Exploring the Perceptions of Iraqi College Instructors of Bilingual Environments

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Abstract

It can be seen that making a little research about the countries of the world will show that there are many diverse languages. In these countries, there will be people who use these languages with their different accents and dialects. Also, in many countries, it can be seen that many people are able to speak with different languages that they use to communicate with each other and to express themselves to the other people. Having this ability is seen as something common in many countries. Such thing shows the importance of being a bilingual or even a multilingual person. Getting the ability to speak multiple languages from birth is something that can be achieved if the person was immersed in a family environment that is considered multilingual. Moreover, being immersed in a bilingual or a multilingual educational environment helps in making the person becomes a bilingual or a multilingual. For these matters, this study tries to give a brief discussion about the matter of bilingualism and multilingualism. In addition, this study tries to give some information about the role of bilingual family environments and the importance of bilingual educational environments on the development of the languages of the person. As well, this study tries to collect information from Iraqi college instructors to show the status of bilingual environments in local contexts. The results of the study that were obtained from the questionnaire showed that the perceptions of the instructors revealed that there are variations and uncertainty concerning the bilingual family environments and the bilingual educational environments in Iraq. These local bilingual environments are still in the early phases. Although, there are readiness from the families and the educational institutions, much is still required to be done to support bilingual family environments and bilingual educational environments in Iraq. As a result, it remains essential to increase the background knowledge of the Iraqi college instructors by establishing workshops to discuss such matters. Such workshops can give them insights that they can carry and use when they try to teach their students.

Keywords: *Exploring, Perceptions, College Instructors, Bilingual Environments.*

Introduction

Before starting with this study, it is important to know that Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015, p.67) say that numerous societies exist in which the phenomenon of speaking two languages (bilingualism) or speaking more than two languages (multilingualism) are seen as the norm in these societies. Moreover, these numerous societies exist in which a part of the norms of speech community may be the usage of multilingual discourse.

In addition, Romaine (2000, p.33) says that there is a probability that about half of the population of the world is bilingual. Also, there is a probability that the phenomenon of bilingualism can be found in practically every republic in the world. It must be noticed that

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there is a distinction between two types of multilingualism. The first type of multilingualism is the 'individual type' and the second type of multilingualism is the 'societal type'. It can be seen that some countries in the world -like Canada- are considered to be officially bilingual in which there is the English language and the French language, although not all Canadian people are considered to be bilinguals. Also, there are other countries in which individual bilingualism can be found in a higher degree like 'Papua New Guinea' and 'India'. In such countries, the average person has the knowledge of at least two languages.

Because of the weight of the topic of bilingualism in Sociolinguistics, this research is conducted to explore the status of bilingual environments in local contexts in Iraq. One of the aims of this research is to give a brief introductory information about bilingualism and multilingualism in general. In addition, this research tries to provide some information to the Iraqi college instructors about the importance of the bilingual environment that a family can provide to their children and the bilingual environment that a school or a college can provide to their students. Furthermore, this research aims at gathering the opinions of the Iraqi college instructors that show their perceptions about the condition and the status of bilingual environments in local contexts.

Since one of the aims of this research is collecting information from the Iraqi college instructors, then a method is used to achieve this aim. This method is a questionnaire which was prepared by the researcher himself. The questionnaire encompasses fifteen items. These items are to elicit the opinions of the Iraqi college instructors of the status of bilingual family environments and bilingual educational environments in local contexts. The hypothesis of the study is that there is uncertainty concerning the bilingual family environments and bilingual educational environments in local contexts in Iraq.

As for the population of this study, they are 40 Iraqi college instructors. Those instructors are all specialized in the English language.

Since the topic of bilingual environments is a crucial one and because of the urgent necessity for many people in the society to be bilinguals or even multilinguals due to the demands of modern times, this research is written with the hope that it may give a starting point to the Iraqi college instructors that they can start from concerning the topic of bilingual family environment and bilingual educational environment. Also, it is hoped that this research may give a little bit of information to the Iraqi college instructors about the significance of the existence and the expanding of the bilingual environments in the society. Moreover, it is hoped that this research can be useful for those college students who are interested in acquiring more knowledge about the topic of bilingual environments and those students who want to do researches about this topic.

1.1 Three Levels

It is important to notice that there are different terms that need to be understood when talking about bilingual environments. There are three terms that need to be considered such as 'monolingualism', 'bilingualism', and 'multilingualism'. Swann et al. (2004, p.211) say that the term monolingualism can be given a definition. This term can be defined as the fact of being capable of speaking with only one language. This term is a one which is different from the term 'bilingual' or the term 'multilingual'. In other words, the term 'monolingual' is a term that contrast with these two terms. Individuals may be identified or characterized as monolinguals. Also, communities or entire states may be identified as being monolinguals. In communities where there is an availability to only one language, speakers are required to have an

understanding and to make different types of choices between the different variations of language and the different kinds of speaking. It must be seen that, at an individual level or at a state level, monolingualism is, sometimes, considered as something normal.

