How Multilingualism May Increase Positive Interpersonal Communication in School in Young Children Interrupting Bias
Early Childhood and the Learning of Multiple Languages Other Than the Home Language - A Study Around Foreign Multilingual Children and Their Damaged Communication Practices in School

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Literature Review

Similarly to the adventures told by French author Jules Verne in his novel *Le Tour du monde en quatre-vingts jours* (English: *Around the World in Eighty Days*), people have always considered travelling: Either due to historical circumstances or will to achieve a dream, humanity has seen migration as a possibility for better chances since thousands of years ago; however, it is thanks to contemporary globalization and the invention of sophisticated transportation and modern social media that the World has been experiencing a consistent high increase in migration. People from all countries are easily traveling, nowadays, both near and far away from home and alone or, most importantly, with families, but what is found empirical to be investigated, when considering global travel, is the need for multilingualism not only in travelers

or resident aliens but also in those speakers who, native citizens of that new country, finds themselves involuntarily involved with foreign nationals.

With travel, most of the the world's population is consistently exposed to languages other than their own but, when relocation to a different country is the goal, the need of learning another new language becomes a necessity, a situation which commonly indicates an increase in multilingualism. As Taintor (2022) suggests, though, "The current rates for the number of multilingual children are often even higher than that for adults" (Taintor, 2022, p. 346), which reasons could be school-related.

This research study is aimed to investigate young children's multilingualism, the lack of plurilingual knowledge in school staff, and primordially wants to explore the reasons why and how multilingualism may increase positive interpersonal communication in schools.
"Despite the global predominance of multilingualism" (Nicholls, Eadie, Reilly, 2011, p. 1) and the fact that approximately two thirds of children around the world are multilingual, the topic has not been profoundly studied (Nicholls, Eadie, Reilly, 2011).

According to Sharples (2017), the challenges that young migrants and learners experience when relocated to a different country are mainly related to a different way of schooling rather than to a lack of the new language skills. They, in fact, are deeply influenced by their own experience of teacher-student and student-student communicative interactions in the school of their native country and are constantly adapting their expectations of schools and teachers, finding the process quite difficult (Sharples, 2017). Not only do they face a constant own struggle to adapt and assimilate but they also face barriers to being heard, misconceptions of who they are, and are typically denied recognition of their knowledge, which factors often lead to inequalities and discrimination. The term "bilingual student", in fact, often has a negative

connotation. Rather than referring to an individual who owns two languages, as Laursen and Mogensen (2016) advise, it is usually perceived and defined inadequately: Based on the level of language competence, individuals may "either belong to or be excluded from the speech community" (Laursen, Mogensen, 2016, p. 15). Despite those obstacles, multilinguals tend to proudly define themselves as such thanks to their ability to naturally switch codes and "jump semiotically from" (Laursen, Mogensen, 2016, p. 8) their native country to a local phenomenon. Furthermore, they mystically create their own identity and linguistic world, intentionally allowing others to access their linguistic process (Laursen, Mogensen, 2016) while entering their Tower of Babel. Multilinguals, therefore, possess what Laursen and Mogensen (2016) call "timespacing competence" (Laursen, Mogensen, 2016, p. 4), as they strategically manage to speak, bringing together different roles and easily moving between times and places (Laursen, Mogensen, 2016), but how does the school system manage multilingualism?

Martínez, Durán and Hikida (2017) discuss how some schools in the United States of America positively offer dual-language programs which "provide literacy and content instruction" (Martínez, Durán, Hikida, 2017, p. 3) to the entire class of students in two different languages, being this Spanish and English, promoting multilingualism and multicultural knowledge. It is important to notice that the dual-language experience in school is fundamental to children's lives and, consequently, although it might result complex for some, it unquestionably shapes their identities and social communicative interactions. The researchers found, in fact, that the sampled children were able to switch codes easily and, we might add, perhaps, inadvertently.

Although very little is known about what younger migrants "who are learning Spanish as a third language within dual-language classrooms" (Martínez, Durán, Hikida, 2017, p. 4) experience,

findings prove that the supposed boundaries between English and Spanish are unfounded (Martínez, Durán, Hikida, 2017). Nevertheless, in spite of such positive results, parents are still unaware of the power of language and primordially plurilingualism and remain so much concerned about their children having to cope with multiple languages that they tend to worry about a possible delay in their children's language development (Lim, Wells, Howard, 2015).

