Vision of families on bilingual education and bicultural competence in early childhood education: A case study

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Público: Maestros de Inglés. **Materia:** Didáctica del Inglés. **Idioma:** Inglés.

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Abstract
The main purpose of this Master's Dissertation is to analyse the degree of information that families have about bilingual education and what it implies. Furthermore, it is intended to determine what attitudes families have regarding bilingualism and the role that they give to bicultural competence. To carry out this research, a mixed methodology was used that combines qualitative and quantitative techniques. There is also a theoretical journey through various aspects related to bilingual education in order to clarify some concepts and the importance of this in the development of students and when it comes to achieving a higher quality education.
Keywords: Bilingual education, Bilingualism, Families, Bicultural competence

Título: Visión de las familias sobre la educación bilingüe y la competencia bicultural en la educación infantil: estudio de un caso.
Resumen
El presente Trabajo de Fin de Máster tiene como objetivo principal analizar el grado de información que tienen las familias sobre la educación bilingüe y lo que esta implica. Además, se pretende determinar que actitudes tienen estas respecto al bilingüismo y el papel que le confieren a la competencia bicultural. Para llevar a cabo dicha investigación se empleó una metodología de carácter mixto que combina técnicas cualitativas y cuantitativas. También se hace un recorrido teórico por diversos aspectos relacionados con la educación bilingüe con el fin de clarificar conceptos y la importancia de esta en el desarrollo del alumnado.
Palabras clave: Educación Bilingüe, Bilingüismo, Familias, Competencia bicultural.

1. INTRODUCTION

As we know, we live in a society in which there are many changes and very fast. All these changes have affected all levels. But if you take into account the educational context you can see how all the transformations have affected in a remarkable way in this area. One of the latest changes in the education system was the introduction of bilingual education from the earliest ages. However, due to the fact that there are still many opinions and many methodologies, it is necessary to analyse how bilingual education is received by students. In this case, taking into account the importance of families in the development of students, it has been opportune to analyse bilingual education from the point of view of families.

Furthermore, bilingual education is linked to bicultural competence, for this reason it is important to determine the degree of knowledge that families have about this competence and to know the degree of importance granted by families to it. To carry out this case study, a mixed methodology has been used and various theoretical aspects have been taken into account.

As Simons (2011) points out, one way to start designing the case is to determine the research questions. This is a phase that requires time and that, therefore, we have to grant it. It is convenient to take into account the theoretical assumptions that are hidden in them and to think if they are going to serve as a theoretical framework or as a hypothesis. These questions will carry with them some assumptions that will affect the data we collect and what they mean; so we have to be fully aware of this. This author affirms that, in addition to serving for the study, there is very useful to remember the objective or objectives of the investigation, thus avoiding deviations. In the end, you can return these questions to check the degree to which they were resolved according to the results and/or the conclusions drawn. For this, it is not necessary to generate many questions and these focus and configure the study and facilitate the choice of

method and analysis. It is essential that the questions are conceptualized so that it can be investigated within the time available.

Reflecting on the type of questions proposed by Simons (2011), it is necessary to consider, in this case, the use of open questions that allow the case to be documented in its entirety.

Before such paradigm arise a series of questions that prompt the beginning of this investigation: What characteristics does the centre have? Do families have enough information about bilingual education? Are families aware of the importance of bicultural competence? What attitudes are observed in families regarding bilingualism?

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this Master Dissertation are:

❍ To identify and analyse the degree of interest and information that families have about bilingual education.

❍ To analyse and reflect on the presence of positive or negative attitudes towards bilingualism.

❍ To know the degree of knowledge and the importance that families attach to the bicultural competence.

❍ To increase the degree of knowledge about the quantitative and qualitative methodology.

3. THEORETICAL JUSTIFICATION

The theoretical framework of an investigation has as its mission to approach the problem from a conceptual point of view, defining the subject of study in a specific field, establishing the exploratory itinerary and avoiding possible deviations from the initial approach (Sánchez, 2011, p. 25).

Although there are several studies on the importance of bilingual education, in many cases this topic focuses mainly on academic aspects and in relation to students. However, there is an essential pillar in education that families are, for this reason it is very important to focus the analysis of the importance of bilingual education in families. In the first place, it is necessary to define the term family. Taking into account the existence of multiple family definitions, in this case we have chosen to make a global definition based on others. In this way, the family is a group of related members that are organized to meet the needs of all its members and favour various aspects such as socialization and education.

According to López (2009) there are different types of family such as: nuclear family, extended family, single parent or reconstituted family. Regardless of the type of family, the interests for education and the need for information and training are essential for the correct development of the students.

López (2009) highlight the importance of the family when it comes to achieving a correct development of the students, in this sense, so that a good teaching-learning process can take place, it is necessary to take into account the opinion of the families. Bolivar (2006) points out that within the family there are processes and forms of relationship that can favour or hinder children's development and, therefore, the academic achievements of students in school.

Although schools increasingly promote family involvement, there is still an absence of information in families in many cases. While this happens in education in general, this increases more in the field of bilingual education. Some ways for families to participate in school are to form part of the school council, the parent association or to collaborate systematically in school tasks and in the classroom activities.

Because there are many bilingual programs and methodologies, many parents do not know which one is best for their children and in many cases they do not know how the bilingual education system works. According to Domingo (2000), the education needs the participation of all its members, teachers, students and parents. For this reason, it is essential that parents know the different educational options their children have and which are the most appropriate for them. At an educational level, the Organic Law 8/2013, of December 9th, for the improvement of educational quality (LOMCE) shows that families are the main responsible for the education of their children and therefore the educational system must have the family, promote their participation and trust in their decisions.

Bearing in mind that in this text reference will be made to bilingual education, it is necessary to establish a definition of this term. Arnau (1980) points out that the concept of bilingual education is quite ambiguous and complex, due to the different situations in which programs that respond to this denomination are developed. Bearing this in mind, a definition

according to this theme is offered by Zúñiga (1989), according to this author, bilingual education is the planning of a teaching-learning process in which the mother tongue of the students and a second language are used as an educational instrument, with the objective that students benefit from learning that second language, while they maintain and develop their mother tongue. If reference is made to what it means to be a bilingual person there are also multiple definitions, among which are:

For Martinet, the bilingual subject is one who can express himself in two natural languages; for Von Weis, bilingualism is the direct use, both active and passive of two languages by the same speaker (understood as active when spoken, and passive when received or understood); for Cristopherson, a bilingual subject is that person who knows two languages with a level of competence more or less equal to that of the bilingual in each of those languages (Calvo, F. and Pantoja, L. 1990, p.11).

As Bathia and Ritchie (2005) say, bilinguals are often defined as individuals or groups who obtain the knowledge and use of more than one language. But bilingualism is a complex thing because it involves psychological and socio-cultural linguistic behaviour. Besides, the term bilingualism has different multidimensional aspects.