In addition, Crystal (2008, p.53) says that the term bilingual can be defined, in general sense, as the capability of speaking two languages by an individual person. The term bilingual is a term which is in contrast with the term of monolingual. In addition, the attention has been directed on the many different types of bilingualism, the various degrees of bilingualism, and the situations in which bilingualism can exist. Assumptions about the proficiency level that people are required to achieve before they can be qualified to be considered as bilingual are reflected by the various kinds of definitions of bilingualism. There has been an introduction to numerous technical distinctions. For example, there may be a distinction between different kinds of methods of learning that can be used to get the two languages. The method may be 'a simultaneous' in childhood or 'in sequence' in childhood. Also, the method that is used to get the two languages can be through 'formal instruction'.

Also, Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.55) say that the term bilingualism can be defined as the usage of, at least, two languages by an individual person or by a group of inhabitants who live in a specific region or live in a specific nation. The individual person who has the capability of speaking two languages is referred to by the term 'individual bilingualism'. The term 'societal bilingualism' is a term that can be used to refer to a situation in which two languages are found within a community, or to a situation in which the whole members of the community have a knowledge of two languages.

There are different types of distinctions when it comes to bilingualism. For example, Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.24) say that 'ambi- bilingualism' is a kind of bilingualism which refers to the capability to function well in two languages or more than that through a wide range of areas. Richards and Schmidt (2010, p.107) also say that the term 'compound bilingualism' is a one which can be used to refer to a situation in which only a single system of word meanings is possessed by the bilingual person. This system is applied to the first language and the second one as well. For example, for a bilingual who knows the French language and the English one, the word '*pain*' in French which means bread, and the English word '*bread*' both have similar meaning. As for 'coordinate bilingualism', it is a term that is used to refer to a situation in which two systems of words' meanings are possessed by the bilingual person. One of the systems is used for the words that he has a knowledge of in the first language, and the other system is used for the words that he has a knowledge of in the second language. For example, for a bilingual who speaks the French language and the English language as well, the French word for bread '*pain*' and the equivalent English word '*bread*' would have different meanings.

Also, Crystal (2008, p.53) says that there are the terms of 'elite bilingualism' and 'folk bilingualism'. In 'elite bilingualism', the second language is learned by a majority group, and this second language does not impose any danger to the first language. As for the 'folk bilingualism', there is a replacement process that happens to the first language where it is replaced by the second language.

Concerning the term multilingualism, Trask (1999, p.20) says that the term multilingualism can be defined as the capability of speaking three languages or more than three languages.

In addition, Wardhaugh and Fuller (2015, pp.82-83) say that, across the world, the phenomenon of multilingualism is a common one that can be found in many societies. This phenomenon appears in societies where groups of people who speak various languages live

closer to each other. Sometimes, those people can be divided by political boundaries and sometimes those people can be identified as being part in the same nation or in the same state. Whatever the case, those people have contact and must do communication with each other. Another different situation which causes the phenomenon of multilingualism is a case in which speakers who know one language make a movement to another area in which there is another language spoken. An example of this is the case of immigration from one place to another.

1.2 Family's Bilingual Environment

It is important to know that bilingualism should be considered by the parents as something essential. Myers-Scotton (2006, pp.12-13) says that studying bilingualism can show two intrinsic values. The first one is that something can be told to the people about the genetic potential of people by studying the topic of bilingualism. The ability to communicate by the usage of two languages is a part of the blueprint of the humans. An example can be given. It can be seen that sentences are produced by monolinguals by following the rules of the language that they speak. The question is that when sentences are produced by bilinguals by choosing elements from different languages, are there rules that those bilinguals appear to follow? Also, if there are these different rules, what are these rules exactly? By such information, linguists can be told more about how the language is processed in the brain than the information that they can get from focusing on studying the monolingual people only. In addition, important insights into how language can be acquired in general -by humans- can be given by focusing the study on the phases that young children experience who acquire two languages simultaneously. In summary, the understanding of the faculty of human language is expanded by studying bilingual people. As for the second value, it can be seen that a part of the experience of human is living in a community in which two languages or more than two languages are spoken.

As for the matter of bilingual family, Baker and Sienkewicz (2000, p.37) say that the future of the languages of the world and the future of the languages of bilingual children is related and connected very closely to the influence of the family. An almost infinite variations of situations is encompassed by the term bilingual family. As a result, this term is difficult to define.

Barron-Hauwaert (2011, pp.1-2) says that it can be seen that there might be a preference from one child to use more or less the language of the mother or the language of the father. In addition, the school's language or the language of the community where children live might be more comfortable to be used as a way of communication by one or more children. Moreover, the process of providing a sufficient exposure to each language and ensuring that both languages not only spoken but practiced by each child, are considered as the biggest challenge of the bilingual family. Barron-Hauwaert (2011, p.4) also defines a bilingual family as a household in which two or more than two languages are spoken regularly.

In addition, Barron-Hauwaert (2011, pp.10-11) says that there are a number of questions that are given by the parents concerning the topic of bilingualism within the family. It must be noticed that the advices that are given to answer these questions does not necessarily apply to all families. The first question is about whether the strategies of the family should be adapted as the family grows. The answer is that the strategy that is used by the family when they have a young child may not be relevant with an adolescent child. A rigid strategy like the '*one parent one language*' may work well with young children. The school's language or the language of the community might be preferred to be spoken by the older children at home. The balance of each language in the home can be affected by external factors like moving to a new country or to a new school in which there is a usage of a different language. As the family grows, adaption

is required from the parents. Also, the significance of preserving a parental language or heritage one, and the cultural value are required to be discussed with the children. The second question is about the solution if the children did not want to speak the minority language with their parents. The answer is that the significance of bilingualism can be discussed by the parents with their children depending on economic reasons, educational reasons, family, age, or in terms of their heritage. A solution outside the home need to be found by the parents such as activities, camps and language classes. With such things, the children of the bilingual family can be given a reason to speak that language through the links with other children. Often, a language can be supported by social lives and the friendships of the children as strongly as a parent can.

