

EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING A LANGUAGE ON A BILINGUAL MODE: A CASE STUDY

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Abstract:

This study delves at how two individuals, one from each of two distinct cultural backgrounds and with very diverse educational backgrounds, learned to communicate in two languages. It looks at the social, political, geographical, and educational factors that affect language acquisition and then assesses those encounters in light of Baker's (2011) "Dimension of Bilingualism." This is essential because the process of learning a second language is so individual. It is hoped that the study will aid language educators and researchers in creating more individualised and sophisticated approaches to dealing with the complexities of the issue that arises in bilingual educational settings, as well as contribute to the development of critical insights about the singularity of the bilingual journey.

Keywords: Bilingual, Language Learning, Bilingualism, Educators.

Introduction:

Today, we live in a world that is becoming more interconnected and interdependent on a daily basis. Globalization is accelerating this trend. As a result, being able to speak two or more languages is associated with a number of positive attributes and characteristics. The ability to speak two languages effectively acts as a bridge between two distinct regions of the world, each of which has its own culture and way of life. Because of this, one's perspective on the other culture shifts, which brings them closer to that culture. It is also essential in any country that only speaks one language due to the rapid advancement of information technology, which brings people from all parts of the world into closer proximity with one another. People who are able to speak more than one language have a much better chance of being able to keep up with the rapid speed of technological change in the world and appreciate its benefits. The ability to speak two languages not only expands one's knowledge but also their understanding of other cultures, which in turn helps to reduce misconceptions, prejudices, and misunderstandings. As a result, it paves the way for greater opportunities to achieve success in today's globalised society.

"Everyone is bilingual," Edward (2004) claims, and I have to agree. His expansive concept of bilingualism includes people who just know a few phrases in another language. This broad definition of bilingualism is accurate. However, a broad definition of bilingualism includes the ability to listen to, speak, read, and write in second language at a functional level.(Laws, Kilgour,& Kasabov, cited in Kabil 2005). However, the concept of bilingualism goes beyond only having the ability to speak two languages; rather, it places a focus on doing so on a daily basis.

2011 on page 4), it is said that "bilinguals are those who use two or more languages (or dialects) in their everyday lives." [Citation needed] Again, Baker (2011) brings up another distinction, this time referring to the ability of bilinguals to use both of their languages. According to him, some people are able to speak fluently in two languages, but they typically only use one of those languages. Other people, on the other hand, may make regular use of two languages, but their proficiency in each language may vary. On the other hand, some people speak one language when they talk to others, but read and write in a different tongue altogether. According to Baker (2011), therefore, the experience of being bilingual differs for each individual depending on the degree of language use and the function of each language.

However, Baker (2011) highlights certain aspects of bilingualism that must be taken into account in order to properly evaluate any case involving bilingualism. In order to evaluate the subjects' progress toward bilingualism, several important aspects, including age, domain, ability, culture, and context, have been taken into consideration.

Methodology:

As a method of data collection, 'Interview' technique has been used because it provides the opportunity to collect authentic and natural data. Two participants from different culture and educational backgrounds have been interviewed. To de-identify the interviewees in this study a pseudonym is given to each of them. (Participant 1 is named as Kavitha and participant 2 as Mohammad).

A brief discussion Regarding the background of the Participants and their Experience of Learning English Language on Bilingual Mode:

Participant 1 (Kavitha): She was born and raised in India, as stated by the first participant, Kavitha. Her first language is Malayalam, and she speaks English and Hindi in addition to Malayalam, which is her native tongue. Kavitha, who is 34 years old, possesses dual citizenship in India as well as Australia. She moved to Australia with her husband ten years ago, as he saw a bright future for himself as a medical professional in Australia. Kavitha has earned a Bachelor of Arts degree as well as a postgraduate degree, and she is currently employed as a teacher in a primary school. Being a bilingual, Kavitha wants to ensure that her two children never lose their cultural identity or the values they were raised with by raising them to be bilingual. She believes that her daughters will benefit intellectually and spiritually from being exposed to both their Australian and Indian cultures. Since Malayalam is not a language that is taught in the LOTE programme, she hopes that her girls will be able to acquire Hindi as a second language.

