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**The Impact of Bilinguality on Pre-University Students
In English Achievement in Mysore, India**

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INTRODUCTION

Bilingualism in education refers to learning of more than one language, as well as, learning through a non-native language. In either case, bilingualism, is not a black and white, or, all or nothing, phenomenon, but, a more or less one, that is, the students become bilinguals to some degree. There are also situations, as in India, where students come to school as bilinguals. All these situations pose different problems for the educational planners to tackle with. In India, the individual as well as the societal bilingualism is widespread. In this study the term *bilingualism* is used in the wider sense to include *multilingualism*.

The terms *bilingualism* and *multilingualism* have been used interchangeably in the literature to refer to the knowledge or use of more than one language by an individual or a community. Bilingualism has been treated both as a societal and individual phenomenon in the literature (Romanine 1995). It is not possible to make a neat separation between bilingualism as a societal and individual phenomenon (Adler 1977).

According to Laubeová (2000), The term *bilingualism* has many different meanings.

On *individual* level it refers to consecutive or simultaneous learning/acquisition of a second language and involves issues of language competence, performance, ability, proficiency, and achievement.

On a *societal* level it refers to a complex phenomena of minority and migrants. While it is not possible to separate effects of individual and societal bilingualism, the latter concerns with concepts such as diglossia and domain that are helpful in understanding the different ways in which linguistic resources are organised in multilingual communities, including phenomena such as borrowing, interference, transfer, and code-switching (cited in Wolff, D., 2003).

Diglossia refers to the coexistence of two forms of the same language in a speech community. Often, one form is the literary or prestige dialect, and the other is a common dialect spoken by most of the population. Sociolinguists may also use the term diglossia to denote bilingualism, the speaking of two or more languages by the members of the same community, as, for example, in New York City, where many members of the Hispanic community speak both Spanish and English, switching from one to the other according to the social situation or the needs of the moment.

A large number of additional studies point in the direction of cognitive advantages associated with bilingualism, although caution must be exercised in making strong claims

for bilingual advantages because of the difficulties of controlling background variables in some of the studies. What is clear, however, is that the development of home language literacy skills by students entails no negative consequences for their overall academic or cognitive growth, and, in some situations, there may be significant educational benefits for students in addition to the obvious personal benefits of bilingualism.

The emergence of a bilingual population can be expected in any areas in which different language groups reside and interact. When two language groups come into contact, the speakers of either language may learn partially or fully the other language. The result is bilingualism and the individuals or groups involved become bilinguals.

Bilingualism is a perplexing reality in any human being who possesses it. Demographically, bi/multilingualism has been defined as the presence and use of two or more languages in a modern nation or state (Asher & Simpson, 1994).

According to Reich (1986) 47.3% of the world's population speaks more than one language. It is well known that India is one of the largest bi/multilingual countries. The Indian Constitution lists over 18 languages for official/administrative purpose, while more than 1652 mother tongues were reported spoken in India according to the Census of India 1961. Many of these languages and dialects may or may not have scripts but are in active use. The nature of bilingualism is not also the same across the country.

BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN MULTILINGUAL INDIA

Bilingual education in multilingual India is of two types. In the first type, in accordance with the universal principle of education, the mother tongue is used as medium of instruction and other languages are taught as subjects. In the second type, a second language is used as medium of instruction. The effect of these two types of media of instruction on a host of variables has been extensively investigated by scholars and, in terms of the findings, the study by Srivastava (1998) stands out as a significant one. In view of these findings, many scholars advocate mother tongue as the medium of instruction and at the same time the importance of English is also not ignored. But languages have to be used if they have to grow and be functionally efficient.

PRESENT STUDY

In the present study, the relationship between bilinguality of second language learners of pre-university stage and their English knowledge achievement in the language as a medium of instruction is investigated.

Therefore, the following null hypotheses are formulated:

2- Null Hypothesis:

1-The linguality of the subjects has no impact on their performance in general English proficiency and grammatical judgment test.

2-Gender of subjects has no impact on their performance in proficiency and grammatical judgment test.

The significance of the present study is that the need for such studies is obvious in the present Indian context where educationists and linguists are trying hard to evolve a language policy and a scheme for its implementation in school.

There is a large number of bilingual students whose contribution to the promotion of the country is of great importance. Considering this, the researcher endeavors to conduct a research and is hopeful to find useful results, which would shed some light on the issue of bilingualism and help modify the present curriculum.

The present research investigates the effect of home languages such as: Kannada, Urdu, Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Marathi and some others used in Mysore on the learning of English as a medium of instruction. It is hoped the results will be of interest to researchers in the field.

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

Initially, a total of 100 students in the age range of 16 to 18 at five pre-university colleges (using English as a medium of instruction) of Mysore were asked to participate in this project. These P.U.C. students of St. Philomena's, J.S.S., Chinamava, Mahajana and Vivekanada colleges were selected randomly. Through a background questionnaire, demographic information about the participants was elicited.