Barron-Hauwaert (2011, p.11) says that the third question is about the type of a language that can be used as a way of communication between the children of the bilingual family. The answer is that the strongest influence will come from the language of the parents in the early years. The language which is preferred by the children can be changed as the children grow. Also, mixing the languages can be enjoyed by many siblings. The minority language of the siblings may be reverted to in public. The reason for this thing is to have private conversations with each other. The language choice of the children cannot really be controlled by the parents and this choice should be respected by the parents. The future effect, the country language and the school language need to be revised by the parents if they concerned about the language of their sibling.

Barron-Hauwaert (2011, p.12) says that the fourth question is about whether bilingualism will be affected by the number of children in the family. The answer is that more adult conversation will be heard by one child. So, more sophisticated grammar and a broader vocabulary will possibly be developed by the child. More questions will be asked by the child and more 'one-to-one time' will be available between the parents and the child. With two children, there may be less direct 'adult-child talk'. However, a benefit can be received from 'child-to-child talk'. A younger sibling may be helped by watching and listening to the usage of the two languages by the other siblings.

Barron-Hauwaert (2011, p.12) says that the fifth question is about whether the older sibling can make the language be taught to a younger child. The answer is that the process of teaching the younger siblings the language is something loved by the big sisters. The minority or the weak language can be supported by this natural interest that comes from the big sisters. Books and movies can be shared by children with a new baby. However, the process of teaching should not be left to siblings. The reason for this thing is that a whole range of language models are needed by the children. The sixth question is about whether the age gap between the children of the bilingual family matter in language use. The answer is that more things tend to be shared by siblings who are close-in-age. They will have similar live style and go to school together. An important role will be played by the language in the everyday communication and the games of the close-in-age siblings. Separate lives may be noticed between siblings who have a gap of six or more years. However, the younger child is more likely to be taught by the older one.

Barron-Hauwaert (2011, pp.12-13) also says that the seventh question is about whether girls talk at an earlier age more than boys. The answer is that, generally, girls talk a little earlier than boys. Often, more focus to small social groups will be shown by the girls. In such groups, the process of making friends requires significant skills such as talking and communicating. On the other hand, more interest may be given by the boys to the physical skills. Yet, at the end of primary school, the linguistic skills of the boys and the girls will be similar.

Barron-Hauwaert (2011, p.13) says that the eighth question is about whether bilingualism is affected by birth order. The answer is that it can be observed that siblings in the family tend to be dominated by the first-borns. The middle ones try to find a different way to make their parents feel happy. As for the last-born children, the role of the 'baby' may continue to be kept by them as long as they can. The status of the last-born children can be used to get the attention. A wider vocabulary may be owned by the older first-born child. First-born children may give extra effort in order that their speaking or writing be correct. Such a thing does not mean that the same proficiency of the older sibling cannot be achieved by the younger siblings. Less pressure can be felt by the younger siblings to be correct. The language can be approached by younger siblings by more active ways.

Barron-Hauwaert (2011, pp.13-14) says that the ninth question is about the solution if one of the children decided not to use one language while it is spoken perfectly by the other child. The answer is that unconscious competing between the two siblings can be the reason that such problem exists. Not all siblings will be possessing similar artistic and musical talents. The linguistic abilities cannot be at similar levels between the siblings. This is a thing that needs to be remembered by the parents. A child may, sometimes, have a feeling that a language may be more culturally attached to it. As a result, the other language can be retracted to an inactive state or it can be under-used by the child. Also, the child can have a feeling that he does not have the ability to catch up in one language. As a result, one language will be dropped by the child. So, support and encouragement are required to be given from the parents to the child.

Barron-Hauwaert (2011, p.14) says that the last question, is about the reason that children who have the same input end up different linguistically. The answer is that the way siblings learn, the chances that are given to them to practice the language, the feedback that they get when they try to talk with each language are all things that affect the siblings who live in the same home and have the same language input from the parent. Even twins who live in the same environment and have similar genes can turn out differently. It is important to know that a language is approached differently from different point of view by each child. Also, it is significant to know that a new dimension is brought up to the family by each child. Therefore, the language use may be increased and decreased by each child in one or more languages.

In addition, Escamilla and Hopewell (2008, p.714) say that a thoughtful approach is required to achieve the goal of raising bilingual children. This thoughtful approach is to regulate the time and the place in which the children make an engagement with each language. The two languages may be acquired by the children either in a simultaneous way -from birth- or in succession.

