

## **EXPERIENCE OF BILINGUAL COUNTRIES IN THE ISSUE OF MASTERING THE MINORITY LANGUAGE: EFFECTIVE BORROWING INTO PRESCHOOL PEDAGOGY OF UKRAINE IN ORDER TO FORM FOREIGN LANGUAGE COMMUNICATIVE COMPETENCE IN CHILDREN OF MIDDLE PRESCHOOL AGE**

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*The article addresses the relevant topic for Ukraine of developing foreign language communicative competence in preschool and, specifically, middle preschool age. The research aims to analyze and summarize the experience of bilingual countries in the formation of communicative competence in minority languages, as well as to determine practical boundaries for its adoption in Ukrainian preschool pedagogy with the ultimate goal to develop effective methodologies for children of middle preschool age to acquire foreign language communicative competence. In the research process, theoretical methods, such as literature and documentation analysis, were used, along with a set of general theoretical methods: abstraction and concretization, analysis and synthesis, comparison, contrast, structuring, induction, and deduction. As a result of the research, the experience of forming language communicative competence in minority languages in countries, such as Finland, Canada, Malta, and Israel, was analyzed and summarized. The main effective methods for developing communicative competence in the language of minorities in children of middle preschool age were identified, including the method of total immersion, the method of partial immersion based on the principle of one educator - one language, and the method of partial immersion based on the principle of one educator - two languages. The widespread use of the translanguaging approach and language mixing in the process of forming communicative competence in minority languages in the context of bilingual countries has been identified. The main conditions, under which the formation of communicative competence in minority languages occurs in bilingual countries, have been summarized, a comparison with similar conditions for developing foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age in Ukraine has been made. It has been identified that the main contextual difference in Ukraine is the extensive geographical distribution of a foreign language that influences children's understanding of its practical significance and the possibility of live communication with it. A conclusion has been drawn regarding the necessity of carefully transferring the experience of bilingual countries in using the translanguaging approach during the formation of foreign language communicative competence in Ukraine, since this caution is warranted because its application may result in a decrease in the motivation of children of middle preschool age to acquire a foreign language, given the possibility of achieving communication goals through their native language. The main assets of the studied bilingual countries that can be effectively borrowed by the preschool pedagogy of Ukraine in the process of developing methods for the formation of foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age are highlighted, as a normative consolidation of the method of such formation, taking into account the greater effectiveness of early and total immersion in comparison with other forms of mastery of children of middle preschool age in a foreign language, managing groups of children with different levels of foreign language speaking competence and the practice of introducing children with an insignificant level of competence in a foreign language into groups with a higher level of foreign language communicative competence*

**Keywords:** foreign language communicative competence, children of middle preschool age, bilingual countries, immersion

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## 1. Introduction

Mastery of at least one foreign language is an urgent necessity today. In the European Union, foreign language competence is recognized as “one of the basic skills that all EU citizens need to acquire in order to improve their educational and employment opportunities” [1]. The official position of the European Union is the recognition of the necessity for each of its citizens to be proficient in two foreign languages [2, 3] and an emphasis on the appropriateness and effectiveness of starting the acquisition of a foreign language during the preschool period [4]. As Ukraine prepares for membership in the European Union, it requires the harmonization of its practices in the formation of foreign language communicative competence to the standards of the mentioned organization. At present, the Basic Component of Preschool Education [5] declares the formation of foreign language communicative competence in preschool children as an optional component of preschool education. However, the approaches, applied in preschool education institutions for children's acquisition of a foreign language, are limited to the formation of a specific set of language knowledge and do not ensure the emergence of genuine foreign language communicative competence, such as the ability to communicate in a foreign language in real communication situations. Under these conditions, the question arises for Ukrainian preschool pedagogy about the development of effective methodologies for forming foreign language communicative competence in preschool children, particularly of middle preschool age, and the application of positive experiences from other countries in this field.

Countries with a long history of bilingualism/polylingualism due to objective circumstances of multicultural society and where the formation of bilingualism/polylingualism in children is a pressing practical issue can be considered as leading experts in the field of forming foreign language communicative competence. These are multilingual countries where ensuring the population's proficiency in all official languages of the country, including the languages of minorities, is relevant. These countries are innovators in research on the formation of foreign language communicative competence in children.

