

THE COMPARISON OF THE MONOLINGUAL AND BILINGUAL JAPANESE STUDENTS IN THE ENGLISH ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Article is intended to know whether the monolingual or bilingual Japanese students are better in the English achievement and whether the exposure of English influences the ability. The data were taken from 60 Japanese students who are supposed to fill in the questionnaires regarding their language background. The English achievement data were taken from the students' scores in Senior High School National Examination and the data further were compared to the TOEFL English score. The analysis is carried out using ANOVA analysis. This research indicates that monolinguals are better learners in English and exposure is proved to influence the students' ability in English.

Keywords: *monolingual, bilingual, Japanese, student, English*

ABSTRAK

Artikel mencoba mencari tahu apakah mahasiswa Jurusan Jepang yang monolingual atau bilingual lebih baik dalam prestasi bahasa Inggris dan apakah exposure Bahasa Inggris mempengaruhi kemampuan mereka. Data diambil dari 60 mahasiswa Jurusan Jepang yang mengisi kuesioner berkaitan dengan latar belakang bahasa mereka. Prestasi bahasa Inggris mahasiswa tersebut diambil dari nilai mereka ketika SMU kemudian dibandingkan dengan nilai TOEFL mereka. Analisis dilakukan dengan uji ANOVA. Penelitian mengindikasikan bahwa mahasiswa yang monolingual adalah pemelajar bahasa Inggris yang lebih baik dan exposure terbukti mempengaruhi kemampuan mahasiswa dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: *monolingual, bilingual, Jepang, mahasiswa, bahasa Inggris*

INTRODUCTION

The fact that English has been used as the language of wider communication can be seen from two sides. The first is from the references and the second is from the reality around us. Baugh and Cable (1997: 4) mentioned that “English is spoken by more than 370 million people as a first language in the United Kingdom, the United States, and the former British Empire; it is the largest of the occidental languages”. The recent research on The Most Asian Language studied in US (2002) indicates that all around the world there are about 514.000.000 people speaking English. Besides, English has been used in the international area especially in the politics, education, as well as the economical matters. As the countries using English as the first language are powerful in those three areas, the influence of their language as the lingua franca is accepted by all countries (Baugh and Cable 1997).

Indonesia seems to realize the importance of English, therefore, the government decided to include English in the formal school curriculum beginning from the Junior High School. Not only the government, but also the Elementary Schools as well as Kindergartens are aware of this fact. Therefore, some of them put the English subject in their curriculum. Besides the government, the parents seem to realize this development very well. They send their children to the English courses which are getting bigger and bigger in number. The result is that all Indonesian students graduated from Senior High Schools are bilinguals at least English and Indonesian with surely the different mastery of each language. On the other hand, as Indonesia consists of a lot of islands and with various vernaculars, the first language of the students can be either Indonesian or other local languages such as Javanese, Sundanese, or Chinese.

From the situation above, it can be inferred that before learning English students are able to communicate in Indonesian only, meaning that they are monolingual. Another possibility is that they learn Indonesian as their second language because their first language is their vernaculars, meaning that they are bilinguals before learning English. Therefore in general this research is intended to know the mastery of English from monolingual, and bilingual groups by using UN and TOEFL.

The research intends to see who is the better learners in English, monolinguals or bilinguals by checking the results of their English National Exam and TOEFL test. In this case, the consistency of the results of the two tests and the influence of the non-formal education is also investigated.

From the problems above this study is intended to find out the following details: The English mastery in the English National Exam by the monolingual and bilingual having exposure outside the school from 0 – 2 years and more than 2 years; The English mastery in TOEFL test the monolingual and bilingual having exposure outside the school from 0 – 2 years and more than 2 years; The result consistency between the English National Exam and the TOEFL; The mastery of English of the monolingual students and bilingual students.