Moreover, Escamilla and Hopewell (2008, p.715) say that differential amount of controls are experienced by the families over which strategy they would like to use with their children. For example, there is the '*one parent one language*' strategy. With this strategy, there is an assumption that there are different dominant languages that are possessed by members of family who are adults. Also, in this strategy, there is an assumption that a simultaneous acquisition of the language is the goal of the family. The children who belong to families who follow this strategy are required to learn to give an equal respect to both languages. Also, with such a strategy, the father uses his language to communicate with the child and the mother uses her language to do the same thing. There is an expectation that the child responds and communicates with them in kind. The child makes an association by linking the language of the father with the father and the language of the mother with the mother. In this strategy, a separation between the two systems of communication is learned by the child. There has been a usage and a

demonstration of this strategy by various scholars and researchers as they applied it with their children. However, with this strategy, some obstacles appear. For example, when parents communicate with each other, which language can be used to achieve the communication? If the father and the mother both were bilinguals, they can make a choice to mix the languages by using the language of the one who starts the talk or everyone can stick to its dominant language. In addition, a choice between the majority and the minority language can be one of the options to relay on. There has been a suggestion by some that the status of the minority language can be increased by giving it the priority within the home. This preference counteracts the hegemony of the English. Another difficulty appears if one of the parents does not know the language of the other. When one of the parents is not capable of understanding and participating in the conversations of the family, then a feeling of exclusion will appear. Furthermore, being totally consistent is a difficult matter to do. Without doubt, there will be occasions encountered by a parent -who speaks the minority language- in which a revert to the majority language is seen as something inevitable. As a result, it is required from the parents to decide how different situations can be handled.

Escamilla and Hopewell (2008, p.715) say that another strategy that can be used is the '*one parent one location*'. Different amount of variations can be noticed for this strategy. These variations depend on the circumstances of the family and their goals. The families who adopt this strategy are required to decide on the language that is used in communication inside home, in school, in public or in places of worship. In a quick way, children reach to a realization that each language has a special place to be used and link each language with a specific place. When the minority language is spoken by both the father and the mother, then this strategy is often chosen by the family. In home, there is a usage of the common native language for communication and the second language can be acquired by making an interaction with the community. This is the situation that can frequently appear with the immigrant families in which both parents are monolingual speakers of a language that is not English. Also, this method is used by other families in which parents are mixed language parents. In such families, the dominant language of one of the parent is forego in order that the other language is developed by the family. With this strategy, position of the minority language is elevated. Its usage is evaluated by the family as they consider it the family's language. In the United States, a different version of this strategy can be seen. This version can be seen in the monolingual families who have a desire that their children be raised bilingually. There is a heavily dependence on educational institutions -by those families- to provide the suitable environment that can make their children learn a second language. Children are often sent to an international or immersion schools in these situations.

Escamilla and Hopewell (2008, p.715) also say that parents will notice that this strategy is challenged. The societal pressure to participate in speaking English presents a challenge to this strategy.

In addition, Escamilla and Hopewell (2008, p.715) say that there are other strategies that can be used. For example, specific days of the week can be devoted to the use of the target language. Also, patterns of geographic migration can be used to determine language use. Furthermore, the acquisition of language may be connected to religious affiliations. The family languages may be enhanced if there was a participation- by the children of bilingual families- in specific educational opportunities that can be found outside home.

Moreover, Escamilla and Hopewell (2008, p.717) say that it must be noticed that children are helped by their parents to learn to celebrate and embrace bilingualism. Simulating linguistic

setting can be provided by the family and positive attitudes can be modeled by the family toward the child who is developing bilingualism. A young child can be much motivated by the praise of the family. Communicative competence should be emphasized over linguistic correctness by the parents. A secondary language support should be provided by the parents, and this can be delivered through visual media in the home and the print one. The libraries of the bilingual family emphasize the significance of immersing oneself in each of the blossoming languages. Biliteracy can be fostered by the parents when they listen to the loud reading of their children in each language. The foundation for positive language experiences can be provided by games and hobbies. Opportunities should be found by the parents in order for them to engage in meaningful cultural activities and linguistic ones also. The social opportunities of the individual can be extended by bilingualism. As a result, bilingualism can be seen as an advantage and friendship possibilities are facilitated by bilingualism not hindered.

Escamilla and Hopewell (2008, p.718) say that conviction and dedication are required in order for the child to be raised bilingually in a monolingual culture. The commitment to deliver social and communicative advantages to the children of the ability to talk in many languages requires fostering either simultaneous acquisition of the language or a sequential one. The language strategies of the family should take into consideration the language proficiencies and the opportunities. The language strategies of the family should foster the stimulating linguistic environments that put an emphasis on the practice of positive communicative practices. More sophisticated language strategies will be employed by the children as they grow up.

1.3 Bilingual Educational Environments

It is important to know the meaning of bilingual education and the different educational programs that come with bilingual education. Myers-Scotton (2006, p.397) says that, in a state that is considered bilingual, much of the acquisition planning encompasses the providence of some kind of education that is termed as bilingual. If a program that focuses on bilingual education is installed in a nation state, then such a thing, usually, points to a situation in which the children start school with one language (often, the first language of the children) that is used in instruction. After that, a switch happens. In other words, the first language that is used in the instruction is switched by the official language. Such a switch happens in a later year. Also, it can be seen that there is another situation which encompasses bilingual education. In such a situation, one can observe that, in some nation states, the first language of the children will be transformed to become a school subject and continues to be a school subject in later years. Also, in such a situation, the teaching of the children may be given by the usage of more than one language. Furthermore, in many nation states, the educational programs that are considered as 'bilinguals' face some hurdles. One of the hurdles is that, in such educational programs, teachers with satisfactory training are not always available.

