Bilingualism

According to Professor Colin Baker (2011) there is no universally accepted definition or understanding of bilingualism, and he beives bilinguals generally speak two languages with different people in different situations and for different goals.

NALDIC (2011) notes that definitions of bilingualism vary amongst individuals. As a result, "bilingualism" can refer to anything from a basic degree of two-language ability to a highly developed level that allows a speaker to communicate and appear to be speaking two languages fluently. Some people may consider themselves bilingual who can communicate verbally.

According to Cook and Bassetti (2011), bilingualism usually refers to speaking two languages, although it can sometimes involve more.

De Groot (2011) asserted that some researchers designate users of two or more languages as bilinguals, and users of three or more as multilinguals. Some scholars think that the ability to some words in two different languages qualifies a person as bilingual.

A person is considered bilingual if they are equally fluent in two different languages and speak two languages in a bilingual setting, according to other studies like Köktürk, Odacıoğlu, and Uysal (2016).

Speaking fluently in a language other than one's native tongue is what Wallner (2016) defines as bilingualism.

Multilingualism

As per the definition provided by the European Commission in 2007, multilingualism refers to the capacity of individuals, organisations, cultures, and institutions to regularly interact with multiple languages in their daily lives.

Li (2008) defines multilingualism as the ability to communicate in more than one language, either actively through speaking and writing or passively through listening and reading.

According to Aronin (2018), multilingualism refers to both speaking multiple languages and utilising three or more languages in conversation.

Nordquist (2019) suggested that being able to converse well in three or more languages is known as multilingualism, whether one speaks solo or in a community.

Multilingualism is not only about language skills; it also reflects our shared humanity and connects us across cultures and generations (Chenoz, 2013)

Benefits of Bilingualism and Multilingualism-

According to research, bilingualism can enhance a child's cognitive development, linguistic proficiency, executive functioning, access to a wider range of employment options.Studies has shown that bilingual children outperform their monolingual peers in a variety of language and cognitive domains (Tekyi-Arhin, 2023).

Bilingualism has been shown to provide numerous advantages for children. Not only may it enhance cognitive growth, but it can also develop cultural awareness and social skills. Studies suggests that bilingual children are better at multitasking, problem-solving, and maintaining their memory. Furthermore, studying a second language exposes children to a variety of cultures and points of view, which helps them develop empathy and social awareness (Manaher, 2009).

According to McLeod, Verdon and Theobald (2015) a research which was conducted in a school in Germany showed bilingual had the greatest impact on the

initiation and negotiation of friendships. Becoming bilingual had an impact on children's chances of forming friendships and socializing.

Learning multiple languages has been linked to a wide range of health advantages, such as delayed dementia onset and quicker recovery from strokes (Vince, 2016).

However, Mark (2023) belives there are also challenges associated with raising a multilingual child, such as language hurdles and perhaps a slower rate of vocabulary growth in both languages.

Nowadays, it is generally acknowledged that bilingual education has many benefits for children, far outweighing any potential drawbacks. (Köktürk et al., 2016)

EAL-

English as an extra language (EAL) is the term used to describe students for whom English is not their mother tongue. According to Ofsted (2013), the term "English as a second language" is unsuitable because the learner may already be multilingual or multidialectal.

Language helps us stay connected to our friends, family, and community while also feeding our brains. The National Literacy Trust states that this is crucial for developing a young child's sense of identity (National Literacy trust, 2022).

Teachers can help children who are learning English as a second language by offering them excellent language instruction, fostering a positive learning atmosphere, and utilising useful teaching techniques like bilingual literature and visual aids. By doing so practitioners can support children thriving in their everyday lives, achieving academic success, and developing excellent language abilities (Manaher, 2009).

Tekyi-Arhin (2023) asserted that bilingualism in early childhood education can help foster a more welcoming and understanding community while equipping children with the skills they need to succeed in a diverse and globalised environment.

EYFS-

since language and communication are the main EYFS domains, they act as the cornerstones upon which all other areas are built. Children's language skills are crucial to their overall development and a good indicator of their academic performance. Practitioners can prevent gaps in early children's language development by fostering a language-rich environment full of kid-friendly stories, rhymes, songs, and play (EYFS, 2022).

Learning multiple languages, including sign language, has many other advantages as well, such as improving one's creativity, grammar, spelling, and storytelling abilities. Children that have a big vocabulary learn more. They can make sense of the world around them with the help of words. (GOV.UK, 2023)

Word sounds and patterns can be explored in a playful way through songs and rhymes as I demonstrate in my activity video. Children benefit from poems that involve actions and repetition as they learn about new words and the structure of spoken language.

Divergent thinking

Divergent thinking is the process of thinking outside the box to come up with several unique ideas or solutions to a problem and it’s a processe that is involved in creativity (Guilford, 1967).

Bertagnoli (2022) asserted that divergent thinking is characterised by a variety of traits, including creativity, teamwork, open-mindedness, and meticulousness. This will allow children to imaginie, think diffrently, find solution to problems in many other ways.

According to Hoffman and Russ (2012), children typically exhibit their most advanced language use during play, which helps them develop their capacity for divergent thought.

Brain development-

According to study from Bialystok (2017), multilingual children have healthier brains and are better at solving problems. Multilingualism allows children to think in two or more languages, it stimulates brain development and aids in learning.

Studies show that learning to speak two languages as a child is an important experience that can affect how well children develop (Bialystok, 2006).

Theories

In accordance with BF Skinner's behavioural theory, children pick up language through operant conditioning, which involves copying their carers and reacting to either positive or negative reinforcement.

According to Chomsky, children are born with the ability to learn languages because of the language acquisition device (LAD), which is thought to function as a brain-based language encoder. Using concepts from Chomsky, Jerome Bruner (1961) claims that although babies can learn language from birth, they need frequent contacts with teachers or carers in order to completely acquire and understand it (BBC Radio, 2015).

Lev Vigotsky's theories had an influence on Bruner since he too believed that social interaction and environment are important factors in a child's learning. During his research, he came up with the popular scaffolding theory in education, which highlights the need of providing pupils with sufficient assistance during the early phases of learning something new (Firestone, 2016).

Conclusion-

There is sufficient evidence to support the idea that multilingualism is the rule rather than the exception in the world and that the benefits of both bilingualism and multilingualism should be recognised, taken advantage of, and applied to promote both personal and societal development (Chibaka, 2018).

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