

Modern Trends in the Formation of Moral Qualities of Senior Students in Conditions of modern Education

Nessipbayeva Zaregul¹ Anuarkyzy Saule^{2*} Mahmetova Dzhamilya^{3*},
Islamgaliyeva Viktoriya⁴, Abirov Bauyrzhan⁵, Bissenbayeva Laura⁶,
Yergeshev Yerzhan⁷

¹Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

^{2*}candidate of pedagogical sciences

^{3*} Master of Translation Studies, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan

⁴Candidate of pedagogical sciences, Aktobe Regional university named after Zhubanov

⁵Postgraduate student

⁶Master of Education,

⁷Candidate of Pedagogical Sciences, Military Institute of Land Forces, Almaty, Kazakhstan

*Corresponding author: Email: zhanat_2006@mail.ru

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ABSTRACT:

In contemporary educational discourse, the formation of moral qualities among senior secondary school students is increasingly viewed as an essential component of holistic education. Rapid globalization, cultural diversification, and the expansion of plurilingual education models have reshaped the conditions under which moral development occurs. Plurilingual education, understood as the purposeful integration of multiple languages within the learning process, creates a unique pedagogical environment in which linguistic, cultural, and ethical dimensions of education intersect. This study examines modern trends in the formation of moral qualities among senior students within plurilingual educational contexts.

The research is grounded in interdisciplinary theoretical frameworks drawing from moral development theory, intercultural education, and plurilingual pedagogy. It analyzes how exposure to multiple languages and cultures contributes to the development of moral values such as empathy, responsibility, tolerance, respect for diversity, and ethical decision-making. Particular attention is given to learner-centered approaches, dialogic interaction, project-based learning, and reflective practices that encourage students to engage with moral dilemmas across cultural perspectives. The study also considers the growing role of digital technologies in facilitating intercultural

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communication and moral dialogue among students from diverse linguistic backgrounds.

The findings suggest that plurilingual education enhances moral development by fostering intercultural sensitivity, critical moral reasoning, and social responsibility. However, challenges related to teacher preparedness, curriculum integration, and assessment of moral outcomes remain significant. The study concludes that effective moral education in plurilingual settings requires systematic curricular support, targeted teacher training, and the creation of inclusive learning environments that value linguistic and cultural diversity. The results contribute to current discussions on educational modernization and offer practical implications for policymakers and educators seeking to strengthen moral education in multilingual societies.

Keywords: plurilingual education; moral qualities; senior secondary students; moral development; intercultural competence; ethical education; multilingual learning; values education.

Introduction

The formation of moral qualities in students has long been recognized as one of the fundamental objectives of education, alongside cognitive and intellectual development. In the context of rapid social change, intensified globalization, and growing cultural and linguistic diversity, educational systems are increasingly required to address not only academic achievement but also the ethical and moral development of learners. Senior secondary school students occupy a particularly significant position in this process, as adolescence represents a critical stage for the formation of personal identity, value orientations, and moral consciousness (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006). During this period, learners actively construct their moral worldview while engaging with complex social realities, making education a decisive factor in shaping their ethical attitudes and behaviors.

In recent decades, plurilingual education has emerged as a prominent educational paradigm in many countries, especially in multilingual and multicultural societies. Unlike traditional monolingual or bilingual models, plurilingual education emphasizes the dynamic and integrated use of multiple languages within the learning

process, allowing students to draw on their entire linguistic repertoire to construct meaning (Council of Europe, 2001). This approach not only enhances communicative competence but also promotes intercultural awareness and mutual understanding. As language is intrinsically linked to culture and values, plurilingual education creates favorable conditions for moral development by exposing students to diverse ethical perspectives and social norms (Byram, 2012).

The relevance of moral education within plurilingual contexts is further intensified by contemporary social challenges, including increasing cultural polarization, the spread of misinformation, and the erosion of shared ethical frameworks. Schools are expected to prepare students for responsible participation in pluralistic societies, where respect for diversity, tolerance, and ethical responsibility are essential competencies (Banks, 2016). In this regard, plurilingual education offers a pedagogical space in which moral learning can be embedded naturally through intercultural dialogue, collaborative learning, and reflective engagement with different value systems.

Theoretical perspectives on moral development

provide a foundation for understanding how students acquire and internalize moral qualities. Classical models, such as Kohlberg's (1981) theory of moral development, emphasize the progression of moral reasoning from externally regulated behavior to principled ethical judgment. Although influential, this approach has been complemented by alternative perspectives that stress the role of care, empathy, and social relationships in moral development (Gilligan, 1982). Contemporary scholars argue that moral development is deeply contextual and culturally situated, shaped by social interaction, language use, and lived experience (Turiel, 2002). From this standpoint, plurilingual educational environments can be seen as particularly conducive to moral growth, as they encourage learners to negotiate meaning and values across cultural boundaries.

Modern educational practice increasingly integrates moral education into subject learning rather than treating it as an isolated component. Value-based and competency-oriented curricula emphasize the development of ethical awareness, social responsibility, and civic engagement alongside academic knowledge (Lovat et al., 2010). Within plurilingual classrooms, moral education is often realized through the analysis of culturally diverse texts, discussion of global issues, and engagement in collaborative projects that require ethical decision-making. Such practices promote critical reflection on moral dilemmas while simultaneously developing linguistic and intercultural competence.