Also, Myers-Scotton (2006, p.398) says that if one tried to understand the various policies of a language, then this one cannot be sure exactly what is meant that children are enrolled in educational programs that are considered as 'bilingual'. Different and various models are introduced to give a clear view of how these educational programs that have the label 'bilingual' may look like. These five models are all models that can be found in the United States. Programs in other places also use these models or variations on them. Moreover, some facts can be given about programs that are considered as bilingual. One of the general facts is that all the children, who are in one of these programs, may not speak the same first language. As a result, a modification must happen to the program. Another general fact is that the goal, in some nation states such as Bolivia, is that multiculturalism's idea is instilled. In addition, the

goal can be that children build their appreciation in their first language and to learn the official language. Also, another general fact is that the mainstream classrooms are the classrooms of children who are first language speakers of the official language or those children who are judged to have a proficiency in that official language.

Additionally, Myers-Scotton (2006, p.398) says that the following five programs are the main programs. The first type of bilingual programs is called the '*early exit programs*'. In this type, the children start going to school in which their first language is used in instruction. This happens only for the first grade, and sometimes for grade two. After that, those children move on and be a part of mainstream classrooms. The second type is called '*late exit programs*'. In this type, instruction through the usage of the first language continues to be given through primary school to the children. This happens even if children have been given the classification that they are proficient in the language that is considered as the official language. The third type is something called the '*structured immersion programs*'. In this type, classes are completely filled with children who do not have proficiency in the official language. The teachers who teach children in these classes are trained teachers who know how to deal with bilingual education. In the United States, those teachers are trained in ESL 'English as a second language'. Ideally, those teachers know some knowledge of the language of the children. Making the children move on to be able to join mainstream classrooms is the main goal of this type of programs. This thing is expected to be done in the period of two or three years. Sometimes, this thing can be achieved in one year only.

Myers-Scotton (2006, p.398) also says that the fourth type is something called the '*two-way programs*'. Ideally, in this type, half of the speakers are speakers who use non-official language and the other half of the speakers are speakers in which their first language is the official language. The idea, in this type, is that each of the two halves acquire the language of the other half. It is important to know that it seems that these types of programs are rare. The fifth and last type of programs is something called the '*sheltered programs*'. Another name of it is the '*content-based programs*'. In this type, a mainstream classroom is filled with children who are in the process of learning the language that is considered the official language. The special instruction strategies and the other visual aids are used as ways of communication between the teacher and the students to give comprehensible input. Also, in such programs, transmitting the content to the children is the thing that is focused on. The official language is also expected to be acquired by the children too. Moreover, these programs appear to be rare.

In addition, the duration of bilingual instruction can also vary from one place to another. Carrasquillo and Rodríguez (2002, p.69) say that it can be seen that the amount of time that is given to bilingual instruction differs among different communities. Such a matter depends on different things. The first thing is the number of years that the LEP students (the students who do not have a complete proficiency in the English language) and the ELL students (English language learners) need in order to acquire a satisfactory proficiency in the English language to be capable to learn through the English language. The second thing that determines the amount of bilingual instruction is the desire that the community is having. In other words, the desire that the program to be continued by the community in order that skills in the native language will be preserved by the students.

2.1 Methodology

The main point of focus in this research is to examine the perceptions of Iraqi college instructors of the status of bilingual environments in local contexts. These are the bilingual

environments that can be found inside the family or inside the educational institutions. The following section shows the procedure that is followed in order to achieve the main aim of the study and to test the hypothesis of the study. One procedure is used to accomplish the main aim of the study. This procedure is a questionnaire that is constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire consists of fifteen items. These items are to elicit the perceptions of the Iraqi college instructors of the status of local bilingual environments. The number of the Iraqi college instructors who participated in this questionnaire is 40. Those are all instructors who are specialized in the English language. The instructors are from different Iraqi universities.

It must be noticed that there are two types of validities. The first one is 'face validity' and the second one is 'content validity'. Patten and Newhart (2018, p.126) say that judgmental validity encompasses assessments that are based on or relied on professional knowledge. Judgmental validity is of two kinds. The first one is the 'content validity' and the second one is the 'face validity'. The 'content validity', from its name, is considered as an assessment of a measurement that is relied on the suitability of its contents. Also, Patten and Newhart (2018, p.127) say that 'face validity' is considered as a type which judges whether a measurement -on the face of the measurement- seems to be valid.

In order to examine the validity of the questionnaire, this questionnaire is judged by a number of professors who teach the English language at many Iraqi universities.

2.1 Discussion

The results that are obtained from the questionnaire showed different variations concerning the items that the Iraqi instructors were asked about. The first item which is about whether the majority of Iraqi parents were bilingual or multilingual, 3 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (7.5%), 19 instructors chose '*Agree*' (47.5%), 2 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (5%), 15 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (37.5%), and only 1 instructor chose '*Strongly disagree*' (2.5%). This shows that Iraqi families have the knowledge of different languages. However, the number of instructors who chose disagree also shows that a good number of instructors does not think that Iraqi families possess different languages that can be used to teach their children.