At the same time, the borrowing of any experience should be conscious and thoughtful. The same methodologies may yield different results depending on the conditions, in which they are implemented. Therefore, effective borrowing of positive experiences from bilingual countries in the formation of foreign language communicative competence in Ukrainian preschool pedagogy is currently relevant, necessitating the need for this research.

## 2. Literary review

The analysis of the scientific literature gave a chance to identify that the formation of foreign language communicative competence is widely studied in foreign literature. An important part of research in this area is from bilingual countries in the field of developing communicative competence in the language of minorities. These studies concern a wide range of issues, such as language mixing [6]; interaction between preschool edu-

cation institutions and parents in order to form effective bilingualism in preschool children [7]; agency of young children in relation to language policy and practice in bi- and multilingual preschool [8]; teachers mediation strategies in a bilingual preschool classroom [9]; the effect of foreign language programmes in early childhood education and care [10]; early language awareness in verbal and nonverbal interaction in the preschool bilingual classroom [11]; teachers strategies implements to create a language-conducive classroom context [12]; teachers agency [13] etc.

The problem of forming a foreign language communicative competence is also becoming an increasingly frequent subject of domestic scientific research. Some of them are devoted to the issue of borrowing positive foreign experience of teaching foreign languages. Sheiko Yu., Oleksiv G., Morskaya N. studied the role of bilingualism in the organization of education in preschool educational institutions and schools in the province of Alberta (Canada) [14]; Kovadlo A., Yankovich O., Bilitskaya K., Zdanevich L. – Poland's experience in teaching a foreign language in preschool age [15, 16]; Maksimenko A. – study of foreign languages in French schools [17]; Biletskaya I. – United State experience in the application of traditional and innovative methods of teaching foreign languages [18]; Pivovar Yu. – features of early learning of a foreign language in the focus of interpretation of modern German methods [19]; Us-timenko V. – immersion education in Canada [20].

At the same time, there is no study of the generalized experience of countries with a bilingual environment in the formation of communicative competence in the minority language in children of middle preschool age and general contextual conditions for its formation. Comparison of these conditions with contextual features of the formation of foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age of Ukraine contributes to the possibility of highlighting the achievements of the studied country, which can be effectively borrowed by preschool pedagogy of Ukraine. So, the need for the conducted research is due to the importance of enriching domestic preschool bilingualism with knowledge about the appropriate limits of using the experience of bilingual countries in the formation of communicative competence in the minority language in the practice of Ukraine when teaching children of middle preschool age a foreign language.

## 3. Research aim and task

The aim of this study is to analyze and generalize the experience and assets of countries with a bilingual environment in the issue of the formation of communicative competence in the language of minorities and to determine the appropriate limits of their borrowing in preschool pedagogy of Ukraine with the aim of developing effective methods of mastering foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age.

To achieve the stated goal, the following tasks are set:

1. Analyze and summarize the experience of bilingual countries in the acquisition of minority languages by children of middle preschool age.

2. Determine the common conditions, under which children of middle preschool age acquire a minority language in bilingual countries and compare them with the corresponding conditions for acquiring foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age in Ukraine.

3. Clarification of the boundaries for the effective adoption of the mentioned experience from bilingual countries into Ukrainian preschool pedagogy.

#### 4. Research materials and methods

During the research, various theoretical methods were employed, including literature and document analysis, a range of general theoretical methods were used: abstraction and concretization, analysis and synthesis, comparison, contrast, structuring, induction, and deduction.

The search of scientific literature was carried out using: scientific databases (Google Scholar, Bielefeld Academic Search Engine, Open Ukrainian Citation Index, WorldWideScience.org etc.), a platforms for sharing academic research (Academia.edu, ResearchGate), which gives access to a significant number of scientific articles and researches; electronic repositories of higher educational institutions and scientific institutions (Digital Repository Dragomanov Ukrainian State University, Borys Grinchenko Kyiv Metropolitan University Institutional repository, National Repository of Academic Texts etc.), where are abstracts of dissertations, scientific publications, materials of reports and conferences stored.

#### 5. Research results

The representatives of bilingual countries, where the practice of forming communicative competence in minority languages in children of middle preschool age is widespread, include Canada, Finland, Malta, and Israel. Let's take a detailed look at the experience of each of these countries.