Dialogic interaction plays a central role in this process. Through discussion, debate, and collaborative inquiry conducted in multiple languages, students encounter alternative viewpoints and are encouraged to justify their moral positions. Research indicates that dialogic learning enhances moral reasoning by fostering perspective-taking and critical self-reflection (Alexander, 2008). Plurilingual dialogue, in particular, deepens this process by enabling students to access moral concepts embedded in different linguistic and cultural frameworks.

Another significant trend is the increasing use of project-based and experiential learning as tools for moral education. Collaborative projects, community engagement, and service-learning initiatives provide authentic contexts in which students can practice moral behavior, such as cooperation, fairness, and empathy (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). When implemented in plurilingual settings, these approaches also require students to navigate linguistic diversity, thereby reinforcing respect for others and ethical communication.

Digital technologies have further expanded the possibilities for moral education in plurilingual contexts. Online exchanges, virtual collaborations, and international projects connect students across borders, exposing them to global perspectives on ethical and social issues (O'Dowd, 2018). Such experiences contribute to the development of global citizenship and moral responsibility, reinforcing the link between language learning and ethical engagement.

Despite these positive trends, challenges remain. Teachers often face difficulties integrating moral education into plurilingual instruction due to limited training, curriculum constraints, and the complexity of assessing moral outcomes. Moreover, differences in language proficiency may affect students' participation in moral discussions, requiring careful pedagogical scaffolding (García & Wei, 2014). Addressing these challenges is essential for ensuring that plurilingual education fulfills its potential as a catalyst for moral development.

Formation of moral qualities among senior secondary students in conditions of plurilingual education represents a crucial and timely area of educational research. By combining linguistic diversity with ethical inquiry and intercultural engagement, plurilingual education offers powerful opportunities for shaping morally responsible, empathetic, and socially active individuals. Understanding contemporary trends in this field provides valuable insights for educators, researchers, and policymakers seeking to align moral education with the demands of a

globalized and multilingual world.

Methodology

The methodological framework of this study is designed to investigate modern trends in the formation of moral qualities among senior secondary school students within the context of plurilingual education. Given the complex, multidimensional nature of moral development and the sociocultural specificity of plurilingual learning environments, the research adopts a mixed-methods approach that integrates qualitative and quantitative strategies. This approach enables a comprehensive examination of both measurable outcomes and contextualized experiences related to moral education, linguistic diversity, and intercultural interaction (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

The study is grounded in an interpretive–constructivist paradigm, which assumes that moral qualities are socially constructed through interaction, language use, and cultural engagement rather than transmitted as fixed norms. This paradigm is particularly appropriate for plurilingual educational contexts, where meaning-making occurs through dialogue among diverse linguistic and cultural perspectives (Vygotsky, 1978; Byram, 2012). At the same time, elements of the post-positivist paradigm are incorporated to allow for systematic measurement and comparison of moral development indicators across student groups.

The research employs a sequential explanatory mixed-methods design. In the first phase, quantitative data are collected to identify general patterns and trends in the moral development of senior secondary students participating in plurilingual education programs. In the second phase, qualitative data are gathered to deepen understanding of the quantitative results and to explore students' and teachers' perceptions of moral formation processes in plurilingual classrooms (Creswell, 2014). This design ensures methodological triangulation and enhances the validity and reliability of the findings.

The quantitative component focuses on assessing

students' moral qualities, including empathy, responsibility, tolerance, respect for cultural diversity, and ethical decision-making. The qualitative component examines how these qualities are shaped through instructional practices, classroom interaction, curriculum content, and intercultural communication. The integration of both components allows the study to address not only the outcomes but also the mechanisms of moral development in plurilingual education.

The research is conducted in secondary educational institutions that implement plurilingual education programs, where instruction is delivered in three or more languages. These institutions typically include a national language, a regional or minority language, and one or more international languages. Such settings provide a natural laboratory for examining the interaction between language learning, cultural exposure, and moral development.

The educational context reflects contemporary reforms aimed at promoting multilingual competence, intercultural understanding, and value-based education. In these schools, moral education is not taught as a separate subject but integrated across disciplines, particularly through language, literature, social sciences, and project-based learning activities. This integrative approach aligns with international educational frameworks emphasizing competency-based and holistic education (OECD, 2019).

The study involves senior secondary school students aged 15–18, as well as teachers involved in plurilingual instruction. The student sample includes learners from diverse linguistic, cultural, and socioeconomic backgrounds, reflecting the heterogeneity typical of plurilingual educational environments. Purposeful and stratified sampling techniques are employed to ensure representation of different language proficiency levels and academic tracks (Patton, 2015).

Teachers participating in the study include language teachers and subject teachers who teach

content through a foreign or second language. Their inclusion allows for the examination of pedagogical strategies and professional perspectives on moral education within plurilingual settings. Participation is voluntary, and informed consent is obtained from all participants in accordance with ethical research standards.

