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The Effects of Bilingualism on Bilingual People

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of bilingualism on bilinguals, and their lives. Before starting study, the most important question in my mind was “how does bilingualism affect people?” I have made this study by reading many articles about bilingualism and talking a few bilinguals who live Trabzon. Bilingualism in children is positively related to classification, creativity, ability to thinking. They have more flexibility in thinking, greater sensitivity to language, and a better ear for listening. Research has shown positive effects of bilingualism on those linguistic abilities: early word segregation; sensitivity to language structure, control of language processing. Bilingual people can easily understand people from other countries and their cultures. Being bilingual has also been shown in the literature to have some advantages over being monolingual. Bilingual people also have advantages in education, due to cognitive development, and mental flexibility. The dominant belief at this time is that there is a superiority of different thinking abilities among bilinguals.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Monolingualism, Cognition, Second Language Acquisition

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to examine the effects of bilingualism on bilinguals, and their lives. As a phenomenon, bilingualism is to have the ability to communicate in two different languages. If people grow in environment which two different languages are spoken, they can learn both languages in a natural way and at the end of this process can be proficient in both languages. Bilingualism mainly occurs in two different situations. The first of these is marriage parents from different nationalities. And the one is the existence of a babysitter from different nationality. Without a conscious and systematic learning of the child in both languages equally and both hearing and to have the opportunity to speak the language learned in a natural state power is called “language acquisition”. Parents intend to teach at least one foreign language to their children because of the opportunities provided by second language or multilingualism to individuals other than their mother tongue.

With globalization, borders got up and now people can socialize with others from different countries and cultures. A new language is being gateway to the different cultures, and also it provides a variety of training and job opportunities. In family which is speak two different languages; way of teaching both languages is through to daily communication between parents and children. In this case, parents should demonstrate a consistent attitude and take care to speak the same language while communicating their children. In addition, with the influence of family and social environment, who can speak more than two languages, all of these languages can be learned and people with this condition are called ‘Bilingual’. If only one language is used in families and social environments, children who growing up in those environments which only one language is spoken can gain the ability to communicate just in this language and they live as a monolingual until taking formal training in other languages.

The main finding of this study which confirms our hypothesis is that there are many important effects of bilingualism on people. In the field of cognitive development, bilingual children are superior to monolingual children while developing concept and evaluating ability. Studies has revealed that they think more agile, and have advanced creative thinking, problem-solving and analytical intelligence. However, many studies indicate that there are more advanced communication skills of bilingual children. Effects of being bilingual in academic performance are investigated and investigation showed that bilingual children are more successful than monolingual children in mathematics, all assessments in the social field. In behavioral sense, bilingual people have more tolerance and respect for different cultures,

detection and espousal of similarities and differences. Bilinguals go through a process which they can make translation, switch from one language to another. Bilingual is not the sum of two single-language, so they have a holistic system of a language its own unique, in the mutual interaction both languages. There is no scientific evidence that explains delaying on child's language developing with exposing second language. Generally, the time of saying first words or creating sentences with 2-3 words is same in monolingual and bilingual children. There are some benefits of bilingualism according to Grosjean, F. (2010);

Cognitive Benefits

- Bilingual's brain, has two active language systems regardless of whichever language is preferred. Therefore, the cognitive muscles are constantly working in brain. People who want to keep live their minds solve the crosswords, but bilinguals are sufficient to use another language.
- A person who speaks two languages can think two or more words while thinking any idea or object, and can use this ability to stimulate personal creativity.
- While speaking two languages, switch between languages, accent correction, syntax correction and linguistic correction are developing.
- Bilingual people are aware of the need to speak which language in communication. Therefore, they are more sensitive than monolingual people in the needs of the audience.
- Being bilingual enrich a person's intellectual development by increasing mental development. So, researches show that bilingual people are more successful on intelligence tests than monolingual people.

Educational Benefits

- Bilingual people show higher performance in the standard tests. In addition, the benefits of multilingualism are associated.
- Bilinguals achieve very fast learning and speaking three, four or more languages.

Communication Benefits

- For bilinguals, enjoy of writing poet, reading novel and magazines, or correspondence with family and friends are multiplied. They are able to understand and appreciate literature and dialogs in various languages.
- While in a foreign country, they are not exposed with communication difficulties.

Business Advantages

- Bilingualism offers the potential occupational benefits. In globalized world, they obtain excellent career opportunities in such as retailing, transport, tourism industries, administration, secretarial, public relations, marketing and sales, banking, accounting, translation, law, teaching.

Benefits for Children

- Children are skilled against the new words and sounds.
- They can easily split words to in the sounds.
- Separating to classes of words is seemed natural to bilinguals.
- Their answers which languages they know may be in the same speed.
- They can catch the rhythm of the words much easier.
- Even in a very young age, bilingual children are so much better to grasp of shapes and patterns.

