

The educator participants engaged in the current study revealed that the BLC with CLIL that provided children with children's literature text that is age-appropriate encouraged early years pupils to engage in dialogue while they were moving in and out of both languages and vocabularies (Garcia and Wei 2014) through dialogue.

DeJong, Harper, and Coady (2013) argued that educators must prepare more for teaching English text from an authentic, bilingual, and bicultural perspective. Several other scholars emphasised the importance of the home language when developing a second language curriculum amongst bilingual pupils (e.g., Grugeon and Woods 2017), which is the case with the BLC with CLIL and translanguaging pedagogy under investigations where pupils use their spoken Arabic a'amiya, a variety of language material through content language integrated learning in centres and stations and translated children's literature to develop both languages. Baker (2006), Docket (2011) and Gersten et al. (2017) concurred and mentioned that using English vocabulary in age-appropriate children's literature and a pupil's home language with subject-integrated activities and resources promotes bilingual language education.

Besides focusing on an authentic, age-appropriate curriculum in bilingual education, several scholars identified early-year educators' participation as the cornerstone of UAE's education policy, decision-making and education reform (Al Momani 2008; Byman 2016, p. 60; Dressler 2018; Guilamo 2020, p.24-6; Mohamed and Medhammar 2014, cited in Garvis, Harj-Luukkainen, and Flynn 2018), and Meyer (2005) argued that not all educators speak out and, unfortunately, "accept what decision-makers in the top hierarchy decide for them to do" (Al Momani, Ihmeideh, and Momani 2008, p. 249), and this excludes them from participating.

Excluding educators from decision-making processes in education reform is more critical in the early years. Berk (2005) and the National Association for the Education of Young Children NAEYC and NAECS (2020) mentioned that effective teaching and the contributions of educators and pupils' early experiences with language and subject content play a vital role in pupils' future academic progress. In the current qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study under investigation, the authentic language texts, material, and resources were planned by a collaborative and reflexive group of early years educators and the senior management team *(Refer to Appendix D:1.2 Educator's reflection template and Figure: 1.2 Early Years Bilingual Literacy with language integrated activities Day 4).*

2.4 Translanguaging Extends Traditional Bilingual Education Programs

Several studies mentioned that pupils' cultural identity and the material and resources chosen by educators should be considered when planning a bilingual and content-based curriculum that is authentic to the language (Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams 2013;

Pimentel-Siqueia et al. 2018, p. 196; Pinner 2013). Whilst there are varying recommendations for bilingual curricula in early years education in the UAE, a lack of research on bilingual literacy in earlier years, resources, educators' professional development, training and practices that impact bilingualism calls for further research in particularly the impact of dual literacy, and CLIL with translanguaging, which this study aims to do. The literature has identified that translanguaging practices and pedagogies within a dual language classroom "co-construct meaning between peers" (Garcıa and Li 2014; Poza 2016; cited in Hamman 2018, p. 24) and transform pupils' identity (Sayer 2013). Translanguaging used in this study provides an ad hoc theoretical framework for understanding early years Arabic pupils' perspectives of the BLC with CLIL curriculum and language practices in dual language learning in the classroom. Esteban-Guitart (2014) mentioned that meaning-making occurs when pupils can draw connections between two languages' structures and vocabulary *(Refer to the narrative on early years pupils' observation Chapter 4.1).* Several scholars stated that children learn valuable second language skills through engagement in a "variety of bilingual language activities" (Kettle 2003, p. 10) and through approaches that include pupil-directed activities and emergent translanguaging (Colón 2019). Wang (2019, p. 2) referred to "translanguaging" as an approach that "transforms and extends" traditional bilingual education programs" where children use their "known languages to amplify their learning" (Baker and Wright 2017; Garcia and Wei 2014; Li and Lin 2019; cited in Colón 2019, p. 1). Crandall (2016) concurred that translanguaging formulates language acquisition and instruction from a multilingual perspective while it "transforms and extends traditional bilingual programs" (p.241) and includes multiple languages for social justice. Colón (2019), Creese and Blackledge (2010), and Garcia and Wei (2014) stated that through translanguaging, children connect to the world with more than one language in their way of knowing. The intentionality behind translanguaging as a teaching practice is to provide a "translanguaging space" (Hamman 2016, p. 36), which is referred to as a flexible and comfortable space for pupils to fully share their home language knowledge across all other languages and use resources to make sense of the content and vocabulary.

(Duff 2019, cited in Wang 2019) mentioned that for translanguaging, "equal participation and spontaneous communication" (p.2) are needed between educators and pupils in a dual-language environment. Children can be more successful in learning when they use various resources, feel more confident when using their home language, and when the home language and the second language are not seen as separate contexts or two solitudes

(Cummins 2007, 2008). Instead, two languages are seen as "fluid' (Colón 2019, p.5) and are used in short sentences or phrases to make meaning to what was said or taught.

According to (Creese and Blackledge 2010; and Garcia and Wei 2014, cited in Colón 2019), translanguaging maximises and contributes to the ability of bilingual and multilingual children to effectively communicate and understand the linguistic concepts taught. The literature highlighted several challenges that included language components such as phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics, and pragmatics when transferring from one language to another. Akan, Karim, and Chowdhury (2019, p. 59) stated that moving vocabulary from one language to another is an "act of interlingual interaction" (p.60) or an exchange of meaning that includes the cultural, religious, and political components of language. The authors (Akan, Karim, and Chowdhury 2019) mentioned that, for instance, in the Arabic language, the verb comes first in the Arabic spoken language, a'amiya, while in English sentences, the verb comes after a noun. Several scholars argued that CLIL and vocabulary transferred from English to Arabic caused a hindrance to bilingualism specifically concerning pragmatic understanding, or cross-cultural meaning, in other words, "what was meant with what was said" (Xialoe 2009; Tang 2013, cited in Al-Saidi and Rashid 2015, p.114). The authors mentioned that this occurs when the translator misunderstands the social conditions placed on language in use and the emphasis is placed on the meaning of "language as a communicative vehicle" (Brown 2007; Malakzadah 2012, cited in Al-Saidi and Rashid 2015, p.114). It is indicated that socio-pragmatic misunderstanding" (Taguchi 2011, p. 305) could be minimised and overcome if English Second Language pupils gain sufficient cultural knowledge and dual linguistic competence before using translated content as a dual language strategy. The authors further argued that translated vocabulary might lose meaning and feeling due to the complexity of the Arabic language's diglossia, grammar, word order, and metaphorical and particular language uses. They argue that this might be why Arabic pupils struggle with English comprehension and understanding of content language integration regarding the meaning of vocabulary and phrases.

The current research under investigation showed that interaction, communication, and the practice of bilingual literacy in both languages in the Arabic early-years social environment is built on translanguaging, which refers to an emergent translanguaging approach to learning a second language. The term "emergent" referred to the Arabic early years pupils' skills and needs in a developmental stage through age-appropriate pupils' literature and the support of educators and peers. In addition, the research under investigation highlighted Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) through resources and activities that were used to

expose pupils to translanguaging opportunities in their social-cultural space to shape and alter their language and to support them in meaning-making (Mazak 2017 cited in Aghai, Sayer, and Vercellotti 2020; Martin and Miller 2012, p. 463). Creese and Blackledge (2010) and Garcia and Kleifgen (2010) stated that translanguaging maximises the ability of multilingualism and supports effective communication. The authors noted that translanguaging should be institutionalised so pupils may gain confidence to communicate and experience success in the second language learning process. Osorio (2020) concurred that translanguaging uses a multilingual lens that gives value to all other languages.

(Garcia and Wei 2014, cited in Colón 2019) further identified the interrelation between two languages, stating educators should provide bilingual and monolingual children with translingual opportunities in the classroom where they can use both languages to communicate, which concurred with the current research study on Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) with CLIL in the UAE under investigation. In comparison, Valdes, Poza, and Brooks (2015) argued that translanguaging does not represent the true nature of bilingualism as it relies upon an imagined native speaker to determine language aptitude, making it challenging to achieve bilingualism and biliteracy. Some of the multilingual educator participants engaged in the current study under investigation revealed during the semi-structured interviews that they embraced translanguaging and engaged pupils in pair and group work in the protective bubbles (ADEK 2019-20) to accommodate and develop an emergent- translanguaging pedagogy when they had limited Arabic proficiency. The literature tends to concur that there is an interrelation between the two languages and that the home language (a'amiya) can potentially strengthen the second language (Jago 1999, p. 161 cited in Grugeon and Gardner 2000, p. 102). Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2013) believed that second language acquisition can happen at any age as children are born ready. The literature reviewed highlighted the first language as a powerful resource for strengthening the second language through children's literature and translanguaging (Garcia 2009, p. 12.), while (Malaguzzi 1998, cited in Bruce and Spratt 2011) focused on the value of play in language acquisition and translanguaging.

2.5 Pupils' literature, the heartbeat of the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum

Pupils' literature-based language instruction is identified within the literature as a way to develop second language vocabulary and oral fluency. For example, active listening to stories is recognised as a vehicle to support children in making sense of the world they live in (Grugeon and Gardner 2000, p, 19). Ghosn (2013) referred to the instruction of language

through children's literature as an "adaptable, authentic, and valid medium" (p.15) that has been positively accepted by young learners to grasp the second language vocabulary. Research on children's literature showed that active listening is the heartbeat of all language learning and a valuable component that should be integrated into children's literature for children to learn a second language (Lightbrown and Spada 2013, p. 165; Coxon 2009, p. 25) through repetition and retelling of the story. The philosophy of the BLC with CLIL under investigation revealed that it was built on developing pupils' listening and speaking skills to encourage oral fluency in English and Arabic. Research related to children's literature showed that "Interactive Shared Book Reading" (Trivette and Dunst 20027, cited in Ping 2021), implemented for a small group, develops a variety of techniques such as dual language, questioning, scaffolding, dialogue, positive re-enforcement, clarifying information and characters, and sequencing of events that can enhance language development and increase pupils' bilingual language understanding. The study under investigation showed that the BLC with CLIL included the development of Arabic early years pupils' active listening skills through a variety of age-appropriate and translated pupils' literature to develop vocabulary and oral fluency in English and their spoken Arabic (a'amiya), through translanguaging and repair and talk. The educator participants identified repair and talk as a strategy in the current study under investigation, where they model the language phrases and vocabulary, while the early years pupils listen repeat, practice (repair) and (talk) when using the vocabulary.

Unfortunately, research is faced with the contradiction of standards that demonstrate the publishing of books in a'amiya for adult readers (KALIMA project, Ogneva 2014) while publishing children's literature in *a'amiya,* as mentioned, are restricted to heritage and folk songs due to pupils' inadequacy in *fusHa* at the age of three and four years old (Shendy 2019, p.125). To address the problem, the qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study (Baxter and McMaster 2009, p. 549; Byman 2016, p. 60) discussed early years educators' use of translated children's literature and the direct translation of the text into a'amiya, the pupil's spoken Arabic language. Lipman (2003) concurred that pupils' stories create a "community of enquiry" (p. 382) in the classroom, which encourages children to ask questions, discuss and understand their world. (Baker 2019; Ragnarsdottir 2006, cited in Bruce and Spratt 2011 p. 35; Shavelson et al. 2008; Topping and Trickey 2007) concurred that stories, poetry, song, rhymes, repetition, and spontaneous free play develop early years pupils own voice that have the potential to develop language vocabulary usage in more than one language.

Despite the belief that "children are more successful acquiring a second language" (Marinova-Todd et al. 2000; Saville-Troike 2006, p.82) through pupils' literature, Hope (2008) viewed children's literature through another lens. The author mentioned that children's literature, included in bilingual literacy, needed to identify with children and their cultural identity. In contrast, other scholars mentioned the importance of children's literature, which provides text that develops "pupils' tolerance and understanding" for different cultures (Lathey 2001, p. 9). Several other scholars stated that the school curriculum and language learning become meaningful for pupils when language, subject content, and resources, such as pupils' literature, are closely linked (Doiz, Sierra, and La-Sagabaster 2014), through stories, "hands-on" activities, and play-based learning that they understand and enjoy (Scott and Ytreberg 2009, p. 6). Play-based experiences engage pupils in deeper learning and spark innovative ideas (Frey, Fisher, and Hattie 2016; Winthrop and McGivney 2016, cited in Zosh, Hopkins, Jensen, Liu, Neale, Hirsh-Pasek, Solis and Whitebread 2017, p. 5).

2.6 Internal and external language development through play-based learning

The literature review identified that a pupil's external social-cultural linguistic experiences and internal language development through play lead to independent language learning. Play "transcends reality as well as reflect(s) reality" (Stagnitti and Unsworth 2000, p. 121). The authors mentioned that play is unconstrained and involves voluntary active engagement.

However, pupils' internal factors, such as their cognitive and perceptual ability, are sources of individual differences in bilingual pupils' early language development that might affect their engagement in play. This was highlighted by the school where the research on BLC with CLIL was conducted. The early-years educators revealed that pupils entered the school with limited English vocabulary and comprehension. Therefore, they had to be taught through a language emergent program for six weeks to follow instructions and understand simple vocabulary before they engaged with the BLC with CLIL curriculum and language through play. The variables of the two figures showed pupils' development by learning a second language while enhancing their mother tongue. In contrast, Silalahi (2019) argued that external language could influence the sociocultural environment when there is a language barrier. Exposing a child to external social-cultural linguistic experiences and internal language development through play-based learning within a social environment concur with the sociocultural theory of Vygotsky (Vygotsky 1978, p. 80, cited in Silalahi 2019, p. 169). Silalahi (2019) mentioned that through more knowledgeable and more experienced others, learning instead awakens a variety of internal developmental processes that will only be

available when children interact with their peers, parents, and educators in a social environment that is appropriately culturally organised. As described by the author, Vygotsky observed that parents and educators tended to interact with children within a teaching task in a specific manner. He realised the importance of parents "adjusting the levels of interaction" (Silalahi 2019, p. 170) to a level just outside what the children could independently achieve. Through the Z*one of proximal development* (ZPD), Vygotsky highlighted the support children need to become independent learners. He proclaimed that to understand the pupil's level of development and learning, there should be a clear distinction between the actual levels of independent achievement that children can learn independently and the potential level of development and learning that can only occur through adult-led support.

Likewise, Esteban-Guitart and Moll 2014, asserted that one of the main priorities of a school is to create a Zone of Proximal Identity Development where pupils can gain *"funds of knowledge"* (p.43) which refers to the knowledge pupils gain from their families, experiences and resources to recognise and maintain optimal identities for learning (Coll and Falsafi 2010; cited in Esteban-Guitart, and Moll 2014). Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) acknowledged that learning takes place through the involvement of others but mentioned that knowledge occurs when there is a connection between prior knowledge, cultural experiences, and new information. The authors stated that the role of the school is to not only ensure that pupils' learning is guided by social interaction, people, artefacts, significant others, practices, and activities but that schools' curricula include various strategies where pupils' family (culture), experiences, prior knowledge and new knowledge can be used to support their learning. Subsequently, Kim and Song (2019) mentioned the importance of educators engaging with the expanded notion of literacy and pupils' families by creating a space where pupils, parents, extended family, and community members can collaborate using their entire literacy resources, cultural identities, and ways of deepening their understanding of words and beyond and sharing them.

The mentioned concurred with the educator-parent-partnership model utilised by the educator participants, involving parents in pupils' bilingual language development (*Refer to Diagram 1.1 Parent-School-Collaborative support model; PSCM; Chapter 4.3).* The BLC with CLIL and translanguaging philosophy under investigation include pupils' language development supported by their educators and peers (the more knowledgeable others). In contrast, the Arabic "My Identity" cultural program is included in the language learning *(Refer to KHDA Enriching guide for My Identify program 2018-2019).* In the early years, pupils gain new knowledge and use prior knowledge to understand the phenomenon. Arabic early years

pupils move in and out of the two languages, Arabic and English, through dialogue, repair and talk, and interaction with learning material planned for the BLC with CLIL to make sense of the world. The BLC with CLIL concurred with the philosophy of (Vygotsky 1978 cited in Holzman 2017, p. 26) that language learning occurs through the interaction of pupils' peers, their family, and their community. In the literature reviewed, it is mentioned that adults (educator participants) are positioned "as the knowledgeable other" (Vygotsky cited in Keenan, Evans, and Cowley 2016, p. 45). The auditors stated that educators are instrumental in guiding children to gain independent learning skills through the hands-on and play activities and technologies planned for them, which concurred with the gradual release model of responsibility mentioned by the educator participants in the study and illustrated in (Figure 2) below.

2.7 The gradual release of responsibility model

Many literacy scholars have adopted the gradual release of responsibility model (Duke and Pearson 2004, p. 211, cited in Frey and Fisher 2013, p. 1). It has become consequential in literacy (Duke and Pearson 2002) for application in language curriculum planning. The model is "recognised, accepted and shared" (Pearson, McVee and Shanahan 2019, p. 3) in education. The authors stated that by implementing the gradual release model, educators' responsibility is moved to pupils' responsibility to encourage pupils to independently apply language and tasks through activities and play exploration, as illustrated in Figure 2 of the Gradual Release Model (Fisher and Frey 2008a).
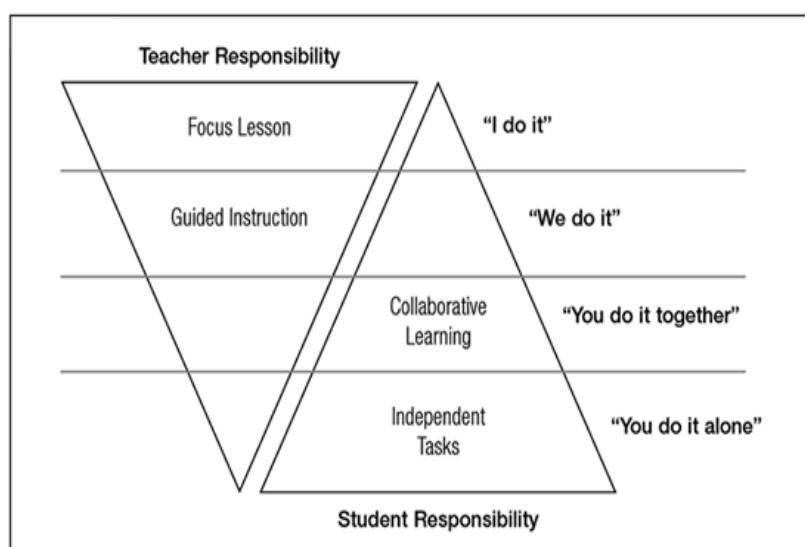
Figure 2 The Gradual Release Model of Pupil Responsibility (Fisher and Frey 2013)

The four components of the gradual release model (Fisher and Frey 2008a) included the curriculum, specific lessons based on standards, and the educators' modelling to encourage pupils to solve problems independently. The second component mentioned in the gradual release model is the guided Instruction of the educator, where questions, prompts, and cues are used to facilitate pupils' understanding individually and in small groups while they experiment with the language. The gradual release model aims to demonstrate how educators release responsibility to pupils while providing instructional scaffolding to ensure a successful application through practice, dialogue, and hands-on activities. The third component allowed pupils to play or work in collaborative groups to engage their peers and practice language structures while being accountable for their learning. The fourth component included independent learning and practising, where pupils are involved inside and during play activities outside the classroom. The model, as had, highlighted that educators' classroom practice is nestled in the sociocultural and instructional contexts of pupils' language-learning journey.

Fisher and Frey (2008a) further emphasised the connection between the classroom and the playground, providing pupils with various play-based language opportunities and learning resources. The authors demonstrated how educators' instructional style of gradual release, play-based learning, modelling, scaffolding, repetition, and repair and talk lead to pupils' independent language learning and facilitate pupils' (in the case of this study) English and Arabic language simultaneously.

There are many reasons why early years pupils may struggle to learn a second language; however, the literature reviewed has shown that many solutions exist, including purposeful instruction, scaffolding, increasing the quality of resources and integrated language learning material, and providing authentic opportunities and a learning environment where pupils can gain independent bilingual language skills.

Although much more needs to be done in the UAE concerning bilingualism in Arabic in the early years, the UAE's multicultural society provides inspiring opportunities for pupils to engage with their peers and educators who speak multiple languages (Esparza, Sierra, and Jiang 2020) to practise bilingualism that may lead to pupils' independent language learning.

2.8 The Global perspectives on bilingual education

Research identified the UAE's education as founded upon enhancing and investing in human capital (e.g., Shihab 2017). The UAE 2030 education reform ensured that it meets

international standards. It highlights building an open, efficient, effective, and globally integrated business environment where a highly skilled, highly productive dual-lingual workforce is developed (2017, UAE Ministerial Decree No 263). The UAE 2030 reform further focused on the capabilities of principals and educators and emphasised the improvement of English language and mathematical skills amongst pupils. However, Mitchell and Wild (2004) argued that the world is not still for pupils' language development.

The authors mentioned how a country thinks of and applies early childhood language learning influences society's provision for its youngest members. Investing in early-year education in the UAE benefits individuals such as the early-year pupils, parents, educators, and the specific society. It can be debated that for the UAE to invest in an early-years education that contributes to individual returns and economic development in the future, it is essential to create a bilingual curriculum that will ensure that the UAE pupils are "bilingual and biliterate learners" (Rygiel 2021, p.297) with 21st-century skills. The research highlighted bilingual education in the UAE as a complex phenomenon questioning whether bilingualism (Cutshall 2005, p. 20; cited in (Rygiel 2021, p. 298) will impact the country's religion, culture and Arabic language. To ensure bilingualism (Grossman et al. 2001; Harris and Jones 2010, cited in Tam, 2015; Wallace and Thomas 2006) mentioned that multilingual educators adopt different pedagogies, various selected resources, and teaching materials and design and organise appropriate learning activities to support pupils' bilingual language and independent learning.

 The authors explained that the interpretations and experiences of bilingual and multilingual educators worldwide contribute to dual languages in classrooms (Baker 2001, p. 193). The literature identified the roles of early childhood educators and Emirati parents as critical indicators of collaboratively developing bilingualism among Arabic early-year pupils by engaging them in bilingual dialogue, reading, and writing.

2.9 Parents are pupils' first educators in language development.

Knopf and Swick (2007) mentioned that parents and guardians are their pupils' first teachers, and their involvement in their pupils' education "matters" (Menheere and Hooge 2010, p. 144). For schools and educators to empower and connect with Emirati pupils' parents to develop the second language learning of young children is essential. (Gallagher 2011 cited in Kirkpatrick and Barnawi 2017, p. 296) highlighted parents' English language proficiency and school-parent partnerships *(Refer to Diagram 1.1 Parent-School-*

Collaborative support model; PSCM Chapter 4.3) for effective implementation of bilingual literacy programs. The authors mentioned that Emirati parents who speak English might experience an advantage because they can support their children in English (Blaik-Hourani et al. 2012, cited in Kirkpatrick and Barnawi 2017). The authors elaborated that practical knowledge starts with social conversation in language, which leads to effective communication and understanding. It remains challenging in a multicultural and multilingual environment with many English dialects, Arabic identity, and Arabic language variations in the Arabic socio-cultural environment *(Refer to Chapter 1.3 The Study and Background of the Research and the explanation that not all Arabic early year's children are exposed to grammatical and pragmatic knowledge that supports their home language).*

Parent involvement in their pupils' bilingual language development and partnerships in schools has been mentioned in many studies (Allen 2017; Drame 2008; Smit et al. 2007) *(Refer to Figure 1.3, Parental involvement model Epstein 2007).* The literature review identified that "it takes a whole village to raise and educate a child" (Bruce and Spratt 2011, p. 100). Therefore, parents should not be left isolated but supported by educators, as most educators in the UAE are bilingual or multilingual and trained in English-speaking countries (Rygiel 2021, p. 300).

Feurstein (2000) mentioned that although parental involvement is significant to children's language and education, concerns are raised but called for in future investigations.

The literature reviewed identified mixed results in the Arab world concerning the relationship between parental involvement and early years pupils' English literacy development due to sociocultural and language challenges (Al-Mahrooqi, Denman and Al-Maamari 2016, p.1; Baker 2001, p.183–184; Paradis and Jia (2017). Desforges and Abouchaar (2003) argued that parental participation seems to have a less positive effect on pupils' development than parental involvement. The authors indicated that pupils' early bilingualism is impossible if the parents are not fluent in the second language. Whereas (Pettito 2009, cited in Rahayu 2018, p. 41) stated that the earlier the second language is taught and supported by parents, the better for pupils to become bilingual and multilingual. The educator participants in the qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study revealed that many Arabic early years pupils were monolingual and had difficulty understanding English. However, the educators announced the positive participation of parents when opportunities were created for the mothers of three- to four-year-old Emirati pupils to visit the classroom and engage in bilingual story reading and arts and crafts sessions.

Several scholars have argued that parents' involvement contributes to pupils' academic success in a second language and social-emotional well-being (Fan and Chen 2001; Nye et al. 2006; El Nokali et al. 2010; Iruka et al. 2011, cited in Niehaus 2012, p. 62).

It is mentioned in research that parent involvement is most effective when viewed as "a partnership between educators and parents" (Emeagwali 2009 and Epstein 2009, cited in Đurišić and Bunijevac 2017, p. 140; Oates 2017, p. 3; Goouch and Lambirth 2007 cited in Bruce and Spratt 2011, p. 158). When involved, the authors mentioned that parents make a significant and transformative difference in pupils' academic achievement, particularly in bilingual language. (Epstein 2002, cited in Oates 2017, p. 3) identified a framework that contains six essential factors influencing parental involvement. The six factors mentioned in Figure 1.3 below identified parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and community collaboration as essential in parents' involvement in their child's language development.
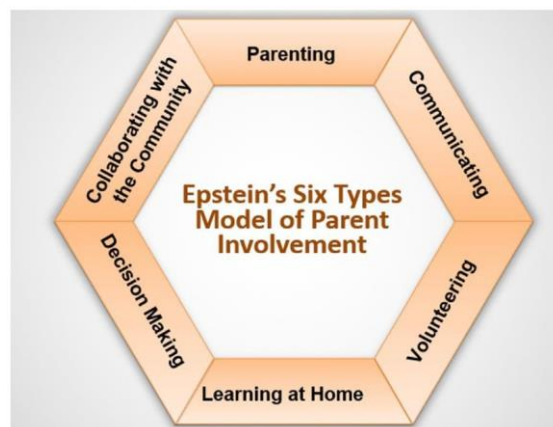
Figure 1.3 Parental Involvement Model Epstein (2007)

(Epstein 2002, cited in Oates 2017, p. 3) stated that parental involvement starts at home, where parents provide a safe and healthy environment conducive to learning and language support and foster a positive attitude toward the school's pupils, parents, and teaching practices. The author mentioned that parents are more involved with children in the early years and encourage the involvement and volunteering of parents and their partnerships that could potentially support schools in addressing and overcoming challenges regarding children's bilingual language or academic success.

The research identified that positive educator-parent relationships were characterised by mutual acceptance, understanding, trust, respect, and cooperation (Menheere and Hooge 2010, p. 153). Scholars Ceka and Murati (2016), Krause et al. (2006), and Noddiings (2005) stated that the success of interpersonal relationships depends upon both parties and further mentioned that a mother's role in a pupil's language acquisition and physical and emotional development is of immense importance. Keenan, Evans, and Crowley (2018) concur and state that the mother's voice has "district patterns of rhythm" (p. 221), an intonation that infants and toddlers mirror when first exposed to a language. Instead, Barron and Powell (2003) concurred that the fusion of the spoken word and good quality children's literature has consistently been recognised as the most effective way to improve communication and language between parents and children and instil a love for children's literature (Bruce and Spratt 2011, p. 158) at home and in the classroom. Unfortunately, it is not valid for Arabic mothers. Arabic mothers face many challenges when reading children's literature to their children due to the profound phonological, grammatical, and lexical differences between spoken Arabic and written Arabic, a situation referred to as language diglossia previously mentioned (Lane and Wright 2007; McGee and Schickedanz 2007; cited in Shendy 2019, p. 125). The literature review identified that due to the differences between the spoken "a'amiya", the written and formal "*fusHa" (*Arabic diglossia), mothers are faced with difficulty in reading children's literature that is published in the standard "*fusHa"* to children, and then explain the text for instance in "a'amiya" (Badry 2012, p. 98). Similarly, (Al-Issa and Dahan 2011, p. 17; Al Sumaiti 2012; Badry 2012, p. 98) mentioned that educators face difficulties teaching the language from the more standard classical Arabic text to young pupils. In comparison, Said (2021, p. 434) noted that the two main challenges with diglossia are to motivate parents to create home Arabic literacy environments with a diglossic nature and secondly to locate Arabic material to support diglossia, particularly material written in a'amiya.

Gouch and Lambirth (2007) advocated that although there are different challenges in motivating parents to create a home literacy environment, they should not be excluded from their children's language learning and social-cultural development. The authors echoed that language diglossia in the Arab world must be acknowledged regarding Emirati pupils' bilingual learning and addressing pupils' reading and comprehension levels. The literature identified a growing concern about the impact of parental involvement, Arabic diglossia, and parents' English proficiency (Baker 2006; Cummins 2000; Garcia 2009).

The authors mentioned that linguistic development occurs when parents are involved in an educator-parent relationship that fosters the teaching and learning of both languages that are taught concurrently.

2.10 The influence of a social-cultural environment on language development

The literature identified that the social-cultural environment has a supportive function and has an imperative impact on pupils' first encounter with a language (Brooks and Kempe 2012; Kuhl, Tsao, and Liu 2003). Hattie and Timperley (2007) stated that a bilingual curriculum should be designed to support pupils in becoming independent, self-regulated, and autonomous learners within their social-cultural environment. The literature reviewed identified a well-designed curriculum and the act of play and social interaction (Parten 1932, cited in Keegan, Evans and Crowley 2016, p. 282-3) within social-cultural environments are seen as the most critical aspects of developing young pupils' language abilities (Stagnitti 2004). The research findings recognised six diffident types of play, in different levels of complexity, involved in language development, such as cooperative play, associative or imaginary or pretend play, parallel play, unoccupied play, solitary play, and social interactions. Research indicated pretend play could stimulate language development and guide children to learn about their social world (Cole and Wertsch 2000), whilst cooperative play, unoccupied play, and solitary play raised self-esteem and independent learning (Petty 2014, p. 144) and lead to pupils' interaction and learning from each other. However, the author stated that research has "misinterpreted the impact of culture" (p.144) on play. Petty (2014) argued that there is a lack of information about Arabic parental perception, assumptions, and play expectations to develop young pupils' language and calls for future research investigation. Cultural influences impact how Arabic parents see the importance of play. Literature has identified the importance of developing pupils' second language through their social-cultural environment where there is active engagement in spontaneous play and activities (Ragnarsdottir 2006 cited in Bruce and Spratt 2011, p. 152). Modell (2021, p. 70) defined an active learning environment where children "are doing" as a learning-centred environment in which children are responsible for their learning and are engaged in activities that lead to independent learning and bilingual literacy.

The Literature reviewed indicated that a social-cultural environment full of pupils' literature, poetry, rhymes, props, and small-world dressing-up clothes would engage and influence children to share their ideas and communicate in a second language (Ragnarsdottir 2006; Siraj-Blatchford 2006; Wyse 2008). Additionally, (Malaguzzi 1998, cited in Bruce and Spratt

2011), the pioneer Italian educator, described pretend play as a component of "the hundred languages of a child" (p.17). However, the literature reviewed acknowledged that not all cultures understand the role of play that could improve pupils' language learning, help them regulate memory formation, and help them learn a second language. The term "play" is a verb in English grammar and is acknowledged in many countries; however, understanding its purpose differs from culture to context, which is the case with the Arabic language and Emirati parents and educators in Abu Dhabi (Baker 2013). The author mentioned the lack of understanding amongst educators and parents concerning play practices and the pupils' choices that lead to the quality of play in ADEC's early years and kindergartens. Scholars have identified that learning through play is non-traditional in Arabic culture and is more related to Western social interaction (Parham 2008). Similarly, Dewan (2018) mentioned that the knowledge of people's vocabulary or translations might be shaped by the constraints they experience in social situations or the society to which they belong. The literature review identified no direct translation of the word "play" in Arabic (Al-Khatib 2018).

Ailwood (2003, p. 215) concurred that the Arabic parents' perception of play in early years and kindergartens and the essentials of bilingual language development through play are not always acknowledged. The author mentioned that Arabic pupils' nannies, or "murabiyat" in Arabic, confined learning through play instead of promoting it, which can be due to less opportunity for children to use their initiative, decision-making and self-choice in play. Another reason might be the language barrier created by the many English language varieties in the UAE.

The findings illustrated that English varieties spoken by Emirati pupils' nannies or carers (Tibi and McLeod 2014) impact young pupils' development of the second language and their experience with learning through play. The literature identified that these nannies use basic English to communicate with the children in their care without the proper phonological and grammatical training (Dubai Statistics Centre as cited in Ahmed 2019), which might influence the second language development of Arabic pupils in the early years.

The right of children to play is enshrined in the United Nations Convention on Rights of the Child, which states that "every child has the right to play and take part in a wide range of cultural, linguistic, and artistic activities (UNICEF UK 2013, p.1).

Blair and Diamond (2008) emphasised a pupil's right to play and mentioned that the value of play depends on educators' language ideologies, language communication, and social

functioning incorporated into play, where children can engage with others to develop language.

Smith (2010, p.216) noted that children performed effectively in non-play activities and in conditions where they were observed. The authors cautioned that play should never be seen as essential but helpful in developing pupils' first and second language. (Bodrova 2008; Hirsh-Pasek and Golinkoff 2008, Petty 2014, cited in Bengochea, Sembiante, and Gort 2017), asserted that sociodramatic play or play that involves acting out children's literature scripts is essential. The authors mentioned that emergent bilingual children drew upon their available linguistic resources to construct sociocultural and linguistic identities. The semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions were compiled for the current study under investigation and posed to the educator participants, including questions concerning their experiences with learning through play. The study revealed that the educators experienced that the early Arabic years' pupils could independently self-correct their bilingual language vocabulary through the educators and peer support and feedback.

Children dramatise their thinking and understanding through socialisation and sociodramatic play (García et al. 2011; Kendrick 2005; Yun 2008) concurred that emergent bilingual children co-create identities that contribute to shared role-play enhance pupils' experiences and perceptions of reality and can support them to move quickly and freely amongst multiple means of communication and bilingual learning (Griffin, Hemphill, Camp, Jewitt 2008; Korat, Bahar, and Snapir 2003; Kress 2003; Kress and Van Leeuwen 2001; Wohlwend 2008; Wolf 2004).

Finally, Cutter-Mackenzie et al. (2014) stated that pedagogical play in early childhood education should be considered. The latter concurred with the current study on BLC with CLIL and Translanguaging under investigation. An obstacle mentioned in the literature is the imbalance between Emirati culture, religion, and the foreign population, where the literature identified foreigners impact the Arabic language domain of the UAE (Petty (2014, p.144) and caused a misinterpretation of play-based learning perceived as western culture. Culture is not a theoretical conceptualisation but is seen as the values and beliefs embedded in each person's daily life within a process of identification and relationships shared by people (Gergen and Gergen 2007, p. 276). Corsaro (2015) concurred that pupils' peers, adults, and societal expectations influence reciprocal interaction and engagement in socialisation and language learning through play.

2.11 Literature Review Summary

The literature tends to concur that there is a symbiotic relation between English and Arabic, where the spoken language, a'amiya, could strengthen the second language (Jago 1999, p. 161 cited in Grugeon and Gardner 2000, p. 102; Baker 2006). In contrast, Docket (2011) mentioned that the home language creates barriers to Arabic pupils' second language learning when they are not engaged in a bilingual curriculum with subject-integrated activities and resources that promote bilingual language education. Subsequently, the literature suggested that children receive equal input in the two languages to reach native-like proficiency (Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams 2013, cited in De Almeida 2016, p. 120).

The authors voiced that language development starts long before pupils start with formal instruction at school and emphasise the importance of developing listening skills and oral language proficiency in the home language to teach the second language. The literature encouraged policymakers and government entities to critically reflect on early-years education curricula and identified educators as key contributors (O'Sullivan 2015 p. 426) in bilingual curriculum design. Marrow (2020, p. 385) and Riley (2007, p. 83) mentioned that educators should not only develop an age-appropriate bilingual curriculum that suits the needs of all early-year's pupils but should include appropriate teaching approaches and resources, such as children's literature to develop pupils' expressive language. Some studies highlighted the role of educators in exposing children to a well-balanced bilingual curriculum and pedagogy that include content language integrated activities within a social space (Wei 2011,p. 27) through translanguaging (Garcia 2009, p. 12; Carcia and Wei 2015) where pupils can become successful independent bilingual communicators. Similarly, the literature identified the value of pupils' sociodramatic play (Cole and Wertsch 2000) to stimulate language development in numerous ways.

For example, it was mentioned that through pupils' literature and role play with costumes, face masks, props and hands-on activities, children repeat language phrases and vocabulary in both languages and develop their oral fluency.
The literature highlighted many factors associated with developing bilingual literacy among early-year pupils. The critical factors for developing bilingual language skills are well-qualified early years educators, effective pedagogy, a well-designed bilingual curriculum with age-appropriate resources, content language integrated learning, and translanguaging. Another essential factor highlighted by the literature that influences pupils' language development mentioned in many of the studies is the involvement of parents in their pupils'

bilingual language development and their partnerships with schools and their pupils' educators.

Al Sumaiti (2002) emphasised that "good parenting approaches are associated with improved pupils' performance" (p. 1), while (Pettito 2009, cited in Rahayu 2018, p. 41) stated the importance of parents' involvement in supporting early years pupils to become bilingual.

The literature on parents' involvement in Arabic pupils' language development indicated that Arabic fathers live busy daily lives, which might not always contribute to children's language development (Ho 2009; Bæck 2010; Lee and Bowen 2006). The literature highlighted the many linguistic and cultural differences between Arabic and English languages that easily confuse and lead to misunderstanding when translated. For example, there is also a misunderstanding about the value of learning through play, which is perceived as a Western cultural concept (Parham 2008). Another essential element that was highlighted in the literature that caused some concern is the tug of war between linguistic dualism UAE (ADEK strategic policy 2009-1018) and Arabic Classical language that is obligatory in all schools (UAE Ministerial Decree No (263) 2017).

Finally, the literature calls for a review by the UAE education authorities, as some scholars feel that language dualism does not benefit Arabic literacy amongst Emirati youth. Even though a'amiya is the spoken language of pupils in the UAE, Abi-Mershed (2010), Ahmed (2019), and Al Hussein and Gitsaki (2018, p. 102) mentioned that English is replacing Arabic as the autochthonous and official language in some instances where subject content is delivered in English with Arabic spoken language, a'amiya, and not in (MSA) fusHa which relegated the classical Arabic to a constrained domain of religion, tradition, and loyalty. In conclusion, the literature reviewed enumerated UAE policy gaps in education. These gaps in the literature revealed the importance of mastering both languages to strengthen linguistic dualism. It is recommended that research related to bilingual literacy development with a content language-integrated learning philosophy and emergent translanguaging in Arabic early years should be further researched.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Introduction

This chapter consists of ten sections, including a restatement of the purpose of the study to conceptualise the methodologies, research design, researcher positioning, overview of the research instruments, research location, description of the research participants, protection of human subjects, validity, data collection, and data analysis. The qualitative phenomenological single-case study underlines the research design (Baxter and McMaster 2009, p. 549; Byman 2016, p. 60; Creswell and Poth 2018). Issues related to the research's quality, trustworthiness, and the researcher's role are addressed in Chapters 3.3, 3.7.1, 3.7.2, and Chapter 3.8 below.

