


## BiNeoLingual Upbringing or bilingual upbringing in non-native families: linguistic habits and strategies

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<https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/cjes.101501>

Recibido 7/03/2025 • Aceptado 13/02/2026

**Abstract:** The knowledge of additional languages is a desirable value nowadays. Raising a bilingual child yields numerous advantages (Baker 2014; Bialystok 2001; Romaine 1995). In order to help their children acquire and learn a foreign language (FL), mainly English, most parents decide to raise their children in a FL that is also foreign to them and that is not the language of the community. However, strategies and linguistic practices in BiNeoLingual (BNL) Upbringing (or bilingual upbringing by non-native parents) have not yet been studied using a statistically significant sample size to draw generalizable conclusions. There is a need to adequately portray and analyse this emerging sociolinguistic phenomenon (Lozano-Martínez 2019, 236). In this quantitative study, through a simple random sampling, 571 families out of the 2010 that participated in a questionnaire were identified as using English as a FL with their children. Nevertheless, “family linguistic planning is crucial to children’s linguistic development” (Lozano-Martínez 2019, 235). Dealing with strategies, One Parent-One Language (OPOL) is the most well-known but, according to the results, OPOL is not the most followed strategy by BNL families. Statistical tests also show that strategies depend on different factors and are often mixed in the BNL family.

**Keywords:** BiNeoLingual; bilingual; non-native; foreign language.

### ES Crianza BiNeoLingüe o crianza bilingüe en familias no nativas: hábitos lingüísticos y estrategias

**Resumen:** El conocimiento de lenguas adicionales es un valor deseable en la actualidad. Criar hijos e hijas bilingües implica numerosas ventajas (Baker 2014; Bialystok 2001; Romaine 1995). Con el propósito de ayudar a sus hijos/as adquiriendo y aprendiendo una lengua extranjera (LE), mayoritariamente inglés, muchas familias deciden criar a sus hijos/as en una lengua que es extranjera para ellas y su comunidad. Sin embargo, las estrategias y hábitos lingüísticos en la Crianza BiNeoLingüe (BNL) (o crianza bilingüe por no nativos) no han sido aún estudiadas con una muestra estadísticamente significativa que permita conclusiones generalizables. Se necesita retratar y analizar adecuadamente este fenómeno sociolingüístico emergente “(Lozano-Martínez 2019, 236)”. En este estudio cuantitativo, con un muestreo aleatorio simple, se empleó un cuestionario que permitió en una muestra de 2010 familias participantes identificar a 571 que usaban el inglés como LE con sus hijos/as. Así, “la planificación lingüística familiar resulta crucial para el desarrollo lingüístico de los/as hijos/as” (Lozano-Martínez 2019, 235). Respecto a las estrategias, Una Persona -Una Lengua (UPUL u «OPOL») es la más conocida, pero según los resultados no la más frecuente en la Crianza BNL. Las pruebas estadísticas muestran que las estrategias y los hábitos lingüísticos dependen de ciertos factores y frecuentemente se combinan en la familia BNL.

**Palabras clave:** BiNeoLingüe; bilingüe; no nativo; lengua extranjera.

**Contents:** 1. Introduction and Justification. 1.1. Linguistic habits and strategies in bilingual families. 1.2. BiNeoLingual upbringing or bilingual upbringing by non-native families in the context of their main language. 2. Aims of the study and research questions. 3. Methods. 3.1. Informants. 3.2. Research instruments, design and procedure. 4. Results. 5. Discussion. 6. Conclusions and Implications. 7. Recommendations for Families. 8. Further Research. 9. Acknowledgments. References.

**How to cite:** Lozano-Martínez, L. (2026). BiNeoLingual Upbringing or bilingual upbringing by non-native parents: Habits and Strategies, en *Complutense Journal of English Studies* 34, e101501. <https://dx.doi.org/10.5209/cjes.101501>

## 1. Introduction and Justification

Being able to speak more than one language is a desirable skill nowadays to increase working opportunities and to enhance the cultural and academic profile of citizens. Therefore, most families want to help their children to improve their knowledge of more than one language. In this way, some families decide to include an additional language even if it is foreign for all their members and is not any of the official or majority languages of the community they live in. Nonetheless, English is the most frequently chosen language to be added as a foreign language in children being brought up by non-native speakers. Bilingualism in non-native families who have not moved to a linguistic community of the target language, or BiNeoLingualism, is an emerging sociolinguistic and cultural phenomenon that urges to be studied “ (Lozano-Martínez 2019, 236)”, especially using quantitative methods and variables that can be measured, with a significant sample size that allows to reach conclusions that might help BiNeoLingual Families (Lozano-Martínez 2022, 58).

BiNeoLingual Upbringing needs to be adequately portrayed by means of statistics as to date, there are only a few study cases (Saunders 1982, 1988) and some experimental works carried out mainly by researchers who are also the parents of the subjects of study (Jernigan 2015) or in the form of guides for parents (Saunders 1982; Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson 2006; Baker 2014, among others). On the other hand, when dealing with bilingualism, non-native families are rarely mentioned except by a few authors like Romaine (1995, 185) or Harding-Esch and Riley (2003, 53), among others, and very briefly without much depth. BiNeoLingualism has also been referred to as ‘elective’ bilingualism, as in the ‘step-by-step guide for parents’ *Raising a Bilingual Child* by Zurer Pearson (2008, 2010) which is often called ‘artificial’ or ‘nonnative’ and it is less well known but possible to be done (Zurer Pearson 2008, 177).

Therefore, when aiming to draw conclusions that may be generalized for a population, a wider perspective is necessary that analyses a significant number of subjects. In this sense, case studies are enriching for the field of knowledge on BiNeoLingualism and should also be considered. In the context of Spain, for instance, Álvarez-Sotomayor and Hidalgo-Clerico analyses the perceptions of 10 families about their adventure on raising their children bilingually (Álvarez-Sotomayor and Hidalgo-Clérico 2020). Although, according to Dörnyei and others, it is important to be cautious and bear in mind that a potential limitation is that some “scholars rarely provide any justification for selecting the specific sample extracts” (Dörnyei 2007, 56), so their conclusions are not always clearly justified (Miles and Huberman 1994, 2). In order to complete the methodological tradition of case studies, more qualitative studies are needed, using a sample that is representative of the entire study population, since the strength of the conclusions to be generalised “depends on how accurately the particular sample represents the larger population” (Dörnyei 2007, 96).

