

## أثر ثنائية اللغة على التعلم في المجتمع الليبي

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### ملخص البحث:

تهدف هذه الدراسة الى دراسة تأثير ثنائية اللغة في التعليم وتسلط الضوء على أهمية هذه الظاهرة اللغوية في عملية التعلم. حيث ان معرفة اللغات الأجنبية هي الأولوية الرئيسية لأي فرد في العالم الحديث. بالنظر الى التحديات الكبيرة التي يواجهها المتعلمون في عملية اكتساب اللغة الثانية، يجب ان تكون هناك طريقة منظمة لتحقيق التعليم ثنائي اللغة دون الاضرار بعلم النفس اللغوي. حاولت في هذه الدراسة إلقاء الضوء على ظاهرة ثنائية اللغة في المجتمع الليبي من خلال طرح مجموعة من الأسئلة حول هذه الظاهرة وأجراء بعض التجارب العلمية والمقابلات الفردية. قمت أيضا بتحليل هذه النتائج وقدمت إحدى المقابلات الفردية وتحليلها، وكانت النتائج مبشرة للغاية، وظهرت تباينا كبيرا جدا. ناقشت أيضا وحددت بعض المصطلحات، مثل ثنائية اللغة، والتي هي محور الدراسة، والتي يتم تعريفها على انها قدرة الشخص على التحدث بلغتين بطلاقة، مثل المتحدث الأصلي والتعليم ثنائي اللغة، واتقان اللغة واكتساب اللغة الثانية. وبالتالي، فإن ثنائية اللغة تساعد في الكشف عن البنية الأساسية وآليات معالجة اللغة التي تكون مخفية بطريقة أخرى في المتحدثين أحاديي اللغة. ومعرفة ما إذا كانت هذه الظاهرة تؤثر على تعلمهم أو حياتهم، وهل لها آثار إيجابية على المجتمع؟ وكذلك معرفة ما إذا كان التحدث بلغتين يغير طريقة تفكيرهم أم لا. تم شرح هذه الأسئلة في هذه الدراسة، وكذلك من خلال مقابلاتي التي أجريتها

## The effect of bilingualism on learning in Libyan Society

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### Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of bilingualism in education and highlights the significance of this linguistic phenomenon in the process of education. As knowledge of foreign languages is the key priority for any individual in the modern world. Considering great challenges learners face in the process of second language acquisition, there should be organized way for realization of bilingual education without damaging their linguistics psychology.

In this study, I have attempted to shed light on the phenomenon of bilingualism in the Libyan society by asking a group of questions about this phenomenon and conducting some practical experiments and individual interviews. I also analyzed these results and presented one of the individual interviews, and its analysis, the results were very impressive, it showed a very large variation.

I also discussed and defined some terms, such as bilingualism, which is the focus of the study, which is defined as the ability of a person to speak two languages fluently, such as a native speaker and Bilingual education, Language proficiency and second language acquisition.

Thus, bilingualism helps reveal the fundamental architecture and mechanisms of language processing that are otherwise hidden in monolingual speakers.

And knowing whether this phenomenon affected both their learning or their lives, and does it have positive effects on society? And also knowing whether speaking two languages changes their way of thinking or not. These questions were explained in this study, as well as, through my interview that I done it.

**Key words: Bilingualism, Second Language (L2), Second Language Acquisition (SLA).**

## 1- Introduction

Bilingualism is a common phenomenon in Libya, and it has major implications for educational development. Some people know her as being able to easily speak the person in two different languages.

A quick survey of definitions of bilingualism over the years reveals the presence of two important factors that characterize bilinguals – language proficiency and language use. In the early years of bilingualism research, language proficiency was put forward as the main defining factor, and it remains the feature most mentioned by lay people when speaking about the topic. Hence, in his now famous definition, Bloomfield (1933) stated that bilingualism is the native –like control of two languages. Releasing, that bilinguals are rarely equally fluent English in their languages, Haugen (1969) stayed with proficiency but offered a much less constraining definition: bilingualism beings at the point where the speaker of one language can produce complete, meaningful utterances in the other language.

The first aim of the present study is to check whether early bilingualism influences the development of education.

This aim leads to the following hypothesis: If bilingualism has a positive effect on educational ability, then persons bilingual will demonstrate greater educational aspect in solving problems, bilingual education has a positive effect on learning ability, then persons bilingual receiving a strong form of bilingual education.

