

ECEY 4004: Multilingualism and multi-thinking

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Welcome to module ECEY4004 Multilingualism and multi-thinking, my name is Aimee Robinson, student number Multilingualism and multi-thinking 2314197. I am going to talk about, what is bilingualism, the benefits of being bilingual, English as an additional language, Brain development, divergent thinking, and the early years framework.

So, what is bilingualism, bilingualism is when a person regularly uses and speaks two different languages, there are different reasons for how a person can become bilingual. (The study of bilingual children, 1991) talks about how children can be born into 'early bilingualism' and, or 'child bilingualism' this is when children have been in contact with two different languages either from birth or acquired a 2nd language in early childhood. In other cases, a second language can be acquired later as a young person or adult. The study also suggests that half of the world population is bilingual, and that language found in bilingual communities can be varied. (The article: Bilingual Minds, 2009) has suggested that the world has become increasingly bilingual and that being bilingual, allows for the cultural and linguistic diversity of bilingualism. A survey of language used in the United States obtained from the American community in 2007 reported that 20% of their population spoke a non-English language at home. (Crystal (1997) estimates that bilingualism that includes English and another language spoken represents about 235 million people worldwide and two thirds of the children in the world are raised in a bilingual environment. Many if not most children around the world are growing up bilingual (Department for Education 2020, Qi, 2016, Ryan, 2013 UNESO, 2016) acquiring

more than one language, either through their home life, culture of movement from their birth country to a new country that they now call home.

According to the article (Thinking skills and creativity: Children's divergent thinking and creativity, 2021), Bilinguals can spontaneously switch languages when speaking in a conversation, a benefit through knowing two languages means that bilinguals have an obvious communicative advantage over monolinguals (individuals who only speak one language), being able to communicate to a broader audience and more efficiently in a variety of language environments. When bilinguals are talking to each other they have the flexibility of choosing the language they would either need to use to communicate and express themselves, but also to choose the language that they are most comfortable speaking. (Heredia & Altarriba 2001, Musyken, 2000, Myers-Scotton, 1997), state that bilinguals commonly switch between language even when they are fluent in both. Acquiring more than one language that are regularly used to a degree of fluency serves direct benefits for children, including improved language skills across both first and second languages (Murphy, Macaro, Albao & Cipolla, 2015; Yelland, Pollard & Mercuri; 1993). Having the ability to communicate with more people (Eberhard, Simons & Fennig, 2021) and gives the potential for greater vocational and economic prospects (Agirdag, 2014). A study from, (Children's creativity and bilingual thinking skills, 2021), suggests that researchers have sought to identify cognitive benefits in bilingualism beyond the domain of language, bilingualism is claimed to impact a broad range of cognitive skills in adults. Including learning memory, meta cognition, theory of mind and attention. (Adesope, Lavin, Thompson & Lingerleider, 2010, Bialystok, Castro & Sanchez, 2014, Escutcheon Mulak, Fu & Singh, 2016). It is critical that we understand the impact of bilingual experience on children's cognitive development and creativity. Some studies have suggested that bilingual children perform better than monolingual children in terms of vocal creativity (L. e, kin, 2013, L. e, kin & Tovli 2014), whilst others have found no evidence (Jacobs & Pierce 1966) or

suggested a bilingual advantage is only in figural and not verbal measure. (Okoh, 1980; Ricciardelli, 1992, Sampedro & Pena, 2019).