The present study was conducted during COVID-19 from March 2021 to April 2021 at a private school for Emirati pupils in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. It consists of two major components: face-to-face semi-structured interviews with educator participants in early childhood education and informal observation of Emirati early years pupils engaged in a bilingual literacy curriculum with content language integrated learning. Recruitment information packs explaining the research, voluntary participation in the research project, and participants' right to withdraw were distributed on March 15, 2021, to all early childhood educators licensed by ADEK and recruited by the school. Within ten days, all sixteen early years' educators (Refer to 3.6 Research Participant), which is referred to as a "sample" (Simons 2009, p. 21), also the case of "a single school" (Bryman 2016, p. 60) engaged in a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) with Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) responded and provided consent to participate in the research project voluntarily. Interviews with the early childhood educator participants were conducted on March 25 and were completed on April 15, 2021. Informal observations were conducted in the classrooms of the Emirati early years pupils, and informal, anecdotal notes of their experiences and activities with the BLC with CLIL were kept. Informed consent was obtained from the parents of twelve Emirati pupils with the right to withdraw at any time. The pupils' observation aimed to gain understanding and insight into how they perceive and interpret the BLC with CLIL in their classrooms and how they interact with others (Simpson and Tuson 2008, p. 11).

The anecdotal notes served the purpose of "triangulation" (Simpson and Tuson 2008p. 65) and provided data that are strong on reality that can contribute to "thick descriptions" of

pupils' speech acts, nonverbal conversation, group and peer discussions and language and vocabulary development (Denscombe 2014 and Marshal and Rossman 2016, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p. 553). The authors mentioned that these quick informal notes taken during observations could be written at several levels, from short descriptions to jotting down key observations, conversations, expressions, phrases, and experiences, including making sketches or diagrams. Mindes (2020) asserted that one of the most common methods for recording observations is taking anecdotal notes, which the author describes as "brief and accurate notes" about a significant event or a particular child's routine. The author stated that by recording anecdotal notes, the researcher writes down what a child is doing or saying, which can provide "rich information about the child's developmental processes, expressions or actions." Whitehead (2020, p. 99) describes anecdotal notes as "brief recordings of an objective focused on a specific outcome." The author stated that anecdotal notetaking during an activity where a child is engaged provides "a clear idea" about the pupil's engagement, collaboration, and progress. The anecdotal notes I took were my brief informal notes written while observing the twelve early-year classroom participants engaged in the BLC with CLIL activities and communicating with them. The anecdotal notes briefly documented the twelve pupils' oral conversations, verbal and non-verbal responses during circle time, expressions and collaboration during literacy sessions, and their communication during peer and group activities in centres where mathematics, science, art, and technology were integrated with language development.

The semi-structured interviews with the sixteen early childhood educators who made themselves available for the personal interviews concluded with ten questions about the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum with Content Language Integrated Learning implemented by the early childhood educators. The educator participants were provided with pseudonyms to protect participants' "anonymity" (Braun and Clarke 2013, p. 63) and confidentiality. The semi-structured interviews were audio recorded and "transcribed" by April 2021 (Creswell and Poth 2018, p. 166).

The semi-structured interview questions include the following ten sections: (1) a demographic background section of the educators; (2) a language proficiency section; (3) questions concerning the bilingual literacy curriculum; (4) educator participants' teaching strategies; (5) content language integrated learning; (6) resources implemented for the bilingual literacy curriculum; (7) play-based learning; (8) the educator's role in the BLC with CLIL; (9) the early years' pupil's parents' role in bilingual literacy; and finally, questions on pupils' experiences with bilingual literacy through play-based learning in a social-cultural

environment. The first section asked basic questions about the educators, such as their country of birth, citizenship, qualifications, and years of teaching experience in the early years.

The section on language use documented the languages of proficiency that the educator participants acquired or encountered over their lifetime: this included language use in daily activities with the pupils (speaking and reading). It also attempted to gather information on the educator participants' proficiency in their languages in the four skills (passive reading and listening and active writing and speaking). This is particularly important to answer the questions on the UAE with its high rate of transnational migration and globalised society contributing to multilingualism.

The third section attempted to ascertain educators' experience with the bilingual curriculum applied in their classrooms. This is particularly important concerning education reform efforts in the UAE, which revealed limited research on bilingual education curricula in the early years. It also attempted to gather the experiences of the early childhood educators with a bilingual curriculum where Emirati pupils' language and culture are connected and where the program avoids language loss and re-establish cultural identity and bilingualism.

The fourth section attempted to ascertain educators' strategies and methods implemented during the teaching of the BLC. The fifth section gathered information on educators' experiences with CLIL as integrated into the BLC. In contrast, the sixth section attempted to collect information on the resources educators utilised while teaching the BLC with CLIL in their classrooms. The seventh section provided the opportunity for open-ended discussions on educators' experiences with play-based learning while leading the BLC with CLIL.

In contrast, the eighth section attempted to ascertain educators' role in compiling and creating the BLC with CLIL. This section is crucial as it attempts to provide research concerning early years educators in the UAE education reform and curriculum decision-making. The ninth section attempted to gather information on the role of early years pupils within the BLC with CLIL classrooms. Finally, pupils' experiences with bilingual literacy through play-based learning in a social-cultural environment were gathered. The open-ended questions based on the BLC with CLIL in early childhood with early childhood educators prevented early childhood educator participants from being presented with questions that did not apply to them. The average completion time was 30.5 minutes, not far from the length advertised in the invitation packages. The following section explains the purpose of the study.

3.1 Restatement of the Purpose

The Literature has identified that limited research has been conducted on sustainable bilingual literacy in the early years of education in the UAE (Boles, Hess and Woll 2010; Gallagher 2011, p. 69; Mohamed and Medhammer 2014; O'Sullivan 2015; and Dillon 2019). On the contrary, the research findings of Justice et al. (2010) and Westerveld, Gillon, and Boyd (2012) revealed that not much is known about the language development of bilingual early years pupils concerning pupils' translated literature as foundational to early years bilingual curricula (Boyd 2012; Uccelli and Páez 2007; Tagoilelagi-Leota Glynn et al. 2005). This current study describes the experiences of educators engaged in a bilingual literacy curriculum with pupils' translated literature and a content-integrated learning philosophy. It concurs with qualitative phenomenological research as an inquiry process of understanding based on distinct methodological traditions of phenomenological inquiry that explore a social or human problem and build a complex, holistic picture while analysing and reporting on the phenomenon by describing detailed experiences of participants in their natural setting (Creswell 2013) using essential invariant structures for reporting on the essence of participants' experiences (Moustakas 1994 cited in Creswell and Poth 2018, p. 80).

3.2 The research design

The methodological framework for the study is built on a qualitative paradigm with a phenomenological approach (Hammersley 2013, p.27; Marshall and Rossman 2016, p. 16) that drives, organises, and clarifies the thinking around this research study. This qualitative phenomenological study is a holistic single case study approach (Baxter and McMaster 2009, p. 549; Byman 2016, p. 60; Creswell and Poth 2018) as it examined the experiences (Marshall and Rossman 2016, cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018, p. 20) of multilingual early years educators at an Arabic early year's department of a private school in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE.

The literature defined a single case study as an empirical inquiry built upon one selected case or group of participants (Ritchie and Lewis 2003) that investigates a present-day phenomenon (the case) in a real real-world context, with real people (Yin 2014, p. 13), which concurred with the group of early years educator participants purposefully selected at the school's early years department for the study.

The literature identified that holistic single case study findings are intended to contribute to theory rather than to be generalised (Harding 2013, p.175). Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011, p. 256) mentioned that the primary purpose of the single case study is to provide an "in-depth understanding of the topic", which concurred with the small sample of educator participants purposefully selected for the single holistic case study, engaged in the BLC with CLIL pedagogy. (Denscombe 2014 cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p, 301) concurred that phenomenology is suited to small-scale qualitative single-case study research focusing on participants' experiences. The study under investigation conforms with the literature that referred to a purposeful sampling of participants as a case study that suits the needs or purpose, selected and mainly "handpicked" for the case under investigation (Flick 2009, p. 123). Creswell and Poth (2018, p.158) define purposeful sampling as selected individuals at a specific site for study, as they purposefully inform an understanding of the phenomenon under investigation.

The instrument used in this qualitative phenomenological single holistic case study is semi-structured interviews (Scott and Ytreberg 2009, pp. 22-23) designed with open-ended questions (Simon 2011, p.1) *(Refer to Appendix C:1.3 Interview Questions)* that were audio-recorded and transcribed *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.7 Example of transcription)*. A *"*play script transcription style" (Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p. 159) was used. In the following sections, I described my position in the research study, the research instrument, and more detailed information about the research location and participants. I elaborated on the validation and reliability of the study as well as the data collection and analysis used in this study.

3.3 Reflexive Positioning of the Researcher

The reason for conducting qualitative research using the experiences of participants in the study stems from my ontological belief that the experiences of people are multi-layered and open to multi-understandings and attempts to match reflection to the unreflective life of consciousness (Merleau and Ponty 2012).

More importantly, my epistemological view is based on constructivism, which believes that the world does not exist independently and that multiple content-specific realities exist (Pring 2015, p.65), as observed through the interpretation of qualitative research and qualitative methods with various realities.
Similarly, my epistemological view that qualitative education research is best understood through the interpretation of multiple experiences of the individuals who work and live in the

environment concurs with the research findings of (Ferrarotti 1981, p.25, cited in Seidman 2019). This research study explains the interviewing of early years educators in a naturalistic environment, allowing them to have the confidence to voice their understandings and experiences within their practice of a bilingual literacy environment. Therefore, I built my positionality further with a dialogue that challenged the participants' perspectives (Hesse-Biber 2007, p.17) within their environment whilst addressing the research questions. The literature identified that such a qualitative paradigm became the rich and thick experiences of participants that allowed me to collect robust evidence rooted in their understanding, interpretation, and explanation of the phenomenon under investigation (Hammerley 2013, p.27; Denscombe 2014, p. 94; McMillan 2012). However, I know that as the principal director of the school, I might be seen as in an asymmetric position of power (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p. 136) with regards to the educator participants who could have felt that they were coerced (Brooks et al. 2014, p. 94; Yardley 2008) to participate. Therefore, I reduced the power differentials by putting the educator participants at ease and establishing rapport and trust, not focussing on position, age, gender, ethnicity, and language (Brooks et al. 2014, p. 112). To conform I detached my emotions from not council (Oliver 2003) yet stayed friendly and cheerful (Hochschild 2012) and thanked them for their contributions, whilst prepared to tolerate attitudes and opinions (Hammersley and Trianou 2012) to conduct valuable research and produce trustworthy results. I further asserted with the findings of (Seideman 2013, p.24) that the purpose of interviewing participants is not to answer questions but rather to have an interest in understanding their experiences and their meaning-making process, which further strengthened my epistemological view. I know that it does not mean that I become the centre of the participants' universe; moreover, I realised there are limitations to understanding other experiences through meaning-making and reflection.

However, I acknowledged the importance of the participants' experiences, and the best way to understand them was to get a subjective understanding by putting myself in their shoes and seeing through their eyes (Descombe 2014, p. 99).

De Laine (2000, p. 109) stated that there should be a partnership of equality between the researcher and the participants, with the researcher as a participant with an insider-outsider's perspective, and without "faking the friendship" (Duncombe and Jessop 2002, p. 108). I realised that the process of reflexivity (Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p. 327) has severe epistemological implications. Therefore, it motivated me to reflect on my ontological

assumptions and their impacts on the experiences of the educator participants, the research, and its findings.

Being reflexive motivated me to leave the preconceptions aside when interviewing participants and analysing data to create valid empirical grounds for the findings rather than relying on my expectations to justify decisions and findings (Naaeke, Radford, Kurylo, Grabowski, and Lindon 2010).

However, (Willig 2013, cited in Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p. 64) stated that in qualitative research, the researcher is the leading research instrument, personally involved in the study with thoughts, feelings, and experiences. The author stated that researchers can shape their thoughts through reflexivity, explore the relationships with the study participants, and analyse their impact. The literature further indicated that to comply and deliberately put aside my own belief about the phenomenon under investigation while interviewing educator participants, I must identify areas of potential bias and "bracketing" out (Carpenter 2007, cited in Chan, Fung, and Chien 2013, p.2; Creswell and Pott 2018, p. 78) potential influences that may affect my research work (Primeau 2003). To ensure the credibility of the research study, I involved a peer reviewer (Creswell 2009) who was a critical friend. The critical friend challenged me to explain and justify the research questions, methods, and evidence (Mertens 2010). Additionally, I utilised member checking (McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl 2018), also referred to as respondent validation or participant validation (Birt et al. 2016) of the interview questions. (*Refer to Validation and Reliability Chapter 3.5 for more information)* and RTA in the study's data analysis.

Finally, I was supported by the semi-structured phenomenological interviews with the open-ended questions (White 2009, pp. 66-70) included in the study, as they steered and guided the interviews (Morse and Richards 2002) and avoided bias when interviewing participants. The phenomenological interviews selected for the instrument also suited the purpose of the qualitative study in that they examine the experiences of the educators concerning the phenomenon (van Manen 2014, pp. 256-260; Simons 2009, p. 21), which helped describe the single case study. The phenomenological approach I applied in this study aimed to capture the instant moments that deal with the meaning units (Giorgi 2009) of participants' experiences as illustrated in the holistic single case study. However, (Limerick et al. 1996 cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p. 274) suggested that to regard the interview as a gift, interviewees have the power to withhold information and decide what to discuss or show themselves in other lights when extending the questions. Nevertheless, I interpreted

the interview as a social encounter (Morrisson 2013a) surrounded by endless responses that complemented the research process. It provided light on the phenomenon and answered the research questions on BLC with CLIL. Additionally, the phenomenological examples made the phenomenon "singular, knowable and understandable" (Agamben 1993, p.10, cited in Harding 2013) and provided a framework of research evidence and data to interpret and match the research epistemology. The rationale for this phenomenological approach was a system of collective thoughts in reciprocal connection (Ingold 2017) incorporated in the interview techniques adopted for this research study and further explained through four phenomenological themes that focused on capturing the experiences of participants *(Refer to the next Chapter 3.4 concerning the research Instrument and the four phenomenological themes).*

3.4 Research instrumentation

As mentioned in Chapter 3.1, the instrument used in this phenomenological single holistic case study is semi-structured interviews (Scott and Ytreberg 2009, pp. 22-23) designed with ten open-ended questions (Simon 2011, p.1; Marshall and Rossman 2016, p. 18) *(Refer to Appendix C:1.3 Interview questions).* The ten interview questions were piloted (Hennink et al. 2011 cited in Harding 2013, p. 48) *(Refer to Appendix C:1.4 Interview questions piloting and validation letter).* Interviews have been addressed in research as the "gold standard" for qualitative research (Barbour 2008, p. 113).

According to (Robsin 2011), interviews need no justification to be used for qualitative data collection as they are "flexible and adaptable" (p. 280). In addition, the qualitative interview with open-ended questions used in this research study provided ample opportunity to listen to the views and experiences of the respondents and to ask questions to explore the ideas further. Hennink et al. 2011, p. 109) mentioned that interviews help determine people's experiences, examine their beliefs, extract people's personal stories, and examine the context surrounding people's lives. Glassner (2011, p. 133) stated that in-depth interviews capture "people's voices and stories" and explore collective understandings.

I used face-to-face, open-ended, semi-structured interviews with the early years' educator participants (King and Horrocks 2010, p.87), where participants and I adhered to safe distancing and wearing masks during COVID-19. I based the interviews on the study of Silverman (2013, p. 134), who mentioned that open-ended and flexible questions (White 2009, pp. 66-70) are likely to get more considered responses than closed questions. Moreover, the literature has identified that open-ended questions provide better access to

interviewees' interpretations of events and their understanding, thoughts, and experiences. Hesse-Biber and Leavy (2011) mentioned that in a qualitative interview, the interviewee and interviewer are involved in and participate in a "meaning-making" (p.94) process. Whilst (Hennink et al. (2001, p.109 cited in Harding 2013 p. 35) suggested that an excellent qualitative open-ended interview should be like a "conversation" (p.36), which informed my practice for this research study. According to Hammersley (2016), open-ended questioning during interviewing can find out participants' experiences of a phenomenon, as it provides "witness information" (p. 68) that involves participants engaged in the situation. In contrast, Atkinson and Delamont (2006, p. 752) stated that interviews are speech acts, not simply vehicles for collecting proxy data.

The phenomenological interviews aimed to transform the experiences of the educator participants of the holistic single case phenomenon into a "textual expression of its essence" (Seidman 2019, p. 18), which took place through using a "play scrip style" for transcription (Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p. 159) of the audio recorded interviews. The questions designed for the interviews were clear and brief, no more than a single sentence (White 2009, pp. 66-70) and had equal importance between them (Andrews 2003).

The experiences of the participants were taken at "face value" (Cohen, Mannion, and Morrison 2018, p. 20) to be described, understood, and explained (Hammersley 2013, p.27). Subsequently, the interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed (*Refer to Appendix C: 1.7 Example of transcribed interview demonstrating the play script transcription style used) (Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p. 159).* Moreover, the ten questions addressed research questions on bilingual literacy in a school's Arabic early years department and elaborated on the multilingual early years educators' experiences with the BLC with CLIL curriculum in their classrooms.

As mentioned the research instrument was divided into ten questions (White 2009, pp. 66-70) *(Refer to Appendix C:1.3 Interview questions)* concerning the bilingual literacy curriculum; educator participants' teaching strategies, content language integrated learning; resources for the bilingual literacy curriculum; play-based learning; the educator's role in the BLC with CLIL; the early years' pupil's parents' role in bilingual literacy and questions on pupils' experiences with bilingual literacy through play-based learning and their social-cultural environment.

Four phenomenological themes provided the rationale for the structure adopted for the interview techniques used.

The phenomenological approach to interviews focuses on participants' experiences and the meaning they make of their experiences (Creswell and Poth 2018, Seidman 2019, p.18; Van Manen 2014).

The first theme provided the rationale for the structure adopted for this research study, which is the "temporal and transitory" nature of human experience (Seidman 2019, p. 17) that indicates that human lives are bounded by time, or "fleeting" (p.16) temporarily moments, and in these fleeting experiences the experience that will become the is, and what was. In asking participants to reflect on their experiences, I used a phenomenological approach, asking them to search for the real "essence" (Creswell and Poth 2018, p.11) of their experiences.

The second theme that provides the rationale for the structure adopted for this research study is seeking participants' subjective points of view (Creswell and Poth 2018. p.20). Through interviewing guided by phenomenology, the researcher strives to understand participants' experiences from their point of view.

 At the same time, the researcher aims to gain a subjective understanding of the participants by coming as close as possible to understanding the true 'is" of the participants' experience from their point of view.

The third theme that provides the rationale for the structure adopted for this research study is the lived experiences as the foundation of the phenomena. Upon reflection, the researcher experience that that phenomenon can take on meaning for the participants and the interviewer (Schultz 1967, cited in Seidman 2019, p. 19). Phenomenology aims to give meaning to the phenomenon by transforming the lived experiences into textual expressions of their essence (Van Manen 2014). Our access to the participants' experiences happens through *language.*

The fourth theme that provides the rationale for the structure adopted for this research study is the emphasis on "meaning making" Seidman (2019, p. 19) through phenomenology. The phenomenological approach to interviewing emphasises the importance of meaning-making of participants' experiences. According to Seidman (2019), meaning-making is a human-related process that relies on language to describe participants' experiences, bringing

experiences into our intentional gaze and opening the door to meaningfulness. Finally, it is stated that meaningfulness happens when the researcher asks the participants to reconstruct their experiences, select events from their past, and then reflect on them, and this is when participants engage in the act of attention that allows them to make meaning of their experiences (Hennink et al. (2011, p.110). The following section provides information on the research location where the research was conducted.

3.5 The research location

The study was conducted in Arabic early-year classrooms in a department of a private school in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the UAE, which indicated the holistic single case study. The school is in an Emirati community with Emirati pupils, and Arabic is their first language. The school followed an adapted American Common Core Curriculum based on a bilingual literacy curriculum designed by the school's senior management and educators, where pupils used their spoken Arabic (a'amiya) to learn and understand English.

Compared with other curricula, this foundational pedagogical approach by the school outlined in the BLC with CLIL is unique in the sense that it is based on age-appropriateness, translated pupils' literature, integrated language and subject content, hands-on activities, play-based learning, and translanguaging (Creese and Blackledge 2010; Garcia and Wei 2014; Colón 2019) in the early years. Many Early Childhood facilities in the UAE offer a Kindergarten curriculum with several different foundational philosophies for the 3-4-year-old pupils that include a Montessori Curriculum, EYFS British curriculum, IPC curriculum, Australian National Quality Framework, Indian National Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE), The Swedish preschool curriculum, the American Common Core Adopted Curriculum, and the UAE Ministry of Education Curriculum which aim to develop independence, confidence, self-esteem, and the love for creative learning (Edarabia "Best Nurseries in Abu Dhabi 2020).

Only female educators are allowed to teach in the school's early years department due to the UAE federal authority's regulations on teaching in early years and kindergartens in the UAE schools (Refer to the UAE Institutions Compliance Inspection Manual for Early Childhood Education 2018 Appendix A: 1.3). The school comply with regulations from the UAE Federal Authority for Early Childhood Education, established in 2022, who issues licenses and monitors government and private early-year entities in the UAE in coordination with the local authorities Abu Dhabi Department of Education (ADEK), KHDA, and the Ministry of Education (MoE).

The teaching of the Arabic language is mandatory in all schools, and the UAE government actively promoted bilingualism among its citizens and integrated English into the "linguistic dualism" (Al Hussein and Gitsaki 2018, p. 102) policy for schools.

Matsumoto (2019) mentioned that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a wealthy young country attempting to achieve top-tier global status in education. However, education reform efforts in the UAE need more research on bilingual education. The author stated that the UAE's focus on international status and the impact of English on Emirati culture and learning have been overlooked. Guilamo (2020, p. 118) define a dual-language curriculum with a "Heritage Language program," also called a language restoration and maintenance program, as a program where pupils' language and culture are connected and where the program avoids language loss and re-establish cultural identity and bilingualism through a 50:50 model where both languages are taught.

The current study asserted and aimed to address a bilingual program where Arabic language and Emirati identity are included and the lack of research concerning the inclusion of early years educators in the UAE education reform and decision-making policies (Al Momani, Ihmeideh, and Momani 2008, p. 249) are addressed. Woodbury and Gess-Newsome (2002, p. 213) concurred that education reform in the U.A.E. will not succeed without the involvement of educators.

The Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) is the regulatory government entity that regulates and provides all education licenses and policies for all private and public schools and evaluates the efficiency of the education system in Abu Dhabi schools *(Ministerial Decision No. (4532) of 2005; Private Education Law; ADEK Private Schools Policy and Guidance Manual 2014-2015).* The school where the research was conducted has been licensed since 2016, has a good reputation and has been in operation for almost eight years with one thousand seven hundred and seventy pupils on the role.

According to the school's learning management system, Orison, pupil data shows that 91.4% of the pupils in the school are first-language Emirati pupils. In comparison, 8.6% of the pupils are first-language Arabic speakers from Yemen, Lebanon, Jordan, Oman, Syria, and Egypt. The school has almost six hundred pupils between the age of 3-5 years in the early years and kindergarten department with Arabic language as their mother tongue. The pupils' enrolment data identified that the pupils had limited English Language proficiency upon entering the school and had to be accommodated in an *emergent literacy* program for the first six to eight weeks to grasp English language vocabulary and overcome the

challenges in following instructions, listening, speaking, reading, phonics and writing in English.

The school registered 125 Emirati Arabic-speaking 3-4-year-old pupils in the early years department of the school. To provide quality teaching and learning, the early years department and Kindergarten section are divided into 16 classrooms with 16-20 pupils enrolled per class and with English and Arabic-speaking educators and Filipina teaching assistants. The research findings revealed that pupils are placed in mixed-ability groups in the early years' classrooms. The early years' pupil population comprises 51.2% male and 48.8% female pupils.

As mentioned, there is an emphasis on a bilingual literacy curriculum in the early years' department with a content and language-integrated learning philosophy (CLIL) to enhance English literacy and Arabic language. Arabic language and English are simultaneously taught through translated children's literature in the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum with CLIL. Like all private schools in the U.A.E., the educators in the early years department of the school are multilingual and bring a wealth of teaching experiences and knowledge.

The Irtiqaa Inspection Board inspected the school and issued an inspection rating of "very good" for the last inspection. Due to the many good initiatives and the bilingual literacy curriculum in the early years, the school has been listed as one of ADEK's pilot projects for 2020-22.

The school employed two hundred and four multilingual staff members from seventeen countries and focused on providing multiple languages such as English, Arabic, French and German in the Elementary, Middle and High School phases to prepare pupils for international university placement and future job opportunities. This concurred with the research findings of Coste, Moore and Zarate (2009), who mentioned that multilingual competency allows participants as social agents to have proficiency of varying degrees and several languages that may lead to "intercultural interaction, competitiveness" (p. 11) and future job opportunities (Vez 2009).

The research further revealed that the pupils' home language is local Arabic, where "*a'amiya*" is spoken. The study showed that in many cases, the only exposure to English language vocabulary the early years pupils have is through attending school; their social collaboration and interaction at the school, cartoons, videos, and pupils' literature, are in the form of electronic applications on the pupils' electronic devices (IPads) or other electronic devices.

The research revealed that the educators experienced that before the pandemic in 2019, pupils were allowed to borrow their English and Arabic storybooks from the class and school libraries. Due to the government's regulation on COVID-19 and health and safety restrictions, the pupils were not allowed to borrow or share library books. However, the research revealed that the Arabic early years pupils were exposed to English Literacy at circle time, where they engaged in English and Arabic-translated pupils' stories read by the educators and hands-on activities.

The pupils' translated literature forms the foundational strategy for language development and is included in the bilingual literacy curriculum (BLCC) with content-integrated activities, which is unique to the school. Another challenge revealed by the educator participants was the hybrid teaching method during COVID-19, where pupils demonstrated a lack of socialisation with their educators and peers and missed out on engaging with their peers with classroom resources.

The school utilised many academic resources for pupils to access and work, such as remote iPads, trolleys, CLIL robotic Lego technologies, and well-equipped libraries. During COVID-19, strict rules were applied, and all equipment had to be sanitised after and before being distributed to the pupils, which limited the time for teaching and learning. The current study identified that early years pupils were placed in mixed ability groups in ADEK bubbles in the school's Arabic early years department. Valiandes (2015) asserted that mixed-ability groups with differentiated instruction could "empower pupils to become independent and critical thinkers" (p.18). The following section describes the research participants purposefully selected for this qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study.

3.6 Research Participants

This qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study (Baxter and McMaster 2009, p. 549; Byman 2016, p. 60) based on a constructivist paradigm recruited a "small sample" (Simons 2009, p. 21) of sixteen female multilingual early years educator participants purposefully selected (Bryman 2016, p. 409) to guide the research questions relevant to the study on bilingual literacy and fit the case. These female participants were employed as early years educators and licensed by the ADEK and MoE. They were engaged in a phenomenon called a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) with Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), implemented in an Arabic early years department of a private school in the UAE. All the educator participants held a bachelor's degree in education, a standard requirement for educators' approval and licensing. In the UAE, only female educators can

teach in schools' early years and kindergarten departments (ADEK Guidelines for Nurseries and Early Childhood 2012, and the MoE Institutions Compliance Inspection Manual for Early Childhood Education 2018, Standard 1.6.1, p. 28).

The educator participants' teaching experience in early years ranged from three to twenty-one years (Refer to Table 1.4 below, educator participants' experiences). The figure identified that most of the participants in the sample group were between 25 and 30 years of age, while the minority were between 45 and 55 years of age.

Number of early years educators with experience between 3-10 years	Number of early years educators with experience between 11-20 years	Number of early years educators with experience 21 years and above
(77.7%)	(16.6%)	(5.7%)

Table 1.4 Early years educator participants' teaching experiences.

The following Table *(Refer to the appendices Table 1.2,* The demographic characteristic of multilingual educator participants with Arabic proficiency and Table 1.3, The demographic characteristics of multilingual educator participants with English proficiency, explains the demographic characteristics of the research sample of sixteen female early years educators *(N=16),* of which eleven, (68.75%) were multilingual with English as their first language and five, (31.25%) were multilingual participants with Arabic as their first language. The MoE Early Childhood Education Institutions Compliance Inspection Manual (2018, p.28, standard 1.6.1) states that only female staff must be employed in early childhood settings. (Liebtag and Hauge 2015, cited in Guilamo 2020, p. 8) emphasised the importance of educators' qualifications when teaching bilingual pupils. The Knowledge and Human Development Authority (KHDA) in the UAE mentioned that the quality of staff has a significant impact on the development of early years pupils and the "lack of relevant qualifications" may lead to disadvantaging of private early childhood services *(KHDA Early Childhood and Care Manual 2009, p.42).* The demographic characteristics in Tables 1.1 and 1.2 highlighted that the participants in the sample group of sixteen female participants were all qualified to teach in the early years. Most participants held a bachelor's degree in early childhood education, a standard requirement for educators' approval and licensing issued by ADEK and MoE for educators at schools in the U.A.E. However, tables 1.2. and 1.3 revealed that two of the

educator participants had early years diplomas, whilst there were a limited number of participants with a master's degree in teaching and learning.

The educator participants revealed significant teaching experience in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, South Africa, Jordan, and Lebanon.

Several participants mentioned that they have experience teaching English as a second language abroad and in the United Arab Emirates.

Tables 1.2 and 1.3 further identified that 77.7% of the research sample (N=16) had 3-10 years of experience teaching in the early years, while 16.6% of the participants had 11-20 years of experience in the early years. 5.7% of the participants have more than 21 years of experience teaching in the early years. Tables 1.2 and 1.3 identified that all the participants in the sample group had experience teaching in their early years. Equally important to note is that although bilingual educators with Arabic as their first language share the same language, they speak different varieties of Arabic and have different Arabic backgrounds. As a result, the literature reviewed identified that these educators bring a vast array of multi-lingual and multicultural perspectives to the teaching of bilingual literacy in the Arabic early years department of the school.

Subsequently, twelve early years pupils (six girls and six boys) were randomly selected on class lists by the school's Deputy Principal and early years coordinators *(Refer to Appendix C:1.2 Chairman of the Board of Trustees consent letter for research and Arabic parents' consent letters Appendix C:1.10)* and were observed through an unstructured (Dörnyei 2007) observation technique referred to as *"simply looking in"* (Simpson and Tuson 2008, p. 17). Unstructured observation does not imply the use of an observation schedule (Bryman 2016, p. 270); however, after their parents' consent was obtained, visits to the twelve pupil participant classrooms were arranged with their educators and informal notes were taken of the pupil participants' experiences, practices, and interaction with the phenomenon (BLC and CLIL) in their classrooms *(Refer to the narrative Chapter 4.1 Findings related to pupils' observation)*. The literature identified that unstructured observation is the essential technique to gain helpful information and insight into how different people interpret events and behave with a phenomenon or engage in a specific context or situation to understand their world (Simpson and Tuson 2008).

The findings were further explained by the literature reviewed (Meo 2010), which stated that children are active agents instead of passive objects and enriched the quality of data collection when observed.

Furthermore, Bryman (2016, p. 274) mentioned that the observation period should be unstructured, and random sampling should be used for younger pupils' observation at different times, as this will help the pupils involved not get tired and provide a false interpretation of their engagement with the phenomenon.

The purpose of observing the Arabic early years pupils was to answer how the BLC with CLIL implemented by the educator participants in the classrooms *occurred in practice* and how it strengthened the second language oral fluency of Arabic early years pupils as indicated by the educator participants. Observation of pupil participants supported the validation and trustworthiness of the study through triangulation and captured and described the pupils' experiences in a narrative (Cohen, Mannion, and Morrison 2018, p. 663).

However, the purpose of the observations was not to reveal the impact of the phenomena on early-year pupils' language progress nor to evaluate or assess the outcomes of early-year pupils' bilingual language skills during the implementation of the BLC with CLIL and the translanguaging approach. The latter calls for further investigation and research in the future.

Dörnyei (2007) stated that the observer should approach the situation as openly as possible to discover the meaning of what has been informally observed. However, Simpson and Tuson (2008, p. 17) mentioned that steps should be taken to pilot the observation procedure so that the researcher can estimate the length of each informal observation. *(Refer to Chapter 3.7, Protection of Human Subjects, for more information on the scheduled times and steps during the observation visits).* The following section will describe protecting vulnerable populations, including pupil participants and educator participants' informed consent.

3.7.1 Protection of Human Subjects

As previously mentioned, twelve early years pupils (six girls and six boys) were randomly selected on class lists by the school's deputy principal and early years coordinators (Simpson and Tuson 2008, p. 16). They were observed through an unstructured (Dörnyei 2007) observation technique referred to as "*simply looking in"* (Simpson and Tuson 2008, p. 17). The pupil participants were between 3 - and 4 years old.

I drew from the research findings of Thomson (2007, p. 208) for including the early years pupils in the research study, as the author argued that pupils' voices have been silent for

many years and that the assumption that children are adults-in-the-waiting must be challenged.

The authors stated that children of all ages must have shared agency in research and be allowed to be co-researchers and advisors alongside the researcher. In comparison, (Hood et al. 1996, cited in Keddie 2000) warn that involving children in research is a "risky enterprise" (p.73), and research involving children should include procedures that minimise harm. The author further stated that making children part of the research study may give them the status of actors who must be valued for their opinions and views. I, therefore, believe that the Arabic early years pupil participants randomly selected had the right to be included in the research study and were valuable in sharing their experiences and understanding of English through their engagement with the BLC with CLIL implemented by their educators.

As this age group forms part of the vulnerable population group, the necessary ethical steps were taken to ensure that no child was placed in an unethical situation. Juneja, Adhikari, and Vardhana Rao (2019) mention that when conducting research within a vulnerable population, one should always reflect on whether the study will provide substantial benefit and understanding to the group. Before the observations took place, a parents' information pack *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.8* Parents' *information pack)* was sent to the randomly selected pupils' parents with a consent letter in English and Arabic *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.9* Parents' *consent form in English; 1.10 Parents' consent form translated in*to Arabi*c).* To ensure the credibility of the Arabic MSA language required in the UAE and parents' understanding of the research project and procedures for their children to participate, the Arabic consent letter was revised by an external qualified Arabic translator (El Khatib 2020) for member checking (Taylor 2001, cited in Braun and Clarke 2013, p. 283) to ensure that the Arabic sentences constructions were in the formal MSA. The external qualified Arabic translator (El Khatib 2020) made the necessary changes to the consent letter *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.11* Parents' *Arabic consent form validation)* before it was sent to the parents. The informed consent (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018, p. 124; Graham et al. 2013; Mukherji and Albon 2010) ensured that parents understood the research procedures and that their children were not obligated to participate.

The informed consent letters included the purpose of the research, research location and information and the withdrawal procedures (Crow et al. 2006, p. 86 cited in Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2018, p. 125), for example, that observations will be conducted in the classrooms of the pupil participants and the presence of their Arabic and English educators,

without the use of audio or video recordings (UAE Federal Law No. 3 of 2016, also known as Wadeema's Law concerning child rights; UNICEF 2021).

Informed consent also included that the pupil participant's personal information will be kept confidential (Graham et al. 2013) using pseudonyms (Thomas and Hodges 2010, cited in Ruth, Allen, and Wiles 2015, p. 2) and stored in password-protected files on a hard disk (Bryman 2016, p. 127).

The consent letters also mentioned that parents can withdraw their children from the research during or before the observations.

Twelve consent letters were obtained with the parents' signatures. The multilingual educator participants gave me 30-minute time slots scheduled over nine weeks to visit their classrooms twice weekly to informally observe the twelve pupil participants during the BLC and CLIL English and Arabic literacy lessons and CLIL activities.

Simpson and Tuson (2008, p.17) mentioned that steps should be taken to pilot the observation procedure so that the length of each observation could be measured. Unfortunately, it was impossible to pilot and measure the length of each observation due to some of the hands-on activities included in technology. Edu-Lego blocks and iPad activities had to be prolonged in the ADEK bubbles. Pupils had to wash their hands, and equipment had to be sanitised during COVID-19 before being re-distributed to the next ADEK bubble. Nevertheless, the educator participants provided me with extended time for the visits. Moreover, in some instances, the BLC with CLIL pedagogy through hands-on activities took the pupils longer to design, build, re-build, and discuss their constructions.

All pupils were present during COVID-19, and when the observations took place where, they were asked to talk about the pupils' story that was read, pictures they drew, or models they had built with resources in the activity centres and ADEK bubbles.

The questions posed to all Arabic pupil participants were: Can you re-tell the story? Tell me about the picture (model) you drew (designed). I built my observations and the interpretation of pupils' drawings on the literature that identified pupils' drawings to be potentially the key to enhancing speaking and communication in English as it provides a transition between what they cannot fully express in the language (Dickins 2004, p.1; Roberts-Holmes 2014, p. 125-6). Beeley (2012, p.47-50) mentioned that much literacy development occurs through pupils' literature, and active listening and drawing inspire the interpretation and response to English communication.

Grugeon and Gardner (2000, p.77) concurred that through pupils' literature, children will be willing to learn a foreign language and draw on past experiences to view their social world and learn from the social worlds of others. Alternatively, Graham et al. (2013) mentioned that children must be allowed to say if they do not want to participate. Therefore, pupil participants were not obligated to answer my questions or discuss their models and drawings. Flewitt (2005) emphasised the "negotiation of initial and ongoing consent" (p. 565) through the "sharing" (p. 543) of information concerning the research with young children. The author stated that the researchers should focus on taking a flexible, reflective stance and explaining the observation process to children. The author said that when children are informed, they will feel at ease to participate. I ensured that the pupil participants knew what would be observed by explaining the purpose of the observation to them in simple English and mentioning that I would be visiting them to share their learning. All the pupil participants engaged and participated within their terms in the conversations and informal discussions without putting them at risk. I visited the classrooms as per the educator's invitations and ensured that there was a trustworthy relationship between the Arabic pupil participants and me when engaging with them. I made informal, anecdotal notes and let the pupil participants feel safe and protected by remaining in their classrooms, which was their "neutral safe territory" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p. 120) with their educators present and without using a video or audio recording devices (UAE Federal Law No. (3) of 2016 on Child Protection Law Wadeema).

According to Watts (2011, p. 302) and Cohen, Manion, and Morris (2018, p. 552), observing pupils in the natural environment builds trust and shares supervision. It supports recording pupils' impressions, conversations, behaviour, events, engagements, and activities during the observation.

I observed and listened to their dialogue by looking in (Simpson and Tuson 2008, p. 17) on how they engaged in language-integrated activities and educator's story readings and listening, and how they retell the pupils' stories and engaged in L1 and L2 in the early years Arabic classrooms (Watts 2011, p. 302). Finally, all twelve pupil participants were thanked and appreciated and received a copy of the pupils' book, *The Smartest Giant in Town*, by Donaldson (2016) as a gift (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2019, p. 503).

