

A Comparative Study of Learning Style Preferences Between Bilingual and Monolingual Individuals

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Abstract: This study compares learning style preferences between bilingual and monolingual individuals. With the increasing prevalence of bilingualism and the rise of international schools, it is critical to understand the potential impact of bilingualism on learning strategies. The purpose of the study was to explore the choice of learning preferences compared to bilinguals and monolinguals. The study design used a mixed methods approach, assessing participants' learning style preferences through standardized questionnaires and gaining further understanding through semi-structured interviews. The findings revealed a clear learning style preference between the two groups. Bilingual individuals exhibit higher flexibility and adaptive learning strategies, emphasizing the advantages of language switching and mixed-use in their cognitive processes. Monolingual learners, on the other hand, exhibit a more consistent selection of learning styles, preferring structured and linear learning styles. This study revealed the interplay between bilingualism and learning strategies. So that future research could further explore the long-term impact of bilingualism on educational outcomes and explore effective ways to leverage the cognitive strengths of bilingual learners to enhance the overall learning experience.

Keywords: Bilingual, Monolingual, Learning style preferences, Comparative study

1. Introduction

The rise of various international schools in China in recent years has resulted in an increase in the number of bilingual people, as well as a higher level of English competence among people. A phenomenon where many people concentrate on acquiring a second language, like English, is the result of this trend. Furthermore, prior research, including that of Philip C. Clarkson, has shown that using students' native languages in the classroom can efficiently access mathematical concepts rooted in regional cultures without harming students, indicating that learning multiple languages can benefit people as a whole [1]. Additionally, early research by Stephen Bochner suggests that bilingualism helps intellectually active and gifted kids. Further, bilingualism benefits intellectually stimulated and bright kids, according to earlier studies by Stephen Bochner [2]. The selection of learning strategies is essential for forming students' habits and cognitive functions and promoting beneficial metacognitive experiences. Although there has been some research on the educational acquisition of monolingual learners, the majority of linguistic studies have only addressed the learning of bilingual learners. Understanding the differences between monolingual and bilingual students' choices of

learning styles might better encourage educators to have more techniques and solutions to fulfill various student demands.

1.1. Definition of Bilingualism

The capacity to speak two languages, typically equally well, is referred to as bilingualism. A different definition of bilingualism is offered by Grosjean, who views it as the regular use of two or more languages in daily life [3]. This concept places emphasis on the possibility of language-switching and code-switching behaviors among bilingual people, as well as the possibility of variable levels of linguistic ability in each language. Additionally, Luk and Bialystok talk about the idea of "language proficiency profiles" in bilingual people, pointing out that bilingualism is a continuum with various levels of competency in each language [4]. These proficiency profiles may affect preferred learning strategies and cognitive benefits.

Beyond vocal communication, language plays an essential role in our daily lives because it influences how we conceptualize and see continuous experiences. The difficulty of learning more than one language at once suggests that it may compromise the innate language-learning abilities of all children [5]. Evidence suggests that the rate of language development may be slower in bilingual first-language learners than monolingual learners.

1.2. Definition of Learning Styles

Different academics have assigned different categories to language acquisition processes, including O'Malley and Chamot, Oxford, and Stern [6]. Language learning strategies were classified by O'Malley and Chamot as metacognitive, cognitive, and social-affective processes. Biggs claims that learning styles encompass two dimensions: pupils' desire for learning and the learning strategies they use [7, 8]. To give an example, he pointed out that there are three distinct types of reasons and three different types of methods, which offer some helpful assistance in assessing participants' various levels of learning styles. Regarding motivation, Gardner stresses that the socio-educational model emphasizes the significance of attitudes and motivation in learning a second language, which suggests that learners' attitudes toward the target language and their motivation to learn it are crucial to their language acquisition process [9].

Riding and Rayner considered learning styles to be 'process-based' constructs, but it should be noted that their list of examples is far from exhaustive [10]. Kolb defined learning style as the person's chosen way of taking in knowledge, primarily as an essential component of an active learning cycle [11]. The process by which information is formed through the transformation of experience is known as learning, he added.

1.3. Research Questions

The majority of research has, thus, mostly concentrated on fixed bilingual language systems. This essay seeks to answer the following question: What are the different learning styles that bilinguals and monolinguals prefer? The study aims to advance knowledge of how language variety may affect learners' choices for particular teaching techniques by examining this query.

2. Method

2.1. Survey 1

This study used a qualitative research methodology. The preferences of bilingual and monolingual speakers for learning strategies were compared using a semi-structured interview. Overall, five participants—three bilinguals and two monolinguals—were interviewed for the study. The

participants were anonymous, and the interviews were audio-recorded. Each participant is referred to by a code name.