Participant 2 (Mohammad): I was born in Kabul, which is located in Afghanistan. His first language is Dari, although Pashto, which is also an official language in Afghanistan, is his second language. In later years, he became fluent in English, Urdu, and Bahasa Malay. His experience of acquiring a language has been substantially affected by educational and sociopolitical influences. After the invasion of Afghanistan by the Soviet Union in 1979, Mohammad and his family fled to Pakistan as refugees. Once there, he began to educate himself in Urdu in order to maintain his ability to communicate on a fundamental level and later for academic reasons. They stayed in Pakistan until the communist dictatorship there fell in 1992, at which point they were able to travel back to their native country. This took place after the

flam was rekindled. In 1996, Mohammad relocated to Malaysia in order to further his education. While he was there, he was required to study Malay because it was part of the curriculum for his degree. Following the completion of Mohammad's Master's degree in Information Technology, he began working in Malaysia, which is where his kid learned to speak Malay as his first language. Despite this, the child's parents did their best to continue speaking the ancestry language (Dari) to them at home. But in the end, he and his family made the decision to immigrate to Australia, where they were forced to retrain themselves in English as the new language of communication.

Result:

The examination of the data demonstrates quite clearly that an individual's experience with bilingualism can vary greatly, which is consistent with Baker's idea. Because both of my subjects are able to communicate in more than one language, the term "bilingual" will be used here to refer to multilingual individuals. The findings of the data analysis are provided with reference to Baker's (2011) concept of the bilingualism dimension.

Age:

The learner's age is a crucial consideration in the process of picking up a second language. Concerning the role that age plays in SLA, the researchers are divided on a number of different points of view. According to the findings of a number of studies, one's long-term proficiency in a second language is positively correlated with the age at which that language was first learned. But there are those who hold a contrary opinion. They contend that the cognitive advantages of older children and young people make it possible for them to acquire a second language in a more effective and expedient manner than younger children (Baker 2011, P.124). However, in the cases of both of the study's subjects, the age of first language acquisition occurred between the ages of one and two years, when the participants' language faculties were initially maturing. Kavitha was enrolled in an English Medium school when she was just five years old, which meant that she immediately began studying English as a second language. Because Hindi is the national language of India, she began studying it when she was seven years old, making it her third language overall. It was necessary for her to be able to interact in Hindi with people who did not belong to her group.

On the other hand, Mohammad began studying his second language, Pasto, when he was six years old, and his third language, English, when he was eleven years old (in secondary school). And during his adulthood, he educated himself in Malay. According to Baker, "sequential acquisition of bilingualism refers to the situation where a child or adult acquires a first language, and later becomes proficient in the second language and sometimes further languages." Therefore, both of them are able to be classified as either consecutive or sequential bilinguals (Baker, 2011, p. 116).

Mohammad is of the opinion that age does have some role in the development of an accent due to the fact that small children are able to acquire native-like pronunciation more easily than adults, although attaining mastery of a second language is unaffected by age. His remark regarding age chimes in harmony with what Marinova-Todd and colleagues have to say about the subject. "age does influence language learning, but primarily because it is associated with

social, psychological, educational, and other factors that can affect L2 proficiency, not because there is any critical period that limits the possibility of language learning by adults," write Marinova-Todd et al. "age does influence language learning, but primarily because it is associated with social, psychological, educational, and other factors that can affect L2 proficiency" (mentioned in Baker 2011 p. 125)

During the process of analysing the connection between age and the acquisition of a language, Kavitha states, "It is beneficial to start learning a second language at an early age but this does not necessarily guarantee that the individual would be successful in acquiring the language." There are a variety of additional aspects that contribute to a successful acquisition. The ability to successfully acquire a language is strongly influenced by both the desire to learn it and the frequency with which it can be used.

This is a really valid point. It has been discovered that bilingual education merely results in the development of passive bilinguals in many EFL contexts. For instance, in the Bangladeshi educational system, English was first taught to students in the very first grade, or class 1, as early as 1991. (www.moedu.gov.bd, 2014). However, Bangladeshi bilinguals continue to be considered passive bilinguals. Their ability to understand what is being said to them is satisfactory to a certain degree, but their productive abilities, in particular their capacity for oral expression, are severely lacking. This is due to the fact that they are not given any opportunities to use the language outside of the classroom, and the curriculum does not include any tests of oral proficiency. The whole focus here is on the structure of the language rather than how it is used.

Domain:

According to Baker (2011), the context in which one learns and employs a language is referred to as the domain. Every multilingual person's context is highly different from one another. "A person's ability to communicate in multiple languages can frequently be put to use for a variety of purposes. For instance, one language may be spoken at home while another is spoken in the classroom" Baker (2011, p.3).

