

Article

Important Aspect For Bilingual Application To Early Childhood

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Abstract: Bilingualism has garnered both positive and negative feedback over the years. The proliferation of early childhood education institutions that provide bilingual programs raises concerns regarding the influence on children, particularly in terms of cognitive and linguistic development. Some who argue against it claim that children would endure speech difficulties, yet various studies have shown conflicting findings. This study use the library research approach to investigate the cognitive development of children who begin bilingualism at a young age Although there are still many pros and cons of bilingual concepts and programs in early childhood, research results show that the positive impact is greater than the negative impact. In terms of cognitive development, it shows that bilingual children have better performance than monolinguals. However, this good result is of course supported by several things such as the readiness of the teacher in preparing the program and choosing the right method so that the expected results can be maximized. Thus, it can make the next generation of the nation brilliant in facing future challenges.

Keywords: Bilingual, Childhood, Children

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1. Introduction

Reading is one of the four basic language skills that should be mastered by language learners. It is the ability to understand words contained in a document and make use of the knowledge for personal growth and development (Alsurraykh et al., 2011; Dahari et al., 2011). This skill is necessary due it can enrich and increase knowledge. Through reading, language learners are able to draw the meaning of words and get the information from a text. It means that by reading, the learners will gain new understanding, new ideas, and also new knowledge that can expand their views later. Many foreign language students often have reading as one of their most important goals, earlier research claims that in today's societies, reading has considered indispensable for a life of high quality. Reading in foreign language learning at present focuses on guiding the students in developing their skills in reading, mainly leading them to direct comprehension of the text. To measure the learners learning progress in reading skills, normally, the test must be given periodically. It also can be used to diagnose a teacher's competence in teaching and to find out how much the learners have learned. It is used not just by foreign educational institutions, but also by other institutions such as private and public schools (De-Jong et al., 2016; Kucirkova, 2014). There are now several educational institutes in Indonesia that provide multilingual education. Based on the results of a study in 2011, early bilingual learning has several advantages. This bilingual learning can improve English language skills in children. This is recognized to facilitate communication in English between parents and children. In addition, through bilingual learning, children can learn the culture of the foreign language being studied. The results of this study also show that there is personality

development in children who receive bilingual learning. Such children become more independent and more self-confident. In addition, it also increases learning achievement in these children. Children who already have bilingual skills from their parents (parents speak two different local languages) will easily learn English as a third language. Children's language skills will develop more because they acquire new vocabulary from different languages. Children's vocabulary will increase when they learn new words and new meanings for old words (Pransiska, 2018).

2. Materials and Methods

A review of the literature was used to conduct this research. A literature review is a description of the theory, conclusions, and other study materials collected from reference materials to guide research operations. A literature review contains reviews, summaries, and the author's comments on numerous sources of literature on the themes mentioned (articles, books, presentations, online material, and so on). A good literature review should be up to date and relevant.

3. Results

According Pransiska (2018) bilingual or bilingual is using two languages. This ability is not only in speaking and writing but also the ability to understand what others communicate orally and in writing. Children who have bilingual abilities understand foreign languages as well as children's understanding of their mother tongue. Bilingualism is defined as the fluency to speak two languages. The two languages in question are mother tongue (native language) and foreign language (foreign language). In this context bilingualism is interpreted more broadly than just language but is also seen as something related to culture and the social environment.

As one of the international languages, English is a priority foreign language that is studied in various countries. In developing countries, the use of English as a second language in the learning process (bilingual program) is a must. In India, Singapore and Malaysia, the use of foreign bilinguals has started since preschool. In Malaysia, one of the considerations for parents in choosing a preschool for their children is the use of English at school. 71.6% of parents choose schools that run bilingual programs (Dahari & Sabri: 2011). In Indonesia itself, the bilingual program in English is also growing rapidly. This fulfills the wishes of parents who wish their children to be introduced to English from an early age.

In principle, the main goal of bilingual learning is to provide language skills to children which only include listening and speaking skills wrapped in activities to enrich children's vocabulary. Of course learning to speak two languages requires a lot of practice as well as methods and strategies appropriate to the context of real, age-appropriate learning experiences children. Without direct experience of the use of language, it will be difficult for students to acquire a second language. For this reason, one effective way is to incorporate English into everyday learning activities without translating it (Garcia et al., 2014; Radesky et al., 2016).

Various sources mention the benefits of a bilingual program. Morrison (2012) revealed that in addition to supporting children's bilingualism, being bilingual also makes children benefit in cognitive, cultural and economic development. Bilingual speakers have been associated with greater awareness and sensitivity to linguistic structure, that is, awareness that is transferred and generalized to early stages of non-verbal and literacy skills. This is certainly not surprising because language skills are closely related to children's cognitive development. The more the child's language is honed, the more cognitively honed it will be. Likewise with culture, because when someone learns a language, he will automatically learn the culture.

Ninawati (2012) states that there are several positive things regarding the cognitive development of bilingual children including; (1) Learning a foreign language during

childhood has a special advantage, because humans have a special capacity to master a language in childhood, regardless of whether the language is the mother tongue or another language; (2) that children learn language more effectively because neurological factors; (3). That there is nothing wrong with children learning English at school, (4) That the disadvantages of being bilingual are far less than the advantages of mastering more than one language. (5) Children acquire language through exposure by seeing, feeling, touching, hearing and witnessing the use of that language; (6) Piaget's cognitive theory has had a major impact on educational theory and practice and has inspired the world of education to design environments, curricula, materials, and teaching that are appropriate to the development of children's thinking (Morrison et al., 2012; Nilawati et al., 2012; Pransiska, 2018).

When developing a bilingual application for early childhood education, there are several important aspects to consider:

1. Age-appropriate content: The content of the application should be designed with the age and developmental level of the target audience in mind. The content should be engaging, interactive, and appropriate for the developmental stage of the child.
2. Cultural sensitivity: The application should be sensitive to the cultural backgrounds of the children who will be using it. This includes avoiding stereotypes and including culturally relevant content.
3. User interface design: The user interface of the application should be intuitive and easy to use for young children who may not have fully developed fine motor skills or be able to read. The interface should also be designed with the bilingual aspect in mind, ensuring that it is easy for users to switch between languages.
4. Language learning objectives: The application should have clear language learning objectives and be designed to support language acquisition in both languages. This may involve incorporating language instruction into the content or providing opportunities for children to practice using both languages.
5. Parent involvement: The application should be designed to encourage parent involvement in their child's language learning. This may involve providing resources and tools for parents to support their child's language development or incorporating parent-child activities into the application.
6. Overall, the design of a bilingual application for early childhood education should be focused on providing an engaging and effective tool for language learning that is age-appropriate, culturally sensitive, and designed to support the needs of both children and parents (Tabors, 2018; Trujillo, 2019; Unsworth, 2016; Yelland, 2018).

5. Conclusions

Although there are still many pros and cons of bilingual concepts and programs in early childhood, research results show that the positive impact is greater than the negative impact. In terms of cognitive development, it shows that bilingual children have better performance than monolinguals. However, this good result is of course supported by several things such as the readiness of the teacher in preparing the program and choosing the right method so that the expected results can be maximized. Thus, it can make the next generation of the nation brilliant in facing future challenges. Considering the methodological challenges raised in the literature on bilingualism, it is reasonable to believe that the developmental paths of bilinguals and monolinguals may differ due to the roles or benefits of individual experiences in each language. While children in bilingual environments may be able to transfer decontextualized skills and knowledge from one language

to another, children in monolingual environments may only do the identical activities in one language.

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