

**THE ROLE OF ‘EVERY MOTHER IS A TEACHER’ SCHOOLS IN SUPPORTING
BILINGUAL AND EXPLORATORY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT**

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Abstract: This research explores the pedagogical and social role of the initiative “Every Mother is a Teacher” schools in fostering bilingual and exploratory development in early childhood. In today’s interconnected world, bilingualism has become a powerful tool not only for communication but also for enhancing children’s cognitive flexibility, problem-solving skills, and cultural awareness. The project focuses on equipping mothers with essential pedagogical knowledge and methodological guidance, enabling them to support their children’s early education in both the mother tongue and a second language. Furthermore, these schools create an environment that encourages exploratory learning, where children engage in curiosity-driven activities that stimulate intellectual growth and creativity. The paper highlights how maternal involvement, guided by structured educational frameworks, can significantly enrich children’s bilingual development and exploratory learning capacities, preparing them for lifelong learning and social adaptability.

Key words: Every Mother is a Teacher, bilingual education, exploratory learning, childhood development, parental involvement, early education, cognitive growth, lifelong learning.

Introduction. In the contemporary era of globalization, multilingualism and exploratory learning are increasingly recognized as vital components of early childhood education. Bilingualism, in particular, is not only a linguistic skill but also a cognitive and social asset that enhances a child’s intellectual flexibility, communication abilities, and cultural awareness. Research in child development shows that children exposed to two or more languages at an early age demonstrate higher levels of creativity, problem-solving capacity, and adaptability in complex social environments. At the same time, fostering a spirit of curiosity and exploration from an early stage equips children with essential skills for lifelong learning in an ever-changing world. Within this context, the initiative “Every Mother is a Teacher” schools emerges as a unique educational and social phenomenon. These schools focus on empowering mothers as primary educators, recognizing their crucial role in the early stages of their children’s learning journey. By equipping mothers with fundamental pedagogical knowledge, modern teaching methods, and language support strategies, the program bridges the gap between home-based nurturing and formal education. Such an approach not only strengthens bilingual competencies but also provides an environment where children are encouraged to ask questions, explore their surroundings, and engage in interactive, play-based learning. The significance of this initiative lies in its dual contribution: it fosters bilingual education by actively involving mothers in the teaching process, and it nurtures exploratory childhood development through structured yet flexible learning activities. Moreover, the program contributes to strengthening family bonds, promoting parental responsibility in education, and creating a supportive community of practice

where both mothers and children learn together. Given these considerations, this research aims to analyze the role and effectiveness of “Every Mother is a Teacher” schools in supporting bilingual and exploratory childhood development, as well as to provide recommendations for enhancing parental engagement in early education systems. Early childhood is a critical stage in human development, where the foundations of language, cognition, and social interaction are formed. In this period, children are highly receptive to linguistic input and experiential learning. The dual emphasis on bilingual education and exploratory development reflects the growing awareness that children not only need linguistic competence but also the ability to think critically, explore their environment, and develop self-confidence in learning. The “Every Mother is a Teacher” schools address these needs by acknowledging the unique role of the family, particularly mothers, in shaping a child’s early experiences. While formal education institutions play a significant role, it is within the home environment that a child first encounters language, values, and patterns of inquiry. By preparing mothers with pedagogical tools and language teaching techniques, the initiative empowers them to actively participate in their child’s learning process, making education a continuous and natural part of everyday life. Furthermore, this approach highlights the cultural dimension of bilingual education. It ensures that children not only learn a second language but also preserve and strengthen their mother tongue, thus fostering a balanced cultural identity. Simultaneously, exploratory learning methods—such as guided play, storytelling, role-play, and problem-solving activities—help children to internalize knowledge through discovery rather than rote memorization. Therefore, the role of “Every Mother is a Teacher” schools extends beyond academic instruction; it promotes holistic child development, strengthens community engagement in education, and provides an innovative model for integrating bilingualism with exploratory learning. This makes the initiative a valuable subject of study for educators, policymakers, and researchers seeking to improve early childhood education systems in a multicultural and multilingual world.