Kavitha has acquired English in a structured environment; specifically, she attended a school with an English language curriculum and was required to take English classes as a subject. In addition to this, the language of instruction for all of the classes was English. She continued her education in English at the university level. Her education in Hindi included both textbook study and conversational practice. She was required to take it as a topic because Hindi is India's official language, therefore her education would not be complete without it. In addition to this, she was able to pick up the language from her surroundings, which included the street, the market, and other locations where people congregated.

Regarding the utilisation of the English language. Kavitha claims that she was able to communicate effectively in English while she was living in India. According to what she has said, having a strong grasp of English is a matter of prestige in India. It reflects a greater level of education as well as cultural sophistication and intellectual acuity. Indians who are fluent in English are proud to show off their abilities and may regularly transition from speaking in their native tongue to speaking in English throughout a discussion.

Due to the fact that India is a multilingual nation, English has risen to the position of second language for the purpose of preserving social cohesion. In addition to this, it ensures improved opportunities for professional advancement and employment. Her speech draws attention to the tendency of Indian people to mix and switch languages, which is a fairly normal pattern of behaviour for bilingual individuals.

The excitement for English-language study in Indian public life is consistent with the research of Mejaia and Marie (2002). Countries with a colonial past and the heritage of the an imperial global language, such as Hindustan and the independent nations of Africa, are said to view the use of international language as a badge of honour and an essential step toward economic modernity and scientific advancement.

Kavitha remarks, with reference to where she currently resides (Australia), that English has nearly taken the place of her native speech. She has a hard time communicating in Malayalam, but she can speak some Hindi, which allows her to interact with the Indian immigrant community in Australia. The only time she speaks Malaylam is when she is speaking on the phone with her family in India.

Mohammad, like everyone else, was required to take English during his time in secondary school. In Afghanistan, instruction in English for speakers of other languages is provided. The prospect of better employment was the driving force behind his decision to improve his English skills. In contrast to Kavitha, Mohammad had a much more difficult time mastering the English language. This is primarily due to the fact that, before to going to Malaysia, he had very few opportunities to both listen to and speak English.

When asked about the reasons for his decision to acquire Pasto as a second language, he responded by saying that Afghanistan is a bilingual country. There are about forty distinct communities of speakers of different languages, and there are nearly two hundred dialects. I needed to be able to communicate in Pasto and Dari, the two official languages of Afghanistan, in order to interact with the majority of the language communities.

In this scenario, his goal in studying Pasto is to better socialise himself with people who speak a wide variety of languages, or the many ethnic groups. According to Edward (2004), who claims that speaking a given language can establish one's membership in a particular language community, this is consistent with what we have just stated. In the case of multilingual communities, Edwards is of the opinion that "...membership in more than one speech community could produce more immediately observable result at the individual level; if two or more languages are exercising some influence, then an individual could conceivably display an interesting pattern woven from several linguistic threads, a pattern which might look quite distinctive against a more unidimensional one."

Ability:

According to Baker (2011), a person's ability to use a language varies from person to person. Some bilinguals are considered active bilinguals because they actively speak and write in both languages, whereas others are considered passive bilinguals because they only have receptive ability in both languages. The ability of a person to communicate in many languages also differs. In her response to the question concerning her capabilities, Kavitha states that she

possesses an advanced degree of English proficiency in both her receptive and producing abilities. She considers herself to be an lively bilingual of English, but a inactive bilingual of Hindi due to the fact that her producing skill of Hindi is intermediate, and her use of Hindi is limited. Consequently, she considers herself to be an active bilingual of English.

On the other hand, Mohammad considers himself to be an active bilingual of English and a passive bilingual of Urdu and Malay, with his abilities falling somewhere between the beginner and intermediate levels in each language correspondingly. However, he believes that he was a passive English bilingual before he moved to Malaysia since he did not have many opportunities to use English and his proficiency was not up to the level. He believes this because he did not have many opportunities to use English. His acquisition of foreign tongues was restricted to the classroom solely. According to Baker (2011), "opportunities for involvement in the second language may be scarce." [Citation needed] However, Mohammad possessed the receptive capacity, which explains why, whenever he has had the chance to use it, he has demonstrated his proficiency as an active bilingual. According to Cannon (1963), who writes on the English education system in Afghanistan, "The instructors are mostly Afghans who work under the major disadvantage of being the only one who are introducing the students to English...The child has very little interaction with the locals. It's possible that a person who was raised speaking English would find his teacher's intonation style and word order difficult to understand.

