

Influence of Bilingualism on Socio-Cognitive Personality Development

Abstract. The paper gives an overview of foreign studies devoted to bilingualism and its influence on socio-cognitive personality development. Experimental research conducted in the recent years has broken the myth of negative influence of childhood bilingualism. Moreover, based on the comparative analysis, the present research shows the advantages of children and adults grown up in the bilingual environment. Their advantages compared with the monolingual peers include the well-developed meta-lingual abilities and executive functions - executive control, attention, planning, concentration, rejection of inessential information - necessary for fulfilling verbal tasks and activity control. The paper emphasizes the influence of bilingualism on cognitive decentration, ability to learn foreign languages and develop higher social sensitivity regarding both verbal and non-verbal communication (i.e. interpretation of mimics, gestures, intonations), and more adequate reaction to communicative behavior of surrounding people.

The author concludes that bilingualism stimulates creativity, facilitates divergent thinking necessary for observing a variety of possible solutions and creative ideas development. Bilingual skills broaden children's mental horizons leaving them more prepared for adult life compared to their monolingual peers.

Keywords: bilingualism, cognitive development, executive functions, decentration, bilingual child.

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