Mackey (1986) points out that bilingualism is not a phenomenon of the language because for him bilingualism is a characteristic of its use. Therefore, it is not a function of the code, for him it is a function of the message.

Moreno (1998) distinguishes between individual bilingualism and social bilingualism. For this author, individual bilingualism affects the speaker who, in addition to his first language, has a similar linguistic competence in another language. For its part, social bilingualism refers to the community in which all or most of its members are bilingual.

It is also important to highlight the existence of other types of bilingualism that are additive bilingualism and subtractive bilingualism. According to Ayora (2008) the additive bilingualism occurs when a second language which is socially recognized or prestigious is acquired and that supposes a personal enrichment. However, subtractive bilingualism occurs when the acquisition of the second language is due to economic needs and involves the removal of the first language and its replacement by the new one.

Ayora (2008) affirms that in multilingual communities not all languages are valued in the same way, nor in monolingual communities all dialects or linguistic modalities have the same prestige. More prestige is granted in terms of the power of social groups, and in addition, political and economic interests determine the linguistic uses and the language model of a community. This leads to talk about diglossia, which means:

A relatively stable language situation in which addition to the primary dialects of the language, in (which may include a standard or regional standards), there is a very divergent, highly codified (often grammatically more complex) superposed variety. The vehicle of a large and respected body of written literature, either of an earlier period or in another speech community, which is learned largely by formal education and is used for most written and formal spoken purposes, but is not used by any sector of the community for ordinary conversation (Ferguson, 1959, 336).

Once analysed some concepts and taking into account the complexity of this topic, it is necessary to emphasize that the changes in bilingual education in our country have been gradual and that still today there are many aspects to improve to offer a quality bilingual education to the students. In this paper we will make a more explicit reference to the stage of Early Childhood Education, because the study has been carried out in the classroom of the first year of this stage. In this sense, it is necessary to point out that at the legislative level the Spanish educational system is regulated by two basic laws that are the Organic Law 2/2006 of May 3rd of Education (LOE) and the Organic Law 8/2013 of December 9th for the Improvement of the Educational Quality (LOMCE). The LOMCE partially modifies the LOE through a single article.

The curriculum of this stage is organized into three areas of expertise that are the area of self-knowledge and personal autonomy, the area of knowledge of the environment and the language area: communication and representation. All these areas are organized in their respective blocks of content and should follow a globalizing approach such as the one advocated by Decroly (2007) that allows the interrelation of concepts and extrapolation so that students achieve a meaningful learning. Again, following this author the role of the family is essential for students to be able to relate the concepts acquired in school to the outside world around them.

In the case of Early Childhood Education, bilingualism has been introduced very slowly in comparison with other European countries. One of the main reasons that have motivated the introduction of bilingualism from the earliest ages is related to the child's cognitive structure. This means that children, as Piaget (1994) points out, have a great cerebral plasticity which allows them to acquire learning in a faster and more solid way. This is one of the reasons why parents are

also interested in their children receiving a bilingual education. However, the main reason that leads parents to choose a bilingual education for their children, is the fact of the advantages their children will have for their future, that is, at work and social level. For this reason, it can be pointed out that, to date, the main reasons why families are interested in bilingual education are due to sociocultural factors.

Taking into account the interest of families for this type of education, it is necessary that parents are very well informed about the functioning of bilingual education, about its advantages and about the most important aspects for their children. It is also necessary to point out that there are families who believe that bilingual education can pose an additional difficulty for the academic performance of students. For these reasons, it is also essential to know the degree of information that families have on this topic.

Besides, in this study reference is made to bicultural competence. Because this cultural component of bilingual education is essential for a good student development. For this reason, it is necessary to speak first of what culture means. According to Kohls (1996) culture is an integrated system of learned behaviour patterns that are characteristic of the members of any given society. Culture refers to the total way of life of particular groups. It includes everything that a group of people thinks, says, does and makes. Besides, culture is learned and transmitted from generation to generation.

There are twelve cultural aspects that must be taken into account when studying a country, these are: food, clothing, recreation, government, education, language, religion, transportation, economy, environment, culture and arts.

Therefore, a bilingual education that takes into account the bicultural competence is one in which the students are encouraged to understand themselves as citizens of the world and understand both their own culture and other cultures. The ultimate goal is to promote international awareness and understanding. In relation to this study, the degree of knowledge that families have about bicultural competence and its importance in the development of students will also be analysed.

Byram (1997) points out that bilingual bicultural speakers, in addition to correctly handling two or more languages, possess four competencies that allow them to interact properly in bicultural environments. These competences are: knowing, knowing how to be, knowing how to learn and knowing how to do.

In this sense, a person with bicultural competence is one capable of understanding and respecting their culture and that of others. Therefore, there is an assessment and a critical judgment about one's own culture and that of others. All this allows a better coexistence and the eradication of prejudices. In this way, if there is a correct application of the bilingual program and the bicultural competence, students will be well trained and able to establish positive relationships with other cultures and learn from others.

In the case of Early Childhood Education, the foundations will be established that will allow students to train as tolerant people, with values and capable of contributing to social transformation. Furthermore, taking into account that the current legislation in our country recognizes that the purpose of this stage is to contribute to the integral development of students in all their areas: physical, social, cognitive and affective. If we apply bicultural competence we would be taking a much greater step that will undoubtedly have a very positive effect on future generations.

Communication appeals to the human being as a whole. As a social agent, each individual establishes relationships with a broad set of overlapping social groups that together define identity. In an intercultural approach, one of the fundamental objectives of education in the language is the promotion of the favourable development of the student's personality and his sense of identity, as a response to the enriching experience that confronts the different in the fields of language and culture (Instituto Cervantes, 2002, 12).

According to Areizaga (2001), there is currently a consensus about the role played by foreign languages, which are attributed educational objectives of a formative nature that involve going beyond the acquisition of a linguistic competence and whose ultimate goal is to form citizens capable of living in a multicultural and multilingual society.

Regarding the methodology used in the bilingual centres, the most used methodology is CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning).

The term CLIL was coined by David Marsh, University of Jyväskylä, Finland (1994): CLIL refers to situations where subjects, or parts of subjects, are taught through a foreign language with dual-focused aims, namely the learning of content and the simultaneous learning of a foreign language (Tennant, 2009).

The following are a series of advantages of bilingual education according to Ardila (2012):

<u>Learning new cognitive strategies</u>: the bilingual person can use two different systems of logical reasoning.

<u>Better understanding of the first language</u>: when a person learns a second language can achieve, through it, a direct method to understand that their first language represents a specific and particular way of organizing reality and personal experiences, not the only way to conceptualize the world.

<u>Increased cognitive control</u>: bilingualism has been associated with more effective controlled processing in the child.

Other advantages of bilingual education that should be mentioned are:

<u>Communication</u>: A bilingual person can communicate with many more people and this favours their socialization and their openness to different societies and cultures.

