

(UN) necessity of bilingualization

Ahmad Abbasi Fard

Research and science branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

aafard20@yahoo.com

Abstract

This study is an attempt to (re)consider the necessity of bi/ monolingualization in the inevitable process of globalization imposed due to the brilliant advancement of communication (and) technology. Globalization in itself inspires modern monolingualization; that is the language of technology would and should become dominant. Sociolinguistically speaking, the culture of many countries especially easterners is threatened in that the language carries with itself the cultural norms and in some cases controversies. In such challenge, language teaching cannot and, in fact, should not move against this process, neither should it stay indifferent. It should make a compromise between the requirements for using technology and at the same time preserving the cultural norms and customs. The research study suggests that a volunteer yet thoroughly planned and controlled bilingualization is needed; that is the globalized language (at present English) should be adopted and adapted.

Key words: bilingualization, globalization, monolingualization, culture

Introduction

"Necessity is the mother of bilingualism" (Haugen 1972: 309). Most of those who manipulate the languages in contact, more or less, aim at functioning more efficiently whether for better social prestige, economic conditions or intellectual needs. The present momentarily increasing development of technology, communication, science, and, specifically, needs all together, have persuaded the people to agree on an unwritten contract to correspond through a common language which has been, chronologically Latin, French, and English, respectively. The way states, students, families, and politicians react to the issue is not harmonious as each has its own concerns and perceptions of the issue. Years ago, people were not so much engaged in such issues as they were able to run, just, their basic needs, something quite different from those of today.

The introduction of the notion of globalization, whether at will or not, has necessitated some changes and, in some cases, actually, drastic ones in the daily affairs; education as the core of each society is not kept immune from these alterations. In treating the issue of bilingualization, two opposing voices are involved; the traditional side that emphasizes keeping on the first culture (C1) and /for preserving it (Cummins, 1984; Pagan, 2005). The more modern view, on the other hand, takes a more receptive position and reiterates the need to welcome the language

of change which is at least utilitarian in nature. To compromise, a midpoint position that can reconcile the concerns of the former group and meet the needs of the latter should be, rationally and updatedly, adopted. In so doing, the social and educational development should be given priority in order to fulfill the requirements for improvement, what is technically called, nowadays, industrialization. In the following pages the threats and privileges that bilingualization may bring about are discussed and substantiated.

History of bilingualism.

Ronjat was the first person who studied bilingualism in 1913 before Leopold who had a longitudinal study of his two bilingual daughters from 1939-1949. Later in 1985 Roger Brown started studying the simultaneous acquisition of two languages. The research in 1950s, basically, made significant contributions into the differing social patterns of language loss and spread, psychological and cognitive outcomes of bilingualism, and reconceptualization of diverse bilingualism. In 1980s, however, the upsurge of interest in bilingualism, due to the willingness in simultaneous acquisition of two or more languages and incorporation of theories of monolingual acquisition to the facts of bilingualism, postulated some theoretical and empirical reformations (Deuchar & Quay, 2000; Hoffmann, 1991; Lanza, 1997; Meisel, 1986); the new research on bilingualism covers different areas of language developments such as phonology (Paradis, 1996, 2000, 2001) lexicon (Quay, 1995), syntax (see Genesee, 2001) and communication skills (Comeau & Genesee, 2001). This decade for the research on bilingualism promises greater progress in areas such as preverbal and early speech perceptions.

Bilingualism is threatening?

There exists an ever-pervading belief, in general, that unilingualism is the norm and bilingualism implies kinds of aberrance. The most two common fears that come to the scene are either reflecting what are socially presupposed or individually pored, though usually intermingled. Interestingly, few bilinguals communalize in such quiver. Research findings show that 52% of bilinguals and 67% of trilinguals reported no worry and, interestingly, no subject felt that it was disadvantageous (Grosjean, 1982: 273). The four most frequent types of fear that are prevalent and more representative are presented; There are, however, other sorts that are less widespread and venial (Kanno, 2003). Of these four, two are individual, viz parental and cultural, and the other two are social, i.e. educational and political. **Parental fear** might root in either the unpleasant feelings and hardships they have already encountered in experiencing bilingual environments or though being bilingual isolated in a unilingual environment which makes them worry about their children become bilingual. De Jong (1986) states that:

"The investigation into parents affected by bilingualism in their children revealed how friends, neighbors and teachers who know nothing about the subject instill worry in parents through bad advice. The folklore influence of non- specialist opinion was often decisive among parents who chose against bringing up their children bilingually when they were in a position to do so; such parents related horror stories of bilingual children who were disturbed, had problems with stuttering or were behind at school."