This is a regular occurrence in many target removed contexts where Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been implemented, but the students' abilities have not significantly improved as a result. One of the primary reasons for such is that teachers typically have a low level of linguistic proficiency.

Culture:

Those who are bilingual progress toward becoming more or less bicultural or multicultural, particularly those who have learned the second language along with the socio-cultural experience, such as migrants. Because language learning in such an environment is followed by the process of acculturation, which helps individuals bridge their previous cultural experience with their new cultural surroundings and assists them in behaving in an appropriate manner-

manner that is suitable given the culture (Baker 2011). When one acquires a new language, they also acquire a set of values, beliefs, and attitudes that are characteristic of the people of a particular linguistic group at a certain point in history. In response to the topic of whether or not learning a language also involves learning the culture of that language Kavitha says:

"Of course, people in this society communicate with one another through the use of language. Therefore, it is important for a person to be aware of the social norms that exist since otherwise there is a possibility of the listener misunderstanding or becoming offended. Because of the cultural significance of greetings, requests, apologies, and expressions of appreciation, a person who speaks a second language should have some understanding how to address people, make requests, apologise, and express thanks."

Mohammad is of the opinion that a learner of a second language ought to familiarise himself

with the culture of the country where that language is spoken in order to act in a manner that is socially acceptable.

It is a fact that linguistic proficiency on its own is not sufficient for language learners to be considered competent in the language they are learning (Krasner 1999). The acquisition of linguistic knowledge must be coupled with either cultural knowledge or pragmatics.

The idea of being multilingual and having a distinct identity are intrinsically linked to one another. According to Baker (2011), "We establish our identities, but at the same time, they are also generated and constrained by other players, situations, and the developing play." The process of learning a second language is like playing a game, and it has a connection to the construction of identities (Baker, 2011, p. 132). The author Edwards (2004) asserts that the ability to speak two languages binds a person to more than one ethno cultural community. Because Edwards (2004, page 27) asserts that "the deeper the language and cultural borrowing into another society, the greater the impact upon identity," the researchers inquired as to whether or not the participants' bilingualism has had an effect on their sense of self. The response from Kavitha was "No. While Mohammad believes that being able to communicate in two languages makes him a global citizen, this experience has caused a shift in my perspective by exposing me to a wider range of information from both cultures.

Context:

The question was put to both of the participants as to whether or not it is feasible to maintain one's culture even when one does not speak one's own mother tongue. The solution that Kavitha provided was, "It is difficult to preserve the culture if we do not know the language and live in a foreign country where there are very few people who share the same culture." I fear that my daughters may abandon my culture and adopt the values of the dominant culture when they grow up.

As a result, their context is one that is subtractive. They are unable to communicate in their mother tongue, which will cause them to lose interest in her culture. However, Mohammad has a contrary point of view. He is of the opinion that while it is possible to be influenced by the culture of the dominant group, this does not inevitably mean that we have to abandon the culture that we were raised in. According to him, one need to never let go of religious ideals, which are related with culture. According to Baker (2011), this explains the phenomenon of additive bilingualism, which describes a situation in which the adding of a second language and culture cannot either replace or supersede the first language and culture.

Conclusion:

This essay examines the process of becoming multilingual from the perspective of two individuals who have been selected from distinct cultural and educational backgrounds. Additionally, they are not of the same gender. Their bilingual experience, on the other hand, demonstrates that no two instances of bilingualism are the same. It was also discovered that Baker's theory of bilingualism cannot account for each and every unique circumstance. Motivation, attitude, identity, language, and so on should have also been included. Evidence from bilinguals suggests that some are losing their native tongue and cultural practises as a result of contact with the dominant culture. Some people go to great lengths to avoid using

their original tongue in public because they know it would bring them negative attention and make them feel ashamed of their heritage. On the other hand, the departure occurs for certain people because they do not have enough opportunities to practice the language. However, this is not a good sign because it is impossible to resurrect a language once it has been lost, and the loss of a language brings with it the loss of its culture, norms, and way of viewing. It is imperative that bilingual education be supported in order to preserve both linguistic and cultural diversity.

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