**Finland** is a country with a complex and controversial language policy, which is reflected in the peculiarities of forming communicative competence in children of middle preschool age in two official languages of the country: Finnish and Swedish. Despite its official status, the latter is a minority language and is considered a foreign language for the majority of the country's population [21]. Despite the recognition of the value of individual bilingualism in legislative documents in Finland, the country follows an ideology of language separation, referred to as "parallel monolingualism" [22], in the context of regions, families, and state institutions to prevent the suppression and mixing of the Swedish language as a minority language [23]. Consequently, a parallel system of monolingual education operates, involving the existence of preschools with either a Swedish or Finnish language environment [24].

At the same time, mixed marriages, the status of the Swedish language as a lingua franca in the Nordic community, the necessity of knowing Swedish for successful employment contribute to the demand from parents for the formation of communicative competence in the Swedish language in their children [25]. As a result, the country has the practice of operating preschool education institutions with a Swedish language environment

in areas where the Finnish-speaking population resides. These institutions can be considered as providing immersion for children of middle preschool age in a linguistic environment and fostering foreign language communicative competence and bilingualism. Such preschool education institutions, in their content, represent a **model of total immersion** into a foreign language environment.

The first experimental immersion program in preschool education institutions in Finland was introduced in 1987 in the city of Vaasa and yielded excellent results. This contributed to the expansion of immersive learning of the Swedish language in preschool education institutions across the entire territory of Finland [25]. At present, the method of total immersion in the national language for children of middle preschool age has received legislative recognition in the normative document National core curriculum for early childhood education and care (2022) [26], includes the purpose of its application – to provide children with capabilities to act in bilingual and multilingual environments, meaning the development of the ability in children to communicate in the language of the minority in real communication situations – communicative competence. In the mentioned document, the necessity of applying within the framework of early total immersion in the national languages by each member of the staff only one language is normatively established. Therefore, the application of the principle **one educator – one language** is envisaged in the conditions of total immersion. To achieve this requirement, educators use a wide range of non-verbal means to support the understanding of the new language by children [27]. However, research, including the operation of co-located kindergarten Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking daycare centers, has also shown the existence of a practice of mixing languages [6].

The value of the Finnish experience in forming the communicative competence of preschool-aged children in the Swedish language lies in its relatively deep research and documentation, driven by passionate public debates in this field. At the stage of the development of immersion education in Finland, research was largely focused on the language learning process and speech development. Currently, it has shifted towards the realm of "code-switching" as a tool for achieving language understanding during the learning process [28]. Several studies have been dedicated to the socio-economic background of preschool-age children choosing Swedish immersion education programs and their expected outcomes. It was found that the participants in such programs are mostly children from Finnish-speaking families who either do not possess or possess extremely limited communicative competence in the Swedish language; parental expectations for their children's participation in immersion programs include understanding the Swedish language and using simple expressions in it [28]. Some studies have focused on the level of language development in children participating in Swedish immersion programs in both their first and second languages. S. Vesterbacka, as a result of experiments, demonstrated that acquiring communicative competence in a second language through immersion does not harm the development of the first language in children who have a similar level of proficiency in that language as monolingual

children. On the other hand, H. Harju-Luukkainen found that children participating in Swedish immersion programs have a high level of understanding of the foreign language but a lower level of proficiency in active speaking [28].

A valuable experience in implementing immersion education in Finland is the close collaboration between researchers and practicing educators, resulting in increased effectiveness of immersion programs. In particular, taking into account the insufficient development of active language skills in children participating in immersion programs, researchers, such as Sodergard M. [29] and Mard K. [30], focused on studying the educational environment of immersion programs. They oriented the pedagogical composition of educational institutions towards the significant importance of children producing language, particularly by encouraging them to respond to open-ended questions requiring elaborate answers, rather than merely passive listening, to achieve a high level of foreign language communicative competence.

A topical issue in Finland, advocated by scientists, is the implementation of proper bilingual education, which would meet the needs of children from bilingual families [31] and carried out education, training and development of children simultaneously in two official languages. One attempt to implement such education is the creation of a bilingual environment, where the teaching staff consists of a monolingual teacher in one language (the dominant language) and a bilingual teacher who represents the bilingual environment, communicating with children in both languages. The pedagogical experience of constructing such a linguistic environment in preschool education institutions in Finland was investigated by Mart-Miettinen K., Palvainen A., and Palojarvi A. [23], revealing the variations of interaction among educators in a bilingual program, organized in this way. Nevertheless, official data regarding the results of implementing such programs are currently lacking, although the insignificant intensity of the impact on children of a foreign language speech environment makes it possible to conclude that the results of such programs are limited to familiarizing children with a foreign language and the development of interest and respect for bilingual communication.