The second hypothesis was that bilingual persons receiving the strong form of bilingual education (Baker, 2001) would demonstrate higher creativity in problem solving than would bilingual persons receiving the weak form of bilingual education.

In this study we try to understand this phenomenon and its impact on students and the extent of its importance for the future, and whether it really has a real impact on the life of the learner, whether at the beginning of their learning or their choices in the fields of their studies. Did they open new horizons for them in the learning process, and did they have positive effects on their educational level and their educational level in the past or now?

One of the most important goals of this study is that it had not been applied before in educational institutions in Libya.

This study attempts to understand the effect of bilingual ability on the education process of individuals and to know its impact on their future and the dimensions of this phenomenon.

Moreover, it is an attempt to draw the attention of the Libyan society in general. Exploiting this phenomenon and trying to benefit from it and helping the bilingual to refine this ability they have because of its positive effects on the life of the individual and society through its impact on the educational process. It is an interesting and remarkably beneficial phenomenon, as it promotes the learning process to a much better level.

Speaking another language gives you a new perspective. Even if you don't travel abroad, becoming bilingual can help you see the world in a different way and understand yourself better. Research has found that bilinguals literally see the world differently. People who regularly speak a second language perceive differences in color variations that are not recognized by monolinguals! How's that for a new perspective?

Many people who speak more than one language also report feeling "like a different person" when they speak the other language. And also, Being bilingual opens up social and cultural opportunities. Speaking another language lets you interact with different people and understand the nuances of another culture. This means you might have more opportunities to make friends, explore different hobbies and better understand your favorite foreign music, film and literature. Improvements in the executive function of the brain the executive function is a command system that directs the attention processes that we use for planning, solving problems and performing other mentally demanding tasks. Bilingual people are better able to sort out relevant information from irrelevant information, meaning they can focus better and be more

Consequently, this study aims to determine the effect of bilingualism on the education of the learners' language in Tobruk, a city in eastern Libya, and whether bilingualism has a positive or negative role on the learners. It is hoped that the results of this study will be beneficial to the learners, who have a major role in the course of the education process, in addition to the teachers.

## **2. Review of related literature**

Changes in bilingual education will have an important on the future well-being of the Growing Latino community in Massachusetts. This study summarizes some of the major research findings regarding the purpose and effectiveness of bilingual education. Questions that will be addressed include: What are the existing bilingual education models? Which bilingual education models work best? Should there be time limits for bilingual education? Do immigrants resist learning English? Does speaking another language interfere with learning? Should bilingual students be exempt from state-mandated testing? Are bilingual teachers qualified? Are bilingual education students more likely to drop out?

It is hoped that readers will examine the studies cited in this study more closely, and that this information will be used to better inform decisions about the future of bilingual education.

### **2.1 What are the existing bilingual education models?**

A review of the research literature finds a number of different bilingual education program models (Brisk, 1998; Moran and Hakuta, 1995; Roberts, 1995). Simply put, how a school district interprets the purpose of bilingual education determines the structure of their bilingual education programs. Roberts (1995) classifies the various bilingual education programs into three categories:

#### **1- Transitional Models**

The purpose of transitional models is to teach students English as quickly as possible and once students have learned English, usually within a specific time limit, to ensure that students are excited or mainstreamed into regular English-only classes. Transitional bilingual education programs include the following examples: early-exit transitional bilingual education, English as a second language pullout, and one-year structured English immersion.

#### **2- Maintenance Models**

Maintenance Models are designed to provide instruction in academic subject areas in a student's native language while they also learn English for a specific amount of time during the school day. The goal of these programs is to transition bilingual students into mainstream English-only classes.

Maintenance programs are also called developmental programs because they are long-term and generally have no time limits.

### **3- Enrichment models**

Enrichment models seek to promote cross-cultural understanding among students who learn their academic subjects in two languages. The models are unique because the student population also includes native English speakers. Examples of enrichment programs include: two-way or dual-language models where two languages are used in instruction. Because some enrichment bilingual programs are part of transitional bilingual education programs, they sometimes have time limits.

#### **2.2 Bilingual Children Better Language Learners?**

Although many research, such as claimed by Halgunseth indicate that bilingual children tend to perform better than monolingual children in many language tasks, Bialystok (2001) shows that any language knowledge of a child is incomplete when compared with the knowledge of an adult. Continuing with Bialystok's discussion, she explains how bilingualism is acquired and mentions that some people live "in home environments where the language of the extended family reveals an ethnic, cultural, or national background that is different from that of the community". In fact, children who become bilingual in those family environments could become more efficient and productive learners.