Based on some indicators such as parents' socio-educational background and occupation (which according to Morris, 1994 is a good indicator of social class status), the participants were matched as close as possible for socio-economic background to minimize the effect of social class. Accordingly, the participants were classified as middle class.

Two groups of students (50 students in each group) participated in this study: Group A (male/female monolinguals) who used just one language as a home language; Group B (male/female bilinguals) who used more than one languages as a home language.

The participants in both groups were homogenous in terms of the socio-educational context: socio economic level, type of the colleges attended by each of the groups,

methodology used at colleges, number of hours devoted to the teaching of English and the age of the participants.

It is worth mentioning that those students who used English as a home language have been excluded in this project.

3.2. DATA COLLECTION

The investigator personally visited the selected colleges and, on the spot, got the questionnaires filled in by the subjects. The marks required under item 9 in then questionnaire (see the Appendix) were collected later from college records in order to include those students who are in the same level of proficiency.

It is worth mentioning that for determining the students' sameness level of proficiency two axes have been pointed out to examine:

Marks obtained in English annual examination in SSLC level were considered in order to exclude those students who are far better or extremely weaker than the middle range of the class (to include middling students).

Marks obtained in General English Proficiency Test have been regarded as a pivotal factor for categorizing the students' level. These marks have been obtained by giving the standard American Transparent English proficiency test to the participants.

3.3. INSTRUMENTS

The instruments used in this study are as:

a) **A background questionnaire:** In order to elicit subjective information about participants, a background questionnaire was developed by the investigator. It covered issues such as the subjects' age, bi/linguality status, their parents' socio-educational background and occupation, and other topics ethical considerations were observed in development and employment of the questionnaires.

The subjects were assured that the elicited information would be kept in full secrecy.

b) **General English Proficiency Test:** English Transparent Test was utilized as the pedestal for assessing the participants' level of proficiency in English. This test comprised 30 multiple choice vocabulary items, grammar, and reading comprehension items. The reliability of G.E.P.T. estimated by Kadar Richurson formula appeared to be 75. It may be worth mentioning that prior to the administration of the test it was piloted with 20 students in the pre-university level with similar characteristics to those of participants of this test and it was correlated with an achievement test developed by the Ministry of Education for pre-university centers. The correlation coefficient calculated between the achievement test and

G.E.P.T. appeared to be 63. Hence, the G.E.P.T. was found to be appropriate for the participant proficiency level.

c) Grammatical Judgment Test along with a correction task developed by the investigator on the basis of the existing English textbook prescribed for pre-university level.

3.4. ANALYSIS

On the basis of their answers to item 6 in the questionnaire (see the Appendix), the subjects were first divided into two groups, viz., a) monolingual: if a subject spoke only one language at home, he/she was classified as a monolingual; and, b) bilingual: if he /she spoke more than one language at home was classified as a bilingual.

After obtaining data, a 2-way ANOVA was employed to find out the significance of difference between linguality and gender (which are taken as Independent variables) and scores obtained –a General English Proficiency and Grammatical Judgment Test (which are considered as dependent variables).

Table 1 presents mean scores obtained in both tests and table 2 presents results of 2-way ANOVA.

Table 1
Mean G.E.P. and G.J.T. scores of male and female subjects with mono and bilingualism

Variable	SEX	Linguality					
		Monolingual		Bilingual		Total	
		Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D	Mean	S.D
G.E.P.	Male	10.90	3.82	15.60	4.03	13.51	4.56
	Female	18.55	3.36	19.84	2.82	19.27	3.11
	Total	14.73	5.26	17.72	4.06	16.39	4.84
G.J.T.	Male	9.05	3.66	11.72	3.18	10.53	3.62
	Female	12.45	5.08	11.96	2.86	12.18	3.96
	Total	10.75	4.70	11.84	3.00	11.36	3.86

Table 2

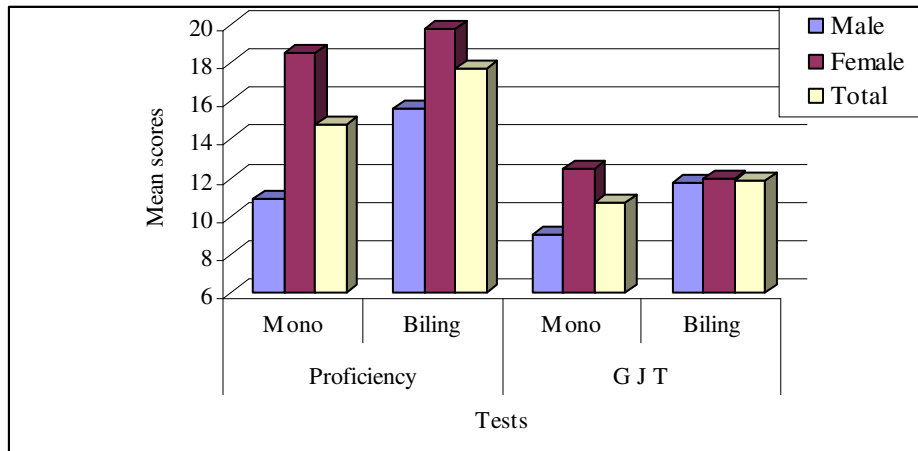
Results of 2-way ANOVA for mean G.E.P. and G.J.T. scores of male and female subjects with mono and bilingualism

