

## THE INFLUENCE OF BILINGUALISM IN COGNITION OF THE WORLD AND INTELLIGENCE

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**Abstract.** *One of the most essential aspects of self-development and world cognition of a child is language acquisition. Sometimes children may acquire two languages simultaneously. The question is does it have any drawbacks or is it useful for children to cognate the world. The present thesis summarizes some scholars' opinions about being bilingual and its effect on intelligence of kids from the earliest researches till the recent ones.*

**Key words:** *bilingualism, bilingual, unilingual, monolingual, world cognition, language acquiring, intelligence, verbal activity, balanced bilingual.*

First of all what is bilingualism itself and who is a bilingual person. Bilingualism is being able to speak two languages and people with such an ability are called bilinguals. Children may become bilingual either by acquiring two languages at the same time or by learning second language sometime after acquiring their first language. Till nowadays it has been a confusing issue whether using two languages simultaneously in early childhood affect their linguistic abilities or bilingualism enriches the intellect and creates multidimensional view of the world since scholars have made both claims. Research in the first half of this century was guided by the question of whether or not bilingualism has negative effect on intelligence. For instance, as Hakuta Kenji cited in his book about bilingualism (1986), an American psychologist, George Thompson, wrote "There can be no doubt that the child reared in a bilingual environment is handicapped in his language growth (p.14)." In 1966 Macnamara took arithmetic test both from Irish primary schoolchildren whose first language was English and the second one is Irish but in medium level. The problem arithmetic test was expressed in sentences and involved the mediation of language. According to Macnamara (1966) those English-Irish bilingual infants were eleven month behind from the unilingual ones who are unilingual in Irish. One another negative idea is met in a study conducted by Tsushima and Hogan. These researchers (1975) reported that middle class Japanese-English bilinguals performed rather low level than a unilingual control group on measures of verbal and academic skills. The bilingual and unilingual groups in this study were matched on non-verbal ability. Only mothers of those bilingual children were born and brought up in the United States while both parents of unilingual participants were originally from there. However there were no information about their degree of bilingualism. So we can see that some earlier studies didn't involve balanced bilinguals and it causes negative idea as bilingualism might affect cognitive and scholastic progress.

On the other hand, some researches tried to prove advantages of bilingualism. As an example, Canadian researchers Elizabeth Peal and Wallace Lambert took test in order to compare I.Q levels of bilingual and unilingual schoolchildren. Their participants were ten year old "balanced" bilinguals whose degree of competence both in French and English languages are similar in Montreal. The group of balanced bilinguals showed a higher level of non-verbal intelligence than the controlled unilingual

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one. Peal and Lambert believed that a bilingual teenager could enjoy experience in two cultures which was essential for concept formation and mental flexibility (Peal & Lambert, 1962).

Other studies, carried out by Ben-Zeev with African-English bilinguals also showed that children who acquired two languages might have positive aspects of cognitive flexibility. According to Ben-Zeev (1972) bilingual group had, a more "flexible manipulation of the linguistic code" in concrete thinking process.

Researches of new century have also proved advantages of being bilingual in world cognition and intelligence. For instance, Raluca Baraac and Ellen Bialystock held a research on bilingual effects on cognitive and linguistic development in 2012. They chose 104 six year old bilingual children belonging to four groups (English monolinguals, Chinese-English bilinguals, French-English bilinguals, Spanish-English bilinguals). They were compared on three verbal tasks and one nonverbal executive control task to examine the generality of the bilingual effects on development. Bilingual groups differed in degree of similarity between languages, cultural background, and language of schooling. They have argued that On , all bilingual groups performed similarly and showed much more better results than monolinguals (Baraac & Bialystock, 2012).

According to another supporter of bilingualism, Alexandra Mirica (2015), bilingual children can communicate well orally and in writing, in both languages. A bilingual child actually communicates in their natural language better than a monolingual one. Learning two languages early increases cognitive abilities of the child. She also mentioned that bilingualism helps the brain to keep away from the aging process and even can delay the danger of Alzheimer's disease.

Studying these works I come into conclusion that there were some wrong opinions about bilingualism like a child who learned two languages simultaneously were in lack of intelligence and confused the two languages in earlier studies on this matter. However there were some methodological defects in their tests. And the promoters of bilingualism as Peal and Lambert, Ben-Zeev and some recent researchers demonstrated positive sides of it. They pointed out that acquiring or learning two languages at the same time enriches the intellect of children and has a good influence in their cognition of the world. Thus many linguists feel that knowing a second language actually benefits a child's cognitive development.

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