To capture the multifaceted nature of moral development, multiple data collection instruments are employed. Quantitative data are gathered through standardized questionnaires and moral development scales adapted for adolescent learners. These instruments are designed to measure moral sensitivity, ethical reasoning, empathy, and attitudes toward cultural diversity. Instruments are selected based on established validity and reliability in previous research (Rest et al., 1999; Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006) and adapted linguistically to ensure accessibility across languages used in the study.

Questionnaires are administered in the students' preferred instructional language to minimize linguistic bias and ensure accurate responses. Where necessary, parallel language versions are developed using back-translation procedures to maintain conceptual equivalence (Brislin, 1986). Quantitative data collection is conducted during regular school hours under standardized conditions.

Qualitative data are collected through semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, classroom observations, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews with students explore their experiences of moral learning in plurilingual classrooms, perceptions of ethical issues, and reflections on intercultural interactions. Focus groups are used to facilitate collective reflection and dialogic exchange, allowing participants to articulate shared and contrasting viewpoints.

Teacher interviews focus on instructional strategies, challenges, and professional beliefs related to moral education in plurilingual contexts. Classroom observations provide insight into real-time interactions, language use, and

moral discourse during lessons. Observational protocols emphasize dialogic engagement, student collaboration, ethical discussions, and culturally responsive teaching practices. Document analysis includes curriculum guidelines, lesson plans, and instructional materials to identify explicit and implicit moral content.

The quantitative instruments used in the study include adapted versions of moral judgment and empathy scales appropriate for adolescents. Items are designed to assess both cognitive and affective dimensions of moral development. Likert-scale formats are employed to facilitate statistical analysis. Internal consistency is assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficients, and pilot testing is conducted to refine items and ensure clarity. Qualitative instruments include interview guides and observation protocols developed based on theoretical frameworks of moral and intercultural education. Interview questions are open-ended to allow participants to express their experiences in their own words. Questions are carefully structured to avoid leading responses and to encourage reflection on moral reasoning, language use, and intercultural engagement.

Quantitative data analysis is conducted using descriptive and inferential statistical methods. Descriptive statistics summarize central tendencies and variability in moral development indicators. Inferential analyses, such as t-tests and analysis of variance, are employed to examine differences between student groups based on language proficiency, participation in plurilingual programs, and demographic variables. Correlational analyses explore relationships between plurilingual engagement and moral qualities.

Qualitative data analysis follows a thematic coding approach grounded in principles of qualitative content analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents are coded inductively and deductively. Initial coding identifies recurring patterns and themes related to moral

development, instructional practices, and intercultural interaction. Axial coding then establishes relationships among themes, linking individual experiences to broader educational processes.

To enhance trustworthiness, multiple strategies are employed, including data triangulation, peer debriefing, and member checking. Triangulation across data sources and methods strengthens the credibility of findings by corroborating evidence from different perspectives (Denzin, 2012). Member checking involves sharing preliminary interpretations with participants to ensure accuracy and resonance with their experiences.

Ethical considerations are central to the research design, particularly given the involvement of minors and the sensitive nature of moral education. Ethical approval is obtained from relevant institutional review boards. Informed consent is secured from students, parents, and teachers, with assurances of confidentiality and anonymity. Participants are informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any stage without penalty.

Data are stored securely, and identifying information is removed during transcription and analysis. Care is taken to ensure that discussions of moral issues do not cause psychological discomfort. Interviewers are trained to handle sensitive topics respectfully and to provide support resources if needed.

The study employs multiple strategies to ensure methodological rigor. Quantitative validity is supported through the use of established instruments and pilot testing. Reliability is assessed through internal consistency measures and standardized administration procedures. Qualitative trustworthiness is addressed through credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability criteria (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Thick description of the research context and participants enhances transferability, allowing readers to assess the applicability of findings to other settings. An audit trail documenting methodological decisions supports dependability

and confirmability.

Despite its strengths, the methodology has limitations. Self-reported data may be influenced by social desirability bias, particularly in relation to moral qualities. Language differences may affect participants' ability to articulate complex moral concepts, even with careful linguistic adaptation. Additionally, the contextual specificity of plurilingual educational environments may limit generalization of findings.

The methodological framework of this study is designed to capture the complexity of moral development in plurilingual educational contexts. By integrating quantitative measurement with qualitative exploration, the research provides a nuanced understanding of how moral qualities are formed among senior secondary students. The methodology aligns with contemporary educational research standards and offers a robust foundation for analyzing the interplay between language, culture, and moral education in an increasingly multilingual world.

Results

The results of the study provide a comprehensive picture of the formation of moral qualities among senior secondary school students in the context of plurilingual education. The integration of quantitative and qualitative data allowed for a nuanced interpretation of both general trends and individual experiences, revealing how moral development is shaped through linguistic diversity, intercultural interaction, and pedagogical practices. The findings are presented as an interconnected narrative that reflects the complexity of moral education in plurilingual settings.

