



An Investigation of Bilingualism

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Abstract

The present article deals with some facts about the investigation of bilingualism. It also studies the revealing of the forms and principles of occurrence of historical factors in the language and provides a short insight into the history and setting the problem. The attitude of an individual towards reality phenomena such as his/her way of clothing, his/her behavior, his/her way of speaking, etc. demonstrate the nation he/she represents. It is stated in the research that it is not difficult for human beings to be bilingual. Growing world can demonstrate itself by its people using two, three, or more languages. The research also touches upon the fact that there exist many kinds and degrees of bilingualism and bilingual situations. The article highlights the cultural factors and their effects in bilingualism as well. The ways of defining common and distinguishing features of expressing the interrelation factors in multi-system languages are investigated in the research too. Accordingly, where many cultures meet, bilingualism may be observed there. The mutual influence of two languages may mostly be occurred in the communication process. The article states the importance of language diversity and to promote native language learning and bilingualism. The article also throws light upon the clarification of political issue of bilingualism through huge empires. The presence of bilingualism may sometimes be meant as threaten the existence of the old ones.

Keywords: language, bilingualism, interrelation, culture, speech, written, verbal, communication

INTRODUCTION

To know a language means that one can speak to others, and may be understood by others who know that language. Producing sounds in order to signify definite meanings and to understand or interpret the sounds uttered by others are considered to be the ability of a human. Language may be used by any healthy born human and the capacity of knowing a language is not miracle. Even an infant is believed to be proficient at speaking and understanding as its parents. The simplest conversation is carried out by profound knowledge, and unfortunately, most speakers are not aware of this.

Knowing a language means knowing what sounds are in that language and what sounds are not. This unconscious knowledge is revealed by the way speakers of one language pronounce words from another language.

Language is one of the ways that people are always interested in. The evolution of language, its usage in speech, how it was created, by whom it was created, and other kinds of questions have always been investigated by various linguists. Though it is not studied in a formal way by all, everyone has any thoughts about it. All of these make the language to be in the central place in our everyday life. N. Fairclough writes: "Critical awareness of language arises within the normal ways people reflect on their lives as part of their lives". (Fairclough 1999, p.73). The scientist claims that for understanding the society and the people living in it is very crucial from distinguishing its functions. It is noteworthy to stress that critical awareness is not considered to be paid attention to. The people become more accomplished or more intelligent because of these reasons.

SETTING AND HISTORICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE LANGUAGE

Language is not considered to be a biological function of a man. It is not arguable that every individual is predestined to talk. E.Sapir relates it due to the circumstances of the nature. He argues that every individual talks because the society that he lives leads him to its traditions (Sapir 1971, p.4). Every health born individual in society is considered to talk if it survives. It is a real fact that if he is removed from the society and not to be surrounded by any speaking creature then whether it can speak or not is arguable. If a new-born baby is taken away from the society environment, his art of walking, of course, will develop in his environment, but his speech will be completely at variance with the speech of his native environment.

There are different approaches to the meaning of bilingualism. According to the Webster's dictionary a person using or able to use two languages with equal fluency is called a bilingual man (Gove 1961). The origin of the word is from Latin *bilinguis*, from *bi* + *lingua* from *tongue*. The term contrasts with *monolingual*. There are many kinds and degrees of bilingualism and bilingual situations which exist. Crystal writes: "Different assumptions about the degree of proficiency are reflected by definitions of bilingualism. Being bilingual, people need to achieve some assumptions about the degree of proficiency. Then they are qualified as bilingual. A bilingual who has the commands of both languages are called a balanced bilingual (Crystal 2006, p.39).

Trask distinguishes the term "bilingual" as the ability of speaking two languages. In modern western society, the ability of speaking two languages is considered to be a remarkable achievement. It is seen particularly in English speaking countries (Trask 2007, p.98). In the opinion of Bloomfield bilingualism is the native-like control of two languages (Bloomfield 1935, p.100).