As mentioned in Chapter 3. 6 concerning the educator participants, a "small sample" (Simons 2009, p. 21) of sixteen female multilingual early years educator participants were "purposefully" selected (Bryman 2016, p. 409; Teddlie and Yu 2007) to guide the research questions and research on BLC with CLIL in Arabic early years. The principle of providing

participants with informed consent, confidentiality (Oliver 2003, p. 15) and the right to refuse or withdraw from research is identified in the literature (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2018, p 122) and forms an essential part of the research process. Equally important is protecting participants' privacy with the utmost respect (Israel and Hay 2004, cited in (Bryman 2016, p. 127). To obtain the early years educators' consent to participate in the research study, invitations were emailed to the sixteen teachers employed at the Abu Dhabi private school. The email invitations included recruitment packs (Refer to Appendix C: 1.5 Educators' recruitment pack) that explained the purpose of the research study that will take place, with information on participants' voluntary participation, the withdrawal process, participant's consent, and the confidentiality process (Refer to Appendix C:1.6 Educators' consent form).

3.7.2 Reducing the Power Dynamics

Eleven multilingual educator participants with English as their first language and five educator participants with Arabic as their first language (N=16) volunteered and signed the consent forms (Marshall and Rossman 2016, p. 55) (Refer to Table 2 Educator participants' demographic characteristics Chapter 3.6). These "mature and qualified individuals" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p. 122) provided with informed consent (Howitt and Cramer 2014, p. 182) had the opportunity to freely choose whether they would like to participate in the voluntary research study. The authors mentioned that the definition of participants' confirmed consent involves competence, voluntarism, complete information, and comprehension.

I was constantly aware of sampling bias (Bryman 2012, p. 174), where distortion in the sample's representativeness could arise when educators in the early years' department felt coerced (Brooks et al. 2014, p. 94) to participate. I did not want to be left out due to the power relationship (Harding 2013, p. 36) between them and me as principal director of the school. As a researcher, I strive for equality (Yow 2015, cited in Seidman 2019, p. 117). I realised that the equality of the interviews could be affected by factors such as racism, power relations and classism, where participants might not have the trust to share their experiences.

Therefore, I reduced the power dynamics between the educator participants and me by "bracketing" out (Creswell and Pott 2018, p. 78) potential influences that may affect my research work and establishing a rapport without becoming involved in "a two-way conversation" (Haring 2013, p. 52). I put the educator participants at ease and established trust (Brooks et al. 2014, p. 112) and a friendly and cheerful (Hochschild 2012) atmosphere,

as well as ensuring participants that their contributions were considered valuable for the research study. Accordingly, to avoid bias, I included all sixteen participants who showed interest in participating in the research and provided them with an open calendar on Calendly so that they could schedule a convenient time and date to be interviewed within the research time frame.

I knew how to position myself as a reflexive researcher (Sullivan and Forrester 2029, p. 327) and understood what my role as principal might have on the participants, and for that reason, I regarded each interview as "a gift" (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2018, p. 274) as interviewees have the power to withdraw or withheld information or to decide what will be discussed and shared. I am aware of the strong impact that power relations and manipulation through language (Howitt and Cramer 2014, p. 410) and participants' appearance and characteristics could have (Haring 2013, p. 53). I, therefore, respected the participants' rights and freedom of speech to be treated with respect, confidentiality, and anonymity (Hammersley and Traianou 2012, p. 129).

I steered the interview conversation positively, keeping a balance between listening to interviewees without interrupting their conversation and letting them feel at ease and encouraged to share their experiences while being aware of non-verbal cues, for example, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and the significance of silences and pauses as the interviewee might be unclear about the meaning behind words, gestures, and statements (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2018, p. 275). I created a conducive interview environment by maintaining a balance between respecting the participants' words and taking advantage of the discussions to go more deeply into the research topic (Seidman 2019, p. 103).

To ensure confidentiality, the educator participants were provided pseudonyms (Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias 1992, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p. 129). To further protect their identity, the educator participants' interview audio recordings, transcripts, contact details, employment numbers, and classroom information were stored on password-protected files (Plummer 1983, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p. 130) that were saved on an external storage drive (Bryman 2016, p. 133). My practice as a researcher has always been to share with participants the material they contributed to ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the research while maintaining a positive relationship with them. Therefore, I included all participants in "member checking" (Birt et al., 2016, cited in Seidman 2019, p. 104) by providing them with a copy of the transcripts to view and respond to if there were any parts of the transcription with which they might not be comfortable with. Only two participants suggested changes to the format, while the other participants were satisfied with their transcripts and the captured conversations. The sixteen educator

participants were appreciated for their valuable contributions to the research study and received twenty-five dirham coffee gift vouchers (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2019, p. 503).

(For more information on the researcher's positionality, reflexivity, and the reduction of power dynamics, refer to Chapter 3.3.)

The following section provides a detailed description of the measures taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the qualitative research study.

3.8 Validity and Reliability

The literature identified that using validity and reliability in research increases transparency and limits research bias (Singh 2014) while mentioning that validity represents the truthfulness required to report data with confidence and utmost honesty (Hammersley 2012).

According to (Ary et al. 2002 cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018, p. 248), the critical criteria for validity in qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Morse et al. (2002) concurred that trustworthiness can be addressed within these criteria through careful audit trails of evidence, member checking or respondent validation, for example, confirmation of participants, when transcribing interviews, and when coding or categorising results.

Creswell (2012) and Winter (2000, p. 8) mentioned that in qualitative research, the emphasis is placed on internal validity as it seeks to constitute the phenomenon reasonably and not generalise findings (Hammersley 2013). Moreover, Winter (2000, p.4) identified descriptive and interpretative validity as essential to provide the truth in the research where the researcher catches the meaning of participants' experiences with a phenomenon and provides credibility.

The author further stated that validity in qualitative research is concerned with the purpose of participants and the appropriateness of data-collection methods that can be enhanced by case study research (Maxwell 2005).

The literature highlighted the importance of reflexivity and disclosure in internal validity, for example, whether the researcher is reflexive and disclosed the impact of negativity caused by the relationships between the researcher and the participants, for instance, through

missing potentially important information, or respondents' inappropriate responses, or sensitive social or moral standpoints (Teusner 2016, p.90). I included a description of reflexivity and control of bias in Chapter 3, where I explained my positionality as a researcher and mentioned "bracketing" out (Carpenter 2007, cited in Chan, Fung, and Chien 2013, p.2) to avoid bias and the influences that may affect my research work (Primeau 2003) *(Refer to Chapter 3.1 Positioning of the researcher).*

To ensure internal validity and particularly the appropriateness and trustworthiness of the research results for this study, the following steps were taken concerning the research participants, the instrument and transcripts utilised for data collection, coding, and description of the data.

First, I approached the Chairperson of the Board of Trustees to get approval to conduct a research study at the Arabic early years department of the ADEK-licensed private school in Abu Dhabi. I obtained consent to investigate the BLC with CLIL in the Arabic early years pupils' classrooms *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.2 Chairman of the Board of Trustees consent letter).*

Second, I submitted a research proposal to the university's supervisors and the General University Ethics Panel and obtained consent *(Refer to Appendix C:1.1 Stirling University GUEP approval letter) and a GUEP research number* to continue with my research on BLC with CLIL in the UAE.

Then, I approached an external English reviewer with a research background to review the data collection instrument with open-ended questions (Hennink et al. 2011, p. 120), also referred to as member checking (Bradfield, Exley 2020; McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl 2018), to review if the instrument covers the domains that it was intended to protect and investigate (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2019, p. 257). The external reviewer slightly changed the sentence construction and created a written form of piloting feedback (*Refer to Appendix C:1.4 External member checking and piloting of interview questions).* I reflected on the input from the external English reviewer and revised the questions accordingly. Hennink et al. (2011, p. 120) mentioned that one of the benefits of piloting is rephrasing so that the research questions could be answered by all participants if the questions were well structured and well understood. *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.3 Interview Questions).* The questions were then pilot-tested with friends and my supervisor. Sampson (2004) mentioned that pilot testing interview questions refine the interview questions and procedures to avoid bias.

To ensure the credibility of the educator participants' responses during the interviews and provide them with the option of clarifying or modifying their responses in ways they felt were comfortable with, I returned the interview transcript with audio files to the educator participants for agreement (Birt et al. 2016; Creswell 2013; McGrath et al. 2016, cited in McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl 2018) and their involvement, also known as respondent validation or participant validation (McGrath, Palmgren and Liljedahl 2018). Five of the educator participants volunteered to check for the accuracy of the transcripts, and no improvements were recommended other than the alignment of paragraphs by one of the participants (Varpio et al. 2017).

Further to validity and reliability, the literature has shown that transcription is theory; however, Ashmore et al. (2004, cited in Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p. 160) warn researchers to treat the audio recording itself as the "ultimate arbiter of reality" (p. 160) as only certain things get recorded and that what is recorded always frames a researcher's analysis to a greater or lesser extent.

Concerning the validation of the analysis procedures followed in RTA, I used a "15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis" (Braun and Clarke 2006, p. 191) to ensure that the concepts or themes used were consistent with the epistemological position of the analyses and that my position in the analysis was reflexive concerning the themes that emerged *(Refer to Table 1.4 Braun and Clark thematic analyses checklist).* Kirk and Miller (2000, p. 21) mentioned that during the labelling stage of phenomenological themes, the focus on validity would be to seek whether the phenomena were labelled correctly.

The literature highlighted the importance of participant consent and confidentiality as ethical requirements of research (Creswell 2013; Roberts 2015); therefore, as previously mentioned in Chapter 3.7, where I described the protection of human subjects and explicitly dealing with the privacy of participants with respect (Israel and Hay 2004, cited in (Bryman 2016, p. 127), I explained that I provided the pupil and educator participates with pseudonyms to preserve anonymity (Thomas and Hodges 2010). Also, participants' informed consent was obtained, and the right to refuse or withdraw from research (Cohen, Mannion and Morrison 2018, p. 122) was included in the consent letters. Additionally, to ensure the credibility of the translated consent letter in the Arabic MSA language, an external qualified Arabic translator (El Khatib 2020) was approached for member checking (Taylor 2001, cited in Braun and Clarke 2013, p. 283), who made the necessary changes to the consent letter *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.11* Parents' *Arabic consent validation letter).*

Finally, the credibility of the data analysis, coding and generating themes through RTA was assured through the involvement of a critical friend (Creswell 2009) who challenged me to explain and justify the codes and provided me with insight to merge some of the codes with similar meaning during a peer debriefing. During the debriefing, I was checking whether the steps I took were transparent and reflexive in addressing validity and reliability (Gläser and Laudel 2013, cited in Cohen Manion and Morrison 2019, p. 240) by reviewing the research process from data collection and analysis to describe the findings of the holistic single case study. The following section provides a detailed description of the data collection instruments and procedures.

3.9 Data Collection

This qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study examined the experiences of sixteen multilingual education participants and twelve Arabic pupils involved with a bilingual literacy curriculum (BLC) within content language integrated learning (CLIL) pedagogy in the context of Arabic early-years classrooms in the United Arab Emirates.

Data was collected through multiple sources to ensure that the study adequately captured early years educators' experiences concerning the BLC with CLIL in Arabic early years classrooms. For example, semi-structured open-ended interviews with the educator participants that were audio recorded (Gonzales et al. 2008, p.3) and transcribed verbatim, informal classroom observations *(Refer to data collection plan Appendix D: 1.1)* with early years Arabic pupils that were described in a narrative, curriculum documentation, weekly lesson plans, and other MoE policy documents (Yin 2014). The data collection for this holistic single case study took nine weeks, from mid-March 2021 to the first week of May 2021. The reason for using a variety of data sources for this holistic single case study is to triangulate the data to strengthen the validity and trustworthiness of the holistic single case study. Simons (2009, p. 21) defines a single case study as "an in-depth exploration from multiple perspectives" (p.21) of the complexity and uniqueness of a specific project in a real-life context.

3.9.1 Semi-structured open-ended interviews

Sixteen multilingual early years educators (the case) voluntarily participated in 45-minute semi-structured open-ended pilot-tested interviews conducted at the school in a quiet zone where the study investigated the BLC with CLIL pedagogy in Abu Dhabi. The interviewees

scheduled a convenient time and date between mid-March and April 2021. The purpose of the interviews was to investigate the educators' experiences with the BLC with CLIL pedagogy and answer the research question on the phenomenon: What are the early years educators' pedagogical interpretations of their experiences with a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) within a Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classroom?

The educators' rich, detailed answers to the interview questions and their experiences with the BLC with CLIL pedagogy helped generate answers that can be coded and processed accordingly (Bryman 2016, p. 467).

In addition, semi-structured interviews with the ten open-ended questions ensure that participants expand on their experiences with the BLC and CLIL and lead to conversations (Jones et al. 2010) that will help me to elicit information regarding the curriculum design, instructional material they utilised, their professional development, their role and the pupils' parents' role in the bilingual curriculum.

The literature identified semi-structured open-ended interviews as applicable when seeking in-depth knowledge about participants' experiences, as they provide space for participants to share their experiences on their terms without the interviewer leading the interviews (Rayburn and Guittar 2013).

3.9.2 Observation of Early Years Pupils

Twelve early years Arabic pupils were informally observed in their classrooms and in the presence of their educators through a technique referred to as "simply looking in" (Simpson and Tuson 2008, p. 17) and presented in a narrative *(Refer to Chapter 4.1 Findings related to pupils' observations).* Gibbs (2007, p. 97) asserted that the narrative is powerful and integrated. The author argued that a narrative may have quotations from the participants observed but will be helpful when accompanied by the researcher's interpretive commentary. It keeps the text and context together rather than fragmenting it into codes and themes and telling the story *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.3 Interview questions and conservation questions).*

The observations aimed to answer the research question: In what ways (if at all) do Content and Language Integrated pedagogies (CLIL) support a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum in the UAE and develop oral fluency amongst Arabic early years pupils?

The twelve early-year Arabic pupils' observations were scheduled over nine weeks, twice per week, for 30 minutes each. A total of twenty-seven structural hours were observed.

Informal, anecdotal notes and pictures of pupils' drawings were taken during the observations. Due to strict measures on child protection, the Arabic pupils were not video or audio recorded during the observations. Note-taking was an important data collection tool in the classroom observations as it reflects the written account of what I observed and heard looking in on the Arabic pupils' experiences with the BLC with CLIL and resources.

In addition to notetaking, pictures of pupils' pictures were taken to compensate for any information I missed during the notetaking and conversations with the early years Arabic pupils.

To avoid bias and to record only what occurred, I first set out any assumptions by using *two simple questions* to note what was observed. These two questions were posed to the twelve pupils while actively engaged in BLC with CLIL activities. The two questions posed to the early years Arabic pupils were:

1. Can you re-tell the story?

2. Can you tell me about the picture that you drew? (Can you tell me about the design you created?)

Koester (2015, cited in Rosen-O'Leary and Thompson 2019) articulated that pupils' drawings help them "become engaged and better remember content or text" (p. 32).

3.9.3 The role and analysis of pupils' observations

In the current study, observations provided first-hand information of the early years pupils' interaction and practice with BLC and CLIL in the classrooms through educators' pedagogy of teaching the curriculum. The observations helped me with follow-up and clarifying questions for the educator participants' interviews that could have gone unnoticed. At the same time, they triangulated and contributed to my data collection as they supported my interpretations of the educators' experiences with the BLC with CLIL and reported what happened (Patten 2002, p. 306) during the pupils' engagement with the curriculum. Gibbs (2007, p. 60) mentioned that the narrative approach will support me in defining the phenomenon, unfolding the sequence of activities and experiences of the early years Emirati pupil participants, and bringing information to life or letting it "catch fire" (Flick 2009, p.347).

The collected data from the Arabic early years pupils was analysed and reported as a narrative analysis (Refer to Chapter 4.1 Findings related to pupils' observation) that provided an account of the pupils' experiences during the engagement with BLC and CLIL. The

structure of the narrative analysis is based on all meaningful interactions with the pupils, activities, and their experiences, which mitigated an "anything goes approach to creating the narrative (Davis and Dwyer 2017, p. 228). I drew from the findings of the research theorist, Patton (2002), who articulated that data should be allowed to "tell their own story" (p. 457). The next section (3.10) provides information about the data analysis. The final section of this chapter (3.11) describes the data analytical method and procedures for this study. In the next Chapter (4.1), findings related to pupils' observations are presented.

3.10 Data Analysis

Introduction

This qualitative phenomenological case study involved a double hermeneutic approach (Van Manen 2014) to data analysis that integrated not only the participants' sense of experiences with a phenomenon but included the researcher's understanding of how the participants make sense of the world (Smit 2009, cited in Creswell and Poth 2018, p. 82).

According to (Moustakas 1994 cited in Creswell and Poth 2018, p. 80), a phenomenological analysis generates themes from the analysis and highlights sentence phrases that explain participants' experiences with a phenomenon. This step is called the "horizontalisation" (Cresswell and Poth 2018, p. 79). These themes are then used to write a description of the essence of the experiences of the participants. According to Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2019, p. 315), one of the characteristics is that data analysis involves organising, accounting for, explaining and making sense of the data collected from, for instance, interviews and observations. Qualitative data analysis is defined as the "back and forth process" (Teddlie and Tashakkori 2009, p. 251) that turns data into findings (Patten 2002, p. 432). Potter and Hepburn (2007) mentioned that the "raw" data is valuable, naturalistic, and not put into pre-existing categories or pre-coded but retains the "messiness of real life" (p. 412).

Alternatively, Braun and Clarke (2016, p. 33) articulated that transcript data is "partially cooked (2013, p. 162), ready prepared and slightly altered from the original phase that can bring about an understanding of the phenomena under investigation. Data coding and analysis are continuous processes in qualitative research throughout the data collection phase.

This chapter reports on the data analysed from the transcribed semi-structured interviews conducted with sixteen early years educator participants. To ensure privacy or anonymity, all participants were provided with pseudonyms (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2019, p. 650) *(Refer to Chapter 3. 6 Research participants' demographic characteristics).* The participants' experiences within a BLC with CLIL pedagogy provide the primary source of the data for this holistic single case study to answer the research questions: What are the early years educators' pedagogical interpretations of their experiences with a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) within a Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) classroom?

Data analysis in this qualitative phenomenological holistic single case study sprung from preparing and organising the text data from the sixteen transcripts for analysis. Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 181) define the analysis process as the interconnection of steps that include ethical considerations, organising data, conducting pre-luminary read-through of the database, coding and containing themes representing the data and forming interpretations. Seidman (2019, p. 125) asserted that in-depth interviews generate extensive text while transcribing but can generate categories that connect threads and patterns that support the researcher in making sense of the data set.

The data analysis for this study started with the transcription of the audio-recorded semi-structured interviews of the sixteen educators recruited for this single case study *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.7 Example of a transcription).*

Cyress 2018, p. 302 asserted that data analysis is more than classifying codes into themes. It involves ethical procedures and generating findings. I, therefore, drew from the findings of Creswell (2012) and Winter (2000, p. 8), who mentioned that in qualitative research, the emphasis is on seeking to constitute the phenomenon reasonably and not to generalise findings (Hammersley 2013). Therefore, this study implemented a Reflexive Thematic Analysis approach (RTA) suggested by Braun and Clarke (2021, p.1392) to analyse the qualitative data derived from narrative materials with verbatim transcripts from the in-depth interviews.

 RTA highlighted my active role as a reflexive researcher *(Refer to Chapter 3.3 Researcher positioning)* and in the knowledge production (Braun and Clarke 2019) of the study, where in this approach, I reflected, interpreted and analysed the dataset, using my analytical skills to provide honest evidence of the data set, without generalising the findings. Through RTA, the themes and subthemes (Howitt and Cramer 2014, p. 381) are produced by organising codes around a central theme or concept as it is interpreted (Braun and Clarke 2019).

3.11 The 6-step-coding method

I based the transcriptions used for the data set on the findings of (Ochs 1979; cited in Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p.150), who stated that "transcription is theory."

I used a six-step approach through reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) to analyse the quantitative phenomenological single case study data set, in which the sixteen educators' transcripts form a single case and one data set (Braun and Clarke 2022).

The first step required for RTA is familiarising myself with the data set to learn the content. I, therefore, used the inductive process (Thomas 2006, cited in Cohen, Mannion, and Morrison 2018, p. 645) by reading, re-reading the data set a few times and cross-checking the typed data set by listening to the audio files to ensure that the participants' "talk" has been transcribed accurately. I appropriately and accurately understood that punctuation.

Then, I printed off the transcribed data sets and re-read again, re-checking and systematically looking at patterns in the data sets that I could code to identify similarities and overlaps between codes (Bryman 2016, p.573). I then re-focused on the themes (Howitt and Cramer, 2014, p. 381) mentioned that looking at the sub-themes that may promote themselves to central themes (Charmaz 2006) is critical. I used pen and paper as I looked at single lines of the data set for meaningful, interesting concepts and topics, which several codes resemble. The purpose was to see if I could use them as a central organising concept related to the research questions and phenomenon under investigation. I coded elements or phrases relevant to the research questions by highlighting them in colour and writing them on sticky notes.

Next, I used the highlighted codes and phrases on the sticky notes and physically grouped similar codes while repeatedly visiting the initial codes to ensure the patterns were still appropriate. I revisited the codes and then created "candidate themes" (Sullivan 2019) by collating codes and keeping the relevant extracts with the codes to keep the meaning intact.

As RTA is not a linear process and involves the revisiting of the previous steps as an "ongoing organic process" (Braun and Clarke 2016, p.91), I made use of an interactive method for the analysis where the process is inductive (Thomas 2006, cited in Cohen, Mannion, and Morrison 2018, p. 645) by going back and forth, to the original raw data transcripts, rechecking and re-reading if the themes appear relevant to the phenomenon in question and to revised if any of the codes were missed. I understood that RTA is a

qualitative method that is flexible yet methodologically rigorous. Therefore, I used a bottom-up process moving from the raw data to find codes with identifying links between them. To be reflexive, I was "bracketing out" (Chien 2013, p.2; Creswell and Poth 2018, p. 78) assumptions or preconceived ideas on what the themes could be and carefully and patiently explored the relationships between themes, subthemes and overarching themes and collate together all data extracts to each theme. I then refined the connections and potential relationships between the semantic themes.

I then created and labelled the first set of codes with central themes, referred to as the first "thematic map" (Braun and Clarke 2016, p. 232). The first map represents the first step, the micro level away from the dataset, and allowed me to identify the main concepts, while the subthemes allow for more nuances or details of the themes. To warrant the credibility of the analysis and as a reflexive researcher (Sullivan and Forrester 2019, p. 327), to be transparent, I ensured the validation (Yardley 2008) of the first themes by adding insight from members to check the clarity of categories or themes created from the raw data (Tomas 2006, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018) to look for "consistencies and discrepancies" (p. 645).

I stepped away during this fourth step of refining themes and subthemes. I reflected, analysed, and reviewed the theme suggestions made by member checking and by looking at the code's extracts within particular themes or data extracts to change and merge some themes and phrases into one overarching theme or concept. I then re-coded, refined and relabeled the themes and subthemes so that the central ideas or themes were "concise and punchy" (Braun and Clarke 2016, p. 93).

I further refined and re-labelled the themes as central organised concepts provided in a second thematic map in precise short phrases and headings *(Refer to Appendix C: 1.12 Thematic Map 2).* To validate the analysis procedures which I followed in RTA further, I used Braun and Clarke (2006) suggested the "15-point checklist of criteria for good thematic analysis" to ensure that the concepts or themes used were consistent with the epistemological position of the analyses and that my position in the analysis was reflexive concerning the themes that emerged *(Refer to Table 1.4 Braun and Clarke thematic analysis checklist).*

The RTA analysis yielded six central organised concepts that were identified. Each of these concepts contained a maximum of six sub-themes. The main concepts in this qualitative phenomenological single case study: Figure 1.5, A Bilingual Literacy Curriculum for Arabic early years; Figure 1.6, The influence of Arabic pupils' spoken language, a'amiya, on

bilingual language development; Figure 1.7, The role and the teaching strategies of the educator; Figure 1.8, The impact of the social environment and learning through play on bilingual language developed; Figure 1.9, Cultural influence and parents involvement in bilingual language development; and Figure 1.10, Content Language Integrated Learning and the influence on bilingual language learning.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the findings and then describes the phenomenological pupil participant observations and the six main themes with sub-themes identified in the data analysis.

Chapter 4

Findings

Introduction

This chapter describes the findings using an interpretive phenomenological approach (Moustakas 1994 cited in Creswell and Poth 2018, p. 80) that describes the relationships amongst the constitutes (Giorgi 2003) that presented the phenomenon, called the essential invariant structure or essence. Phenomenology provided a deep understanding of the phenomenon as experienced by the sixteen educators and twelve pupil participants. The findings related to the observations included the bilingual literacy curriculum, pupils' spoken language and the role of parents, educators' strategies, cultural influences, and the role of language-integrated learning. They ended with a summary.

This current phenomenological inquiry (van Manen 2014) was conducted in an Arabic early-years department in the classrooms of 3-4-year-old pupils at a private school in Abu Dhabi, the capital of the United Arab Emirates. According to the Bennett Report, the zero to six age range is explicitly defined as "early childhood" (Bennett Report 2009). The Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge (ADEK) is the government entity that regulates and provides all education licenses and policies for all private and public schools and evaluates the efficiency of the education system in Abu Dhabi schools *(Ministerial Decision No. (4532) of 2005; Private Education Law; ADEK Private Schools Policy and Guidance Manual 2014-2015).*

As mentioned in Chapter 3.5, the research location of the school is in an Emirati community in Abu Dhabi, and the teaching of Arabic language, Arabic Social Studies, and Islamic Studies is required for all government and private schools in the UAE. Therefore, multilingual qualified Arabic and Islamic educators were employed to teach the mentioned subjects in K-12. Essential foundations are laid in early childhood by integrating social studies and Islamic studies to build cultural values. The integrated social studies and Islamic curriculum in EY include "the hidden curriculum" (Ross 2000, cited in Alhosani 2022, p. 293) that incorporates teaching practices and topics on Arabic identity and Islamic values such as "cleanness, appearance, self-care, committing to morals, speaking to adults, behaving with parents, the treatment of siblings, and keeping good relations with relatives" *(Refer to Appendix A 1.1 ADEK Guidelines for Nurseries and Early Childhood 2012).*

The school registered one hundred and twenty-five Emirati Arabic proficient speaking 3-4-year-old, early years pupils. To provide quality teaching and learning during COVID-19, the early-years department and Kindergarten section were divided into 16 classrooms with 16-20 pupils per class with small groups of 6-10 or ADEK bubbles, with their English and

Arabic-speaking educators and multilingual teaching assistants. The research findings revealed that pupils were placed in mixed-ability, small groups in the early-years classrooms. The early-years pupil population comprises 51.2% male and 48.8% female pupils. According to *ADEK Guidelines for Nurseries and Early Childhood (2012), only female educators are allowed to teach in the early-years departments of schools (Refer to ADEK guidelines Appendix A: 1.1 p. 28).*

The reason for conducting the qualitative phenomenological case study at the private school in the UAE is to investigate the school's Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) in the early-years department that underlines a Content and Language Integrated Learning philosophy (CLIL) (Garrido (2000); Lawson (2002); Nikula (2017) and San Isidro (2021), which aims to enhance pupils' English oral fluency.

The research revealed that the BLC with CLIL curriculum provides Arabic and English language taught through themes designed from English and Arabic-translated children's literature and include early language strands and standards *(Refer to Table 1.1 Early-years children's literature and Linguistic resources).* CLIL has been defined as pupil-centred language learning and is essential to develop cross-curricular and translingual synergies to integrate language and subject content (Pavon et al. 2014).

Dalton-Puffer, Nikula, and Smit (2010, p. 1) refer to CLIL as the "carrier content" taught through the medium of a foreign language" to pupils on all educational levels to enhance oral fluency. In recent years, increasing attention has been given to integrating language and content, partly due to the need to promote language development among bilingual and multilingual pupils. Greere and Räsänen (2008) refer to CLIL as a "dual integrative focus on content and language.

The private school highlighted the BLC with CLIL philosophy as an excellent initiative during the Irtiqaa Inspection Board inspection, and the school received an inspection rating of "Very Good" rating for the last inspection. It was selected as an ADEK pilot school initiative.

The Literature asserted that limited research had been conducted on bilingual literacy in the early years in the UAE and stated the impact of globalisation on the Early Childhood Education (ECE) curricula (Boles, Hess, and Woll 2010; Gallagher 2011; Mohamed and Medhammer 2014; O'Sullivan 2015; and Dillon 2019). Likewise, Dressler (2018) stated that there is limited research on the interaction with bilingual programs, and the pedagogy has not been studied as much as in the French language (Harju-Luukkaimen 2013).

This current qualitative phenomenological case study provides insight for practitioners and researchers into shared experiences in bilingualism in a different context. It may serve as a potential alternative curriculum for private early years and kindergarten institutions in multilingual education in the UAE. It aimed to investigate the topic of bilingual literacy in the early years.

The literature review identified that even though Emirati parents are incredibly supportive and encouraging of their pupils' education, fathers are not always regularly involved due to work circumstances. Scholars highlighted Emirati fathers' involvement in the education of their children, particularly in the shaping of pupils' language development and future careers that start at an early age (Ridge, Dingus, and Han 2020).

The current study on BLC with CLIL under investigation highlighted a critical factor influencing early years pupils' language development at the private school and the rationale for implementing the BLC with CLIL, such as the pupils' home language. This includes the home language or locally spoken Arabic that is referred to as "*a'amiya." At the same time,* "*fusHa,"* more formal Arabic, is spoken and used in meetings and during formal conversations and readings. This significant difference between the spoken and written Arabic language is called the Arabic "language diglossia". Diglossia exists not only in the Arabic language but also in multilingual societies such as the UAE in the sense that they employ dialects or different language varieties. Jaspers (2016 p. 180) stated that etymologically, "diglossia" derives from the Greek word, "διγλωσσίας" "diglossías" or "bilingualism" and mentioned that diglossia is a "human universal" and a captivating "sociolinguistic" phenomenon that is recognised worldwide where language has different varieties, registers, or styles that people produce and recognise.

Literature supports and shows the inclusion of the mother tongue, also referred to as the pupils' first language, as a pedagogical advantage in bilingual education. Benson (2004) mentioned that using pupils' first language and academic integrated content facilitates transferring language skills to gain knowledge of the second language.

4.1 Findings related to pupils' observation.

To address the Arabic language's complexity and understand how early years Arabic pupils learn a second language, it is essential to know how they drew from their home language, or spoken language, *a'amiya*, to understand English and make sense of the world. The following narrative describes the findings of informal observations and a "simply looking in approach" (Simpson and Tuson 2008, p. 17) conducted with twelve Arabic early-years pupils involved in the bilingual literacy curriculum with integrated language and subject content

activities to develop language skills. To protect pupils and educators, pseudonyms were provided and used throughout the study (Cohen, Manion and Morrison 2018). The anecdotal notes I took during the observation included information on the pupils' engagement and experiences with children's literature and the content and language-integrated activities prepared by the educators as part of the BLC with CLIL to develop bilingual literacy skills.

I was looking for specific practices and instances where pupils were engaged in expressive language and conversation with peers and me, which I described in a narrative. Creswell and Poth (2018, p. 246) stated that there is no standard format for reporting case study research regarding a narrative other than simply describing the case using vignettes to explain the observations and what was observed.

I used two questions to encourage dialogue with the twelve Emirati pupils engaged in the BLC practice with CLIL in the Arabic early years' classrooms. w

The first question was: Can you re-tell the story?

The second question was: Can you tell me about the picture you drew or the design you created?

In the early-years class of P8, the pupil, KBM1, appeared comfortable in the presence of his educator and readily showed me what he experienced with the educator's children's literature in the classroom. He was excited to communicate and was fully engaged in the story of *"Harry and the Bucket Full of Dinosaurs" by Ian Whybrow and Adrian Reynolds*.

KBM1 chose a more sensory activity: washing a few dinosaurs in a small bucket of water. He was able to answer the two questions I posed to him.

KMB1 explained his favourite part of the story and mentioned it was when Harry washed the "dusty dinosaurs." During the activity with the bucket of water linked to mathematics, KMB1 used the keywords *"floating, sinking, and heavy"* and explained their meaning to me while counting the ten dinosaurs in the bucket. He also could match the plastic dinosaurs with laminated pictures and number cards. He identified the words *"attic" and "dusty.* He provided the sequence of the events in English and said: *"Harry put clean dinosaurs in the bucket."* He identified the dinosaurs and called out: *"See, this is a Tyrannosaurus; there are three Stegosauruses and two Triceratops."* He was also able to identify vocabulary such as *"bucket, Harry, grandmother, Sam, and train"* with the help of the visual aids in the activity centre. The English language vocabulary was integrated into the subject content and activities displayed in centres and stations and concurred with the BLC and CLIL curriculum philosophy.

For the science lesson linked to the literacy content, P8 showed the pupils a short video clip of a plant and meat-eating dinosaurs and their footprints and grouped KBM1 at an activity centre where he had to make a fossil of the dinosaur foot in soft play dough. While observing, I noticed that he spoke Arabic a'amiya to his friends in the group. He called me over and said: *"Come see my dinosaur fossil. It is a Tyrannosaurus".* It was observed that KBM1 followed the instructions of P8 and could support his peers in the group through oral communication and an emergent translanguaging approach.

During the Art and Design activity, KBM2 shared a drawing with me. She appeared comfortable retelling her version of the English story *"Harry and the Bucket Full of Dinosaurs" while* moving in and out of Arabic and English vocabulary. KBM2 explained her picture without using prepositions such as "*with, at, of, to, in, for, on, by, to, in, but, of, until and* mentioned: *"Harry dusty box."* She also said: *"When Harry bath, dinosaurs bath; when Harry when the beach, dinosaurs go beach."* When I asked KBM2 to tell what the word "beach" meant, she could not explain well but had an idea and said, *"water."* Although she moved in and out of Arabic a'amiya and English language to retell the story, she was able to "read" and identify the sentence strip with visual clues, "*The dinosaur runs fast,"* "This is a dinosaur," and *"This is Harry."*

The educator, P8, divided the "class bubble" *(Refer to ADEK 2020 compliance regulation COVID-19)* into three colour codes (green, yellow, and red) and placed differentiated activities for English language, mathematics, science, technology, arts, and design linked to the bilingual literacy content, in the three colour-coded centres for pupils to choose from. When analysed, it was observed that there was a focus on creativity, design, and problem-solving, and one of the groups had to build dinosaurs.

Class P8 were instructed to choose from different resources such as sticks, Edu-Lego blocks with battery switches, soft shapes, and 3D blocks to calculate, design, and create their dinosaurs. The challenge was that the dinosaurs should be able to move or stand upright. They spoke in English and Arabic a'amiya while laughing as they designed and moved around to pick up resources to create and design a dinosaur. It was observed that the Arabic early years pupils were looking at the designs of their peers to figure out how to solve the problem and to get ideas on what worked, and therefore, went back and forth with "trial and error," three and four times to improve their designs. It was revealed that the early years pupils enjoyed the learning centres where the resources and activities were displayed. They were encouraged to utilise the targeted vocabulary to communicate with their peers.

In the yellow group with Edu-Lego blocks with battery switches and shapes, KBF was eager to let his dinosaurs stand or walk. He used several trial-and-error attempts, and eventually, with the help of his peers and a few more discussions through emergent translanguaging, he could make his dinosaur stand by adding an equal number of blocks to the legs of the dinosaur. KBF then switched on the batteries and screamed joyfully when the dinosaur tried to move but burst out laughing when the dinosaur immediately fell over. KBF's friends joined in the laughter when they saw the dinosaur falling. One of his friends explained in English, *"Put more blocks!"* KBF followed.

I prompted him to answer the question about retelling the story. KBF could retell the story in English but could only use a few English vocabularies, such as "Harry, bucket, dinosaurs, and dirty," that could be identified. KBF and the pupils in his group appeared to be excited. They enjoyed the language content-integrated activities and moved in and out of Arabic a'amiya and English when they communicated and were engaged in sharing resources.

I observed that the early-years educator P8 fostered an "emergent translanguaging" atmosphere.

When pupils were in Arabic conversation, P8 encouraged them with English dialogue by asking them questions about their designs and repeating and translating many of the vocabulary from the English children's literature so that pupils could repeat the vocabulary and phrases.

On one occasion, P8 sang the song "*Harry and the Bucket Full of Dinosaurs,*" many pupils sang along while completing their activities. KBF listened to the music, and I observed that KBF was repeating some of the English vocabularies of the song with the rest of his group.

In the red group for Art and design activities, it was observed that KBH could use the visual A4 picture cards to retell the story in his own words using prepositions. He mentioned: *"Harry helped Granny to clean the attic."* KBH explained that his favourite part was when the station master returned all his dinosaurs after Harry left them on the train. KBH said: *"Harry left his dinosaurs on the train. The man at the station gave Harry his dinosaurs".*

KBH then drew a picture of his seven-legged dinosaur and contributed to the spontaneous laughter in the classroom. He humorously explained why his dinosaur was drawn with seven legs and said: *"So he can run fast and eat all the other dinosaurs, grrrrr!" he laughed.*
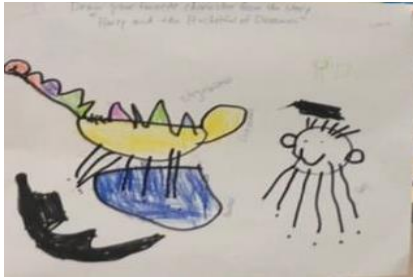
KBH used the English vocabulary taught in the classroom through the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum, the repetition of the story vocabulary by P8, and the different centres set up in the classroom. He could retell the story of *"Harry and the bucket full of Dinosaurs"* and explain in complete sentences the reason for drawing a "seven-legged dinosaur." The class educator, P8, mentioned that KBH had grasped English vocabulary quickly; he can hold a sensible conversation and can sound out and read three to four-letter words such as: "c-a-t, m-a-t, m-a-n, b-e-d, p-e-g, l-o-g, sh-o-p, and ch-op" in the English language. KBH was eager to have more conversations with the researcher. He elaborated while holding A4 laminated picture cards of Harry in the bathtub and another A4 picture where Harry sleeps with his dinosaurs: *"Harry takes a bath and dinosaurs bath too." "Harry sleeps, and dinosaurs sleep, too."*

KBH 's educator, P8, also mentioned that his Arabic Language conversation skills showed progress, as he could easily retell the story of "Harry and the bucket full of dinosaurs" in a'amiya and English.

In another classroom, the educator, PS10, was reading the story "The Smartest *Giant in Town"* by Julia Donaldson as an additional story added to the curriculum for the third term. The educator, PS10, mentioned that pupils could retell and role-play the last story that she presented to them and that she wanted to enhance their vocabulary by adding a new story with *"audio and visual resources"* to the curriculum for the term.

PS10 used modelling and different questioning strategies to encourage the pupils to communicate, such as: *What is the matter with Mr Fox? Why was the sleeping bag so wet? Why do you think the shop doors in town closed? Do they close shops in Abu Dhabi? Do you think it was a good plan for the dog to place the belt over the bog to walk on? What do you think you could have used to get across the bog? Can you walk across a bog on a belt?* One of the pupils enthusiastically mentioned that he would use the giant's shoe and turn it upside down to walk across the water because it might float. PS10 praised the pupil, gave her a sticker as an award, and said: *"That is a brilliant plan!*

In PS10's classroom, KFH could retell the story of "The Smartest Giant in Town" in his own words but was unsure of two visual picture cards when placing them in sequence. He was able to provide synonyms for the word *"scruffy,"* which he said meant *"messy or untidy," as explained in the story of "The Smartest Giant in Town."* I observed that the pupils' story had many opportunities for pupils to engage in the repetition of vocabulary and phrases and the repetition of the vocabulary in the song when they sang along to remember the sequence of the story. The pupils' story also had many rhyming words, such as *"fox and socks, boat and goat, mouse and house, and dog and bog,"* which KFH could repeat with his educator. KFH could say the rhyming words and match the graphic laminated picture cards during the literacy activities with his peers.