Quantitative analysis demonstrated that students enrolled in plurilingual education programs exhibited consistently higher levels of key moral qualities compared to peers in monolingual or traditional bilingual contexts. Descriptive statistics revealed elevated mean scores in empathy, tolerance toward cultural differences, responsibility, and ethical sensitivity. In particular, empathy emerged as one of the most

strongly developed moral traits, with students demonstrating a heightened ability to recognize and respond to the emotional states and perspectives of others. This tendency was especially pronounced among students who reported frequent engagement in multilingual discussions and collaborative learning activities. These findings suggest a strong association between plurilingual interaction and affective dimensions of moral development, supporting previous research emphasizing the role of intercultural contact in fostering empathy (Byram, 2012; Banks, 2016).

Statistical comparisons indicated significant differences in moral reasoning levels based on the intensity of plurilingual exposure. Students participating in programs where three or more languages were used regularly across subjects scored higher on measures of ethical decision-making than those whose exposure was limited to language classes alone. Inferential analysis confirmed that these differences were statistically significant, suggesting that the integration of multiple languages into content learning plays a crucial role in shaping moral cognition. Correlational analysis further revealed moderate to strong positive relationships between students' self-reported plurilingual competence and indicators of moral sensitivity, including respect for diversity and openness to alternative viewpoints.

Responsibility and social accountability also emerged as salient outcomes. Students in plurilingual environments demonstrated a stronger sense of personal and collective responsibility, particularly in collaborative and project-based tasks. Quantitative data indicated that these students were more likely to perceive themselves as accountable not only for their own learning outcomes but also for the success of their peers. This sense of shared responsibility was closely linked to the necessity of negotiating meaning across languages, which required patience, cooperation, and mutual support. Such findings align with social constructivist perspectives that emphasize the moral

dimensions of collaborative learning (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

Tolerance and respect for cultural diversity showed particularly strong development among students with sustained plurilingual learning experiences. Survey responses indicated that these students expressed lower levels of cultural stereotyping and greater acceptance of differing norms, beliefs, and practices. Notably, tolerance was not limited to passive acceptance but extended to active interest in other cultures and willingness to engage in intercultural dialogue. These results suggest that plurilingual education contributes not only to attitudinal change but also to the internalization of moral values related to social justice and inclusion.

Qualitative findings provided deeper insight into the processes underlying these quantitative trends. Interviews and focus group discussions revealed that students perceived plurilingual classrooms as spaces where moral learning occurred naturally through interaction rather than through explicit moral instruction. Many students reported that encountering ethical concepts in different languages allowed them to perceive moral issues from multiple perspectives. For example, participants described how discussing the same social issue in different languages led to subtle shifts in interpretation, emotional resonance, and evaluative judgment. This phenomenon reinforced their awareness that moral meanings are culturally embedded and context-dependent, fostering greater moral reflexivity.

Students frequently emphasized the role of dialogue in shaping their moral understanding. Classroom discussions conducted in multiple languages were described as more inclusive and intellectually stimulating, as they allowed students with different linguistic strengths to contribute meaningfully. Participants noted that such discussions often required them to listen more attentively, clarify misunderstandings, and negotiate meanings collaboratively. These communicative demands were consistently linked to the development of patience, respect, and

ethical communication. Students reported becoming more conscious of the impact of their words on others, particularly when expressing opinions on sensitive moral or social topics.

Teachers' perspectives corroborated these student experiences. Qualitative data from teacher interviews indicated that plurilingual instruction encouraged a shift from teacher-centered moral instruction toward facilitative and dialogic approaches. Educators observed that moral qualities such as empathy and fairness were most visibly developed during collaborative activities, group projects, and problem-solving tasks involving ethical dilemmas. Teachers also noted that plurilingual settings required them to model ethical behavior more consciously, as students closely observed how teachers navigated linguistic diversity, addressed cultural differences, and resolved conflicts. This modeling effect emerged as a significant factor in moral formation.

Classroom observations further substantiated these findings. Observational data revealed frequent instances of spontaneous moral discourse arising from language-related challenges. For example, when students encountered difficulties understanding instructions or peer contributions in a non-dominant language, classmates often intervened to provide explanations, translations, or emotional support. Such interactions demonstrated the practical enactment of moral values, including solidarity, compassion, and responsibility. These behaviors were particularly evident in classrooms where translanguaging practices were encouraged, allowing students to draw flexibly on their full linguistic repertoires.

Document analysis of curricula and instructional materials indicated that moral education in plurilingual contexts was predominantly implicit rather than explicitly articulated. Ethical values were embedded within learning objectives related to intercultural competence, communication skills, and collaborative learning. While explicit moral terminology was relatively limited, qualitative analysis suggested that this implicit

integration did not diminish the effectiveness of moral education. On the contrary, students appeared to internalize moral values more deeply when they emerged organically from learning activities rather than being presented as abstract principles. This finding supports contemporary views advocating for embedded and experiential approaches to moral education (Lovat et al., 2010).

The role of digital technologies emerged as a significant theme in both quantitative and qualitative data. Students who participated in online intercultural exchanges and virtual collaborative projects demonstrated higher levels of global moral awareness and ethical sensitivity. Survey results showed that these students were more likely to express concern for global social issues, such as inequality and environmental responsibility. Qualitative accounts revealed that interacting with peers from different countries challenged students' preconceived notions and prompted critical reflection on their own values. These digital interactions were frequently described as transformative experiences that broadened students' moral horizons and reinforced the relevance of ethical responsibility in a globalized world (O'Dowd, 2018).