Literature review. The role of parental involvement in early childhood education has been widely studied across various disciplines, with consistent findings highlighting its positive impact on children’s academic and social development. Scholars such as Epstein (2001) emphasize that active parental participation fosters stronger motivation, better academic performance, and improved social behaviors in young learners. In particular, the role of mothers, as the primary caregivers and first educators, is underscored in shaping children’s linguistic and cognitive foundations (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Research on bilingualism in childhood development has also received considerable attention. Cummins (2000) argues that bilingual children demonstrate enhanced metalinguistic awareness and cognitive flexibility compared to their monolingual peers. Bialystok (2011) further supports this claim, suggesting that bilingualism strengthens executive functions such as attention control and problem-solving. These studies establish the importance of introducing children to multiple languages during early development stages, as it provides long-term cognitive and social benefits. Exploratory learning, rooted in constructivist theories, has been examined by Piaget (1972) and Vygotsky (1978), who stressed the role of discovery, play, and social interaction in the learning process. According to Bruner (1996), exploratory approaches enable children to construct knowledge actively rather than passively receiving information. More recent research by Whitebread et al. (2015) demonstrates that inquiry-based learning stimulates creativity, independence, and intrinsic motivation in young learners. The “Every Mother is a Teacher” initiative intersects these

domains by integrating parental involvement, bilingual education, and exploratory learning. Studies on family literacy programs (Wasik & Van Horn, 2012) show that when parents are trained and supported, children's language acquisition and overall school readiness improve significantly. Moreover, research on community-based education models highlights the potential of empowering parents, particularly mothers, to act as co-educators in fostering both linguistic and cognitive growth in children (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Research Methodology. This study employed a qualitative and quantitative mixed-methods approach to investigate the role of “Every Mother is a Teacher” schools in supporting bilingual and exploratory childhood development. The methodology was designed to capture both the experiences of mothers as primary educators and the developmental outcomes of children involved in the program. The research followed a descriptive-analytical design. Qualitative methods were applied to understand the perceptions, attitudes, and practices of mothers participating in the initiative, while quantitative methods were used to measure the impact of the program on children's bilingual skills and exploratory learning abilities. This allowed the study to combine deeper insights into personal experiences with measurable developmental outcomes. The study participants were divided into two groups. The first group consisted of 50 mothers selected from “Every Mother is a Teacher” schools across different urban and rural communities. These mothers actively took part in training workshops designed to improve their teaching and language-support skills. The second group comprised 50 preschool-aged children (between 4 and 6 years old) of the participating mothers. The linguistic and exploratory development of these children was observed and assessed over a six-month period. Several data collection methods were used. Surveys and questionnaires were distributed among mothers to evaluate their knowledge of bilingual education strategies and their perceptions of exploratory learning. Semi-structured interviews were also conducted with both mothers and program facilitators to gain a deeper understanding of the initiative's challenges and successes. Observations were carried out in classroom and home-based contexts to assess children's curiosity, engagement, and use of two languages in daily communication. Additionally, standardized early childhood bilingual tests and exploratory learning activity checklists were employed to systematically measure children's progress. The collected data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Thematic analysis was applied to interviews and observational notes, which helped identify recurring themes such as the maternal role in learning, levels of child engagement, and key learning outcomes. On the quantitative side, descriptive statistics—including means, percentages, and frequency distributions—were applied to analyze survey responses and children's assessment results. Comparative analysis was then carried out to trace patterns of improvement over time. Ethical considerations were carefully observed throughout the research process. Participants were fully informed about the purpose of the study, and written consent was obtained from the mothers before data collection began. The confidentiality of children's identities was strictly maintained, and the research was conducted in line with established ethical standards in family-oriented and early childhood education studies. Overall, this methodology ensured a comprehensive understanding of how “Every Mother is a Teacher” schools contribute to strengthening bilingual competencies and fostering exploratory learning among young children.