Findings of 16 case studies done on a French /Australian couple who lived in Brazil and brought up their children in Portuguese, German, and French by Harding and Riley (1986) revealed that parents' illusions were the problem, not the children. Some parents believe that bilingualism impedes the linguistic development of their children. Such an illusion deemphasizes the dual input in developmental stages of language acquisition. Swain (1981) in this regard has shown that though the internalization of the input in bilinguals may take a longer time, in the long run, they do, eventually, outperform their monolingual peers in one of the two languages. To this end, Cummins (1948) puts more emphasis on the quality and quantity of the exposure rather than the specificity of the language of communication. Parents believe that unilingualism can centralize the children's emotional firmness in communicating with a given linguistic community as they don't have to shift between linguistic poles. In a study by Lambert and Allan (1972) a group of middle class children of different parental languages were compared with a group of homogeneous background, showing that the heterogeneous group manifested healthier personality and social characteristics than the homogeneous one. In a similar vein, (Housen & Baetens Beardsmore, 1987) delineated that European multilingual adolescents did not see themselves separate from the community they were involved in and lacked any biased attitude toward the members of that linguistic group and sustained dual linguistic patterns (Zehr, 2005). One more fear of the parents arises from the immigrant situations in which the children move from the social and cultural values of their first language and assimilate or acculturate the values of the mainstream society where with the children try to show independence and individuality. Beardsmore (1988) calls all these fears unfounded as in multilingual societies where bilingualism is the norm, they have not been mentioned.

Cultural threat represents a very perplex condition for there is no unanimous agreement as to the characteristics of culture, how they are combined, and conveyed; Miller (1983) points out the difficulty in distinguishing culture from language. She then describes how her investigation of the role of language in bilinguals' life has shifted, unexpectedly, to other issues.

...my somewhat dogged insistence that my interlocutors keep to the subject of language was defeated time and time again. Only later did I realize that these speakers' evading of my questions about language in order to talk about immigration, culture, family conflict, social and political dilemmas, constituted, in fact, and significantly, answers to my questions. (Miller, 1983: 17).

Fitouri (1983:214–15) also attempted to draw the boundary between language and culture among Arabic/ French bilinguals in Tunisia. His findings revealed that upper level groups were more willing to adopt the orientation of cosmopolitan values and therefore self inclined to see bilingualism as stimulating while the lower level groups preferred traditional, native values which made them see bilingualism as a strong cultural belligerency. Garmadi (1972:319) faces the same controversy in describing the cultural disequilibrium created by bilingualism. Such disagreement and dissidence implies that 'cultural fears cannot be dismissed lightly'. On the other hand, without the maintenance of the mother tongue and culture, there is the risk to provoke the sense of identity conflict, and marginality. Miller (1983) studied British bilingual teenagers who have encountered some cultural troubles; the findings showed that in comparing the bilinguals, class factor played a significant role, namely elite bilingualism subsides conflicting cultural problems while in lower level socio-economic classes the bias to preserve native culture is more severe. Moreover, in cases of great differences in terms of culture as the case of Turkish and Swedish girls, studied by Ekstrand (1981), delineated the possibility of gaining harmony weakens, though Bialystock and McLaughlin(1985:39) see the problem as a matter of scale which does not necessarily confirm the greater emotional disturbance of the immigrants than do their counterparts peers.

Bentahila (1983) examined cultural fears among middle class Arabic–French bilinguals aged 15–45 in Morocco. The results reported that an overwhelming majority of the bilingual respondents favored bilingualism. Interestingly, the findings revealed that, for them, the utilitarian side of bilingualism outweighed its cultural value. He further explains the findings as the weaker preference of Arabisation for patriotic reasons over industrialization for utilitarianism. To be just, the scrutiny of the literature illustrates that there might be some bases to invoke cultural fears in some situations. Such circumstances can not be numerous among the middle class population, whether industrialized or developing. The situation, however, with lower level class is more tangible. Providing a comprehensive bilingual education for both industrialized and industrializing countries which can offer an option for bicultural familiarization can be the remedy for such concerns. Such situations will somehow change the linguistic imperialism from a social to an individual one, the result of which is less severe and harmful.

Educational threat has taken two poles into consideration; on the one hand, there are some who have undergone the bilingual education directly like the students and on the other hand those who have no or little experience in the issue but seem more concerned and vocalizing, usually the negative side effects of bilingualism.