The linguistic situation in **Israel** is characterized by the presence of one official language, Hebrew, which is the majority language in the country, additionally, Arabic holds a special status as a language of the minority population. [32]. In fact, the situation is such that every Arabic-speaking preschooler in Israel is proficient in Hebrew, but not every Hebrew-speaking child is proficient in Arabic. [33]. The country has a separate education system for the Arab and Jewish populations [34]. However, to overcome the conflict situation between the Arab and Jewish communities, promote tolerance and respect for each other, and mastering the Arabic language among Hebrew-speaking Israelis, Arabic-Hebrew bilingual education was introduced in the country [35]. In 1997, the Bilingual Education Center "Hand in Hand" was established [36], and as of the beginning of 2023, six bilingual educational institutions were operating at the state level, including the preschool level. [37]. These

institutions, in terms of their content, represent a form of **partial immersion** for Hebrew-speaking children who enter these institutions with either a lack or a minimal level of communicative competence in the Arabic language. A distinctive feature of Arab-Hebrew bilingual preschool institutions is the simultaneous presence of two educators throughout the child's time in the institution: one who speaks Arabic and the other who speaks Hebrew. Each educator is a native speaker of the respective language and uses it as a means of instruction and teaching.

Based on the analysis of studies, conducted by Palvainen A., Protassova E., Mard-Miettinen K., Schwartz M. [38], it is possible to identify characteristics of language behavior among educators in Israeli bilingual preschool institutions:

1. The absence of a clear language division in the preschool institution, the use of a translanguaging approach, which involves:

– Flexible use of both languages, allowing each educator to use both languages to expand the linguistic environment in the minority language and enhance the prestige of Hebrew-Arabic-speaking citizens of Israel.

– Responsible switching from one language to another, using the child's foreign language by the educator-translator of that language when necessary to capture and support their attention, providing clear and understandable instructions, discussing abstract concepts, and checking the correctness of the children's understanding of what was said. Exclusion of direct translation.

2. Contextualization and non-linguistic support involve educators using various means to align the content of speech in a foreign language, such as body language, verbalization of actions, repetitions, simplifications, etc., a gradual complexity of speech in the foreign language.

3. Consideration of the individual characteristics of the child during the acquisition of a foreign language involves attention to the child's temperament and character, the level of development of their foreign language communicative competence, and immersing the child in language that corresponds to their zone of proximal development.

The special value of the Israeli experience in the introduction of bilingual education lies, in particular, in the study of the importance of interaction between peers with different levels of foreign language communicative competence and the staff of a preschool education institution in the process of mastering a foreign language and proving the positive effect of the joint stay and interaction of children with different competence in a foreign language in the same group of a preschool education institution [33]. In particular, it has been found that children with a higher level of language proficiency (experts) can serve as teachers and language models for children with lower language proficiency (novices), thus expanding the subjective element of the foreign language environment in the preschool institution. Moreover, they act as powerful language policy managers for the preschool institution. In turn, the performance of experts in the role of teachers is essentially "linguistic brokerage," providing them with social advantages in the form of enhanced empathy and perspective-taking. Also, this role has a positive impact on academic development and contrib-

utes to self-assessment of language proficiency by achieving understanding.

**Malta** is a country with two official languages: English and Maltese. The Maltese population exhibits a high level of bilingualism [39], indicating the effectiveness of its development. A distinctive feature of Maltese bilingualism is the recognition of its value by the state and the entire society, with equal prestige for both languages and their prevalence throughout the entire country. Consequently, the entire population of Malta receives bilingual education. According to "A Language Policy for the Early Years in Malta and Gozo (2016)" [40] in preschool education institutions, an **immersion model** is used to acquire proficiency in both languages. In the majority of preschool education institutions in Malta, the principle of **one person – two languages** is applied, where the choice of language varies depending on the type of activity [41].