Benefits on Mental Health Issues

- According to a study from Professor Jared Diamond in UCLA, children who grew up in a bilingual family are at very little risk of Alzheimer's disease. Scientists from University Of California have found that bilingual people are more resistant to that disease. The age of onset of illness is directly proportional to the degree of speech two or more languages.
- To speak two languages can serve as therapy, such as musicians' preparing for their rehearsals or athletes' training for competitions.

Literature Review

More recently, Bialystok E. (1986) has shown that children's bilingualism positively affects their increasing ability to solve problems involving high levels of control of linguistic processing. In this respect, an empirical study was carried out on immigrant students who are originally Finnish and living in Sweden. It consists of studies reported by Linde-Laursen A. and Löfgren, O (1988). The purpose was to assess the extent to which students' acquisition of Swedish (L2) academic skills is related to their Finnish (L1) proficiency.

Another hypothesis put forward by Peal E. and Lambert W. (1962) stated that the possibility of switching linguistic codes while performing cognitive tasks gave bilingual children an added flexibility that monolingual children did not enjoy. This hypothesis gave rise to a popular concept regarding bilinguals' cognitive advantages, namely, bilinguals' cognitive flexibility.

In another study carried out by Diaz R. M. and Klinger D. (1991) they stated that the positive effects of bilingualism were so clearly connected to low levels of second language proficiency that a new threshold hypothesis was formulated. This was in contrast to Cummins' threshold hypothesis. Diaz suggested that only before a certain threshold of second-language ability, would bilingualism have a strong impact on cognitive ability. It seems that the data suggests that the effects of bilingualism on cognitive development are most likely mediated through the processes and experiences associated with early phases of second language learning.

In a commentary by Homel and Palij, they examine bilingualism and its relation with psychological feature development from 3 views, namely: 1. Historical, 2. Examination of problems associated with methodologies and 3. The role theory has viewed in guiding analysis and what's expected to happen within the future. The authors argue that within the past, bilingualism was viewed as a worry for the foyeys. It had been believed that it caused confusion in youngsters and it obstructed their mother tongue learning talents. However, since that point, a distinct image has immerged, an image that is optimistic and verify of bilingualism in childhood. Creative or thinking relies within the acquisition of a varied mental object. (Feldhusen 2002)

“Bilingualism is to intelligence as food is to human fitness... A simple statement about bilingualism and intelligence is as impossible as prescribing one simple food for human survival” (Grosjean 1988). For thirty years consultants have had in progress discussions regarding the bilingual kid and his mental skills about intelligence and education. Originally,

specialists believed that a bilingual person couldn't be associated in nursing intellectual, since he/she was carrying 2 or additional languages in their head.

Research Questions

The questions which were asked during the article were those following:

1. What are the effects of bilingualism in cognitive development?
2. What are the differences between monolingual children and bilingual children?
3. What are the bilingual effects in the Brain?
4. In which areas bilingual children are more talented?

Methodology

I did my study by search articles about bilingualism on internet, journals, and online libraries. The works of Professor Grosjean F. and Professor Rosenberg M. -who accepted as an authority in bilingualism- shed light to my investigation. As well as, young researchers such as Bhattacharjee Y. were also very helpful. I hope you do agree with me on this issue, bilingualism is an issue which will take too long to investigate. Therefore, in a limited time, I could not find opportunity to interview with bilingual people.

Conclusion

The complete research explained that bilingualism may give advantages to individuals because of greater mental flexibility, concept superiority, information diversity, and higher verbal IQ ability. It is believed that bilinguals have an advantage in mental skill sets and flexibility. Therefore the problem solving process is different from others used previously at a young age by children who only have a single language knowledge base. Also, when a child must learn their literacy skills in two languages at the same time the advantage of bilingualism may be lost. Being bilingual might offer blessings to people attributable to bigger mental flexibility, idea superiority, data diversity, and better verbal intelligence quotient ability. It's believed that bilinguals have a plus in mental ability sets and suppleness. The dominant belief at this point is that there's a superiority of mentation talents among bilinguals. The power of youngsters with two languages provides rise to manage and divergent ability over issues of a nonverbal nature thanks to the varied ability sets at work. Thus the matter determination method is totally different from others used antecedently at a young age by kids World Health Organization solely have one language content. Thanks to this flexibility, and inflated content, bilingual kids area unit additional possible to specific themselves while not the constraints of symbols.

Once a toddler should learn their acquirement skills in two languages at an equivalent time the advantage of bilingualism is also lost. Reasoning behind this analysis study was to assist justify and clarify the rearing of the researcher's youngsters UN agency area unit each four years previous in a very bilingual atmosphere. The kids in question have the psychological feature ability to relate in two languages their thoughts, memory, and compared to others they appear to find out seamlessly. Their thinking pattern once engaged in either of the two languages appears to change instantly among their surroundings. Raising youngsters in a very bilingual setting, we will see first-hand the distinction within the process.

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