In this way, Lozano-Martínez’s quantitative study on BiNeoLingualism with a sample of 735 informants (2019) analysed the perceptions of families on bilingual upbringing by non-native parents, focusing on some of the myths as well as identifying some of the potential challenges that BiNeoLingual Families usually face. The widest study on BiNeoLingualism to date, as far as we know, is Lozano-Martínez’s doctoral thesis (2022), it analyses more than a hundred variables and uses a sample of 2010 informants among whom 571 claimed to use English as a foreign language with their children. For this study, considering this work as a starting point, some further analyses have been made to gain deeper insight into certain aspects of linguistic habits.

English seems to be the most frequent language chosen as a target language in BiNeoLingual Families in numerous countries around the world. However, many other languages are also introduced in the upbringing without being the mother tongue of any of the members of the family, nor any of the main or official languages of the community. Bilingual profiles in students, workers and citizens are desirable and positive, not only in English but in any other language, as it might enhance possibilities of communication, sociocultural exchange and cooperation among peoples. In this case, English is the language being studied. However, as well as the perceptible omnipresence of the English language, it is also the core of this research because each language should be studied in isolation considering the perception of such a language, its status, and its presence in society and in the educational system, as it has been analysed in the aforementioned doctoral thesis.

Within such a framework for research, it was considered necessary to identify the main strategies and habits that BiNeoLingual families apply and follow to raise their children bilingually in a language that is not a main language either in the community in which they live or within their family.

### 1.1. Linguistic habits and strategies in bilingual families

The vast majority of the studies on bilingualism addresses families in which one or more members of the families provide an additional language to the children as a native speaker of that language. The other cases mainly studied are those in which a family has moved to another community that provides the additional language. This implies that when research deals with linguistic habits and strategies they mainly refer to such contexts.

Certain strategies to achieve bilingualism in children serve as the main characteristics of the different types of bilingual families such as the five depicted by Harding-Esch and Riley (2003, 51-53). Thus, they consider that Type 1 would include two parents with different native languages and whose strategy consists in speaking their respective native languages to their children from birth. In Type 2, both parents also have different languages, but both speak the minority language to the child who gains the dominant language in the community, mainly when he or she starts school. In Type 3 however, both parents share the same native language, which is different to that of the community, so they speak their own language to their child. Type 4 includes three languages as parents do not share their native languages and the community provides a third different language. Each of the parents speak their native language to their child from birth. Finally, in Type

5, both the native language of both parents and that of the community is the same, but one of the parents always addresses the child in a foreign language (Harding-Esch and Riley 2003, 51-53).

Another typology, by Romaine (1995, 183-185), provides further details on certain aspects and names each type of family according to the general linguistic strategy that is expected to be followed. Thus, Romaine names Type 1 as '*One Person – One Language*', Type 2 as '*Non-dominant Home Language / One Language – One Environment*', Type 3 '*Non-dominant Home Language without Community Support*', Type 4 '*Double Non-dominant Home Language without Community Support*' and Type 5 '*Non-native Parents*', adding Type 6 '*Mixed languages*'. This last type is considered by Romaine as not following a proper strategy as it seems that 'the child is exposed to two languages in the home in an apparently unsystematic fashion' Romaine (1995, 186).

Type 5 and Type 6 of bilingual families are the closest to the main core of interest in this study: BiNeoLingual Families in which one of the parents, or the parent in a single-parent family, introduces a foreign language at home that is different to that or those of the community. However, it seems that, to some extent, in Romaine (1995) and Harding-Esch and Riley (2003) it is assumed that the strategy followed in Type 5 is a '*One Parent – One Language*' type by '*Non-native parents*' as the strategy they associate with consists in having 'one of the parents that always addresses the child in a language which is not his/her native language'.

Other strategies are, as mentioned by Barron-Hauwaert (2004): *Minority Language at Home (mL@H)* (the minority language is spoken within the family, generally a heritage language), *Mixed Strategy* (the language used is chosen according to the topic of conversation or the communicative situation), *Time & Place Strategy (T&P)* (the language is used in specific moments or places, i.e. bath-time).

Barron-Hauwaert (2004) also refers to *The Artificial* or *The Non-Native Strategy*, commonly associated to the use of the foreign language by one of the parents. In addition to the *OPOL* and *Home-Outside the home* strategies, Grosjean (2010, 206-207) also highlights the *One-language-first*, *Language-time* and *Free-alternation* strategies, considering five main ones. However, the present study aims to question the potential association between '*Non-native Parents*' and '*One Parent – One language*' and it is an aim in this work to find out whether there are other strategies followed by '*Non-native parents*' or BiNeoLingual Families and to identify the most frequent ones.

## 1.2. BiNeoLingual upbringing or bilingual upbringing by non-native families in the context of their main language

Most of the types of bilingual families share some characteristics and may hold similar linguistic habits and follow certain strategies. However, families that are introducing a language that is not the main language of any of their members or of the community need discernible research because there are some specific factors that emerge when none of the speakers are native speakers of the target language.

BiNeoLingual Upbringing (BNL Upbringing, *Crianza BiNeoLingüe* in Spanish) implies the introduction of an additional language into the home environment without being the main or one of the main languages of the community in which they live (Lozano-Martínez 2022, 109). The NeoLingua (NL) is a new language for all the members of the family; therefore, it is an unexpected one as it could not be expected to be introduced by any of the members of the family or within their community (Lozano-Martínez 2022, 109, 550). Thus, BiNeoLingual Upbringing differs from Bilingual Upbringing as none of the speakers of the family are native speakers of the NeoLingua and nor is the language one of the main languages where they live. In this sense, linguistic habits and strategies may also be different in BiNeoLingual Upbringing compared to Bilingual Upbringing by native speakers or in communities in which the language introduced is one of the main ones.

## 2. Aims of the study and research questions

The main aim of this study is to describe and gain deeper insight into an emerging sociolinguistic and cultural phenomenon that is BiNeoLingual Upbringing as hardly any research exists in this field, especially from a quantitative approach. More precisely, this work aims to describe the linguistic habits and strategies that BiNeoLingual Families follow and to identify those that are more prominent and might be more effective and/or long-lasting in the long term.