There exists a plethora of literature expressing the dissatisfaction as to the fruitfulness of bilingual education which are almost all emphasizing the inadequacy of provision rather than the bilingualization itself and in no case the replacement of unilingualism proposed. The reason is that all those who have undergone bilingual education have been either a matter of choice or necessity; Fishman (1976:28–9) calls the former courses enrichment programs and the latter inadequate and stigmatized provision, though immersion program in developing countries is exception. Elite bilingualism is the volunteer adoption, which has delineated slight conflicts of home tongue and widely used educational values, by stable middle class groups usually followed by involvement and backup on the part of parents (Mackey ,1972; Fishman ,1976; Swain & Lapkin ,1982;Baetens Beardsmore and Swain ,1985; Paradis ,2000). Ethnic bilingualization, on the other hand, is a parent-free unwanted, in most cases, educational remedy the result of which is pushing the recipients into bilingualization. Most of the fears come out of this system of bilingualization, though the recipients themselves have not shown any concern. Cummins (1984: 101) presents different types of fears and threats caused by bilingualization as follows: bilingualism impedes child's linguistic development, mental promotion, educational opportunities, and emotional firmness; soars aggressive and anti social citizens; makes children culturally ambivalent and disoriented, linguistically sloppy and morally untrustworthy. Such misgivings have not been proved in immersion programs in Canadian school system, however. Cummins (1984: 44) further points out that no evidence has been reported as to show that bilingualism, as a home-school switch, can exert any malfunction on academic development, though in some cases the schools misguide the parents as they recommend no home language use in order to increase the intuition of the school language; It is believed that, as an illusion, elimination of the first language can simplify the internalization of the second language while, in fact, it might be the other way round. Note that this is contrary to the notion of elite bilingualism. Bruck (1984) points out that in Canada between 10% and 20% of the School population learning problems were socio-economic-status-irrelevant and that 7-10 % of the total school students showed sort of learning difficulties .Hence a similar proportion is expected in any other school system which implies that the difficulties are not imputable, at least directly, to bilingualism. Genesee (1976) studied cases of children below average IQ ratings and reported no negative effects, in comparison with IQ of those unilingually educated. The findings in the literature show that a long term, properly developed, bilingualization can remove even the unfounded fears of the people involved.

Political threat which consider the aesthetic aspects, culture and education and the uneasiness is a covert intension of 'dominance, economic control, social status and, group security'(McArthur, 1986: 88). Nelde (1987), too, believes that this sort of interpretation should be taken with great care as the languages in contact can create the language conflicts due to differing and sometimes opposing values, attitudes, identities, and education. Nedle, however, does not specify whether the difficulties come out of the attempt to unilingualise or bilingualize; as the sources of tensions are the partiality of one language to the exclusion of the other within one political

identity. Let us assume that unilingualism is set as a desirable circumstance for the establishment and cohesion of a nation-state. Historical evidence show that, whether this aimed at encouraging the language of minority or majority, has rarely succeeded; in doing so, Welsh has not been eradicated, though act 1535 has abandoned it officially. So is the case for Breton in France and Catalan in Spain. The Californian senator Hayakawa maintains that: 'A common language can unify, separate languages can fracture and fragment a society' (quoted in Marshall, 1986: 23). No matter what the intension behind , the viewpoint is controversial since Northern Ireland has a common language though religiously fractured whereas Singapore and Finland are linguistically diverse yet socially defragmented. Schumann (1986) in her acculturation model asserts that learning a language should entail using it, using entails interaction, and interaction entails social integration. Consequently, the integration of immigrants and the host population would enhance bilingualism thereby weakening the fragmentation mentioned earlier.

Bilingualism is a privilege

Martin (2001) postulates that bilingualism brings about facility forms one of which is the identity, a many faceted phenomenon. He further isolates social identity from individual identity. Individual identity is not and cannot be isolated from the social aspects or reinforcements as NO MAN IS AN ISLAND. Thus our personal identity is the result of socialization within a group (or groups). 'Language can certainly be considered as a marker at the individual level '.yet the question is that how this marker is taken, flourished and internalized. The answer, surely, is the linguistic community. That is what Cattell (1948) called *syntality* .Bilingualism, no matter in how long and where learned, is seen as positive in the society as findings have shown that two linguistic spheres will increase one's mental capacity (Grosjean 1982 , Baker and Jones, 1998 , Hamers and Blanc ,2000).