Due to the territorial proximity of languages and the bilingualism of the teaching staff in preschool education institutions, the main issue in the field of bilingual education in Malta is the separation of language environments. According to A National Literacy Strategy for All in Malta and Gozo 2021–2030 [42], the question of adhering to a clear separation of language environments or applying a flexible method of using languages is left to the discretion of educators and in most cases, it depends on their beliefs and experience, as well as the individual needs of the child and the language policy of the educational institution [43]. At the same time, in the field of preschool pedagogy, it is officially recognized that in the Maltese context, it is provided that children have access to each language outside the preschool institution in a bilingual society, «switching between languages is beneficial for the effective management of learning processes and teaching activities» [40]. In connection with the mentioned practices, Maltese educators often use language mixing and a translanguaging approach.

**The Canadian** experience in developing foreign language communicative competence in children of preschool age is one of the most illustrative. It was in the territory of this country that in 1965 the immersion model of children's acquisition of a foreign language was experimentally implemented for the first time in preschool education institutions (the Saint-Lember experiment) [44, 45]. Considering the novelty and lack of a clear understanding of the results of the specified model, as well as the need to confirm its effectiveness for the wide implementation of relevant programs, "Canadian immersion" has been the subject of numerous studies for more than half a century and currently has an extensive documentary base in the form of several hundred schools management reports, scientific articles, books and dissertations [46].

In Canada, at the federal level, there are two official languages: English and French. However, more than half of the Canadian population has English as their native language, and only about 29% have French. [47]. The prevalence of languages in Canada also depends on the region. For instance, the official language of the province of Quebec is French, and the only officially bilingual province is New Brunswick [48]. Therefore, Canada exhibits a situation where the majority of the

population is monolingual, and there is a need for English-speaking children to acquire proficiency in French, which in its content is a foreign language.

Despite the existence of the general principle of "Canadian immersion," where the second language is learned indirectly through the acquisition of educational materials and everyday activities, it is characterized by significant branching of models. In Canada, there are models of early immersion (from 4 to 6 years, grade 1), middle immersion (from 9 years), and late immersion (from 11–12 years) [49]. The model of early immersion, which involves children of preschool age naturally acquiring second-language communicative competence, can take the form of total or partial immersion. In the first scenario, preschool-aged children are in a French-speaking environment throughout their time in the preschool institution. In the second scenario, the linguistic environment of the preschool institution is divided in a 50/50 proportion between English and French, making it bilingual [50]. Interesting are the models of constructing immersion education in preschool institutions in New Brunswick, the only officially bilingual province in Canada for children who belong to the French-speaking community but are English monolinguals. The goal of these models is to adapt English monolingual children to French-speaking groups in preschool institutions where children already have a high or advanced level of proficiency in French. These models serve as excellent examples of introducing monolingual children into a foreign language environment in preschool education when other children already have a certain level of second-language communicative competence. Among the mentioned models of immersion education, one can note the model of sheltered classes; the model of the mainstream with pull-out; the model of mainstream with in-class support and pull-out; and the integrated model [51]. The "sheltered classes model" is implemented by creating special groups for monolingual children, with the aim of intensive acquisition of second language communicative competence before integrating these children into the mainstream groups with a second language environment. The "mainstream with pull-out model" involves immersing the monolingual child in the second language environment of the mainstream group and separating them for specific, short-term sessions, dedicated to focused foreign language learning. The "mainstream with in-class support and pull-out model" involves the constant presence of the monolingual child in the mainstream group with a French-speaking educator nearby for several hours, which goal is to ensure the child understands instructions and tasks in the second language, and occasional short sessions are held with the child to study the second language. The "integrated model" includes various approaches to adapt the child to the foreign language environment.

The diversity of immersion education models in Canada has resulted in a wide range of responses regarding the positive and negative aspects of each, as well as comparisons to identify the most effective immersion education models. The most significant findings from the research on "Canadian immersion" were presented by M. Wesche [46] and are as follows:

1) Early immersion yields better results compared to middle and late immersion in terms of the level of development of children's foreign language communicative competence. Children attending early immersion programs have advantages in "face-to-face" communication in a foreign language and feel more confident using it.

2) Acquiring foreign language communicative competence through the early immersion model does not harm the development of the native language in children of middle preschool age. In some cases, it even prompts improvement in certain language and educational skills of children by the end of primary school compared to children studying in their native language.