Employment: A person with a bilingual education has more facilities to reach higher goals at the labour level, because currently the labour market requires people with extensive training and knowledge of other languages.

Although in this study families play a fundamental role, it is necessary to refer to teachers. According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), bilingual teachers have an important mission to mediate between cultures. For this reason, among its objectives, the following stand out: to make students acquire linguistic and intercultural competence; prepare students to establish relationships with people from other cultures and accept those people as individuals possessing different points of view, values and behaviours; help you to value the enriching character of this type of experiences and make the students able to grasp the relationship between their own culture and other cultures.

Therefore, taking into account all the previous aspects, it is necessary to underline that in conclusion, many times parents make decisions regarding the education of their children with little information, especially when it comes to aspects related to learning a foreign language. Therefore, it is essential to inform parents of the various aspects that make up bilingual education and also give them the necessary tools to make the best decisions regarding the education of their children.

4. RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1. Contextualization

4.1.1. The school

The educational centre in which the research was conducted is a bilingual centre in the Autonomous Community of Galicia, specifically, the school is located in the province of Ourense. It has four stages of education: Early Childhood Education, Primary Education, Secondary Education and Baccalaureate.

The school began operating in 1972 and the building underwent an extension in the following years. Currently, the centre has around 1000 students. The centre is complete at the organizational level as indicated in Royal Decree 82/1996 and complies with the provisions of Royal Decree 132/2010 of Minimum Requirements.

With regard to bilingual education, the centre's educational project states that professionals must have an accredited B2 level of English or be in an advanced process of obtaining it. From the centre, European exchange educational programs are promoted. Also, it is recorded that the centre works from a bilingual and multicultural line in all educational stages.

The centre has native conversation assistants who weekly have a session with each of the Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Education classrooms.

Some of the objectives that the school collects in relation to bilingual education are: to enhance the professional mobility of the students; enhance linguistic and cultural diversification; strengthen cooperation among countries; promote educational exchanges; promote the use of the English language as a means of communication and show a positive attitude towards the English language and its culture.

Besides, the school has a high number of extracurricular and complementary activities where bilingual education is always encouraged. As stated in Decree 330/2009, which establishes the curriculum for Early Childhood Education in the

autonomous community of Galicia, these activities are essential because these kind of activities allow a greater participation of the educational community in the management, organization and realization of activities, developing values related to socialization, participation and cooperation.

The classroom where this case study has been carried out is the classroom of the last year of Early Childhood Education (5 years). This class is formed by a heterogeneous group of twenty students.

4.1.2. Characteristics of families

With regard to the characteristics of the families, it should be noted that the majority belong to a middle-high social class, the main economic activity of these families is in the services sector.

Most families have higher education and more than half of families have more than one child. Most of the families are of Spanish nationality but there is a large percentage of families from different countries, specifically, Portugal, Italy, Bulgaria, Colombia or China.

Regarding the importance that these families give to Early Childhood Education, they are very participative in the life of the school and they are fully aware of the importance of this stage in the development of their children.

4.2. Goals

The objectives to be achieved are the following:

- Analyse the degree of information that families have about bilingual education.
- Know the assessment that families make about the bilingual education their children receive.
- Identify and analyse the degree of interest that families attach to bicultural competence.
- Analyse and reflect on positive or negative attitudes towards bilingualism.
- To know to what extent the school promotes information on bilingual education for families.
- Delve into the knowledge of bilingualism as an indicator of academic and personal development.

4.3. Method

In this section we intend to establish the bases of the empirical study of the present investigation. In the first place, the methodology in which the present investigation is based, the techniques and instruments that have been used for the data collection, the tools used for the codification and analysis of the data, the criteria of methodological rigor used and the ethical questions of the investigation.

With regard to the methodological aspects themselves, reference is made to the two typologies used: the quantitative methodology and the qualitative methodology.

Coller (2000) asserts that a case is an object of study that has more or less differentiated boundaries and that is analysed in its context, considered relevant to verify, construct or illustrate a theory or its intrinsic value.

In this case, methods and techniques of qualitative research and quantitative research have been combined, since questionnaires have been made to families and the situation of the centre has been observed.

With the combination of both types, it is intended that the strengths of qualitative research be complemented with those of quantitative research, that is, it is intended that there be feedback between some methods and others. That is, by not covering a single methodology we do not close ourselves to the different techniques and instruments that are specific to each one and we can choose the one that is most convenient for our particular case. In this way it is intended to improve the validity of the research and show results as faithful as possible to reality.

Martínez (2011) points out that the focus is the perspective from which reality is observed. Therefore, the interests, intentions and knowledge with which the researcher perceives, categorizes and conceptualizes the phenomena studied count.

This work uses the case study as a type of research. However, to arrive at a definition of this methodology, it is necessary to mention various authors since there is not a single adequate definition. On the other hand, Stake (1998, p.11)

defines it as "the study of the particularity of a singular case, in order to understand its activity in important circumstances".

Simons (2011), meanwhile, adds that the task of research with case study is to understand its distinctive nature, which may be the case a person, a classroom, an institution, a program, a policy or even a system.

As already noted above, qualitative and quantitative research have been used to carry out a triangulation of results, which will give greater significance to them. Bearing this in mind, we will briefly review aspects of these two types of research.

As Flick (2014) highlights, it is increasingly difficult to find a common definition of qualitative research that is accepted by most of its approaches and researchers. Currently, this type of research has developed an identity of its own and has several common features. Qualitative research aims to understand, write and explain social phenomena in various ways: analysing the experiences of individuals and individuals or groups; daily knowledge, reports and stories; the interactions and communications while they occur; diverse documentation, such as texts, images, films, etc. or similar traces of experiences or interactions.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) define qualitative research as an activity located in a certain place and time that places the observer in the world. It consists of a series of interpretative practices and materials that make the world visible. These practices transform the world and turn it into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and personal memories.

On the other hand, Pérez (2004) points out that qualitative research has the following characteristics:

- The research focus is quality (nature, essence).
- The philosophical roots are phenomenology and symbolic interaction.
- The associated concepts are field work, ethnography, and naturalist.
- The objectives of the investigation are compression, description, discovery; generating hypothesis.
- The characteristics of the design are that it is flexible, enveloping and emergent.
- The framework or scenario is natural and familiar.
- The sample is small, non-random and theoretical.
- In the collection of data, it is important to highlight the researcher as the primary instrument, the interviews and the observations.
- The modality of analysis and inductive (by the researcher).
- The findings are comprehensive, holistic and expansive.

According to Pita and Pértegas (2002), quantitative research is one in which quantitative data on variables are collected and analysed. Some of its characteristics are that it is based on the probabilistic induction of logical positivism; Penetrating and controlled measurement; objective inferences beyond the data; confirmatory, inferential, deductive; oriented to the result, provides solid and repeatable data; generalizable and particularistic.