Despite many studies favour bilingual children as being more effective than monolingual children, there are downsides of being bilingual. In an article by Genesee (2008), he raises concerns about bilingual acquisition in early childhood and points out that it can be a difficult task for a child to learn more than one language and can eventually lead to delays in language development. However, it is extremely important to take into account the individual learning differences in second language acquisition and therefore have in mind the different learning abilities as some children learn faster than others. He explains how this "delay" does not have to be a negative aspect of language gaining and explains that the process of acquiring the language for the child takes longer time. The importance of sufficient exposure is confirmed as he states how important it is to provide learners with sufficient exposure to both languages all the time. Also, how important it is to avoid

any radical changes to the language environment because that can create problems and difficulties for the child (Genesee 2008)

Another concern from parents and professionals and discussed by Genesee is the problem that bilingual children might never master either language fully and in comparison to monolingual children, they might never become as proficient in the language. He talks about how bilingual children might have different language development patterns in the short term. Moreover, he points out in comparison with monolingual children at the same age, that young bilingual children struggle in vocabulary and they know fewer words in one or both of their languages. His reasoning is mainly because all young children have limited memory capacities as bilingual children need to memorize words from two languages and not one like monolingual children. In addition, it is worth noting that bilingual children might know certain words from one language but not the other. However, these are “short term” problems that most likely will disappear by the time that the children begin their school journey (Genesee 2008).

Continuing with the earlier concerns about bilingual children who might encounter problems on their learning journey, Genesee shows how bilingual children’s proficiency and competences in the second language reflects the amount of time they spend in each of the two language environments. He supports his claim by giving an example of a child who just arrived back home after visiting grandparents for short periods of time and only one of the languages was used. The child might favour that language over the other for a while, and therefore the child loses proficiency in the other language. Note that this is just a temporary shift that will revert back once the exposure to the other language is sufficient (Genesee 2008).

Another concern discussed by Genesee is the belief that young bilingual children are unable to keep their languages separate which mean that they can get confused and use both languages at the same time. He points out that most bilingual children use sounds and words from both languages in the same utterances although people talking with them are using only one language. This particular problem has raised concerns among childhood educators as they tend to believe that this is because the child is confused and unable to distinguish between the two languages. Moreover, his claims are

based on the reason that children mix their languages simply because they lack vocabulary in one or both languages to express themselves entirely in each language. Therefore, he states that they borrow words from the other language. This is an effective communication strategy in most families due to parents and other adults that are part of the child's language environment tend to mix the languages themselves when they talk to the child as they understand both languages. Genesee states that it is common to mix up languages and it is actually a natural and normal process of early bilingual acquisition that will occur even between proficient adult bilinguals. The role of parents is very important in this case and they should not stop or worry when their children mix up languages because children will naturally stop doing it (Genesee 2008).

The exposure mentioned above is extremely important. To help the child to develop its own identity, it is important that parents provide their children with sufficient exposure to the target language. Similarly, like discussed earlier, parents who speak two different languages but only use one language at home might result in the child favouring that language unconsciously because there is not enough language input and the ability to express in that language declines. Hence, the motivation becomes evident now because if instructors and parents motivate children and provide them with enough exposure, it could lead to effortless second language acquisition (Genesee 2008).

### **2.3 Bilingual Education**

Bilingual education is a term that refers to the teaching of academic content in two languages, in a native and second language. Varying amounts of each language are used depending on the outcome goal of model.

There are different program models that can be used in bilingual education. Historically, program models used for English Language Learners (ELL) have focused on helping students transition from their native language to English.

A bilingual education can strengthen the executive function of the brain. In fact, Research shows that because bilingual students are able to use two languages at the same time, switching consistently, it develops skills for functions such as inhibition, switching attention, and working memory.



Your child's education whether it be monolingual or bilingual, is one of the most important things you will have to consider during their lives. So, when making this decision there are many things to consider.

There are many advantages of bilingual education. If your child is bilingual when they are ready to start kindergarten or school, learning in a bilingual school can reinforce their languages.

If your child can speak only one language, giving them a bilingual education can help them to acquire an additional language in a short amount of time. So, if your home language is English, but you want to teach your child Spanish or Chinese for example, this is one way to be sure your child becomes proficient in both.

The academic and labor-market success of EL students depends in large part on their ability to become proficient in English. Standardized tests are usually given in English, and EL students have consistently lower test scores than students whose native language is English.