Nicholls, Eadie and Reilly (2011) attempt to examine communication skills in all the languages to which multilingual preschoolers are exposed and argue against those evaluations which only use monolingual reference.

Results of their study indicate that there are differences and similarities between children's language acquisition, regardless of acquiring English only or simultaneously with another language, and show that bilingual and monolingual children perform differently with regard to morphological abilities in the English language (Nicholls, Eadie, Reilly, 2011). Nonetheless, in their cross-sectional group study, Lim, Wells and Howard (2015) aim at constructing "clinical norms for speech development" (Lim, Wells, Howard, 2015, p. 1) in multilingual children while want to also provide evidence about parents' unfounded worries surrounding childhood multilingualism and language delays. Per the researchers, phonological delays in bilingual children are merely "linked to reduced exposure to each language" (Lim, Wells, Howard, 2015, p. 4). The comparison within the study in discussion finds that multilingual children demonstrate comparable phonological competence to that one of monolinguals or bilinguals; however, presumably thanks to the "cross-linguistic influences" (Lim, Wells, Howard, 2015, p. 15) from other languages received since birth, they possess "an advanced phonological skill" (Lim, Wells, Howard, 2015, p. 15) and, for that reason, acquire certain consonants slightly faster than monolinguals and much faster when compared to bilinguals. It is hence demonstrated that

multilinguals can cope with different "developing phonologies" (Lim, Wells, Howard, 2015, p. 15) during the first years of life and are predisposed to become learners of "an indefinite number of languages" (Lim, Wells, Howard, 2015, p. 15).

Home languages constitute an important part of children's identity, which allow them to naturally adapt and switch from their native language to the new one while also communicating effectively. Although multilingualism is broad and, therefore, hard to define, research studies suggest that multilingual children showcase cognitive advantages when compared to monolingual peers, and these might also benefit the acquisition of additional languages and human positive interpersonal communication experiences across the lifespan and, especially, while in school. With that being said, the assistance of multilingual teachers and specific types of communication methods may help in reinforcing these capabilities which, otherwise, might lose positive effects in child development.

Conclusively, even though children learning the new home language are viewed as deficient and their speech practices that fall outside of monolingual norms are still undesirable, Gilham and Fürstenau (2020) report that schools are positively trying to deal with "migration-related multilingualism" (Gilham, Fürstenau, 2020, p. 3) by addressing the importance of teachers' own language experience, and providing staff with professional development surrounding linguistic diversity (Gilham, Fürstenau, 2020). Nevertheless, "the diverse other" –i.e., foreign language and accent, different physiognomy, and culture, still remains a major bias which needs to be overcome. Due to the insistent perseverance in many individuals to being magnetized to their monolingual normalcy, to continue to bring awareness of the significance of plurilingual and multicultural knowledge, especially across the school system, would be a major step in recognizing the importance of multilingualism in a globalized era. While foreign multilingual

children are performing well despite the multi-faceted hardship experienced in school, being this their own struggle to assimilate or unacceptance from national residents, continued foreign language exposure in school staff, accompanied by "professional development programs in which the transfer of linguistic knowledge is prioritized" (Gilham, Fürstenau, 2020, p. 3), could interrupt the bias and only positively impact interpersonal communication, not only in child development but across the lifespan of humans as a whole; therefore, it needs to be promoted and examined due to the still relevant presence of frictions and misunderstandings in foreign student-school communicative relations.

Research Proposal

Research Theme	How multilingualism may increase positive interpersonal communication in school in young children interrupting bias Early Childhood and the Learning of Multiple Languages Other Than the Home Language - A Study Around Foreign Multilingual Children and Their Damaged Communication Practices in School
WHO **What population are you sampling?**	Multilingualism in Young Children (Interviewees: Children 5-10 years & Adults 18-40 years) Monolingualism in School Staff (Interviewees: Adults 25-60 years)
HOW **How is communication involved?**	Multilingual communicative expertise in young children; hardship and positive outcome in a new country school; effects in interpersonal communicative interactions with monolingual school staff
OUTCOME **What circumstances or aspect of life matters to these people?**	Relocation hardships, parents trust, good results in school, positive interpersonal communication experience with school staff

Description and Future Research	This research will serve to dive deep into Nussbaum (2014) chapter 3 around communication development, and how young children, thanks to being able to learn other languages early in life, manage to positively deal with elementary school communication when relocated in the US.
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	Future research will detail the significance of multilingualism towards positive interpersonal communication in school.