The instruments used to carry out this research have been:

Questionnaire: A questionnaire was made to the families of the students of the last year of Early Child Education (appendix I). Specifically, this questionnaire has 12 statements and in each of these families should show the degree of agreement with each of them. For this, we use a scale whose parameters are: strongly agree, agree, undecided, disagree, and disagree.

Observation: During a week we went to the centre, specifically to the 5-year-old classroom for Early Childhood Education, where we was able to observe the operation of the school and we had contact with the families.

4.4. Results

In this section, we will gather the results of this research that according to Rodríguez, Gil and García (1999) have to be shared and communicated. The preparation of a report allows the research to be preserved, recorded in a format that makes possible its recovery at any time and facilitates its dissemination and communication to different audiences that may be interested on it.

In order to facilitate the understanding of the data, a series of graphs with their corresponding comments are presented. Besides, we will present the results extracted from the observation made in the classroom of 5 years of Early Childhood Education of that school.

Graph 1. I have enough information about bilingual education.
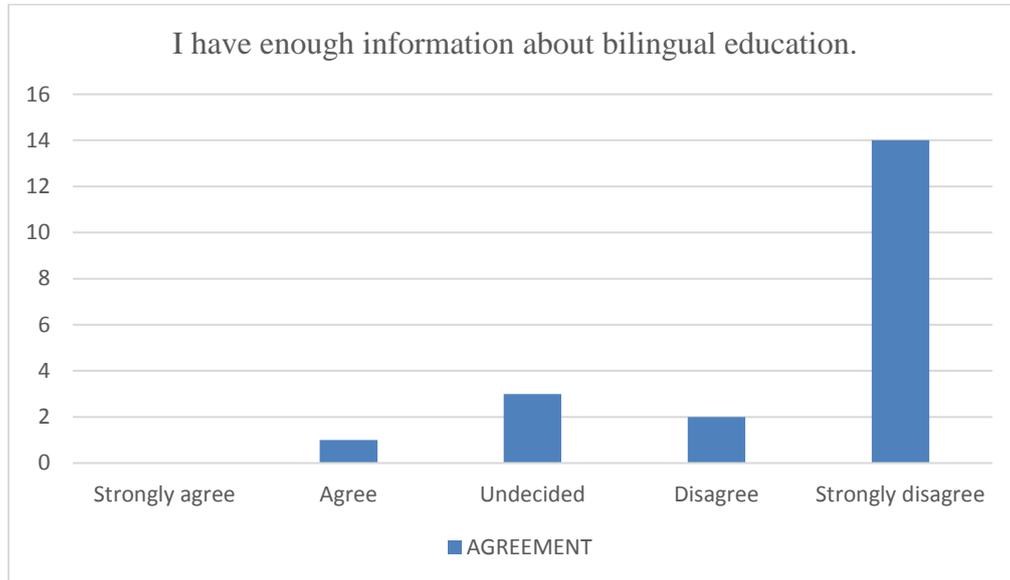
Source: self-made

Faced with the statement *I have enough information about bilingual education*, the majority of people (70%) are strongly disagree. That is, families recognize that they do not have enough information about bilingual education. 15% of people are undecided in the response. Nobody is completely in agreement with the affirmation and only 5% of the people are in agreement with this affirmation.

Graph 2. I know some methodologies within bilingual education.
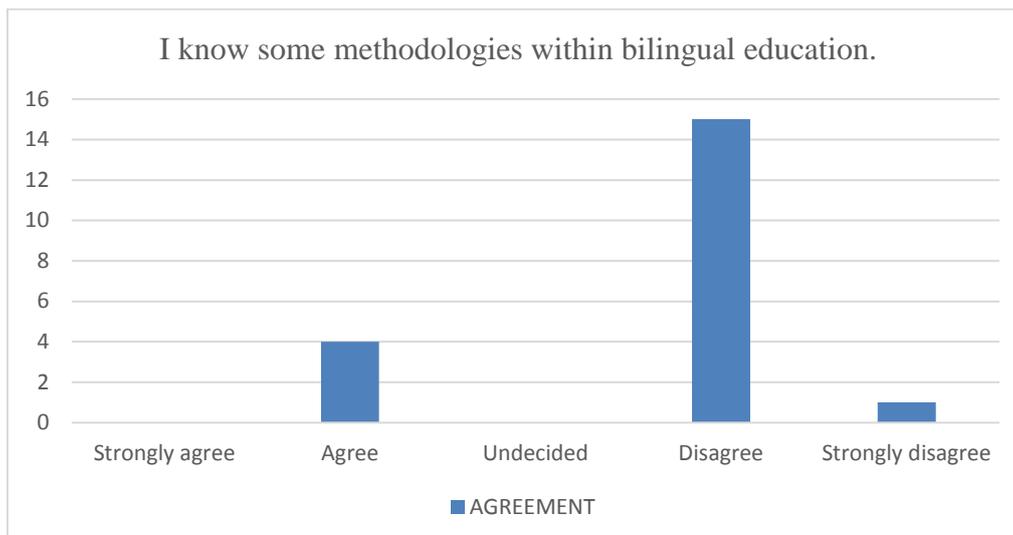
Source: self-made

With respect to the statement *I know some methodologies within bilingual education*, 75% of families consider that they have no knowledge of bilingual methodologies. Only 20% claim to have such knowledge in this kind of methodologies.

Graph 3. I consider that bilingual education is important in the development of students.
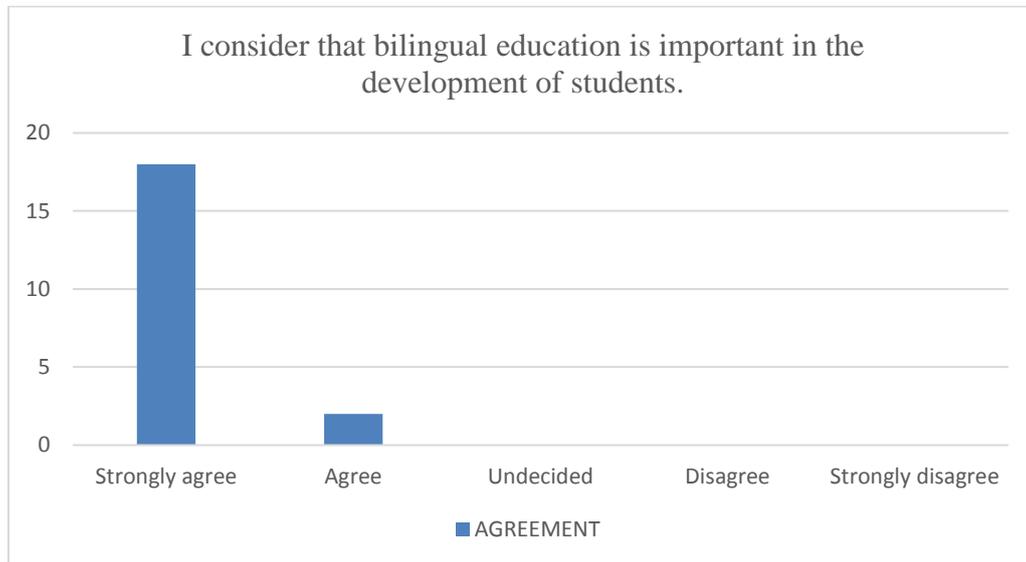
Source: self-made

Analysing the answers of families to the statement *I consider that bilingual education is important in the development of students*, the vast majority (90%) of families consider this type of education very important in the development of their children. Besides, as it can be seen in the graph, no one is contrary to this statement.

