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**BEING A POLYGLOT****Amonova Vazira****Karimova Iroda***Karshi State University*

This case study tries to examine the phenomena of a polyglot. The objectives of the study are to describe how a polyglot acquires the languages, and to find out the factors that facilitate a polyglot in acquiring the languages. This case study used an interview to gain a deeper understanding of the learning strategies. The age also plays crucial role in determining the level of fluency of each language somebody acquires, but the contact with the new languages also plays equally important role in second language acquisition. This article is expected to serve as a reference for language learners seeking to learn new languages.

**Introduction.** You might have encountered people claiming that they are bilingual or the term bilingualism, especially if you are a part of an international community. A bilingual is an individual who can communicate in two languages on a native level (or with a very high proficiency). According to Webster’s dictionary, a bilingual person means “having or using two languages with the fluency and characteristics of a native speaker”. At the same time it may mean “the constant oral use of two languages.” Oxford’s dictionaries define it as “speaking two languages fluently.” However, polyglot is a person that has mastered several foreign languages. Polyglotism is a synonym to multilingualism, yet it stands for a person that has learned additional languages as a hobby. To put it simply: polyglots learn languages for the sake of learning languages. In contrast, multilingualism is usually a term for a community where more than two languages are spoken and used in everyday life.

**Multilingualism and polyglotism**

In a multicultural countries like Indonesia, many people are considered as multilingual since they are able to speak more than one language. Ellis (1994) stated that many learners are multilingual in the sense that in addition to their first language they have acquired some competence in more than one non-primary language. In short, a multilingual person is one who is able to communicate in more than one language. Further, since 1992, Vivian Cook in Cook and Bassetti (2010) has argued that most multilingual speakers fall somewhere between minimal and maximal definitions. Cook calls these people multi-competent. A multilingual person is generally recognized as a polyglot. Poly (Greek: πολύς) means "many", glot (Greek: γλώττα) means "language" (Wikipedia, retrieved at December 15, 2012).

The study of multilingualism is based on second language acquisition theory because basically it refers to the process of acquiring additional language after the first language. In 1953 U. Weinrich cited in Klein (1986) identified three kinds of bilingualism with reference to the structuring of the vocabulary as follow:

Compound bilingualism ( two languages are being learned in parallel).

Coordinate bilingualism (first language has been acquired when learned the new language)

Subordinate bilingualism (referring the first language in order to access the new language).

#### Language and brain

Tool using and language seem to be centred on the left side of brain of most people. The left side is responsible for language, and the right for control of spatial judgment and the processing of non-verbal information generally. Kess further pointed out that humans have language functions lateralized to the left side of the brain, since the damage to the right side of the brain does not usually result in severe language impairment (1992).

Before we dwell on how to become a polyglot, we must know who exactly is a polyglot. A polyglot does not have specific criteria, but they are people who can speak multiple languages. To become a polyglot, we must know how to speak and write multiple languages. Usually, knowing different dialects does not qualify as being a polyglot.

#### How to Become a Polyglot?

The first and obvious step towards how to become a polyglot is by starting to learn a new language. While we cannot teach you a new language from scratch, we can help you make this process a lot easier.

##### 1. Learning one language at a time

Learning a new language can be a lot of fun. It might seem interesting to learn multiple languages, but it is not a piece of cake. Especially when trying to learn more than one language, it can cause confusion and you will not be able to hold much information for long, and hence you will fail at both. Therefore, it is better to learn one language at a time.

##### 2. Choose Languages that are Similar

When choosing the next language, unless you have already planned the language you want to learn, try to look for the ones that are similar to the ones you know. For example, English is similar to Frisian, a Germanic language spoken by a small population of 480,000 people. Hindi is similar to Sanskrit, and Sanskrit is similar to Greek and Latin. This way you can plan a chain for learning new languages.

##### 3. Famous polyglots

Inspiration is often the key to learning, if you want to know about how to become a polyglot, you must enlighten yourselves with some of the famous polyglots the world has seen. There have been several polyglots in the world. All of them know more than 5 languages and have been famous in their fields. However, there are many polyglots around the world who know many languages due to their geography, culture, and interests. Here are some of the famous ones:

Elizabeth I: The queen of England was fluent in speaking seven languages.

Sir. Richard Burton: He is believed to have a gift for linguistics. He knew approximately 29 languages and based his career on knowing languages only.

Friedrich Engels: The co-author of the famous communist manifesto, Friedrich Engels could speak in nine different languages.

Lokesh Chandra: He was an Indian Scholar who is known to speak approximately 12 languages, including several ancient languages like Sanskrit, Pali, Old Persian.

Ziad Fazah: He is the most famous polyglot who was born in Liberia and lives in Brazil. He claims to speak 59 languages. He has the record for speaking most languages in the world.

