

Cultural psychology bilingualism and its effect to emotional regulation research ...

[Education](#), [Discipline](#)



Psychology

- Introduction

- Bilingualism has been defined variously as the ability to converse or speak and understand more than one language. In a stricter sense, bilingualism implies the ability to speak two languages though multilingual speakers, i. e. those who speak and understand more than two languages are often referred to as bilinguals. In recent years especially due to the world reaching the pinnacle of globalization where there is virtual interconnectedness of one end to the other, bilingualism has become more of a norm rather than an exception. The knowledge and expertise in more than one language has been viewed as a tool of survival in an increasingly dynamic multilingual world. Such views have thus swayed many people around the world to learn and master more than one language so as to have a cutting edge especially in the job market. Parents are heavily investing in their children prodding them to learn another language beyond their mother tongue while pressuring teachers as well as schools to introduce exotic languages in their curricula. This is why in schools around the world today, from Africa to Asia, from Europe to Latin America and from North America to the Australian sub continent, more than one language is taught. Code changing, where one switches from one language to another has become prevalent. On the other hand, emotional regulation has become adversely affected since the globalization age kicked in. what has brought this breakdown in emotional has been a subject of heated arguments, discussions and speculation in the academic arena as well as in the public domain.

- Problems Statement

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- As earlier explained, bilingualism involves the ability of an individual to converse in more than one language which is often referred to as multilingualism if it exceeds two languages though bilingualism has been the most widely used terminology. In a multilingual, multicultural world the only sure way to communicate with neighbors, business partners, schoolmates, colleagues among many other numerous people who one interacts on a day to day basis. It has thus prompted schools to review their curricula introducing foreign languages so as to prepare their students for the world ahead. With this new aspect of society, emotional regulation has been adversely affected as generations who go through this bilingual system of learning are impacted negatively on their emotional regulation and regulatory mechanisms. Various scholars have attempted to explain emotional regulation and what effects as well as affects it within various sub-fields of psychology as well as sociology. Various theories have been advanced on this frontage. Lamentably however, consideration has not been put to look at the effect that bilingualism has on emotional regulation and where it has been undertaken it has largely shied off from particular case studies. Due to this a more robust study has been lacking to explain the effect of bilingualism on emotional regulation.

- Emotional regulation is a factor being measured for this study whether or not bilingualism will constitute an impact. Emotional regulation is divided into two sub-criteria. First is context of emotion, which is a complex phenomena that entails the constellation of cognitive appraisal, physiological arousal and expressive activity that are subjective to situational demands, behavioral events and cultural rules (Thompson & Calkins, 1996). The second

criterion is about regulation, which is primarily a control mechanism that follows a process of monitoring, promulgation and enforcement of significant rules. In combination, emotional regulation can be regarded as complex phenomenon that constitutes a strategy that originates from an infant's effort to overcome stress by means of self-soothing (Thompson & Calkins, 1996). Children normally integrate self-regulating strategy into their network of behavioral patterns in order to sustain a personal well-being.

- Literature Review

- Bilingualism is the ability to speak and understand more than one language (Harding-Esch; Riley, 2010). Quoting from the Webster dictionary (1961), Hames and Blanc describe bilingual as the ability to speak two languages with the fluency of a native speaker. They also define bilingualism as the constant use of more than one language (Blanc; Hamers, 2000). On the other hand, emotional regulation is defined as the ability of a person to regulate his emotional self often due to the socio cultural background as well as environment. This cultural connection of emotional regulation as various scholars have such as Yuri Miyamoto and Xiaoming Ma found out is manifest in the fact that there are differences in emotional regulation in people of diverse cultures.

- Several researchers, practitioners as well as renowned authors have written expansively on the subject of language behavior. However, four key authors raise their heads above when it comes to their explanation of bilingual effects even though they still fail to deeply expound on the matter. These researchers are Yuri Miyamoto, Xiaoming Ma, Josiane Hames and Michel Blanc. The key puzzle behind language, a factor that has been baffling

psychologists in the last decade of the 20th century as well as the 21st century has been due to the multiple functions of language. This is because language is at the very centre of culture. Language can only be used to express its functions and can never supersede such functions which are communication (the social aspect of language) and cognitive (the psychological aspect of language). These functional levels in turn comprise of two processing levels; the formal level where surface symbols are represented and expressed as well as the functional where the meanings are represented and expressed (Gross, 1998; Miyamoto).

- A language anywhere in the world has been used to regulate emotions. This is done through three ways of emotional regulation, namely, up-regulation, maintenance and down-regulation. This is expressed within the cultural context of individuals. Where an individual comes from a given place, his/her emotional regulation may differ comparatively with other individuals from another given area. This is theoretically elaborated through cognitive theories where other than the formal representation of language, a culture shapes the emotional aspects of the language user.

- Objectives and Research Questions

- The broad objective of this study is to find whether bilingualism has any effect on emotional regulation among school going children.

- The effect of bilingualism on emotional regulation

- The extent to which bilingualism affects emotional regulation

- Type of Study

- In order to determine whether bilingualism has an adverse effect on emotional regulation among school children, a correlational approach will be

used determining whether the identified independent and dependent variables has a positive correlation. This means the both variables will be measured for its strong positive correlation whether both variables increases or decreases together. Negative correlation on the other hand will measure a correlation coefficient indicating whether the increase in one variable will result to a decrease to another. Lastly, no correlation will be determined primarily to determine whether the identified independent and dependent variables will show a zero coefficient, which means both variables does not affect one another.