The present study will try to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the most frequent linguistic habits and strategies in BiNeoLingual Families?
2. Is OPOL the most frequently used strategy in BiNeoLingual Families?
3. Is OPOL an advisable strategy for BiNeoLingual Families?

## 3. Methods

This study statistically analyses the data provided by 2010 informants, carrying out both descriptive and inferential analysis. By means of a questionnaire that was mainly distributed online, 571 families were identified to be BiNeoLingual in English and one or more of the official languages of Spain. The distribution of the questionnaire followed a systematic strategy to reach groups on the internet related to different interests, sociocultural environments, different ideologies, as well as from all the Autonomous Communities and Autonomous Cities of Spain, to gain representativeness of the studied population. Thus, the questionnaire was mainly published on different blogs, websites, and distributed through social media, email, and several communication apps.

The methodology of this study is predominantly quantitative and holds a descriptive purpose by means of a significant sample size. Data has been principally collected by means of the mentioned questionnaire, although some information was qualitatively collected during different conversations with families have served to illustrate certain aspects. Nevertheless, the different variables involved have been statistically analysed, mainly using IBM's Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS, version 22).

Thus, this work derives from a wider study on BiNeoLingual Upbringing, focusing on the Family Language Planning (FLP), more precisely on linguistic habits and strategies followed by the families that introduce a foreign language in their household, in this case, English. Since Spain is the place where the families of the study live, the community does not officially provide the English language and nor do any of the members of the family.

In this way, the study statistically analyses the frequency of the different linguistic habits and strategies in order to identify the most predominant ones. More precisely, it is also the aim of this work to find out if OPOL is the most frequent one, as it could be expected seeing as it is claimed as one of the most frequently chosen strategies by bilingual families (Danjo 2018) and in non-native families (Romanowski 2018). Besides, OPOL has received much attention (Wilson 2020) since it is the core of numerous studies declaring it to be one of the most efficient strategies. Thus, it is probably the most widely known strategy (Grosjean 2010, 206; among others). Nonetheless, this study attempts to determine if it is also the most frequently chosen strategy by BiNeoLingual families or non-native bilingual families by means of quantitative analyses using a statistically significant sample.

### 3.1. Informants

The requirements that were asked to be met and included in the sample were clear and concise: to live in a determining context and Spain was chosen for the study, to have Spanish and/or an official language of Spain as the mother tongue (or father tongue) and to be parents. Both the informants and their partners were applied the same criteria to include their family in the final sample. The questionnaire was designed in such a way that these criteria could be strictly verified. Thus, more than 200 questionnaires were excluded from the sample for living out of Spain or for having a partner who was a native speaker of a mother tongue (mainly English) rather than Spanish or one of the official languages of Spain.

Therefore, the universe for our study comprises all the households in Spain in which children are living with their parents, mother, or father. The number of families living in Spain with children under the age of 25 could be estimated at 6,827.300 (=N), out of 18,625.700 households in general (INE 2020). This implies that a sample of n=384 could be considered statistically representative of the studied population according to one of the possible formulas to be applied for that purpose, as by authors like Fernández de Molina (2017, 17) among others (see fig. 1).

$$n = \frac{Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q \cdot N}{N \cdot e^2 + Z^2 \cdot p \cdot q}$$

Figure 1. Sample sized formula

Finally, the sample is made up of 2010 families, out of which 571 families reported that they used English as a foreign language with their sons and daughters. It is necessary to consider the high number of BiNeoLingual families, in proportion to the total number of families could be due to the higher interest in participating in the study in BiNeoLingual families rather than in non-BiNeoLingual families. However, a great effort has been made to gain a significant sample size of BiNeoLingual families to draw generalizable conclusions for the target population. Besides, the population of the study has been limited to a single country (Spain), so results are not biased by other factors related to unparalleled contexts. This also increases the effectiveness of the sample in terms of proportion within the population that is under study. In the same sense, languages have also been delimited, considering English as the target language of the BiNeoLingual Upbringing and one or more of the main official languages of Spain as main language or languages of the members of the family. In this way, it has been possible to minimise wrong conclusions derived from factors such as the status of a certain language within a context which might differ from language to language and from country to country.

Therefore, taking the final number of participants into account, the sample can be considered representative of the population under study. The sample includes families of different characteristics living in all the autonomous communities and the autonomous cities of Spain, from both urban and rural areas, so this increases the validity and inclusiveness of the results.

### 3.2. Research instruments, design and procedure

This study was designed with a quantitative approach as it was considered the most appropriate methodology to try to accomplish the need to carry out research on BiNeoLingual Upbringing using statistical techniques and a significant sample size, to shed light on the path initiated by case studies. Thus, the main data collection instrument used is a questionnaire. It was written following different phases of bibliographic research and reading, and conversations with knowledgeable people and families.

Such a research tool has undergone several changes during two previous pilot studies: first with 18 families and later with 104 families. These two progressive phases allowed the questionnaire to be pretested and re-edited and for some questions to be clarified and rewritten for the purposes of the study. Insightful comments and observations made by some of the families as well as by some researchers who examined the questions were considered in such a process. Some preliminary results about family perceptions on BiNeoLingual Upbringing and the remarkable challenges BiNeoLingual Families face as well as some myths, were shared (Lozano-Martínez 2019), shedding light on an almost unexplored field.

The questionnaire ended up with 111 questions or items to be analysed, of which those related to habits and strategies have been used for this paper. Thus, the full questionnaire was designed to collect data about different aspects of each family such as the context where they live in relation to the use of languages and the characteristics of the informant, his/her partner if it was the case, and about their children (age, gender, educational level, occupation, etc.) and their level of English). Among numerous factors that were analysed, this paper's focus is on the section devoted to Family Language Planning, especially on linguistic habits and strategies.

Data has been organised using Excel and analysed by means of the statistical package SPSS for the descriptive analyses and non-parametrical tests to find out whether it is acceptable a relationship of independence among certain factors.

#### 4. Results

BiNeoLingual Upbringing is a present phenomenon in different countries worldwide as can be observed on social media and even in daily contexts. However, research must be objective and provide data. The results obtained from the data collected for this study confirm that BiNeoLingual Upbringing in English as a non-native language and an official language of Spain is present in the Spanish context as a sociolinguistic and cultural phenomenon. In the aforementioned research, 571 out of 2010 informants were identified to have adopted English as a foreign language in their Family Linguistic Planning, which is a considerable percentage of the sample taken. However, it is necessary to be cautious when taking this proportion in relation to the rest of the population as a representative of the whole Spanish society. Nevertheless, it was necessary to collect a sufficient number of data points that allow us to conclude that the results of the study focusing on the strategies and habits followed in BiNeoLingual families are not due to random chance.