While there have been benefits found, divergent thinking is one benefit, Children in infancy growing up can recognise from the article,(monolingual vs bilingual: discrimination in young monolingual & bilingual infants, article 2018) can notice the existence of two language system input and can show similar language discrimination abilities, expect bilinguals are not confused by receiving two languages. From the article (Thinking skills and creativity: Children's divergent thinking and bilingualism, 2021), Most children in the world grow up bilingual, and bilingualism has been linked to a range of linguistic and other cognitive skills. However, in this study, bilingual and monolingual children (the number of children, 111, 60% were bilingual) sampled from a number of British schools, completed three measures of nonverbal intelligence, vocabulary and exposure to English, there were no differences found between monolingual and bilingual children across any divergent thinking tasks or measures. Children learning one or more languages; The first word combinations for all children appear at about 1-1 ½ years old. Parson et al 1993; Petitti et al, 2001). The details of children's increasing grammatical sophistication appear to be tied to a specific language that they are speaking. With examples for this point coming from children learning English and Spanish (Gather Cole, 1997), English and French, (Paradis & Genessee, 1996) and French and German (Meisel, 1990). Current theories of language acquisition are based on the idea of a deep connection between words and structure and that grammar is part of the linguistic system. The first evidence occurs when the child knows around 50 words, a relationship demonstrated for both monolingual (Bates & Goodman, 1997 and bilingual (Conboy & Thal, 2006). Diversity and variation in language experiences, such as bilingualism, contribute to the heterogeneity in children neural organisation for language and brain development. Spoken words are comprised of sound (phonological units and meaning semantic units) Early language experiences shape a child's mind and brain, while laying the foundations for reading, (Werker & Hensch, 2015). Bilingualism offers enriched linguistic experiences

that will lead children's neural organisation for language and reading acquisition (Hernandez et al, 2019), encouraging the development neural heterogeneity for language processing. This study from the article (The bilingual brain, Human evolution and second language, 2008) was to research language progression, how children process language and how they are influenced by bilingual experiences. Bilingual development stems from dynamic communications between individuals developing cognitive skills, for example attention and working memory. Linking this kind theory into my activity, speaking English and Italian throughout I was repetitive asking the children to take turns such as (Che colore, what colour, Che colore & my turn, now your turn, going over the words that I wanted them to learn and remember. In my activity I added a song to also encourage memory by remembering the colours, l'colore with a catchy tune and also repeating that would help them remember by singing it first, then breaking down the song for repetition. Bilinguals may form different patterns or neural organisation for language processing in relation to monolinguals and / or bilinguals of different language groups. Learning to read builds on a child's existing language, the article (Language and reading development, 2020), suggests that children acquire language when they are aware of what they hear and what they read, developing critical skills for reading comprehension in one language may facilitate learning to read in both languages. also relating back to my activity displaying the words for a colour or shape in both English and Italian on the props for the children to see, Rosso, Red, and Un cerchio, a circle,

According to the article (language and reading development in Children learning English as an additional language in primary schools in England 2018) In England the children who are learning English as an (ELA) are pupils whose exposure to a first language other than English, during early development and may continue to use their first language in their home or community setting. This will continue throughout their schooling (Department for education 2007, 2019) says that EAL learners in primary schools have been growing steadily at 21.2%. These children are diverse in term of their proficiency in English at school, their exposure to English outside of school, their literacy skills in

language, religious and cultural practices and the number of different languages spoken. The article (Contributions of bilingual home environments and language proficiency, 2022) Children's language environment at home plays a major role in bilingual language acquisition, children should be exposed to literacy and a quality of language stimulation. (Hoff 2003, 2006; Noble et al 2006). All classroom in state- maintained (government controlled) schools in England takes place in English, with the exception that EAL learners will acquire sufficient English language and reading skills through instruction alone (Costley (2014). There is no concrete status on the national curriculum Early years framework, the department for education (DFE) requires schools to report a level over time for listening, speaking, reading and writing. (The Help for early years providers, Gov. UK, no date) Schools need to learn how to support a child that is an EAL learner, to continually talk in English, to model English, to consider a child's needs for a visual timetable, props that the child can relate to in their home language to be patient, and to find ways to encourage a child's learning. Using scaffolding to support, EAL learners enables them to move from dependent to independent learner, this approach will enable teachers to maintain high expectations for the learner. (Vygotsky, 1962) and (Burner, 1975) and (Gibbons 2015) all supported the use of scaffolding language as well as emphasised the importance of learning to work with EAL learners.

To summarise, from the findings in my evidence, being bilingual is worldwide, it is important to continually use a second language and regularly speak in more than one language as not to lose the knowledge of it. Learning to read in a second language will strengthen a person's ability to learn a language as well as just speaking it. Repetition is important for the continued learning and remembering language, being bilingual has a major benefit and should be celebrated.

Thank you for listening.

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