There exist other opinions about bilingualism. For example, P.Spolky writes: "Bilingualism means the functional ability of someone in a second language. This may differ from a limited ability in one or more domains, to very strong form of command of both languages. It is sometimes called *balanced bilingualism*." (Spolsky 1998, p.34)

According to the opinions of some scientists bilingualism covers a multidimensional continuum, but it reduces some linguistic structure and skills. M.Paradis is one of these scientists (Paradis 1978, p.xi). Some other scientists such as A.Mohanty reduce the definition of bilingualism to its social-communicative dimension. He writes: "Bilingual

people or communities are those with an ability to meet the communicative demands of the self and the society in their normal functioning in two or more languages in their interaction with other speakers of any or all of these languages.” (Mohanty 1994, p.13)

Some recent definitions refer to some specific characteristics of the bilingual. A bilingual speaker is considered to be more than the sum of two monolinguals in the sense that the bilingual should develop some unique language behavior by F.Grosjean (Grosjean 1985, pp.467-477). Ludi (1986) supports this idea. He writes: “Bilinguality is more than an addition of two monolingual competences, but an extreme form of polylectality (Josiane and Michel 2004, p.14).

As bilingualism is related to the people’s ability of switching between two language systems, its cognitive side needs to be underlined. Zelasko and Antunez write that the brains of bilinguals have been proved to be very active and flexible (Zelasko and Antunez 2000, p.45). The following has been distinguished relating to the cognitive ability of a bilingual:

1. They understand math concepts and solve word problems more easily than others (Zelasko and Antunez 2000);
2. They have strong thinking skills (Kessler and Quinn 1980);
3. They can use logic (Bialystok and Majumder 2011);
4. They can focus, remember and make decisions easier than monolinguals;
5. They are able to learn more languages (Jessner 2008).
6. One interesting approach comes from Dreifus (2011) that bilingualism may delay the onset of Alzheimer’s disease.

THE SCOPE OF STUDY

The early form of bilingualism is meant to have started when young children begin hearing not just one language but two more. The languages learnt by children may be heard from their birth, or the study of a second language may start at a later age. It is noteworthy to stress that the first bilingual process of children begin with their first language acquisition (abbreviated form BFLA) (Houwer 1990, 2009; Meisel 1989, pp.13-40). BFLA means the children having two first languages. The term “two first languages” mean Language A (LA) and Language Alpha (La). Both of these kinds of languages are spoken at home by people. It means that people namely children are not meant to have chronologically first or second language. First of all, they are grown up with just a single language (Language 1 or L 1), and they are possible to hear a second language (Language 2 or L2) at a later age. It is called the process of early second language acquisition or ESLA (Houwer, 1990, p.58). So, ESLA children are believed to hear just one language at home (L1), and meet the L2 outside the home such as in kindergartens, daycare centers, etc. The L 1 language is considered to be a minority language.

The second kinds of bilingualism are distinguished as subtractive bilingualism and additive bilingualism. The first one namely subtractive bilingualism means the perception of acquisition of L2 as detrimental to an individual’s L1. The detrimental process includes the increased cognitive load due to L2 acquisition which is believed to decrease the competence in users’ L1. F. Y. Veysally writes: “The bilingualism namely the

acquisition of the second language should not decrease the competence in users' L1" (Veysally). Lambert writes: "This process is found to be experienced by minority groups, especially when they are not schooled in their L1 (Lambert 1975, pp.55-83). Therefore, the L2's frequent usage the L1's competence and culture may be observed to be replaced by the L2.

Every language is heard by any human before he/she was born. It means that healthy born babies can hear things in their mother's womb before they are born. D.Crystal claims that the first things that babies hear their mothers' heartbeat, blood sloshing through the veins of the body, tummy-rumbles, and surely, the voice of the mother. According to the experiment that was carried out by the researchers D.Crystal writes: "They put headphones on the tiny ears and play some sounds such as a barking dog, or a man's voice, a woman's voice, etc. They also put a teat into the baby's mouth and wire it up to a counter. Firstly the baby sucks away at a steady rate. But when the dog's bark is heard, or the man's or the woman's sound is heard, it began sucking a bit and then slows down. When the baby hears its mother's voice, it sucks like crazy as it recognizes its voice. The experiment was carried out after the baby was born after a few hours old. People began to learn when they are still babies. They do not know the meaning of the words, but they listen and try to understand what is going on around" (Crystal 2011, p.12).