The educator, PS10, explained that KFH expressed himself wholly in a'amiya, the local Arabic and English language, and enjoyed reading short stories consisting of one or two sentences. KFH's parents could only speak Arabic, but he has older siblings she felt might have contributed to his English language development. PS10 mentioned that she provides KFH with extra e-story applications and short sentences to read in English at home on his iPad. PS10 stated that the parents of KFH struggle to communicate in English, but they are engaged with his learning by utilising "Google Translate" to understand messages from her. PS10 mentioned that even though she is proficient bilingual, she speaks in English to the parents but supports the pupils in their mother tongue when they are unsure and then immediately repeats the sentence in the English language in the classroom. PS10 mentioned that she felt this strategy contributes to pupils having the confidence and an "openness" to communicate with her as they are not afraid if they do not know the English vocabulary well.

KFM, another pupil in the classroom of PS10, could express herself confidently in the English language when retelling the story of "The Smartest Giant in Town" and even copied the facial expressions and tone of voice of PS10 while retelling the story to the researcher.

The educator PS10 mentioned that KFM entered the school with limited English vocabulary during the first term but showed rapid improvement in the third term through exposure to the bilingual literacy curriculum with language and content-integrated learning. The educator, PS10, mentioned that KFM was initially shy but gained confidence and enjoys retelling and acting stories. PS10 said, "*She is always in the role-play area, trying to be the story's characters."* KFM's mother is an Arabic language educator at a neighbouring Arabic school and has limited English language communication skills. Another pupil, KFH, in the PS10 class, was intrigued with the giant's tie and showed the giant's colourful and bright tie around the neck of the giraffe on the graphic cards when she was retelling the story to me. It was observed that the teaching assistant was supporting KFH. KFH is an active, petit-built pupil and was unsure of the sequence of the story but could point at the pictures while explaining what was happening in them. I observed that KFH was not making eye contact, got distracted often, and, therefore, found it difficult to concentrate for more than seven minutes. PS10 provided KFH with one-to-one support with the help of the teaching assistant regarding activities and following instructions.

PS10 mentioned that although KFH has limited English vocabulary, she gained more confidence to communicate and has developed new friendships since the first term, which helps her engage with her peers in group activities, which PS10 has not observed before. I observed that KFH eagerly used the song "The Smartest Giant in Town" vocabulary as she sang along with her peers and tapped the rhythm with her foot.

The pupils in educator PN11's class enjoyed engaging in conversation and interacting with the pupils' stories during circle time. During circle time, they were fully involved in the English story "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle.

PN11 explained some of the vocabulary in a'amiya so that pupils struggling to identify the vocabulary could understand the story. This concurs with the interview data that revealed that PN11 was providing her pupils the opportunity to "share a little of both languages" with their peers.

The educator used a story sack and soft toys linked to the story to ensure understanding and encourage conversation. PN11 used different types of questioning to encourage pupils to speak, and when they answered in Arabic, PN11 repeated the sentences in English. It was observed that PN11 gave ample opportunity for pupils to take turns in retelling the story by using their local language, a'amiya, English vocabulary, visual resources, and soft toys from the story sack to demonstrate their understanding of the story. In the class PN11, pupils

consistently found ways to tie their learning to PN11's inquiry and previous vocabulary knowledge. Pupils were tackling PN11's inquiry method using different visual resources and hands-on equipment so that hands-on resources, play, and communication became coherent.

One of the collaborative "bubbles" (ADEK COVID -19 regulations 2020), or small groups in the class of PN11, were holding up stick puppets of the characters in the story to retell the story sequence to their peers, while another small group was working in pairs "matching and talking" about the large A4 laminated picture cards of the story related to the story sequence. Another group buzzed while drawing their favourite characters in the story and sharing different decorative arts and crafts resources to decorate the drawing by cutting and pasting using scissors, glue, and items for arts and crafts.

A fourth group used their iPad to drag and drop the matching vocabulary with pictures related to the story or rearrange the story sequence with story cards from the application on their electronic devices. A fifth group was in the science and mathematics centre, matching the caterpillar's life cycle. The sixth group of early-years pupils acted out and pretended to be different characters in the role-play centre using hand puppets and dressed-up costumes. It was an event where they could repeat phrases from the children's literature to each other while acting out the sequence of the story.

In the PN11 class, KEF, who was in the Arts and Design group, could not wait for her turn to retell the story of "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" with her drawings. KEF's caterpillar was pasted on a green leaf and covered with soft cotton wool, while her butterfly was colourful with some scattered glitter pasted on the wings. KEF explained her drawing with the caterpillar's life cycle and could sound out three-letter words and read short high-frequency words such as *"I, like, look, can, cat, and ran."* KEF could also "read" and "recognise" the words *"caterpillar, egg, leave, apple, pears, plums, strawberries, oranges, chocolate cake, ice-cream cone, watermelon, cocoon and butterfly"* with the help of the story's pictures and without prompting from her peers or me.

Another pupil in the PN11 class, KEN, who chose the science and mathematics centre, used the vocabulary associated with the story that was read in the classroom and provided me with the entire sequence of events. She also said: *"The egg will pop,"* pointing to the caterpillar's life cycle in the science centre. KEN also mentioned: "*The caterpillar eats junk food, lollipops, and chocolate cake. I like watermelon; it is healthy food".*

In the science and mathematics centre, KEN and her peers used hand microscopes to count the number of tiny caterpillar eggs hidden on and below green leaves displayed on laminated cards. Vocabulary for Mathematics, such as "*the same or different* and *more and less"* number symbols and science vocabulary, were integrated with the bilingual literacy curriculum in the centre, where pupils had *to "find, match and compare."*

Pupils were instructed to use their science vocabulary *"hatched, not hatched, caterpillars, watermelon, ice-cream, strawberries, and butterflies"* when they observed the pictures and indicated on a math telly chart how many tiny eggs were *hatched* and how many were not *hatched.* The little scientists wore white science laboratory coats and had miniature hand microscopes in their hands.

They searched for the caterpillars, watermelons, ice creams, strawberries, butterflies, and many other pictures on detailed picture cards and matched them with the correct number symbols. It was observed that the mentioned literacy activity, integrated with the content and vocabulary of science and mathematics, provided early-years-pupils with the opportunity to develop perceptual skills such as visual discrimination, visual memory, visual and auditory sequential memory skills, scientific observational skills, mathematical skills, and oral language skills necessary to develop their expressive language skills in the early years.

In the class BI14, KAD was very shy when speaking and whispered when she was asked to explain her drawing about *"Harry and the bucket full of dinosaurs"* to me.

Although KAD was shy about raising her voice and speaking up, I observed that KAD could communicate and appreciated the attention she was provided. KAD used simple vocabulary and short phrases with the taught English language to explain her picture with Harry and his grandmother. KAD lifted her picture to get my attention, pointed at the two figures she drew, and said in a'amiya and English: "This Harry." "This jida (grandmother), my house." I used the opportunity to communicate further, pointed at the bucket, and asked: *What is this KAD?* She silently said something that sounded like "luwu" (bucket) in Arabic, "dlw." I praised KAD and said*: "This is a lovely picture with Harry, his grandmother, and a bucket, KAD."* I then asked if her grandmother was living with her and her family, to which KAD nodded. I saw no dinosaurs in the bucket and asked: *"Where are the dinosaurs, KAD?"* KAD just gave a sweet and innocent smile and started to draw figures in the bucket that looked like silhouettes of dinosaurs. It was observed that even though KAD's English vocabulary was limited, and she was unable to speak in complete English sentences, KAD understood the instructions to place

the visual picture cards in a sequence of events and used some of the critical vocabulary, such as "train, jida (grandmother), Harry, dlw (bucket), dinosaurs, and dirty."

Another pupil in BI14's classroom, KAS, drew a train with a bucket full of dinosaurs in one of the train's coaches and was eager to tell me about the train and Harry, who left his dinosaurs on the train. He recalled the sequence of events and knew that Dubai has a metro station, like the train station in the pupils' book Harry and the Bucket Full of Dinosaurs. "I go on the Dubai metro to my granny," he said.

Although he could use English vocabulary, he was moving in and out of Arabic and English through emergent translanguaging to make sense of his picture while telling me about it.

I observed a supportive function and an imperative impact on pupils' first encounter with English as a Second Language through the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum built on children's literature and the integration of concepts, content, and vocabulary through pupils' literature, science, mathematics, technology, arts, and design activities. It concurs with the interpretation PA2 who revealed the importance of integration of subject content to repeat and develop a vocabulary, which was mentioned during the interview conversation:

Moreover, pupils used English and Arabic to collaboratively engage in activities integrated with science, technology, English, engineering, and mathematics. During the Content and Language Integrated Learning activities, I continued to ask the two mentioned questions.

I observed that in the early years Arabic class, pupils used English language phrases such as "Look my high bridge" when the story of "The Billy Goats Gruff "was read. They had to plan, design, and build a bridge with many hands-on resources, including battery-operated Edu-Lego blocks for the bridge that could hold three plastic Billy Goats.

Other vocabulary and phrases that pupils used during the classroom observation were observed during free play, particularly in the role play and science, mathematics, engineering, and design centres, which showed that pupils had the opportunity to communicate using target vocabulary when they were engaged in free play, dialogue, designing, and acting out the characters of the children's literature taught such as: *"See my big dinosaur"; "Harry found dusty box"; "The man at the train station helped Harry"; "I am the man at the train station. Where are my dinosaurs? "I make a dinosaur, see green tail;" "Harry takes a bath with dinosaurs;" "Caterpillar eats junk food;" I am the scruffiest giant in town." "I*

am the smartest giant in town." "What is the matter?" "It is my neck. It is too long and cold."
"Cheer up!" says George.

I saw that the Arabic early-years pupils gained independence and a sense of responsibility from the bilingual literacy curriculum, with pupils' stories as a foundation for language learning.

In addition, the integrated literacy content was "repeated in different ways, as well as subject content and hands-on activities, such as in science, mathematics, technology, art, and design centres and stations in the classrooms. The educator participants revealed that the different teaching *strategies they adopted, such as translanguaging, peer-peer dialogue, repeat and teach, modeling, and repetition, contributed to developing the second language among the early-years pupils*. I saw that many Arabic phrases and vocabulary were used repeatedly between teaching and learning when pupils were unsure of the English vocabulary or in dialogue with peers and how the educators rephrased that in English. Pupils were also confident in using emergent translanguaging when experimenting with the English language in dialogue. I observed that much talking was encouraged by the educators, and there was never a dull moment but a buzzing constructive noise filled with language atmosphere. It was observed that when pupils were moving in and out of the English and Arabic languages through emergent translanguaging, they were supported by the educators who modelled and rephrased the sentences in English so pupils could repeat them several times during their social interaction. The educator's tone of voice during the reading of the stories encouraged the pupils to imitate their educators when playing with resources in the centres, retelling the pupils' story using the A4 sequencing cards and speaking in English to their peers, or playing with graphics cards, soft toy characters of the pupils' book, hand puppets, Edu Lego blocks or when they were having fun in the role play area during free play sessions.

Furthermore, I experienced the early Arabic pupil's social interaction during activities, and their collaboration in small groups (ADEK bubbles) and role-play supported their confidence to express themselves orally.

Finally, the observation of the pupils answered the second research question concerning how the pedagogies related to BLC and CLIL supported and encouraged the development of oral fluency among Arabic early years pupils. The pupils enjoyed the BLC with CLIL curriculum, which provided an understanding of the deep connection between vocabulary, language knowledge, and comprehension of the two languages and their texts. The

observation of the twelve early years pupils yielded that the age-appropriate BLC with CLIL and pupils' translated literature and integrated instructional strategies and pedagogy supported them in making the connections in both languages explicit to their age and supported them to communicate with each other and me.

The data analyses yielded six main themes described using a maximum of six sub-themes illustrated through diagrams to identify the sub-themes related to each theme. The 15-point The main themes or central concepts in this qualitative phenomenological case study are Figure 1.5, A Bilingual Literacy Curriculum; Figure 1.6, The influence of Arabic pupils' spoken language, a'amiya, on bilingual language development; Figure 1.7, The educator's role and teaching strategies; Figure 1.8, The influence of the social environment and learning through play on bilingual language development; Figure 1.9, Cultural influence and parents involvement in bilingual language development; Figure 1.10, Content Language Integration activities and bilingual language development.

The study used triangulation (Braun and Clarke 2013), where the observation of pupil participants described in a narrative *(Refer to Chapter 4.1, Findings related to pupils' observation)* was included in the descriptions of the main themes derived from the analysed transcriptions. Triangulation was used "to get as close as possible to the truth" (p. 285) of the phenomenon under investigation and to strengthen the validity and trustworthiness of the holistic single case study (Simons 2009, p. 21). The phenomenological interviews and observations broaden the understanding of the phenomenon whilst ensuring the study's validity. The interviewing and observations engaged in an informal interactive process that aimed to elicit a personal, comprehensive description of the experiences of the phenomenon (the case) without pre-determining the responses or findings, which are discussed through the main themes in the following section.

4.2. A Bilingual Literacy Curriculum for Arabic early-years Language Development

The central theme, "A Bilingual Literacy Curriculum for Arabic Early-years Language Development," encapsulated educator participants' experience with a bilingual literacy curriculum designed primarily to focus on children's literature and develop pupils' bilingual language skills.
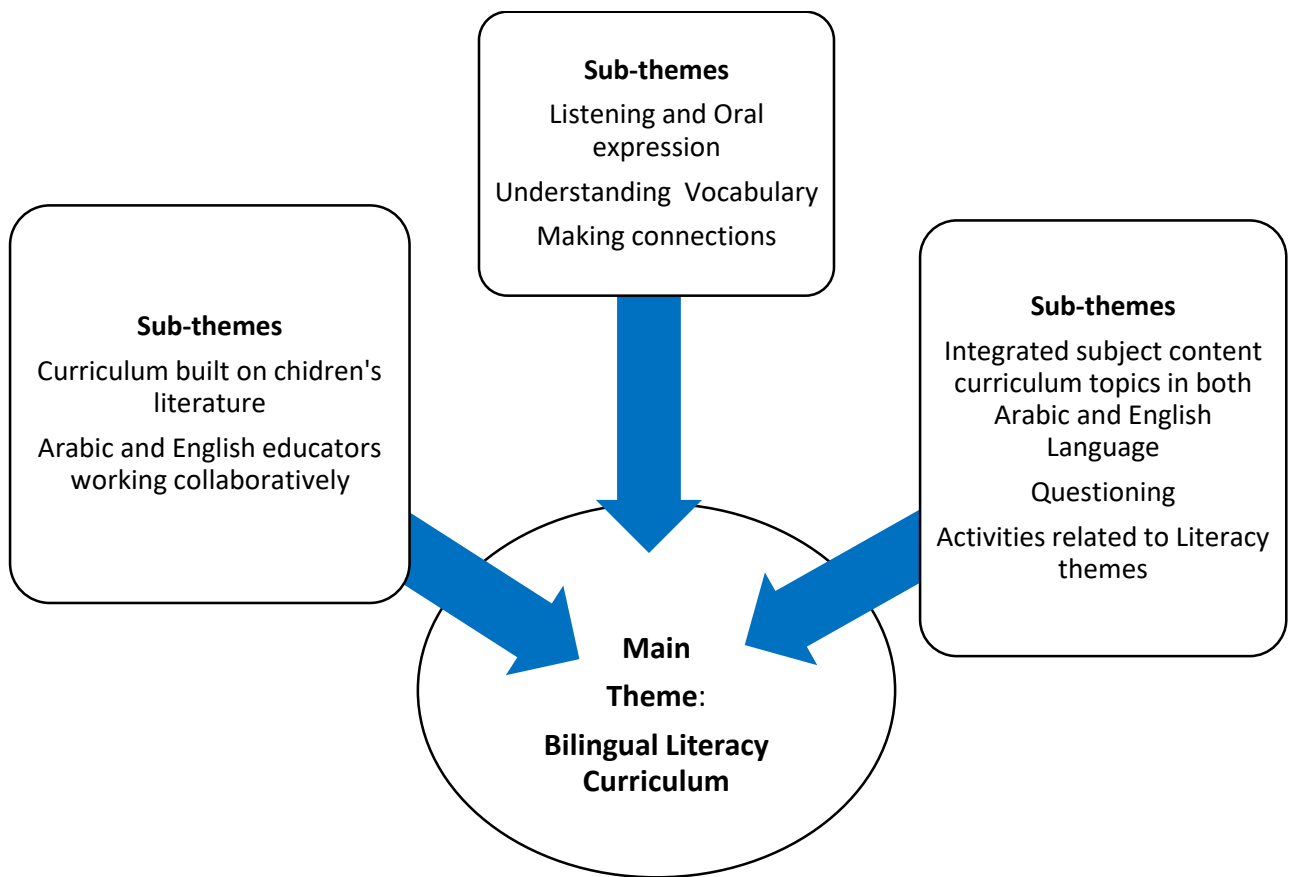
Figure 1.5 Bilingual Literacy Curriculum for Arabic early-years language development

(Nikula 2017; San Isidro and Lasagabaster 2019b; San Isidro 2021) It was mentioned that CLIL contributes to pupils' developing a higher motivation regarding the second language while improving oral skills and developing compensatory communication strategies.

Compared with other curricula mentioned for public schools in the UAE where pupils' English instructional learning and contact with the target language has limited exposure, the BLC with CLIL and emergent translanguaging under investigation showed that pupils were exposed to Arabic and English conversation throughout the day. Based on pupils' translated literature, the curriculum, bilingual instruction, and the variety of content language-integrated activities and resources have been shown to maximise Emirati early years pupils' exposure to both languages through interactive groups (ADEK bubbles) and collaborative work in centres.

The case study research findings concerning the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC) indicated that educators hold similar views on developing English and Arabic language vocabulary simultaneously through the children's literature planned through children's literature for the BLC with CLIL. Participants felt that the taught bilingual literacy curriculum, with translated pupils' literature, provided exposure to both languages through similar themes and language-integrated activities and resources, taught at separate times, and had the potential to strengthen oral fluency *(Refer to Appendix B: 1.2 Jack and the beanstalk strands and standards –cross-curricular).* The findings further revealed that the English-Arabic translated children's literature and subject Content Language Integrated pedagogy (CLIL) used at the school in Abu Dhabi where the research took place do not constrain but develop both languages through pupils' translated literature with similar value and interchangeable strategies.

Participant PL5 mentioned that the early-years department based their bilingual literacy curriculum on all activities related to children's literature and related activities to develop pupils' language skills by integrating language and subject content.

> *"Well, we kind of based our English curriculum on a storybook, basically read a story, and all of our activities are integrated with lessons based on the story.*
> *"This play a huge role, as kids have a huge interest in storybooks, the illustrations, the words, the way you teach the story in the beginning, it also plays a part to see that they are engaged and listening" (PL5 lines 120-122).*

The educator participants revealed that Arabic early years pupils who were exposed to translated pupils' literature, their spoken language, a'amiya, and simultaneous bilingualism throughout the day, which included engaging in a variety of bilingual language-integrated activities and play-based learning in a language-rich environment, showed positive signs of oral fluency in both languages. However, Arabic diglossia and its impact on the language development of Arabic early years pupils were highlighted in the literature as a concern in bilingual language development (Jaspers 2016, p.181).

Similarly, PN11 mentioned that pupils' exposure to children's literature in both English and Arabic could strengthen both languages because they repeated the story in both languages throughout the day.

PN11 also shared her experience about the importance of educators' collaborative weekly planning and the sharing of ideas to benefit pupils' language learning through the same resources and materials in Arabic so that pupils can make connections with the vocabulary of both languages *(Refer to Table 1.1 English and Arabic resources; pupils' literature).*

> *"We cannot exclude the Arabic from the English, especially in the Early years. You must plan together. So, exposing the children to the same material at the same time in Arabic and English has great benefit because they are exposed to the same material at the same time in English and Arabic" (PN11 lines 20-21). "Without the educators planning together, there will be no benefit for the children. If you plan together, you will see confidence because you will see exactly what the other educators are giving. So, the children will be exposed to both languages at the same time during the day as well. They are learning this story, so we will do the same story in both languages" (PN11 lines 22-23).* It concurred with P6 who mentioned *"So they get the best of both…doing the same themes" (P6 line25)*

PN13 concurred that educators who collaborated supported pupils' understanding of the language and vocabulary to make sense of the world, particularly through the translated topics when pupils were weak in one of the languages. PN13 mentioned that:

> "*English and Arabic staff work together, so when they work with the topics from stories that the Arabic and English staff coincide with each other so that it is much easier for the pupils, …. children will receive the same story in two different languages …...that makes their understanding a bit deeper….so if they don't understand in one language, they will have the opportunity in another…. which improved the language that is weaker" …. (PN13 lines 6-8)*.

Participant P14 felt that children learn vocabulary faster by using both languages at an early age, and when they use the two languages simultaneously, it can help Arabic early-years pupils engage with and understand the English vocabulary.

 "I feel that it will help at the early age…… because they are not so good at English….so they will say a word in Arabic and the educators may be able to understand it, …the pupils are at the early stage and can grasp the two languages together" (P114 lines 27-29).

Participants P7, P8, PN11, P13, and P15 emphasised language development through the "five-step development plan" *(Refer to Appendix B: 1.1 The five-step Bilingual Literacy*

development plan) and particularly through speaking and listening. They spoke openly about their experiences with bilingual children's literature and felt that it was building pupils' imagination and language development. The participants mentioned that when children had good listening skills, it could lead to an understanding of vocabulary. The participants noted that by listening, children can connect with the vocabulary of both languages, which could lead to bilingual dialogue and expressive language development in the early years classroom.

> *"Of course, when they listen to stories …. when I am reading, they can do their connections, they might be interested in learning more, or might say this it in another way of word, if you like, uhm… that is it that I wanted to say…….so is there a connection between speaking and listening (P7 lines 66-67).*
> *"The story has a very important role in a child's life because it will build their listening skills, their imagination, and their language" (PN11, lines 51-52).*
> *"So, when you read the story to them, it is all eyes on you and the story, and they will feel that they are going inside the story with you, and they will build their vocabulary" (PN11 lines 52-53).*

Participants PP14 and P9 elaborated on the importance of educators using different strategies to teach the bilingual curriculum. They mentioned the importance of repetition of words and phrases when using pupils' literature but emphasised educators 'modelling and tone of voice as essential resources in the pedagogy and language development of early-years pupils.

"Children can understand long before they are comfortable to speak…they have little filing cabinets, and next time they hear the word, they take it out of their filing cabinet and say, "I know what that is" (PP14). "So especially one thing that I have noticed with listening is that some children will sit there for the whole story without listening well, but you will be able to know it quickly when you ask questions" So modelling for them…let them repeat the phrases…..your tone of voice helps them to understand what you read" (P9 lines 67-75).

PN13 shared a combination of experiences with children's literature in the bilingual curriculum and mentioned that her experience with the curriculum and the bilingual approach to learning was one where the outcome was pupils' "oral responses" and their "retelling of the story."

PN13 mentioned that the success of the BLC with the CLIL curriculum depended on English and Arabic educators who had similar routines.

> "*Huge because…uhm...stories help us to measure pupils' understanding, so when educators introduce stories into the classroom, there is definitely a lot of questioning. It might be low, or high-order questioning, depending on the abilities of the children, …. will there be an oral response from children regarding story? Can children retell stories in their own words? Is Arabic and English educators' routines the same, but language is the only difference? I think it is successful when children transition smoothly from English to Arabic through this approach" (PN13 lines 9-10; lines 51-53).*"

The participant PA2's experience with a bilingual curriculum originated from past perceptual development, such as auditory and visual experiences that develop language. The participant mentioned that resources such as auditory and visual perceptual games and educators' language modelling could potentially develop pupils' oral and "receptive language" skills.

> *"Stories, …uhm …so yes, listening and speaking skills are essential for English Second Language acquisition and development in kids…. I had this game of different animals and farm animals that made different noises. ….to listen to a tape, the tape will say a sound of a chicken or so, and if we had the chicken on our Bingo board, …. put the token on the picture…."*. *"That again is the receptive language skills because if you think of a child who is …. three years old, mimicking sounds is very important, because from mimicking sounds you would see that they understand what modelling is, as parents we model good language, we expose kids to vocabulary, to stories, everything…" (PA2 lines 152-155).*

For participant PP14, an emergent translanguaging approach was valuable when involving pupils with the bilingual curriculum and vocabulary. PP14 stated that pupils understood when educators used both languages to distinguish the meaning and the difference between the two languages and vocabulary with the pupils' literature.

> *"At the moment, we are doing 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar.' "It is a lovely story. In the beginning I had a few children that said, 'the worm,' instead of caterpillar, yarqa' in Arabic, (both laughing), by reading the story a few times, and explaining the Arabic*

and English, they now know that this is a caterpillar. I also show them the Read Write Inc (RWI) illustrations to distinguish the words of course" (PP14 lines 79-81).

Similarly, educator participant P16 experienced that the children's literature used as a foundation in the bilingual curriculum guided children to be creative, solve problems, gain vocabulary, teach them about morals, and cope with their emotions.

> *"I think the curriculum plays an important role as many English stories give examples of problem-solving within that, how to manage emotions, it shows them ideas on how to use language because it gives them vocabulary, it helps them to see things in a different perspective, but it also creates creative thinking for them. So, I would say that it plays a vital role in learning English" (P16 lines 63-64). "With Jack and the Beanstalk story that we are doing now, the kids really enjoy that, and one of the little boys in the class and has progressed so well through listening, I asked them what they have learned from the story, and the only thing that he could think of was like "Jack was a good boy and was brave and looking after his family" …. so, they also learn about morals (P16 lines 65-66).*

PE3 shared her view and experience about the bilingual curriculum and mentioned that literacy in cross-curricular planning provides ample opportunity for pupils to gain bilingual language skills. She mentioned:

> *"Bringing literacy into all your lessons" and working "cross-curricular" (PE3 line 28) into the entire day……brings opportunity" (line 31).*

4.3 The pupils' spoken language and the role of the parents

The literature identified that bilingual education and the spoken Arabic language *(a'amiya)* were challenges in acquiring Emirati early years pupils' bilingual language learning. The Arabic two varieties of language usage referred to were *(a'amiya)* and *(fusHa).* Jaspers (2016) mentioned that Arabic diglossia is complicated. The author argued that Arabic literature is written in fusHa, making it difficult for educators to use it while implementing the BLC with the CLIL curriculum and circle time.

The educator participants revealed that they used a'amiya to retell the story so the pupils could repeat phrases more easily in the spoken Arabic language and connect with the vocabulary of the English version. The literature reviewed aimed to provide an account of the mentioned influences and explain the role of early years educators in bilingual literacy and education reform. In addition, it highlighted the role of parents and the integration of subject content in language learning. This theme, "pupils' spoken language and the role of parents," captured participants' feelings about pupils' spoken language a'amiya and parents' involvement in bilingual language development. Some participants revealed that parents felt more comfortable communicating in their first language.

Sub-themes

Parents' involvement in the second language

Collaborative approach to parents' support

Sub-themes

Language of parents

Parent-educator-relationships

Sub-themes

English-Arabic communication

Language Expectations

Main Theme:

Arabic pupils' spoken language
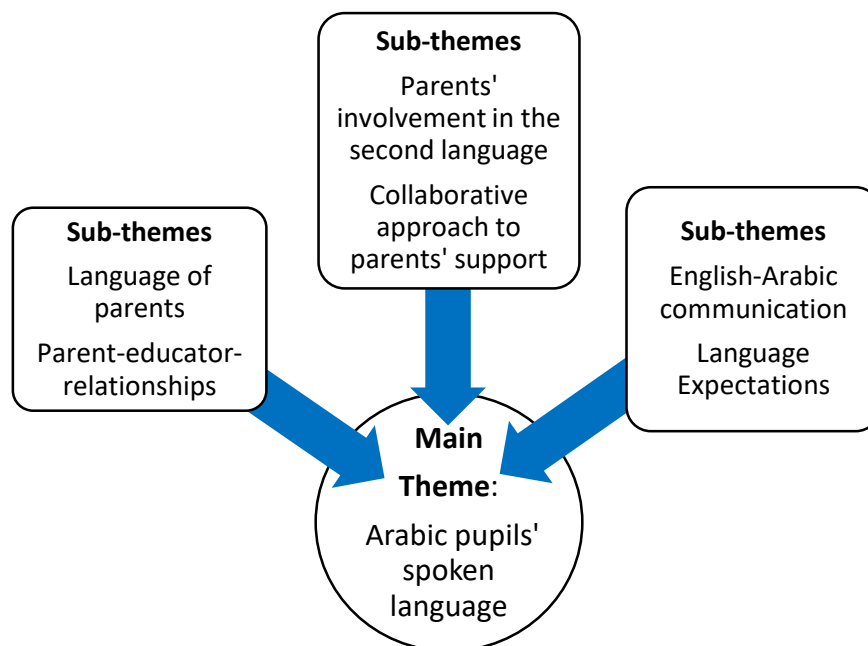
Figure 1.6 The influence of the Arabic pupils' spoken language (a'amiya) on bilingual literacy development

Research has mentioned that significant differences are observed in the linguistic domains of the two Arabic language codes (*a'amiya and fusHa);* such differences include language lexicon, phonology, syntax, and grammar (Eviatar and Ibrahim 2014; Schiff and Saiegh-Haddad 2018). Many scholars have asserted that language diglossia in the "Arab world must be acknowledged," and the effect thereof on language instruction should be addressed. The findings on the BLC with CLIL and a translanguaging approach implemented by the educator participants revealed that Arabic early year's pupils exposed to translated pupils' literature, translingual strategies, repetition of words and phrases by the Arabic and English educators, and their experiences with the integration of bilingual language and subject content showed understanding of language vocabulary, in English and Arabic due to the use of the spoken

Arabic language, a'amiya. Moreover, pupils' spoken Arabic, a'amiya, and the interaction in translated pupils' literature, dialogue, peer communication, repetition, and practice of language vocabulary and phrases contributed to pupils having fun with language. They supported meaning-making and particularly oral fluency in both languages.

The findings further revealed a collaborative support model the educator participants used, referred to as a *Parent-School-Collaborative support model (PSCM).*

The early years educator participants responded positively to the PSCM, which encouraged them to involve parents in the pupils' bilingual learning, which they felt was instrumental in helping pupils gain confidence through positive learning experiences and shared opportunities to reach their full potential. The finding revealed that educators find the model a positive contribution to bilingual learning as it involves the school, educators, and parents working in collaboration towards pupils' independent language learning success. The *Parent-School-Collaborative Support Model (PSCM) below* revealed that educators emphasised that the parents and the school should work together to collect enough information about the student and the barrier(s) to bilingual learning they might experience. The model indicated that educators prioritised collaborating with parents to support pupils' bilingual learning through essential guidelines.
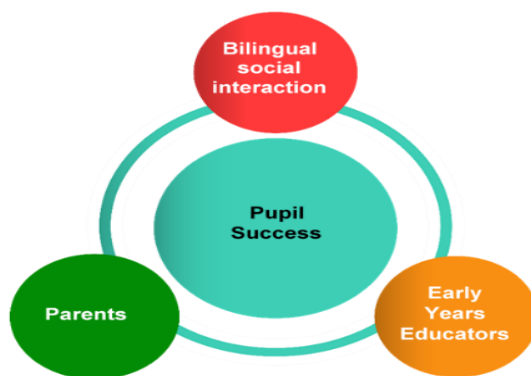
Diagram 1.1 Parent-School-Collaborative support model (PSCM).

Arabic spoken language was highlighted as essential for all early-year pupils' language learning, and this was evident through educators' experiences and strategies with bilingual instruction. PA2 elaborated on pupils' spoken language, "a'amiya," and mentioned that it is an essential part of their daily language development and should be acknowledged when teaching English. PA2 stated that it should be considered during the giving of instructions so that pupils could make connections between the two languages.

"I would say that Arabic must be taught side by side with English…....we cannot leave out or neglect the importance of the mother tongue" (PA2 line 23).

All participants emphasised the importance of collaborating with parents to develop pupils' language skills. PA1 emphasised fostering good relationships with parents and encouraged parents' involvement in bilingual literacy and pupils' language learning. The participant described the experience working with Arabic-speaking parents as a collaborative "educator-parent-partnership" approach, potentially contributing to pupils' learning even when parents were not English proficient.

"So, it is very important to have like an educator-parent partnership………. When parents are more involved it makes such a diffidence in the pupil's learning (PA1 line 77)….. even in my class I have parents that does not speak much English at all…. but they are involved"
(PA1 line 81).

PN13 believed one parent's involvement would encourage others to engage in their pupils' bilingual language learning. PN13 mentioned that the encouragement of one parent "starts a fire" that gets the rest of the Arabic parents involved in bilingual language development for their children (PN13 line 43).

PL5 expressed her intense feelings about parents' communication and mentioned that not all parents were willing to communicate in English. PL5 argued that parents' communication started with the educator's encouragement so they could show interest in their pupils' bilingual language development.

"This can be a tough one as it depends where the parents lie if they are willing to cooperate and communicate with you or not" (PL5 line 97). "There are some parents that say that their children are better than them…….so show encouragement, that they show an interest." (PL5 lines 100-101).
A few educator participants experienced that mothers with limited English were not fully engaged. P16 mentioned that finding proper resources to support monolingual parents in enhancing the bilingual literacy of young pupils is essential. P16 stated that providing Arabic-speaking mothers with online resources and applications where they can listen to audio recordings when they cannot read children's literature in English is beneficial.
"If they cannot pronounce the words or speak English because of the mother tongue, they can have the "read to me" option…. I assign online books….so many of my

mommies are so interactive with the lessons; they are enjoying the English lessons"
(P16 lines 8-9).

PN13 was very open about her inner concerns about parents' communication, their involvement in their pupils' English language learning, and their expectations when school fees at private schools were at stake. PN13 stated that paying school fees is like rendering a service at the end of the day. PN13 argued that certain expectations regarding those services, such as involving parents and educators in quality teaching and learning, were essential.

> *"Umm. I think it is just to get the parents as involved as possible. I think it is very important that Arabic parents will know what we are doing, and what our expectations are, and make sure that they understand how important that is……I worked in schools where paying school fees was nothing; it did not matter what the school fees were, the family could afford them, but they did not care, and they did not value very much what was taught…..but now paying school fees is a very different kettle of fish for Arabic speaking parents ….it comes out parent's pockets now. Arabic parents are investing…... I think parents are more invested as they use to be in English…. every penny count…. spending money and getting value….so (getting involved) they want their Arabic children to learn English" (PN13 lines 39-41).*

PS10 and PN11 felt that parents' communication and involvement were challenging and expressed their feelings about communication with their Arabic pupils' parents, who only used Arabic to communicate when they knew that PS10 and PN11 were both bilingual. PN11 mentioned that being a bilingual educator caused parents to avoid English; however, they needed encouragement to communicate in English so their children could benefit and be supported.

> *"All my parents are Arabic speakers…. this year and last year, we have parents that cannot speak English at all…. or find it challenging to communicate… (PS10 line30). Arabic language has a place in the class as we always focus on their identity (PS10 line 7). If parents cannot speak English, I cannot put pressure on them, but will help them to support their children." (PN11 line 31).*

PN11 expressed that she sometimes felt discouraged being bilingual and mentioned that when her parents know that she can speak Arabic as well, they tend not to talk in English to her. *"parents avoid speaking to us in English … because we are the English-*

> *Arabic educators….they are avoiding us …..I keep encouraging them" (PN11 lines 33-34).*

PI4 expressed concern about parents' miscommunication being monolingual. It stated that Arabic parents translated English messages into Arabic on mobile phones and then misinterpreted what was said. P14 stated that such misinterpretations cause conflict about what was said and not meant: *"especially if it is their second language. They might not mean it in a wrong way……. with a lack of English language usage*, [translations]…… *they mentioned something but not meant it" (PI4 lines 18-19).* PP14 felt that she had overcome the challenge of parents speaking in their mother tongue by encouraging them to read to their early- years children. *"I say …read bedtime stories in English* …...and *have short English conversations …. everywhere, all day, if it is possible of course" (P14 lines 70)-71).*

P8 was coming in, mentioning how she felt being Arabic and English speaking and how that facilitates the learning process of bilingual literacy in her classroom through translanguaging.

> *"As a native Arabic speaker, I facilitate the learning of bilingual literacy……..and can communicate with the second language …..I try to facilitate language for them by explaining the word in Arabic and then in English …." tiny" and "said alhaji" in Arabic… which can also be very small …. For them to understand…. I understand what they want…and facilitate the language to answer" (P8 lines 8-13).*

4.4 The role and strategies of the educator

The following central theme of "The Educators' Role and Teaching Strategies" captured participants' experiences and thoughts on using various resources and teaching strategies.

Sub-themes

Repetition and educators ' modelling

Peers and parents as resource

Small groups and differentiation

Sub-themes

Vocabulary and the love for stories and books.

Story sacks, technology and other resources invite collaboration and engagement.

Sub-themes

Slow Release Model

Play-based learning

Educator's motivation to lead stduenst to self-confidence and iIndependance.

Main Theme: The educator's role and teaching strategies

Figure 1.7 The educator's role and teaching strategies in Bilingual Literacy.

The study shed light on the role of educators in exploring their understanding of emergent-translanguaging pedagogy and identifying bilingual strategies for implementation that could support the second language learning of Arabic in the early years. Pupils.

PN11 shared her experience with the bilingual curriculum, using resources and strategies chosen for the early-years classroom, and mentioned the educator participants' collaborative planning of a weekly curriculum plan. *(Refer to Figure 1.2 BLC with CLIL Weekly plan, day 4).* PN11 felt that an age-appropriate bilingual curriculum planned with children's literature and integrated subject content resources could encourage the use of vocabulary through dialogue and trigger a pupil's imagination.

> "*So, the Curriculum is an important resource. The way you choose the curriculum according to the level of the children….so you create big planning then modify it to termly and weekly planning…......and put all the details there …..for example, we have the story of "The Hungry Caterpillar," we can do science with it, literacy with it, we can*

do the story, vocabulary, imagination, mathematics, iPad, so it is like a full combination" (PN11 lines 11-12).

PE3 expressed her experience with planning resources and having strategies to enhance bilingual literacy. PE3 uses pupils' vocabulary in both languages and labels items and resources in the classroom in English and Arabic to encourage pupils to start identifying vocabulary.

"labelling your classroom, for instance, or labelling the lots of resources so they have the English word at the top and the Arabic word at the bottom, you will often hear children going around in the class trying to sound out of saying the words….they are learning from each other, helping each other to read the words…in both languages" (PE3 lines 56-57)

P8 agreed that the strategy of retaining the Arabic early-year pupils' home language, a'amiya, supported their English language. P8 used an integrated approach for differentiation as a teaching strategy. P8 described her strategy by mentioning that pupils were divided into smaller groups to encourage bilingual conversation while providing support when pupils were conversing to understand the second language.

