

Do bilinguals outperform monolinguals?

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Abstract

The relationship between second dialect acquisition and the psychological capacity of the learner is still a divisive topic that generates a lot of debate. A few researchers contend that the acquisition of the second dialect tends to improve the cognitive abilities in various individuals, but at the same time it could hinder the same abilities in other people. Currently, immersion is a common occurrence in some countries. In the recent past, it has significantly increased in its popularity, which has caused parents, professionals, and researchers to question whether second language acquisition has a positive impact on cognitive development, encompassing psychological ability. In rundown, the above might decide to comprehend the effects of using a second language based on the literal aptitudes connected with the native language. The issue of bilingualism was seen as a disadvantage until recently because of two languages being present which would hinder or delay the development of languages. However, recent studies have proven that bilinguals outperform monolinguals in tasks which require more attention.

Keywords: bilingual advantage, language, acquisition, outperforms.

Introduction

The impact or influence of the foreign language on the literal skills of the first language cannot be assessed independently without considering the context under which the second dialect was learned. The political and social connection of the foreign dialect learning is a basic factor to help understand its impacts on primary language. In this manner, it would be important to show the different setups from which the studies tend towards and develop a relationship to the surroundings. Bilingualism is being regarded as an advantage recently, contrary to initial studies that considered it as disadvantage because of the impact on the delayed development of the first language. Bilinguals are found to be more creative than monolinguals because of the opportunity to switch codes naturally and the possibility to express their thoughts efficiently. Nowadays, more than 60% of European citizens are bilingual because of the necessity for cross-cultural communication across Europe and further. The earlier the babies are exposed to more than one language, the easier they can adapt to the environment.

Subtractive bilingualism

Additive and subtractive bilingualism are terminologies that were first used by a prominent scholar known as Lambert in 1964. The critical component distinguishing

the two concepts of bilingualism is based on social nature. Subtractive bilingualism is seen in minority kids who are forced to acclimatize into the general society, for example, Albanian children in England, or Mexican children in the United States. Such children often begin school and are given instructions using a second (foreign) language (English). In this respect, it means that their first (mother tongue) language is gradually being replaced (Beatty, Gardner, Madden, & Karlsen, 1984). Therefore, their bilingualism is characterized by an increasing disuse of their mother tongue and its sociocultural accompaniments. According to Lambert (1992, p. 213), this implies the first language is being eliminated. Once they set about to learn the foreign language (L2), their mother tongue (L1) is often not yet advanced, and because they are not able to enhance it outside the family setting, it usually results in a deficiency in both the L2 and L1 languages described as semi-lingualism.

To mitigate against this situation, the debate about bilingual education continues to be one of the most contentious topics around the world. Since submersion appears to harbour extensive adverse effects on the advancement of minority youngsters, through the elimination of their mother tongue language it has weakened their social-cultural identity, and hence exposing them risks academically that is why transitional programmes have been introduced. In such programmes, most of the instructions issued in writing and reading are conducted in mother tongue in order for the children to understand during the formative years of their learning process (Bournot-Trites & Reeder, 2001). Similarly, they also receive intensive instructions through the foreign or second language. In this regard, the programmes have the ability to offer a time transition between learning in the first (mother tongue) and when their second language or foreign language has been acquired to a significant degree so that it can be used as the main language of providing instructions. It has been influential in encouraging self-confidence in children from immigrant families and promoting a positive attitude towards their native cultures.

Some studies have compared transitional and submersion bilingual programmes in the USA and found that understudies who are educated in their primary language while additionally accepting intensive instructions through a foreign language tend to perform better in their academics in comparison to that only receive learning instructions through a foreign language only. These results were positive in mother tongue and English as the foreign language, just like in social studies. The learners in the intermediary programmes were also associated with higher optimism with regard to themselves and the school, which is an aspect of assisted scholastic success. These findings have been supported by many other studies (Cummins, 1976; Darcy, 1953). It has also been observed that the strong encouragement of minority students' mother tongue throughout their initial school years has a critical contribution to their success in academics. However, even these transitional programmes result in monolinguality in the foreign language towards the end of their elementary learning because they are conceptualized as pedagogical support to encourage the utilization of mother tongue in their entire educational career. Regardless of the struggle, the intermediary programmes still cause subtractive bilingualism.