People leave their country of birth with young children and, despite the sacrifices of leaving hostile families and deep roots behind, most of their dreams are realized, especially when their children are involved. As international residents who speak a "broken language", though, migrants continue to suffer denigration in their new fellow home, and that is because, sadly, "not all opportunities are created equal when it comes to ethnic families (Lerner, 2005, p. 145). "The dominance of Anglocentrism and the marginality of multilingual and multicultural education are seed forms of greater discrepancies and discriminatory practices in the education system" (Lerner, 2005, p. 145). However, the American dream is real and ideally "begins by achieving competence in school" (Lerner, 2005, p. 145). Regardless of the provocations and unfounded misconceptions, migrants tend to always look for the best opportunity for themselves and their loved ones and without abstention. It is evident, therefore, that part of the obstacles relocated individuals often experience comes from the new hostile society in which they live, which hinder their ability to follow their own path. That is particularly true when children face challenges due to language barrier, where achievements are "hampered by a system that does not treat all people as equal" (Lerner, 2005, 145).

It is demonstrated that, regardless of challenges, bilingual young individuals satisfactorily develop their language skills, and that the introduction of different languages does not cause a delay in developmental milestones (Griesser, 2022). For that reason, parents should rest assured. Furthermore, Griesser (2022) reveals how Arredondo (2021) also details that the "theory of mind" surrounding bilingual infants works differently when compared to the one of those who live in monolingual households (Griesser, 2022), proving that they code-switch languages easier. With that, based on Susana Alverdi, Former Bilingual Literacy Specialist for Austin ISD, schools should "accommodate bilingualism in homework assignments and standardized testing" (Greisser, 2022), which not only might improve child language development but also could help children obtain "more cultural awareness and empathy" (Greisser, 2022).

"Culturally collaborative studies […], addressing the myriad of contexts of multinational, multicultural, multireligious, and multimediality […] is imperative […] in our discipline" (Creedon, Al-Khaja, date, p. 1). Nussbaum (2014) suggests that future research needs to illustrate communication practices across various cultural groups and multiethnicity (Nussbaum, 2014). The results will lead to a more complex but simultaneously complete understanding of the development of human communication in an "increasingly diversified and globalized society" (Nussbaum, 2014, p. 66). With that, to comprehend the significance and complexity of multilingualism, native citizen must be informed, through educational programs, that multilingual communication is of fundamental importance. Like all other kinds of discourse, it represents the interchange of ideas between interlocutors, performed through verbal and non-verbal resources, and it is the time that defines experience which helps speakers accordingly interpret and inter-comprehend each other (Nussbaum, 2014). Thanks to their plurilingualism, migrants, and especially young children own a more complex visual and a better prospective

around multiculturalism and multilingualism, which allows them to easily conversate with and empathetically comprehend others. These factors might initiate possible future research, which requisite is "to illustrate communication practices across" (Nussbaum, 2014) monolingual and plurilingual interlocutors.

This report wants to explore the challenges and consequent communicative success in school experienced by relocated multilingual children up to ten years of age, and is aimed at understanding how multilingualism within the school system may increase positive interpersonal communicative results across the lifespan, in a biased country other than the one of birth. Moreover, strategic methods could possibly be identified for future research. Furthermore, the study will serve as research analysis of the importance of the integration of a multilingual communication course (or global or international) into the graduate program in Lifespan and Digital Communication of Old Dominion University.

Detailed research should initially be performed using university database sources, and a list of articles in support of the topic of interest must be reviewed to identify which ones would benefit the research study. Thereafter, several possible plurilingual and monolingual participants are to be identified so to consequently send, via e-mail or by letter, IRB and parent permission forms for participants under the age of 18, as needed, and to subsequently schedule and perform interview meetings, which would be executed differently. On one side, multilingual children between the age of 5 and 10 and multilingual adults in their 18-40 years will be sampled to discover similarities in learning other languages, differences, and common experiences and methods surrounding intrapersonal and interpersonal communication in primary school. On the other hand, monolingual school staff, within the age-range of 25-60, will be examined to determine their preferences about language and communication practices.

A brief single focus interview per participant, virtual or in-person, is to be conducted on the same day, using a compounded approach of sequential exploratory questions, serving as analysis of their school life after relocating, and a purposeful observation of their words and body language to determine how their own multilingual expertise has been helping or affecting their interpersonal communicative efforts. To properly conduct the suggested interviews, researchers should perform at least five thirty/forty-minute interviews per group: Multilingual young children, multilingual adults who have experienced relocating to another country when still in primary school age, monolingual school staff. Additionally, interview questions should be approximately six or eight to allow enough time for three-five-minute answers and follow-up questions. Then, after interpreting each answer, charts similar to the one in Figure 1 (See Appendix) will be created and compiled in an effort to collecting informative data.

