

A closer look on bilingualism

Experience, Human Nature



Bilingualism is not uncommon to many people and in many parts of the world. As long as there are people who migrate from far off countries to different places in the world, bilingualism will exist, and prosper.

This has become a bigger reality in today's world where different countries are brought closer by technology, and globalization has become commonplace, especially to more prosperous and industrialized countries where migrants tend to gather.

Hence, cultures become interrelated and languages are no longer limited to their areas of origin. In fact, it is normal for many people to use two languages, or even more, in the course of day-to-day living, some by choice and some by necessity.

As evidenced by studies and observation made by scientists and educators, bi- or multilingualism exists because humans are not limited to learn a single language in the course of his/her lifetime.

Although there were no studies that have determined how many languages a person can learn in his/her lifetime, there was no question that it could be done, given the relative ease by which children learn languages.

The brains of a human being hold endless possibilities. It is not a jug that has limited capacity; it can absorb so much more information (Alladina 6). Hence, it is not surprising that more and more people are learning and making use of different languages.

It is not uncommon to see a person who makes use of a different language at home, in school or in business, a particular language is used depending on the appropriate situation.

As we attempt to explore different facets of bilingualism, it would be most logical to explain briefly the meaning of bilingualism and how it is commonly perceived in order to offer a better understanding as to why it has such great impact on the society.

More importantly, this paper will deal on the overall effects of bilingualism on children, adults and families, as well as the influences of schools, its systems, and society at large to people who are bilingual, and vice versa.

We shall also delve on the choices that different bilingual-background families have or have made with regard to rearing their children as bilingual or monolingual, and the subsequent effects of these choices.

We shall shed light on these concerns, partly, by going through the personal experiences of three individuals, with different degrees of bilingualism, who were interviewed exclusively for this paper.

We shall examine how bilingualism played a part in their lives. Their bilingualism resulted from different circumstances surrounding them as they were growing up that were mainly rooted from their families.

For instance, the first interviewee and her parents migrated to Norway from Pakistan, where she was actually born and raised until she was eight years old, the second one has parents whose mother tongues were different from each other, while the last interviewee was adopted from Colombia when she was eight years old.