" Integration in the curriculum is the strategy how we are teaching …' The Hungry Caterpillar' in English right, so the Arabic educators read the same story in Arabic…. and help to retain the home language of the children….by learning the new similar vocabulary of the second language……. apply differentiation in small groups for speaking opportunities and understanding (P8 lines 24-25).

Six participants shared their feelings and experiences about children's literature as an essential resource while teaching and learning a bilingual curriculum. They felt it led to expressive language development through visuals, props, and role-play of the characters related to pupils' literature.

PA2 mentioned that *"stories were key in any language development also in combination with multi-sensory approaches" (PA2 lines 30-31).* While PP14 said, *"For me, it is the stories and songs…. children learn the vocabulary from that, showing them "this is a ball, talking about concepts and things in the story" (PP14 line 35).* PS10 stated, *"Lots of stories …. we must make the story real life with masks of the story characters…so they connect the vocabulary (PS10 lines 13-14).*

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It concurred with the experiences that P6 had with children's literature when she mentioned:

"I don't know what I will do without stories to teach Arabic to children, they learn so many vocabularies and grammar rules and things like that" (P6 line 126).

On the other hand, P5 explained the strategy of using both languages for communication and mentioned that it "solidified pupils' bilingual learning".

"The bilingual literacy approach through stories solidify what they are learning….as it is great to have that communication in both languages" (PL5 line 71).

While PN13 mentioned that she felt that [it is] "*a love for story and a love of books*" [that]……*links literacy to everything…...and having literacy text at the centre point, the kind of foundation for everything….so link to that story in everything…..always coming back to it* " *(PN13 lines 13-15)*

Another viewpoint mentioned was "learning through play, visual resources, modelling and learning from each other," which was revealed through discussions with a few participants.

For PL5, play-based learning was a highly effective strategy where pupils could get in touch with oral language through play, engaging with each other, learning from each other, and exploring the language and vocabulary by speaking with each other.

"I find that play-based learning from the beginning is quite a shunt start……. they get a foundation and base of oral language …. they learn from each other then….they will ask a lot of questions and get the answers themselves through exploration" (PL5 lines 30-38).

This concurred with the experience of PA2, who mentioned:

"*For young kids I use a lot of play-based learning, and I was fortunate to learn to form a speech pathologist (Lois Kam Heymann) where I experienced the value of sound and motion in teaching a second language. So, lots of modeling, lots of visuals, using tactile and lots of stories…. lots of vocabulary" (PA2 lines 12-17).*

P8 mentioned the importance of age-appropriate and different resources, role play, blocks, games, and visual aids necessary for young Arabic children to learn to communicate in a second language through play (P8 lines 15-16).

"We should not forget that they are still little, so the most important part for them is learning through play" …this is the best way Arabic children learn and communicate and understand the second language…. with different resources, social dramatic play, Lego blocks, iPad games, and visual aids (P8 lines 15-16.

Like the view of P8 is the experience of P9, who highlights the importance of creating opportunities for pupils to speak and using *"puppets in role-play" (P9 line 36)* to demonstrate their understanding of the vocabulary and phrases*.*

PT12 also believed that *"a lot of talking…talking…talking" was* the strategy*, "and a lot of visuals …. story or song…story cards…flash cards" …...* [were important]*. (PT12 line 8)* to teach a bilingual curriculum.

PN13 concurred and mentioned that she experienced "more oral language recorded during distance learning" where pupils had the opportunity to present in "show and tell" as a resource that could be used for assessment" [purposes] (PN13 line 25).

In comparison, PA2 disclosed that, in her viewpoint, the reciprocal conversation needed sign language, a'amiya, and visual cards. PA2 mentioned that pupils pointed at illustrations to show their understanding when they could not use vocabulary to communicate and follow educators' English instructions and conversation.

"For instance, when I use the teach-test method to teach "Brown Bear" to an Arabic child with no English, my teaching objective is to see if he can put the story sequence in the right order. If he repeats the phrases …even not accurate…he can use the Makaton signs strategy and Arabic to show his understanding" (PA2 lines 80-83).

P16 experienced teaching strategies implementing a more holistic approach to second language learning by integrating all subject content and language-integrated learning.

"Incorporate the language, science, mathematics, technology, and vocabulary with real-life experiences……. a more integrated learning….in CLIL for example with Jack and the Beanstalk …. we planted seeds…. measured how much soil will be needed…. and planned innovative ideas for Jack to get down from the beanstalk" (P16 lines 25-26).

PA2 mentioned that her strategies included teaching English and Arabic vocabulary simultaneously when pupils were unsure about using translanguaging, for instance:

"If the kids are not able to say "apple" but will say the Arabic word "tafaha," I will reinforce the English word "apple.""

"One of the boys did not know which picture belongs to the word "lion," but he could make the sound of the lion, "roarrrrr" [PA2 laughing] … So we put the sound and the picture together. The goal is …. can they interact, … socialise, and communicate" … (PA 2 lines 46-51).

PA1 mentioned that *"a lot of hands-on resources is the key"* to teaching the bilingual curriculum was imperative. She also highlighted that "children and their parents were the best resources to develop language.

"The child is the best resource….as it comes from themselves…... and that the educators there to scaffold, model, and support…. parents are also part of the resources" (PA1 lines 60-64).

PP14 explained that her experience with the bilingual curriculum and strategies in an Arabic early-year's class to enhance English literacy was through using a "story sack" and various "toys" to encourage conversation and let pupils speak.

A lot of toys…things that they can play with that they can talk about …. I have used a little wooden house with a baby room…. they talk about the dolls in the house …they talk about their baby brother or sister ….we also use soft toys that relate to the stories so they are in a story sack ......I bring everything I can lay my hands on that we can use to talk about" (P14 lines 41-43).

P8 elaborated on her experience using technology and repetition of phrases in both languages with vocabulary in the English language that she felt she was familiar with and that she felt contributed to more visual learning.

"I use advanced technology…. the interactive Smart Board to touch, drag and drop illustrations of vocabulary that we teach and can repeat in both languages. Other resources are PowerPoints, videos, and English and Arabic applications that I put on their iPad to use in their free time so that they learn a lot of vocabulary…I put that up and it repeats the English sentences of the stories. They learn from illustrations" (P8 lines 17-19).

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On the other hand, P14 mentioned that, in her experience, Arabic early years children exposed to English as a Second Language demonstrated "emotional feelings" such as a lack of understanding and sometimes showed separation anxiety. She felt that motivation and positive feedback were strategies to encourage them to speak in English.

> "Give them positive remarks for improvement …. you are a role model…….so follow – up on them…Does he feel shy opening his lunchbox? Can he tie his shoe?......they think with your smile…. with your words……coming from inside …. (P14 lines 7-13)

PA2 mentioned that one of the teaching strategies familiar to her is to allow children to gain self-confidence and work towards independent learning by using the "Slow-Release Model of Responsibility" technique. PA2 mentioned that pupils gain through self-exploration and support, which enables them to use vocabulary confidently.

> *"where we for instance use the Slow-Release Model……where educators and parents supporting children…. the more advanced they become, the more self-confident they become, the less they need our support" (PA2 lines 80-81).*

P8 disclosed her experience with the bilingual literacy curriculum in an early-years environment and stated that she could relate to the pupils as she was bilingual. P8 mentioned that she could put herself in the Arabic pupils' shoes and that she felt that she knew what resources and strategies they would need to communicate in English. P8 mentioned that translanguaging, open-ended questioning, peer-to-peer, and educator-pupil engagement could support and contribute to bilingual language learning.

> *"As an Arabic-English educator and native Arabic speaker, like I am, I facilitate the learning process of bilingualism. I can understand their needs, their language, and their culture, and I can support the pupils because I can understand their language and I can communicate with them in the second language. I don't speak in Arabic with them full time, but I can understand their words and then say the English because I can understand their needs. I …...challenge them to speak in the second language" (P8 lines 9-11). "I use pupil-to-pupil conversation or educator-to-pupil conversation or open-ended questioning..….. as strategies during story time to support them" (P8 lines 29-30)*

PI4 expressed her views and experiences with hands-on resources and strategies by encouraging pupils to collaborate to support their language learning in the Arabic early years classroom.

> ….*" tell me then I will forget, share and engage me, and then I will remember, for every single thing, for every single concept….if you say let us work together…...I will never forget"(PI4 lines 32-35).*

PN13 confidently and openly expressed her views on the role of educators and their reflection on the curriculum implementation and resources *(Refer to Appendix D: 1.2 Educator's reflection template)* and mentioned that planning teaching strategies together in both languages and using repetition of phrases and vocabulary provides pupils with confidence to use the vocabulary and start speaking.

> *"For the penny to drop……going back to Literacy….it has to be that thread that runs through everything, the same ideas, the same concepts…. that give them the confidence to start using the words, because it is using the strategy of was repeating, and repeated in different ways …developing vocabulary and in different context around the room" (PN13 lines 37-38).*

In comparison, PE3 shared her struggle with pupils' listening skills and mentioned using children's literature illustrations and questioning, which she felt was a vital strategy and resource when children lack listening skills and do not fully grasp the English language vocabulary at the start.

> *"We were doing the 'Ugly Duckling,' which is a good classic….and uhm…and the kids were really getting into the illustrations…… so [I used] guided listening skills……….so you can get them engaged and listening with lots of guided activities to the story…..questioning…so the oral skills that they struggled with will follow…you know what I mean?".*

PL5 was very open regarding the teaching resources and pupils' frustration when they struggled to grasp the language through illustrations and other resources. PL5 felt that learning through play, questioning, observation, short phrases to repeat, and modelling were the teaching strategies she used and was familiar with in her early-years classroom.

> *"observing children and using educator-lead activities and anecdotal notes (line 75), asking children questions in different ways…..and within play-based learning, children*

get the answers through exploration, so they become the owners of their learning…but
I could sense the frustration …….because they could not communicate ….. if they are
not able to tell me… …....so I model and give them a short phrase ……to break the ice"
(PL5 lines 38-45).

PI4 expressed her feelings about her role as a bilingual educator and mentioned using more creative ideas, hands-on activities, and open-ended questioning to encourage communication when involved with the bilingual curriculum and English Language vocabulary.

"I implement …21st Century strategies …. brainstorming, …hands-on activities,
expressing their ideas, sharing open-ended questions…....this will open the door for
them to think more….to be creative ……for English Language (PI4 lines 37-38).

The experiences of the educator participants revealed that pupils participated and engaged in Arabic and English-translated literature during circle time in both languages by practising phrases and vocabulary and retelling the pupils' literacy while developing pupils' independent use of oral language. Moreover, the study showed that the BLC with CLIL within "the authentic educational setting" (Williams 2009, p. 68), the early years classrooms, with the help of their peers and educators, showed important features of emergent-translanguaging (Garcia and Wei 2014, cited in Colón 2019) needed in the pupils' language development stage.

4.5 Learning through play within a social environment

This central theme, "Learning through play within a social environment," encapsulated the participants' experiences, feelings, views, and interpretations about pupils' learning through play and their bilingual language development. The literature identified that the reasons why some parents might not have been engaged or involved in their pupils' English development have to do with parents' perception of early years as only a service that is "consuming time with entertainment" and that no learning is taking place through play (Abdulla 2018).

Sub-themes
Activities related to themes
Sharing of Oral Language

Sub-themes
Emmergent language in learning
Sharing and interaction with peers
Engaging in knowledge and understanding

Sub-themes
Social play and interactive collaboration
Social interaction and dialogue
Online classes and COVID-19 bubbles

Theme:
The Social Environment and learning through play

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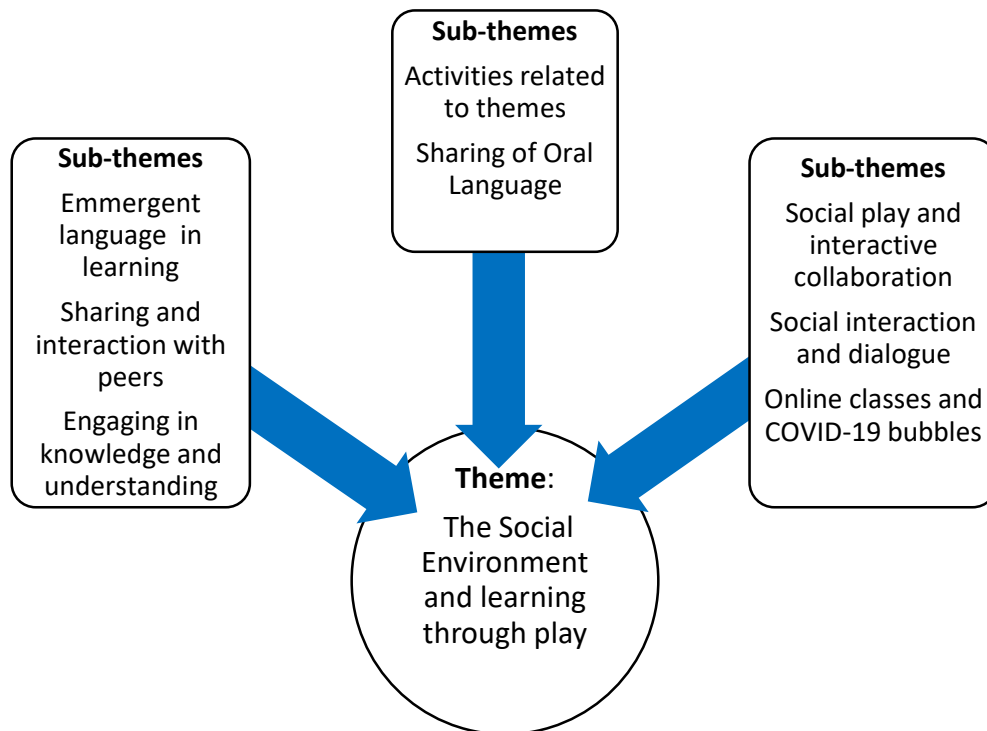
Figure 1.8 The influence of Social Environment and learning through Play on Bilingual Literacy

KHDA (2009, p. 42) stated that "relationship quality" between pupils and educators plays a crucial role in their development. PS10 concurred and expressed her view and thoughts on the social learning of the Arabic early-year pupils. She felt that the educators' relationship and engagement with pupils contributed to pupils' meaning-making and their having fun through social connection through play that contributed to the interconnection with both languages.

"*Involved as actresses and actors in a social environment where they play together, sit together, learn how to share, and improve their listening and oral expression skills.*

For instance, having a shop and children have to buy. They are bargaining the prices and learn the names of the fruits and vegetables, they sometimes do not know, so they will say, Miss… (in broken English) what this? …. Do you need soup? so these lentils? … I need onions in my soup…I am the noisy educator in the corridor…playing with them…. keeping them alive and connected" (PS10 lines 22-24).

The literature review identified that learning through "play" is non-traditional in Arabic culture and is more related to Western social interaction (Parham 2008). Likewise, P9 stated that learning through play impacts "social learning," especially when pupils struggle to understand the target language.

"I think social learning plays a role. I have seen Arabic children make gains out of learning through play without having the English Language at home" (P9 line 49).

PA1 expressed her view and feelings about social interaction, social play, and children sharing valuable social experiences with peers during the interaction and involvement through play and language learning, and mentioned *that:*

"Social play is essential for language development, I think, so in the social environment they learn from their peers and the educator…. especially in playful experiences, like role play…. if their friends do not know the words, … so they will try to speak to them… …when children sometimes cannot communicate, …. you can see them using gestures, like pointing" (PA1 lines 58-62).

PL5 concurs and feels that social play is more of an opportunity to have fun, gain confidence, and have a dialogue in both languages with peers without them knowing that.

"*Play sparks that element of fun*" for early years children while *"developing and learning, and they don't even realise that … social learning and oral dialogue give them the opportunity to speak to one another and engage in language and their learning"* …..…[help them] to *"come out of their shells" (PL5 lines 84).*

PN13 felt that although social interaction is essential, it is vital that there is a balance between developing socially and developing the English language for Arabic early-years children within a semi-structured social environment. PN13 stated that organised play directs children and supports them in making choices and moving freely to explore the language.

" Huge, huge, ridiculously huge (laughing), Yes, to me …it is particularly important but ……it has that balance, but that takes time…. setting up the classroom in a semi-structured way, where children can make choices and decide what they want to do…it has to be learning through play….it can be organized behind the scenes by the educators……but has to be set-up that children can move freely" (PN13 lines 32-37).

Having firsthand experience teaching early-year pupils through the Hybrid teaching model during the Covid-19 pandemic, PP14 mentioned that she experienced a significant difference

in the English vocabulary, knowledge, and understanding of language when it comes to the Arabic early-year pupils who were taught virtually in comparison with those who were taught in the class through face-to-face teaching. PP14 also saw a difference in their social interaction and engagement with play led by peers and led by educators.

" Online pupils…those that were not exposed to English, other than their school counterparts, being socialising and listening to English, they picked up the language much quicker, while …. the online pupils are exposed to only a fraction of the time that they were exposed to before when they could socialise with me and with the educator's assistant, other educators, other children….in practising the language, playing, listening to the language on the carpet with me and getting the understanding. Now I see they struggle socially." (PP14 lines 64-65).

P6 had a different view of the language development associated with free play, which is used to socialise, develop oral expression, and make new friends. She expressed her view that using the pupil's spoken language, a'amiya could contribute to making friends and socialising.

"I know that during free play, they speak a lot of Arabic; I do not want to stop that either, but encourage them to repeat phrases in English. When you say, 'No, you have to speak in English,' they will miss out on effective communication, and developing those friendships and just grow socially and emotionally, if I try to let them speak only in English" (P6 lines 73-76).

P16 's view accorded well with P6's regarding Arabic in the early years, when children practise English in a social context through play and communicate at home with their family members.

"I can see when speaking with them ……whether those words are being developed…. that they are not practicing the language in a social context" (P16 lines 45-46).

P8's view concurs with P16's when she expressed her feelings on learning a language through practising and said that it is "more about practice and sharing, not writing"; she mentioned that it is "communication, it is practice" *(P8 line 35).*

PA2 has a unique perspective on social learning and expressed her view about parents' interaction, involvement, and support to the school and their children to develop their pupils' language.

> *"I am a huge social theory person (laughing), so definitely I am a big fan of Constructivism and fan of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)….the triangulation with pupils, parents and the school…and so that parents will understand that social development of language and learning should not just come from the school side ….it could be an interchangeable triangle….together working together to develop social skills….this is the key for children to develop their language skills" (PA2 lines 95-103).*

P7 disclosed her experience in an Arabic early-years social environment as having to simplify English, which is different from her experience in England, which is a multilingual and bilingual environment where English is spoken most of the time.

> *" In England, of course, I had some children that were multilingual and bilingual in my class, but because over there, the environment is English when you go out, or go to the shops. Over here, I want to use a proper English language, but have to simplify it…so there is a barrier but also a benefit if they can get it…..... there should be a balance…I should achieve it" (P7 lines 43-46).*

The perspective of PE3 and how early-years pupils learn a second language was explained more through pupils' experience of mixed-ability groups, constructive and collaborative play, and constant communication.

> *"I think people may disagree with me, but I think kids should be able to socialize, play in groups collaboratively. I also think collaborative work, learning through play, and communication is important. I will have my kids in mixed ability groups with differentiation where they might have different tasks assigned within that mixed ability groups so that they constantly learn from each other within that social environment…working and playing together….getting opportunities to work and play together as much as possible" (PE3 lines 64-72).*

In comparison, PN11 felt that early-year children playing together build up a lot of English and Arabic vocabulary, build their self-esteem, reveal their personalities, and learn new vocabulary through self-exploration and imitating their parents during collaborative social play.

> " … So, for the whole…they are building their vocabulary, building a positive self-esteem, learning from each other, learning to be more independent, and exploring by themselves. They imitate their moms cooking or their dads using a mobile phone, and you can see their personalities through social play: Who is the dominant one? Who are the leaders?…the quiet one…? Who is the shy kid? Who likes to help others" (PN11 lines 29-32)?

PA 2 mentioned that, in her view, early-years children should not be underestimated and mentioned her experience of children developing vocabulary quickly and sharing and copying vocabulary from their peers to create language.

> " We should not underestimate kids…. they are like sponges…. we should support them to gain more vocabulary……they learn from each other, I have seen pupils in their early years saying words in Arabic, and another pupil will help him to say the word in English, and then the pupil will say 'Oh yes, now I remember', learning, sharing and copying from each other, yes, I have seen that working well" (PA2 lines 107-109).

PA1 's shared her experience of expecting the unexpected during social and more structured play that was planned and quickly changed into unstructured free play. Pupils could learn more than planned, for instance, when a spider entered the arena.

> "Sometimes you will have a more structured play where you planned specific vocabulary, and then sometimes just free play, depends on the type of play and what you planned, if they see a spider during structured play, and they are interested in the spider, …. there are loads of things they can learn together from the spider, what the spider eats, the colour of the spider, how many legs it has …. even if it was not meant to be done for structured play" (PA1 lines 65-68).

A few participants expressed their feelings about the early-years pupils' social interaction during COVID-19 and the challenges of providing opportunities for cooperative group work and interaction in bubbles within the social environment. PE 3 expressed her experience with the social interaction of the early-years Arabic pupils during COVID-19.

"We are still lucky at our school to let children socialise, as we teach in a bubble of ten pupils, where we have the ability of having the ten pupils in the bubble and can use the space you had with twenty and twenty-five children before. The pupils and activities are always sanitised, but they move around and interact and converse with fewer pupils. One another pupil is at a table with a friend and can still communicate and move around in pairs. Sometimes, we are in groups of five, with social distancing, but still talking. They still have the opportunity to talk, but just more difficult to orchestrate with limited resources due to the safety regulations (PE3 lines 73-85).

It concurs with the experiences of PL5, who mentioned that "the pandemic influenced cooperative group activities, but there was an opportunity to work in smaller groups or "bubbles" and provide pupils with literacy games to play and develop their language skills.

"With the pandemic that is going on, it is difficult to mix and mingle; however, children are in bubbles, and everything is washed and sanitised after used, but we continued with play-based learning in the classroom…. and social interaction as a base of oral language within our story books and literacy themes" (PL5 lines 32-35).

4.6 Cultural Influence

This central theme, "Cultural Influences," encapsulated the participants' experiences, feelings, views, and interpretations about the Arabic early-years pupils' home language, a'amiya, and parents' participation that influenced bilingual literacy. According to Mapp (2004), pupils' academic progress is built on parents' positive engagement in their learning.

Sub-themes

Arabic norms and values

Approach to Arabic parents willingness to support bilingual efforts

Sub-themes

Early years entry level of English

Arabic language as foundation to teach English Langauge

Sub-themes

Understanding the second langue though Arabic and English language differences

Theme:

Cultural Influences
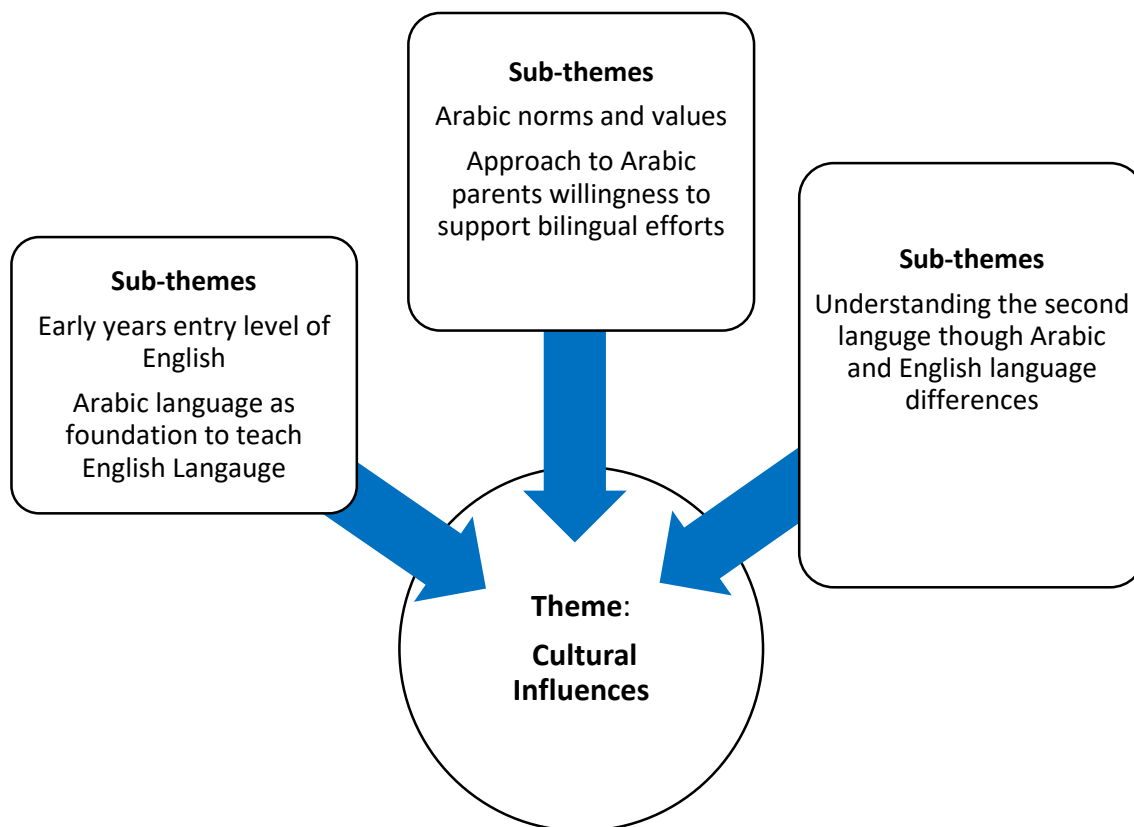
Figure 1.9 Cultural influences and parents' involvement in Bilingual Literacy development

The finding revealed that engaging Emirati pupils in emergent translanguaging and translated literature with CLIL at a young age enhanced their bilingual literacy skills and might contribute to their future success in oral communication in Arabic and English.

PN11 was extremely specific when she shared her years of experience in the U.A.E. with the pupils' culture. She mentioned that Emirati children have limited English ability when they enter school. Arabic parents play a vital role in understanding English and supporting their pupils' English language development.

> *"Arabic is more dominant than English in the Arabic culture, [it is] …. difficult for the children, as they come with zero, zero, or a little bit of a background of English…. the parents have an important role in the gaining of English…. So, the early-years child will communicate with their parents…. (PN11 lines 5- 7).*

P6 explains that according to her experience with pupils' language preferences in the early-years, their mother tongue and children's literature based on Arabic culture should be considered when teaching English*. [Arabic Language] …" that is the language that the…three to four-year-old will go to first…. (P6 line 20*).

It concurs with PP14's view, who mentioned that people's "body language" supports how one understands the language.

> "I understand a bit more where pupils' lack of English understanding comes from......I will be looking at first language English speakers....and for more body language to let me see or kind of understand.....so I would say that they [Early years children] ...will understand or know what we are doing, or what we want them to do, by our body language" (PP14 lines 29-30).

Participants revealed that the pupils' spoken language, a'amiya, supports the learning of the English language. PA2 expressed her view on the early-years pupils' proficiency with Arabic and was optimistic about children who are fluent Arabic speakers and can learn English adequately.

> "...children with excellent Arabic language skills, ...makes it easier for them to acquire a second language (PA2 line 21). It concurs with the perception of PN11, who stated, "Arabic language is the foundation to teach English Second Language (PN11 line 7).

The experiences of P16 concur with the experiences of PA2 about translanguaging and that pupils' Arabic language can be the foundation for developing English Language vocabulary. P16 stated:

> "Educators can use the Arabic language .....to help children learn the second language......teach them this is the Arabic word, and that is the English word, and we teach them together....I think they have a better understanding. This is the mother tongue language they hear daily"...(P16 lines 12-16).

The research study noted parents' involvement in their children's language development; however, participants mentioned specific language and cultural issues, such as the spoken language a'amiya. Many of the participants addressed the complexity of the Arabic language. They stated that it is essential to understand how they drew from their home language, or spoken language, *a'amiya*, to understand English and make sense of the world.

> "This can be tough as it depends on .... if the parents are willing to cooperate and communicate ....I have lots of Arabic parents coming to me and asking, 'How can I help?' and what I say is to try your best to speak the English language and even if it is broken and even if you mix your Arabic words in, that is fine, show that you are there and are willing to learn.......so just the main encouragement that they show an interest" (PL5 lines 97-101). "So

there is some improvement among children, so parents must be doing something at home" (PL5 line 110).

In contrast, PT12 felt it difficult to encourage her monolingual Arabic pupils' parents while teaching during COVID-19. She mentioned that she experienced inviting parents to join online lessons, involving parents in their pupils' learning, and providing helpful online resources to parents to support pupils' language learning is beneficial.

> *"I can see, especially with the one-to-one assessments online, that children are speaking in English and their parents in Arabic. I feel this is challenging, as not all the parents can speak English, and sometimes the kids speak better English than the parents. So, for parents to encourage their children is more of a challenge to me" (PT12 lines 25-26).* She also disclosed her experience with other parents and mentioned what they had said. *"Miss, I loved the online lesson and have learned so much from you" …. I feel that parents now have so many resources from the educators" …. (PT12 line 27-28).*

> Participants revealed that the early-years pupils entered school with limited English vocabulary, which created challenges in communication and following instructions when they started school. RLP7 shared her struggle with the Arabic culture and pupils' limited English language.

> *"I will not say cultural barrier…. but it is a big challenge because language is the main issue….and they do not understand English" (P7 lines 10-11).*

Describing her experience when working with language differences and specifically syntax and keeping in mind the differences that occur when translating English Language sentences into Arabic Language sentences, P9 expressed that:

> *"As a first language English educator, I had to get firsthand knowledge of Arabic," [she said]. "Arabic is a difficult language, and so I think I know why children get confused with things like adjectives,"* because in Arabic…*" size comes before colour…. that can confuse them a lot because it is not like that in English…so you will see if the child understands the word or just tried to translate it…. I have to focus on it more …to support the child." (P9 lines 29-33).*

PP14 noticed that Arabic children in the early years might not have the English language vocabulary to understand English instructions or explanations. Therefore, English educators

need to understand the culture of the early-years pupils because when dealing with Arabic culture, one needs to approach the pupils differently regarding hygiene and values.

> *"I think it is a much different approach because of culture. Whenever I work with Arabic children in their early years, I have to have their culture in the back of my mind. For example, in bathroom routine, you must be incredibly careful than normal when it comes to early years boys using the bathroom….so these are little things….and always in the back of your mind…. but Arab parents value them. Approaching parents …hmm …. speaking with parents…when you see an obvious issue ……. [language misunderstanding] ...…. the way to approach them must be subtler…I think…I think children across the world are kind of the same as they develop. I would say the significant difference is getting around the culture" (PP14 lines).*

On the contrary, PN13 felt a cultural change was starting to happen with the included parent-school-collaborative model. She stated that according to her experience [there are] *"more parents* [that] *are communicating in English and have a level of English than before"* and that she does not feel that *"it is as difficult to encourage Arabic parents to be involved"* in the English language development of their children (PN13 lines 40-41).

The educator participants further revealed that they reached out to parents to improve English language learning opportunities for their pupils, and steps were taken to support parents and help them take an interest in their pupils' language learning at home. The educator participants mentioned that visual curriculum planners and lesson plans were posted at the section's entrance, and a suggestion box was placed with sticky notes where parents could provide instant feedback on their experiences. Moreover, the parents' communication portal displays weekly newsletters in Arabic and English. This, together with continuously updated applications with school events and classroom activities, ensured parents of what was happening in the early years. The educator participants mentioned that parents are also welcomed into classrooms and are encouraged to participate in language and cultural events or accompany them on excursions. The educator participants revealed that parents and their families are involved in special workshops where information is shared on early childhood development and curriculum, and parents can engage with the community to be assisted by Arabic counsellors, psychologists, and family therapists to assist parents experiencing challenging personal circumstances.

4.7. Language integration and activities

This theme on language integration and activities explains the experiences, feelings, views, and interpretations of the participants about language and integration subject content in the Arabic early-years classroom and the influences of the activities on bilingual literacy development.
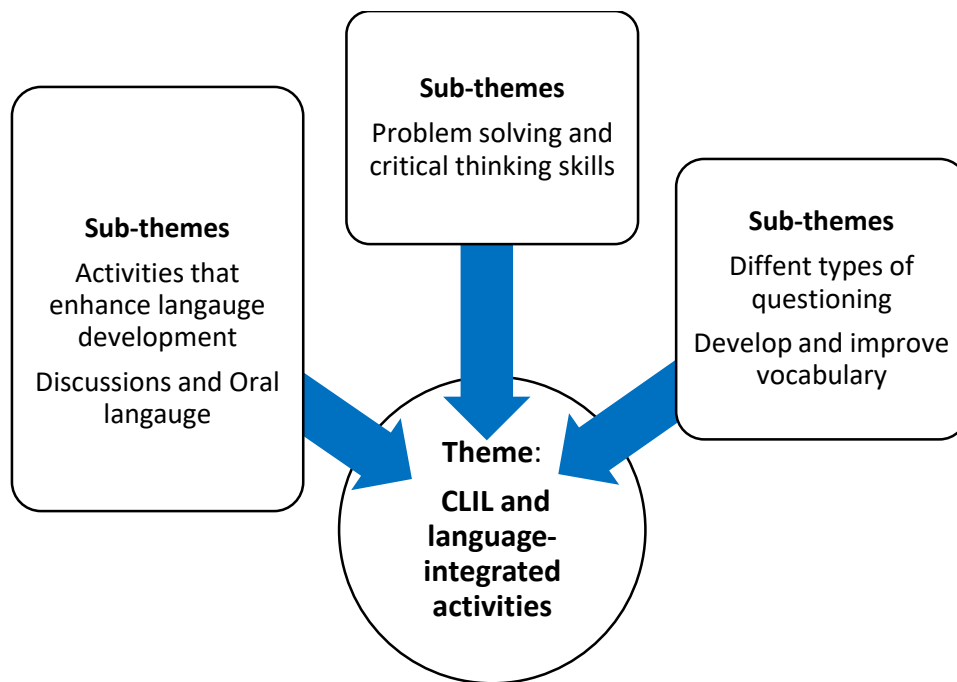
Figure 1.10 CLIL activities and the influence on Bilingual Literacy

Parker (2018) mentioned that including science, technology, language, engineering, and mathematics in school programs in early childhood curricula will encourage careers in engineering in future. Sharpan (2012) asserted that integrating language and subject content in group activities could develop pupils' critical thinking skills and help them answer complex questions through exploration. The findings revealed that the Arabic early years pupils engaged in pair and Group tasks and worked collaboratively in mixed language ability groups with translanguaging, moving in and out of both languages using CLIL and hands-on activities to develop Arabic and English oral fluency and critical thinking skills.

The educator participants viewed the BLC with CLIL learning philosophy with integrated language and subject content as a valuable classroom curriculum. PS10 felt that the best way for her to teach and to make children engaged in the teaching process and enthusiastic about learning new English vocabulary taught through children's literature was through using CLIL activities that included language vocabulary and content from (science, technology, English pupils' literature, engineering, and mathematics), where pupils could use their thoughts and imagination to design and redesign objects (*Refer to Figure 1.1 the BLC with CLIL cross-curricular planning).*

"….*it is the most exciting way to teach…because they do not want a boring way to be taught….and an educator that tells them what to do…. I say, 'Put on your thinking hats,'…so for me, CLIL is creative thinking and problem-solving. For instance, in the story 'Jack and the Beanstalk,' he goes down the beanstalk, which is unsafe. He took a lot of risks. He might have fallen, and something bad might have happened* [to] *him. So, they had to think of a solution to help him to come down safely. One of the children came up with a bright idea, a "parachute" (or barashut, like some will say in Arabic). So, children were put in small groups; they watched videos on the engineering of parachutes. They received various materials and resources, and they had to think about how their parachute would be the best to fly. Some used double paper with wool and single plastic paper and fishing lines. Children evaluated their parachutes and engaged in oral discussions with their peers and me. They discussed what worked and what did not and worked collaboratively to adjust, compare and re-design their parachutes…. (PS10 lines 32-35).* It concurs with the experiences of PA1 and P15, who mention that "CLIL *is a very hands-on activity-based approach …. that can extend pupils' learning" (PA1 line 95 and P15 line 86).*

P8 had similar views on CLIL and felt that "CLIL encourages "habits of the mind like creativity," language communication, and problem-solving within CLIL-differentiated activities*.*

"For instance, when I read the story of 'The Three Billy Goats Gruff', children were placed in three groups, one group was sequencing the story, another was drawing their favourite characters from the story, and another had to design a three-dimensional bridge by using a variety of resources" (P8 lines 41-43).

PE3 confidently explained that she felt the *"Bilingual Literacy curriculum is very cross-curricular and that CLIL comes into most everything, in things with Lego, Bee-bot floor robots and technology iPads" (PE3 lines 107-110).*

She also felt that with the literacy story *(The Three Billy Goats Gruff),* she experienced that with concepts such as:

> *"Measurement and weight,"* [and] *"push and pull" you bring language and engineering to the mathematics ……. that the children can explore…… (although a bit restricted due to COVID-19) …. building a bridge that will be strong enough to take three plastic Billy goats across in bridge in the free play area" (PE3 line 112-114).*

PN13 explained that her experience in the early-years classrooms with CLIL is *more "language orientated,"* and she mentioned that:

> *"It definitely stimulated the use of English Language. As all CLIL activities …. opens a lot of language discussion and conversation" (PN13 line 48).*

PT12 expressed her feelings about CLIL activities, which she experienced being linked to the literacy curriculum and art, which she mentioned made her think more broadly about English vocabulary that she can add to the curriculum.

> *"This curriculum is much better because it connects with all subjects, including artwork…..... makes you think more broadly…. and you can link it to any literacy topics or themes …......and can use it for vocabulary" (PT12 lines 28-29).*

Participants mentioned that CLIL activities create a conducive "learning environment" with many opportunities for early-year pupils to "observe, tally their reports, investigate, ask questions, and explore.

PN11 explained her experiences with CLIL during a literacy lesson and how that unfolded into an inquiry question for a science experiment and the building of new knowledge of English vocabulary through observation and investigation. She felt that."

> *"The story is the 'Rainbow fish,' and we will talk about sea life and investigate living and non-living things that are added to the theme. In science, we will ask an inquiry question, 'Can plants live in salt water?'....and then we will plant a few plants in pure water and salt water and let the children investigate and predict. The activity includes mathematics and technology, as the children will search for information on their iPads….so children gain more English because they integrate the subjects and allow children to explore more by doing hands-on activities. Through CLIL they will*

remember more and build more vocabulary........instead of lecturing them" (PN11 lines
43-49).

For PA2, CLIL is part of the "integration technique" used in the bilingual literacy curriculum. *It is more through "hands-on activities and play-based learning" that children solidify knowledge and the thoughts they have gained through many types of questioning, communication, and engaging in creative thinking and problem-solving opportunities (lines 139-142).*

PL5 concurred that CLIL provides children with a "lot of language" through questioning and open discussion.

> *"CLIL is a great way to get the kids inquiring and interested from an early age. CLIL activities and resources for engineering, like Lego, can spark a lot of thought, questioning, dialogue, and thinking outside the box with early-years children" (PL5 lines 113-118).*

PA2 also felt that *"young children can learn more than what we think; they are definitely like sponges" (A2 line 107).* She also mentioned that "*educators and parents are responsible and accountable" to plan a social environment through "theme-based tables*" (line 130) *that are "conducive for CLIL learning"* (PA2 line 120).