English language proficiency is critical for overall academic success. Furthermore, several authors have demonstrated the positive link between English proficiency and success in the labor market (Gonzalez, 2000; Trejo, 2003; Bleakley and Chin, 2004).

As most educators and researchers would agree, instruction targeting English proficiency.

There are two important differences between bilingual programs and other EL programs. The first is the obvious difference in the language of instruction: bilingual programs teach academic subjects in the primary language, whereas other EL programs teach these subjects in English. The second difference is that bilingual programs attempt to improve primary language skills in addition to English language skills, whereas other EL programs focus only on improving English language skills. There is much debate over the role of native language instruction, yet much of this debate is based on belief rather than on empirical evidence (Greene, 1998).

### **3. BENEFITS OF A BILINGUAL EDUCATION**

#### **3.1. Cognitive benefits of a bilingual education.**

A bilingual education can strengthen the executive function of the brain. In fact, Research shows that because bilingual students are able to use two

languages at the same time, switching consistently, it develops skills for functions such as inhibition, switching attention, and working memory.

As such, students who are being educated bilingually, often perform better on tasks which require multi-tasking, decision making and problem solving, even though they have nothing to do with the language.

### **3.2 More options for further education**

One of the major benefits of bilingual education is that kids are not only raised to be bilingual but also to be obliterate. This can give your child more choices when it comes to choosing further education. They will be free to choose which university they want to go apply for, in which country, depending on the languages they speak.

It will also be easier for them to participate in semesters abroad, or an exchange program where they can study in another country immersed in the culture of their second language assisting in their proficiency.

### **3.3 A bilingual education broadens career opportunities**

Being fluent in an extra language can make a candidate stand out among prospective employers. It also open doors to extra opportunities that those without these skills may miss out on.

In today's growing global economy, many international companies are increasingly searching for employees who are bilingual. Those with a bilingual education have the advantage. Candidates who are educated bilingually stand out from other potential employees especially if it is a language which is widely spoken.

### **3.4. Children with a bilingual education are more adaptable**

Language isn't just about learning sets of words and grammar, it is also learning about another culture and another way of life. The advantage of bilingual education gives children a broader outlook and brings them closer to different races and nationalities.

In a world that is constantly changing, communication is becoming increasingly important. Children who are able to communicate with a variety of cultures are the ones that will have more advantages in life.

### **3.5. A bilingual education creates more cultural opportunities.**

A major advantage of attending a bilingual school is that you get to meet with people from different backgrounds. Learning about other cultures is important

for children and helps them to understand the world around them. It helps them to grow up more open minded and accept differences.

***Will you send your child to an international school or a bilingual school?***

There are differences. An international school will usually follow the international curriculum and students graduate with the International Baccalaureate which is worldwide recognized. In a bilingual school, they may follow the national curriculum. In some cases, not all classes will be held in both languages equally.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY**

##### **4.1 The participants**

The participants in this study were enrolled at Omar Al-Mukhtar University (Tobruk Campus) in Libya. This study comprised of two samples. The first sample was consist of 5 third-year undergraduate students (2 male & 3 female) of medicine college, re-coding them with the symbol A.

And the second sample was consisted of 5 third-year undergraduate students (1 male & 4 female) of Arts college, English department, re-coding them with the symbol B.

The two groups are from the same age group, and it is worth noting that both groups apply to them about the same conditions in terms of educational environment, their level of exposure to language, and their level of bilingual ability.

***The difference appears because they are bilingual, and the answer was as follows: -***

##### **Group A**

We speak two languages Arabia and English, because the Arabia language is a native language and English language is language of world and become more important in any field including the medical community and We used or needed in any time.

##### **Group B**

It depends on what the learner wants. For us, the reason we learn English is because we want to become more familiar with the English language because it is important in our time.

## 4.2 Instruments and data

The methods of collecting data for this study include individual interviews with the people targeted by this study.

## 4.3 Research purpose and question

The purpose of the present study, as previously mentioned, was to identify the effect of bilingualism on education in Tobruk, a city in Eastern Libya and how bilingualism effect on educational of learning and what extent improve students in comprehensible input for process of learning. More specifically, this study attempted to answer the following questions:

1-How bilingualism effect on educational of learning and does it change the way of thinking in (his /her) learning process in future?

2-Does bilingualism have (positive/negative) effect on the learning? and does it improve students in comprehensible input for (his / her) (study/Learning) process and does bilingual students(used/studies) tow language proficiency at the same level?

