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Multilingualism, multi-thinking

Introduction

Hello and welcome to this presentation on Multilingualism and multi-thinking, module number ECEY4004 my name is Pandora Oates student number 2317746.

Section 1 Definition and benefits of being bilingual.

Pert and Bradley (2018) states that bilingualism is an umbrella term that covers the concept of multilingualism and multi-modal languages such as Makaton. RCSLT (2024) defines a bilingual as an individual with the ability to develop communication skills in more than one language with varying proficiency including oral and/or written forms, and that an individual should be regarded bilingual regardless of how much of these languages they understand or use. Baker (2000) agrees, stating that being bilingual does not mean that an individual is equally fluency in both languages, adding that fluency can change over one's lifetime. Ludden (2016) adds that many bilinguals also use codeswitching when communicating, switching between languages in a single sentence, stating this is often observed in bilingual children. Kohnert, *et. al.* (2021) says that language should be thought of as a multi-faceted social tool which is constantly evolving and therefor there cannot be one single definition for bilingualism.

One advantage to being bilingual as highlighted by Byers-Heinlein and Lew-Williams (2018) is that bilingual children seem have a deeper social understanding, as young bilingual children are more in tune to certain characteristics of communication such as intonation and tone and seem to better understand the needs and perspectives of

others. This is possibly because these children have had to navigate their social world adapting their language to different people and scenarios according to Byers-Heinlein and Lew-William (2018).

Marian and Shook (2012) posits that bilingual people may also benefit from better cognitive control as they appear to have sharper focus and find task-switching easier than their monolingual counter parts. Marian and Shook (2012) states that bilinguals undertaking the 'Stroop test' seem to be able to ignore competing perceptual information and answer quicker than monolinguals.

Section 2 brain development and divergent thinking

Kuipers and Thierry (2015) states that bilingual children may have a more acute phonological awareness, as areas of the brain such as the auditory cortex linked to language acquisition appear enhanced in bilingual children. Hofmann (2020) concurs that recent brain studies have shown both increased connectivity in the Brocas and Wernicks areas of bilingual brains, responsible for language production, processing and comprehension. Wong, et al. (2015) also found that neural images from bilinguals had greater amounts of grey and white matter compared to monolinguals, leading them to believe that it is possible that bilinguals may have increased attention and cognitive control. Friesen and Bialystok (2013) agreed that the bilingual brain was healthier and might demonstrate better cognitive control needed for tasks such as problem solving, however bilingual children may also be at a disadvantage in lexical representation, with monolingual children showing greater verbal fluency especially in timed tasks to that of bilingual children. Friesen and Bialystok (2013) This may be because bilingual children do not have the crystallized intelligence such as vocabulary knowledge to call upon.

Robinson (2016) describes divergent thinking as having the ability to think laterally and to question or answer in a variety of ways. Robinson (2016) states divergent thinking is innate in young children but declines as they progressed on their educational journey. Huffmann and Russ (2011) links divergent thinking to play and creativity, stating that play is about practicing and making associations.

Sobecks (2020) describes Chomsky's Language Acquisition Device theory as the brain's architecture having the natural ability to learn and use language. According to

Espinosa (2013) newborn babies can distinguish between sounds in language. Petitto, et al. (2012) posits that studies carried out on bilingual infants demonstrated they had innate abilities to process, hear and learn multiple languages, as well as enhanced brain plasticity. Bruner (1983) suggests that children also need adult intervention to support language development and developed LASS (Language Acquisition Support System), influenced by Vygotsky's (1962) Zone of Proximal Development.

My group activity supports divergent thinking as the children were presented with loose parts and play dough to create a home for their mini beasts. The play dough also provides a rich sensory experience. Vygotsky (1962) suggests that creative and lived experiences are an integral part of play. Robinson (2016) also expresses the importance of collaboration for divergent thinking to support learning. Bandura's social learning theory; MacBlain (2022) also emphasises the importance of social relationships as part of the learning process suggesting that people learn through observation, imitation, and modelling others' behaviours.

Section 3 Support children EAL

To support EAL children in early years, it is important for practitioners to understand the unique characteristics that each child brings to the setting including their culture, family's heritage and language (Chamers and Crisfield, 2019). The National Literacy Trust (2022) states that there are more children in the world growing up either bilingual or multilingual – Lee (2015) and Ludden (2016) suggest that this is due to factors such as migration, intermarriage and education. Cultural capital is the knowledge, behaviours and skills a child refers to for success in education and society and shapes their overall identity (Early Education, 2021). Schools, community and families are part of a child's 'microsystem' and have a direct influence on a child's development according to Bronfenbrenner's Ecological system (Pound, 2009). Building positive relationships are crucial with both the child and their family (EYFS 2023) practitioners need to give families the chance to share what is important to them. This supports practitioners in understanding a child's interests and difficulties, and to plan relevant and stimulating learning experiences (Early Education, 2021). My activity I used dual language to greet (czesc/hello) and praise

(dobry/good) to welcome and support the self-esteem of the children. The use of verbs in the activity is important for language development and grammatical skills, valuable to both monolingual and bilingual children (Hsu, 2017). The combination of targeted translation and total physical response also support inclusive practice. Ashers (1969) Total Physical Response Strategy links words to actions, helping to consolidate the learning. While singing slows down the language and repetition helps the children with their phonological awareness and builds a connection between practitioner and child (Dyke, 2019). The EYFS (2023) states that practitioners need to teach a good standard of English language as well as to take reasonable steps in providing opportunities for children to use their home language in play and learning. EMAS (no date) states that schools should actively inspire children to use their home language as much as possible and encourage parents to converse with their children in their native tongue, as this strengthens the second language's foundation, without which both first and second language acquisition could be delayed. A failure to celebrate and encourage the diverse mix of languages coming into our schools could lead to language attrition according to Unicef (2016). The immersion method to learning language as used by Wales is seen as important for both the preservation language and culture (Welsh government, 2022). Article 30 of the UNCRC states that children have the right to use their own language, culture and religion – even if these are not used by not people in the country where they live, and article 8 expresses the right of children to their own identity (Childrens Commissioner for Wales, 2024).

Summary

In summary, a child's language acquisition and thinking skills are linked to and supported by the experiences afforded to them by their families as well as educational professionals.

Thank you for your time today and goodbye, dziekuje I do widzenia.

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