

Bilingual Kids going to School

Dora Alexopoulou
Cambridge Bilingualism Network
University of Cambridge

***My child has
only additional languages!***

- Benefits: Cultural, Social, economic ...
- Challenge: going to school!

Why school a challenge?

- Bilingual children are linguistically “behind”
—> challenge to achievement in English.
- English takes over—> challenge to maintaining bilingualism.

Who is bilingual?



2/3 of children in the world!

Actual bilinguals!

- “the majority of bilinguals do not have equal fluency in their languages, many have an accent in at least one of their languages, and many acquired their other language(s) when they were adolescents or adults.... bilinguals use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, to accomplish different things.” (Grosjean,2013) **20132013:7)**

Advantages to learning

- **Cognitive**
- **Communication**
- **Linguistic**

Conflicting cues

- **What's the font colour?**

• **XXXXXX**

- **XXXXXXXX**

- **GREEN**

- **RED**

- **PURPLE**

- **BLUE**

- **Bilingual kids are better than monolingual kids of the same age in cognitive tasks.**
- **They manage two systems.**
- **Any pair of languages is good for this mental gymnastics!**

Communication: reading behind the lines

Version 1: George and his mother were in the living room. George asked his mother: "Mom can I buy an ice-cream?" His mother replied "There's money in my wallet".

Version 2: George and his mother were in the living room. George asked his mother: "Mom can I buy an ice-cream?" His mother replied "You are ill".



Linguistic Benefits

- **Bilingual kids are better linguists**
- **Attention to sounds, structure and meaning of words**

Which is the longest word? (Sorace 2010)

train



caterpillar



Literacy/Reading

Background skills


- Oral proficiency/vocabulary
- Cognitive development
- Metalinguistic awareness

- Vocabulary “deficit” (for pre-school bilinguals the gap closes around 5th grade); evidence for challenges in secondary education in reading English <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics>

- Concepts vs. Words

- Result of variable input (not cognitive ability).

- Cognitive advantages not always present
- Studies indicating lower achievement of EAL students

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- Bilinguals have very different experiences
 - Bilingual education and biliteracy a predictor of cognitive advantages.

Reading and biliteracy

- Words used in children's books are considerably rare in comparison to those used in prime time television
- Higher linguistic complexity of written text
- Reading skills transfer

Born Global Project

Seven out of ten employers believe that school and college leavers and graduates who only speak English are at disadvantage in the jobs market.

Eight out of ten employers believe that foreign language skills are equally important as STEM subjects to Britain's future

95% of employers believe that young people who speak a different language in addition to English in the home should regard bilingualism as an asset

Nurturing bilingualism

- Importance of use
- Importance of sustained and frequent input to nurture learning

Healthy linguistic Diet!

- **READING and Resources**

- <https://sites.google.com/site/cambiling/home>

- **Languages Society and Policy**

Tsimpli, M.I, 2017, **Multilingual education for multilingual speakers**, Languages, Society and Policy.

Thomas Bak and Dina Mehmedbegovic, 2017, **Healthy linguistic diet: the value of linguistic diversity and language learning across the lifespan.**

Bernadette Holmes, 2017, **Global Britain requires more and better languages skills.**

Bialystok, E. 2009) **Bilingualism: The good, the bad, and the indifferent.** Bilingualism: Language and Cognition, 12(1), 3-11. doi: 10.1017/S1366728908003477