

MULTILINGUALISM AND ITS ROLE IN PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

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This article highlights the importance of multilingualism in education and supports its ideas with research and evidence. It is well-known that multilingualism is one of the pressing issues in global education today. Multilingualism has a positive impact not only on linguistic skills but also on cognitive development. This article also examines the role of multilingualism in improving the quality of education through existing research and practical examples, including an analysis of an experiment involving two 13-year-old students Object A (multilingual) and Object B (monolingual).

Key words: *multilingualism; cognitive benefits; code-switching; cultural diversity; language learning; decision-making; intercultural communication.*

МНОГОЯЗЫЧИЕ И ЕГО РОЛЬ В РАЗВИТИИ ЛИЧНОСТИ

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Данная статья подчеркивает важность многоязычия в образовании и подкрепляет свои идеи исследованиями и доказательствами. Общеизвестно, что многоязычие является одной из актуальных проблем современного мирового образования. Многоязычие оказывает положительное влияние не только на языковые навыки, но и на когнитивное развитие. В статье рассматривается роль многоязычия в повышении качества образования на основе существующих исследований и практических примеров, включая анализ эксперимента с участием двух 13-летних учеников Объект А (многоязычный) и Объект Б (одноязычный).

Ключевые слова: *многоязычие; когнитивные преимущества; переключение кодов; культурное разнообразие; изучение языков; принятие решений; межкультурная коммуникация.*

In recent years, globalization has had a significant impact on education systems. Particularly in developed countries, multilingualism has become an integral part of education. Countries such as Finland, Canada, Switzerland, and Singapore have established multilingual educational environments. For instance, Switzerland has four official languages (German, Italian, French, and Romansh), all of which are taught comprehensively in schools, with English included as a foreign language.

The positive effects of multilingualism on logical thinking and understanding the world have been demonstrated in research. On the other hand, some perspectives argue that learning multiple languages can create challenges for students. This article scientifically proves the positive aspects of learning multiple languages.

Literature review

Multilingualism has long been an area of interest in linguistic, cognitive, and psychological research, with numerous studies demonstrating its positive impact on brain function and overall cognitive health. This review explores key contributions by prominent researchers, highlighting the multifaceted advantages of multilingualism

beyond linguistic proficiency. The cognitive benefits of multilingualism were first systematically addressed in the seminal study by Peal and Lambert (1962). Their work, conducted with Canadian children, was groundbreaking as it refuted the earlier misconceptions that bilingualism hindered cognitive development. The study revealed that bilingual children outperformed monolingual peers in various cognitive tasks, including problem-solving, creative thinking, attention, and concentration. These findings established a foundation for subsequent research, emphasizing that multilingualism is not only linguistically enriching but also cognitively advantageous.

Moreover, the constant activation of different linguistic systems fosters neuroplasticity, allowing bilinguals to adapt more readily to new challenges and environments. The research discussed highlights the broad implications of multilingualism for education, healthcare, and societal well-being. Educational systems should consider integrating bilingual programs to harness the cognitive and academic advantages outlined by Cummins and others. In healthcare, promoting multilingualism may serve as a preventive measure against cognitive decline. Furthermore, understanding the social and cognitive dynamics of code-switching, as explored by Lanza, can inform strategies to support effective communication in multicultural settings.

Future research could delve deeper into the neurobiological mechanisms underlying these cognitive benefits, exploring how multilingualism interacts with other factors such as socioeconomic status, cultural diversity, and digital communication. Additionally, longitudinal studies could provide a more comprehensive understanding of how multilingualism impacts cognitive health across different life stages. The collective contributions of Peal and Lambert, Bialystok, Sorace, Cummins, and Lanza underscore the profound cognitive, academic, and social benefits of multilingualism. Beyond linguistic proficiency, multilingual individuals exhibit enhanced executive functions, cognitive flexibility, and resilience, reaffirming the importance of promoting bilingual and multilingual practices in an increasingly globalized world. As research continues to uncover the far-reaching implications of multilingualism, its value as a cognitive and social asset becomes increasingly evident. This study, based on my own research, aimed to examine how multilingualism affects students' thinking abilities and their attitudes toward languages. The methodological approach of the research was as follows:

Participants:

The study involved two 13-year-old students, Object A and Object B, both in the 7th grade.