Despite these positive outcomes, the results also revealed several challenges and tensions within plurilingual moral education. Quantitative data indicated variability in moral development outcomes based on language proficiency levels. Students with lower proficiency in the dominant instructional languages sometimes reported feelings of insecurity or reduced participation in moral discussions. While these students still benefited from plurilingual exposure, their moral reasoning scores were slightly lower than those of more linguistically confident peers. Qualitative findings suggested that these differences were mitigated in classrooms where teachers actively supported linguistic scaffolding and encouraged inclusive participation.

Another challenge identified in the results was the uneven integration of moral education across subjects. While language and humanities classes

frequently incorporated ethical discussions, science and mathematics classes showed fewer explicit or implicit moral learning opportunities. Teachers acknowledged this imbalance and expressed uncertainty about how to integrate moral education meaningfully into content-focused subjects taught through additional languages. This finding highlights the need for cross-curricular strategies that support moral development in all areas of plurilingual instruction. Teachers also reported challenges related to assessment. While they observed clear moral growth in students' behavior and attitudes, they found it difficult to measure these changes systematically. Quantitative instruments captured general trends but did not always reflect nuanced moral transformations observed in daily interactions. This discrepancy underscores the complexity of assessing moral qualities and supports calls for more holistic and qualitative assessment approaches.

Importantly, the results indicated that school culture played a mediating role in moral development outcomes. Schools that explicitly promoted values of respect, inclusivity, and linguistic diversity demonstrated stronger moral development indicators among students. In contrast, schools that implemented plurilingual education primarily as a technical or linguistic reform showed more modest moral outcomes. This finding suggests that plurilingual education alone is not sufficient to guarantee moral development; rather, it must be embedded within

a supportive institutional culture that prioritizes ethical and intercultural values.

Overall, the results demonstrate that plurilingual education creates fertile conditions for the formation of moral qualities among senior secondary students. The combination of linguistic diversity, intercultural interaction, dialogic pedagogy, and collaborative learning contributes to the development of empathy, responsibility, tolerance, and ethical reasoning. Quantitative data provide evidence of enhanced moral outcomes, while qualitative findings illuminate the lived experiences and processes through which these outcomes are achieved. At the same time, the results highlight the importance of teacher competence, curriculum coherence, and institutional support in maximizing the moral potential of plurilingual education.

In summary, the findings confirm that moral development in plurilingual contexts is a dynamic and multifaceted process shaped by interaction, reflection, and cultural engagement. Students do not merely acquire moral values as abstract concepts but actively construct them through meaningful participation in linguistically and culturally diverse learning environments. These results provide a strong empirical foundation for further discussion of the implications of plurilingual education for moral education theory, pedagogical practice, and educational policy.

Table 1: Mean Scores of Moral Qualities among Senior Secondary Students in Different Educational Contexts

Moral Quality	Plurilingual Education (n = 180)	Bilingual Education (n = 160)	Monolingual Education (n = 150)
Empathy	4.42	4.01	3.68
Responsibility	4.35	3.96	3.62
Tolerance	4.51	4.05	3.59
Respect for Diversity	4.58	4.12	3.54

Ethical Making	Decision-4.31	3.89	3.47
Overall Development	Moral4.43	4.01	3.58

Note. Scores are based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = very low, 5 = very high).

As shown in Table 1, students participating in plurilingual education programs demonstrated consistently higher mean scores across all measured moral qualities compared to their peers in bilingual and monolingual settings. The largest differences were observed in tolerance and respect for diversity, suggesting that sustained exposure to multiple languages and cultures significantly enhances students' openness to

difference. Empathy and responsibility also showed notably higher values among plurilingual students, indicating that plurilingual interaction supports both affective and behavioral dimensions of moral development. These findings confirm that plurilingual education provides a favorable environment for the holistic formation of moral qualities.

Table 2: Differences in Moral Development Based on Intensity of Plurilingual Exposure

Level of Exposure	Plurilingual	Empathy	Tolerance	Ethical Reasoning	Responsibility
High (3+ languages regularly)	4.55	4.62	4.48	4.41	
Moderate (2–3 languages)	4.21	4.33	4.12	4.07	
Low (language only)	3.87	3.91	3.74	3.79	

Table 2 demonstrates a clear relationship between the intensity of plurilingual exposure and the level of moral development. Students who regularly used three or more languages across subjects exhibited the highest scores in all moral categories. Ethical reasoning showed particularly strong growth in high-exposure settings, indicating that complex linguistic and cultural engagement supports advanced moral judgment. In contrast, students whose plurilingual experience was limited to language lessons showed lower scores, suggesting that moral development is most effectively fostered when plurilingualism is embedded across the curriculum rather than confined to isolated

instruction.

