

Bilingualism and Language Development Challenges in Children

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It is expected that one takes up the language of the parents after birth. In this case, it becomes easy to learn from them as they use the same language consistently. However, challenges come in when one is exposed to more than one language as a child. This is a tender age in which the child is expected to learn the language so as to develop social skills. Therefore, different scenes of life presented different problems in childhood due to the bilingual program. In this case, each step along the way presents a challenge. As a child, one is not expected to have the ability to capture issues fast. The various problems a bilingual child faces range from delayed language development, less exposure to the mother language, inability to separate the languages, and the use of the two languages during communication.

Delayed Language Development

Upon entering school for the first time, one expects to use the native language that he or she was using at home. To the surprise, this is not always the case. Exposing the child to two or more languages at the same time creates more problems. This is because there is no one of the two or more languages that the child has mastered. Therefore, it becomes a workload on the child to be able to learn all the languages at the same time. Learning the two languages seems like learning two difficult subjects for the child. This is because each of the languages has a different pronunciation of the same item. This is a disturbing period for the child. On many occasions, the children take more time trying to learn the language than they learn the content taught in school. This is not healthy for a child. In addition, the child gets to the level of being unable to differentiate between the two languages. As such, the learning becomes a mess and a mixture of words. The slow language learning process also affects the ability of the child to socialize effectively with the rest of the kids as well as society. It is a good policy, but it has major setbacks in the child's learning process.

Less Exposure To One's Language

Having two or more languages for the child to learn means that less time will be dedicated to the mother language. In this case, the mother language is taken to the language of the child. However, the introduction of another language to the child eliminates the ability to specialize in the same language to the end. For this reason, the learning of the native language becomes hard. In this case, learning the English language as a second language and Spanish as a first language makes the process more difficult. Therefore, the child is required to sacrifice more time for the second language,

as it proves to be harder than the first language. By doing this, the first language fails to have the chance for better and deeper internalization.

Inability To Separate The Languages

The learning of the two languages, in this case, English and Spanish, takes place at the same time. The mind of the child is quite fresh and thus takes anything that comes its way. At the end of the day, the language that the child learns fails to meet the qualifications of either of the two languages. It becomes impossible to speak fluently in either of the languages. As such, the ultimate goal of enhancing a better understanding of the child as well as better and fluent communication becomes impossible. Even as one grows, he or she takes the language as being one and uses it inseparably. The child ends up being unable to learn the actual language.

Interpersonal Communication Challenges

All the problems stated above make it impossible for the learner to communicate effectively with the rest of the speakers. At the end of the day, all the learning proves to be a source of confusion for the learner. As stated above, it becomes impossible to separate the two or more languages from each other. An attempt to speak to a one-language-speaking person becomes a problem. This is because some of the words may be strange to him or her. This happens in such a school that is dominated by Whites, meaning that they all speak English. Having English submerged into Spanish proves to be more confusing to English speakers. As such, one fails to communicate effectively with the rest of the people. This results in social problems. A common language is the major aspect of the connection between people. Thus, the inability to speak effectively with them creates more social problems. Many of such children find themselves unable to have friends from children who speak only one language. As a result, this results from alienation, leading to psychological problems.

Undermining The Rate Of Understanding

As a child, the ability to understand the various concepts of life, as well as the content taught in schools, depends on the ability to master the language used. In a school dominated by whites, many of the books are written in fluent English. This is a second language in the first place. Again, it has been a problem getting through it due to the effect of the first language. As such, it becomes impossible to conveniently get all the concepts that are written in English. The inability to understand the concepts taught in one language well creates problems in school life. By being unable to understand the concepts well, it also becomes hard to handle the exams effectively. It, therefore, forms a pattern of one failure to another.

Lack Of Sufficient Vocabulary

The experience of learning two languages at the same time ends up in denying vocabulary to the child. In this case, most of the time is spent trying to differentiate between the two languages. As such, only the simple terms in the two languages are mastered. As one grows, it also becomes hard to determine the deeper words of each of the languages. Therefore, the insufficiency of vocabulary materializes. This is reflected in class. For instance, the bilingual child lacks sufficient vocabulary to use when writing down a composition. This leads to poor grades, affecting the entire school life of the child.

Conclusion

It is factual that bilingual learning creates lots of problems for the students. From childhood experiences, the learning process is hard for the young ones. The education, as well as the social life, is affected negatively by the bilingual form of learning. In addition, the affected children are unable to interact effectively with the rest of the pupils as well as their teachers. As one ages, it becomes impossible to separate the two languages while speaking. It is also a challenge for bilingual students to have sufficient vocabulary to use while conversing as well as when responding to exam questions. It is, therefore, necessary to take a better learning strategy into account. I recommend that bilingual languages be introduced at higher levels of learning. This can give enough time for the child to master the mother language and develop in it effectively. It will also be easier for the child to learn a second language later in life. (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, n.d.) (Bialystok et al., 2012) (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, 2018)

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