METHODOLOGY

It is noteworthy to stress that for being bilingual it is necessary to master it with corespondence of native language. It is necessary to arrange the process in a more productive way, in order that a native language may not impede, but help to learn a foreign language. It requires examining key problems experienced by some learners in the process of studying, as well as determining the ways to overcome them.

Some scientists as well as investigators try to pay much attention to the problems of bilingualism, particularly, to the interfering impact of native language in learning a foreign language.

Interference in linguistics is a consequence of influence of one language on the other. It is considered to be an interaction of language systems. Its deviations from the norm and system of non-native language takes place as a result of impact of native language. In this case the idea of V.A.Vinogradov in understanding interference to be an interaction of language systems in the context of multilingualism is needed to be stressed. It is an uncontrolled transfer of certain structures or elements of one language to the other one. Such a phenomenon may appear both in the verbal and written speech (Vinogradov, 1990, p.102)

The English language refers to Indio-European languages and it is fleective; though the Azerbaijan language is considered to be agglutinative. The Azerbaijan language is rich in suffixes. As the English language is an analytic one, it lacks some analytic forms than the synthetic forms.

It is difficult to study these two languages not to face the grammatical interference existing in two languages, namely the Azerbaijan and the English languages.

According to Koshevaya in the English language the grammatical category of number is generally supported by the grammatical category of definiteness and indefiniteness. These are introduced by the articles (Koshevaya, 2008, p.34).

It is a known fact that the English nouns differ from the Azerbaijani nouns in number. In this case the articles is needed to be paid attention too. For example, in the English language the indefinite article [*a, (an)*] is not used before the plural nouns such as /Children like to eat ice cream// The definite or the zero article may be used instead. Depending on the absence of grammatical category of definiteness/indefiniteness in the Azerbaijani language, another grammatical form takes place in the English speech of students. The students who forget that some nouns in the English language such as *people- adamlar, police - polis, stairs- pilləkən* and others have only plural forms, the indefinite article is used with these nouns. For example: "*The people have arrived there in some minutes. (Adamlar araya bir neçə dəqiqədən sonra gəlib çıxdılar.)*".

Thus, at various levels of proficiency in the English language the Azerbaijani students differently realize the potentials of interference: typological differences, because of the lack of grammatical category of definiteness / indefiniteness realized by articles, cause the regular interference at the initial stages of bilingualism.

CONCLUSION

The interrelations between languages possess some psychological nature. Fulfilling the functions of a culture bearer and transmitter, language is believed to be a means of realization of communication between the representatives of the same or different nations. Nowadays many people are observed to use two or more languages in society. The ability of an individual or the members of a community using, or speaking two or more languages are named as *bilingualism*.

At present bilingualism is considered to be a main factor in the world. It is noteworthy to state that nearly 5,000 languages are spoken in the world's 200 independent states. Bi- (if not multi-)lingualism is observed in the communication among the people of many countries. According to the statistics by D.Crystal, the two-thirds of the world's children are growing up being bilingual. Again relying on the statistics estimated by D.Crystal nearly 570 million people speak English in the world, and over 41 percent or 235 million are meant to be bilingual in English and some other languages.

According to the statistics of "Multicultural America: A Multimedia Encyclopedia" more than half of the world's population is bilingual or multilingual: "56% of Europeans are bilingual, while 38% of the population in Great Britain, 35% in Canada, and 17% in the United States are bilingual" (Carlos 2013, p.9).

Thus, bilingualism may be meant as a part of our real life. It reveals national mentality and becomes the product and integral part of every nation.

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