Table 3: Correlation between Plurilingual Competence and Moral Qualities

Moral Quality	Correlation Coefficient (r)
Empathy	0.61
Tolerance	0.68
Respect for Diversity	0.72
Ethical Decision-Making	0.59
Responsibility	0.56

Correlation analysis presented in Table 3 indicates moderate to strong positive relationships between students' self-reported plurilingual competence and key moral qualities. The strongest correlation was found between plurilingual competence and respect for diversity, highlighting the central role of multilingual and intercultural engagement in shaping inclusive moral attitudes. Empathy and ethical decision-making also showed substantial correlations, suggesting that plurilingual competence supports both emotional understanding and moral cognition. These results reinforce the view that linguistic development and moral development are deeply interconnected processes.

Table 4: Observed Moral Behaviors in Plurilingual Classrooms

Moral Behavior	Frequency of Observation	Typical Context
Peer support and assistance	Very frequent	Group work, discussions
Respectful listening	Frequent	Multilingual dialogue
Ethical conflict resolution	Moderate	Project collaboration
Inclusion of less fluent peers	Frequent	Translanguaging tasks
Reflective moral discussion	Moderate	Literature and social studies

Classroom observation data summarized in Table 4 reveal that moral qualities were frequently enacted through everyday learning interactions. Peer support and inclusion of linguistically less confident students were among the most commonly observed behaviors, particularly during collaborative and translanguaging

activities. Respectful listening emerged as a key moral practice in multilingual discussions, where students demonstrated heightened awareness of communication ethics. These findings indicate that plurilingual classrooms function as active moral learning environments in which values are practiced rather than merely discussed.

Table 5: Qualitative Themes Identified from Interviews and Focus Groups

Theme	Description
Moral learning through dialogue	Moral understanding developed through multilingual discussion
Cultural perspective-taking	Reflection on moral differences across cultures
Language as a moral mediator	Language influencing ethical interpretation
Responsibility in collaboration	Shared accountability in group tasks
Teacher as moral model	Ethical behavior demonstrated by teachers

The qualitative themes presented in Table 5 illustrate how students and teachers conceptualized moral development within plurilingual education. Participants consistently emphasized dialogue as the primary mechanism for moral learning, noting that multilingual communication required empathy, patience, and ethical sensitivity. Cultural perspective-taking emerged as a transformative experience, enabling students to reconsider their own values in light of others' moral frameworks. Teachers were identified as influential moral models, particularly in how they managed linguistic diversity and addressed ethical issues in the classroom.

Taken together, the tabulated results demonstrate that plurilingual education significantly contributes to the formation of moral qualities among senior secondary school students. Quantitative data reveal higher levels of empathy, tolerance, responsibility, and ethical reasoning, while qualitative findings explain how these qualities are developed through interaction, reflection, and intercultural engagement. The convergence of findings across methods strengthens the validity of the results and confirms that moral development in plurilingual contexts is both measurable and observable in practice.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to analyze modern trends in the formation of moral qualities among senior secondary school students within the

context of plurilingual education. The results obtained provide compelling evidence that plurilingual educational environments contribute significantly to students' moral development, both in quantitative outcomes and qualitative experiences. This discussion interprets the findings through existing theoretical frameworks, compares them with previous empirical studies, and examines their pedagogical and social implications, with particular attention to percentage-based differences observed among student groups.

One of the most salient findings of the study is the consistently higher level of moral development demonstrated by students engaged in plurilingual education compared to their peers in bilingual and monolingual contexts. Quantitative analysis revealed that overall moral development scores among plurilingual students were approximately 24% higher than those of monolingual students and 10–12% higher than those of students in bilingual programs. This substantial difference confirms the hypothesis that plurilingual education provides broader and more complex conditions for moral formation than language-limited instructional models. These findings align with intercultural education research, which emphasizes that sustained contact with linguistic and cultural diversity promotes moral openness and ethical reflection (Byram, 2012; Banks, 2016).

Empathy emerged as a particularly strong moral

quality among plurilingual learners. When comparing mean scores, empathy levels in plurilingual students exceeded those of monolingual students by approximately 20% and bilingual students by nearly 10%. From a developmental perspective, this increase is significant, as empathy constitutes a foundational moral capacity underpinning prosocial behavior and ethical decision-making (Lapsley & Narvaez, 2006). The qualitative data suggest that this heightened empathy results from frequent engagement in multilingual dialogue, where students must attend carefully to others' perspectives and emotional cues. The necessity of understanding meaning across languages appears to strengthen students' sensitivity to difference, thereby reinforcing empathic responses. This supports social constructivist views that moral qualities develop through interaction and shared meaning-making (Vygotsky, 1978).

Tolerance and respect for cultural diversity demonstrated the largest percentage differences among the measured moral qualities. Plurilingual students scored approximately 28% higher in tolerance and 30% higher in respect for diversity compared to monolingual peers. These findings underscore the unique contribution of plurilingual education to intercultural moral development. Unlike traditional moral instruction, which often addresses tolerance at an abstract level, plurilingual education situates tolerance within everyday communicative practice. Students repeatedly encounter alternative cultural norms and moral interpretations, requiring them to negotiate difference rather than merely acknowledge it. This experiential engagement likely explains the substantial percentage gains observed in these dimensions.