Code switching as an intermediary in bilingualization

Code switching as simplification of teaching has been the matter of concern in the last two decades(martin-jones,1995).Manifold functions have been identified to educationally legalize code switching such as clarification, translation, comprehension checking, helping week students, giving directions, and saving time , to name just a few. Martin (2001) reports cases of bilingualization in Brunei in which the policy is bilingualism through monolingualism. In this system, English and Malay are separately, depending on the content of the course, used; in the first three years of the primary school all the subjects are thought in their mother tongue, viz Malay and from the fourth year some courses like geography, science, history and mathematics are thought in English.

Bilingualism reported positive and helpful

The problem solving tests of divergent thinking applied in Canada, Australia and Singapore all revealed that the bilinguals outperformed their monolingual counterparts for being more creative ((Ricciardelli 1992). The same tests also delineated that bilinguals were more flexible in their thinking and showed more original interpretations. Multilinguals as the research shows are more successful in doing visual puzzles, differentiating the image of an old woman etched in a young woman, and shape movements in space (Tokuhama Espinosa 2001). Tokuhama Espinosa (2001:108) believes that multilinguals have nine areas of the brain devoted to language learning while in bilinguals just seven parts are engaged. Hence the faster and more accurate processing of the language materials.

The integration of language instruction with content instruction helps children pick up a second language naturally and unconsciously (Cloud, Genesee & Hamayan, 2000). Some western scholars believe that immersion programs can make the easterners devalue their own culture and highly value, instead, the foreign, here western, culture (Ruan, 1996; Zhuang, 2003; Chen, 2003). Some others believe that bilingualization, in this specific course immersion, would not pose any difficulty and, actually, improve the 'progress without long term costs' (Cummins, 2005)

Bilingualization needs a compromise of language and culture

The EFL contexts in which the negotiation of identity is an inevitable part, the children resort to different strategies such as assimilation, acculturation, and preservation. In acculturation actually, the safest one, the children adopt L2 values and at the same time they stay loyal to their native culture; in assimilation, however, the children give up their L1 values and replace them with L2 which is not welcome by families. In preservation or hardliner confrontation, the situation is reverse - assimilation (Rudimin (2003). As the research shows the matter of acculturation, presently called hybridity, is a sort of scale in which same sides are heavier at the cost of, or balancing, the other side (Bhabha, 1994; Kanno, 2003). No matter what the terminologies, what is important is that in the process of cultural negotiation a mutually cultural challenge, through which a selection and mostly a compromise is achieved, occurs and invokes what was previously termed divergent thinking (Pavlenko & Blackledge, 2004). The way children are compromising or selecting a specific cultural norm, as language and culture are not separable, roots in three constructs: cognitive, affective, and evaluative. Chen (2003) asserts that in cases of conflict between L1 and L2, the children either reject one of them. He, however, does not point to the criteria for rejection or selection (Chen, 2006). The monolingualization of education as seen in almost all immersion programs is not recommended at all, as Chen (2006) reports that use of L1 in Taiwan's immersion programs is implicitly and explicitly devaluing the C1; on the one hand, when a teacher is encouraging the students with good L2 is in fact devaluing L1 along with

the encouragements given to the mastery of L2; punishing the students who are using L1 inappropriately in the class , on the other hand , is linking punishment, shame, embarrassment and resent with the first language. Hence devaluing L1.

Finality

Both parents and the educational system should follow the best window of opportunity for becoming bilingual beginning from birth to eight .The period which is the main focus of this article is from eight on ,however. In this time the persons can more easily learn the abstract concepts of syntax and grammar compared with children. What should and can be done?

In training bilingual children a number of factors should be taken into consideration : proper timing for beginning of the education , aptitude , motivation, strategy, consistency ,home or and system support, and handedness are very important .The educational systems role is , of course ,more important and in fact leading as what the system is orienting and followed by consistently can faster get to fruition. The role of family, coordinated by the educational system, can substantially simplify the process. In doing so, the motivation and pursuit of the home alongside with the provision of motivation and reinforcement can considerably open the path. Training of he parents by the educational system in which the necessity and difficulties of the present technological advances are elaborated can help the internalization to follow the issue.

Globalization, wily nily, is happening and re/forming the new values and necessities. Such issue needs a common medium of instruction or communication, namely language. Eastern languages and cultures are somehow threatened provided that no volunteer compromise is made. In doing so, the role of human resources development should receive great care and emphasis .Technological advances has become an inseparable part of our present life. The familiarization of the pupils with the language of globalization, presently English, as well as the culture it entails is becoming a necessity. How can we imagine the world without technology or see the world advancing and we stay stable and look with regret that we can not present ourselves and contribute to the progresses whether in terms of technology or our inherited and civilized culture .Fortunately some studies of the east Asian countries have revealed that the bilingualization is not menacing the cultural values and beliefs of the language learners.

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