

# Bilingual acquisition

[Linguistics](#), [Language Acquisition](#)



Through various observations and experiences that the public witnessed regarding bilingualism and learning second languages, the people have formed particular beliefs, opinions, and ideologies about language and communication, as well as the nature or characteristics of second language learners and the learning environments they are subjected into.

These beliefs, opinions, and ideologies, even generalizations are extremely significant in shaping the structure or framework of education in terms of bilingualism and second language learning considering the situations of the learners because they provide the academic community with significant information that will help professionals in making well-informed decisions regarding the matter at hand. For instance, people may communicate their thoughts about various teaching strategies that efficiently provide learning opportunities for second language learners that were designed to accomplish the goals and objectives of bilingual education.

Sometimes, the involvement of the public to academic affairs helps in fostering collaborative relationships that further improves the landscape of education. With this in mind, one of the most important issues regarding bilingual education shall be discussed in the remainder of this text, determining how second language learners learn best and identifying how the issue shall be settled for the adaptation of academic institutions under the context of bilingual education.

This particular issue challenges the framework of bilingual education because it criticizes how pedagogical processes designed for second language learners facilitate the transfer of knowledge efficiently and appropriately meeting established goals and objectives of bilingualism.

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Apparently, there had been much debate on the risks, difficulties, and challenges involved during the process of bilingual acquisition due to the perceived results or outcomes from the learning process that do not meet standards, guidelines, goals, and objectives of bilingual education.

For critiques of bilingual acquisition, learning two languages at the same time influences what and how second language learners will learn, particularly grammatical structures and functions. They postulate that there will be learning delays if the pedagogical processes implemented for bilingual education is compared with those applied for monolingual education.

Although critiques have developed an acceptable position that transforms how bilingual education and acquisition is viewed, I believe that thorough investigation on the matter supported by various research studies will support how bilingual education is made efficient by implementing pedagogical processes based on bilingual acquisition. This discourse shall focus on disproving the aforementioned claim about bilingual acquisition and look to support arguments through a series of discussions gained from various reputable and valid sources.

Going over these issues thoroughly and comprehensively is extremely important because understanding how learners will be able to learn through bilingual acquisition matches the landscape of society at present time. GLOBALIZATION AND BILINGUAL EDUCATION I believe that bilingualism is rooted on globalization which initiates worldwide interaction between people from different nations. Globalization facilitates the growth and development of economies, cooperation and sharing between governments and politics, <https://assignbuster.com/bilingual-acquisition/>

unity among cultures, and so on. However, one of the challenges faced by globalization is communication.

For this reason, there had been an impending need in the past to look for means by which interaction among nations was to be facilitated by discovering communication strategies and techniques. Under these pretexts, bilingual education was developed and its foundation fortified in order to cultivate the aims and objectives of globalization. (Sonntag, 2003) For these reasons, tackling issues that either shape or debunk bilingual education is severely important because its results or outcomes instantly affect the situations that society will consequently experience.

By realizing the advantages and disadvantages, strengths and weaknesses, nature and features of bilingual education society will become aware of its importance in developing the landscape of our world based on the demands and concerns of our society at present time. We shall be able to make valuable decisions on how we are to develop and improve education, particularly bilingual education, in order for people to obtain comprehensive and essential knowledge and skills to become productive and indispensable members of society. ANSWERING CHALLENGES TO BILINGUAL ACQUISITION

The primary critique towards bilingual acquisition constitutes tendencies that impede learning and education rather than foster it in children. The critique hypothesis has something to do with how the process of simultaneously learning two languages might affect how learners will understand and apply grammatical rules and structures during communication. This concern was focused on the possibility that learners might confuse the grammatical

structure of one language with the grammatical structure of another developing inefficient and erroneous language use and communication.

However, several research studies have proved that this argument or hypothesis is not true. Two research studies which were conducted to determine how early exposure to the target language of learning influences learning development and capabilities. These two studies revealed that early exposure to the target language does indeed strengthen the foundations of language learning and is more likely to exhibit positive results or outcomes. The first study conducted by Newport (1990) focused on proving the influence of maturational constraints in learning the American Sign Language or ASL.

The second study by Mayberry, Lock, and Kazmi (2002) was centered on comparing the task performances between learners who had no early experiences of the target signed and spoken languages and those who experienced learning situations for the purpose of obtaining knowledge and skills on the target signed and spoken languages. Both studies have revealed that exposure to the target language, whether it be signed or spoken, is more likely to contribute to advanced development of linguistic capabilities later in life despite differences on the level of maturity exhibited by children as compared to adults.