Graph 4. The school has given me enough information about bilingual education and methodologies.
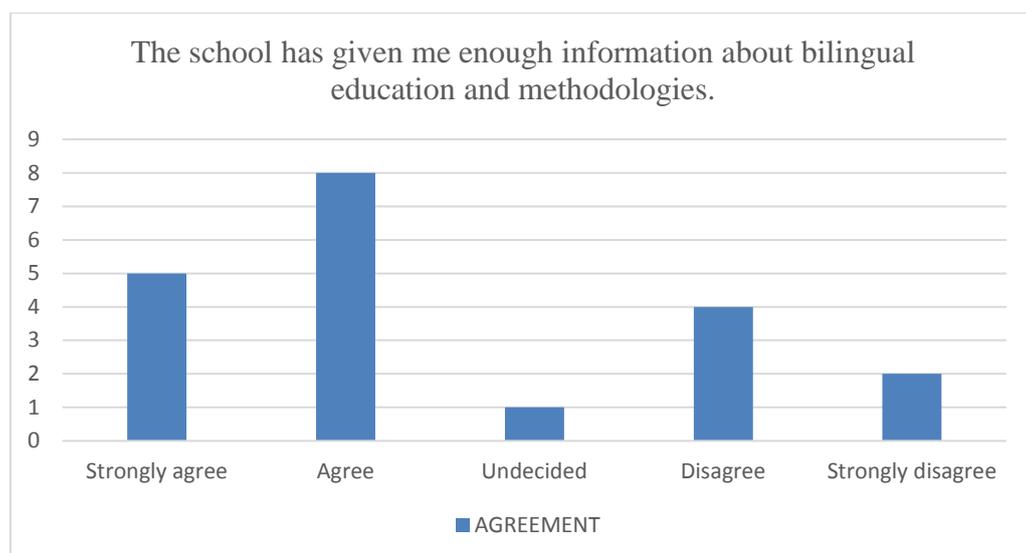
Source: self-made

Focusing on the statement *the school has given me enough information about bilingual education and methodologies*, the answers of the families are very polarized. Specifically, there is no clear majority in any of the options. Although, if we highlight the highest percentages, it is necessary to point out that 40% of people agree with the statement, 25% also strongly agree with the statement. 20% of families disagree with the statement.

Graph 5. The bilingual education that my son/daughter receives is adequate.
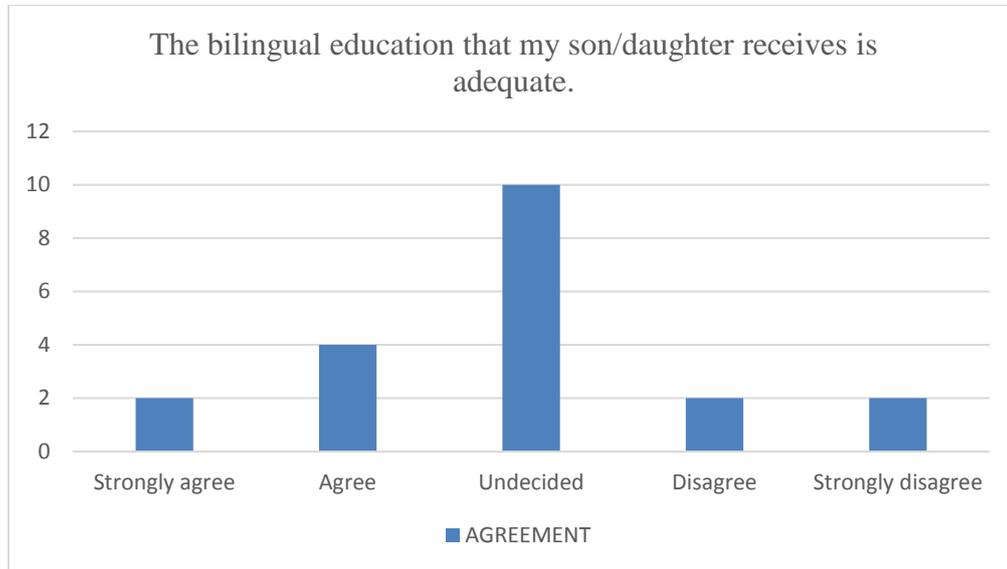
Source: self-made

In what refers to the statement, *the bilingual education that my son/daughter receives is adequate*, 50% of the families are undecided, 20% of the families are in agreement with the statement. The rest of the options are the least chosen by the families, each one reaching 10%.

Graph 6. An adequate bilingual education will allow the student a greater professional development.
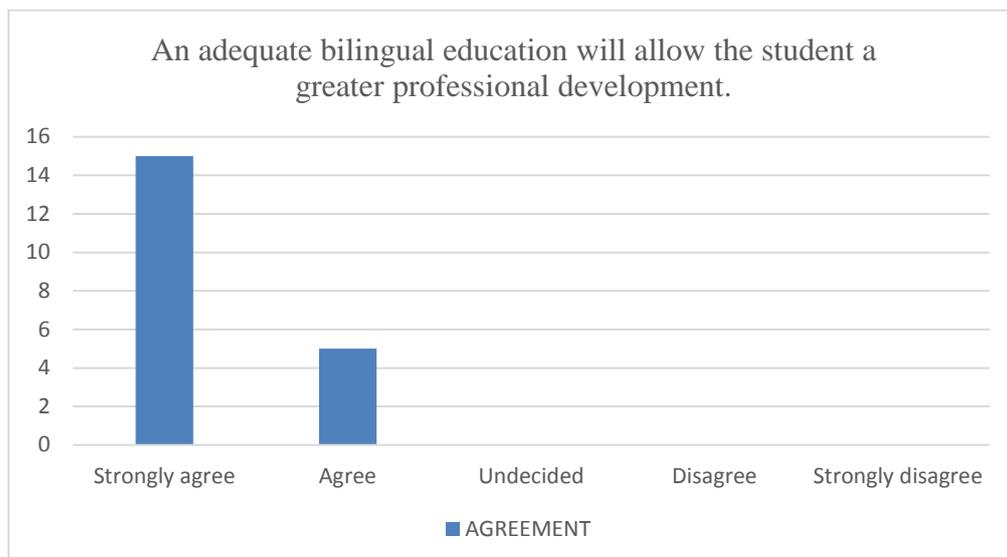
Source: self-made

In relation to the statement *an adequate bilingual education will allow the student to greater professional development,* the vast majority of families are strongly agree (75%) and agree (25%). None of the participating families has selected the options that refer to the disagreement with the statement.