## 4.4 Research design

A research design is a detailed description of how a research task is achieved. It involves the data collection, measurement and analysis. The study of the effect of bilingualism on education and its impact on students and the extent of its importance for the future adopted qualitative research as a mode of inquiry. The intent of qualitative research is to obtain a holistic picture of the problem under investigation, as this approach is " a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem".

## 4.5 Data Collection

One tool is used in data collection. It is interview for students. This tool is of critical importance in supporting and shaping how bilingual effect on education. It involves asking questions and collecting relevant information, and all within a context of specific purpose and goals.

## 5. FINDING AND DISCUSSION

This sample can represent a specific group of society, being targeted, "a selective sample." This study produced satisfactory results and responses relatively on the subject of the study.

The main question in this study is to know the extent of the impact of bilingualism on the educational process in Tobruk or Libyan society in general.

### **5.1. Discussion of the data analysis for interview**

The analysis of the five questions can be provided as the following:

We have selected a person who has the ability to speak the English language next to his mother tongue, who is considered a bilingual, and symbolized by the symbol x.

The method of collecting the data that we relied on at this stage was to do an interview with x.

The interview is divided into three sections:

**The first section:** we asked x to answer some general questions such as, what is your name, how old are you and also what language do you speak in your home. In preparation for the beginning of the interview to make sure that x is able to understand our question the following.

**The second section:** took one minute and six seconds of time.

The second section was based on viewing. Some pictures for x, hence, we asked x some questions related to the pictures for example, what is this in English, what is this in Arabic, or what is called in Arabic, or in English, and the questions were a mixture of the two languages (Arabic & English). The pictures were popular, well-known, and very simple pictures such as, pictures of a car, people, buildings and animals etc.

The goal of this course is to know whether x can simply switch between the two languages, or he needs a bit of time in order for his mind to translate what he sees. It became clear to us that x is able to switch between the two languages fluently.

**The third and final section:** took almost one minute.

It consisted of four questions, and these questions are the focus of the research, i.e., closely related to the research.

The questions are as follows:

- 1- How long have you been speaking English?**
- 2- Have you ever lived in English country? If yes, for how long?**
- 3- Does speaking different languages effect the way you feel and think?**
- 4- Do bilinguals dream in different language?**

It's through those questions becomes clear to us that x speaks English language since he was 15 years old, as well as, his way of thinking and feeling had a great impact in his life.

This shows us that the expression of feelings varies according to the languages a person speaks. Sometimes we may not find a suitable expression for a particular situation in our native language, so we can instead express it in the second language.

Thus, it shows us that the phenomenon of bilingualism has a significant impact and a positive effect on our lives.

## **.2. Interview (practical experience)5**

Name: Alsalheen

Age: 22 years old

Country: Libya

City: AL,Qubba

This sample can be considered bilingual from childhood as he has learned English before the critical period and the level of mastery of the language and this appears in a modern method and its use of my English accent through the questions that were asked on the sample and symbolized by the symbol (X), we show the following:

The ability of the sample (X) to fully separate the two languages and the speed of response in answering the questions asked and not mixing the two languages and the correct combination of the answer we also asked Ali (X) about how to acquire a language, which showed that (X) was acquired through films, series and English songs, i.e., unconsciously, and this proves that the ability of bilingualism is not learned.

# **Several French studies** have shown that a bilingual phenomenon has negative effects on the education of children. In another way, if a child grows in both languages, this has a negative impact on the educational level, and this case proves the opposite through his academic level from the first year of basic education and during the period of acquisition of the second language at the age of 10 to the last year of university education.

## **6. CONCLUSION AND DIRECTIONS**

The main objective of this research is to draw the attention of society and the Ministry of Education to the importance of a bilingual phenomenon

on education and its positive effects on the individual, society and the Libyan state in general.

Through the collection of data and a set of experiments that we have applied to individuals to whom the bilingual character applies. The use of two or more languages is common in most of the world. Yet, until recently, bilingualism was considered to be a complicating factor for language processing, cognition, and the brain. Contrary to the view that bilingualism complicates the language system, this new research demonstrates that all of the languages that are known and used become part of the same language system. The interactions that arise when two languages are in play have consequences for the mind and the brain and, indeed, for language processing itself, but those consequences are not additive.

From our point of view, the results were satisfactory to the aim of the study, which is an attempt to prove positively the effect of the ability of learners to have two languages on their education.

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