

## Assignment 2 – Interview of a multilingual person

My colleague and partner for this project was Marta Makarowicz. She is 22 and a Polish student of English philology on her third year of studies. In the following paper I will be presenting her profile as a multilingual person based on the questions provided in the assignment.

### 1. Multilingualism Types Your Colleague Identifies Herself With

Marta is identifying herself as a multilingual person because at the moment she is speaking Polish and English fluently and she also has good knowledge of Spanish. Apart from those in her previous years she was taught French and German. But here is a more in dept view of her language skills.

- Polish is her mother tongue, therefore it was taught to her since birth
- English is her second language which she started learning at the age of 6 years old and continuous to do so through school to this day
- German is the third language she came in contact with at the age of 13 through school and she studied that for the entirety of junior high (3 years)
- French is her fourth language that she came in contact with and she also studied that due to school for the next 3 years, the entirety of senior high school
- Spanish is her fifth language that she started learning at the age of 19 and continued to do so for the next 2 years

Another categorization we could use is additive versus subtractive multilingualism. Based on the interview for Marta, we get the following results. Every language compared to Polish and English was additive multilingualism because she never felt loosing contact with either, no matter what other language she was learning. However, due to the fact that she studied German and French only in school, when the transition happened ( from German to French) she lost some of the German she had learned, therefore this is an example of subtractive multilingualism. The same thing happened when she took Spanish classes in university. Marta lost some of the French she had learned in high school, and so we can deduct that learning Spanish when compared to French and German is another example of subtracted multilingualism.

Moreover, another categorization we could use is simultaneous bilingualism and successive bilingualism, and for Marta all the languages compared to Polish can be categorized as successive bilingualism, but all the languages compared to English are categorized as simultaneous bilingualism. Finally, when we compare German to French, to Spanish, it is another example of successive bilingualism.

A final categorization we could use is early bilingualism, late bilingualism, balanced bilingualism and dominant language. Because Marta started learning other languages after the age of 5, we can safely say that she belongs in the late bilingualism category. Finally, according to her, between English and Polish there is balanced multilingualism, but

compared to the other 3 languages (French, German, Spanish) they are dominant multilingualism. Spanish compared to French and German is again dominant multilingualism.

## 2. Multilingual Learning Strategies

Something that both me and Marta notices straight away was the fact that depending on the language there were different methods and tools used to learn them.

For Marta, apart from her mother tongue which she learned as she grew up, all the other languages were a matter of choice and preference. More specifically, with English due to the fact that her first contact with the language was through movies and songs that was one of the main tools that she used to help her learn. There was some contact through school but the main reason if I can quote her "she fell in love with this language" was her love for American, movies, musicals, culture. Later in life and through school she also, started learning by reading books and watching different shows. With Spanish the situation was a little different. Marta chose Spanish for her second language at university and received classes for them that lasted 4 terms, but she also started to enjoy the language very much to a point where she began to watch movies and shows in Spanish. Moreover, for one of the terms she also had a tutor to help her learn and understand a bit more. Recently she has stopped learning Spanish, but she aspires to learn more and even at some point go to Spain. Finally, when it comes to French and German, Marta didn't have many influences outside of the classes she got through school.

## 3. Some Typical Features Of Multilinguals/ Polyglots (based on your personal experience and the recommended film/programme)

Based on the most recent data in this area there are some features that most multilinguals and polyglots have in common. Through the video provided for this exercise, we gather that they are surprisingly mostly men, who grew up as monolinguals and started picking up more languages as they were growing up. Another characteristic described in the video is that these people possibly have different brain anatomy than a regular person, but also they were raised in an environment that helped them develop that specific talent. Moreover, they do study a lot and focus on evolving their knowledge. To them learning a new language is a passion and it is not a "chore" to do. I would say that seems to me like the most outstanding difference between people who learn new languages and people who don't.

From my personal experiences I can say that most people, I know to be multilinguals, are people who first and foremost enjoy studying and learning more languages and also show interest in other cultures and civilizations. They consider learning and being able to speak that specific language a great way to better understand and immerge themselves better in that culture. Finally, some are just people who enjoy traveling and want to be able to communicate better with the people of the country they visit to elevate their experience there.