This results of this research can be used for the students, teachers, and parents to see whether they should send their children to have additional English course, at least for two years or more or think the ways of giving the children more exposure in learning and practicing their English. Besides, as the object is the students of the Japanese Department who are at the first year, the teachers will be able to use the data to predict which students will have problems in learning Japanese at least for their third language or more. If bilingual students are already have difficulties in learning English, the parents and teachers should stop teaching the next new language in order not to make the students more confused.

DISCUSSION

Literature Review

Bilingualism according to Richards and Platt (1977:36) is “the use of at least two languages either by an individual or by a group of speakers” and Hamers and Blanc (2000:6) also mentions that “bilingualism the state of a linguistic community in which two language are in contact with the result that two codes can be used in the same interaction and a number of individuals area bilingual”. Thus bilingualism involves two languages or more that are used by individuals or by society. Psychologically, “. . . a person has access to more than one linguistic code as a means of social communication; the degree of access will vary . . . (Hamers and Blanc, 2000:6). Thus, actually everybody has the ability to learn more than one language in this case Hamers and Blanc use the term bilinguality.

Regarding age, a child can be bilingual since he was born; meaning that there is a possibility that he was raised with two different languages. However, he might learn only one language in the family then he learns the second language either in his school or in his environment. The first is called simultaneous bilinguality and the second is consecutive one (Hamers and Blanc, 2000:27). If the second language is acquired before 11 it is called childhood bilinguality. They also gave another class that is adolescent bilinguality (the second language is learnt between 11–17 and adult bilingualism in which the second language is acquired after 17.

The issue concerning monolinguals and bilinguals is which ones are more capable in learning a new language. Some researches as quoted by Keshavarz and Astaneh (2004:295) “suggested that bilingualism was associated with negative consequences . . . bilingual children suffered from academic retardation, had lower IQ and were socially maladjusted as compared with monolingual children”. However, they also concluded from some other researches that “bilingualism positively influences the child’s cognitive and social development.”

In this case, Hamers and Blanc conclude that the ideas of some authors who have the opinion that “bilingual children may have greater cognitive control of information processing than do monolingual children and that this provides them with the necessary foundation for metalinguistic ability” (Bialystok & Ryan, 1985a; Bialystok, 1991).

The studies to know whether monolinguals are better than bilinguals in learning a language have been done by researchers such as Williamson and Freda Young (1978), Muller’s in Houwer (1998), Keshavarz and Astaneh (2004), and Maghshudi (2007). They use what Hamers and Blanc (2000: 35) call as “Measures of bilingual competence by giving tests of competence in a second language”. Each researcher uses different areas of language aspects.

Williamson and Freda Young (1978) gave a test in reading aloud and the results showed that regarding the sound similarities, bilinguals are better but their sensitivity in grammatical and semantic cues as well as their hypercorrection is less than the monolinguals’. Another statement by Muller’s in Houwer (1998) indicates that the mastery of grammar, in this case, word order was better in monolinguals than that of bilinguals. In 2004, Keshavarz and Astaneh (2004) conducted a study on the bilingual students (Turkish-Persian), (Aremenian-Persian), and Persian monolingual and the result was that the information that bilingualism gives “positive effect on the third language vocabulary achievement”. The most recent research carried out in India by Maghshudi (2007) is to find out whether bilinguals or monolinguals are better in achieving English and he found out that “bilingualism results in more efficient foreign language learning”.

In this research, the population used is the consecutive but included in childhood bilinguals as all the population both bilinguals and monolinguals have one mother tongue; meaning that they learn the second language after they master the first language for sometime. They are also included in childhood bilinguals as all of them began to study English (as their second or third language) at least at the elementary school, that is, before the age of 11.

Research Method

There are two types of data; the first is the students' data consisting of the background of the students as the subjects of the research and the second is the instruments for measuring their ability in English. The first was taken from the questionnaires and the second was taken from the questionnaires and the tests.