Results indicate that among the BiNeoLingual families of the study that share the upbringing of their children as a couple, the most frequent strategy used is *Time & Place*, as 425 out of 571 BNL informants declare. This corresponds to 74.43% of BiNeoLingual families. It is followed far behind by *OPOL*, by 151 of the respondents (26.44% of BNL families). An indistinctive use of the languages at home is declared by 58 families (10.15% of BNL families). Exposure to English through the television and other devices are the main strategy for 44 of the families (out of 571 BNL families). However, a multiple-choice question has allowed to conclude that some of the strategies or techniques are combined although one of the strategies emerge as predominant in BiNeoLingual Families. Thus, *OPOL* is not the most frequent strategy used even if it is quite a widespread one (see fig. 2).

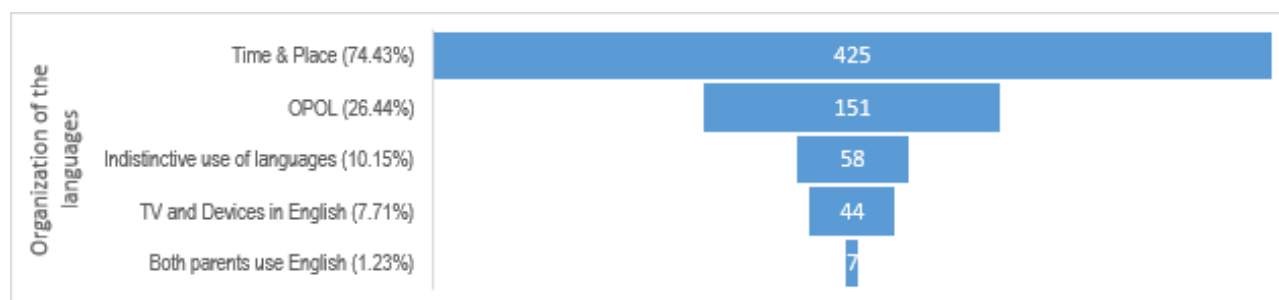


Figure 2. Organization of the languages in BiNeoLingual families

In addition to the predetermined options (see Appendix), for the question related to language organization at home, an extra option 'other' was included. Since it was configured as an open answer it allowed to collect important data about linguistic strategies and habits that were not expected beforehand. Diverse answers were obtained this way. It is worth mentioning that in 7 BNL families both parents used English with their children. Besides, within the whole group of 2010 families which also included non-BiNeoLingual families, 20 families reported using English to help their children with homework, and 21 (also out of 2010) that they used English occasionally. An anecdotally curious finding is that only 6 families (out of 2010) reported having a nanny or au pair who spoke English to their children.

As for possible linguistic habits, it is noticeable that singing in the NeoLingua (i.e., English) is a common linguistic habit in BiNeoLingual Families, as 68.0% of the BiNeoLingual parents sing to their children very often or daily (see fig. 3). Less frequent but also considerable is the percentage of 53.2% of the BiNeoLingual Families that read in the NeoLingua, English in this study, to their children usually or every day (see fig. 4).

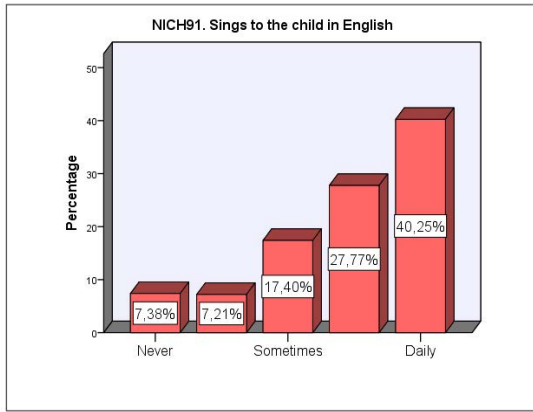


Figure 3. NICH91. Sings to the child in English

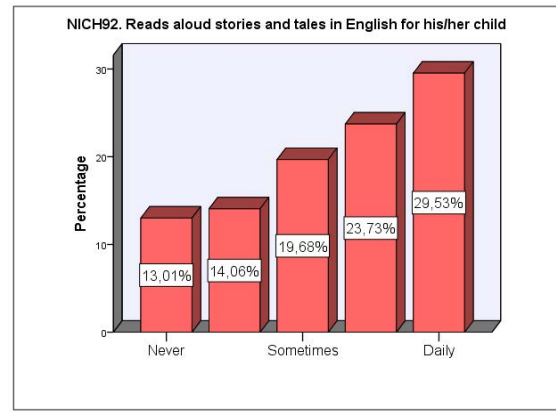


Figure 4. NICH92. Reads aloud tales and stories in English

Apart from books, other valuable resources are television and applications for tablets and smartphones that can contribute to the acquisition and learning of languages. Results indicate that 54.3% of 1774 valid cases (which comprises BiNeoLingual families, non BiNeoLingual families, and families who abandoned the use of the NeoLingua) use devices in English with a frequency of 1 to 5 hours per week, and 14.7% of cases use them for more than 6 hours. There is still another group of children who never use devices in English, which represents 31.1% (Table 1).

