



The impact of multilingualism on language learning and teaching in ELT context

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ABSTRACT

This article investigates the impact of multilingualism on language learning and teaching in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT). As globalization reshapes communication dynamics, the growing prevalence of multilingual individuals presents both challenges and opportunities for educators and learners. This study explores how multilingualism affects learners' cognitive processes, motivation, and cultural awareness, ultimately shaping their language acquisition. Additionally, it highlights pedagogical strategies that utilize students' linguistic backgrounds to enhance engagement and foster a deeper understanding of English.

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Ko'p tillilikning tilni o'rganish va ingliz tilini kontekstda o'qitishga ta'siri

Kalit so'zlar:

ko'p tillilik,
til o'rganish,
ingliz tilini o'rgatish (ELT),
kognitiv jarayonlar,
motivatsiya,
madaniy xabardorlik,
pedagogik strategiyalar,
til foni,
talabalarning faolligi

ANNOTATSIYA

Ushbu maqola ingliz tilini o'qitish (ELT) kontekstida ko'p tillilikning til o'rganish va o'qitishga ta'sirini o'rganadi. Globallashuv muloqot dinamikasini o'zgartirar ekan, ko'p tilli odamlarning tobora ko'payib borayotgani o'qituvchilar va talabalar uchun ham qiyinchiliklarni, ham imkoniyatlarni taqdim etadi. Ushbu tadqiqot ko'p tillilik talabalarning kognitiv jarayonlariga, motivatsiyasiga va madaniy ongiga qanday ta'sir qilishini, natijada ularning tilni egallashini shakllantirishini o'rganadi. Bundan tashqari, u faollikni oshirish va ingliz tilini chuqurroq tushunishga yordam berish uchun talabalarning til

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Влияние многоязычия на изучение языков и преподавание английского языка в контексте

АННОТАЦИЯ

Ключевые слова:

многоязычие,
изучение языка,
преподавание
английского языка (ELT),
когнитивные процессы,
мотивация,
культурная
осведомленность,
педагогические стратегии,
языковой фон,
вовлеченность учащихся.

В этой статье исследуется влияние многоязычия на изучение и преподавание языка в контексте преподавания английского языка (ELT). Поскольку глобализация изменяет динамику общения, растущая распространенность многоязычных людей представляет как проблемы, так и возможности для педагогов и учащихся. В этом исследовании изучается, как многоязычие влияет на когнитивные процессы, мотивацию и культурную осведомленность учащихся, в конечном итоге формируя их усвоение языка. Кроме того, в нем освещаются педагогические стратегии, которые используют языковой фон учащихся для повышения вовлеченности и содействия более глубокому пониманию английского языка.

INTRODUCTION

We live in a multilingual world. English serves as the lingua franca for education, trade, and employment, and is an essential skill for anyone wanting to succeed professionally or academically in the 21st century. English offers enormous opportunities, and language policy rightly focuses on how to give more equitable access to high levels of English language proficiency so that these opportunities can be inclusive rather than exclusive, and open to all socioeconomic groups. But English is not enough. [1, 95].

Properly managed language policy can help to ensure that English can be taught effectively and incorporated into society without hurting the first language, culture and local identity of the learners of English. An understanding of English and multilingualism is especially important in an age of increased and rapidly growing international migration. People migrate for many reasons – escaping oppression and war, searching for better opportunities – but the languages that they have access to or aspire to use can greatly influence the pattern of migration and the success with which migrants can integrate and contribute to their host societies. [2, 34]

This underlines the need for a language policy worldwide that provides people with the languages and the language skills that they need both at home and in future global destinations. Education should provide a varied language repertoire and an understanding of which languages we should learn for what purpose. This suggests a language policy that improves the quality of curriculum, teaching, and learning in state education, as well as a policy that helps to position the role of multiple languages in a more positive and protected context.

The reality of the multilingual and multicultural society is that languages overlap and collide. The work on translanguaging and code-switching demonstrates the often-messy practice in our multilingual families, schools, and cities. From this lived experience we need to learn how to prepare people with the language skills they need for a

multilingual society, and how to train people to develop the necessary sensitivity towards the cultural and linguistic needs of their fellow citizens. [3, 61]

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

The role of compulsory education is critical and we need a language education policy which both respects mother tongue heritage and also prepares young people for a globalized world with English as a lingua franca. This has implications for teacher education and curriculum design for state education at both primary and secondary level, and it is clear that more research is needed to discover how to accelerate the development of high-level language proficiency in young people, perhaps with new pedagogical models that avoid the low spoken proficiency outcomes of many current foreign language programs.

Multilingual learners often demonstrate improved cognitive abilities, such as problem-solving and critical thinking skills. This cognitive flexibility can facilitate the process of learning a new language, including English. Translanguaging allows learners to use their entire linguistic repertoire to make sense of new concepts. In ELT, this practice encourages students to draw on their native languages to enhance comprehension and expression in English, promoting deeper engagement with the material.

Multilingualism fosters greater cultural awareness and sensitivity. In an ELT context, teachers can leverage students' diverse backgrounds to create a more inclusive classroom environment, enriching discussions and learning experiences. For multilingual learners, the ability to integrate their linguistic identities into the learning process can boost motivation. When students see their languages as assets rather than barriers, they are more likely to engage actively in learning English.