The populations of the study were 83 students of the first year of the Japanese Department, Faculty of Letters, Bina Nusantara University. In order to know whether they are monolinguals or bilinguals, they were asked to fill out the questionnaire asking about their mother tongue and their second language. Those whose mother tongue is Indonesian and their second language is English are considered as monolinguals as before learning English they only master one language.

Bilingual students are the ones whose first language is Indonesian while the second one is not English (it can be Javanese, Sundanese or Chinese), or the students whose first language is not Indonesian but the second language is Indonesian. From 83 students, 30 monolinguals and 30 bilinguals were taken randomly. In order to complete the background of the students, in the questionnaire they were also supposed to give information about their exposure in English. Out of the 60 students selected, 32 have the experience in learning English from outside schools (in English courses or private lessons) for 0 – 2 years and 28 have it for more than 2 years.

The second data, the one to be used as the instrument for measuring the English as a whole were taken from the Ujian Nasional (the English National Examination) and the TOEFL test. The results of the English National Examination were taken by using questionnaire, while the data for TOEFL tests were obtained in two ways. The first is when the new students were following the *Pekan Orientasi Mahasiswa* (New Student Orientation) – covering reading and structure and the second was given during the first semester of their study.

The data were analyzed using the statistics completed by the detailed data so that the results can be more informative. First of all, the students were divided into two groups: monolinguals and bilinguals. Then, each group would have smaller groups, the students having the experience of reinforcing their English from 0 – 2 years and the ones having more than 2 years. The analysis of the mastery of English was taken first from the English National Examination in their high school English mastery was taken from the four groups by using two measurements. The two measurements are meant to see the consistency of the English mastery and to make the instruments used complete.

The chart of the process of the collecting data and data analysis is as follows.