Graph 7. For me bilingual education can negatively interfere with the child´s academic performance.

For me bilingual education can negatively interfere with the child's academic performance.

- y-axis: 0, 5, 10, 15, 20
- Categories: Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- AGREEMENT
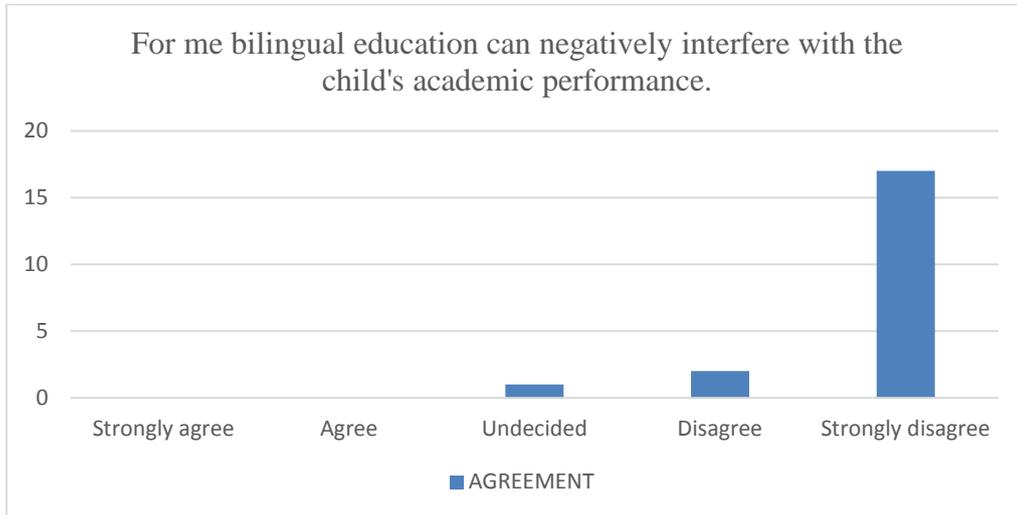
Source: self-made

In what refers to the statement *for me bilingual education can negatively interfere with the child's academic performance*, the majority of families (85%) is in total disagreement. 10% of families disagree and 5% of families are undecided. None of the people agrees with this statement.

Graph 8. The main reason why I have chosen this school is because it has a bilingual program.

The main reason why I have chosen this school is because it has a bilingual program.

- y-axis: 0, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8
- Categories: Strongly agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly disagree
- AGREEMENT
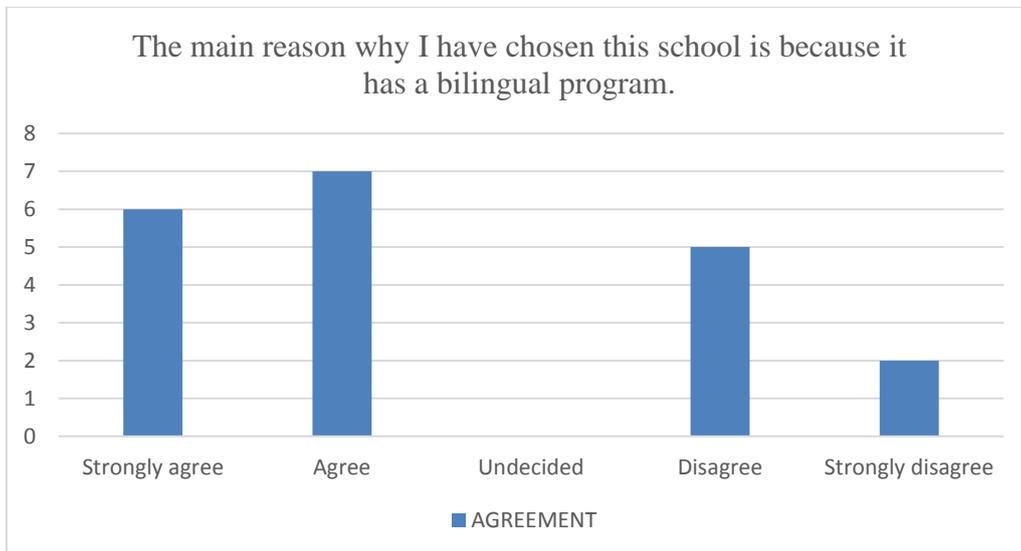
Source: self-made

In the case of the statement *the main reason why I have chosen this school is because it has a bilingual program*, the answers of the families are very polarized. 35% is agree with the affirmation, 30% shows a high degree of agreement, 25% shows disagree and 10% shows a strong disagreement. Therefore, there is no clear majority, but as noted above, a large percentage of people agree with the statement.

Graph 9. I know what bicultural competence is.
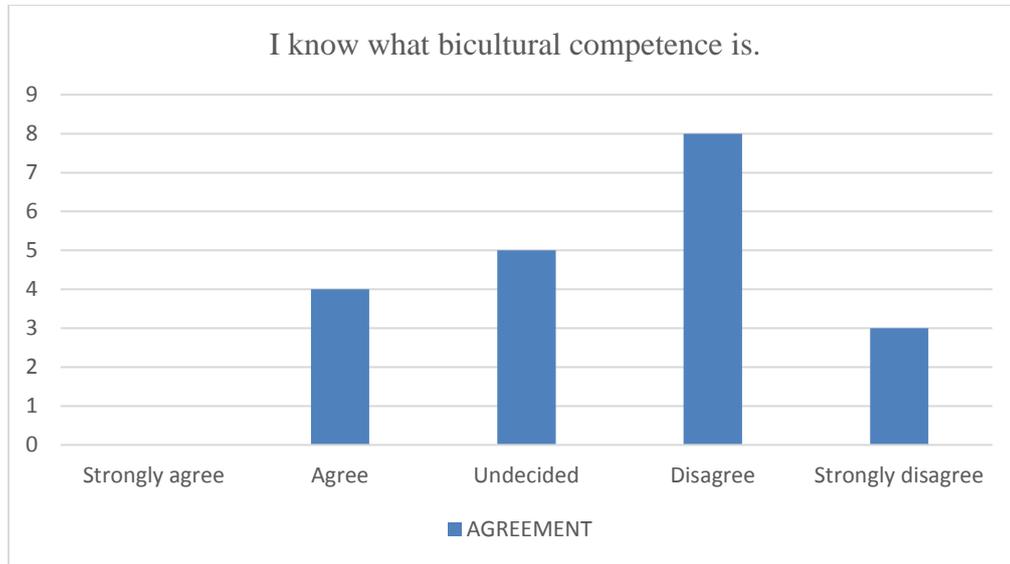
Source: self-made

Regarding the statement *I know what bicultural competence is*, 40% of families do not know what bicultural competence is, 25% of families are undecided, 20% of families claim to know what is bicultural competence and 15% consider that they do not know anything at all about bicultural competence. Nobody is in complete agreement with this statement.