Table 1. Crosstabulation. JSE74. Hours per week of devices in English, and MPLF87b. Use of English in children upbringing

Variables JSE74 and MPLF87b. Crosstabulation			MPLF87b. Uses English in children upbringing			Total
			No	Abandoned	Yes	
JSE74. Hours per week using tv and apps in English	0 hours	Count	411	73	67	551
		% within JSE74	74.6%	13.2%	12.2%	100.0%
		% within MPLF87b	39.0%	29.0%	14.3%	31.1%
		% of Total	23.2%	4.1%	3.8%	31.1%
	1-5 hours	Count	512	145	306	963
		% within JSE74	53.2%	15.1%	31.8%	100.0%
		% within MPLF87b	48.6%	57.5%	65.4%	54.3%
		% of Total	28.9%	8.2%	17.2%	54.3%
	6 hours	Count	131	34	95	260
		% within JSE74	50.4%	13.1%	36.5%	100.0%
		% within MPLF87b	12.4%	13.5%	20.3%	14.7%
		% of Total	7.4%	1.9%	5.4%	14.7%
Total	Count	1054	252	468	1774	
	% within JSE74	59.4%	14.2%	26.4%	100.0%	
	% within MPLF87b	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	% of Total	59.4%	14.2%	26.4%	100.0%	

In all the families, both BiNeoLingual and non-BiNeoLingual families, around half of the group use English-language television and devices between 1 and 5 hours per week. Nevertheless, the results show that the use of devices in English on a regular basis can be considered a characteristic strategy in BiNeoLingual families, as it is plausible to assume a dependency relationship between the use of devices in English and the condition of being a BiNeoLingual family, given that the resulting Chi value is less than 0.005 (Table 2).

Table 2. Chi-Square Tests. Variables JSE74 and MPLF87b. Weekly hours of devices in English and Use of English in children upbringing

Chi-Square Tests	Value	Df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	95.369 <sup>a</sup>	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	103.121	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	78.497	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	1774		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 36.93.

BiNeoLingual families, as the results indicate, follow some selected strategies within the framework of their own specific family language planning (FLP). However, some families also consult some sources on bilingual parenting, mainly on the internet, social networks, and magazines (45.4%) (Table 3).

Table 3. Resources or sources consulted on bilingual parenting

Resources or sources consulted on bilingual parenting		Frequency	Percent	Valid percent	Cumulative percent
Valid	None	202	35.4	35.4	35.4
	Internet, blogs, social networks, magazines...	259	45.4	45.4	80.8
	Specific training, specialised books, and magazines	110	9.3	9.3	100.0
	Total	571	100.0	100.0	

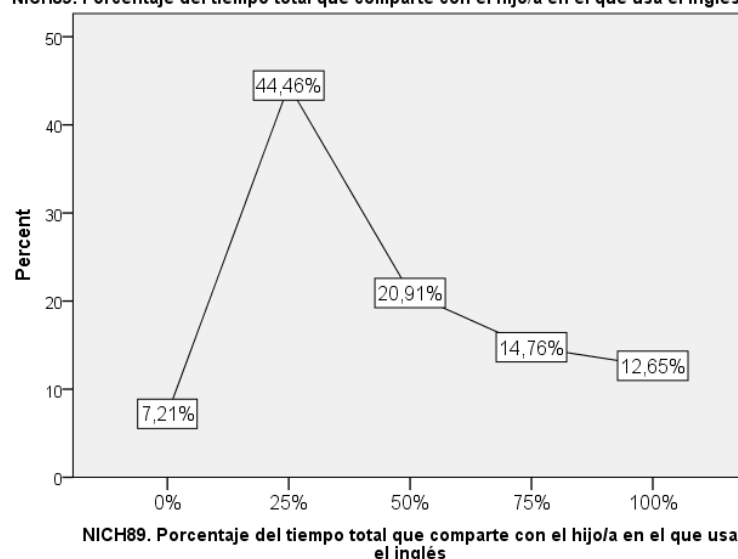
On the other hand, when inviting the informants to reflect on their own strategies and habits regarding BiNeoLingual upbringing, the results indicate that two aspects that could leave room for improvement are “travelling more with their children to English-speaking countries” (45.3%) and “spending more time speaking English with their children” (43.4%) (Table 4).

Table 4. Identification of improvable aspects in their own BiNeoLingual upbringing

QBNN108. Possible improvements in their English parenting method		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Nothing	29	1.4	5.1	5.1
	The grammar part	16	.8	2.8	7.9
	Would spend more time speaking English with their child/children	247	12.3	43.4	51.3
	Would travel more with my child/children to English-speaking countries	258	12.8	45.3	96.7
	Other	19	.9	3.3	100.0
	Total	569	28.3	100.0	
Missing	System	1441	71.7		
Total		2010	100.0		

The amount of time BiNeoLingual families speak to their children in the NeoLingua, in this case English, is a precisely important factor, as increasing input will always increase the child’s opportunities for language acquisition. The results indicate that most BiNeoLingual families, specifically 44.46%, use English with their children 25% of the time they share as a family. 20.91% use it approximately half of their time, and only 12.65% use the NeoLingua 100% of the time (see fig. 5).

NICH89. Porcentaje del tiempo total que comparte con el hijo/a en el que usa el inglés



Time spent using English in proportion to the time shared with the child

Figure 5. NICH89. Percentage of the time shared with the child using English

Regarding the time spent using the NeoLingua in the family, 77.8% also acknowledge that during certain periods or times they use English less with their children, 'letting their guard down' (see fig. 6).

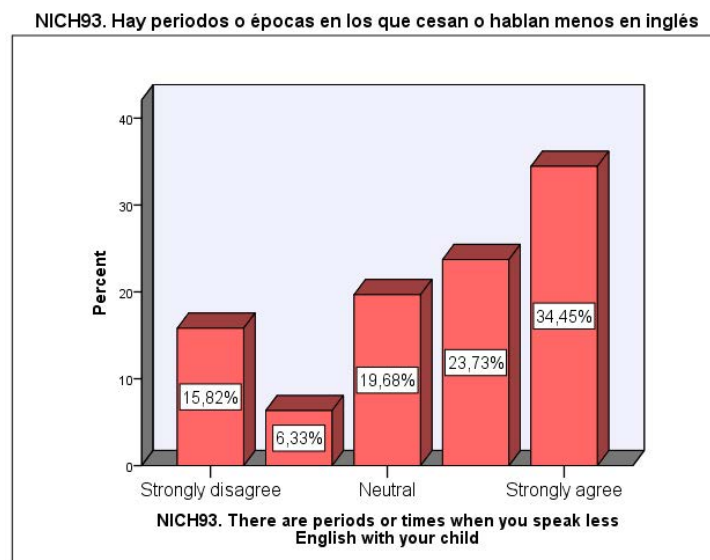


Figure 6. NICH93. Existence of periods of lesser use of English with children

However, the results of the assessment conducted by BiNeoLingual families indicate that speaking to their children in the NeoLingua contributes to their level of English to varying degrees, according to 96.6% of the BiNeoLingual families in the study (see fig. 7).

