

Learning more than one language

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Workshop outline

- Introduction
 - You and me
- Group work
 - 1 thing you know about bi-multilingualism
 - 1 thing you always wanted to know about bi-multilingualism (but were afraid to ask)
 - Discussion
- True or false?

1 child, 2 parents, 3 languages

Switching between Indonesian, English and French

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgWQoZz6nEk>

True or false??

1. Learning two languages is a lot of effort

- Maintaining one or more minority languages requires a deliberate effort on the part of the parents and of the immediate family (time, strategy and resources)
- Children who are exposed to two languages from birth or in early childhood do not learn in the same way as we understand foreign language learning.

2. Children are confused by exposure to two languages

- From a very young age children choose the “right” language with the “right” speaker.
- Switching between languages, i.e. *code-switching* both across and within sentences, is not a sign of confusion; it requires sophisticated linguistic knowledge and social skills.

3. When children start school parents should switch to English

- Research suggests that maintenance of the home language is important for success in the community language.
- There is evidence that non-native input is not helpful for the acquisition of L2 skills.
- Good quality input in the L2 is important > increase opportunities for children to be exposed to English but not to the detriment of the L1.

4. Bilingual children are more vulnerable to language delay and impairment

- The prevalence of language impairment has not been demonstrated to be any different in bilingual children.
- Because language development in general is strongly determined by the amount of input, bilingual children typically score lower than monolingual children in standardized tests of language.

5. Identifying language impairment in bilingual children is not easy

- Aside from English-Spanish there are no assessment tools that are standardized on bilingual populations.
- SLT knowledge of other language is limited (working with interpreters).
- Developmental norms are not available in many languages.
- Error patterns in bilingual children resemble those of children with a language impairment.

6. Learning to read in one language helps children in another language

- Learning to read involves many different skills, including concept of print which can transfer across languages.
- Children who are learning to read in alphabetic languages where there is a sound-letter correspondence will be able to transfer skills across, but this is not the case in children who are learning very different systems (e.g. logographic systems like Chinese).
- Research suggest that bilingual children are not disadvantaged in learning to read two languages.

7. Bilingual children are smarter

- This is a very controversial issue at the moment with some evidence suggesting that bilingual children have some cognitive advantages (flexibility and inhibition).
- Some studies have not found a bilingual advantage.
- Reassuringly none have so far found a bilingual disadvantage.

8. Bilingual children's knowledge of each language is not as that of a monolingual child

- Children's language development is determined by the quantity and the quality of the input > less input = slower development.
- Comparing like with like is important. Some bilingual children can have language skills that are higher than monolinguals with fewer opportunities.
- The bilingual experience is by its very nature distributed across two languages > bilinguals are not the sum of two monolinguals.

9. Children soak up new languages like sponges

- Children are undoubtedly more flexible language learners than adults.
- Nevertheless we need to be realistic about what we can expect a child to achieve in a short amount of time.
- We cannot expect children to “catch up” years of exposure in a matter of months.

10. Having parents who speak another language will make a child bilingual

- Not necessarily.
- Teachers and other practitioners must find out about the family's language choices and what opportunities the child has to *hear* and *use* the minority language.

Multilingual Manchester

<http://mlm.humanities.manchester.ac.uk/>

- Multilingual Manchester is a cluster of activities that aims to
 - promote awareness of language diversity
 - identify and respond to language needs (such as foreign language learning, access to English courses, and maintenance of heritage languages)
 - document and inform about some of the many smaller languages spoken in the city

Bilingualism Matters

<http://www.bilingualism-matters.ppls.ed.ac.uk/>

- The mission of Bilingualism Matters is to:
 - raise awareness of bilingualism
 - provide research-based information to parents and practitioners on language and literacy development in bilingual children
 - Forge links between the academic community of bilingualism researchers and communities of bilingual speakers

شكرًا 감사합니다

Grazie ありがとう Danke

Takke deg 謝謝

Gracias Σας ευχαριστώ

Thank you!

ขอบคุณ! Terima kasih

Merci 有難う Danke

Obrigado

Eskerrik on