Multilingual classrooms encourage collaboration among students who share different linguistic backgrounds. Peer interactions can lead to more effective language practice and support systems, enhancing overall learning outcomes. Teachers can adapt their instructional strategies to accommodate the diverse linguistic needs of multilingual learners. This differentiation can include using varied resources, incorporating visual aids, and employing culturally relevant materials. [4, 61]

Multilingual students may experience positive transfer from their first languages to English, especially in areas like vocabulary and grammar. Understanding these transfer processes can help teachers anticipate challenges and leverage strengths. While multilingualism has many benefits, it can also present challenges. Variability in language proficiency levels may affect classroom dynamics, requiring teachers to develop strategies to support all learners effectively. [5, 68]

Educational policies that recognize and support multilingualism can lead to more effective ELT programs. Such policies may include bilingual education models or curricular frameworks that value linguistic diversity. To effectively teach multilingual learners, educators need ongoing professional development focused on multilingual pedagogies. Training can equip teachers with strategies to foster an inclusive environment that values all languages.

We live in an ever more complex globalized world. This globalization has a paradoxical effect on our lives. On the one hand it increases conformity through the power of the market (products, tastes, culture); on the other it leads to ever greater diversity (assertions of local and regional identities, social and cultural conflicts). One

striking feature of globalization is the impact of multilingualism, and the related phenomenon of multiculturalism. [6, 18]

Very few contemporary societies can be considered homogenous; they are increasingly diverse, whether in the languages spoken or in the ways that people live and express themselves (their cultures). Multilingualism – the normal human condition. ‘Speaking two or more languages is the natural way of life for three-quarters of the human race. [This] principle ... has been obscured in parts of Europe as a consequence of colonial history. We urgently need to reassert it, and to implement it in practical ways, for, in the modern world, monolingualism is not a strength but a handicap.’ (David Crystal 2006:409).

In one sense, it might be thought that linguistic diversity is in decline. Some languages are dying out, some are spoken by smaller numbers of people, and there are linguists who believe that the rise of English is accelerating this trend. [7, 28] Despite this, however, one estimate suggests that there are still over 7,000 distinct languages spoken by substantial populations as first or mother tongues, and many more countries than is commonly known need to operate in multiple languages. At the same time, the rise in identity politics across the world appears to be supporting a renewed sense of confidence in and wish to maintain local, regional and national languages.

On being Welsh ‘To be Welsh is an experience. To both be and speak Welsh is a related, more robust experience. Each time we erase one of those options from the world of human experience, we lose an incomprehensibly complex realm of knowledge. We lose a way of thinking about the world. We lose a way of being in our world. For to live with a language is to live as part of an organic, long-developed tradition and identity.’ (Conor Williams 2015).

Multiculturalism is less easy to define and can be a controversial term. If, though, we understand culture in a broad sense as the way that people live their daily lives (the food they eat, the way they dress, their preferred entertainment) and also the way that they see the world, we can say that different cultures coexist but also that cultures become increasingly mixed. Language is an important aspect of this culture – especially as it determines identity. But language and culture are not always identical. [8, 31]

In the new economy not only does technology enable networking across distance but the populations in each locality are increasingly diverse. The flows of population and their impact are greater, and also the types of movement in terms of gender, status, age, and professional category are different from what has been historically the case. Although current migrations can be seen as the continuation of a historical trend of population movement from the country to the city, they also differ significantly in that they are global – multicultural, multilingual – and on an unprecedented scale. [9,14]

Also different are the directions of movement, so that nations whose recent image is of emigration now are solidly nations of immigration. Ireland and Italy are classic cases of this, but there are many others. So while the vast movements of people are highly differentiated, there are some common tendencies, affecting virtually all parts of the globe. In particular, this movement is taking place at an accelerating rate, and it involves many different kinds of population transfer (in terms of timing, motivations, and legal status for example). This was the case even before the current mass migrations from the Middle East and Africa.

The fifth-largest country 'Over the past 15 years, the number of people crossing borders ... has been rising steadily. At the start of the 21st century, one in every 35 people is an international migrant. If they all lived in the same place, it would be the world's fifth-largest country.' (BBC News Online 2009). Migration also has a significant impact on general policy – both the idea of migration as well as its rate and numbers provoke political responses, from planning and integration policies to rejection and hostility. This has become a major challenge in Europe since 2012, but it is not limited to Europe. [10, 47]

Thus while the period of the consolidation of nation states involved making internal cultural patterns homogenous, the combined effects of the Age of Migration with the Information Age, both motivated by the new economy, have produced more communication-rich workplaces and communities, linked across multilingual spaces and themselves more communication-dependent and multilingual. These changes are having a major impact on societies more generally.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the impact of multilingualism on language learning and teaching in the English Language Teaching (ELT) context is profound and transformative. It enhances cognitive skills, fosters cultural awareness, and encourages a more inclusive classroom environment. By embracing translanguaging practices, educators can leverage students' linguistic repertoires to deepen understanding and engagement with English.

Moreover, multilingualism promotes collaboration among peers, allowing for richer interactions and shared learning experiences. While it presents certain challenges, such as varying proficiency levels, these can be addressed through differentiated instruction and targeted support strategies.

Ultimately, recognizing and valuing multilingualism in ELT not only enriches the learning experience but also prepares students to thrive in a globalized world. By adopting policies and practices that celebrate linguistic diversity, educators can create dynamic, effective, and inclusive language learning environments that benefit all learners.

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