The plan for said interviews should serve to collect and analyze narratives regarding multilingual communicative journeys, plurilingual intrapersonal communication methods, and interpersonal success (or failure) with both multilingual and plurilingual speakers, so to identify and detail different approaches which could be used by both monolinguals and plurilingual individuals as a tool on how to positively perform interpersonal conversations *and not only*, in a globalized world.

In conclusion, the lack of multilingualism in the school system and, particularly, in those who daily interact with plurilingual students, like teachers, is damaging positive interpersonal communication, and specific types of educational programs surrounding the importance of multilingualism within interpersonal communication may help. However, because scientific evidence suggests, but does not prove, that multilingualism as part of all individuals' cultural baggage may increase positive interpersonal communication, future research is essential: Further

studies and research are needed to determine when, why, and how multilingualism may positively affect interpersonal communication, to ultimately attempt to demonstrate the importance of multiculturalism and, predominantly, of multilingual communication in a globalized digital era.

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Appendix

Primary Interview Questions

Multilingualism in Young Children (Interviewees: Children 5-10 years & Adults 18-40 years)

1. What is your nationality? And at which age did you relocate?

2. Which language(s) are/were spoken in your home? And how did you learn them?

3. Provide examples of experiences surrounding your own multilingualism in school. How about other plurilingual peers? What have you noticed, in which circumstances, and why? What could be the reasons?

4. Provide a list of methodological items which have helped you succeed in interpersonal communication? Which plurilingual intrapersonal communication methods have you noticed you use to achieve positive communicative outcomes?

5. What are your expectations when interacting with others? Which efforts have you noticed monolingual staff in school makes when interacting with you?

6. What do you think your interlocutors expect when they communicate with you?

7. Do you prefer to communicate with monolinguals or plurilingual speakers, and why? Do you enjoy speaking to those whose mother tongue is not the same as yours?

8. How about goals in life as a multilingual speaker? Overall, are you satisfied with your current communicative life? If not, what would you change? Include possible changes within the school system, as well.

9. Clearing questions: Anything missed or that you would like to ask?

Primary Interview Questions

Monolingualism in School Staff (Interviewees: Adults 25-60 years)

1. What is your nationality? And at which age did you relocate?

2. Which language(s) are/were spoken in your home? And how come you only speak one language?

3. Provide examples of multilingual experiences in school. What have you noticed, in which circumstances, and why? What could be the reasons?

4. Provide a list of methodological items which have helped you succeed in interpersonal communication? Which intrapersonal communication methods have you noticed you use to achieve positive communicative outcomes? Any example of multilingual experience where you are/were directly involved?

5. What are your expectations when interacting with others? Which efforts have you noticed plurilingual young students makes when interacting with you?

6. What do you think plurilingual interlocutors expect when they communicate with you?

7. Do you prefer to communicate with monolinguals or plurilingual speakers, and why? Do you enjoy speaking to those whose mother tongue is not the same as yours?

8. How about goals in life as a monolingual speaker? Overall, are you satisfied with your current communicative life? If not, what would you change? Include possible changes within the school system, as well.

9. Clearing questions: Anything missed or that you would like to ask?

Content Analysis Coders

Multilingual Child 5-10 years	Interviewee 1 (Italian)	Interviewee 2 (Spanish)	Interviewee 3 (English)	Interviewee 4 (Chinese)	Interviewee 5 (Polyglots)
Question 1					
Question 2					
Question 3					
Question 4					
Question 5					
Question 6					
Question 7					

Multilingual Adult 18-40 years	Interviewee 1 (Italian)	Interviewee 2 (Spanish)	Interviewee 3 (English)	Interviewee 4 (Chinese)	Interviewee 5 (Polyglots)
Question 1					
Question 2					
Question 3					
Question 4					
Question 5					
Question 6					
Question 7					

Monolingual School Staff 25-60 years	Interviewee 1	Interviewee 2	Interviewee 3	Interviewee 4	Interviewee 5
Question 1					
Question 2					
Question 3					
Question 4					
Question 5					
Question 6					
Question 7					

Figure 1. Example Tables for Content Analysis Coders

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