Additive bilingualism

The circumstances are different in bilingual programmes in which mother tongue is widely used. This is often the scenario with students speaking English as major language students being enrolled in a French engagement programme in Canada. The foreign language which is French is often introduced in diverse forms of core French with about 30 minutes of daily instructions offered through the second language, or through immersion programmes. The diverse forms of immersion include early, mid, or late immersion.

During immersion, some or all of the classes are instructed through the foreign language. For instance, science or mathematics are instructed through French (Ben-Zeev, 1977; Lambert, 1992). In this regard, these programmes in Canada can be described as either partial or comprehensive immersion. There are also enriched foreign language programmes in which only a single subject and language arts are instructed through the foreign language. In most occasions, all the classes are instructed through the foreign language from the elementary school until the third grade. From the fourth grade, more than a half of the classes are instructed in a foreign language while the rest are taught us through the mother tongue. Nonetheless, the differences of this devise are observed entirely in Europe.

In most cases, the mother tongue language (English) is enhanced in schools, in the households, and other set-ups external to the school environment. Therefore, the resulting form of bilingualism is referred to as additive bilingualism since the second language has been added to the mother tongue competencies without any loss to the first language. In this regard, both languages are perceived to have both social values and respect, particularly since both languages are used as official dialects in Canada. In some instances, the mother tongue language is often given more or a higher status in comparison to the second/foreign language (De Courcy & Burston, 2000; Marsh, 2000). In these situations, learning in the foreign dialect has demonstrated good results on the overall mastery capacities, especially in the mother tongue literal skills. The disparities between both forms of situational contexts, immersion or submersion bilingual education could result in additive or subtractive bilingualism. It is significant as it leads to diverse outcomes in surveys conducted on the impact or influence of the learning of a different language on the development of mother tongue languages.

The influence of foreign languages on the mother tongue

Over the ages, there has been a significant amount of studies with regard to the impact of the original dialect (mother tongue) on the subsequent language (foreign), but the general outcomes have indicated that the mother tongue is a necessary facto in learning of any subsequent language. However, the influence of the subsequent language acquisition on the first language has yet to be fully exhausted. Nonetheless, surveys conducted with regard to immersion education have made a good attempt to address this question. The opponents of the immersion programmes during their inception had projected that the students' mother tongue abilities and intellectual improvements would be hindered because of receiving instructions for various

subjects from foreign languages. Nonetheless, the findings from a decade of scientific research have revealed little proof of any delay in the growth of English proficiencies in most immersion programmes (Harley, Hart, & Lapkin, 1986).

Despite immersion students lagging behind in comparison to their monolingual peers in various aspects of literal skills in English, most of these disparities tend to disappear when learning instructions incorporate the English language.

Research has revealed that bilingual students have been known to outperform their unilingual peers. This has been observed in English grammatical usage, vocabulary, as well as punctuations. The reduction of the time when English is used as the instructional language did not appear to have an adverse influence on English literacy skills.

Lambert and Tucker (1972) explored an early French interest programme in the city of Montreal. The first French immersion was begun by a group of parents who were predominantly English speaking. The objective of the experiments was to offer English children with the ability and aptitude in both spoken and written French while also maintaining and encouraging normal degrees of English growth.

All the learning instructions were administered through the French language during kindergarten through to the first grade. During the experiment, the English language arts instructions were later introduced during the second grade. Therefore, the researchers' compared the immersion group with an English control group towards the end of grades one, two, three, and four. Before the commencement of English instructions during the first grade, the immersion learners scored poorly English literal like spelling, reading comprehensions, and written vocabulary (Cummins, 1979; Genesee, 1987).

Nonetheless, the students recovered from this lag by the end of completing their second grade, but the only exception was with regard to spelling by the time they were completing the fourth grade. In terms of English know-how like oral production, snoop understanding, or vocabulary skills, students in the immersion group never lagged at any stage.

The speaking skills of first and second graders were also assessed by tasking them to tell a fictional story from a comic trip. The tales were collected through recordings and examined for various nouns, adjectives, verbs, as well as other errors. The stories from the immersion students were observed to be similar to those collected from English students in the control group. They were to listen to a brief story and respond to questions.

The conclusions in the study did not get people unaware as the students relied on their original language (English/mother tongue) beyond the school environment from which they developed their oral skills. The researchers described their positive outcomes from the immersion group as a result of the early growth of a detective capacity (Genesee, 1979; Genesee & Stanley, 1976). They argued that the experience from the French immersion facilitates the engagement of students in contrastive linguistics through the comparison of differences and similarities in all dialects. This resulted in constructive influences on their literal abilities in English, and assists them to construct vocabulary and understand composite linguistic meanings.