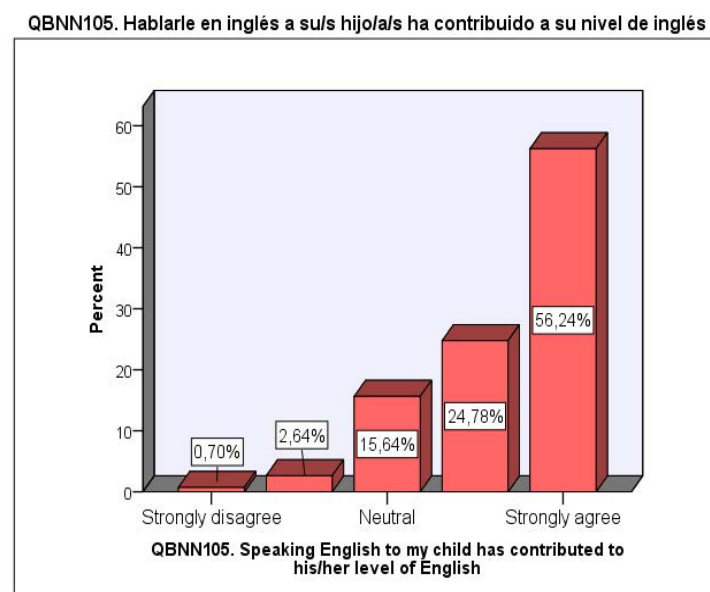


Figure 7. QBNN105. Speaking English to children contributes to their level of English

In view of these findings, it is worth visiting the results of other authors and discussing the agreement or lack of agreement with one's own results in order to deepen the subject and shed light on it.

## 5. Discussion

The present study, as previously claimed by Lozano-Martínez (2019, 2022), confirms that BiNeoLingual Upbringing is present in the Spanish context as a sociolinguistic and cultural phenomenon. This is the widest sample used for statistical analysis on BiNeoLingual Upbringing as far as we have been able to ascertain up to date. Lozano-Martínez's doctoral thesis sample included 2010 informants of whom 571 reported to use English with their children without being native speakers of the language and living in a non-English-speaking country. As this study has found, even a considerable number of other families who cannot be considered BiNeoLingual use English with their children in various ways or expose them to the language.

In terms of strategies, OPOL is the best known and most recommended. Moreover, it is the language practice in mainstream bilingual families that has received the most attention by authors such as Venables et al. (2014), Qiu and Winsler (2015) or Takeuchi (2006). Besides, it is the preferred strategy in bilingual families

with native speakers, according to authors such as Bein y Yu (1980), Döpke (1992), Nenonen (2024), Park and Jee (2024), Park (2023) and others, based on case studies.

Most of the research on bilingualism in BiNeoLingual families also has a qualitative approach and is also mainly based on case studies in which they mostly report following the OPOL strategy approach, as in Andruski et al. (2014), García (2022) or Kiliç (2024). Although they make interesting contributions to the research field, the case studies do not allow generalizable conclusions to be drawn about strategy preferences for obvious reasons related to the limitations of the sample. Such case studies also tend to consist of the experience with the researchers' own children and consequently on a reduced number of individuals, such as the revealing and well-known case study of Saunders (father speaks German and mother speaks English) following the OPOL strategy (Saunders 1988).

However, the present study, which highlights the use of a statistically significant sample size, confirms that, at least in the Spanish context, OPOL is not the most used strategy in BiNeoLingual families. This differs from the results of other studies. For example, in Romanowski (2018), albeit in a different context (Poland), 10 out of 22 families reported following and recommending the OPOL strategy, reaching 45.4%, although the sample may present limitations in terms of statistical conclusions due to its size. Nevertheless, OPOL is the most widely known and recommended strategy, although not the most widely used and maintained in practice. Studies in other contexts with significant sample sizes that are representative of the target population are needed to draw generalisable conclusions.

Some studies on bilingual families and heritage languages (Karpava 2024) conclude that there is an alternating use of languages, so that OPOL would not be a strategy to maintain in everyday life, as is also reflected in the present study. However, ideally, there may be a tendency to distribute the use of languages since, as Moreno-Fernández, Álvarez Mella and Elizondo point out in their work on Spanish as a heritage language, "there is a clear desire to avoid mixing languages" (Moreno-Fernández, Álvarez Mella and Elizondo 2025, 17). Also, in studies with bilingual pairs of native speakers of different languages, several authors report that there are difficulties in separating languages strictly in the OPOL strategy (Okita 2002; Wilson 2020) in a consistent way (Cunningham-Andersson and Andersson 1999; Hamers and Blanc 2000; Smith-Christmas 2015).

In the context of BiNeoLingual parenting, the results of the present study indicate that the OPOL strategy (26.44% of BiNeoLingual families) is outperformed by Time & Place (T&P) (74.43% of BiNeoLingual families). The findings suggest that maintaining the OPOL strategy is complex for various reasons and that in everyday reality, families combine different strategies chosen according to the context, time, and level of the language introduced, as it has been obtained from the multiple-choice question.

The OPOL strategy, in relation to bilingual parenting by mainly native speakers, has been credited with consistency, high input, and heightened motivation in children to respond in the language, as well as reduced effort (Steiner 2008, 56-64). However, these findings cannot be extrapolated to BiNeoLingual families. A significant distinction emerges when comparing native and non-native speakers. The former typically experience reduced effort when using their mother tongue, in contrast to the latter, who must continuously engage with a foreign language, encompassing diverse settings and contexts. The complexity of maintaining the OPOL strategy is further compounded by the varied levels and domains of a foreign language, which poses a significant challenge to most non-native speakers.

As for the strategy identified in this study as the most employed, that is Time & Place (T&P), it associates the use of the introduced language with specific times and places. This finding contradicts Barron-Hauwaert's assumption that it is rarely used among bilingual families (2004, 175). This discrepancy may be attributed to the varying characteristics of parenting styles between bilingual and BiNeoLingual families, since the use of a foreign language in parenting usually involves an added effort that the mother tongue does not. Thus, in BiNeoLingual parenting, the use of the foreign language is often reserved for times such as bath time or bedtime reading. This phenomenon is particularly evident in families with a basic or intermediate level of the foreign language, where it is often impractical to maintain its use in all areas and at all times due to the effort involved (Lozano-Martínez 2019, 2022). As Lozano-Martínez concluded, the use of a foreign language in the context of parenting is contingent on the proficiency of the individual introducing it. Non-native parents may encounter challenges due to the lack of vocabulary in certain contexts, pronunciation, and/or fluency (Lozano-Martínez 2019, 2022) –all of which are concerns that the native speaker does not even worry about.

