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The Benefits of Bilingualism: Navigating Two Worlds with Ease

Termez state university

Department of Foreign filology, Teacher

Nazarova Ziyoda Kattayevna

Department of Foreign filology, Student

Xayitaliyeva Sarvinoz Abdurayimovna

sarvialiyeva03@gmail.com

Annotation. This article explores why speaking two languages is so beneficial. It talks about how it helps our brains work better, keeps our minds sharper as we age, and makes it easier to understand different cultures. It also mentions how being bilingual can help us get better jobs in a global world.

Key words: Bilingualism, benefits, different cultures, mental benefits, occupation.

Annotatsiya. Bu artikl nega ikki tilda gapirish foydali ekanligini ochib beradi. Hamda ongimizga keltiradigan foydali tomonlari va yosh o'tgan sari miyyamizni charhlashi, va boshqa madaniyatlarni tushunishda bo'lgan ahamiyatini ko'rsatib beradi. Dunyo miqyosida ish topishda bo'lgan ustunligini ham takidlab o'tadi.

Tayanch so'zlar: Ikki tillilik, foydalari, turli madaniyatlar, lavozim, ustunliklar.

In today's globalized world, knowing two languages has become really important. It gives us a bunch of benefits, like making our brains work better, helping us understand different cultures, and making it easier to connect with others. Whether we learn two languages from when we're babies or later in life, being able to speak them fluently boosts how well we communicate, how sharp our thinking is, and how much we appreciate different cultures. "Bilingualism is an experience that shapes our brain for a lifetime, and it's an experience that has both cognitive and social benefits." - Ellen Bialystok, Professor of Psychology at York University, Toronto, Canada. It is generally believed that more than half of the world's population is bilingual [1]. In each of the U.S. [2] and Canada [3], approximately 20% of the population speaks a language at home other than English. These figures are higher in urban areas, rising to about 60% in Los Angeles [4] and 50% in Toronto [3]. In Europe, bilingualism is even more prevalent: In a recent survey, 56% of the population across all European Union countries reported being functionally bilingual, with some countries recording particularly high rates, such as Luxembourg at 99% [5]. Bilinguals, therefore, make up a significant portion of the population. Importantly, accumulating research shows that the development, efficiency, and decline of crucial cognitive abilities are different for bilinguals than for monolinguals [6]. This means that bilingualism offers more positive benefits than monolingualism. If experience can shape



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brain structure and cognitive ability, then bilingualism is a prime candidate for such effects. Language use is the most intense, sustained, and integrative experience in which humans engage. The intensity reflects the role that language has in all our activities, not only for verbal communication but also for conceptualizing and interpreting ongoing experience. Semantic networks are invoked each time an event is understood or a memory is formed. Language use is sustained because of all human activities, none consumes the proportion of waking (and perhaps non-waking) time that language does. Other activities with known neuroplastic benefits, such as musical performance, can only be undertaken some finite number of hours per day; language use in all its forms has no limit so from the perspective of dose-related effects, it is unrivalled. Finally, language use is integrative; using language engages most of the brain, including frontal, temporal, and parietal lobes, as well as some posterior regions (Friederici, 2011) [7].

Why should bilinguals show a cognitive benefit? Why should bilingualism be associated with enhanced cognitive control? A large body of psycholinguistic research has shown that both languages are always active in the bilingual brain, despite the absence of any conscious awareness of the non-used language (Costa et al., 1999 [8]; Francis, 1999 [9]; Kroll et al., 2014 [10]; Marian & Spivey, 2003 [11]; Wu & Thierry, 2010 [12]). Because bilinguals rarely commit intrusion errors from the unwanted language, inhibitory control seemed to be an obvious mechanism for excluding the non-target language from ongoing processing. Evidence from brain imaging demonstrated that overlapping networks were used for language selection and nonverbal selection (review in Wong et al., in press [13]). On the assumption that lifelong bilinguals have had many years of flexibly deploying inhibitory control in language processing, and that these processes are at least partly shared with nonverbal cognitive networks, the interpretation has been that inhibitory processes are strengthened in such individuals [14].

Studies by Grosse (2004) of graduates from the renowned international business program at Thunderbird, The Garvin School of International Management, and Porras et al. (2014) found that that foreign language skills and cultural proficiency provided professionals in international commerce a noticeable advantage over monolinguals [15]. In today's job market, bilingualism is more than just a skill—it's a strategic advantage that can propel your career to new heights. Here's why:

1. Expanded Opportunities: Speaking two languages broadens your job prospects. Many industries, from hospitality to healthcare, value bilingual employees who can communicate with diverse clientele.



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2. **Competitive Advantage:** Companies are willing to pay a premium for bilingual talent. Your ability to bridge language barriers can lead to higher salaries and better job offers.

3. **Enhanced Problem-Solving Skills:** Bilingual individuals are known for their cognitive flexibility and adaptability. These traits make them valuable assets in fast-paced work environments where quick thinking is essential.

4. **Cultural Sensitivity:** Understanding different languages often goes hand in hand with cultural awareness. Bilingual employees excel at navigating cross-cultural interactions, fostering a more inclusive and harmonious workplace.

5. **Personal Enrichment:** Beyond professional benefits, bilingualism enriches your life on a personal level. Learning a new language opens doors to new friendships, experiences, and opportunities for growth.

In conclusion, embracing bilingualism isn't just about language—it's about seizing opportunities, advancing your career, and embracing a world of possibilities.

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