4.8 Summary of Findings

Participants reported that professional development and collaborative planning of the BLC with CLIL, including sharing the curriculum resources, were highly beneficial. They thought good listening skills in both languages developed pupils' receptive language and created an opportunity for interactive dialogue, questioning, and expressive language during the ADEK bubbles. In comparison, some participants felt that developing listening skills was not enough and that, according to their experiences, their tone of voice and the modelling of English phrases were essential to encourage and motivate Arabic early-years pupils' bilingual language development and oral fluency.

Participants mentioned that emergent translanguaging was essential when teaching English as a Second Language in a bilingual classroom. It can be surmised that in the early years, participants believed that receptive and expressive language development skills go hand in hand. It was found that participants used various linguistic techniques and CLIL activities when reading English and Arabic-translated pupils' stories that they thought were promoting bilingual language and fostering vocabulary acquisition.

Several participants mentioned that an engaged educator-parent partnership was needed for parents to be more involved in the early-years pupils' learning of English as a second language. At the same time, other participants held different views and felt that collaboration was a challenge when Arabic parents were unwilling to collaborate or communicate in English, which might have been due to a language barrier or the fear of losing the Arabic language's status. In this school setting, there was a parental assumption, according to the feedback from the participants, that parents do not have to take part in their pupils' English Language development as it was the sole responsibility of the school and the educators. However, some participants mentioned that through an initiative of school-parent collaborations, a change was observed in parental involvement where parents showed a willingness to engage and support their children's language skills in the early years.

The early years educator participants elaborated that the BLC with CLIL was a complete learning experience because it included both languages and cross-curricular integration, play-based learning, and translingual opportunities necessary to develop pupils' English and Arabic vocabulary.

Participants felt that the Arabic early-years pupils' cultural and social environment had a supportive function and an imperative impact on pupils' first encounter with English language. They also experienced early-year pupils' social interaction in pairs and collaborative groups (ADEK bubbles), learning through constructive and free play within the social environment, and Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) developed pupils' confidence in oral dialogue.

Additional findings from the observation of pupil participants suggested that for children to gain English language vocabulary and become more confident in speaking a second language, adult-led and peer-to-peer-led involvement, hands-on activities such as illustrating the stories, modelling and repeating English language phrases and vocabulary were necessary. Other participants felt it was challenging to fully orchestrate social interaction and collaboration during the COVID-19 health and safety restrictions. Regardless of the pandemic's impact, participants viewed early-years children's social learning as imperative to bilingual language learning, which was observed during the informal observations with the twelve pupil participants. During the observation, pupils engaged with each other and shared knowledge and language skills through interaction and discussion with their peers, in pairs and groups, and by using translanguaging to make sense of the world.

Lastly, participants reported integrating language through subject content in science, technology, English, art, engineering, and mathematics benefited pupils' bilingual language learning and fit the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum (BLC with CLIL) pedagogy and method. They felt CLIL stimulated the integration of English and Arabic through various hands-on activities that encouraged inquiry-based learning and simultaneously developed pupils' English and Arabic vocabulary. They felt that CLIL was instrumental in enabling pupils to engage in emergent-translingual conversation through the activities that allowed them to learn through observation, investigation, designing and creating new knowledge to solve problems through critical thinking opportunities. As a result, participants felt that CLIL offered an opportunity for bilingual language integration and oral fluency. The observation of the twelve pupil participants concluded that pupils were actively engaged in group activities and gained valuable knowledge, vocabulary in both languages and understanding by collaboratively working together to solve problems. Educator participants also noted that the planning involved with CLIL activities in the early-years BLC curriculum needed to be collaborative and age-appropriate to address the Arabic early-years pupils' curiosity levels and modern digital and technological skills. Finally, the findings highlighted that for Arabic early years pupils' bilingual language development to be successful, a well-planned bilingual curriculum that includes their

spoken language, a'amiya, a CLIL learning environment with a variety of age-appropriate bilingual literacy resources and teaching strategies, pupils' learning through play, emergent-translanguaging, bilingual educators' collaboration, their professional development, and parental involvement were imperative.

Chapter 5

Discussion
Introduction

This chapter describes the findings related to the research's reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) and the research questions. The current study's findings are compared with a bilingual curriculum and content-integrated learning. A general discussion and some implications are included.

As mentioned before, this qualitative phenomenological case study aimed to investigate the interpretations of sixteen early-years educators at a private school in Abu Dhabi involved in a bilingual literacy curriculum (BLC) structured around children's literature and subject Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) demonstrated through activities in centres and stations. The study explored how BLC and CLIL contribute to developing English expressive language and oral communication among pupils in the early Arabic years.

The sixteen multilingual educators were interviewed through ten semi-structured, open-ended questions. They provided their experiences and interpretations of the BLC with the CLIL curriculum and pupils' learning of bilingual literacy. Triangulation that would strengthen the validity and trustworthiness of the holistic single case study (Simons 2009, p. 21) was applied to the validation process of the research study by collecting evidence of the practices of twelve early-years pupils engaged in content language-integrated activities related to the children's literature and included in the BLC with CLIL curriculum. The aim was to investigate if the CLIL had contributed to pupils' bilingual literacy and oral fluency in the BLC and provide evidence of their engagement in the CLIL activities.

The two questions posed to the twelve-pupil participants during the observation and conversations with them provided more insight into their thoughts, feelings, and experiences with children's literature. They were observed using expressive oral language during the observations, free play with peers, and hands-on materials and resources while implementing the BLC with CLIL curriculum.

The observations with early-years pupils contributed to my understanding of how Arabic early-years pupils acquire English second language vocabulary, confidence, and oral fluency through emergent-translanguaging. The findings of the multilingual Arabic and English educators' experiences may provide insight into how a bilingual literacy curriculum with

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integrated language and subject content supports early years Arabic pupils' language acquisition.

This finding consisted of six phenomenological themes generated from the Reflexive Thematic Analysis (RTA) suggested by Braun and Clarke (2021, p.132). RTA reflects my interpretive analysis of the data, which included the dataset, theoretical assumptions of the study, and my analytical skills and resources. Through RTA themes, I produced codes around a central organising concept that I interpreted (Braun and Clarke 2019). Creswell and Poth (2019) identified the first step of the phenomenological data analysis when themes are generated from significant phrases or sentences that provide an understanding of participants' experiences with the phenomenon, as "horizontalisation" (p. 80) that guides the structure that supports the description of themes. The literature review identified that themes are conceptualised as "fossil[s] hidden in a rock" (Howitt and Cramer 2014, p.380) or that they were "diamonds scattered in the sand" (King and Brooks 2017, p. 220, cited in Braun and Clarke 2021) waiting to be discovered by the researcher.

The first phenomenological theme explored the bilingual literacy curriculum approach used by English and Arabic educators through children's literature translated into both languages and taught through similar strategies. The second theme explores the early-years Arabic pupils' spoken language, *"a'amiya"*, and its influence on their second language learning. The third theme explored the Arabic early years pupils' sociocultural environment and their pupils' learning through play. The fifth theme explored Arabic cultural influences and the engagement of Arabic early-years pupils' parents in learning the English Language. The last phenomenological theme explored the impact of content language-integrated learning on Arabic early years pupils' bilingual language skills and vocabulary.

The **1st** phenomenological theme explored the bilingual literacy curriculum approach used by English and Arabic educators based on the linguistic foundations of children's literature that were simultaneously taught. The research findings showed that the early-years multilingual educators hold similar views on developing the bilingual literacy curriculum in the Arabic early-years department through translated pupils' literature. They positively emphasised the value of the BLC with CLIL pedagogy for early years pupils with Arabic Language, where similar themes or topics and similar language resources during circle time and children's literature exposure are used to enhance the second language oral fluency.

The educators' interpretation of the phenomena and their ontological and epistemological foundations that supported meaning-making revealed that bilingual literacy with similar

language text, material, and resources has the potential to strengthen the early-years pupils' understanding of English Language vocabulary, promote pupils' collaboration, interaction in both languages and increases their self-efficacy. The early years' multilingual educators hold similar views on the bilingual literacy curriculum that started with initiative-taking vocabulary development through bilingual children's literature that they felt built a solid literacy foundation in both languages through children's literature. They described the BLC with CLIL as a pupil-centred pedagogy that involves the development of the whole child through their experience of the language and features that can be included in early childhood education.

They further revealed that they view the BLC with CLIL as a developmentally appropriate practice that helped young pupils achieve developmentally significant goals through age-appropriate strands and standards. The sixteen educators viewed scaffolding as an essential strategy to address the needs of all young pupils to be more successful in absorbing English vocabulary through modelling and repetition of language phrases in English. The educators emphasised the collaborative designing of a well-planned bilingual curriculum that includes pupils' literature, self-motivation, resources, excitement, interest, creativity, and problem-solving to improve both languages and pupils' cognitive and social development. Such results could imply that the BLC with CLIL is a highly effective curriculum in Arabic early years. The early-years educator participants revealed that the sociocultural rich language learning environments (Lonigan and Shanahan 2010) through play contributed to pupils gaining two languages simultaneously (Lightbrown and Spada 2017) and understanding the second language through a "translanguaging" approach where they engaged in dialogue with their peers and educators by moving "in and out" of the two languages English and Arabic (Garcia 2009, p. 157) (*Refer to Appendix B 1.2 Jack and the beanstalk strands and standards).*

This qualitative phenomenological study, which took an education perspective on BLC with CLIL, revealed that the activity-centered environment with independent exploration opportunities to promote language development created by early-years educator participants is a stimulating and enjoyable learning environment. For example, it mentioned that it included activities where language objectives are systematically integrated with academic objectives in science, art, design, technology, mathematics, and language vocabulary and contributed to self-directed and independent learning (Isaacs 2018; Lee 2000; McKenney and Reeves 2011).

The **2nd** phenomenological theme explored the early-years educators' experiences with the Arabic early-years pupils' spoken language, "a'amiya", and the influence of the Arabic language on the bilingual literacy curriculum taught at the private school. The research findings concerning educator participants' experiences revealed that when they used a bilingual literacy curriculum where a'amiya (Arabic language) was used to retell the pupils' story, educators experienced a positive increase in vocabulary and oral communication among pupils in both languages. The early years eeducator participants also shared that when the Arabic Language and English Language were taught with similar resources, for instance, the children's literature " Harry and the Bucket Full of Dinosaurs", the Arabic first language created the foundation for English as a second language development through the knowledge of the story sequence, and vocabulary that facilitated the understanding of the second language.

The educator participants' experiences with children's literature revealed that pupils enhanced their vocabulary in both languages and did not fall behind in their Arabic language when both languages were taught using similar resources and methods. Further findings revealed that the educators also experienced a positive outcome when Arabic early-years pupils connected the illustrations of the children's literature and vocabulary through a'amiya and English to make sense of the phenomenon.

The findings further indicated that bilingual educators experienced positive self-efficacy when collaboratively planning the BLC with the CLIL curriculum. The educator participants mentioned that they received weekly professional development in the BLC with CLIL and shared practices to improve their teaching strategies with CLIL. The educator participants revealed that they were working together and discussed Content Language Integrated (CLIL) activities, children's literature themes, and vocabulary that developed from the English and Arabic pupils' literature. Concerns regarding educators' self-efficacy, planning of a bilingual curriculum, and staff training were mentioned in several research literature, stating that they are inadequate and do not provide enough challenge for early-year Emirati children. The educator participants involved in the study revealed that they need adequate curriculum development training, theoretical knowledge, and practical skills to teach a bilingual curriculum to young children. They reported that success with the bilingual curriculum relies on professional training with the curriculum to enhance their knowledge to deliver the English language curriculum in their classrooms effectively.

However, the literature does not mention Emirati early-year pupils' language development or early-year educators' training to develop theoretical knowledge and practical skills to teach young children through a bilingual curriculum.

The **3ʳᵈ** phenomenological theme explored the early-years educators' experiences with the different teaching strategies and resources in Arabic early years that influenced the acquisition and practice of English as a second language oral skill. The findings related to educator participants' experiences revealed that educators had a collective and positive turn of mind about experiencing and implementing children's literature texts as the leading resource, with themes in both Arabic and English literature. The research findings revealed that the early-years educator participants were positive about teaching Arabic and English children's literature through the illustrations of the pupils' literature, support of graphic A4 picture cards, modelling strategies, repetition of phrases and words, the implementation of role play, questioning, and retelling of the children's literature text to develop pupils' listening skills and their expressive and receptive language. The educator participants felt that teaching a bilingual curriculum through pupils' literature should be simple with short sentence phrases, distinct levels of questioning, educator's talking, and repetitive language so pupils can follow and repeat the story. The educator participants were optimistic about the resources and materials chosen for the BLC with CLIL and the colourful illustrations that contributed to the pupils' meaning-making process. It involved the connection of illustrations with bilingual vocabulary and connected pupils emotionally and intellectually to understand the story, use both languages and make sense of the world.

The educator participants reported that they experienced that when age-appropriate children's literature promotes cultural diversity, they inspired pupils to connect their language and culture with the target language and culture and mirror themselves with the characters. The early years' multilingual educator participants participating in the current research study engaged in the BLC with CLIL curriculum stated that early years' pupils are involved in a meaning-making process of vocabulary through both languages and the use of connections they made with the illustrations and the language of the pupils' literature. The multilingual Arabic proficient early years educators suggested including in the BLC with CLIL children's literature that highlights pupils' identity and culture. They felt it would support the emergent translanguaging approach to promote oral fluency in both languages and foster a sense of belonging to their Arabic culture and Emirati identity.

The interpretations of the educator participants' experiences with the BLC with CLIL implemented at the school revealed that it was taught through themes created by the children's literature as units. The educator participants stated that the units (pupils' literature) that consisted of language strands and standards were integrated into the subject content of English literacy, mathematics, science, art, and technology when pupils were engaged in collaborative activities in learning centres and stations.

The multilingual Arabic and English educators elaborated on the interaction of pupils when children's literature and story sacks were used and mentioned through the process of "repair and talk" pupils were supported by their educators and peers to use the illustrations on the A4 graphic cards and the props from the story sacks related to the pupils' literature, to repeat phrases of the stories, and vocabulary with the support of their peers and educators. The educator participants revealed that the pupils' bilingual literature with supporting soft toys of the main characters included in the story sacks of the children's literature provided meaningful content, developed active listening skills, developed literacy, and gave children a love for stories through hands-on materials. The educator participants mentioned that the resources and materials related to the pupils' literature supported pupils to "move in and out" of both language vocabularies through emergent translanguaging to develop oral fluency. The educator participants argued that children's translated literature was the main strategy for success with the BLC with CLIL curriculum. The educator participants mentioned that pupils drew from different linguistic resources to make sense of the world and were not confined to one language of instruction. Educators felt that using children's literature with colourful illustrations provided the story's meanings and led to pupils acquiring both languages.

The findings related to reading pupils' stories aloud revealed a cultural mismatch between the practice of reading aloud and the understanding of spoken and formal Arabic language due to diglossia. The educators' interpretations of the use of children's literature in the BLC with CLIL and the reading of the story out loud revealed that the reading was pleasurable in the Arabic spoken language a'amiya and built a desire and interest among the early-years pupils to retell the story, as they grasped the concepts and text quickly, which was not experienced when the story was read in Arabic fusHa. However, the interpretations of the educator participants' experiences revealed that even though the pupils took longer to grasp the concepts and text in fusHa, they developed positive learning of print and illustrations. They include that pupils learned to interpret the text independently when their educators' voices created the children's literature characters, and the expressions of educators were

provided through the spoken language a'amiya. Based on educator participants' experiences, the findings identified that the children's literature written in fusHa made it challenging to retell or use simple phrases for repetition. In contrast, using a'amiya when re-phrasing the story required educators to use the exact words throughout the week to help pupils recall and memorise the children's stories. The educator participants' experiences revealed that for children to develop pragmatics and bilingual literacy skills and succeed in effective bilingual communication, adequate teaching methods, resources, social exposure in their school and their lived environment, and proper motivation to learn the second language were needed. Based on the educator experiences, the findings concurred and reflected a positive development in English as a second language among Arabic early-year pupils by reading the children's literature aloud. The educator participants' experiences further disclosed that the teaching method and strategies of Bilingual Literacy implemented at the school through children's literature with a Content Language Integrated philosophy in a play-based and emergent-translingual environment contributed to the pupils' oral fluency in both languages.

Additionally, the interpretation of the educator participants' experiences of the BLC and CLIL revealed that active listening to pupils' stories and the repetition of phrases contribute to building pupils' self-esteem, imagination, and expressive language skills.

The educators further revealed that when they read aloud, they experienced pupils' listening skills improved through their engagement in bilingual children's literature story sacks resources and visual and auditory materials. The findings revealed a positive development of their receptive and expressive vocabulary.

Educators' disposition showed positivity about character masks for role-playing when stories were read. The educator participants mentioned that integrating the masks with songs, vocabulary, dialogue, and expressive language reflected successful interaction and dialogue among the Arabic early-year pupils. They said that pupils' literature, illustrations, story sacks, and graphic A4 picture cards contributed to pupils' language development and oral fluency. The educators felt that creating narratives when children's literature is read and letting children act out stories and use rhymes to remember vocabulary makes the development of vocabulary, connections of words in both languages and the sequence of events in a story worthwhile in acquiring a second language. The findings based on the educator participants interpretations revealed that when pupils were engaged in the repetition of words and phrases, rhyming words, and a chant during role-play, such as with" The *Smartest Giant in*

Town" by Julia Donaldson, pupils were able to remember the vocabulary and simple sentences to communicate. Educators refer to the BLC with CLIL as a balanced approach to language learning as it involves a variety of resources and subject content material to enhance the English language and grammar.

The research findings revealed that educators' disposition towards modelling, imitation, repetition of supportive English phrases and words, and their tone of voice when singing songs or reading the text of children's literature reflected a positive development in Arabic early-years pupils' use of English. They felt that the repeated phrases, gestures, and visual references support vocabulary development and lead to self-confidence when participating in English language dialogue. Some educators were concerned with the repetition of language phrases and imitations that may not help the complexity of English grammatical language structures and pragmatics for pupils to understand the language used and what is meant in their daily lives. The multilingual educators that participated in the research study were all qualified and licensed early-years trained practitioners; however, the multilingual Arabic-proficient educators felt a need to be more proficient in English. The findings revealed that the English-proficient multilingual educators' disposition towards Arabic reflected an actual need for additional vocabulary through translanguaging. The multilingual Arabic educators' disposition regarding English vocabulary reflected a similar response towards English.

The **4th** phenomenological theme explored the educators' interpretations concerning the Arabic early-years pupils' social-cultural environment and the role and influence of "play-based learning" within the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum with a Content Language Integrated Learning philosophy. The findings showed that the educators experienced a significant positive change in Arabic early-year pupils' oral communication and the learning of English language vocabulary because of their engagement in constructive play and self-explorations in centres and stations. This included pupils' experiences with free play, role play, and learning and communication with peers during outdoor play, where they were encouraged to speak in English.

The educator participants indicated that pupils' language and physical and social-emotional development improved through interaction with their peers and learning through play. The findings highlighted that the Arabic and English educators' collaborative planning of sharing resources and materials to encourage language learning through play showed positive development of pupils' receptive and expressive language skills. The findings revealed that

Arabic and English multilingual educators from the Gulf countries and English first language educators from Ireland, the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Canada, Australia, and South Africa bring with them a wealth of lived and shared experiences into the social environment of the Arabic early-years pupils at the school they are employed at in Abu Dhabi. The findings revealed that the educators experienced a collectiveness within their own identity. Within the Arabic social identity, Arabic language and culture are shared within the English second language structures in a bilingual social context of learning through play.

Learning through play has become a highly debated phenomenon, and theorists have much to say about learning through play where adult interventions occur. They mentioned that it might negatively influence pupils' self-agency. The finding of the multilingual early-years educators' interpretations revealed that self-exploration, as well as both educator-led and peer-led play, where pupils were able to design objects in pairs or groups, such as a bridge for the *"Billy Goats Gruff,"* a parachute *for "Jack and the Beanstalk*," or a fish tank for *"The Rainbow fish*," contributed to pupils being engaged in integrated and independent language learning through play. Additional findings of the educators' interpretations of learning through play revealed that educators felt that social interaction and engagement between pupils with a'amiya within the bilingual social environment contributed to them socialising and developing their expressive language skills while connecting the Arabic and English-taught vocabulary.

The educator participants' experiences disclosed that the social environment created for learning through social play positively contributed to building Arabic early-years pupils' self-esteem. The educator participants revealed that through both adult-led and child-led play, educators experienced many English vocabulary and dialogue opportunities. The findings revealed a positive correlation between educator-child modelling and peer-to-peer modelling of English words and phrases and the free-play and self-doing or hands-on exploration created in the social environment.

The findings based on educator participants' experience further revealed that placing resources in the social environment led to pupils' self-exploration, connection to bilingual vocabulary, development of social-emotional learning, investigation, and discussion. The educator participants' experiences further highlighted the development of pupils' bilingual literacy through interacting and engaging in a social-cultural environment filled with interpretations of play-based learning and adult-led, pupil-led and pupil-independent learning approaches to solve problems independently and with peers. Educators felt that they use the scaffolding technique "repair and talk" when pupils need adult-led support to understand

language structures, help pupils repeat and say the words or phrases, or challenge others to be language risk takers.

The literature highlighted social interaction as imperative for language and cognitive development. The findings of the educators' interpretation indicated that the educators' disposition reflected a significant correlation between the social environment of the Arabic early-years pupils, self-directed play (free play), and adult-led play. The educator participants' experiences revealed that pupils could extend, and in many cases even cross, the "zone of proximal development" by achieving many tasks independently through self-exploration, investigation, and discussion with peers in a'amiya and translanguaging. The findings do not include findings from interviews with Arabic parents' interpretations and interaction with play-based learning and call for further investigation.

The findings also indicated that the educators' disposition towards learning through play reflected a positive aperture and a ray of light experience with child-led and adult-led play. The educator participants experienced a balance between constructive adult-led, pupil-led, and individual free-play activities that positively affected pupils' independent language learning.

The research findings revealed that educators' dispositions about pupils' independent learning reflected a positive development because of the "The Gradual Release Instructional Framework" by Fisher and Frey (2008a), which was used as the foundation for instruction in the early years department.

The framework utilised by the early years' educator participants suggested that cognitive work, in this case, the English literacy content, should proceed gradually. The educator participants argued that this should be within the pupil's pace and purposefully include both English and Arabic educators' reading of children's literature to the modelling, sharing of responsibility between early years educators, pupil-self-supporting practices, and application by the pupils through peer and educator motivation. The findings concerning the educator participants' interpretations of independent learning revealed that the early years pupils unknowingly took over the responsibility for learning after being guided through their spoken language a'amiya and adult-and-peer-led experiences.

The research findings concerning pupils' responsibility for learning revealed that Arabic early-years' pupils enter the school with limited English vocabulary and communication skills. The educator participants disclosed that they planned and offered an emergent bilingual literacy program that included visual cues and visual schedules which supported and led

pupils to understand simple instructions such as "look at the picture", "stand up and come to the carpet" to more advanced instructions during the first six weeks of school. The findings related to the educator participants' experiences revealed that the adult-led bilingual literacy curriculum during COVID-19 (ADEK bubbles), which refers to small mixed ability groups with differentiated tasks, supported pupils' spoken language and extended Arabic early years pupils' foundational English vocabulary levels.

The findings based on the experiences of early years educator participants further implied that the BLC with CLIL, with translated children's literature, supported pupils' vocabulary when the multilingual Arabic educators retold the story in a'amiya, modelling phrases, scaffolding, differentiating, and using visual resources. The experiences of the educator participants revealed that pupils' English vocabulary and receptive and expressive language developed through extended dialogue, reading aloud, retelling the story text, sequencing, role play, and language-integrated subject content activities.

The educator participants' experiences revealed that they expanded and stretched the pupils' independent learning by planning and providing various opportunities and resources with a social environment to develop bilingual language vocabulary with the interaction of their parents, family, educators, and peers on their journey to independent learning. The educator participants' experiences revealed a collaborative support model they used, referred to as a *parent-school collaborative support model (PSCM).*

The early years' educator participants responded positively to the PSCM, which encouraged them to not only support their pupils' bilingual learning but to involve parents in the pupils' bilingual learning, which they felt was instrumental in helping pupils gain confidence through positive learning experiences, and shared opportunities to reach their full potential. The early years' educator participants identified the critical role of the school's Arabic-speaking multilingual counsellor for further effective collaboration with parents to support them with the social and emotional needs that their children might have. The finding revealed that educators find the model a positive contribution to bilingual learning as it involves the school, educators, and parents in a trio of collaborations towards pupils' independent learning success. The finding revealed that educators emphasised that the parents and the school work together to collect enough information regarding the student and the barrier(s) they might experience to bilingual learning. The educator participants indicated that collaborating with parents to support pupils' bilingual learning through essential guidelines, is necessary. According to the findings, educator participants' guidelines included: 1) Liaising with parents and providing support; 2) Liaising with speech and language therapists with parents'

consent; 3) Engaging with the school's counsellor; 4) Parent-Educator-Conferences (PEC): Meeting with parents to compile a support plan for bilingual language development; 5) Compiling an Individual Education Plan (IEP) with the parents. The findings revealed that the IEP included pupils' strengths, areas of difficulty, level of support, strategies and targets to develop bilingual literacy and that parents are included fully at every stage.

Educator participants raised concerns about pupils' language development, how parents are informed, and how information was gathered and shared with parents. The findings revealed that the educator participants ensured transparency through regular communication with parents and involved the Arabic school counsellor in supporting parents. At the same time, they assured solutions to develop pupils' language skills. The findings revealed that educators involved parents in a shared learning approach and provided them with audio recordings. The recording included a collaborative voice recording of the English and Arabic educators to understand the questions and tasks related to the children's literature, "Harry and the Bucket Full of Dinosaurs*," for instance.*

The findings revealed that educators took parents' feedback regarding the gifted and talented pupils and reviewed the IEPs and support provided to enhance their skills. The educator participants said parents were provided with additional applications where the gifted and talented pupils could read or listen to children's literature in both languages. The findings indicated that educators positively responded to the development of the gifted and talented pupils' oral fluency, as it was mentioned that they engaged with confidence.

The educator participants implied that where parents were regularly involved in pupils' language development, external support services were not necessary for pupils with a slight delay in language development. The educator participants revealed that they were encouraged to follow the PSCM guidelines to ensure appropriate support was provided to pupils and parents to develop pupils' bilingual language skills. The findings revealed that parents were requesting support with their children's bilingual learning, and the early years educators supported them through routine communication emails, after-school quick discussions, and the registered application for the early years department and messaging.

The early years' educator participants' experiences highlighted that these messages to parents included feedback regarding sessions and the weekly strengths and weaknesses. The early years' educator participants' experiences revealed that in line with current good practice, the first wave of bilingual language support was provided by them via effective differentiation, awareness of learning preferences, and a range of teaching strategies during circle time and ADEK bubbles with a variety of CLIL tasks to guide pupil to independent

learning. Additionally, the educator participants' experiences identified that the PSCM provided them, the pupils, and parents equal access to the curriculum by making reasonable adjustments to cater to each student's bilingual needs.

The experiences of the early years' educator participants revealed that all students had access to the bilingual curriculum, which was broad, balanced, and effective in involving parents and pupils to encourage independent learning.

The findings revealed that educators who utilised the PSCM model modified the curriculum and differentiated instruction for the monolingual Arabic early years pupils to support their language learning pace. The educator participants disclosed that modification occurred through their teaching methods, learning materials, CLIL, and pupils' learning environment. The findings further identified that accommodations made to some of the pupil's language learning do not indicate a change in the language curriculum, strands and standards, audio equipment, use of iPads, visual A4 storyboard cards, and children's literature. The early years' educator participants' revealed that modifications altered the curriculum, such as when children's literature was planned with shorter texts, tasks with fewer instructions, and additional support provided by the classroom assistants. The findings related to support and involvement of parents in pupils' language learning through the PSCM model used by the educator participants further indicated that parents were provided with clear information about the impact of support and how they could be involved in their children's language learning journey.

The early years' educator participants indicated they reflected positively towards independent learning because pupils' self-exploration eventually became child-independently-led, self-exploratory, inquiry-based, and interactive learning within a resourceful social environment.

The early years educator participants showed they felt responsible for nurturing and challenging pupils during language-integrated science activities in the social environment. They felt that pupils' collaborative and shared practices and their shared language Arabic and English vocabulary within the translingual free play and science-related activities have a positive outcome. The findings revealed that educators encouraged critical thinking skills and pupils' problem-solving skills through self-exploration and activities involving the integrated language and science strands and vocabulary in engineering, such as "push and pull, fast and slow, measuring, and prediction." The early years' educator participants also revealed

that pupils' curiosity was awakened through free play with water and sand resources. Pupils explored mathematical concepts through vocabulary such as "space, shape and number, full, empty, more, less, even, odd, high, low, sieve, funnel, surface, waterwheel, slide, besides, below, above, next to, larger, smaller, last, and first" where vocabulary was shared, through peer collaboration, translanguaging and English children's literature.

The findings about the impact of the social environment on Arabic early years bilingual language acquisition revealed that educators had positive experiences using children's literature and integrated content language integration through activities where pupils experienced a sense of social togetherness.

In the early years, educator participants experienced togetherness in role-playing and pupils' interactive engagement, leading to independence, self-confidence, and self-exploration, essential for second language acquisition, communication, and oral dialogue. The early years' educator participants disclosed that role-play costumes and open-ended props can trigger ideas, open language, and conversation. The educator participants stated that it provides a source of independence, oral communication, language development, and literacy.

The literature on language development states that language acquisition and development are continuous and interactive in a social context. The educator participants engaged in the BLC with CLIL at the school in Abu Dhabi revealed that pupils learn a language by playing with it independently, trying unfamiliar words, involving themselves in dialogue with others, and practising what they have learned in new and existing ways.

The **5th** phenomenological theme explored the early years educator participants' interpretations of the Arabic culture and the influence of parents' interaction and support on pupils' development of English as a second language. The educator participants had ambiguous perceptions and different experiences regarding the support provided by the parents to their early-years children concerning English. In addition, they were not all in agreement regarding communication with parents, specifically with communication from parents who were (Arabic) monolingual speakers.

The early years' educator participants were experiencing monolingual parents not being fully involved in the early years pupils' English development. The early years educator participants revealed that some parents were not fully showing responsibility towards their Arabic early-years pupils' progress in the English language when educators were applying the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum with CLIL, which might be due to a language barrier. Some

educator participants who were fluent in Arabic revealed that a few parents were reluctant to communicate in English if they knew the educators could speak Arabic. Therefore, it seemed they avoided speaking in the English Language when educators were bilingual.

The early years educator participants revealed that they experienced that where parents were more involved, children felt supported, had more confidence, and showed increased English vocabulary usage. The opposite was experienced and reported where parents were not fully supporting their children with English language activities and vocabulary.

The educators felt that parents are integral to a pupil's language acquisition and understanding of a second language and influence their pupils' vocabulary growth. Some educators mentioned that bilingual programs would be more successful if they had parents' support through a parent-educator partnership. Other educators mention that mothers are more involved early than fathers. Some educators identified several factors that influence and hinder the interaction of parents with them. One of the factors included limited English proficiency, which they thought triggered parents' unresponsiveness and misinterpreting messages in English. They felt that supporting parents through audio and translated messaging and written correspondence in Arabic would help parents familiarise themselves with the education system and pupils' language learning.

A second factor mentioned by the educator participants is a cultural mismatch," where the school adopted practices from foreign countries, such as reading bedtime pupils' literature. Even though encouraging parents to read to their children is imperative in enhancing pupils' vocabulary, social-emotional and cognitive development, and their ability to engage in dialogue, the educator participants experienced that it is not easy for Arabic parents. A cultural mismatch was observed in the early years, and educators' interpretations of Arabic mothers' reading of bedtime stories to their children reflected an anxious response. The findings indicated that Arabic children's literature was published in the More Standard Arabic (MSA) or "fusHa", which makes it difficult for Arabic mothers to translate to the spoken Arabic "'a'amiya" when expected to read bedtime stories. The early years' educator participants revealed that Arabic mothers face many challenges when reading stories to their children. One such challenge announced is the difference between the spoken and written Arabic language, a situation referred to as "language diglossia." Language diglossia is defined as the "differentiation of two varieties of the same language used in different domains and for distinct purposes." Arabic is a typical "language diglossia," in which Arabic speakers within a specific community simultaneously use two varieties of Arabic, one for everyday communication and

the other for writing and formal interactions. The educator participants' experiences have shown that due to the difference between the spoken, written, and formal interactions of Arabic (diglossia), mothers have difficulty reading to children in Arabic, and educators face difficulty reading and explaining the children's literature in Arabic from fusHa to a'amiya, spoken Arabic. Therefore, the educator participants' experiences revealed that they used a'amiya to encourage speaking, retelling stories, and inspiring conversation. The findings on the sociocultural environment revealed that children grow up speaking a'amiya, but it is not commonly related to social class. The research findings showed that f*usHa* is used in children's literature and writing and is uniform across the Arabic-speaking world, with some dialects of a'amiya that differ across nationality-based Arabic-speaking communities. In this separation of the Arabic language, a pupil's mother tongue is a'amiya Arabic. What Arabic children read is based on *fusHa,* acquired only at school; therefore, there is a struggle with the bilingual literacy curriculum where Arabic educators read translated stories aloud. Arabic literature and pupils' books in the Arab world are written almost exclusively in fusHa Arabic, a language children can only master through formal teaching. The literature identified that in a socio-cultural environment where children do not grasp the meaning of *fusHa* Arabic, parents must focus on one of two techniques. The first technique is to read the story text in *fusHa* Arabic and respond to translations and explanations in spoken *a'amiya,* avoiding reading and translating and directly translating the story into spoken *a'amiya.* However, the educator participants reveal that this is not a solution, as children want to repeat and retell stories, and this method may confuse them. The findings further revealed that the Arabic multilingual educators made use of the translation of the *fusHa,* Arabic, into spoken a'amiya for the children's literature related to the BLC with CLIL. The early years' educator participants disclosed that Arabic themes encouraged dialogue and conversation, which are necessary for language development in the Arabic early years' classrooms. The educator participants further identified that as formal Arabic is not transmitted orally from generation to generation, home and family literacy practices are crucial to creating functional bilingual, bi-literate pupils. The literature identified growing concerns about parental involvement and the impact of culture, involvement, and responsibility on the independent learning of English. The educator participants felt that Arabic cultural differences and that parents might not speak English fluently might indicate a reluctance to feel responsible for their pupils' English acquisition. Some of the educators mentioned that it was essential to understand the culture of their pupils and parents first. They also said that continuous communication and appreciation for parents' efforts, including supporting them with an understanding of the bilingual curriculum, was essential.

It is evident through the findings that educators viewed parents' engagement and support to have impacted not only the academic performance of children but also their behaviour, attendance, social competence, and pupil motivation. The experiences of the educator participants showed that a positive relationship between the school and the home settings consistently produces positive involvement and academic and behavioural outcomes. The findings related to the educator participants revealed a critical element in parental involvement, such as the parent-school partnership. The early years' educator participants disclosed that such relationships may avoid misinterpretations and miscommunication between educators and parents, including working with parents from different cultures. The findings revealed that in parental involvement, the school, the family, and the community could collaborate to influence children's development and language learning. The educator participants' experiences identified the need to support families with parent-and-child relationships and set home conditions that support pupils at all age levels. The research findings indicated that the educators' disposition towards parents' involvement and engagement reflected mixed perceptions and experiences. The early years educators reflected positively towards the engagement of Arabic early-years pupils' parents in their children's homework, where they volunteered in reading projects and themes of occupation at the school. However, a few educator participants identified that some parents were reluctant to communicate with the educators in English when they knew that they were also proficient in Arabic.

The early years' educator participants expressed that some of them who were proficient in English struggled to communicate with only Arabic-speaking parents. The educator participants revealed issues with monolingual parents' English proficiency and resistance to communicating with educators in English. Subsequently, they found that pupils with monolingual parents seemed to lack support with English language vocabulary and homework from their parents. The educator participants experienced that the parents Google translated many messages that were misinterpreted. The educator participants believed that misinterpretations can be avoided by positive educator-parent relationships characterised by mutual acceptance, understanding, warmth, trust, respect, and cooperation.

The multilingual early years educator participants disclosed they needed professional development, including opportunities to improve their communication levels with parents and pupils. They include the need to empower parents by inviting them to be more involved in their pupils' bilingual activities. The findings based on early years educator participants' experiences asserted that most Arabic mothers' contributions and engagement in their

Children's English learning were positive. However, a few educators experienced that when Arabic mothers were asked to contribute or engage in mini projects, such as reading stories on *"World Book Day"* or visiting the school as a speaker to talk about occupations, Arabic culture in the U.A.E. National Day, or being involved in *"My identity environmental initiates"* such as saving water, electricity and saving animals, not all parents reached out to be engaged.

The findings indicated that the educators' disposition towards parents' responsibility and accountability reflected a positive but limited involvement in their pupils' learning, possibly due to language barriers. The early years' educator participants disclosed that their initiative to invite parents to participate in events and activities encouraged other Arabic parents to participate in school activities with their children. The educator participants also identified that the involvement of parents was one of many factors influencing pupils' language development in the early years. The study findings were based on the educator participants' experiences, which revealed that the role of a mother includes physical and emotional development. The educator participants reported that the role of the mother in language development should not be underestimated. They elaborated that there is a special connection that young children have with their mothers through the mother's voice, which was identified as a child's first encounter with language.

Finally, the **6th** phenomenological theme explored the early-year educators' experiences with CLIL, Content Language Integrated Learning, and planned activities. It investigated the influence of CLIL on English language development. The research findings based on the educator participants' experiences showed that educators' disposition towards implementing CLIL activities reflected a positive increase in early-year Arabic pupils' vocabulary in both languages. In addition, the educator participants' experiences reported that CLIL activities encouraged English language communication and dialogue, which also developed 21st-century skills, such as critical thinking and problem-solving.

The early-years educators' experiences have shown that the school invested in iPad and Edu-Lego, used in centres and stations in the early years' classrooms. The findings based on the educator participants' interpretations revealed that the resources for technology, such as Edu-Lego and iPads, positively contributed to the early years pupils' language integration and learning interactive tools to enhance language vocabulary and critical thinking. The early years' educator participants mentioned that early-year pupils were taught sequencing, estimation, and critical thinking skills through technology.

Although there is limited research conducted on the impact of CLIL on language development in the early years, the research findings based on educator participants' interpretations concerning the Bilingual Literacy Curriculum with Content Language Integrated Learning through activities indicated a positive increase in pupils' vocabulary and oral fluency. Based on the educator participants' experiences with the BLC with CLIL, the findings positively impacted early-years pupils' development through meaningful hands-on resources that included language and subject-content-integrated activities. The educator participants revealed that if pupils could communicate and have a dialogue with each other, it would contribute to their language development.

The findings based on the early years educator participants' experiences revealed that the foundation for integrated learning is in the early years. They positively responded to integrating subject content and language through hands-on activities in the language, math, science, art, and technology centres and stations. They reported that pupils gained understanding through language, communication, observation, interaction, questioning, investigations, and experimentation with integrated content. The educator participants reported that pupils were provided with iPads in the classroom in the technology centre, where they listened to children's literature with headphones. The educator participants also indicated that pupils were provided with digital activities related to the children's literature and digital instructions to create or design an object with the Edu-Lego. Educator participants expressed that the online links pupils received to listen to English and Arabic children's literature at home positively contributed to extending vocabulary in both languages. Based on educator participants' experiences, CLIL provides pupils with many opportunities to gain confidence and experiment with bilingual language through emergent translanguaging and hands-on activities planned with integrated language and subject content.