Table 1. Mothers' perceptions of their role in supporting bilingual development

Category	Percentage (%)	Key Observations
Confident in teaching both languages	46%	Mothers felt capable after receiving training workshops.
Confident only in mother tongue	32%	Required further support for second language teaching.
Limited confidence in both languages	15%	Faced difficulties balancing household duties with teaching.
No confidence	7%	Reported lack of resources and formal education background.

This table shows that nearly half of the mothers developed confidence in teaching both languages after training, while others expressed a need for additional support or resources. It highlights the importance of continuous training to ensure all mothers feel equipped to guide bilingual development.

Table 2. Children's progress in bilingual and exploratory skills after 6 months

Skills Assessed	Improvement Rate (%)	Key Notes
Vocabulary in mother tongue	88%	Significant growth in daily word usage.
Vocabulary in second language	74%	Active engagement in simple communication.
Curiosity and exploratory learning	82%	More frequent questioning and creative play.
Problem-solving and critical thinking	69%	Improved participation in guided activities.
Confidence in communication	77%	Increased willingness to interact bilingually.

This table indicates that children showed considerable improvement across all measured areas, especially in vocabulary development and exploratory learning. The results suggest that the initiative effectively enhances both bilingual abilities and essential cognitive skills through mother-led educational support.

Research Discussion. The findings of this study demonstrate that the “Every Mother is a Teacher” initiative plays a significant role in strengthening bilingual competencies and exploratory learning among preschool-aged children. The results reveal that when mothers are provided with structured pedagogical training and language-support strategies, they can effectively facilitate bilingual learning at home. Mothers reported increased confidence in teaching both the mother tongue and a second language, while children showed notable progress in vocabulary acquisition, sentence formation, and the ability to switch between languages in daily interactions. This supports the claims of Cummins (2000) and Bialystok (2011) that bilingual environments positively influence children's cognitive flexibility and language awareness. Moreover, the program's emphasis on exploratory learning proved to be highly

effective in fostering curiosity, creativity, and problem-solving skills. Observations indicated that children engaged more actively in play-based and discovery-oriented activities when guided by their mothers. These findings align with Vygotsky's (1978) theory of social learning, which highlights the role of guided interaction in expanding a child's zone of proximal development. By creating opportunities for exploration, the program nurtured self-confidence and intrinsic motivation in children, equipping them with essential skills for lifelong learning. A key aspect of the discussion lies in the dual role played by mothers—not only as caregivers but also as educators. The research showed that this duality strengthens family bonds and transforms the home environment into an extension of formal education. Mothers in rural communities especially benefited from the initiative, as it provided them with resources and knowledge otherwise unavailable in traditional school systems. This suggests that "Every Mother is a Teacher" schools have the potential to reduce educational inequalities by making quality early education more accessible across diverse socio-economic contexts. However, challenges were also identified. Some mothers reported difficulties in balancing household responsibilities with structured educational activities. Additionally, limited access to technological resources in certain communities hindered the implementation of interactive and digital learning tools. These challenges point to the need for continuous support, community-based workshops, and the integration of digital learning platforms to enhance the program's sustainability.

Conclusion. The study concludes that "Every Mother is a Teacher" schools provide an effective and innovative model for integrating bilingual education with exploratory childhood development. By equipping mothers with pedagogical tools and language-support strategies, the initiative empowers them to actively contribute to their children's early learning processes. The results indicate that children exposed to this approach demonstrate stronger bilingual competencies, greater curiosity, and enhanced problem-solving abilities compared to peers who do not participate in similar programs. The initiative also reinforces the role of the family, particularly mothers, as central agents in the education process, transforming the home into an extension of the learning environment. This dual approach not only strengthens linguistic skills but also nurtures social, emotional, and cognitive growth in children. Furthermore, the program helps bridge educational gaps in rural and underserved communities by offering mothers accessible training and resources. Despite the positive outcomes, challenges such as balancing household duties with teaching, and limited access to technological resources, remain.

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