

Presentation

Good morning, my name is Lois Duffy, student number 2307781. This presentation will be discussing multilingualism and bilingualism.

(Quay and Montanari 2018) states that multilingualism refers to the ability of an individual or a community to speak more than two languages proficiently, where as bilingualism specifically refers to the ability to speak two languages fluently.

(Marian and Shook, 2012) states that being bilingual or multilingual from a young age offers numerous benefits such as, improved cognitive abilities, as multilingual individuals often exhibit enhanced problem-solving skills, creativity, multitasking abilities, and improved academic performance as studies have shown that multilingual children often perform better academically, particularly in subjects such as mathematics, reading, and vocabulary. Being bilingual or multilingual can also offer better job opportunities in the future as many employers value language skills, particularly in globalized industries, which can lead to higher job prospects and salaries. (Chumbow 2018) strongly agrees that being multilingual or bilingual from early years follows with many benefits allowing you to have greater cultural understanding, allowing us to engage more deeply with different cultures, this also allows us to expand social networks, by knowing multiple languages facilitates connections with a broader range of people, both locally and internationally.

While there are numerous benefits to being bilingual or multilingual from a young age, there can also be some challenges states (Mark, 2018). Such as potential language confusion as young multilingual children may experience language confusion or mixing, especially if they are exposed to multiple languages simultaneously. This can temporarily affect language development and fluency in each language, or some multilingual children may initially exhibit a slight delay in language development compared to monolingual peers, particularly if they are trying to balance learning multiple languages. (Understanding Multilingualism in the Early Years, no date) adds that in some cases multilingual children may face social challenges, such as feeling different or excluded if their languages are not widely spoken in their community or if they struggle to communicate effectively in certain contexts. and finally another challenge children may face is identity confusion, multilingual children may grapple with questions of identity and belonging, particularly if they come from multicultural or immigrant backgrounds, and may struggle to reconcile different cultural linguistic aspects of their identity. While these challenges are important to consider, they are often outweighed by the long-term benefits of multilingualism, and many multilingual individuals successfully navigate and overcome them with appropriate support and resources.

(turning learners into users of the Welsh language/ Estyn, 2021) strongly suggests that an additional language typically refers to any language learned in addition to one's native or first language, which is also referred to as the mother tongue. This can include second languages learned for communication, education, cultural enrichment, or professional reasons. It encompasses languages acquired through formal instruction, immersion, or exposure in multilingual environments. (Welsh as an additional language, no date.) defines Welsh as an additional language as the use of the Welsh language by individuals who do not have Welsh as their first language. This typically occurs in regions where Welsh is spoken alongside English, such as Wales. It involves acquisition of Welsh as a second or foreign language for communication, education, or cultural purposes. English as an additional language refers to the learning and use of the English language by individuals whose first language is not English. It is commonly used to describe the educational context for students who are learning English alongside their native language. EAL programs and support services aim to help non-native English speakers develop proficiency in English for academic, social, and professional purposes, supported by (Clements, 2023).

(Bilingual Development in Childhood: Cambridge Core Blog, 2021) states that being multilingual, or bilingual as a child has a profound impact on brain development. Learning multiple languages in early childhood enhances brain plasticity, the brain's ability to change and adapt in response to experiences. The heightened plasticity allows the brain to more easily acquire and process new information. Multilingualism has also been linked to improve cognitive abilities such as problem solving, critical thinking, and decision making. Constantly switching between languages exercises the brain, leading to better overall cognitive function. (Bialystok and Werker, 2016) also states that research suggests that bilingual individuals may have certain cognitive advantages over monolinguals, such as better attention control, task-switching abilities, and working memory. These cognitive benefits extend beyond language processing and positively impact various areas of cognitive functioning. Studies have also shown that speaking multiple languages has been associated with a delayed onset of age-related cognitive decline and a risk of developing neurodegenerative diseases such as Alzheimer's and dementia. The cognitive benefits of multilingualism may help preserve brain function and cognitive reserve in old age.

(Madore, Addis and Schacter, 2015) states that divergent thinking in early childhood refers to the ability to generate multiple creative solutions or ideas in response to a single problem or stimulus. (Divergent thinking in children, 2019) adds that divergent thinking is closely linked to creativity. Encouraging young children to think divergently fosters their ability to come up with original, imaginative ideas and solutions. Also, early childhood is a period characterized by exploration and curiosity. Providing opportunities for open-ended play, exploration, and problem solving encourages divergent thinking skills to flourish.

During my activity I read the book 'Lliwiau'r enfys pi po' in both Welsh and English, code switching between the two languages, by doing this it gave the children a better understanding of the story and the languages, following onto the activity with the rainbow and the different

colours by doing I tried to allow the children to explore the task with the different colours of the rainbow by doing this, it allowed the children to problem solve the different colours of the rainbow, providing them with opportunities to use their divergent thinking skills, while also using their cognitive abilities to remember the colours and their names. During the activity I spoke in both English and Welsh, as code switching between the two languages can be a versatile and adaptive communication strategy that enhances cognitive flexibility. To end my activity, I then sung a Welsh song about the colours of the rainbow.

In conclusion to my presentation, research shows that being multilingual or bilingual from early years has more benefits than challenges, is good exercise for the brain, and is over all beneficial for the future of adolescents and can open many more opportunities. Thank you very much for listening.

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