On the other hand, the present study demonstrates that BiNeoLingual families sometimes combine strategies and that there are periods when one language is more used than the other. This study confirms statistically the inconsistency in strategies mentioned by Tokuhama-Espinosa (2001, 57) despite the fact that the families self-declare that they follow one strategy.

In terms of language habits, the two habits stand out as being closely related to the adoption of the Time & Place strategy, namely the practice of singing in the foreign language or NeoLingua (68.0%) and the practice of frequent or daily reading together (53.2%). These two habits, especially enjoying during childhood, create special moments in the family. In this sense, numerous studies conclude with the importance of both habits in the acquisition of an additional language. As the results of several studies show (Saidah 2024), even in a heritage language in a minority situation (Klein and Márkus 2024), through repetition in songs, children acquire new vocabulary and know the correct pronunciation of words. In this sense, it could be explored, for example, the possibilities of the shared singing picture book examined in Zhou and Guofang (2017) by applying it to BiNeoLingual parenting.

In addition to songs and stories in the traditional way, technology has developed to such an extent that there are countless audiovisual resources in the target language with native speakers that contribute to

their development, whether they are used via television, tablet, or mobile phone. As Bellay (2016), points out, children add elements from songs, stories, and television programmes to their linguistic repertoire. Similarly, in BiNeoLingual upbringing, songs, stories, and television programmes and games on digital devices can contribute to the acquisition of vocabulary, intonation, and correct pronunciation of the NeoLingua through the speaker models they provide in a fun, visual and repetitive way. This is evidenced by the qualitative data collected in the open-ended questions and perceptions provided by BiNeoLingual families during this research. This study identifies the use of devices and television in the target language as particularly characteristic of BiNeoLingual families, where it is used more than in other families.

It is worth noting that the data obtained show that there are families who do not use English in parenting but are in the habit of exposing their children to devices in English, including television, for a few hours a week. Thus, such families use digital and electronic media in order to contribute to their children's linguistic competence in the foreign language, since, as Lozano-Martínez concludes, 98.8% of families (regardless of whether they use English in parenting or not) consider it between 'quite important' and 'essential' that their children learn English (2022). Also, students are aware of the importance of becoming able to communicate in a foreign language (Hompanera Lanzós 2020, 20).

Clearly, there is a need for balance and positive use of such devices to avoid potential negative risks such as addiction, mental overstimulation and exposure to harmful content. According to the results, 31.1% did not use technological devices in English, where there may be an influence of families' attitudes towards the use of screens in childhood, even as a potential contribution to the acquisition of a foreign language.

In addition to the aforementioned resources, 45.4% of BiNeoLingual families consult the Internet, social networks and magazines, which are on the rise. However, one of the difficulties that families face when taking the first step towards non-native bilingual parenting is the scarcity of sources and studies to consult on how to undertake it successfully, most of which are based on personal experience. There is also a need for more formal studies (Lozano-Martínez 2019).

However, the one thing that families most complain about as a way to improve is to travel more and speak more English with their children. The importance of input is crucial in neo-language acquisition, even in the mother tongue; it is vital for language development, as babies who have little exposure to the language have difficulties. Linguistic stimulation by the family, both in the mother tongue and in additional languages, contributes to language development. The amount of time is therefore very important, as well as the quality of input and social interaction.

Nevertheless, according to the results, the majority of the BiNeoLingual families (44.46%) use English only 25% of the time they spend with their children, and only 12.65% use the NeoLingua 100% of the time. These results are very revealing because they can have a direct influence on children's acquisition and learning outcomes and can even determine unsatisfactory results and lead to drop-out. Moreover, they are conditioned by the level of English of the main person who introduces the NeoLingua in the family (Lozano-Martínez 2019, 2022).

In addition, another difficulty added to the short time of NeoLingua use with children is the lack of consistency, which 77.8% recognize as succumbing to periods of reduced NeoLingua use. This statement supports Lozano-Martínez's findings regarding the identification of self-determination in maintaining consistency in NeoLingua use with children over time, as reported by 88.7% of informants. This is related to the level of English proficiency of the adult NeoLingua facilitators (Lozano-Martínez 2019), which was later confirmed again with an expanded sample size (2022). However, although it is always desirable to increase the amount of input to achieve better results, 96.6% of the BiNeoLinguals in this study confirm that their language intervention contributes to varying degrees to their children's level of English.

Based on the results of the present study and the discussion, it seems plausible to draw the following conclusions, which in turn have certain implications and are presented in the next section.

## 6. Conclusions and Implications

BiNeoLingual Upbringing is an emerging phenomenon that is more frequent than could be expected, since data shows that 28.4% of the informants have declared to use English as a NeoLingua with their children. Although this figure is possibly lower, given that interest in the study's topic may have relatively influenced BiNeoLingual families to respond, the number detected in this study is significant and high enough to maintain that it is a sociolinguistic phenomenon present in today's society. Thus, this paper presents for the first time objective data about the presence of such a sociolinguistic phenomenon. This work has also been able to bridge a gap in research since previous studies are mainly based on a few individuals and have used samples that are too small-scale. Thus, this research contributes to knowledge on BiNeoLingualism, providing an objective description of BiNeoLingual families' practices using a statistically significant sample size with clear inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to the participants, following the first results by (Lozano-Martínez 2019).

This paper has analysed the fact that BiNeoLingual families most frequently followed the Time & Place (T&P) strategy. Besides, the majority of BiNeoLingual families (44.5%) use the NeoLingua during 25% of the time they spend with their children. Only a minority of families claim to use the NeoLingua full-time with their children. The amount of input and output in the NeoLingua is relevant when acquiring it. Aside from quality, interaction is essential and can motivate children to use the language and improve their competence. Thus, it seems that the time spent using the NeoLingua contributes to the preference of certain strategies over others.