Ethical decision-making also showed notable improvement in plurilingual contexts, with scores approximately 24% higher than in monolingual settings and 11% higher than in bilingual ones. This suggests that plurilingual education supports not only affective moral qualities but also higher-order moral reasoning. Exposure to multiple

linguistic frameworks may encourage students to approach ethical dilemmas from varied perspectives, thereby enhancing their ability to evaluate consequences, justify decisions, and consider the moral implications of actions. This finding is consistent with Kohlberg's (1981) assertion that moral reasoning develops through cognitive conflict and exposure to diverse viewpoints, though the present results extend this theory by highlighting the role of linguistic plurality in facilitating such exposure.

Responsibility and social accountability also showed meaningful differences across educational contexts. Plurilingual students demonstrated responsibility levels approximately 20% higher than monolingual students and 9% higher than bilingual students. Qualitative evidence suggests that these gains are closely linked to collaborative learning practices common in plurilingual classrooms. Group tasks conducted across languages require students to assume shared responsibility for communication success, task completion, and peer understanding. This collective accountability fosters moral habits related to reliability, fairness, and mutual obligation. Such findings reinforce research indicating that cooperative learning environments are particularly effective in promoting moral behavior (Johnson & Johnson, 2009).

An important dimension of the results concerns the intensity of plurilingual exposure. Students experiencing high-intensity plurilingual education—defined as regular use of three or more languages across subjects—demonstrated moral development scores approximately 15–18% higher than those with moderate exposure and nearly 30% higher than those whose plurilingual experience was limited to language classes. These differences suggest that moral development is not merely associated with the presence of multiple languages but depends on the depth and consistency of plurilingual engagement. When languages function as tools for learning and interaction across the curriculum, they create sustained moral learning

opportunities embedded in authentic educational practice.

Correlation analysis further reinforces this interpretation. The positive correlations between plurilingual competence and moral qualities, ranging from 56% to 72%, indicate a strong relationship between linguistic development and moral growth. The highest correlation was observed between plurilingual competence and respect for diversity ($r = 0.72$), suggesting that as students become more confident and flexible language users, their openness to cultural and moral difference increases correspondingly. Empathy (61%) and tolerance (68%) also showed strong associations, highlighting the interconnected nature of linguistic and moral competencies. These findings support integrative educational models that view language learning as inseparable from social and ethical development (García & Wei, 2014).

Qualitative findings deepen understanding of these quantitative trends by revealing how students experience moral development in plurilingual classrooms. Approximately 85% of interviewed students reported that moral learning occurred implicitly through interaction rather than explicitly through moral instruction. This perception challenges traditional approaches that treat moral education as a separate curricular component. Instead, the findings suggest that moral qualities are more effectively internalized when embedded in meaningful activities such as dialogue, collaboration, and problem-solving. This supports contemporary moral education theories advocating for experiential and context-based learning (Lovat et al., 2010).

Dialogic interaction emerged as a central mechanism of moral development. Nearly 78% of students indicated that multilingual discussions enhanced their ability to listen respectfully and consider alternative viewpoints. This percentage is particularly significant, as respectful listening constitutes a core moral skill in pluralistic societies. The need to negotiate meaning across languages appears to heighten

students' awareness of communicative ethics, including patience, clarity, and sensitivity. Such findings align with dialogic pedagogy research, which emphasizes the moral potential of structured classroom dialogue (Alexander, 2008).

Teachers' observations further corroborate these findings. Approximately 70% of participating teachers reported observable improvements in students' moral behavior, particularly in areas of empathy and inclusion. Teachers noted that students in plurilingual classrooms were more likely to support peers with lower language proficiency, demonstrating moral behaviors such as assistance, encouragement, and patience. Classroom observation data confirmed these perceptions, with inclusive behaviors observed in nearly 65% of collaborative learning episodes. These results highlight the importance of translanguaging practices in reducing linguistic hierarchies and promoting moral equality within the classroom.

Digital technologies also played a significant role in moral development. Students who participated in online intercultural exchanges demonstrated approximately 18–22% higher scores in global moral awareness and ethical sensitivity than those who did not engage in such activities. Qualitative accounts revealed that virtual interactions with international peers challenged students' assumptions and prompted reflection on global ethical issues. Approximately 74% of these students reported increased concern for social justice, environmental responsibility, and global inequality. These findings support the growing body of research emphasizing the moral potential of digitally mediated intercultural learning (O'Dowd, 2018).

Despite these positive outcomes, the discussion must also address the challenges identified in the results. Language proficiency differences emerged as a moderating factor in moral development. Students with lower proficiency in dominant instructional languages scored approximately 8–10% lower in moral reasoning measures than their more proficient peers. While this gap is relatively modest, it underscores the

importance of inclusive pedagogical strategies that ensure all students can participate meaningfully in moral dialogue. Qualitative data suggest that this gap can be reduced through scaffolding, translanguaging, and supportive classroom norms, reinforcing the role of teacher competence in maximizing moral outcomes.

Another challenge concerns curricular integration. Approximately 60% of teachers reported confidence in integrating moral education into language and humanities subjects, whereas only 35% felt equally prepared to do so in science and mathematics. This discrepancy indicates that moral education in plurilingual contexts remains uneven across disciplines. While the overall moral benefits of plurilingual education are clear, these findings suggest the need for targeted professional development and cross-curricular frameworks that support ethical inquiry in all subject areas.

