

# Milena Rampoldi: Advantages and Factors of Bilingualism

Education

Dr. phil. Milena Rampoldi

Advantages and Factors of Bilingualism

With Particular Focus on Children

Essay

G R I N

In this essay Milena Rampoldi is describing the phenomenon of bilingualism and its advantages for children. The author is convinced that bilingualism is an important aspect of intercultural dialogue and intercultural communication. If children grow up in a bilingual or perhaps even tri-lingual environment, this will be an advantage for the society in whole. Bicultural and bilingual education from childhood is something we should profit from in a globalised world and in multilingual and multicultural societies as it is the case in Western industrial societies today.

There is no language without culture, and there is no communication without language. So all linguistic communication is the expression of a culture, and as a consequence biculturalism is the expression of the soul of a child who builds a bridge between two cultures, and not just between two languages.

In the first chapter, the author strives to define bilingualism from a multicultural perspective. In the

following chapter she passes to the description of the advantages of bilingualism, in particular for children. Bilingualism means biculturalism because language is a system of signs which makes intercultural dialogue and communication possible.

In the third chapter Milena Rampoldi shows how wrong a theory about bilingualism can be. It is simply wrong and unjust towards a child to connect external problems to bilingualism. Studying a second language is not a problem, but a chance for all children. Bilingualism also helps the child to become socially oriented and flexible.

The chapter four talks about the relationship between bilingualism and age, the fifth about bilingualism and biculturalism. Here the author stresses on the important link between culture and language. She writes: "I believe the question of whether intercultural learning and bilingual acquisition should be identified should be answered in the affirmative, even if there is the danger of being labelled "holistic"". In this perspective, language classes are an essential mean of promotion of the intercultural communication. The author also treats the importance of family and school in the context of this bicultural and bilingual education. The didactical conclusion is that "biculturalism should not be separated from bilingualism. Teachers should always start from the idea that language and culture are two inseparable unities. Culture cannot be ignored in the teaching process, especially in children's classes".



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