4. Individual learner differences is a undeniable fact that there are some people who are struggling even only to master one foreign language, while some other can master many languages so easily. It leads the experts to the conclusion that there are some individual learners play significant role on it. Sekhan (1989) in Ellis (1996) defines four learners differences in learning a second language as follow:

- Language aptitude
- Motivation
- Language learning strategies

Cognitive and affective factors such as, extroversion-introversion, risk-taking, intelligence, field independence and anxiety.

Every person has a different learning style with one mode usually strength, Learning is typically categorized into three modes or types: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic.

-Auditory learners acquire information best when it is presented verbally- by listening. They succeed best when directions are read aloud, by listening to and giving speeches, and when information is presented and requested verbally.

-Visual learners acquire information best when it is presented visually- by seeing. They succeed best when directions are written, by writing things down, and when information is presented in pictures, movies, diagrams and charts.

-Kinesthetic learners acquire information best when it is presented in a way that can be touched and experienced- hands-on. They succeed best by participating in field trips, science labs, using manipulative (blocks, felt, props), and by being actively involved in some type of activity ( Wilkins, 2009).

After accomplishing these stages our languages learned can serve as a key to open opportunity doors. According to statistics, 40% of people in the world are monolingual. They are fluent in only one language and a majority of them are American, Brit, Aussie or Kiwi. They do not see the need to pick up a second language as majority of the world speaks English as their first or second language. Others have the luxury of growing up being effectively bilingual. This group of people (43%) most noticeable in communities like the Hispanic in the US (English + Spanish), French speaking countries in Africa (French + Mother Tongue) as well as immigrants who grew up in another country. Exhibiting similar traits are Trilinguals and they have the added benefit of being able to speak a third language. 13% of the world belong in this category and many of them are found in countries like Hong Kong (English, Chinese, Cantonese), Norway (Norwegian, Swedish, English) and the Philippines (Tagalog, Spanish, English). 4% of the world fall into the category of Multilinguals (4 languages) and less than 1% are known polyglots. These people reside mostly in countries like Switzerland (German, Italian, French, Romansh, English) and Morocco (Arabic, French, Spanish, Moroccan, English). Foreign influences and cultural diversity are main reasons why people from these countries are able to pick up so many languages so easily. The Moroccan language is filled with foreign words with origins from Arabic, French and Spanish and this gives them a natural platform to transition to pick up these languages easily.

Advantages of being polyglot

1. Better Job Opportunities

For many, the lack of job opportunities in their home country would prompt them to seek greener pastures elsewhere. The knowledge and fluency of another language would open up new doors to secure that new job you have been eyeing. Chances for better job opportunities would increase massively since a major stumbling block, the language barrier, is no longer existent.

## 2. Business Expansion for Business Owners

In order to fulfill a need in the market, you have to find out what the consumer wants. In order to communicate with customers from a different market, you have to first speak their language. Finding contractors, suppliers or even using a translator is highly inefficient and exorbitant. This is where the knowledge of another language comes into play and helps you establish better working relationships with your foreign counterparts.

## 3. Better travel experience

Travelling to exotic countries is often on everyone’s bucket list these days. However, the language barrier experienced during travelling could pose a major stumbling block towards fully immersing yourself in the country and culture. Miscommunications that often happen due to a language barrier can be overcome if you pick up a certain fluency in the language of the country you are visiting. The locals would also be more forthcoming once they realize you can speak in their native tongue.

## 4. Become better in your first language

As you pick up the nuances and grammar of a foreign language, you will learn to appreciate your native tongue more and more. This is because your brain subconsciously compares the new language you are learning to the existing languages you already know and this provides you with a better understanding of the grammar, sentence structure and pronunciation of your first language.

## 5. Self-Fulfillment

No matter your reason for learning a new language, be it for work, a new livelihood or even a hobby, you will definitely feel a sense of fulfillment upon completion of the course. That feeling of pride is immeasurable knowing you have taken another step towards not only becoming a polyglot but also understanding the nuances and culture of a different country.

## Conclusion

To conclude, from the findings and discussions previously, there are some conclusions that can be drawn. Firstly, polyglot learns languages much more easier than other learners because he is left-brain lateralized and has good characters of language learner, such as having highly motivation, good language aptitude, self determination, good learning strategy, as well as being extrovert and risk-taker. Then, it is true that age plays crucial role in determining polyglot fluency in acquiring new language, but the contact with the language and the chance to use the language are more important in acquiring new language. It is obvious that there are several advantages that multilingualism will open many opportunities, and give you the upper hand nowadays. The one thing that is for sure is the fact that if someone is now way ahead of competition. In terms of employment, seeking better job opportunities, going one bar up on the corporate scale.

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