3) Children who undergo an early immersion program retain their cultural identity as native language speakers.

4) Early immersion prompts children to develop a more sustained positive attitude towards the foreign language and culture transmitted through it compared to children studying the language through traditional methods. These children show a greater inclination toward spontaneous communication in the foreign language.

5) The learning, upbringing, and development outcomes of children through a foreign language do not differ from those of children attending preschools with a native language-speaking environment.

6) The model of partial early immersion shows intermediate results in terms of children of middle preschool age acquiring foreign language communicative competence, yielding lower results than the total early immersion model but significantly higher than traditional methods of foreign language acquisition.

7) Simple immersion in a foreign language-speaking environment is not sufficient for successful foreign language acquisition. The active use of the language proves to be crucial for effective mastery.

The above analysis has led to the conclusion that the development of communicative competence in the language of minorities in children of middle preschool age, who are native speakers of the dominant language of society in bilingual countries, essentially involves the formation of foreign language communicative competence. This allows us to utilize the positive experiences of these countries in developing methodologies for fostering foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age in Ukraine. At the same time, the analysis of the experience of bilingual countries has revealed certain significant differences in the conditions for forming communicative competence in minority languages compared to the conditions for developing foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age in Ukraine. These differences are outlined in comparative Table 1

Table 1

Comparative characteristics of the conditions for the formation of communicative competence in the minority language in the context of bilingual countries and foreign language communicative competence in the context of Ukraine

Conditions for Developing Communicative Competence in Minority Languages in Bilingual Countries	Conditions for Developing Foreign Language Communicative Competence in Ukraine
The existence of two languages in society, one of which holds stronger positions as the dominant language, while the other is a minority language, necessitates the expansion of communicative competence in the minority language to the dominant monolingual population of the country for its effective functioning within the country of residence.	Indirect necessity of forming foreign language communicative competence in children, driven by the desire to develop competitive advantages in the future in a globalized world.
In the formation of communicative competence in children of middle preschool age in the minority language, educational institutions play a significant role alongside the family and society.	In the formation of foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age, educational institutions play a crucial role.
The close territorial distribution of languages implies that children understand the practical significance of the language.	The remoteness of the territorial residence of speakers of a foreign language, which complicates the possibility of live communication in this language and children's understanding of its practical significance.
The availability of highly qualified teaching staff who are native speakers of the foreign language, and consequently, provide an authentic language model.	The difficulties of selecting teaching staff who would simultaneously possess a high level of foreign language communicative competence and be knowledgeable in preschool pedagogy.
Bilingualism of pedagogical staff, which hinders a strict separation of languages and promotes their mixing, and translanguaging.	Predominant bilingualism of teaching staff, which prevents a strict separation of languages and promotes their mixing, translanguaging, except for isolated cases of employment of speakers of a foreign language who do not speak Ukrainian.
Normative regulation of the model for acquiring communicative competence in the minority language by monolingual children, speakers of the dominant language.	The lack of consolidation of a certain model of formation of foreign language communicative competence in preschool children at the state level.

Summarizing the differences, presented in table, it can be concluded that the key contextual challenge in borrowing the experience of bilingual countries for the formation of communicative competence in the minority language by Ukrainian preschool education is the distant geographical spread of the foreign language. This results in a lack of understanding by children of the practical significance of the foreign language, the opportunity for its live use beyond preschool education institutions, and the absence of preschool teaching staff with a high level of authenticity in the foreign language.

Under such conditions of limited access to the foreign language, the latter requires special reinforcement within the preschool education environment. Considering this, Ukrainian preschool education should cautiously utilize the experience of bilingual countries regarding the permissibility of translanguaging (mixing, including controlled mixing) in the formation of foreign communicative competence in children of middle preschool age. Translanguaging in bilingual countries does not affect children's motivation to learn the minority language due to the existence of a real necessity for its use. It is associated with situations of natural code-mixing in a bilingual society, depending on the situation and the communicative context, the interlocutor. Translanguaging during the acquisition of a foreign language in preschool education institutions of Ukraine is a consequence of insufficient foreign language competence among pedagogical staff and may have a negative impact on the results of such language acquisition. This is due to the reduced real necessity for children to communicate in a foreign language when communication goals can be achieved through the use of their native language.