This particular conclusions prove how exposing children with the target language early on is important in helping build a strong foundation for linguistic learning and capabilities that shall materialize until adulthood. Caruthers, Laurence, & Stich (2005) talked about how the competencies and capabilities of children are often undermined. What some people fail to

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realize, especially critiques of bilingual acquisition in children, is how this specific population as young as they are, are able to exhibit linguistic competence that is comparable to the knowledge and skills obtained by adults.

By obtaining evidences from the poverty of stimulus argument and facts gained from psycholinguistic investigations on the language and communication skills of children, Caruthers, Laurence, & Stich (2005) proved that children are similarly capable of achieving competence in linguistics in the same way that adults do. In this particular study, children were described to be capable of looking beyond their experiences and determine the differences between languages used in various settings and situations.

Moreover, the language input that children obtain from learning serve as guides for them in order to distinguish between their native language and the target language even if the nature of the input does not match their previous experiences. This means that children are naturally capable of learning second languages by looking beyond their previous experiences and native language, and distinguishing the second language through symbolisms and interpretations.

In previous discussions, the innate learning capabilities of children were explored in order to emphasize how children are able to learn two languages efficiently despite differences in language or grammar structures between the learner's native language and the target language. This argument was supported by research studies conducted by Newport (1990), Mayberry, Lock, & Kazmi (2002), and Caruthers, Laurence, & Stich (2005) which

support the hypothesis that there is no learning gaps between children and adults.

Exposure to the target language at an early age does in fact establish continuity to a child's learning competence towards adulthood. This particular idea dismisses the previous argument stated to critique bilingual acquisition which states that simultaneous language learning will cause developmental delays in language, because the process results to the opposite. Studies have confirmed that early exposure leads to impressive competence on language in later life.

Supporting these arguments were the claims revealed about the innate characteristics of children who are able to perceive different languages despite their previous experiences from their native language. Children have been said to be naturally perceptive who can distinguish the differences between various languages simply because they do not relate their earlier experiences and their native language with a second or foreign language.

This particular finding also dismisses the arguments presented against bilingual acquisition that relates the simultaneous learning of second languages to confusion regarding grammar usage or conflicts between the native language and the target language which leads to poor communication among children who were believed to be incapable of distinguishing grammatical and structural differences among various languages. In Ng & Wigglesworth's (2007) discussions on bilingualism and language acquisition, they dismiss assumptions on the child's innate capabilities as determinants of bilingual competence.

For Ng & Wigglesworth (2007), bilingual competence exhibited by children is influenced by external factors independent of the child. Therefore, assumptions that children may not be able to handle second language learning because of their inability to distinguish between grammatical forms and structures exhibited by two different languages are incoherent simply because it was based on a limited construct which does not consider all the factors and aspects involved in the process.

According to Ng & Wigglesworth (2007), the efficiency and frequency of interaction influences how language, particularly a second language, is acquired or learned. This means that although learning is generally known to be influenced by personality, self-motivation, and innate characteristics, the quality of instruction or interaction and the frequency by which instruction or interaction take place affects the bilingual competence of children.

Therefore, if some people argue that bilingual acquisition might not be the best strategies in the transfer of language and communication skills, we say, based on Ng & Wigglesworth's (2007) illustrations that the feared or perceived outcomes of bilingual acquisition – that is, conflicts on grammatical forms and structures between the first and the second language – may be prevented by focusing on developing a strong foundation that shall stand by bilingual education. This means that the success of learning and bilingual acquisition is dependent therefore on how language is taught and learned.

Pressly & McCormick's (2006) discussions on bilingualism and cognitive development support Ng & Wigglesworth's (2007) arguments. For Pressly & McCormick (2006), enhancing the bilingual or linguistic competencies of

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second language learners is dependent on the methods of instruction. Moreover, in several studies comparing bilingual and monolingual students, it has been found out that the awareness of bilingual students that they obtained from their exposure to two different languages contributed to their cognitive development, and thus, helped in letting them differentiate grammatical structures between both languages.

**CONCLUSION** From previous discussions, we have found out that perceptions regarding flaws of bilingual acquisition are annulable. This is because evidences from research studies have pointed out that the innate capabilities of children, the external factors that contribute to bilingual acquisition, and the comparison between bilingual and monolingual learners, prove that children should not be undermined by supposing they will not be able to handle the process of acquiring two languages simultaneously.

These findings imply that academic institutions should focus on strengthening the quality of bilingual education in order to further the cognitive growth and development of bilingual learners. Further research studies should focus on how bilingual education is to be transformed in order to meet high standards and guidelines of second language learning and linguistic competence that are not only precursors to personal growth and development and nation-building through productiveness, but also in meeting the demands of a globalized and multicultural society that relies so much on communication and interaction.

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