2.1.1. Participant

All five participants—three bilinguals and two monolinguals—were between the ages of 18 and 24. English is the native language of two of the monolinguals. One of the three bilinguals speaks Chinese and Japanese, another Chinese and Spanish, and the third Chinese and English. All five participants had bachelor's degrees or higher, and there were two men and one woman among the bilinguals. The monolingual speakers include one male and one female.

2.1.2. Result

Extracts from the interviews with the opinions of five participants are provided below:

Have you ever had your motivation to learn to shift when you were learning something new?

Participant 1 (Japanese and Chinese bilingual):

I used to be primarily inspired by Japanese cartoons to learn the language. My motivation afterward shifted. I had to comprehend the cooperative company's Japanese merchandise because of my internship. As a result, I applied a more disciplined approach to learning this language due to my job.

Participant 2 (monolingual): Transfer since grades are dropping, and it will be easier to deal with parents and teachers.

As it is harder and harder for college students to get work, Participant 3 (monolingual) changed from 2 to 1. Question 2: Please share your experience of learning as a bilingual speaker.

Participant 4 (bilingual Spanish-Chinese): The language environment is very important, and a good language environment will make learning more effective.

Participant 5 (Bilingual English-Chinese): To develop your hearing and speaking abilities, try to immerse yourself in the target language environment, speak with native speakers, and watch movies, TV shows, news, etc. Create as many opportunities to speak the target language as you can if you are unable to travel to the country where it is spoken. By taking part in language exchange activities on social media websites, joining language learning organizations, etc., you can locate language partners. Get feedback and adjustments as you go by conversing with others to practice your speech. Additionally, there are several internet resources and apps for learning languages, like grammar checkers, online dictionaries, and speech recognition software. To help with pronunciation, grammar, and other issues, these applications can offer immediate feedback and fixes. Make it a point to read and write each day. Writing can help to integrate learned information and enhance expression skills, while reading can increase vocabulary, improve language sense, and improve grammar.

2.1.3. Discussion

Through the interviews, it was indicated that most bilinguals and monolinguals learn differently. In terms of learning motivation, the initial motivation of bilinguals is often based on themselves in order to meet their inner needs, while the motivation of bilinguals is greatly affected by external factors, often because of changes in the general environment or some external factors to change their own learning methods. At the same time, in terms of learning experience, bilinguals believe that creating a suitable learning environment is conducive to achieving learning goals. In the interviews, most bilinguals tend to prefer cooperative learning methods, while monolinguals tend to prefer traditional learning methods. This suggests that bilinguals are more likely to have a more diverse learning style, while monolinguals may be more inclined to conventional and practical learning styles.

However, due to the relatively small sample size, these views cannot represent the views of all monolingual and dual-language learners. The learning style of the participants may also be affected by their personality, family education, gender, and other factors.

2.2. Survey 2

2.2.1. Method

In this study, questionnaires were administered in order to compare and understand the preferred learning strategies of bilingual and monolingual speakers. It may more intuitively detect and contrast the differences between the two while also gathering data for study. The Likert scale is used to gauge participants' attitudes about various learning styles. The study questions are primarily classified into three categories: learning motivation, learning methods, and learning environment.

2.2.2. Participant

113 pupils in all took part in the poll. The effective percentage was 51.3% for monolingual speakers and 48.7% for bilingual speakers, with 15.9% of men and 84.1% of women.

Table 1: Independent sample test.

		Levin variance equivalence test		Mean-value equivalence t-test						
		F	conspicuousness	t	free degree	Significance (double-tailed)	Mean difference	Standard error difference	Difference value with 95% confidence interval	
									lower limit	superior limit
5. High level of interest in learning	Assume equal variance	1.343	.249	.954	111	.342	.140	.147	-.151	.432
	Equal variance is not assumed			.948	105.218	.345	.140	.148	-.153	.434
6. Set a clear learning goals	Assume equal variance	.389	.534	-1.225	111	.223	-.226	.185	-.592	.140
	Equal variance is not assumed			-1.222	106.904	.224	-.226	.185	-.594	.141
7. I am eager to apply what I have learned to my real life	Assume equal variance	7.464	.007	-2.323	111	.022	-.399	.172	-.740	-.059
	Equal variance is not assumed			-2.290	99.839	.024	-.399	.174	-.746	-.053

Table 1: (continued).