As for the second item which is about whether Iraqi families have the knowledge of the different strategies that can be used to teach their children to be bilinguals, 3 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (7.5%), 13 instructors chose '*Agree*' (32.5%), 2 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (5%), 21 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (52.5%), and only 1 instructor chose '*Strongly disagree*' (2.5%). The high number of instructors who chose disagree shows that Iraqi families do not have enough knowledge of the different strategies.

The third item which is about whether Iraqi families have the mindset that recognizes the importance of learning multiple languages to help them in their everyday life, 5 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (12.5%), 22 instructors chose '*Agree*' (55%), 2 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (5%), 11 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (27.5%), and none of the instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (0%). The percentage of the instructors who chose agree shows that Iraqi families have the mentality of making themselves become bilingual or multilingual people.

The fourth item which is about whether Iraqi families have the mindset of spending time, money and effort to learn multiple languages to help them in the process of raising bilingual or multilingual children, 6 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (15%), 19 instructors chose '*Agree*' (47.5%), 4 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (10%), 10 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (25%), and only 1

instructor chose '*Strongly disagree*' (2.5%). These numbers show that Iraqi families have this mentality of giving time, money, and effort to become bilinguals or multilinguals so they can raise bilingual or multilingual children.

The fifth item which is about whether Iraqi families know how to deal with language challenges that appear in bilingual or multilingual environments, 4 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (10%), 15 instructors chose '*Agree*' (37.5%), 5 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (12.5%), 15 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (37.5%), and 1 instructor chose '*Strongly disagree*' (2.5%). The percentage of the instructors who chose agree and those who chose disagree shows that there is uncertainty concerning this matter.

As for the sixth item which is about whether Iraqi college students feel embarrassed to speak with different languages with their friends and instructors, 12 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (30%), 22 instructors chose '*Agree*' (55%), none of the instructors chose '*Neutral*' (0%), 6 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (15%), and none of the instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (0%). The high percentage of the instructors who chose agree shows that Iraqi college students feel embarrassed to use their different languages to communicate in college. This thing may point that something in the atmospheres of universities in Iraq does not encourage the students to do so.

The seventh item which is about whether educational institutions in Iraq make competitions and activities to encourage the creation of bilingual or multilingual environments and encourage the students to learn various languages, 5 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (12.5%), 17 instructors chose '*Agree*' (42.5%), 2 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (5%), 13 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (32.5%), and 3 instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (7.5%). This thing shows that educational institutions such as universities and schools make an effort in supporting the students.

Concerning the eighth item which is about whether the social environment in Iraq supports the learning, usage or the existence of various languages in the society, 4 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (10%), 16 instructors chose '*Agree*' (40%), none of the instructors chose '*Neutral*' (0%), 18 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (45%), and 2 instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (5%). It can be seen that combining the number of instructors who chose strongly agree and agree with the instructors who chose disagree and strongly disagree shows similar results. As a result, there is uncertainty concerning this matter.

For the ninth item which is about whether Iraqi environment is a fertile one in which people can have the opportunity to learn different languages, 10 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (25%), 18 instructors chose '*Agree*' (45%), 3 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (7.5%), 9 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (22.5%), and none of the instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (0%). This shows that people can have various opportunities to learn different languages in Iraq.

The tenth item which is about whether educational environments such as schools and universities encourage the students to learn different languages, 2 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (5%), 17 instructors chose '*Agree*' (42.5%), 2 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (5%), 17 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (42.5%), and 2 instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (5%). It can be observed that combining the number of instructors who chose strongly agree and agree with the instructors who chose disagree and strongly disagree shows similar results in numbers. Yet, there is uncertainty concerning this matter.

The eleventh item which is about whether educational programs can be found in local schools and colleges, 2 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (5%), 17 instructors chose '*Agree*' (42.5%), 5

instructors chose '*Neutral*' (12.5%), 16 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (40%), and none of the instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (0%). Combining the percentage of the instructors who chose strongly agree and those who chose neutral and disagree shows that schools and universities does not employ bilingual educational programs. Yet the close percentages also show that there is uncertainty concerning this matter.

The Twelfth item which is about whether Iraqi instructors know the different kinds of bilingual education, 4 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (10%), 24 instructors chose '*Agree*' (60%), 5 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (12.5%), 7 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (17.5%), and none of the instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (0%). This shows that Iraqi instructors have a background knowledge of the different types of bilingual education programs.

As for the thirteenth item which is about whether local schools and universities have rich libraries that are full with books that support the creation of multilingual environments, 6 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (15%), 24 instructors chose '*Agree*' (60%), 1 instructor chose '*Neutral*' (2.5%), 8 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (20%), and 1 instructor chose '*Strongly disagree*' (2.5%). The percentages show that the libraries support in the students by providing them with different books of different languages.

Concerning the fourteenth item which is about whether the curriculums in schools and universities are available with versions that are written with different languages, 4 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (10%), 16 instructors chose '*Agree*' (40%), 2 instructors chose '*Neutral*' (5%), 15 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (37.5%), and 3 instructors chose '*Strongly disagree*' (7.5%). Combining the percentages of those instructors who chose strongly agree and agree with those who chose neutral, disagree and strongly agree shows similar results. So, there is uncertainty concerning this matter.

