

Multilingual Map of Europe: identity and diversity

Second assignment: Types of multilingualism; Multilingual individuals



Professor: Magdalena Wrembel et al.

Date: 12/3/21

Course code: AMU1500

Names: Batsiou Dafni, Bułhak Milena

1) Multilingualism types your colleague identifies herself with

About Milena

In this part, we interviewed each other for our language profiles. Milena is a multilingual, she knows Polish as her mother tongue, she was learning English from kindergarten and then Spanish during secondary school and high school. She is a proficient multilingual in English and Polish and she used to learn German too. Thus, based on the types from the table we have on the presentation, Milena is an additive, successive (L1 → L2, L3), and late multilingual. As for language competence, English and Polish are dominant over Spanish and she is in the category of foreign language learners at school. The manner of acquisition is mostly formal and the languages are all high-prestige too. In addition, the typology of the languages is far from each other, Spanish belongs to the Italo-western, English to Germanic, and Polish to Bal-to-Slavic (West) “family”. The recency of use is equal to English-Polish and Polish-Spanish but unequal when the pair is English-Spanish and the purpose is for academia/work for English and Spanish whereas Polish is for private/communication. Also, she is a switcher in English but a non-switcher in the other two. Lastly, she is in a multilingual mode as she frequently switches between those three languages.

About Dafni

During my interview with Dafni, I had an exceptional opportunity to discover her multilingual profile. Dafni comes from Greece, and thus, her mother tongue is Greek. She identifies as a bilingual speaker since her second language is English. She acquired English later in life than Greek, therefore her type of bilingualism is late and successive. She experienced no detrimental effect to her native language due to learning a second language, which exemplifies additive bilingualism. Her proficiency is higher in Greek than in English, and these two languages are typologically distant with English being a West Germanic language and Greek a Hellenic one. Dafni stated that her context of acquisition Greek was mainly informal as she learned it at home from birth, whereas her manner of acquisition English was more formal as she learned it at school and with private tutors. Both languages are of high prestige, and both are socially valued, but it is Greek that is spoken more frequently in Dafni’s environment. When it comes to frequency and purpose of use, Dafni’s language distribution is

equal. She speaks Greek and English on a daily basis. She studies in Greek, but English constitutes a big part of her academic education as well. For this reason, Dafni remains in a multilingual mode by switching frequently and intentionally between Greek and English.

2)Multilingual learning strategies

We thought about dividing the learning strategies into categories. First of all, we have the memory strategies which are used for retrieving and storing the new pieces of information. Some examples of memory strategies are having lunch cards, repeating the things that you have to learn, reciting out loud in your own words until you don't need to refer to your notes, watching movies, listening to podcasts, watching videos, trying to teach someone else, learning generally and later more specific, etc.

Secondly, we have the cognitive strategies that learners use to learn more successfully including summarizing meaning, organizing new language and using imagery for memorization guessing meaning from context. Thirdly, metacognitive strategies, which allow learners to control their own cognition – that is, to coordinate the learning process such as paying attention, consciously searching for practice opportunities, self-evaluating one's progress, planning for language tasks, and monitoring errors.

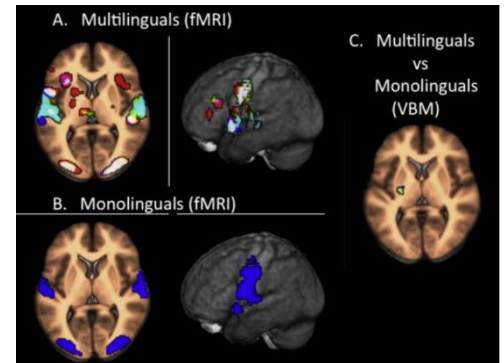
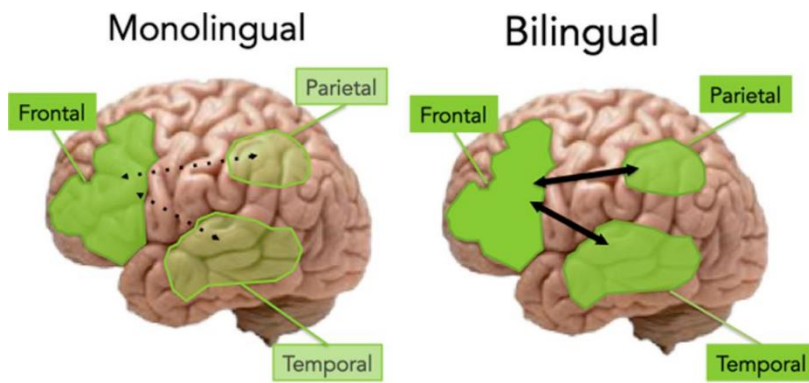
Moreover, there are affective strategies that enable learners to gain control over affective factors that influence language learning (emotions, attitudes, motivations, and values) namely deep breathing, progressive relaxation, making positive statements, rewarding yourself, using a checklist or writing a language learning diary. Last but not least, social strategies that help students learn through interaction with other people, like cooperating with others, asking questions, and empathizing with others. Some social methods might be trying talking with someone that speaks the language you want to learn, downloading apps to speak and practice languages with other people, etc.



3)Some typical features of multilinguals/polyglots

On the basis of our personal experience and the recommended film, we concluded that multilinguals and polyglots might share a few personal, societal and biological features. Firstly, they all are very passionate about languages, and they devote a huge amount of time to learning them, which is often at the cost of their social life. They call themselves ambitious but lonely individuals. What is also attributed to multilinguals is creativity and great mathematical skills. The reason behind it is that by acquiring several languages one acquires also more lenses and different perspectives on life. That provides an individual with creative skills and helps in solving mathematical problems.

Secondly, the environment in which they find themselves has a big influence on their linguistic development. If a child is raised by bilingual or multilingual parents, they are prone to learn more than one language already from birth. Also, as they grow up, they are becoming more and more interested in languages and cultures, and thus, are willing to acquire distinct languages for the sake of international communication. They express a strong desire to communicate with people from different and often remote countries. It is said that multilinguals are more open-minded in that they have better interpersonal and communication skills.



According to recent research, multilinguals and bilinguals possess some biological and neurological characteristics which indicate that they are capable of learning numerous languages more easily and quicker than others. Their parental and temporal parts of the brain are bigger, as well as their memory capacity. However, it has not been confirmed whether the differences in the brain of a monolingual person and a multilingual are the result of genetic predisposition or experience-related structural reorganization. What has been proved, on the other hand, is that some parts of the brain can increase in size if an individual achieves proficiency in a second language.