Finally, the findings based on the experiences of early years educator participants, which were discussed through the six phenomenological themes, concluded that CLIL provided an essential philosophy to learning. The findings highlighted that it addresses Arabic early years pupils' literacy needs and encourages them to be engaged in language learning by integrating children's literature, learning through play, and interactive activities that lead to creative thinking and problem-solving.

The following section concludes the study by explaining the study's limitations and recommendations and provides a conclusion for the study conducted.

Chapter 6

This chapter includes four sections: 1) The Discussion, 2) the study's Limitations, 3) the Recommendations, and 4) The Conclusion. The first section includes a discussion based on the findings in Chapter 4, similar research findings, and possible implications of these findings for the future. The second section had the limitations of the current case study based on the sample, the instrument used, and the procedures implemented; the next section incorporated recommendations for future research studies; the last section is a brief conclusion.

6.1 Limitations

This study concludes by acknowledging some of its limitations. The small sample population for the study might have been limited in terms of the single case study approach and the number of educator participants interviewed and pupil participants observed. One of the critical limitations of the findings presented in this thesis is the lack of empirical research evidence involving many schools' subordinates within the emirate of Abu Dhabi during COVID-19 restrictions. The qualitative single case study could have had more impact on education reform initiatives within the UAE if it had embarked on longitudinal cohort interviews and observations with principals, educators, parents, and pupils of multiple private schools with Emirati early years pupils. Such an endeavour certainly can be costly, time-consuming, and presumably too demanding, but it is possible if research teams could be utilised to embark on such a research journey to create a feasible procedure to overcome such problems. Nonetheless, the present study has highlighted the role of early years educators in promoting age-appropriate bilingual pedagogy and experiences that can give insight into the factors that affect pupils' bilingual language development.

Additionally, the interview responses by educator participants could have been impacted by the COVID-19 restrictions on distancing between the interviewees and interviewer and the wearing of masks that could have affected a clear understanding of responses due to the different dialects of the multilingual educator participants during the interviews.

The study confirms clear ethical procedures such as informed consent, privacy, anonymity, and confidentiality were applied, with a transparent relationship between the participants and the interviewer and the interviewer's position of reflexivity. However, educator participants could have felt coerced to participate (Yardley 2008) due to the interviewer's leadership position at the school where the research occurred. Subsequently, the trustworthiness and plausibility of the research findings were addressed by thick descriptions, triangulation, member reflections, and conclusions on how the findings were interpreted, further emphasising the credibility of this research study.

6.2 Recommendations

Bilingual Education in the U.A.E. faces several challenges. This study provided several recommendations to address these needs. The study recommended that UAE ECE and MoE policymakers include improved requirements for early years educators in their licensing system that stipulates the minimum qualification to be a bachelor's degree in early childhood development. Consequently, well-qualified educators in the early years will bring a wealth of knowledge and skills that will benefit young pupils. Additionally, it is recommended that UAE ECE invest in early years educators' professional development to equip these professionals with knowledge and pedagogical strategies to design a bilingual curriculum appropriate for Arabic early years.

Another recommendation that UAE ECE policymakers could consider is including bilingual professionals in early years of education in collaborative discussions and decision-making processes concerning designing a descriptive bilingual curriculum framework for early years education.

The study further recommended that private schools adopt a bilingual curriculum that includes age-appropriate and culturally aligned translated children's literature to address the linguistic needs of Emirati early years pupils. Future qualitative research could extend Arabic parents' cultural practices and beliefs about learning through play and the benefit of children's translated literature for early Emirati children's bilingual literacy skills.

Another critical recommendation identified by the study is for school principals and multilingual educators to establish positive school-parent partnerships where pupils, parents, and stakeholders support and enhance Arabic early years pupils' bilingual language development.

The study further recommended that multilingual early years educators meet the needs of pupils by adjusting the pace of learning and by identifying and adopting different pedagogy that promotes bilingual literacy in Arabic early years. The recommendations include that educators consider Arabic early years pupils' spoken language, a'amiya, as an emergent-translingual approach and strategy to teach a second language and include Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in early years classrooms to support translanguaging and pupils' bilingual vocabulary and oral fluency.

Finally, the study calls for further research that explores emergent-translingual approaches in Arabic's early years to benefit bilingual literacy efforts across U.A.E. public and private kindergartens.

6.3 Conclusion

We have arrived at a valuable time that holds the hopeful prospect of enhancing the language developmental trajectories of Emirati early years pupils for future bilingual language success. It is well documented that bilingual language success is critical in UAE early childhood education.

The study indicates that Emirati early years pupils have the potential to become fully bilingual when they are engaged in an age-appropriate, bilingual curriculum with culturally aligned children's literature in a semi-structured social environment.

The study implies that a sociocultural environment that values and fosters simultaneous exposure to English and Arabic, where pupils in the early years can develop similar literacy and oral proficiency levels, adds value to bilingual education. A desirable and ethical goal for early years institutions in the UAE is to provide a bilingual curriculum where Emirati culture and identity, Arabic spoken language, and hands-on language and subject content-integrated learning are included to improve pupils' bilingual skills.

Although there is much more to be done in the UAE concerning bilingualism in Arabic early years, the study indicates the need for the UAE Early Childhood Education and policymakers to rethink the integration of English and Arabic in innovative ways. The study identifies multiple solutions that include educators' purposeful instruction, scaffolding, modelling, and identifying and presenting Emirati early years pupils with a quality bilingual curriculum built on age-appropriate children's literature, integrated subject content and text, and a variety of hands-on resources and collaborative peer and group activities that can engage them in dialogue and encourage them to be confident bilingual users without losing the value of their Arabic language and culture.

In a world of escalating complexities and contradictory demands, early years educators must keep up with current and improved bilingual and multilingual literacy practices and policy changes, challenging their integrity and professional identity. The study ascertains that educators' experiences, professional development and training, teaching strategies, involvement in curriculum design and decision-making processes and parent engagement impact bilingual language development in early childhood education.

Finally, the study suggested that stakeholders, school principals and kindergartens in the UAE can contribute to bilingualism in early childhood education by investing in a bilingual

curriculum with a Content Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) pedagogy and an emergent translanguaging philosophy to enhance bilingual literacy amongst Emirati early years pupils.

The study indicates it can add value to Emirati pupils' literacy development by encouraging dialogue in both languages through an emergent translanguaging approach to strengthen bilingual oral fluency. The study further implies that emergent translanguaging in the bilingual literacy curriculum can add value to Emirati pupils' understanding of English vocabulary by connecting the Arabic-spoken language a'amiya with English vocabulary taught through translated and culturally aligned children's literature. Further research is recommended in early childhood, where a Bilingual Literacy Curriculum is taught through a'amiya as an emergent translanguaging approach.

 The UAE's linguistic and multiculturally diverse desert landscape identifies Arabic diglossia as complex, while it reflects English, the global language in the country's history and citizens' everyday lives, as likely to remain pre-eminent as lingua franca for the ascertainable future. It is, therefore, significant that UAE policymakers, school principals, educators, and parents reduce the linguistic barriers in the UAE bilingual arena and make English more accessible in Emirati early childhood education.

The study recognises that being bilingual in the early years is more than just adding two languages to a pupil's repertoire; it prepares them to be proficient and fit future local and global university language requirements. To achieve such goals, the study showed that having a strong connection, a united interaction between English, a'amiya, and translanguaging is desirable to support the bilingual language development and oral fluency of all Emirati early years' pupils.

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Appendices

Appendix A

1.1 MoE English Manual (UAE policy regulation on female educators in early years)

1.2 The Bilingual Language and Literacy rubric).

Institutions Compliance Inspection Manual

for Early Childhood Education

2018

STANDARD 1	
Organisation and management	
Domain	**Elements**
1.5 **Accounting and** **finance system**	1.5.1 There is a transparent accounting system in place that includes a record of all finance payments and receipts. 1.5.2 There is a Ministry of Human Resources and Emiratisation approved staff payroll system that includes wage protection. 1.5.3 The Ministry of Education has approved the initial fee structure and any subsequent increases.
1.6 **UAE social &** **cultural norms**	1.6.1 Only female staff are employed.[4] 1.6.2 Children participate and celebrate UAE National events. 1.6.3 Muslim children are not obliged to attend, or prepare for non-Islamic religious ceremonies. 1.6.4 Complies with religious and national holidays and the dates are listed in the schedule of annual holidays.
1.7 **Child grouping**	1.7.1 All children attending are the legal age permitted for admission to ECE Institutes. 1.7.2 Children are grouped according to their age in any variation.
1.8 **Staff to Child** **Ratio**	1.8.1 The staff to child ratio meets regulations and does not consider any administrative, cleaning, security or other non-qualified staff. ▪ 1:4 for children aged birth to one year. ▪ 1:5 for children aged 1 year to less than 2 years. ▪ 1:8 for children aged 2 year to less than 3 years. ▪ 1:10 for children aged 3 year to 4 years. 1.8.2 Arrangements are in place to maintain the minimum requirement required during staff absences/leave.

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(4): Employed staff directly involved in supervising the children.

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Early Years Bilingual English Language and Literacy with CLIL
Curriculum Standards Rubric for term 1,2 and 3

Strand 1: Oral Language				
Code	Standard	1	2	3
FLL.1b	FLL1.b Sequencing and retelling stories in both languages	Support is needed when retelling a story and identifying the characters.	I can retell a story and identify the characters with some Arabic vocabulary and English .	I can retell a story in the correct order in English.
FL.1h	Follow simple one and two step oral directions	Follow no directions in English.	Follow one-step directions with support in English	Follow one- and two-step directions confidently in English.

Strand 2: Vocabulary				
Code	Standard	1	2	3
FLL.2c	Use expanding vocabulary of language, science, math, technology and art to express ideas, feelings and needs in both languages using emergent-translanguaging	No response and does not express feelings, needs and ideas.	Uses sufficient vocabulary to express feelings, needs and ideas, however uses Arabic vocabulary to support during activities and circle time.	Uses expanding vocabulary to express feelings, needs and ideas and with confidence in English languages during activities and circle time. .

Strand 3: Phonological Awareness				
Code	Standard			
FLL3.e	Can participate in a simple rhyme in English	Responds physically to music eg facial expressions, mouth movements, moving arms or legs, bouncing, shuffling	Physically interprets different genres of music - children often move and express themselves differently to different genres.	Independently moving to music-understand instructions in both languages

Strand 4: Letter knowledge and early word recognition				
Code	**Standard**			
FLL.4c	Recognize most of the sounds taught in English Arabic is separate	I can identify and point to the sounds.	I can tell you some /most of the sounds I have learnt.	I can confidently say all the sounds I have learnt in English.

Strand 5: Print and book awareness				
Code	**Standard**			
FLL.5f	Turn pages one at a time from the front to the back of a book	I can turn the pages of the book	I can turn the pages without skipping any	I can follow the lines from left to right in English and right to left in Arabic.

Strand 6: Writing				
Code	**Standard**			
FLL.6c	Writes most of the sounds taught in both languages	I can trace /write sounds with help	I can copy independently	I can write sounds taught in English independently
FLL.6d	Write name independently	I can identify and trace my name	I can identify and copy my name .	I can write my name independently
KR6.b	Identify 5 digraphs (sh,th,ch,ng,nk) English	I can point to the digraphs	I can point and say the digraphs sound	I can recognize special friends and read them in words
K.R.3.f	Blending simple words (CVC) English	I can point and say 3 sounds	I can Fred talk and read words with teachers help	I can Fred talk and read words independently

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Appendix B.

1.1 Five-Step Bilingual Literacy Initiative: An Early Years Developmental Approach

through Children's Literature and CLIL

1.2 Jack and the Beanstalk strands and standards

Five-Step Bilingual Literacy Initiative

An Early Years' Developmental Approach through

Children's Literature and CLIL

**Step 5
Apply
Knowledge
Oral fluency**

**Step 4
Demonstrate
Knowledge**

**Step 3
Display
understanding**

**Step 2
Responding to
others**

**Step 1
Listening
Attentively
to the story**

Participating

Participating in conversation, teacher's **questioning and repetition of** phrases, and vocabulary, practising receptive language development

Engaging

in oral expressions, encourage talking, use short phrases, and teach vocabulary to **identify characters** and happenings in the story (sequencing). **Practising and repetition Repair-and-Talk-** Teacher-led practising, **questioning and repetition; emergent-translanguaging**

Understanding
Display understanding of the story and bilingual vocabulary by **retelling** the story, **using verbal phrases** and visual pictures. Use **Expressive language** through CLIL activities and **role play**; **Utilize** peer and teacher support. Emergent-translanguaging: Moving in and out of both languages. Practicing. Student-led, **Teachers-led, and questioning**

Explanation

Demonstrate knowledge through the use of vocabulary **and questioning. Explain the story through simple dialogue, role-play, retelling, and explanations in both languages. Use story cards, visual and auditory memory, story sacks, and picture drawings to explain the vocabulary, characters, and** story sequence. **Individual demonstration of vocabulary; Independent use of language**

Application

Apply the vocabulary taught with confidence; use sentence phrases in other short conversations and dialogue. Use CLIL activities to apply the vocabulary and sentence phrases taught. **Draw connections between the vocabulary taught in literature and the subject content language** in science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics. **Recognise vocabulary and apply vocabulary** and story sequencing through listening activities; engage in audio-recorded children's literature on electronic devices; iPads

Jack and the beanstalk strands and standards

For example, during the planning for the unit on Jack and the Beanstalk, the following subject content strands were included in the activities for language literacy integration:

Jack and the Beanstalk With CLIL	Early Years Language and Literacy	Early Years Mathematics	Early Years Science	Early Years Art and design	Early Years Technology and Design
Unit 4 Theme 1	ELL1a, ELL1b, ELL1c, ELL1d ELL1e	EM1a, EM1c, EM1d	ES1a, ES1b, ES1c	EA1b, EA1c, EA1e,	ET1a, ET1b, ET1d, ET1e

Appendix C

UNIVERSITY of STIRLING

University of Stirling
Cottrell 3B1
Stirling
FK9 4LA

08/03/2021

Dear Antoinette

Ethics Application Form : English Language acquisition through bilingual literacy initiatives in an Early Years Arabic environment. A phenomenological approach to investigating learning 0474

Thank you for your submission of the above ethics application and subsequent amendments.

The ethical approaches of this project have been approved and you can now proceed with your project. The Panel noted 2 points that you may wish to address:

- On the Early Years Teachers Consent Form and the Deputy Principal Consent Form, the words 'Suggested Text' still appear on the last item to be initialled. You may want to delete this.
- The dates on the various forms indicate a start date of yesterday (7th March). You may want to change these

Please note that should any of your proposal change, a further amendment submission will be necessary.

If you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Panel by email to ethics@stir.ac.uk

Yours sincerely,

General University Ethics Panel

LETTER OF CONSENT

To Whom It May Concern,

I,

Chairman of the   and the lawful owner of

situated in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates,

grant **Antoinette Charmaine Brown** employed as the Headteacher (Principal Director) of the school, and

a final year Education Decorate student at the University of Stirling in the United Kingdom,

the consent to conduct qualitative research on English Language acquisition through bilingual literacy

initiatives at the school during the academic time with students during the month of March 2021.

Antoinette C. Brown will further obtain parents' and teachers' consent for the research in classrooms.

Any questions regarding this consent letter can be directed to the undersigned at:

E-mail address:

Telephone number:

Signature:

Date: February 25th, 2021

UNIVERSITY of STIRLING

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Antoinette C. Brown January 12th, 2021

Topic: Early Years' educators' interpretations of a bilingual literacy curriculum implemented in Content Language Integrated (CLIL) classrooms in the United Arab Emirates: A phenomenological approach to investigating learning.

Interview Questions Teachers

Appendix (A) Teachers' semi-structured interview questions (audio recorded)

1. Please tell me about your experience teaching predominantly Arabic Speaking Early Years students in the U.A.E.
2. What role does the Arabic Language play in an Early Years English Second Language Classroom?
3. What strategies and methods do you believe work best in developing English literacy in Early Years?
4. Are there any resources that you implement that promote English language in Early Years?
5. How does the bilingual literacy approach benefit your teaching and students' learning in Early Years?
6. How do you measure successful English language in the Early Years?
7. What role does the social environment and social learning play in the teaching of English Language vocabulary?
8. How do you encourage your Arabic speaking parents to develop their children's English language skills in Early Years?
9. How does CLIL learning impact English language in an Early Years classroom?
10. What role does the English children's literature play in developing speaking and listening skill in Early Years?

Appendix (B) Informal Questions pupils OBSERVATION

Questions	Anecdotal notes and comments
1. Can you re-tell the story?	
2. Tell me about the picture that you drew?	

1
Antoinette Brown Proposal January 2021

14 February 2021

Dear Antoinette,

I hope you are well and that you are having a wonderful day.

I have reviewed your research questionnaire. You are on the right track but I would still like you to revise and structure your questions a but more effectively. Please consider the following:

1. The length of your questions needs to be revised.
2. You have some questions that contain two questions. Be concise with what you want to explore and what you want to ask.
3. If you are not concise it may cause some confusion for the participants and may result in transcription and data concerns later.
4. Remember that your aim is to explore "lived experiences" thus your questions need to follow a more open-ended, probing and or funnelling structure. Refrain from using "closed questions" as much as possible in qualitative research.

I would like to suggest that you have look at the following journals/articles to further explore questioning in research:

- Tully, P.M. (2014) *Research: Articulating Questions, Generating Hypotheses, and Choosing Study Designs.* The Canadian Journal of Hospital Pharmacy. *67(1), pp. 31–34.*
- file:///C:/Users/97156/Downloads/NMSUBO_OpenversusClose-EndedSurveyQuestions--February2016.pdf
- Weller SC, Vickers B, Bernard HR, Blackburn AM, Borgatti S, Gravlee CC, et al. (2018) *Open-ended interview questions and saturation.* PLoS ONE 13(6): e0198606.

    https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0198606

I would like to provide you with some snippets of additional advice if I may; (1) ensure that you manage your time effectively, I know that your work as an educational director takes up a lot of your time, but make time for your PhD journey. (2)Do not neglect reflection and review as this can be an asset to your data analysis process and can be a necessary philosophical endeavour in itself. (3)Lastly, ensure that your introduction to your thesis highlights the outline of the subsequent chapters, and make use of the research question throughout.

Your research seems interesting and very suited to your profession. I wish you nothing but the best with your PhD journey ahead.

Kind Regards,

Angelique

UNIVERSITY *of* STIRLING

Recruitment Guidance:

Teachers, Coordinators and Heads of Section (Early Years 4 years and 3 months old students)

Research Project Title and purpose

English Language acquisition through bilingual literacy initiatives in an Early Years Arabic environment. A phenomenological approach to investigating learning.

Introduction:

I am studying a Doctorate of Education degree at the University of Stirling in Scotland and I am conducting a final research study on the lived experiences of teachers in Early Years within their professional practices and their engagement in a bilingual English Language programs with **4 years and 3 months old students**. This research aims to bring together different perspectives of bilingual teaching in Early Years. In addition will aim to identify ways to support Early Years teachers' professional practices that will potentially bring transformational change within the institution and will contribute in identifying gaps within the teaching and learning of English literacy in an Arabic Early Years environment.

Invitation to participate

I would like your help with the research study by asking you to participate in an individual ten question interview. The interview will take approximately forty-five (45) minutes of your time and will be scheduled online or face-to-face as preferred, and at a time and date of your convenience between March 9th to March 23rd 2021.

1. **Where will the research take place?**

The face-to face interviews will take place on the premises of in Abu Dhabi in the school at a place of your choice where you feel safe and comfortable. The online interviews will take place through the Google Classroom meeting platform and will be scheduled at a time and date convenient for you.

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2. **What precautionary measures for the health and safety will be taken during the pandemic?**

For the face-to- face interviews, the researcher will provide the Human Resource Manager of Ajyal International School in Abu Dhabi, with a negative PCR COVID-19 test result as per the regulations stated by the U.A.E. Department of Health, before the face-to-face interview with you will take place and before entering your classroom. The researcher will wear a mask at all times and will keep to 1.5 metres social distancing. The researcher will wear disposable protective gloves during the class visits and will sanitize the allocated seating area when used.

3.**What precautionary measures will be taken for the protection of vulnerable children?**

The researcher will adhere to the U.A.E. and school's **Child Protection Policy,** and recognises the moral responsibility to create a safe and supportive environment for all students and to safeguard and promote their welfare at all times. The researcher will have proof of signed consent letters of your students' parents for the research study. The researcher will fully adhere to the school's protocols and consent to respectfully communicate with the students in your class for an informal conversation.

The conversations will take place with the students who have their parents' consent. This will take place during normal school hours from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. twice (2) a week over a period of two (2) weeks during March 9th to March 23rd, 2021, for 10 minutes each and will take place in your classroom, in your presence and in the presence of the Arabic teacher, the teacher assistant and the student's peers.

The visiting class schedule will be discussed with you and the Arabic teacher to be agreed upon. The visiting time and conversations with students with consent, will take place without disrupting your teaching schedule, your breaks or the students' snack time. The visiting time will include observing students during your English literacy story time as per your class time table.

4. **Will my interview be recorded?**

Your interview with the researcher will be **audio recorded only**. No video recordings will be made. Audio recordings will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be stored for 12 months and will then be erased. Your contact details will be kept confidential and will be fully anonymised by using a specific code.

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The data collected from the individual interview will be kept confidential when analysed and included in the research study. If it becomes necessary for the Ethics Review Board to review the research study records, information that can be linked to you, will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

The data resulting from your interview may be made available for future research, however, your personal data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with you, or with your participation in any part of the study.

5. Who can take part?

Coordinators and teachers in the Early Years Department of the school, including the Deputy Principal who is also the head of the Early Years Department, may participate. There is no age restriction for staff.

6. Timeframe for recruitment

This study aims to recruit participants between March 9th to March 11th, 2021.

Please NOTE:

This is a research study about English Language literacy development and your lived experience while teaching English literacy in an Arabic Early Years environment and does not involve or include any staff assessment, staff professional development or probationary assessment reports, or staff performance grading. There is no right or wrong responses involved.

Your participation is voluntary and will not impact any professional performance evaluation or decision by the senior management regarding your employment or decisions on your probation, if you are on probation.

Your relationship with the researcher is strictly professional and participation in the research study is completely voluntary and will not have any impact on your relationship with the researcher who is also the school's Head teacher and Director.

Due to your direct relationship with the researcher as your manager, you can choose not to participate or, if you do decide to participate, you can choose to stop participating at any time during the interview without having any penalties.

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7. Expenses/Payments

Participation in the research study is completely voluntary and there is no compensation.

As a token of my appreciation for your time and contribution toward this research study, a Carrefour gift voucher of AED 25 will be handed to you after the completion of the interview, if you choose to participate.

8. What are the risks involved in this study?

There are no foreseeable risks for you to participate in this study. You have the right to fully withdraw at any time. The research has no impact on your employment contract or relationships with any staff member whatsoever.

9. What are the possible benefits of my participation in this study?

The possible benefit of participation is that you will contribute to the data that will be collected to establish whether bilingual literacy programs with STEM activities, have the possibility to develop Early Years students' English Language conversation.

10. Do I have to participate?

No, you do not have to participate. Participation in this study is voluntary and confidential without having any impact on your employment history.

Please note that you may withdraw from participation in the interview at any time, and this will not affect your employment contract, staff performance evaluation, and will not impact your relationship with the staff and management at _____ in Abu Dhabi.

11. Who has reviewed this research project?

The ethical approaches of this project have been will take place by the University of Stirling General University Ethics Panel and Ethics Review Body. Additionally, the Chairman and licensed owner of the school, Mr. Nasser Mohamed Omeir Yousef Al Mheiri, gave his consent for the study to take place at the school.

Ethics Approval Reference: [GUEP 2021 0474 1552].

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12. Who do I have to contact if I choose to participate?

If you wish to participate, please email Antoinette Brown, at antoinette.brown@stir.ac.uk

For any further information on the research project, You may contact my supervisors, Dr. Elspeth McCarthy at elspeth.mccartney@stir.ac.uk and Dr. Kylie Bradfield at kylie.bradfield@stir.ac.uk.

Thank you for your consideration and support towards my research project.

Antoinette C. Brown

Doctorate of Education Researcher

University of Stirling

UNIVERSITY *of* **STIRLING**

Participant Consent Form (1) (Early Years Educators)

GUEP/NICR Approval Number [Insert]   Participant number [ ]

Research Project Title: English Language acquisition through bilingual literacy initiatives in an Early Years Arabic environment. A phenomenological approach to learning.

	Please initial box
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [09/08/2020] explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time during the study and withdraw my data within three days without giving a reason, and without any penalty. I understand that beyond three day' timeframe, when data analysis has started it may not be possible to remove my data from the study.	
I understand that my responses will be kept anonymous and I give permission for members of the research team to have access to my anonymised responses .	
I consent to being audio recorded.	
I understand how audio will be used in research outputs. I am aware that I will not be named in any research outputs but I could be identified by people I know through the stories I tell.	
I give permission to be quoted directly in the research publication without mentioning my name.	
I agree for research data collected in the study to be given to researchers, including those working outside the EU to be used in other research studies. I understand that any data that leave the research group will be fully anonymised so that I cannot be identified.	
I agree for my personal data to be kept in a secure database so I can be contacted about future studies.	
I understand that my General Practitioner (GP) will NOT be informed of my participation in this study. However, if the researcher has any concerns regarding information about me and/or any measurements that are taken as part of this research, I will be advised to contact my GP.	
SUGGESTED TEXT: I agree to take part in this study	

Name of Participant   **Signature:**

Date:

Name of Researcher: Antoinette C. Brown   **Signature:**

Date: 04/09/2020

Transcription: An example taken form a transcript: Responded Code **PA2**

26	"Even if they re-tell the story in Arabic, because that is what we want, the goal is building vocabulary
27	through stories, not necessary expressing yourself correctly in English."
28	"Well, I know that it is also something that I leant form Ms Louis, when you teaching a child
29	with autism for instance, we don't teach them grammatically correct English, because
30	they are three years old and do not understand grammar like other neuro-typical kids do."
31	"So, uh, < *pause* >, we teach them a phrase like "I want." I do not use the word "the" because "the"
32	is an article that we do not need at this moment."
33	"So, that might be, "I want mobile, I want red apple, I want blue shoe."
34	"So the phrase is there, so they can express their needs and wants and noun relationships for
35	children with limited vocabulary is important in the beginning with bilingual education."
36	"So you can give then short phrases to express themselves. "
37	"Instead of them pointing to things, teaching them the word and having a lot of pictures that is key."
38	"I put out pictures for them, and some of the kids will not be able to say "apple" for instance, but will
39	say the Arabic word "tafaha," so I will reinforce the English by saying, "Good job, tafaha, apple."
40	" One of the boys did not know which picture belongs to the word "lion", but he could make the
41	sound of the lion "roarrrrr." < *laughing out loud* >
42	"So I at least know that he knows the sound of a lion, so we put the sound and picture together so
43	that he will be able to recognize the picture of "lion."
44	"I think this was his way of communication."

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Parental Permission and information guide for Early Years Children Participation in Research

Research Project Title

English Language acquisition through bilingual literacy initiatives in an Early Years Arabic environment. A phenomenological approach to learning.

Introduction

Dear Parents,

The purpose of this document, is to provide you (as the parent of a prospective research study participant) with information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to let your child participates in the above-mentioned research study.

The researcher **Ms Antoinette Brown**, who will be performing the research, will describe the study to you and answer all your questions.

Please read the information below and ask any questions you might have before deciding whether or not to give your permission for your child to take part. If you decide to let your child be involved in this research study, this electronic form will be used to record your permission.

Purpose of the Study

If you agree, your child aged between (4 years and 3 months old), will be asked to participate in a research study where the researcher wants to investigate how students in the Early Years class, use the opportunities provided for them through English and Arabic literacy programs and STEM activities, to engage and communicate in English Language conversation.

The purpose of the research

Will a bilingual literacy program, structured around children's stories, and STEM activities, contribute to the development of expressive language and communication among Early Years students?

1. **What is my child going to be asked to do?**

If you allow your child to participate in this study, he/she will be asked to:

- Listen to a children's story read by his/her English and Arabic class teacher.
- Draw a picture of his/her interpretation of the story.
- Discuss the story with the researcher by answering the following two (2) questions:
- (1) Can you retell the story?

- (2) Can you tell me about the pictures you drew or the pictures you created? (through STEM activities)
- This is an informal discussion with your child about his/her interpretation of the story.
- The approach is informal and child-friendly through the use of children's stories and their expressions and interpretation thereof through drawings and (STEM) hands-on activities.

2. **Where will the research take place?**

The research with your child will take place **twice (2) a week** (1) over a period of three **(3) weeks during March 7th, 2021 to March 23rd, 2021,** in your child's classroom during regular school hours from 8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. and in the presence of your child's English teacher and the Arabic class teacher. Each session with your child will be no longer that 10 minutes each and will fit in the daily program and time table of your child's English and Arabic class teachers.

There will be no disruption of your child's normal teaching schedule.

3. **Please NOTE**: This is a research study about English Language literacy development and does not involve any assessment or identification or provision of a medical or therapeutic diagnosis or treatment. For your child. There is no right or wrong responses involved.
4. **COVID-19 precautionary measures for health and safety**

The researcher will provide the Human Resource Manager of Ajyal International School Al Falah in Abu Dhabi, with her vaccination card and negative PCR COVID-19 test result as per the regulations stated by the U.A.E. Department of Health before entering the class. The researcher will wear a mask at all times and will keep to social distancing. The researcher will adhere to the school's protocols when communicating with your child in his/her class. The visiting class schedule will be discussed with the class teachers to be agreed upon.

5. **Audio recording**

Your child's conversation with the researcher will be audio recorded. **There will be no video recordings made and no photographs of your child taken.** Any audio recordings will be stored securely and only the researcher will have access to the recordings. Recordings will be stored for 12 months and will then be erased. Your child's personal details will be kept confidential and will be fully anonymised by using a specific code.

6. **What are the risks involved in this study?**

There are no foreseeable risks for your child to participate in this study. Your child will be in the safe environment of his/her classroom in the presence of his teacher, teacher assistant and his peers during normal school hours. Person data will be kept confidential.

7. What are the possible benefits of this study?

The possible benefit of participation is that your child will contribute to the data that will be collected to establish whether bilingual literacy programs with STEM activities, have the possibility to develop Early Years students' English Language conversation.

8. Does my child have to participate?

No, your child's participation in this study is voluntary.

It will be appreciated if you could allow your child to participate.

Please note that you may withdraw your child from participation at any time, and this will not affect his/her or your relationship with the Ajyal International School Al Falah in Abu Dhabi staff or management.

9. What if my child does not want to participate?

In addition to your permission, your child must agree to participate in the study. If your child does not want to participate or is hesitant, he/she will not be included in the study and there will be no penalty. If your child initially agrees to be in the study they can withdraw at any time without any penalty.

10. Will there be any compensation/ payment for participation ?

Your child will not receive any payments, but will receive an English children's story book from the researcher, and a certificate for his/her participation in the research study after completion of the research study.

11. How will your child's privacy and confidentiality be protected if s/he participates in this research study?

Your child's privacy and the confidentiality of his/her personal data will be protected by the researcher through keeping it confidential and by fully anonymising his/her contact details and responses by a project protection code and the researcher will refer to him/her anonymously.

If it becomes necessary for the Ethics Review Board to review the research study records, information that can be linked to your child will be protected to the extent permitted by law.

The data resulting from your child's participation may be made available for future research, however, your child's data will contain no identifying information that could associate it with your child, or with your child's participation in any part of the study.

12. Whom to contact with further questions about the study?

Prior, during or after your participation you can contact the researcher Antoinette C. Brown at mobile number : 0567958849 or send an email to antoinette.brown@stir.ac.uk for any questions who might have.

This study has been reviewed and approved by The University of Stirling in Scotland's Ethics Review Board and the study number is **[STUDY NUMBER].**

The two supervisors involved with the researcher are: Dr. Elspeth McCarthy, senior supervisor, at elspeth.mccartney@stir.ac.uk and Dr. Kylie Bradfield at kylie.bradfield@stir.ac.uk

13. Consent Signatures

You are making a decision about allowing your child to participate in this research study. Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above and have decided to allow your child to participate in this informal research study.

If you later decide that you wish to withdraw your permission for your child to participate in the study, you may discontinue his or her participation at any time.

You will be given a copy of this document.

I give consent that my child may participate in this research study	Yes	No
I give consent that my child's conversation with the researcher can be audio recorded. I take note that there is no video recordings.	Yes	No

Full Name of Parent **Signature:**

Date: Name of Researcher: Antoinette C. Brown **Signature:**

Date: 07/03/2021

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Parents of Early Years Students, aged 4 years and 3 months Consent

GUEP/NICR Approval Number [Insert]   Participant number [ ]

Research Project Title: English Language acquisition through bilingual literacy initiatives in an Early Years Arabic environment. A phenomenological approach to learning.

Please initial box	
Although the researcher is a senior leadership manager within the school, I am not obligated to allow my child to participate in the research project.	
I confirm that my relationship with the school's manager is purely established as a parent of the school and will not influence the validity and reliability of the data collected during the research.	
I confirm that I have read and understood the information sheet dated [03/03/2021] explaining the above research project and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the project.	
I understand that my child (**aged 4 years and 3 months)** will not benefit directly from participating in this research and that the data collected during the research will not have an impact on my child's assessment result provided by the class teachers nor will have any impact on the school's report card results.	
I understand that my child's participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw my child at any time during the research study.	
I further understand that the data collected during the research, may be available for analysis and subsequent publication, and I provide my consent that this may take place.	
I understand that my child's name and responses will be kept anonymous and I give permission to the researcher to have access to my child's anonymised responses.	
I provide permission that my child may be quoted anonymously and directly in the research publication.	
I understand that any data that leaves the research study will be fully anonymised so that my child cannot be identified.	
I agree for my child's data to be kept in a secure database.	
The researcher has provided me with the contact details of the university and her contact information, should I have any questions or concerns regarding the research or data that was provided.	

Name of Parent   **Signature:**

Date:

Name of Researcher: Antoinette C. Brown   **Signature:**

Date: 07/05/2021

مرفق طيّه جميع المستندات ذات الصلة، بما في ذلك معلومات المشاركين والمستندات الخاصة بالموافقة الخطية والشفوية (إن وجدت) (انظر النماذج).

دليل توظيف المشاركين

1. عنوان مشروع البحث:

أنا طالبة ماجستير دكتوراه تخصص تربية في جامعة ستيرلنغ في اسكتلندا ، وأجري دراسة بحثية حول التجارب الحيّة للمعلمين في السنوات الأولى ضمن ممارساتهم المهنية ومشاركتهم في برامج اللغة الإنجليزية ثنائية اللغة التي تتضمن STEM. يهدف هذا البحث إلى الجمع بين وجهات نظر مختلفة للتعليم ثنائي اللغة في السنوات الأولى

2. دعوة للمشاركة:

أرغب بمساعدتكم في هذه الدراسة البحثية من خلال مشاركتي في مقابلة فردية تتكوّن من عشرة أسئلة.

تستغرق المقابلة حوالي (45) دقيقة وسيتم تحديدها بناء على الموعد مسبق يناسبكم. سيتم حفظ تسجيل صوتي للمقابلة كما سيتم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها وإدراجها في دراستي البحثية.

هذه المشاركة اختيارية. يمكنكم عدم المشاركة أو التنحي في أي وقت في حال رغبتم بعدم إكمال المقابلة.أقدر أقدر مساهمتكم في دراستي البحثية، وتعبيراً عن امتناني سأقوم بإهداء قسائم شرائية من كارفور كعربون تقديري.

3. الفئات التي يسمح لها بالمشاركة :

مدرّسي قسم المراحل الاولى المبكرة ونائب مدير مدرسة أجيال الدولية الفلاح - أبو ظبي.

لا توجد قيود عمرية للموظفين

4. الاطار الزمني للتوظيف

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توظيف المشاركين في الفترة من 14 أكتوبر إلى 30 أكتوبر 2020.

5. المصروفات / المدفوعات

هذه المشاركة اختيارية. يمكنكم عدم المشاركة أو التنحي في أي وقت في حال رغبتم بعدم إكمال المقابلة.أقدر مساهمتكم في دراستي البحثية، وتعبيراً عن امتناني سأقوم بإهداء قسائم شرائية من كارفور كعربون تقديري. (duplicated)

اسم الباحث / الطالب وضعهم وكليتهم. إذا كان يجب أيضًا تضمين اسم مشرف الطالب (UG و PGT و PGR) وتفاصيل الاتصال به

إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة، يرجى التواصل معي شخصاً أنطوانيت براون على antoinette.brown@stir.ac.uk.

لمزيد من المعلومات حول مشروع البحث ، يمكنك الاتصال بمشرفي ، الدكتور كايلي برادفيلد على kylie.bradfield@stir.ac.uk.

6. <u>من قام بمراجعة هذا المشروع؟</u>

تمت الموافقة على النهج الأخلاقية لهذا المشروع من خلال لجنة الأخلاقيات بجامعة ستيرلنغ العامة وهيئة مراجعة الأخلاقيات.

مرجع الموافقة الأخلاقية: [أدخل].

<u>7. كيفية المشاركة:</u>

للمشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية ، يرجى التواصل عبر : antoinette.brown@stir.ac.uk

أ)   انقر أو اضغط هنا لإدخال نص.

<u>نموذج موافقة المشارك (1) (معلمي السنوات المبكرة)</u>

رقم اعتماد GUEP / NICR [أدخل رقم المشارك]

عنوان مشروع البحث: اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال مبادرات محو الأمية ثنائية اللغة في بيئة عربية في السنوات الأولى. نهج ظاهري للتحقيق في التعلم. (معتمدة من قبل المشرفين).