Object A: Fluent in Uzbek and Russian and currently learning English.

Object B: Speaks only Uzbek.

Both participants demonstrated average academic performance and regularly participated in the learning process. The goal of the study was to analyze the cognitive, cultural, and practical aspects of language knowledge among these students.

Methodology:

This study used a qualitative approach, namely semi-structured interviews, to evaluate participants' attitudes toward multilingualism. Semi-structured interviews were chosen to enable for a thorough examination of individuals' personal experiences, beliefs, and attitudes regarding language. This methodology was chosen because it enables a more in-depth understanding of participants' opinions and experiences, which quantitative methods may not fully convey.

The research was conducted in the following stages:

1. Research questions

Three questions were developed to identify participants' general views about languages, the importance of multilingualism in daily life, and their opinions on the challenges of learning other languages.

1. If everyone in the world spoke the same language, would that be good or bad?
2. How does knowing languages affect your life? Is multilingualism important?
3. Do you find it difficult to learn other languages?

2. Individual Interviews with Participants

The interviews were conducted in separate rooms. Each participant was asked the questions individually, and their response time and level of detail were observed.

3. Recording and Analyzing Results

The participants' answers were recorded and later analyzed.

Analysis of Questions and Responses

The current study looks at the responses of two people, Object A and Object B, to three crucial issues about language learning and multilingualism. By juxtaposing their perspectives on the significance of a global language, the influence of multilingualism on their lives, and the difficulties of language learning, we can obtain insight into their distinct attitudes toward languages.

1. If everyone in the world spoke the same language, would that be good or bad?

Object A provides a thoughtful response by addressing the potential downside of a universal language: the disappearance of cultural diversity. This answer reflects a deep understanding of the importance of preserving unique traditions, customs, and ways of life. It also hints at the richness and vibrancy that diversity brings to the world. Object A perceives the world as potentially becoming monotonous without cultural differences, which demonstrates an awareness of the broader implications beyond just communication. Object B, however, focuses on the practical benefits of a universal language, particularly the ease of mutual understanding and communication. While this perspective is valid and highlights the practical advantages, it lacks a deeper consideration of the cultural and emotional consequences. The contrast between the two responses shows that Object A adopts a more balanced and reflective approach, whereas Object B prioritizes functionality and simplicity.

2. How does knowing languages affect your life? Is multilingualism important?

Object A strongly emphasizes the significance of multilingualism, highlighting its role in creating future opportunities and fostering global connections. This answer suggests that Object A views language learning as a tool for personal and professional development, as well as a means to engage with the wider world. The use of phrases like "opens doors to the world" indicates a forward-thinking and optimistic perspective, showing that Object A recognizes how multilingualism can break barriers and enhance cross-cultural interactions. In contrast, Object B takes a more dismissive stance, implying that knowing one language is sufficient. This response does not delve into the benefits of language learning or how it can enrich one's life, which suggests a limited appreciation for the value of multilingualism. The lack of depth in Object B's answer highlights a narrower perspective compared to Object A's broader and more insightful understanding.

3. Do you find it difficult to learn other languages?

Object A expresses enthusiasm and confidence in language learning, noting that they already know three languages and are eager to learn more. This answer reflects a strong interest in exploring different cultures and a proactive attitude toward acquiring new skills. By framing language learning as an exciting opportunity rather than a challenge, Object A showcases motivation and a growth mindset. Their curiosity about other cultures adds another layer of depth to their response, indicating a desire to use language as a bridge to understanding and connecting with others. On the other hand, Object B highlights the difficulties of language learning, focusing on the challenges of memorizing vocabulary and constructing sentences. This response suggests a more hesitant and possibly negative attitude toward the process. While it acknowledges the effort required to learn a new language, it lacks the optimism and curiosity shown by Object A.

In conclusion, it can be stated that multilingual individuals, unlike those who specialize in a single language, are more likely to succeed in life and possess a broader understanding of the world. Knowing multiple languages activates the brain, enhances concentration, and improves decision-making skills. Moreover, the process of learning languages allows individuals to become familiar with the values, traditions, and customs of other cultures, enabling them to engage in intercultural communication. This not only contributes to personal development but also plays a role in strengthening international relations.

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