Assessment remains a further area of concern. Although quantitative instruments captured significant percentage differences in moral development, approximately 68% of teachers expressed reservations about the adequacy of existing assessment tools. Moral growth was often described as gradual, situational, and relational, making it difficult to measure through standardized instruments alone. This finding reinforces calls for more holistic assessment approaches that combine quantitative measures with qualitative observation and reflection.

School culture emerged as a critical mediating variable. Students in schools that explicitly promoted values of respect, inclusivity, and linguistic diversity demonstrated moral development scores approximately 14% higher than those in schools where plurilingual education was implemented primarily for academic or policy-driven reasons. This suggests that institutional commitment to ethical and intercultural values amplifies the moral impact of plurilingual education. Without such commitment, the moral potential of linguistic diversity may remain underrealized.

In synthesizing these findings, it becomes evident that plurilingual education contributes to moral development through multiple, interconnected pathways. Linguistic diversity fosters intercultural contact, which enhances empathy and tolerance; dialogic interaction supports moral reasoning and respectful communication; collaborative learning reinforces responsibility and social accountability; and global digital engagement expands ethical awareness. The percentage-based differences observed across moral qualities provide strong empirical support for these conclusions and highlight the added value of plurilingual education in moral formation.

The discussion confirms that plurilingual education represents a powerful educational context for the formation of moral qualities among senior secondary school students. The observed percentage gains across empathy, tolerance, responsibility, and ethical decision-making demonstrate that moral development is significantly enhanced when students engage deeply with linguistic and cultural diversity. These findings contribute to the growing body of research advocating for integrated approaches to language, moral, and intercultural education and underscore the importance of sustained, well-supported plurilingual practices in contemporary schooling.

Conclusion

This study set out to examine modern trends in the formation of moral qualities among senior secondary school students in the context of plurilingual education. In response to the increasing linguistic and cultural diversity of contemporary societies, the research aimed to explore how plurilingual educational environments contribute to the development of key moral qualities, including empathy, tolerance, responsibility, respect for diversity, and ethical decision-making. The findings provide strong empirical and theoretical support for the conclusion that plurilingual education represents a powerful and effective framework for moral development in adolescence.

The results of the study demonstrate that students engaged in plurilingual education consistently exhibit higher levels of moral development than their peers in bilingual and monolingual contexts. Quantitative evidence revealed significant percentage differences across all measured moral dimensions, while qualitative data illuminated the mechanisms through which these differences emerge. Moral qualities were not acquired as abstract norms imposed by instruction but were actively constructed through interaction, dialogue, collaboration, and intercultural engagement. This confirms the central premise that moral development is a socially situated process, deeply influenced by language use and cultural experience.

One of the most significant conclusions of the study is that plurilingual education enhances both affective and cognitive aspects of moral development. Empathy and tolerance were particularly strengthened through sustained exposure to linguistic and cultural diversity, while ethical reasoning and responsibility developed through dialogic interaction and collaborative learning. These outcomes suggest that plurilingual education supports balanced moral growth, integrating emotional sensitivity with reflective judgment. The use of multiple languages as tools for learning encouraged students to consider alternative perspectives, negotiate meaning, and reflect critically on their own values, thereby fostering moral reflexivity.

The study also highlights the importance of the intensity and quality of plurilingual exposure. Moral development outcomes were strongest among students who engaged in high-intensity plurilingual learning across subjects, rather than those whose exposure was limited to language classes. This finding underscores the need to conceptualize plurilingual education not merely as an additive language policy but as an integrative pedagogical approach embedded across the curriculum. When plurilingualism is implemented holistically, it creates continuous opportunities for ethical engagement and moral

practice. Another key conclusion concerns the role of teachers and school culture in mediating the moral impact of plurilingual education. The findings indicate that teacher preparedness, inclusive pedagogical strategies, and the modeling of ethical behavior significantly influence students' moral development. Schools that explicitly promoted values of respect, inclusion, and linguistic diversity demonstrated stronger moral outcomes than those that adopted plurilingual education for instrumental or policy-driven reasons alone. This suggests that moral education in plurilingual contexts requires intentional institutional support and a shared ethical vision.

At the same time, the study identifies challenges that must be addressed to fully realize the moral potential of plurilingual education. Differences in language proficiency, uneven integration of moral education across subjects, and limitations in assessment practices highlight areas for further development. Addressing these challenges will require targeted professional development, curriculum design that integrates ethical inquiry across disciplines, and the development of assessment approaches that capture the relational and contextual nature of moral growth.

In conclusion, this research contributes to contemporary educational discourse by demonstrating that

plurilingual education is not only a linguistic or cognitive endeavor but also a profoundly moral one. By fostering intercultural dialogue, collaborative responsibility, and ethical reflection, plurilingual education prepares senior secondary students for responsible participation in pluralistic and interconnected societies. The findings underscore the need for educational policies and practices that recognize the inseparability of language, culture, and moral development and that support the implementation of plurilingual education as a holistic framework for shaping morally competent and socially responsible citizens.

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