	الرجاء قراءة التالي بتمعن وضع إشارة (√)
☐	بالرغم من أن الباحث هو يعمل في المدرسة بمنصب مدير ، إلا أنني لست ملزمًا بالمشاركة في البحث. في حالة عدم الامتثال ، فقد تأكدت من أن هذا لن يؤثر على تطوير الأداء المهني (PPD).
☐	أؤكد أن الباحث زميل عمل محترف وأن العلاقة المهنية لن تؤثر على صحة وموثوقية البيانات التي تم جمعها أثناء البحث.
☐	أؤكد أنني قد قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات المؤرخة [2020/08/09] التي تشرح مشروع البحث أعلاه وقد أتيحت لي الفرصة لطرح أسئلة حول المشروع.
☐	أدرك أنني لن أستفيد بشكل مباشر من المشاركة في هذا البحث وأنه ليس إلزاميًا تنفيذ مبادرة محو الأمية ثنائية اللغة داخل فصلي.
☐	أفهم أن مشاركتي طوعية و أنه يمكنني الانسحاب في أي وقت أثناء هذا البحث كما يمكنني سحب بياناتي في غضون ثلاثة أيام دون إبداء أسباب ودون أي عقوبة.
☐	أتفهم بأن المعلومات التي أقدمها يمكن استخدامها لأغراض التحليل والنشر في وقت لاحق ، وأوافق على حدوث ذلك.
☐	أتفهم بأن ردودي ستظل مجهولة المصدر وأعطي الإذن للباحث للوصول إلى إجاباتي مجهولة المصدر.
☐	أقر بأنه سيكون هناك تسجيل صوتي لردودي وأوافق على إجراء هذه المقابلة من أجل البحث.
☐	أنا على دراية كافية بإمكانية استخدام الصوت في مخرجات البحث، وأدرك أنه لن يتم ذكر اسمي في أي مخرجات بحثية ولكن يمكن التعرف علي من قبل الأشخاص الذين أعرفهم من خلال القصص التي أرويها.
☐	أنا أعطي الإذن بأن يتم استخدام المعلومات التي قمت بمشاركتها بشكل مجهول ومباشر في منشور البحث.
☐	أوافق على إعطاء بيانات البحث التي تم جمعها في الدراسة للباحثين ، بما في ذلك أولئك الذين يعملون خارج EU لاستخدامها في دراسات بحثية أخرى. أفهم أن أي بيانات صادرة من مجموعة البحث هي مجهولة الهوية والمصدر.
☐	أوافق على الاحتفاظ ببياناتي الشخصية في قاعدة بيانات آمنة حتى يتم الاتصال بي بشأن الدراسات المستقبلية.
☐	شاركني الباحث بمعلومات التواصل الخاصة به ، في حال كان لدي أي أسئلة أو مخاوف بشأن البحث أو البيانات التي تم توفيرها
☐	أؤكد أنني ومقدم البحث قد تواصلنا مع أولياء أمور المشاركين وحصلنا على الإذن اللازم على إجراء هذا البحث.

اسم المشارك:	التوقيع:	التاريخ:
اسم مقدم البحث: أنطوانيت براون	التوقيع:	التاريخ: 2020/09/04

ب)فقط إذا كانت هناك حاجة إلى إجراءات موافقة وتصريح إضافية

ج) صف الإجراءات الإضافية التي ستتبعها للحصول على موافقة من المشاركين و / أو الأطراف الثالثة (مثل الأذونات لإجراء أخذ الدراسات الميدانية).

نموذج موافقة المشارك (2) أولياء أمور طلاب السنوات المبكرة.

رقم اعتماد GUEP / NICR [أدخل رقم المشارك]

عنوان مشروع البحث: اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال مبادرات محو الأمية ثنائية اللغة في بيئة عربية في السنوات الأولى. نهج ظاهري للتحقيق

في التعلم.

	الرجاء قراءة التالي بتمعن وضع إشارة (√)
☐	على الرغم من أن الباحث هو مدير قيادي كبير داخل المدرسة ، إلا أنني لست ملزمًا بالسماح لطفلي بالمشاركة في مشروع البحث.
☐	أؤكد أن علاقتي بمدير المدرسة هي مجرد علاقة ولي أمر في المدرسة ولن تؤثر على صحة وموثوقية البيانات التي تم جمعها أثناء البحث
☐	أؤكد أنني قد قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات المؤرخة [2020/08/09] التي تشرح مشروع البحث أعلاه وقد أتيحت لي الفرصة لطرح أسئلة حول المشروع.
☐	أتفهم بأن طفلي لن يستفيد بشكل مباشر من المشاركة في هذا البحث وأن البيانات التي تم جمعها لن يكون لها تأثير على نتيجة تقييم طفلي التي يقدمها معلمو الفصل.
☐	أدرك أن مشاركة طفلي اختيارية ولي الحرية في سحب طفلي في أي وقت أثناء هذه الدراسة.
☐	أتفهم أنه من الممكن إتاحة البيانات التي تم جمعها أثناء البحث للتحليل والنشر اللاحق ، وأوافق على ذلك.
☐	أتفهم أن ردود طفلي ستظل مجهولة الهوية وأعطي الإذن للباحث في الوصول إلى ردود طفلي المجهولة المصدر.
☐	أوافق على أن يتم نقل معلومات عن طفلي بشكل مجهول في منشور البحث.
☐	أتفهم أن أي بيانات تترك الدراسة البحثية ستكون مجهولة المصدر بالتالي فإنه لن يتم التعرف على طفلي.
☐	أوافق على الاحتفاظ ببيانات طفلي في قاعدة بيانات آمنة.
☐	في حال كان لدي أي أسئلة أو مخاوف بشأن البحث أو البيانات المقدمة، قام الباحث بتزويدي بتفاصيل الاتصال بالجامعة ومعلومات التواصل الخاصة به .
☐	أمنح طفلي الإذن بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

اسم ولي الأمر	التوقيع:	التاريخ:
اسم مقدم البحث: أنطوانيت براون	التوقيع:	التاريخ: 2020/10/14

إلى من يهمه الأمر

تحية طيبة وبعد،

أنا الموقع أدناه رلى الخطيب ، بصفتي مترجم ذو خبرة أقر بأني قمت بالاطلاع ومراجعة البحث ، و تم تعديل بعض الأخطاء وعليه أوقع

تفضلوا بقبول فائق التقدير والاحترام

التوقيع:
رلى الخطيب

F3. إجراءات الموافقة والأذونات

مرفق طيّه تجدون جميع المستندات ذات الصلة، بما في ذلك معلومات المشاركين التي تشمل المستندات الخاصة بالموافقة الخطية والشفوية (إن وجدت) (انظر النماذج).

دليل توظيف المشاركين

1. **عنوان مشروع البحث:**

أنا طالبة ~~ماجستير~~ دكتوراه تخصص تربية في جامعة ستيرلنغ في اسكتلندا، وأجري دراسة بحثية حول التجارب الحيّة للمعلمين في السنوات الأولى ضمن ممارساتهم المهنية ومشاركتهم في برامج اللغة الإنجليزية ثنائية اللغة التي تتضمن STEM.

يهدف هذا البحث إلى الجمع بين وجهات نظر مختلفة لتعليم ثنائي اللغة في السنوات الأولى.

2. **دعوة للمشاركة:**

~~أرغب بمساعدتكم في هذه الدراسة البحثية من خلال مشاركتي في مقابلة فردية تتكوّن من عشرة أسئلة.~~

الرجاء مساعدتي في اتمام دراستي البحثية هذه عن طريق المشاركة في مقابلة فردية تحتوي عشرة أسئلة. تستغرق هذه المقابلة حوالي (45) دقيقة وسيتم تحديدها بناء على ~~الموعد~~ موعد مسبق مناسب لكم. المقابلة مسجلة، حيث سأقوم بتحليل جميع البيانات وإدراجها في دراستي البحثية.

~~سيتم حفظ تسجيل صوتي للمقابلة كما سيتم تحليل البيانات التي تم جمعها وإدراجها في دراستي البحثية.~~

هذه المشاركة اختيارية. يمكنكم عدم المشاركة أو التنحي في أي وقت في حال رغبتم بعدم إكمال المقابلة. أقدر مساهمتكم في هذه الدراسة، وتعبيراً عن امتناني سأقوم بإهداء قسائم شرائية من كارفور كعربون تقديري.

3. **الفئات التي يسمح لها بالمشاركة:** مدرّسو المراحل الاولى المبكرة ونائب مدير مدرسة أجيال الدولية الفلاح - أبو ظبي. لا توجد قيود عمرية للموظفين

4. **الإطار الزمني للتوظيف**

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى توظيف المشاركين في الفترة من 14 أكتوبر إلى 30 أكتوبر 2020.

5. **المصروفات / المدفوعات**

هذه المشاركة اختيارية. يمكنكم عدم المشاركة أو التنحي في أي وقت في حال رغبتم بعدم إكمال المقابلة. أقدر مساهمتكم في هذه الدراسة. تعبيراً عن امتناني سأقوم بإهداء قسائم شرائية من كارفور كعربون تقديري.

اسم الباحث / الطالب والكلية التي ينتمي اليها. كما يجب تضمين اسم مشرف الطالب (UG و PGT و PGR) وتفاصيل التواصل معه

إذا كنت ترغب في المشاركة، يرجى التواصل معي شخصياً أنطوانيت براون على antoinette.brown@stir.ac.uk.

لمزيد من المعلومات حول مشروع البحث، يمكنك الاتصال بمشرفي، الدكتور كايلي برادفيلد على kylie.bradfield@stir.ac.uk.

6. <u>من قام بمراجعة هذا المشروع؟</u>

تمت الموافقة على النهج الأخلاقية لهذا المشروع من خلال لجنة الأخلاقيات بجامعة ستيرلنغ العامة وهيئة مراجعة الأخلاقيات.

مرجع الموافقة الأخلاقية: [أدخل].

7. <u>كيفية المشاركة:</u>

للمشاركة في المقابلة الشخصية ، يرجى التواصل عبر : antoinette.brown@stir.ac.uk

أ) انقر أو اضغط هنا لإدخال نص.

نموذج موافقة المشارك (1) (معلمي السنوات المبكرة)

رقم اعتماد GUEP / NICR [أدخل رقم المشارك]

عنوان مشروع البحث: اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال مبادرات محو الأمية ثنائية اللغة في بيئة عربية في السنوات الأولى. نهج ظاهري للتحقيق في التعلم. (معتمدة من قبل المشرفين).

	الرجاء قراءة التالي بتمعن وضع إشارة (√)
☐	بالرغم من أن الباحث هو يعمل في المدرسة بمنصب مدير ، إلا أنني لست ملزمًا بالمشاركة في البحث. في حالة عدم الامتثال ، فقد تأكدت من أن هذا لن يؤثر على تطوير الأداء المهني (PPD).
☐	أؤكد أن الباحث زميل عمل محترف وأن العلاقة المهنية لن تؤثر على صحة وموثوقية البيانات التي تم جمعها أثناء البحث.
☐	أؤكد أنني قد قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات المؤرخة [2020/08/09] التي تشرح مشروع البحث أعلاه وقد أتيحت لي الفرصة لطرح أسئلة حول المشروع.
☐	أعلم بأني في هذه المشاركة غير مستفيد بشكل ،وأنه ليس إلزاميًا تنفيذ مبادرة محو الأمية ثنائية اللغة داخل فصلي.
☐	أعلم أن مشاركتي طوعية و أنه يمكنني الانسحاب في أي وقت أثناء هذا البحث كما يمكنني سحب بياناتي في غضون ثلاثة أيام دون إبداء أسباب ودون أي عقوبة.
☐	أتفهم بأن المعلومات التي أقدمها يمكن استخدامها لأغراض التحليل والنشر في وقت لاحق ، وأوافق على ذلك.
☐	أتفهم بأن بياناتي ستظل سرية للغاية وأعطي الإذن للباحث للوصول إلى إجاباتي مجهولة المصدر.
☐	أقر بأنه سيكون هناك تسجيل صوتي لردودي وأوافق على إجراء هذه المقابلة بهدف البحث.
☐	أنا على دراية كافية بإمكانية استخدام الصوت في مخرجات البحث، وأعلم أنه لن يتم ذكر اسمي في أي مخرجات بحثية ولكن يمكن التعرف علي من قبل الأشخاص الذين أعرفهم من خلال القصص التي أرويها.
☐	أنا أعطي الإذن بأن يتم استخدام المعلومات التي قمت بمشاركتها بشكل مجهول ومباشر في منشور البحث.
☐	أوافق على إعطاء بيانات البحث التي تم جمعها في الدراسة للباحثين ، بما في ذلك أولئك الذين يعملون خارج EU لاستخدامها في دراسات بحثية أخرى. أعلم بأن أي بيانات صادرة من مجموعة البحث هي مجهولة الهوية والمصدر.
☐	أوافق على الاحتفاظ ببياناتي الشخصية في قاعدة بيانات آمنة حتى يتم الاتصال بي بشأن الدراسات المستقبلية.
☐	شاركني الباحث بمعلومات التواصل الخاصة به ، في حال كان لدي أي أسئلة أو مخاوف بشأن البحث أو البيانات التي تم توفيرها
☐	أؤكد أنني ومقدم البحث قد حصلنا على الإذن اللازم لإجراء هذا البحث.

اسم المشارك:		
التوقيع:		
التاريخ:		

اسم مقدم البحث: أنطوانيت براون	التوقيع:	
	التاريخ: 2020/09/04	

ب)فقط إذا كانت هناك حاجة إلى إجراءات موافقة وتصريح إضافية

ج) صف الإجراءات الإضافية التي ستتبعها للحصول على موافقة من المشاركين و / أو الأطراف الثالثة لإجراء أخذ الدراسات (مثل الأذونات لإجراء أخذ الدراسات الميدانية).

نموذج موافقة المشارك (2) أولياء أمور طلاب السنوات المبكرة.

رقم اعتماد GUEP / NICR [أدخل رقم المشارك]

عنوان مشروع البحث: اكتساب اللغة الإنجليزية من خلال مبادرات محو الأمية ثنائية اللغة في بيئة عربية في السنوات الأولى. نهج ظاهري للتحقيق في التعلم.

	الرجاء قراءة التالي بتمعن وضع إشارة (√)
☐	على الرغم من أن الباحث هو مدير المدرسة ، إلا أنني لست ملزمًا بالسماح لـ ابني / ابنتي بالمشاركة في مشروع البحث.
☐	أؤكد أن علاقتي بمدير المدرسة هي مجرد علاقة ولي أمر في المدرسة ولن تؤثر على صحة وموثوقية البيانات التي تم جمعها أثناء البحث
☐	أؤكد أنني قد قرأت وفهمت ورقة المعلومات المؤرخة [2020/08/09] التي تشرح مشروع البحث أعلاه وقد أتيحت لي الفرصة لطرح أسئلة حول المشروع.
☐	أتفهم بأن ابني / ابنتي لن يستفيد بشكل مباشر من المشاركة في هذا البحث وأن البيانات التي تم جمعها لن يكون لها تأثير على نتيجة تقييم طفلي التي يقدمها معلمو الفصل.
☐	أدرك أن مشاركة ابني / ابنتي اختيارية ولي الحرية في سحب ابني / ابنتي بأي وقت أثناء هذه الدراسة.
☐	أتفهم أنه من الممكن إتاحة البيانات التي تم جمعها أثناء البحث للتحليل والنشر اللاحق ، وأوافق على ذلك.
☐	أتفهم أن ردود ابني / ابنتي ستظل مجهولة الهوية وأعطي الإذن للباحث في الوصول إلى ردود ابني / ابنتي المجهولة المصدر.
☐	أوافق على أن يتم نقل معلومات عن ابني / ابنتي بشكل سري في منشور البحث.
☐	أتفهم أن أي بيانات تترك الدراسة البحثية ستكون مجهولة المصدر بالتالي فانه لن يتم التعرف على طفلي.
☐	أوافق على الاحتفاظ ببيانات ابني / ابنتي في قاعدة بيانات آمنة.
☐	في حال كان لدي أي أسئلة أو مخاوف بشأن البحث أو البيانات المقدمة، قام الباحث بتزويدي بتفاصيل الاتصال بالجامعة ومعلومات التواصل الخاصة به .
☐	أمنح ابني / ابنتي الإذن بالمشاركة في هذه الدراسة.

اسم ولي الأمر:	التوقيع:	التاريخ:
اسم مقدم البحث: أنطوانيت براون	التوقيع:	التاريخ: 2020/10/14

Learning through play within a social environment

Still developing language; importance of play in language and learning; constructive play and free Play Fröbel; Toys to talk about to relate to; Activities related to themes; collaboration; friends pairs; share and model; play re-enforces vocabulary; learn from each other; re-enforce oral language by using both languages and repair and talk ;vocabularies; socialize; interact; communicate; knowledge and understanding is taking place during play; Social play boosts confidence and enhance vocabulary; social development; copying each other and learn from others experiences; sharing oral language; children's drawings reveal knowledge and understanding ; COVID-19 "bubbles "

Cultural Influence

Student level of English vocabulary on school entry; Interpretation of body language; Different approach of Arabic parents on play; Arabic norms and values are different; Arabic language is the main issue; Arabic spoken (home language) is the foundation from which English vocabulary can be taught; Arabic and English language differences

Integration of language and content in bilingual language development

Holistic approach; Cross-Curricular; Activities enhance language development and encourage creativity; problem solving; critical thinking; different types of questioning; repetition of vocabulary and short phrases; in language, science, technology, art, integration, opens up language discussions and oral Language; develop and improve

Influence of Arabic spoken language on Bilingual Language Development

Partnership between English and Arabic Departments; English educators collaborate with Arabic plan together; holistic emergent language approach; spoken Arabic language used in translated literature; story text as the central point for both languages;
Love for stories improve weaker language; Gain a deeper understanding of the difference between Arabic and English;
Bilingual stories build understanding of vocabulary; improve listening skills; role of stories; imagination; sequential memory, role play; re-telling enhance vocabulary

A bilingual Curriculum

depth of knowledge; Involve children's translated stories; Cross –curricular; Bilingual Literacy approach- Teaching Arabic and English side by side
Learn through open –ended questioning
Improve listening skills; Develop Oral expression and confidence; Listening help to understand before speaking (children's filling cabinets); activities related to the Literacy (story) themes and subject vocabulary

The Arabic students' mother tongue and role of parents

Home environment and spoken language of parents and pupils
Encourage listening to English stories online and at bedtime; Parent-teacher relationships; Parents' involvement; School fees matter; More English at home more success in class; Supportive parents start a fire; short English conversations; Communication in spoken language is the key;
COVID-19 impact on parents' engagement

The role of the educator and teaching strategies

Mixed ability groups with differentiation; Scaffolding Vygotski Observation open-ended questioning; reciprocal conversation; the power of listening; hands-on activities; visual aids; games; rhymes; picture cards; songs; Big Books; repetition; repair and talk method; student-teacher partnership; vocabulary making links between two languages; use mother tongue; Circle Time; keep them talking in both languages; teaching instructions; student-to-student conversation; teacher modeling; tone of voice; face-to-face and online strategies; give pupils' responsibility, parts to whole; short phrases to express themselves; observe how children take risks, pupils responsibility for independence in language content integrated ADEK bubbles; COVID-19 impact on the use of resources- sanitizing takes time.

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Appendix D

1.1 Multilingual participants' demographic characteristics

1.2 Data Collection Plan

1.3 Early Years Reflection form

The following is a data collection plan with a timeline: Antoinette C. Brown 2646627

Data collection plan	Timeline 2021-2023
Approval for location and research UAE	February 25th, 2021
Thesis Approval GUEP	March 4th, 2021
Fieldwork approval	March 10th, 2021
Recruitment of participants –information pack followed by invitations	March 15-20th 2021
Proceeding with an interview schedule and ask educator participants to select a date and time suitable between March and April 2021.	March 23rd, 2021
Conducting interviews with teachers	March 25th, 2021 until April 15th, 2021
Completed all interviews	April 15th, 2021-May 5th, 2021
Recruiting of Early Years pupils –information pack with invitations to patents	April 11th, 2021
Observations and communication with students	April 17th-April 28th.2021
Transcribing of interviews	Completed at least four transcriptions by April 18th, 2021
Completed all 16 transcriptions	May 27th, 2021
Start writing narrative –observations of pupils	June 1st, 2021
Continue reading – reading week- compiling thoughts for literature review	June 6th- July 12th 2021
Data set handling: Familiarisation with data – read- re-read	June 30th, 2021
Coding- capture the sematic conceptual reading of the transcribed data	
Searching for themes in data	
Review themes- defining and renaming themes, Mapping and interpretations, finding associations – re-map	August 7th – to September 10th, 2021
Writing of Literature review and Introduction to Theory	October 25th, 2021

Complete narrative –pupils observation	November 7th, 2021
Methodology	November 15th, 2021
Continue with Chapter 1-3 writing of thesis	December 16th, 2021
Review Dr Elspeth Dr Bradfield	December 19th, 2021
Chapter 3 continue with data analysis reflections and comparisons	January 20th –January 30th, 2022
Continue Chapter 4 Findings	May 4th, 2022
Continue Chapter 5 Conclusions	July 7th, 2022
Continue Chapter 6	August 10th, 2022
Continue Revising, editing, re-reading, making amendments	September 28th, 2022
Draft thesis submitted Dr Emma, Prof Elspeth	October 23th, 2022
Draft 2 thesis Dr Emma and Prof Elspeth	November 5th, 2022
Intention to submit Form ARO 014	March 12th, 2023
Draft re-viewed Prof Elspeth and Dr Emma	April 4th, 2023
Making changes received form supervisors	April 5-8th, 2023
Peer review (friend)	April 5th 2012
Submission	April 11th, 2023
Submission viva	To be announced

Antoinette C. Brown

Reflection Template – Early Years Educators

Early years section: Term 2 Week   Date:

Educator's Reflection and Next Steps *(Completion by the end of the week)*
What have you learnt from your pupils this weeks concerning their learning experience face-to-face and online? What have you learnt about yourself as an educator and your collaboration with other educators that you feel was important for your practises with bilingual literacy this week?
Educator's experiences Pupils' experiences
What (pedagogy) methods and strategies have you tried in your lessons and acquired this week?
.
What have you learnt about content language integration and your teaching instruction this week? What impact does it have on your teaching and pupils' language learning experiences this week?
What are the Success Criteria you have for classroom participation in your bilingual lessons this week where you integrated the language and subject content?
What percentage of pupils are *"Actively Engaged" in your language integrated circular time and activities this week?*
What are the challenges of the non-*responsive pupils* in your class week? Please list the *full Names for tracking and support purposes.*
What challenges are you currently experiencing and what are your responses to these challenges?
Next Steps for pupils' Bilingual Language / /Educator's next step:
Pupils' Engagement Level (Students' Engagement Wheel)- What strategies are you employing in your integrated language and subject content lessons and what are the pupils' responses to these strategies as evidenced by the completion and participation rates of your pupils in their language learning this week?

Reflection Template – Early Years Educators

Strategies Used: A, B, C, E, G, I, J.

Student Response to these strategies?

A student taught/explained something to the class, a partner, or a small group. **A**

The class spent part of the hour in partner/group activities. **B**

Students gave their opinion on a topic in a group or whole class setting. **J**

Students used hands-on technology to enhance their learning. **C**

Students were presented a media clip. (video, audio, Internet, newspaper, etc) **I**

Students were out of their chairs for at least one activity during the class. **H**

The class performed a lab or hands-on activity for part of the hour. **D**

The class was given time to self-reflect during the hour. **G**

Students laughed out loud at something appropriate in class. **F**

Students were called on randomly instead of voluntarily throughout the class. **E**

Next Steps for teaching and integrating language and subject content activities in my lessons. My needs are:

List of Tables

Table 1.1 Early years' literature resources in English and Arabic Language

English Big Book stories	Arabic Big Book translated version
Term 1 +-14 weeks Units 1-5	المدى 1
Harry and the Dinosaur goes to school (Whybrow 2006)	"هاري والديناصور يذهبان إلى المدرسة" ،
My feelings (Church 2007)	مشاعري
My five senses (Aliki 2015)	حواسي الخمس
Brown Bear (Martin and Carle 1996)	دب بني
Goldilocks and the three bears (Daubney 2015)	المعتدل والدببة الثلاثة
Term 2 +- 12 weeks Units 6-10	الفصل 2
Hana's surprise (Browne 1994)	مفاجأة هناء
The Gingerbread man (Yerrill 2018)	رجل الزنجبيل
The Three Billy Goats Gruff (Asbjørnsen and Moe 1841)	الماعز بيلي الثلاثة خشن
The Hungry Caterpillar (Carle 1994)	اليرقة الجائعة
Jack and the Beanstalk	الفاصولياء وشجرة جاك
Term 3 +-15 weeks Units 11-15	الفصل 2
The enormous turnip (Daynes 2006)	اللفت الهائل
Rainbow Fish (Pfister and James 1999)	سمكة قوس قزح
Shark in the park (Sharatt 2007)	القرش في الحديقة
Harry and the bucket full of dinosaurs (Whybrow 2010)	هاري ودلو مليء بالديناصورات
Roaring Rockets (Milton and Parker 2000)	هدير الصواريخ

Table 1 Literacy plan in English and Arabic

Table 1.1 shows the Multilingual educator participants with demographic characteristics Arabic first language						
Participant	Gender	Age group	Place of birth	Foreign Language spoken	Highest qualification degree	Years teaching English
P7	Female	30-40	Pakistan	Arabic, English and Urdu	B.A. with PGCE	Less than 10 years
P8	Female	30-40	Lebanon	Arabic, English and French	B.A. with PGCE	More than 11 years
PS10	Female	30-40	Jordan	Arabic, English and French	B.A. with PGCE	10 years' experience
PN11	Female	30-40	Lebanon	Arabic, French and English	B.A. with PGCE	More than 15 years' experience
PI14	Female	30-35	Syria	Arabic and English	M.A.	Less than 10 years' experience
Table 1.2 shows the demographic characteristic of the eleven multilingual participants English first language						
Participant	Gender	Age group	Place of birth	Foreign Language (s) spoken	Highest qualification degree	Years teaching English
P16	Female	25-30	South Africa	English and Afrikaans	B.A	4 years
PN13	Female	40-45	Scotland	English and Scottish Gaelic	B.A	24 years
PT12	Female	25-30	South Africa	English, Afrikaans and Dutch	M.A.	6 years
P9	Female	25-30	UK	English and Arabic	University 3 years with PGCE	4 years
P15	Female	25-30	Ireland	English and Irish Gaelic	B.A.	4 years
P6	Female	25-30	Ireland	English and Irish Gaelic	B.A.	2 years
PL5	Female	25-30	Ireland	English and Irish Gaelic	B.A.	2 years
PE3	Female	25-30	UK	English, Spanish, limited French	M.A.	6 years
PA2	Female	30-35	South Africa	English Dutch, French and Afrikaans	B.A. Education M.A. Applied Psychology M.A. Special Education Needs	10 years
PA1	Female	25-30	UK	English, and limited Spanish	M.A.	4 years
PP14	Female	45-55	South Africa	English and Afrikaans	University 3 years with PGCE	27 years

List of Figures

Figure 1.1 The BLC with CLIL approach

Figure 1.2 Early Years Bilingual Literacy with CLIL activities plan example Day 4

Early Years Bilingual Language with Cross Curricular CLIL planning and Strands and Standards Term1							
Language and Literacy with CLIL (example)							
Weeks	Unit	Theme	Standards Of Learning	Cross Curriculum (math, science and langauge)	My Identity link with Arabic	Books/songs/links	Celebrations events Dates
Week 1 and 2	Orientation Week	**Settling In** **Story: Brown bear start school** In English and Arabic **Back to School Theme:** Introduction to our school Routines, rules and setting and groups in centers Brown bear **Baseline assessment**	FLL1.h FLL2.c Fll5.f FLL4.e	FSD1.b FSD2.d FSD 3.d FCA1.b FCA3.a	My school My name https://drive.google.com/file/d/1lGCYCsUaGm_nOzSBOdgNL59V5WLN45o7/view?usp=sharing FSD1.C FSD4.C	**Song**: Welcome (The Kiboomers) Song https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HsObw88z5GTLHL-ugT-glbFzeW9V6laD/view?usp=sharing Hello hello what's your name (super learning song) https://drive.google.com/file/d/1H1NH_DDgakPhNHaE7xe4zcBtJXLmqp3U/view?usp=sharing	

		Weekly Plan Early Years 1B Bilingual Literacy Plan with CLIL					Book Focus: The Hungry Caterpillar
		Week 4 Bilingual Literacy Theme: The Very Hungry Caterpillar					
EY 1B	7.50 -8.00	8.00 - 8.50	8.50 - 9.50	9.50-10.10	10.10 - 11.00	11.10 - 11:50	11.50 - 12.40
Day 4	Registration	Gross-motor activities (Physical Education) Including music and rhythm English and Arabic songs	**Arabic Literacy** **Reading of The Hungry Caterpillar story in Arabic** **Questioning-** sequence of the story **Vocabulary – Arabic to English** **Small groups:** **Arabic letter sounds and visuals with vocabulary of the story: Teacher-led** Teaching Strategy: "My turn", Your turn; All children to attempt letter formation and sound	Breakfast Break	**English Literacy** Sound "qu" Teaching Strategy: "My turn", Your turn; All children to attempt letter formation and sound **Group1: Peer-to peer learning**: Story sack and visual picture cards – retelling of the story using the story sack soft toys and picture cards to re-tell the story to peers. Use story sequencing. **Group 2: Peer-to-peer led**: Sound and card game – with dice language-math integration activity.	**CLIL Mathematical thinking and problem solving included in Engineering and Design** Colors Revision Children to revise all the colors taught so far using different objects. **Color focus:** **Orange** **Starter Art Activity: Experimentation:** Experiment and find which colours will make the colour orange. Children explore the color of the week by mixing many colours. **Group1: Creativity: Intendent learning**: use different material to design and printing	**CLIL Scientific Inquiry** Life cycle of the butterfly **Group 1: Independent learning**: IPads and videos: children explore, investigate and observe the life cycles of different other animals **Group 2: Peer-to-peer: Children talk** about the life cycle of an animal- using visuals, match the visual cards while having dialogue. TA to support language. **Group 3: Teacher -led conversation**: Children explain the life cycle of an animal –use **vocabulary** (Whole Class Discussion) Through Questioning, modelling and repetition of English taught vocabulary

			Teacher-led activity: "Fred talk puppet" repeating of words, story vocabulary and sounds, match sounds and pictures- writing of sounds **Independent-learning** with story picture sequencing; drawings and using of vocabulary **Peer-to-peer learning:** Story sack activity – re-telling of the story to peer in Arabic, using props of story sack.		Match sound, number and pictures (TA) support- children write sounds and short words **Group 3: Teacher-led activity:** Teacher to focus on sound, and vocabulary, using "Fred Talk" puppet- Teacher's modelling, students' repetition of sounds and vocabulary, retelling of the story in English.	orange objects- using mixed media. **Group 2: Drawing the sequence of the story.** Explain to peers –English Dialogue Writing some of the words leant. **Integration with math and engineering:** **Group 3: Working in pairs with LEGO® Education Maker (Design):** Step 1: **Design a caterpillar** using thinking and drawing first. Then use Lego and think how the caterpillar can move. Solve or find a new design opportunity Step 2: **Brainstorm** Brainstorming the design Step 3: (hands-on experimentation) with the LEGO bricks, and drawings). Peer-to-peer work, is essential, sharing

					ideas. Choose and discussing the best idea. Use simple pictures) (teacher-led at first) to connect Lego with WeDo 2.0 Core Set parts; making the caterpillar to walk or spin. **Step 4:** Evaluate What they have done. **Step 5**: Present their spinning, or walking caterpillar, to groups. Discuss- or redesign.	

Early Years Department Bilingual Literacy with CLIL activities plan example Day 4

List of Findings

The following table lists the findings generated from the open-ended semi-structured interviews conducted for the study. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using Reflective Thematic Analysis (RTA) (Braun and Clarke 2022), described in Chapter 4.2.

The RTA analysis yielded the following six central organised themes:	List of Findings: **Educator participants' experiences revealed the following:**	Early years educator participants (respondents):
1. A Bilingual Literacy Curriculum for Arabic Early Years (Fig. 1.5, p.109)	1) The Educator participants reported that the BLC is built on translated children's literature as it supports integrating languages and cross-curricular subject content and provides examples of problem-solving and how to manage emotions.	PL5; PN11; PN 13, P16; PE3
	2) The BLC exposed Emirati pupils to both languages through similar themes, vocabulary repetition, language-integrated activities (CLIL), and resources. The Arabic language is the foundation for teaching English Language.	P6; PN 11; PN 13; PP14; P9
	3) BLC with CLIL maximises Emirati pupils' language development at an early age.	PL5; PN9
	4) The BLC develops pupils' language early through age-appropriate translated children's literature with similar values and	P15, PN11, PN13; PP14; P9

		interchangeable strategies.	
		5. CLIL is included in the BLC and supported through play-based learning and visual materials that help pupils confidently connect with the vocabulary taught in both languages.	P7; PN11
		4. In the BLC with CLIL, children's translated literature is essential for developing English and Arabic vocabulary. However, educators felt that children's literature should be more aligned with cultural identity.	PP14; P6
		5. Pupils receive the same children's story in two different languages, which deepens their linguistic understanding. Educator participants felt that pupils learn vocabulary faster by engaging with the vocabulary of both languages.	P7, P8, PN11, P13, P15; P14
		6. The BLC uses a five-step development plan, with listening and speaking as essential language development concepts that motivate oral responses and the retelling of the stories.	P7, P8, PN11, P13, P15
		7. Multilingual educator participants planned collaboratively, having similar routines and shared ideas, resources, and materials to benefit	PP14; P9; PN13

	pupils' bilingual literacy development.	
	8. The BLC with CLIL emphasises pupils' listening, educators' modelling, the repetition of phrases, and the educator's tone of voice to help pupils understand and use bilingual vocabulary.	PP14; P9
	9. The BLC with CLIL includes auditory and visual experiences that develop pupils' receptive language skills and bilingual literacy. Educator participants mentioned the importance of age-appropriate Lego blocks, technological games, and visual aids for young Arabic children to learn to communicate in a second language through play.	PA 2; PP14; P8
	10. Edcator participants revealed that pupils could develop English and Arabic vocabulary and distinguish the meaning and difference between the two languages and vocabulary through an emergent translanguaging approach and a strategy referred to as repair and talk across the curriculum.	PP14; P16; PE3; P8
	11. The Educator participants revealed that more oral language development and increased vocabulary occurred during COVID-19 as pupils could present topics recorded in "show and tell" activities online. The hybrid teaching model during the COVID-19	PP14; P9; PN13

	pandemic has shown a significant difference in pupils' acquisition of English vocabulary, knowledge, and language understanding when taught virtually compared to those taught in the class through face-to-face teaching due to less social interaction through play led by peers and led by educators.	P9; PN13; P14
	12. Educators used a "teach-test method" to read the story and determine whether pupils could sequence the story's illustrations.	PA2; P16
2. The influence of Arabic pupils' spoken language, a'amiya, on bilingual language development (Fig. 1.6, p. 115)	1. Educator participants find the *Parent-School-Collaborative Support Model (PSCM)* a positive contribution to bilingual learning as it involves the school, educators, and parents collaborating to ensure pupils' independent language learning success. Educators highlighted the stretching of pupils' independent learning.	PA 1; PA 2; PL5
	2. Educator participants articulated that Arabic diglossia is complicated. However, integrating bilingual language and subject content showed an understanding of language vocabulary in English and Arabic due to the use of the spoken Arabic language, a'amiya. Multilingual Arabic-speaking educators highlighted Emirati pupils' spoken language,	PA2; PN13; PA2

	a'amiya, which they felt supported pupils' English language learning. Formal Arabic, fusHa, makes it difficult for educators to use while implementing the BLC with the CLIL curriculum and circle time.	PS10; PN11; P14
	3. Proper resources need to be created to support monolingual parents to support and enhance pupils' bilingual literacy.	PA1; PL5
	4. It is essential to involve monolingual parents in quality bilingual teaching and learning. One parent's involvement would encourage others to engage with and support pupils' language development.	PA1; PN13; PL5; P16; PS10
	5. Arabic parent involvement and communication can be challenging and sometimes needs to be clarified. To succeed, Arabic parents will need support and encouragement from educators. Educators emphasised fostering good relationships and using translanguaging.	PN11; P14

3. The educator's role and teaching strategies (Fig.1.7, p. 120)	1. The educator participants reported participating and collaborating on weekly curriculum plans. They took a more holistic approach, integrating the language vocabulary of content subjects such as English, science, mathematics, technology, engineering and art to facilitate early literacy development. The educators revealed that the plans were built on the five-step development plan in both languages.	PN11; PE3
	2. Educators used pupils' vocabulary in both languages and labelled items and resources in the classroom in English and Arabic to encourage pupils to identify vocabulary and learn from each other.	PN 11; PE3
	3. Educator participants ascertained that retaining pupils' home language will support their learning of the new, similar vocabulary of the second language.	PA2; PE3; P8
	4. Curriculum planning is based on children's literature, which they felt was essential in developing language. Other educators felt that combining stories, multi-sensory approaches, role play, songs, and hands-on activities in CLIL centres, stations, and ADEK bubbles for six to ten pupils supported the effective development of both languages.	PA2; PN13; PS10
	5. A love for stories would engage pupils with each	PA1; PN13; PL5; PP14

	other and promote dialogue.	PL5
	6. Play-based learning was identified as a highly effective language teaching strategy.	PA2; P8; PT12
	7. Teaching English and Arabic should include modelling and repeating story phrases, sentences, and vocabulary with lots of visual resources and materials to encourage language development.	
	8. Significant differences are observed in the linguistic domains of the two Arabic language codes (*a'amiya and the formal Arabic fusHa). These differences i*nclude language lexicon, phonology, syntax, and grammar.	P8; P6; PT12
4. The influence of the social environment and learning through play on bilingual language development (Fig.1.8, p. 127)	1. Educators revealed that Social play is essential for language development. When the social environment is semi-structured, pupils can decide what they want to play with and which resources they would like to use.	PA1; PN13
	2. By including play in pupils' language learning, pupils could connect with oral language, socially engage, solve problems, learn from each other, and explore language and vocabulary by playing with various resources, such as the story sack with props and hand puppets, while speaking with each other.	PL5; P8; P9; P14

	3. Motivation and positive feedback were strategies to encourage early years pupils to speak in English.	P8; P9
	4. Scaffolding and including the "Slow-Release Model of Responsibility" technique support Emirati early years pupils in gaining self-confidence and working towards the independent learning of English.	PA2; PA1
	5. Educators felt that translanguaging, open-ended questioning, peer-to-peer, and educator-pupil engagement in the social environment could support and contribute to bilingual language learning.	P8; P14; PL5
	6. Educator participants revealed that learning through play is non-traditional in Arabic culture and, therefore, can be viewed as a service that consumes time with entertainment and that no learning is taking place through play.	P9
	7. According to the educator participants, learning through constructive play and self-explorations in centres and stations leads to active communication and practising in both languages by integrating resources and subject content.	P8; P16
	8. Educator participants viewed pupils, parents, and the school as an interchangeable triangle involved in Emirati early years pupils' language development within the social environment. Educators revealed that pupils learn new vocabulary through self-exploration in the early	PA2; PA1; PA11

		years, imitating their parents and educators during collaborative social play activities.	
5. Cultural influence and parents' involvement in bilingual language development (Fig 1.9, p. 133)	1. Educators reported that they included a collaborative support model, referred to as the *parent-school collaborative support model (PSCM). This model examined by educator participants included* liaising with parents and providing support in pupils' language development by having speech and language therapy with parents' consent, engaging parents and pupils with the school's counsellors, and providing additional information sessions about pupils' language development during Parent-Educator-Conferences (PEC) meetings.	PN13; PA1	
	2. Educators reported that pupils succeeded when children's literature highlighting Emirati pupils' identity and culture was included in the BLC with CLIL.	P6	
6. Content Language Integrated Learning and the influence on bilingual language learning. (Fig 1.10, p. 137)	1. Educator participants viewed the BLC with CLIL learning philosophy and integrated language and subject content as a valuable classroom curriculum.	PS10; PA1; P15; PN13	
	2. CLIL encourages language communication and problem-solving within CLIL-differentiated activities.		
	3. Educators revealed that the BLC with CLIL includes a cross-		

	curricular pedagogy that involves many types of questioning, communication, creative thinking and problem-solving opportunities through both languages, mathematical concepts, science concepts and vocabulary, technology (iPads), Edu-Lego, Bee-bot floor robots, art activities and vocabulary.	P8

PE3; PN13; PT12; PA2; PL5 |