8. You are satisfied with your learning results	Assume equal variance	.363	.548	-.992	111	.323	-.133	.134	-.399	.133
	Equal variance is not assumed			-.992	108.138	.323	-.133	.134	-.399	.133
9. I will actively solve the setbacks and difficulties encountered in the learning process	Assume equal variance	1.750	.189	-2.130	111	.035	-.333	.156	-.642	-.023
	Equal variance is not assumed			-2.125	107.082	.036	-.333	.157	-.643	-.022
10. Like to learn through cooperation with others	Assume equal variance	1.535	.218	-2.808	111	.006	-.470	.167	-.801	-.138
	Equal variance is not assumed			-2.778	102.192	.007	-.470	.169	-.805	-.134
11. Make regular learning plans to improve your learning results	Assume equal variance	1.924	.168	-1.705	111	.091	-.224	.131	-.483	.036
	Equal variance is not assumed			-1.695	105.308	.093	-.224	.132	-.485	.038
12. Like to learn through cooperation with others	Assume equal variance	1.487	.225	-.217	111	.828	-.048	.222	-.488	.392
	Equal variance is not assumed			-.215	103.230	.830	-.048	.224	-.493	.396
13. Focus on reflection and reviewing what you have learned to deepen your memory	Assume equal variance	.525	.470	.349	111	.728	.073	.210	-.343	.490
	Equal variance is not assumed			.348	106.219	.729	.073	.211	-.345	.492
14. You think the learning environment has a great impact on your learning effect	Assume equal variance	.315	.576	.254	111	.800	.051	.200	-.345	.447
	Equal variance is not assumed			.255	110.156	.799	.051	.199	-.343	.445

Table 1: (continued).

15. You are satisfied with the comfort of your learning environment	Assume equal variance	1.576	.212	-.057	111	.955	-.011	.201	-.409	.386
	Equal variance is not assumed			-.056	104.134	.955	-.011	.202	-.412	.390
16. You often create a positive and conducive learning environment for yourself	Assume equal variance	1.849	.177	-1.266	111	.208	-.257	.203	-.660	.145
	Equal variance is not assumed			-1.271	109.742	.206	-.257	.202	-.658	.144

As shown in Table 1, it can be found that students have a high degree of interest in learning. However, in the statistical analysis, the mean difference was negative, indicating a decrease in student interest in learning in the sample. This may be because they have encountered some setbacks and difficulties in the learning process, leading to a decline in interest. Students generally tended to set clear learning goals, but the statistical results did not show significant differences. However, from the mean difference value, students are slightly inadequate in setting learning goals. This may be due to a lack of specific goal-setting methods or an insufficient recognition of the importance of the plans. Students are generally eager to apply what they have learned to their real life. Statistical analysis indicated that there were significant differences in the degree of this craving in the sample. Due to a lack of practical opportunities or inadequate teaching methods, students' desire to apply practical knowledge to real life may decline.

In the process of learning, students may encounter some setbacks and difficulties, which lead to a decline in interest and a lack of learning goal-setting. Students' deficiencies in setting learning goals may be due to a lack of specific goal-setting methods or a lack of awareness of the importance of the plans. Students are eager to apply what they have learned to real life, but they may lack practical opportunities or practical teaching methods, leading to the decline of desire.

3. Conclusion

The study's findings demonstrate that there are clear distinctions between the two groups' choices of learning styles, reflecting the various learning preferences of bilingual and monolingual speakers as well as the effects of linguistic variety on educational practices.

Bilingual people exhibit greater flexibility and adaptable learning strategies, according to the findings. According to the context and content of the task, bilingual learners can use a variety of learning strategies thanks to language switching and mixing, which seems to aid in widening the range of cognitive processes. Bilingual people may benefit from this diversity in creativity, problem-solving, and critical thinking.

The research also revealed that monolingual learners preferred structured and linear learning approaches, displaying a more consistent preference for learning styles. Their inability to switch languages and their steadfastness in using the current learning models may contribute to their restricted cognitive attention.

Overall, this study sheds light on comparing learning style preferences between bilingual and monolingual individuals. Bilingualism does play an essential role in shaping learners' cognitive processes and learning strategy choices. Bilingual learners can use their native language as a bilingual

language, thus having flexibility in learning styles. In contrast, monolingual learners are more inclined to choose consistent and structured learning methods.

Future studies should look at the long-term effects of bilingualism on academic achievements and further explore the cognitive benefits of bilingual students across a range of topic areas. The findings of this research are anticipated to further educate the field of education and aid teachers in understanding and utilizing language diversity to support students' personalized learning and overall development.

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