The fifteenth item which is about whether teaching and academic staffs at educational institutions are capable of providing explanations of educational materials with the usage of different languages, 5 instructors chose '*Strongly agree*' (12.5%), 21 instructors chose '*Agree*' (52.5%), only 1 instructor chose '*Neutral*' (2.5%), 12 instructors chose '*Disagree*' (30%), and only 1 instructor chose '*Strongly disagree*' (2.5%). This shows that teaching academic staffs have this skill.
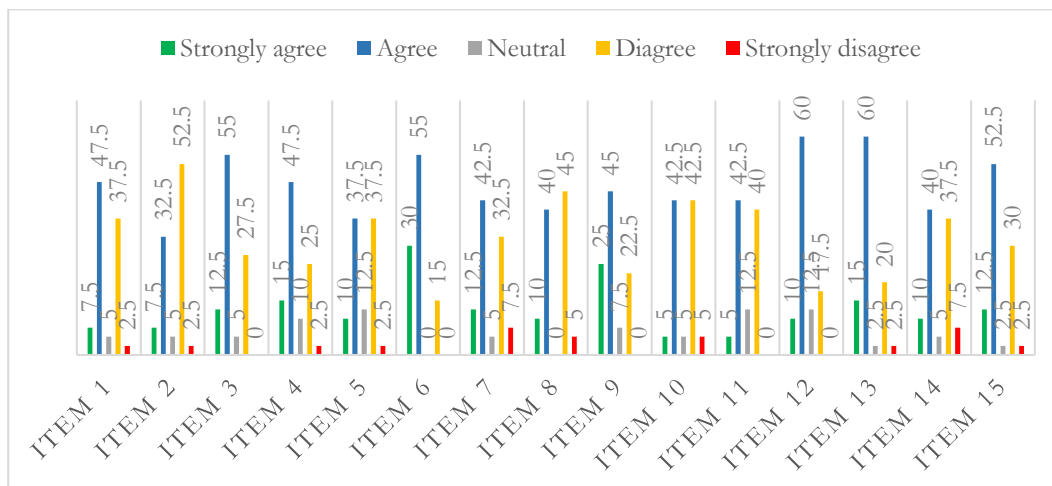

Fig (1): The Percentages of the Answers of Iraqi College Instructors Concerning Bilingual Family Environments and Bilingual Educational Environments in Iraqi Context.

2.2 Conclusion

The modern times that people live in, nowadays, and as they enter a new era of a technological advancement stress on the fact that becoming an individual who speak two, three or more than three languages is not a privilege anymore, but a necessity that must be considered and worked on.

The results that were obtained from the questionnaire showed variations in the answers. It can be said that although Iraqi families have the mindset that recognizes the importance of being bilinguals or multilinguals, and have the mindset that shows readiness to give time, money and efforts to help themselves to become bilinguals or multilinguals to raise their children to become bilingual or multilingual children, they do not have enough knowledge of the different strategies that can be used by bilingual families to raise bilingual or multilingual children. Also, the answers of the instructors showed that there is uncertainty about whether Iraqi families know how to deal with language problems that appear in bilingual or multilingual environments. In addition, the answers of the instructors showed that students in collages feel embarrassed to speak with different languages with their friends and instructors. The answers of the instructors showed that there is uncertainty about whether the social environment in Iraq supports the learning, usage or the existence of various languages in the society. In addition, the answers of the instructors showed that there is uncertainty about whether educational environments such as schools and universities encourage the students to learn different languages. Also, the answers of the instructors showed that there is uncertainty about whether educational programs can be found in local schools and universities, and uncertainty about whether the curriculums in schools and universities are available with versions that are written with different languages. It can be said that although the different kinds of bilingual education are known by the Iraqi instructors, and although academic staffs at educational institutions can provide explanations of educational materials with the usage of different languages, and although local schools and universities have rich libraries that are full with books that support the creation of multilingual environments, much is still needed to be done to support the bilingual family environment and bilingual educational environments in local contexts.

Because of the significance of this matter, this research focused on the matter of bilingual family environments and bilingual educational environments in local contexts in Iraq. It was shown that there are different levels when it comes to acquirement of language. Speaking a sufficient amount of only one language make the person be known as 'monolingual'. Also, speaking a sufficient amount of two languages will give the person the title of 'bilingual'. Furthermore, speaking a sufficient amount of more than three languages will make the person acquire the title of 'multilingual'. It must be noticed that the level of control over the languages can vary from one person to another.

In addition, this research focused on the matter of the bilingual environments that can be found among various families across the world. It has been shown that these families can adopt different kinds of strategies such as 'one parent, one language' where the bilingual father speaks only one language with the child, and the bilingual mother speaks only one language with the child. There is also another strategy that is called 'one parent, one location'. In this strategy, the children of the bilingual family reaches to a realization that every place has its own exclusive language that must be used in. Of course, different variations can be exhibited by the different families when they adopt these strategies. Nevertheless, this research also showed that bilingual

or multilingual families can face some hurdles when it comes to raise their children to become bilinguals or multilinguals. These different hurdles need to be considered by the bilingual or multilingual parents who want their children to become proficient users of the different languages. A sufficient amount of time and effort must be given by the parents to their children to help them in the process of developing the different languages. It must be remembered that the bilingual or multilingual families will, with no doubt, adopt different strategies as their children get older.