The notion of the transfer of skills was also introduced in different languages or the

development of a superior degree of mastery skills, which is created in one language and applied to the other to increase proficiency.

In relation to specific literal skills in contention, Genesse and Stanley (1976) explored the English skills among students from level four to level six in early immersion while making comparisons to a control group on English. The learners were required to construct compositions based on three different topics that were determined by the testers.

Afterward, experienced teachers from the fourth to the six grade who were not aware of the experiment were recruited to mark the tests written by the students. It is also significant to note that the specific group that the students belonged was not disclosed to the teachers. The teachers charged with the responsibility of marking the tests then graded each test in relation to the spelling, punctuation, vocabulary, sentence complexity and variety, sentence accuracy, as well as originality and organization.

Apart from originality and spelling in the fourth grade, no significant disparities between the immersion and the control group existed (Johnson & Swain, 1994; Lambert & Tucker, 1972). Other studies have collaborated these findings through an examination of writing skills. Research has shown that there is gain with regard to the communicative capacity of learners as well. Other surveys have established that early total immersion learners and partial immersion learners seemed to perform better in terms of interpersonal communication activities than their peers in the ordinary English institutions.

When required to explain how the game is played to a peer who missed the game due to blindfolding, most of the immersion learners had the ability to take into consideration the handicap of the listeners. They began by first identifying the material that was used to construct the game before they delved into the regulations governing how the game was played (McLaughlin, 1990). This sensitivity manifested in the immersion learners is due to their enhanced consciousness of the prerequisites of dialogues.

In another study that reviewed the outcomes from the reading skills in the second and first languages, higher associations between the first and second language skills in reading were observed. In this regard, the expertise is transferred to different languages. Lapkin & Swain (1984) conducted several studies in the cities of Toronto, Ontario, and Ottawa.

The main interest of the study was to explore whether the skills of the participating students in their mother tongue were influenced by participating in programmes that used foreign languages to deliver instructions.

The study was also focused on determining whether an association existed between mastery and achievements among the students in the French immersion group. The experiment tested the learners under immersion and used an English group as a control annually when the students were approaching the end of their academic year. The results obtained from the survey revealed that even though the immersion learners appeared to have low literal skills in comparison to the unilingual learners in the initial two years, these disparities were eliminated as soon as the teaching of arts in English was introduced into the curriculum during the third grade. During the fifth grade, the student under immersion was observed to outperform their

counterparts in the control group that received instructions strictly through English (Genesee, Tucker, & Lambert, 1975; Geva & Ryan, 1993). For instance, grammatical and vocabulary usage was better among the immersed group.

This demonstrates that if literal abilities are developed in a single language, they can be transferred to another. Moreover, in the same study, no disparities in term of English language proficiency between early stages of immersion and the full implementation of immersion during the fourth and third grade were observed. This implies that the amount of instructions issued in English did not have an impact on the students' performance.

However, researchers have noted that it is not simple to determine and determine disparities of inspiration among different groups. This is because most students in the immersion group are drawn from the middle-class families; they have higher educational objectives and motivation to understand foreign languages.

Conclusions

From the discussion above, it is evident that immersion and enrichment programmes often tend to attain a functional bilinguality in their foreign language without any adverse effect on their mother tongue. Additionally, mother competencies are often enriched in comparison to control groups that have been educated using English only as the instructional language.

This implies that even though there is very little educational instruction administered using the mother tongue language, the first language rarely suffers from the action. Therefore, it can be inferred that a transfer from the foreign language to mother tongue usually takes place. This suggests that language and thinking capabilities are created in one dialect and replicated to another.

There is a beneficial correlation between the foreign language and mother tongue languages. Nonetheless, the findings from a decade of scientific research have revealed little proof of any sluggishness in the growth of English proficiencies in most immersion programmes. Despite immersion students lagging behind in comparison to their monolingual age mates in various discourses of literal skills in English, most of these disparities tend to disappear when learning instructions incorporate the English language.

Research has revealed that bilingual students have been known to outperform their unilingual peers. This has been observed in English grammatical usage, vocabulary, as well as punctuations. The reduction of the time when English is used as the instructional language did not appear to have an adverse influence on English literacy skills.

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