Variable	Source of variation	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
G.E.P.	Linguality (A)	199.334	1	199.334	15.960	.000 (S)
	Gender (B)	785.401	1	785.401	62.884	.000 (S)
	Interaction(A x B)	64.601	1	64.601	5.172	.025 (S)
G.J.T.	Linguality (A)	26.402	1	26.402	1.915	.170 (NS)
	Gender (B)	73.609	1	73.609	5.338	.023 (S)
	Interaction(A x B)	55.476	1	26.402	4.023	.048 (S)

Note: S- Significant: NS-Non-significant.

Fig. 1

Mean G.E.P. and G.J.T. scores of male and female subjects with mono and bilingualism:



3.5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.5.1. GENERAL PROFICIENCY TEST (G.P.T.)

Monolinguals and bilinguals differed significantly in their general English proficiency scores ($F=15.96$; $P<.000$) where bilinguals had significantly higher scores (mean 17.72) as against monolinguals (mean 14.73).

Gender also indicated a significant difference ($F=62.884$; $P<.000$) where females had high scores (mean 19.27) than males (mean 13.51).

Lastly the interaction effect between linguality and gender was found to be significant ($F=5.172$; $P<.025$) where, we do not find much difference between male and female subjects of bilingualism, but monolingual females had higher scores (+7.56).

Therefore, the first hypotheses formulated for general English proficiency test is rejected.

3.5.2. GRAMMATICAL JUDGMENT TEST (G.J.T.)

Monolinguals and bilinguals did not differ significantly in their G.J.T, where F test failed to reach the significance level criterion ($F=1.915$; $P<.170$). Between gender a significant difference was observed ($F=5.338$; $P<.023$) where females' scores are higher (mean 12.18) than males (mean 10.53).

Therefore, the second hypotheses formulated for G.J.T is accepted only for linguality and rejected for gender and interaction effects.

4. CONCLUSION

Results of data analyses showed that the subjects' bilinguality has a positive effect on general English proficiency test. Thus, the initial part of the first null hypothesis stating that the linguality of the subjects has no impact on their performance in general English proficiency test was rejected. The result supports the finding of other bilingual studies which have demonstrated that bilingualism results in more efficient foreign language learning (cf. Lerea and Laporta, 1971; Cummins, 1979; Eisenstein, 1980; Ringbom, 1985; Thomas, 1988; Valencia and Cenoz, 1992; Zobl, 1993; Sanz, 2000; Hoffman, 2001).

While as it was shown in the process of analyzing, "monolinguals and bilinguals didn't differ significantly in their performance in English achievement, so the second part of this null hypothesis stating the linguality of the subjects has no impact on their performance in grammatical judgment test was accepted. The result supports the finding of other bilingual studies which have mixed results, comparing monolinguals, bilinguals and multilinguals' acquisition of an artificial grammar, reported that although the multilinguals showed superior performance under certain conditions, generally there is "no clear evidence that they were superior in language learning abilities (Nayak et al, 1990; Magiste, 1984; Balke, Aurell and Lindbad, 1982 and Sawyer, 1992).

The result showed that there is a significant difference between gender in performing general English proficiency and also English achievement test where females had high scores than males, therefore the second null hypothesis stating the gender of the subject has no impact on their performance in general English proficiency and grammatical judgment test was safely rejected. The result supports the findings of other researchers who indicated that the female learners show

possible superiority in SLA, and also proved the gender difference in SLA (Burstall, 1975; Boyle, 1994).

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Appendix

Student Proforma

1-Name of the student:.....

2-Age:.....

3-Gender:.....

4- Class studying:.....

5-Medium of instruction:.....

6-Language or languages which are used at home (Home language):

a)Kannada

b)Urdu

c) Hindi

d)Telugu

e) Marathi

Others (specify)

7-Educational levels of parents:

a) Father: Nil / Below middle / Middle / High school or P.U.C. / Graduation / Post Graduation

b) Mother: Nil / Below middle / Middle / High school or P.U.C. / Graduation / Post Graduation

8-Occupation of parents:

a) Father:.....

b) Mother:.....

9- Marks obtained in English annual examinations:

2005 (SSLC)

Maximum marks:.....

Marked obtained:.....

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