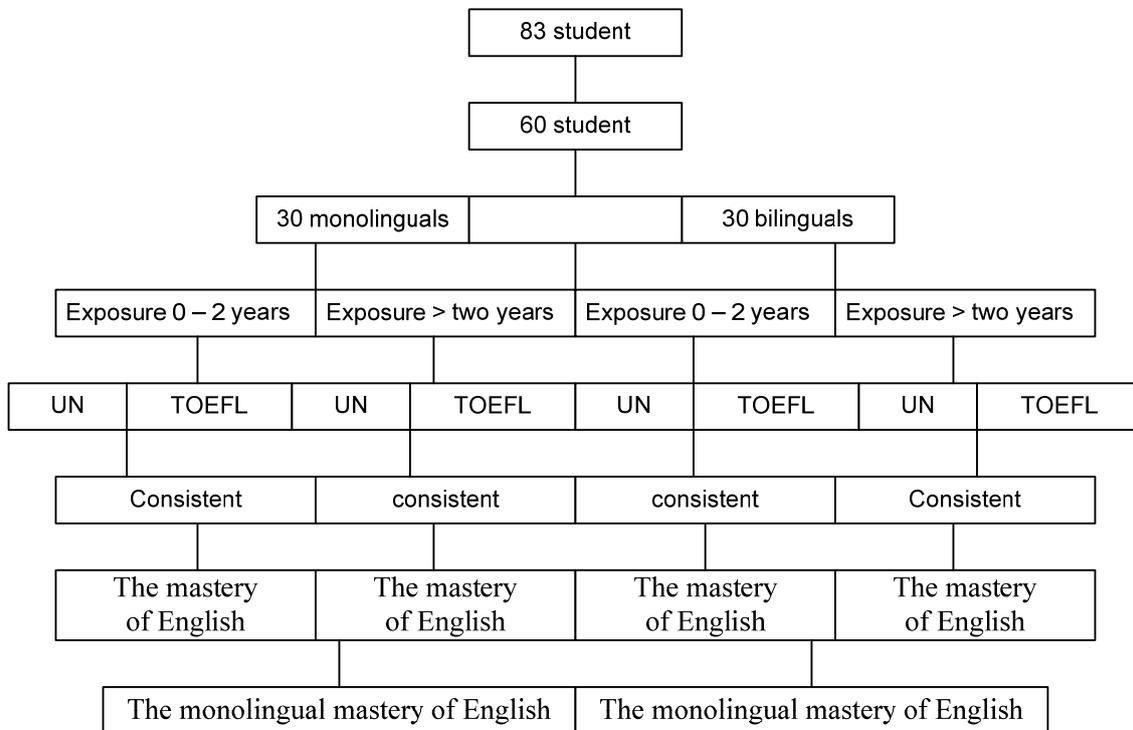


Figure 1 Chart of the Process of the Collecting Data and Data Analysis

Research Findings and Discussion

The data is divided into four groups:

- d1 - monolingual students having exposure 0-2 years
- d2 – monolingual students having exposure > 2 years
- d3 – bilingual students having exposure 0-2 years
- d4 – bilingual students having exposure > 2years

The data analysis will be done in the following order:

The statistics used are ANOVA analysis in order to find out which group is better in achieving the score in UN and TOEFL. The second instrument is using *t* analysis in order to find the consistency of the students in achieving the results of UN and TOEFL class. Each analysis will be supported by the detail data.

The Analysis of UN

The ANOVA analysis could be seen in Table 1.

Table 1 ANOVA results for UN

| Source of Variation | df | SS | MS | F | Fcrit |
|--|----|-------|--------|-------|-------|
| Treatment (d1+d2) vs (d3+d4) | 3 | 6.521 | 2.437 | 2.442 | 2.76 |
| Mono vs Bilingual d1 vs d2 | 1 | 2.97 | 2.9704 | 2.977 | 4.00 |
| Mono A vs Mono B d3 vs d4 | 1 | 0.016 | 0.0162 | 0.016 | 4.00 |
| Bilingual A vs bilingual B | 1 | 3.535 | 3.5347 | 3.542 | 4.00 |
| Error | 56 | 55.88 | 0.9979 | | |
| To t a l | 59 | 62.4 | | | |

SS: sum of square
 Df: degree of freedom
 MS: means square
 F: statistical test score
 F crit: F table standard

The ANOVA indicates that all statistical test score (F) have smaller number than the F table standard (Fcrit). It means that there is no difference among the four groups (d1,d2,d3,d4) in achieving the UN. This result also shows that there is no difference between monolingual and bilingual in achieving English tested by UN. This table also indicates that the exposure in the form of additional English course outside the school does not influence the score of the UN.

Table 2 Summary of the UN and TOEFL Scores

| | no resp | av. UN | av. TOEFL |
|-------------------|---------|--------|-----------|
| d1 | 16 | 8.3 | 446 |
| d2 | 14 | 8.3 | 431 |
| Av d1 + d2 | | 8.3 | 439 |
| d3 | 16 | 7.5 | 421 |
| d4 | 14 | 8.2 | 421 |
| Av d3 + d4 | | 7.9 | 421 |

However, among the four, it seems that the most significant result is d3 vs d3 (bilingual + short exposure) vs d4 (bilingual + long exposure). From Table 2, we can see that the score of d4 is higher (8.2) than d3 (7.5) meaning that exposure influences but not a lot. Meanwhile in monolingual groups, exposure does not play any roles at all. The number of F is very small, and it is reinforced by the fact that the average UN from d1 and d2 is the same 8.3. However, this average is bigger by 0.4 than the bilingual ones (7.9).

The analysis of TOEFL

Table 3 Hasil ANOVA untuk TOEFL

| Source of Variation | df | IK | KT | F | Fcrit | Ho/H1 accept |
|---------------------------------|----|-------|----------|--------|-------|-----------------|
| Treatment (d1+d2) vs (d3+d4) | 3 | 7275 | 2424.932 | 0.7722 | | |
| Mono vs Bilingual d1 vs d2 | 1 | 6869 | 6869.4 | 2.2074 | | |
| Mono A vs Mono B d3 vs d4 | 1 | 405.1 | 4051319 | 0.13 | | |
| Bilingual A vs bilingual B | 1 | 0.268 | 0.2625 | 0 | | |
| Error | 56 | 2E+05 | 311 | | | |
| Total | 59 | 62.4 | | | | |

From Table 1, it can be seen that the TOEFL average of monolinguals is 18 points higher than the bilinguals. In this case, it seems that in monolingual groups, the ones that have less exposure are 15 points higher than the ones taking English course longer. Meanwhile in bilingual there is no difference between the two groups.