The strategies followed by BiNeoLingual families where the NeoLingua is used all the time correspond to a minority, allowing for other types of strategies to come into play, such as the use of the NeoLingua depending on time and space (T&S) or the chosen moment. These data do not dictate, but allow us to accept, through a comprehensive assessment of the different analyses carried out, that OPOL is not the main strategy used within BiNeoLingual families. It is plausible to accept that OPOL may be conditioned by the English level of the adult facilitating the NeoLingua. This can be a considerable difference compared to the situation of families where a family member facilitates the language as a native speaker, with a generalised command of the language in all areas of use and context. Thus, NeoLingua facilitators who do not have a high or expert level in the language may find it difficult to maintain the use of the language throughout the entire time shared with their children. By means of perceptions shared by the families participating in the present study, it can be affirmed that, in daily life, even those who try to adhere to the OPOL strategy, in practice, tend towards less rigid strategies of language separation than the OPOL strategy.

BiNeoLingual families mix strategies and find it difficult to persist in using the foreign language continuously for a variety of reasons, such as possible extra effort, politeness when others do not speak the language, or the need to use the mother tongue in emotional conversations, for example.

It can be concluded that major habits among BiNeoLingual families are singing and reading to their children in English, activities children usually love. In addition, many families, even non-BiNeoLingual families expose their children to the English language on a regular basis (from 1 to 6 hours per week) through television and other devices. This implies that learning and acquiring English is highly desired in all the families, not only in those that adopt a BiNeoLingual Upbringing.

In this way, television and the use of other devices in English might help considerably in the development of the acquisition and learning of the language, even if there is no interaction (although interaction does enhance such possibilities). Exposure to the NeoLingua through television and other devices can be a strategy used by any family, even if they do not know the NeoLingua and wish to help their children.

Another aspect to be highlighted is the scarcity of informative sources on how to carry out BiNeoLingual parenting (Lozano-Martínez 2022), so families need well-founded guidance and access to the conclusions and implications of more scientific studies on BiNeoLingual parenting, as it presents differences and attention to specific needs that do not occur in bilingual parenting carried out by native speakers. It is essential to clarify myths about BiNeoLingual upbringing which some parents may fear. Several families erroneously associate BiNeoLingualism with potential adverse outcomes (Lozano-Martínez 2019, 2022). However, as Romanowski also concludes, "such an approach does not lead to confusion or further problems in communication" (2018, 162). Therefore, this paper opens multiple paths for future research.

## 7. Recommendations for Families

When deciding to adopt a BiNeoLingual upbringing, some key factors are important to bear in mind. Primarily, one of the aims should be to maximise exposure to the input in the NeoLingua (e.g., songs, storytelling, television programmes) and to facilitate as much interaction as possible (increase the use of language at home and meet other speakers of the language whenever it is possible). However, each family should consider its own characteristics and possibilities and be aware that in real life consistency and regular and full-time use of the NeoLingua are not possible for every family. Therefore, Linguistic Family Planning is necessarily flexible to be adapted to actual circumstances and possibilities (time shared, language level of the adult, presence of people who do not know the language, etc.).

In the ideal scenario, where all adults in a family are proficient in the language being introduced, it would be advisable for them to use NeoLingua on a full-time basis in all possible settings, since the more the language is used, the better the results that can be obtained. As we have seen in this paper, there are different strategies and linguistic habits that BiNeoLingual families can adopt. However, families need to find the strategy that works best for them.

## 8. Further Research

The research questions posed in this study have been addressed through a comprehensive data analysis. However, further research is necessary to achieve a more profound understanding of the subject matter. This study has identified strategies and habits characteristic of BiNeoLingual families. Family perceptions indicate that the BiNeoLingual upbringing can contribute to the acquisition and learning of a foreign language, even for families residing in communities that do not provide such language.

It is convenient to study bilingual and BiNeoLingual parenting in a differentiated manner, given the inherent similarities and differences intrinsic to each type of parenting. Even in teaching English as a second language some authors, e.g. Rámila Díaz (2009), find differences in strategies used by native teachers and non-native teachers of English. In subsequent studies, it would be desirable, as it has been done for the present study, to clearly determine the factors of inclusion and exclusion in the sample, as well as to focus on a single language (given that each language is associated with its own factors, e.g., prestige/lack of prestige in a region) and a specific context.

Furthermore, it is imperative to use appropriate statistical samples to draw generalisable conclusions. A field of interest that has yet to be explored could centre on the measurement of the results obtained through the analysis of vocabulary, intonation, and pronunciation acquired in BiNeoLingual upbringing.

## Acknowledgments

The greatest gratitude goes to all the families who participated in this study, as it would not have been possible without them, and this is for them and thanks to them.

## Funding

The author received no financial support for the research and/or publication of this paper.

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## Appendix

### QUESTIONNAIRE (FRAGMENT-Spanish)

¿Cómo organizáis los idiomas?

- Uno/a usa el inglés y otro/a el español ('OPOL')
- El uso del español y el inglés es indistinto
- El uso del inglés depende del ámbito o contexto (ej. rutinas del baño, juegos, lecturas, etc.)
- Otra...

Cantas a tu hijo/a en inglés

	1	2	3	4	5	
Nunca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	A diario

Lees cuentos o historias a tu hijo/a en inglés

	1	2	3	4	5	
Nunca	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	A diario

¿Cuántas horas semanales ve o usa tu hijo/a la tele, tableta, el móvil u otro dispositivo en inglés?

- 0 horas
- 1-5 horas
- 6 horas o más

¿Qué recursos o fuentes usaste para informarte sobre la crianza bilingüe?

- Ninguno
- Internet, blogs, redes sociales, revistas...
- Formación específica, libros y revistas especializados

¿Qué mejorarías en tu método de crianza en inglés?

- Nada
- La parte de gramática
- Hablaría más tiempo en inglés con mi/s hijo/a/s
- Viajaría más con mi/s hijo/a/s a países de habla inglesa
- Otra...

¿Qué porcentaje del tiempo que pasas con tu/s hijo/a/s le/s hablas en inglés?

	1	2	3	4	5	
0%	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	100%

Hay periodos o épocas en los que 'bajas la guardia' y le hablas menos en inglés

En total	1	2	3	4	5	Totalmente
desacuerdo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	de acuerdo

Creo que hablarle en inglés a mi/s hijo/a/s ha contribuido a su nivel de inglés

En total	1	2	3	4	5	Totalmente
desacuerdo	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	de acuerdo