Graph 10. I consider essential the development of the bicultural competence in order to contribute to the integral development of the students.
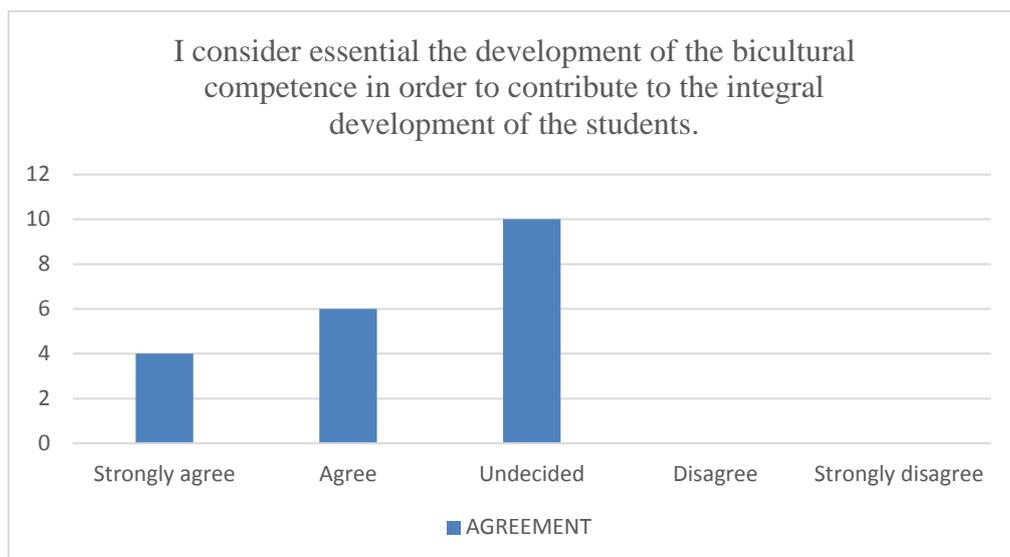
Source: self-made

Taking into account the information extracted on the statement *I consider essential the development of the bicultural competence in order to contribute to the integral development of the students*, it can be affirmed that 50% of the people are undecided. 30% of families consider the development of bicultural competence essential and 20% are fully in agreement with the statement. Any family disagree with the statement.
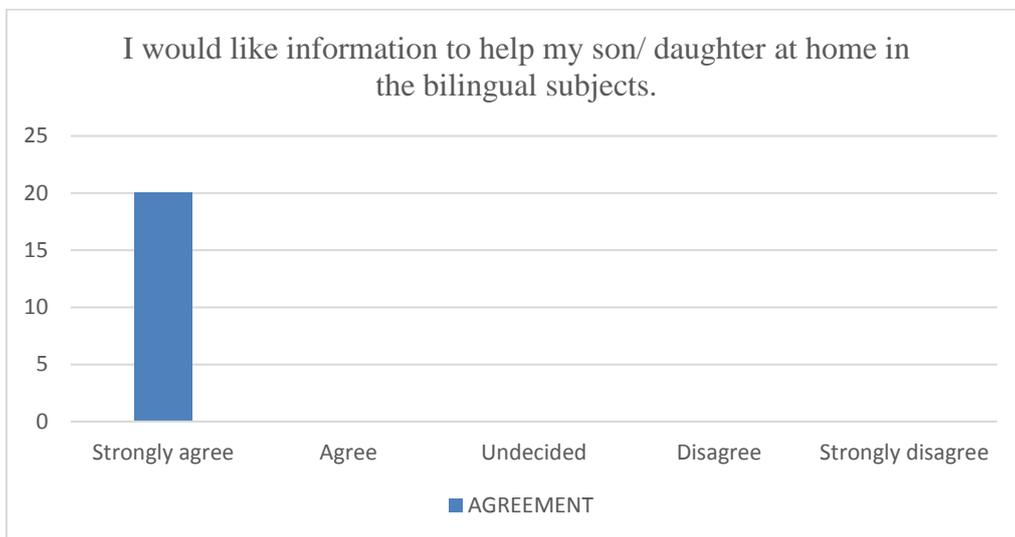
Graph 11. I would like to receive more information about bilingual education and what it implies.
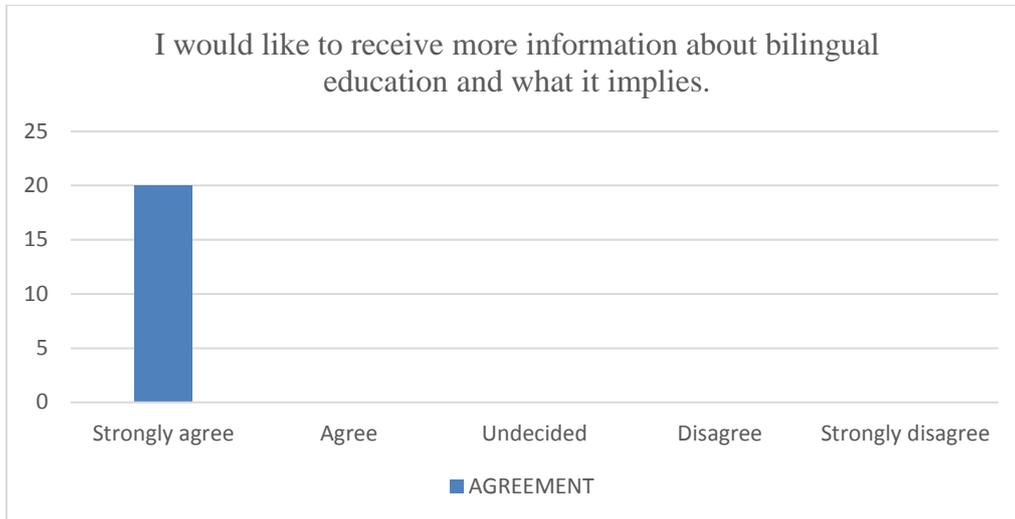
Source: self-made

Absolutely all families want to receive more information about bilingual education and what it implies.

Graph 12. I would like information to help my son/daughter at home in the bilingual subjects.

Source: self-made

This graph shows that 100% of the families that have answered this questionnaire would like to receive information to help their children at home in the bilingual subjects.

With respect to the results of the observation that has been made in the classroom, it is necessary to emphasize that there is a strong involvement of families in the areas of the school. This collaboration is favoured by the multiple activities

that the school promotes for families to participate, as well as by the fact that families are part of various associations and commissions in the school.

Families receive feedback from the classroom tutor at different times of the day and families can request information on any question whenever they wish. Specifically, in the case of bilingualism, families have certain information at the beginning of the course and can follow up at the school once a term to discuss this aspect.

Families often establish verbal contacts with teachers at the beginning of the day and even when they pick up their children at the end of the day. There are usually tutorials several days a week and for families to do them they only need to ask for an appointment with the tutor.

