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The Effect of Bilingualism on English Language Learners' Learning

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ABSTRACT

This study was aimed to investigate the effect of bilingualism on English language learners' learning that English is their foreign language and Turkish as their second language. In doing so, interview and observation were implemented. The result of this study showed that bilingualism has some positive effects on English language learners' learning and it causes bilinguals to learn and understand some features of English language better and faster than monolinguals. For instance: pronunciation, vocabularies, phonetics, etc. This study definitely has some implications for both teachers and students.

Keywords: Bilingualism, English Language, Learning.

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INTRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

Research studies show that there are different languages and their related specific accents in the world which influence the bilingual's second or foreign language learning specially pronunciation dimension of languages. This means that some people are monolingual, bilingual or multilingual. This research investigates whether bilingualism helps English language learners' learning or not. Many studies have also found that bilingualism has a positive effect on foreign language achievement (Cummins, 1970; Hoffman, 2001; Klein, 1995; Sanz, 2000; Zibl, 1993). Eisentein (1980) for instance, found that childhood bilingualism has a positive effect on adult aptitude for learning a foreign language. That is, those who learned a second language during childhood would have a greater success in learning foreign languages as adults (Mokhtari khiavi, B, Rostami, Gh., & Gholami, H., 2016).

According to the research, bilinguals and monolinguals have different types of brains. The students who have learnt two or more languages from their childhood have a faster and more active brain than monolinguals. So, this helps them in adulthood and when they want to learn another language. Because they have experienced some similar feelings before.

The fact that may have attracted the researcher was that how different students are in terms of their being bilingual or monolingual act in the process of English language learning. The bilinguals have some privilege over monolinguals and they also might have some difficulties on the way of learning languages. Therefore, following question was formulated:

RESEARCH QUESTION:

Does bilingualism have any effect on English language learners' learning?

2. METHOD

Participants

The participants of this study consist seven Iranian English language learners with 17-25 age range. Most of them had Turkish language as their second language and English as their foreign language.

Instruments

The researcher used interview and observation as instruments of the study to ask them whether they are bilingual or not, what language they are able to speak or understand and its influences on their English language learning.

Procedure

The researcher asked participants the required questions .During this process, some said they understand their second language but they cannot speak it fluently. Nevertheless, some would say they can both speak and understand their second language, well .The researcher observed and wanted to study that whether bilinguals are good at learning English as their foreign language or monolinguals ,Is there any relation between bilingualism and English language learning on English language learners and does bilingualism assist bilinguals to learn English as foreign language better or hinder them.

3. RESULT

This study was about the effect of bilingualism on English language learners' learning .In doing so, seven English language learners were asked some questions about their bilingualism and their ability to understand or talk their specific second language, their foreign language studying was English .Having asked them mentioned questions, It was proved that bilingualism definitely has some positive effects .For instance : individuals pay more attention and place more emphasize on pronunciation and phonetics and etc. they compare some features of English language by the features of their specific second language mostly Turkish, which should help their English language learning as a foreign language with ease, unquestionably about mentioned features. The obvious and vital experience of learning other languages has helped bilinguals to learn and study English as foreign language better, as English language learners in their private institutes and classes. Some English language learners had been familiar with some features of English since childhood by the help of specific second language. Some features consist: pronunciation and phonetics etc. Which caused bilinguals to understand those features more and much better than others and monolinguals. In addition, bilinguals had the experience of learning another language before. This point helped them a lot in learning foreign languages in adulthood. Because they were familiar with some strategies of foreign language learning.

4. CONCLUSION

This study aimed to investigate the effect of bilingualism on English language learners' learning who had mostly Turkish language as their second language and English as foreign language. For fulfilling the purpose of the study, interview and observation were done and it was proved that bilingualism has positive effect on the process of learning foreign language such as English on English language learners' learning. Specially in aspect of pronunciation and phonetics, by the help of their second language mostly Turkish. In line with this study some studies approve or deny it. There have been some disputes among researchers on effects of bilingualism and various studies show divergent results. Many studies (e.g., Federman, 2000; Lopez, 2003; Mora, 2000) find significant or negative effects of bilingual programs on labour-market outcomes such as educational attainment and earnings whereas a lot more research on the relationship between learning a second language early in life and cognitive ability reveals more positive effects such as these studies. (Asst. Prof. Dr. Suwanarak, K ,2014). This study contains some implications for both teachers and students. Teachers can use the result of the study in order to be aware of the fact about their students' and English language learners' ability and cope with the difficulties, problems and contrasts that may occur during the process of teaching and learning other languages specially English, or take good advantage of such abilities to help them to understand and learn English as a foreign language better by various methods and ways. Also, on the other hand English language learners can use their mother tongue and second language to be able to operate and utilize the techniques, strategies and some features of their second language to have the ability and opportunity to learn and understand mentioned features of English language as their foreign language better than other learners and monolinguals according to their specified second language and mother tongue.

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