In addition, the age of the children is a significant factor that makes the bilingual or multilingual family adopt different strategies. Also, a balance between the languages must appear. It may happen, sometimes, that the minority language will be left out by the child of the bilingual or multilingual family. As a result, the parents must find solutions outside home such as activities, camps and language's classes that show the importance of the minority language to the child and to his friends. Also, it must be seen that the choice of the preferred language that the child sticks to can change as circumstances in life change. As a result, the choice of the child need to be respected by the family and it is a good thing to show the child the importance of the other languages, the parental language, and the heritage of the family. Furthermore, a sufficient space can be given to older children to teach the younger children the languages of the bilingual or multilingual family. Yet, this process must be monitored by the parents because young children need different types of language models. Age gab between the children of the bilingual families must also be considered by the parents and thought about. However, older children can always be there and support in the process of teaching the younger children. Also, it may happen, sometimes, that some children in the bilingual or multilingual family may feel unable to speak with some of the languages of the family or uncomfortable with, therefore, support and understanding must be given by the parents. Each child in the bilingual or multilingual family need to be given a sufficient time and care by the parents.

As for the matter of bilingual educational environments, it was shown that educational institutions can adopt different types of bilingual educational programs. Programs such as 'two way programs', 'sheltered programs', or 'immersion programs' are some of the examples. These programs depend on the circumstances of the students inside the educational institution itself. The goal in these programs is to help the students to be developed to become bilinguals.

2.3 Suggestions and Recommendations

Instructors at the universities can help by establishing many workshops that show the significance of being a bilingual or a multilingual person. Also, the media and the social media can contribute in enriching the background knowledge of the society by showing the privileges of being a bilingual or a multilingual person.

Educational institutions can make educational conferences that focus on the matter of bilingual environments. The effectiveness of the bilingual or multilingual family in the society can be shown. Also, the different kinds of strategies that can be used to raise bilingual or multilingual children can be talked about. Furthermore, these conferences can show how to deal with language problems that appear when raising bilingual or multilingual children. Moreover, these conferences can show the different types of bilingual educational programs and encourage the society to use it in schools and colleges. It can be said that the people in the society must try to become bilinguals or multilinguals if they want to catch up with the trails of the train of modernity and technological advancement.

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Appendix

Dear instructor,

This questionnaire is to collect information that is needed to accomplish a research paper. The topic focuses on the status of familial and educational bilingual environments in local contexts in Iraq. You are kindly requested to provide your opinions by answering the following.

Note: **SA** (=Strongly agree), **A** (=Agree), **N** (=Neutral), **D** (=Disagree), **Sd** (=Strongly Disagree)

No.	items	Sa	A	N	D	Sd
1.	Within Iraqi Environment, the majority of children have parents who are considered bilingual or multilingual who are capable of speaking with more than two languages.					
2.	Within Iraqi atmosphere, families (fathers and mothers) have the knowledge of the different strategies that are used to raise bilingual or multilingual children such as 'one father, one language' or 'one language, one location', etc.					
3.	Members of Iraqi families (fathers and mothers) have the mindset that recognizes the significance of learning two, three or more than three languages to help them in their everyday life.					

No.	items	Sa	A	N	D	Sd
4.	Iraqi families (fathers and mothers) have the mindset of giving time, money, and effort to learn extra languages to become bilinguals or multilinguals to help them in the process of raising their children to become bilinguals or multilinguals.					
5.	Iraqi families (fathers and mothers) have the knowledge of how to deal with language challenges that appear in bilingual or multilingual environments.					
6.	Students at schools and universities feel embarrassed to speak with different languages with their friends and their instructors.					
7.	Within Iraqi environment, educational institutions such as schools and universities create competitions and activities that focus on encouraging the process of creating multilingual atmospheres and motivating the students to acquire two, three or more than three languages.					
8.	The social environment in Iraq supports the learning, usage, or the existence of various languages in the local society.					
9.	Due to the ability to travel abroad, or communicate with other people through the internet, Iraqi society became a fertile environment where people can become bilinguals or multilinguals who are capable of speaking with two, three or more than three languages.					
10.	Local educational environments in schools -at different provinces- and in universities- at different departments- encourage the students to learn two, three, or more than three languages.					
11.	Within Iraqi Environment, different types of bilingual educational programs can be found in educational institutions (schools and universities) such as 'two way programs', 'sheltered programs', or 'immersion programs', to teach the students.					
12.	Iraqi academic instructors have the knowledge of the different types of bilingual educational programs that can be used to teach students at different stages.					
13.	Educational institutions such as schools and universities -at different departments- have libraries that contain books and academic resources of different local and international languages that can help the students to become bilinguals or multilinguals and support the idea of creating multilingual environments.					
14.	Curriculums at schools and universities –at different departments- are available with different versions that are written with different local languages such as -Arabic, Kurdish, Turkmen, Syriac- or international languages such as -French, Spanish, English, German- to help the students to be bilinguals or multilinguals and support in creating multilingual educational environments.					
15.	Teaching staff at schools and academic staff at universities -at different departments- are capable of explaining academic topics, subjects and educational materials in more than two languages.					