- Methodology

- Type of Study - The most appropriate method to employ in this study is the quantitative approach. Since variables will be used to measure results, it is only fitting that qualitative model will be used. In addition the correlational type of study generally calls for numerical measurement, which the quantitative method offers a more accurate results for discussion. To tie up the correlational type of study (relationship) and quantitative approach, an experimental method will be used to obtain raw data in which the dependent and independent variables will be identified from. The experiment will have samples consisting of 100 students from two middle schools. The samples will be divided into two segments, 50% will target students in a school where secondary language is not mandated to be part of the curriculum while the other 50% of the samples will come from a school with a secondary language curriculum. The experiment will be performed by means of manipulating the independent variable. The rationale for choosing experimental method is that it is delivers a more accurate quantitative data that will prove the

relationship between the identified IV and DV. Naturalistic observation will also be used as a secondary method only to record additional variable data. This approach will also enable the research to view the variables in its natural settings without an apparent interference.

- Independent Variable – By definition IV is the factor being manipulated to determine effect. For this study, bilingualism will be independent variable because of its characteristic that can be manipulated according to the research design. For example to determine emotional regulation among children, bilingualism will be tested through observation of students that are trained in school to speak dual language and those that are only taught to speak the mother tongue.

- Dependent Variable – It is defined as an output measure in which the changes caused by the independent variable is being measured. For this study, the dependent variable will be the emotional regulation. It is apparent that emotional regulation is the expected outcome for this study in which its effect is determined by the identified independent variable. For this study, bilingualism is being hypothesized as a causing factor to emotional regulation. Therefore, its effects should be measured to conclude if bilingualism is indeed an affecting factor.

- Scope and Limitation of the Study

- The study will focus on school going children who are bilingual. Among the variables that the study considers among these school going children, age, and gender will be of primary important. Given the scope of the study, the findings cannot be generalized beyond school going children since school going children were the objects under study.

- Procedure – IV and DV will be operationalized by means of performing an experiment to samples. In addition, biases will also be eliminated through randomization because one of the weaknesses of research studies is the prevalence of bias conclusion generated by selective sampling. There are three steps in outlined in operationalizing the identified variables.
- First, is identifying the main concept of the study being measured. In this case, the emotional regulation effect of bilingualism.
- Second, is determining the quantitative measurement to be applied to the concept. For this study, effects can be measured by analyzing results of the pre-experimental design. For example, the participants will be divided into two groups. One will be the controlled group; while the other is will be observed in a replicated environment.
- Lastly, the method used to obtain relative data is through a pre and post experimental test to be performed in the participants.
- Experimental Procedure – The participants will consist of 100 middle school children where 50% are from a school that teaches a second language, while the other half are children coming from school with no mandatory second language curriculum. Group A (dual language group) and group B (single language group) will watch an emotionally stimulating video clips depicting the different types of human emotions on a separate occasion. The first set of clips will be in group A's native language to be followed by a set of clips in second language. Observers will have an evaluation checklist with a rating scale of one to five. The children will be observed as they watch the clip and each response listed in the evaluation sheet will be rated as: 1-no effect, 2-somewhat not affected, 3-neutral, 4-somewhat affected and 5-being highly

emotionally affected. The clips will be taken from cartoon shows and movies to enable interest among the children. The tabulated scores from the evaluation sheet will be analyzed to see if the experiment has rendered a desired result, if not a second test will be performed.

- Operational procedure for DV – The first phase of the experiment focuses on determining the emotional responses of the children after watching the video clips. However, to determine whether the experiment can prove that bilingualism has a profound effect to emotional regulation, a separate experiment will be conducted to determine such effect. The first step is to divide the samples again two groups. Group A (dual language) and Group B (single language), Each group will be given a task on the computer. Those computers that the samples will use are intended to have a very low technical specification allowing it to hang in the middle of the tasks. The objective here is to observe how the samples will react to the situation that confers frustration. To intensify the experiment the samples will be given a series of tasks that are time restrained. Adding time pressure as a factor will quickly insinuate frustration among the samples. The level of frustration, manner of reacting and use of language at the very moment of frustration will be observed and evaluated using the scale of one to ten. The evaluators will mark the evaluation sheet per group and mark 1-being not affected at all, 2-being somewhat not affected, 3-neutral, 4-somewhat affected and 5-being highly affected. In addition, behavioral responses will also be noted in the evaluation to determine the type of behavior and which sort of language is used when dealing with a frustrating situation.

- Hypothesis

- The purpose of a hypothesis is to study explanations for certain facts and guide in investigation of others (Kerlinger, 1964; Mwangi, 2005). From the above literature review, the research was guided by the following hypothesis:

- Bilingualism positively effects emotional regulation among school going children.

- Expected Results

- Children tend to regulate their emotions when speaking in second language than in native tongue. For instance, uttering swear words in native language impose greater emotional force because of the child's emotional attachment to their native tongue. Swearing for kids in a native language constitutes a greater emotional force because they can greatly comprehend the contextual meaning of the words when spoken in native tongue. In contrast to the second language, children are less emotionally attached to the contextual meaning imposed by the second language because their early exposure to their native language promotes heightened emotionality. In addition, the first language co-evolves with emotional regulation perceived at an early age unlike second language, which is often used to conceal emotional conveyance allowing it to be regulated at any given point.

- Conclusion

- One of the problems that most kids are facing at school and at home is the manner of behaving or acting in front of adults or another people. The knowledge of a second language allows children to regulate their emotion. The commonality among children is the large disparity in knowledge of emotional word vocabulary. Several symptoms can be perceived among

children with weaker second language vocabulary and some of them are the apparent occurrences of passivity, withdrawal and daydreaming. For children speaking in a native language and eventually exposed to an environment where an unfamiliar language is persistent, the effects of none emotion vocabulary ability is emotional regulation.

- Recommendation

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