The Analysis of Consistency between the UN and TOEFL

Table 4 Consistency antara Ujian Negara dan TOEFL

| Variables | r | r ² | t | t _{0.05} |
|-----------|---------|----------------|-------|-------------------|
| d1 | -0.0079 | 0.00006 | | |
| d2 | 0.589 | 0.347 | 2.521 | 1.782 |
| d3 | 0.101 | 0.01 | 0.38 | 1.626 |
| d4 | 0.424 | 0.178 | 1.622 | 1.782 |

The consistency of the students in achieving UN and TOEFL can be seen from Table 3. If t is bigger than $t_{0.05}$, then there is a consistency in the achievement meaning that the students are good at UN and TOEFL. The highest consistency is seen from d2 in which t is 2.521 and $t_{0.05}$ is 1.782. d4 is quite consistent as there is only small difference between t and $t_{0.05}$ (0.160). However, d3 the bilingual with less exposure has the biggest difference in t compared with $t_{0.05}$ (0.296).

In order to know which respondents that jumps' across the average, Table 5 will indicate the fact.

Table 5 Not Consistent Data

| | | | |
|-----------|----------------|------------|------------|
| d1 | 11 | 7.8 | 453 |
| | 9 | 8 | 483 |
| | 14 | 8 | 490 |
| | Average | 8.3 | 446 |
| d2 | | | |
| | Average | 8.3 | 431 |
| d3 | 31 | 7 | 477 |
| | 33 | 7 | 500 |
| | 41 | 7 | 453 |
| | 44 | 7 | 497 |
| | Average | 7.5 | 421 |
| d4 | 49 | 8 | 453 |
| | 54 | 8 | 450 |
| | Average | 8.2 | 421 |

From d1 there are two respondents 'jumping' beyond the average. The normal consistency is that if the UN score is below the average, the TOEFL score will follow or vice versa. In D1 the three students from below average have the score over average. The results of d2 is in accordance with the t analysis, that the students are consistent in performing their ability in UN and in TOEFL. No respondents 'jump'. The bilingual group which has less exposure outside the class is the most inconsistent in this research. Four students 'jump' from below to over average. The bilingual with longer exposure also moved from below average to over average.

CONCLUSION

This research is intended to see whether monolinguals or bilinguals have better scores in English by using the results of the National English Exam and TOEFL test. In students, one of the factors suspected to influence their ability is that the exposure of the language learning meaning that the respondents have the experience in having more study and practice in English apart from the lessons that they get from their schools. The instruments used to measure the students' achievement in English are the English National Exam (Ujian Nasional – UN) and TOEFL (Test of English as Foreign Language). The two tests are intended to see whether the students are consistent in their scores or not.

The statistic results indicate that there is not much difference between monolingual and bilingual students in achieving UN and TOEFL. Although not very significant, monolingual students tend to have better scores in both UN and TOEFL. The results seem to be different from the ones found by Williamson and Freda Young, (1978), Muller's (1998) in Houwer (1998), Keshavarz and Astaneh (2004), Maghshudi (2007) which indicate the tendency that bilinguals are better. The interesting thing in this research is that the length of exposure does not play an important role meaning that there are not significant differences in achievement between the students taking more English courses outside the class 0 – 2 years and the ones who take more than two years. The results of the National English Examination and the TOEFL tests are relatively consistent for monolinguals and bilinguals except for the students having less than two year – exposure in English.

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