However, for Ukraine, in the issue of forming foreign language communicative competence in children of preschool age, the experience of bilingual countries in legislatively establishing methods for such formation is useful. This would allow for the standardization of corresponding programs for the development of foreign language communicative competence in preschool education institutions, the training of pedagogical staff, and the preparation of educational materials. For developing the mentioned model, it is worth considering the experience of bilingual countries regarding the effectiveness and naturalness of the immersion method for children of preschool age in mastering a foreign language that involves immersion in a language environment and the use of a foreign language as a means of education, learning, and development; the advantages of early immersion over late, total over partial, and partial over classical methods of mastering a foreign language by conducting separate classes on the development of a foreign language. In the context of Ukraine, it is advisable to consider the experience of employing techniques to encourage children to actively speak a foreign language, manage groups with children of varying levels of foreign language communicative competence, and utilize children with higher proficiency in a foreign language as language models and promoters of the language policy of the institution.

**Practical significance.** The conclusions and results of the conducted research can be used in the development of effective methods for acquiring foreign lan-

guage communicative competence in children of preschool age, both at the state level and within individual preschool education institutions. Additionally, preschool educators should take these findings into consideration during their practical activities, aimed at forming foreign language communicative competence in children of preschool age.

**Limitations of the study.** The limitations of this study include its focus on children of middle preschool age. However, despite this, the results of the conducted research can also be useful for developing methods to foster foreign language communicative competence in all age groups of preschool children.

**The influence of martial law conditions.** The state of war, without a doubt, increased the relevance of the mentioned research, since during this period Ukraine's course towards European integration and the need to bring Ukraine's practices, including in the field of foreign language communicative competence formation, to the standards of the European Union are urgent.

**The prospects for further research** involve the development of specific methodologies for shaping foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age in Ukraine, drawing on the experience of bilingual countries.

## 6. Conclusion

1. Canada, Finland, Malta, and Israel are classic examples of bilingual countries with a long, extensively researched, and documented experience in shaping communicative competence in the minority language for monolingual children, who are speakers of the dominant language in these countries. The experience of these researched countries has shown that the immersion method, involving immersion in the linguistic environment and the use of a foreign language as a means of education, upbringing, and child development, is an effective way to shape communicative competence in the minority language in children of middle preschool age. Depending on the specifics of language distribution in society, the immersion method takes on certain form. In Finland, this is the method of total immersion, in Israel – the method of partial immersion is based on the principle of one educator – one language, in Malta – the method of partial immersion is based on the principle of one educator – two languages, in Canada – early total or partial immersion. The close territorial distribution of languages in bilingual countries leads to the widespread use of translanguaging in the process of acquiring the minority language. Considering the fact that in the middle preschool age, children in the researched bilingual countries do not possess or possess a very limited level of communicative competence in the minority language, mastering such a language can be considered the formation of foreign language communicative competence.

2. The borrowing of the experience of the researched countries by preschool education in Ukraine in the process of forming foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age should occur selectively due to significant differences in the contextual conditions of such formation. The key difference is the distant territorial spread of the foreign language, resulting in a lack of understanding by children of

the practical significance of the foreign language and the opportunity for its lively use.

3. In the context of Ukraine, the experience of bilingual countries regarding the permissibility of using translanguaging and language mixing should be borrowed with caution, as it may influence the motivation of Ukrainian children to acquire a foreign language in middle preschool age. The main acquisitions from the experience of bilingual countries that can be beneficial for preschool education in Ukraine include the practice of legislative consolidation of the method of forming foreign language communicative competence in children of middle preschool age; conclusions about the absence of a negative impact of immersion method application on the development of children's native language; greater effectiveness of the total immersion method compared to partial immersion, and partial immersion compared to classical methods of learning a foreign language through separate language acquisition sessions; more successful foreign language acquisition as a result of early immersion compared to later immersion types; experience in managing groups of children with differ-

ent levels of foreign language communicative competence and the practice of introducing children with a low level of competence in a foreign language into groups with a higher level of formed foreign language communicative competence.

### Conflicts of interest

The author declares that has no conflicts of interest in relation to this research, whether financial, personal, authorship or otherwise, that could affect the research and its results, presented in this article.

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### Use of artificial intelligence

The author confirm that does not use artificial intelligence technologies when creating the current work.

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