

Bilingualism

Justin Wong

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What is Bilingualism?

- Is it the ability to speak two languages fluently?
- What is “fluency” anyways?
- Is being able to read and write the language important?
- Does having an accent matter?

Why Does Bilingualism occur?

- Result of migration, nationalism, plurality of languages in a region
- Intermarriage
- Language policy

Child vs. Adult Bilinguals

- Child bilinguals have “superior cognitive abilities” compared to their peers
 - More motivated
 - Better at abstraction
 - Greater social sensitivity
- More likely to not have an accent than adults
- More likely to become highly fluent

Bilingual Education

- Immersion
- Sink or Swim
- Family-planned
 - One parent, one language
 - One context, one language
 - Delayed second language acquisition
 - Language “time”

Code-switching

- The mixing of two different languages in speech
- Can be word, phrase or sentence
- Ex: La consulta era eight dollars
- Ex: wo de ming ze shi Justin

Why does code-switching occur?

- Memory – can't think of the word in the other language
- Semantics – word has different connotation in a language
- Exclusion – prevent eavesdropping
- Identity – Solidify and establish group/ethnic identity

Attitude Towards Code-Switching

- Mixed Reactions
 - It's done out of laziness
 - It's embarrassing
 - It helps me express myself
 - It's part of the culture

Biculturalism and Bilingualism

- Language and culture are closely related
- Knowing two languages can create a split identity
 - Rejection of home culture/language
 - Belonging to neither culture
 - Belong to both cultures

Case Study: South Asia

- “Linguistic laboratory” of the world
- Four language families, 650 languages and dialects
- Sanskrit <—> Dravidian
- Influence of Persian

Case Study: South Asia

- Three language policy
- Media bridges the urban rural divide
- Code-switching a way of life

What did I learn?

- How to explain my own “bilingualism”
- Research grant writing

Questions?