In the school there is a parent school every term, which addresses different topics of interest to families and students. All topics are aimed at enhancing the help of families in the development of their children.

In the school's educational project and in programming, specific references are made to bilingual education and the school's methodology. Families have access to various information through the school website and can also request it from the school by filling out the corresponding form.

5. DISCUSSION

Once all the results of the research have been analysed, this section will refer to a series of aspects that derive from said data.

First of all, it is necessary to point out that although families are happy with the school, they consider that they do not have enough information about bilingual education. One of the causes of this lack of information is given by the fact that the school explains in a generalized way the educational program of the centre without taking into account the participation of families and without explaining other types of methodologies. It is also true that from the legal and political sphere there is not much information on this subject. All this causes that the families choose this educational model and the types of school in base to the importance that each one grants to the bilingual education. But at all times this importance towards bilingual education resides in the families themselves and in the information they obtain in different ways. In this case, the media has a lot of influence in this kind of decisions.

Families also feel that they do not have much knowledge about bilingual methodologies. In this case, something similar to what is explained in the previous paragraph happens, that is, from the education system and from that school in particular, families are not informed enough about the different methodologies that exist or about the advantages and disadvantages of each one of them. It would also be important to explain to families the best option for their children.

There is unanimous agreement by families on the fact that bilingual education is very important for the development of students. In this case there is no room for discussion, as reflected in the theoretical part of this work, bilingual education is very positive for students and the sooner this education begins more positive the results will be for the children.

The fact that when the families are asked if they are satisfied with the information given by the school about bilingual education, the answers are so polarized, this implies that the information provided by the school may not be enough or that the families they would need more information to issue a clear answer. If this is added to the fact that families consider that they do not have enough information, it can be concluded that the lack of information that families have causes them not to know where the information should come from or do not know where to turn.

What is explained in the previous paragraph can be observed, again, when families are asked if they consider that the education their children receive is adequate. That is, given that families do not have enough information about bilingual education, they are not able to assess the education their children receive in this regard. This is something very understandable, because when you do not have enough information on a topic it is very difficult to establish clear and concrete valuations.

It is also important to emphasize that there is unanimity when families express that they fully agree with the fact that bilingual education can help their children achieve greater professional development. In this case, this response is probably influenced by the current circumstances of our country, that is, due to the economic instability that exists and the lack of employment nowadays the academic training and languages are essential in order to achieve a good job. It is also true that some families do have more information about bilingual education, so this answer is only one of the reasons

why they have chosen this type of education, but these people are aware of the other personal benefits that this type of education has in the students.

Families also do not consider that there is any type of negative effect on bilingual education. Therefore, in this sense it can be observed that families have a very positive vision of bilingual education. Furthermore, in the observations the families show great interest in the fact that their children continue to pursue this type of education.

The families of the students return to show a polarized opinion when they are asked the reasons why they have chosen that school. A large part of the families recognize that the main reason why they chose this school is due to the bilingual program. Although, there are many other families that have taken into account other reasons for selecting this school. In short, we can say that the school is chosen for various reasons and this leads us to think that the operation of it is good and enjoys popularity among families.

Families say they need and want more information about bilingual education in order to help their children at home. All this reflects the great interest of families in the development of students and the need for families to be taken into account from different sectors when dealing with issues of education.

With regard to bicultural competence, families claim not to have information on this aspect and many of them are undecided about the importance of this competence in the development of students. In this case, it is necessary to perform a greater analysis. In the first place, it is very curious that an important aspect of a good bilingual education is ignored by families. In this sense, it can be seen that the lack of information in this aspect is absolute, therefore there is no evidence that the treatment of bicultural competence in the school is correct. This is reflected in the data obtained from the questionnaire and in the observation made because the families recognize their ignorance and in the observation there has not been any practice with the students that demonstrates that there is a treatment of bicultural competence. This topic is very important because bilingual education cannot be understood separately from bicultural competence.

6. CONCLUSIONS

First of all, it is necessary to point out that in addition to having increased knowledge about the school studied and about bilingual education and its benefits in the development of students, a series of conclusions have been extracted as a result of the triangulation of the various data collected through of the research process.

Families have a very positive vision of bilingual education and its multiple benefits. Furthermore, families are involved in the school life of their children and consider their participation in the life of the school essential.

Families do not show any kind of negative attitude toward bilingual education, quite the contrary. That is, they are families that attach great importance to this type of education as a way to achieve a better future for their children, especially in the work ambit.

Families disagree with the information received about bilingual education, because they consider that this information is insufficient and limits them as families when it comes to helping their children with homework. Besides, this lack of information prevents families from assessing the education their children are receiving because they do not have the instruments to do so in an adequate manner.

It is important to emphasize that families have no knowledge of bicultural competence and what this entails in the personal development of their children. Therefore, in this sense, it would be very interesting for families to receive training in this respect. Also, from the governmental level measures should be promoted to favour this knowledge.

When families are asked about bilingual methodologies, they are unaware of the existence of several of them and they are not able to give an adequate judgment. In this sense, it is essential that knowledge of the different methodologies be promoted because it is the best way for families to choose the most appropriate for their children, as well as the type of school for children's schooling.

In a concrete way, in this study the sample was reduced so it would be very good to carry out a study of greater depth that would allow a more adjusted and realistic judgment. Although, as teachers, we know that the issue of bilingual education still has to be continued working and fostering. Many times, most of the doubts that families have are due to lack of information, because this ignorance leads them to rely on external influences that sometimes it have lack rigor.

Although families show a satisfactory opinion about the school, it is important to highlight that the school should increase the type of information it gives to families, give more priority to their participation in this topic and carry out a better follow-up and analysis of their bilingual practices. In this way, the quality of education would be greater and the development of the students would be even more optimal.

7. APPENDICES

7.1. Appendix I. Families questionnaire.

STATEMENT	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
I have enough information about bilingual education.	o	o	o	o	o
I know some methodologies within bilingual education.	o	o	o	o	o
I consider that bilingual education is important in the development of students.	o	o	o	o	o
The school has given me enough information about bilingual education and methodologies.	o	o	o	o	o
The bilingual education that my son/daughter receives is adequate.	o	o	o	o	o
An adequate bilingual education will allow the student a greater professional development.	o	o	o	o	o
For me bilingual education can negatively interfere with the child's academic	o	o	o	o	o

performance.					
The main reason why I have chosen this school is because it has a bilingual program.	O	O	O	O	O
I know what bicultural competence is.	O	O	O	O	O
I consider essential the development of the bicultural competence in order to contribute to the integral development of the students.	O	O	O	O	O
I would like to receive more information about bilingual education and what it implies.	O	O	O	O	O
I would like information to help my son/ daughter at home in the bilingual subjects.	O	O	O	O	O

* The questionnaire that has been given to families was in both English and Spanish in order to facilitate the comprehension.

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