

# "RESEARCH-BASED TRANSFORMATION OF TEACHER EDUCATION: TRADITION AS A BASIS FOR INNOVATION"

## International Conference on Teacher Education

### BILINGUALISM: OPPORTUNITY TO ENRICH LANGUAGE LEARNING ABILITY

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***Abstract.** This article deals with the issues of bilingualism and some obstacles which can be faced by individuals in language learning and using processes. Some strategies for teaching bilingual students another foreign language are put forward. It highlights the cognitive, social, and economic features of being fluent in more than one language, as well as the difficulties that come with maintaining proficiency in multiple languages. Furthermore, the article illustrates one bilingual group students social experience in language learning journey.*

***Keywords:** language learning, bilingualism, problem-solving skill, multilingual, age-related.*

#### **Introduction**

Today being bilingual or multilingual and the ability to communicate in more than one language can provide cognitive, social, and economic benefits that are highly sought after in our globalized society. However, achieving fluency in multiple languages is not without its challenges. This article will discuss the advantages and challenges of being bilingual or multilingual, highlighting the benefits of language proficiency and the difficulties that come with maintaining it.

Studies have been conducted on the advantages and disadvantages of bilingual and multilingual individuals. One of the most significant benefits of being bilingual or multilingual is the cognitive advantage. According to a study conducted by the University of Edinburgh, bilingual individuals have better executive functioning and faster cognitive processing compared to monolingual counterparts [Bialystok et al., 2012]. Therefore, being bilingual or multilingual helps individuals develop better problem-solving skills, mental flexibility, and creativity.

Research has shown that bilingualism and multilingualism can have positive effects on cognitive abilities, such as improved problem-solving skills and increased creativity. Additionally, being able to speak multiple languages can open up job opportunities in fields such as translation, international business, and diplomacy. Furthermore, being bilingual or multilingual can enhance cultural understanding and facilitate communication with people from different backgrounds.

Moreover, bilingualism is believed to protect against age-related cognitive decline and could delay the onset of diseases such as Alzheimer's and dementia

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[Alladi et al., 2013]. Additionally, bilingual individuals have better communication skills, which enables them to connect with people from different cultures, and communicate effectively in social and professional settings.

However, being bilingual or multilingual also poses some challenges. One of the significant obstacles faced by bilingual individuals is code-switching. Code-switching refers to the ability to switch between two languages, which can be both an advantage but also a disadvantage.

While it can help individuals express themselves more efficiently, it can also lead to confusion and misunderstanding in communication, especially in social and professional settings [Li, 2019].

Another challenge faced by bilingual or multilingual individuals is language dominance. Individuals may sometimes experience difficulties in determining which language to use in specific situations or when communicating with specific people. For instance, when talking to a bilingual friend, an individual may experience difficulties in determining which language to use.

**Discussion** The benefits of being bilingual or multilingual are numerous and have significant implications across various domains, including employment, cognitive abilities, intercultural awareness, and societal integration. However, the challenges faced by bilingual or multilingual individuals cannot be overlooked, including language attrition, confusion in communication, and difficulties in language usage in different contexts.

**Social Experiment** A group of students were chosen for experiment. As bilingual students studying English and Russian, they have experienced both the benefits and challenges of being bilingual. Being able to speak more than one language has allowed them to interact with people from different cultures, improved their academic writing, and boosted their confidence in communicating with others. However, they have also experienced the challenges of code-switching, especially when communicating with people who speak only one of the two languages.

**Results** Ultimately, the benefits of bilingualism or multilingualism appear to outweigh their challenges, with individuals experiencing an increased advantage in cognitive abilities, intercultural understanding, and employment opportunities. Therefore, it is essential to encourage individuals to embrace and maintain their linguistic proficiency in multiple languages and communities, promoting linguistic diversity and acceptance across different cultures.

In conclusion, being bilingual or multilingual has many advantages. It not only improves cognitive functioning and communication skills but also provides numerous



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social and professional opportunities. Although bilingualism presents certain challenges, such as code-switching and language dominance, these obstacles can be overcome through practice and exposure to different languages. Being able to speak more than one language is a valuable asset that can help individuals succeed in a globalized world. Overall, while being bilingual or multilingual can provide many benefits, it also poses challenges that should be considered. As the world continues to become more interconnected, the ability to speak multiple languages is likely to become even more valuable.

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