

BILINGUALISM IN EARLY AND PRE-SCHOOL AGE IN CROATIAN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

This paper discusses bilingualism in early and pre-school age. Considering that the world has become a global village and a multicultural community, bilingualism in general and especially in the young population, is a unique phenomenon, and as such it is increasingly subject to the interest of many linguists, sociolinguists, psychologists and other professionals (including school and kindergarten teachers). In this paper we discuss the various definitions of bilingualism and the very process of becoming a bilingual person in general, with the emphasis on early and pre-school ages. Precise distinction between language learning and language acquisition is consistently present in the paper. In addition, different types of bilingualism are described, as well as the different relationships between two languages engaged in the process of being bilingual (domination of one language, interlanguage, linguistic borrowing, code-switching etc.). Considering the specific linguistic situation in Croatia, i.e. the coexistence of three (very) different languages or dialects (Chakavian, Kajkavian and Shtokavian), horizontal and vertical bilingualism are discussed. Also, advantages and (potential) disadvantages of being bilingual are presented.

Keywords: bilingualism, Croatian language, children, early and pre-school age.

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