The relationship between Iranian EFL Learners’ Linguality and their General English Proficiency

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Abstract
The acquisition of more than two language systems leads to the development of new skills such as learning how to learn it also facilitates subsequent additional language acquisition as learners use metalinguistic awareness to explore the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms underlying language. (Maghsoudi and Talebi, 2008)

In the present study by employing the one-way ANOVA and t-test results indicated that bilingual students performed significantly better than monolingual students in General English Proficiency. It further indicated that there wasn’t any difference between monolingual male and female in General English Proficiency.

Key words: monolingual and bilingual females, monolingual and bilingual males, General English Proficiency.

1. Introduction
1.1. What is Bilingualism?
Bilingualism is a universal phenomenon in a mono cultural country like India where this study was conducted. Multiple factors interact in learning a second language. The problem of research is not what effects bilingualism per se has on cognitive process, rather than in identification of those conditions under which bilingual experiences are likely to retard or accelerate growth. The level of bilingual competency is emphasized as an intervening variable in mediating the effects of their bilingual experiences on cognition. But the attainment of threshold level itself is determined by various environmental factors, (Cummins, 1976).

People use the term bilingualism in different ways. For some, it means an equal ability to communicate in two languages. For others, it simply means the ability to communicate in two languages, but with greater skills in one language. In fact, it is more common for bilingual people, even those who have been bilingual since birth, to be somewhat dominant in one language. Calling someone a bilingual is therefore an umbrella term. Underneath the umbrella rest many different skill levels in two languages. Being bilingual is not just about proficiency in two languages. There is a difference between ability and use of language. Someone may be quite competent in two languages, yet rarely or never use one of those languages. Such a person has bilingual ability but does not act or behave bilingually. (Khadivi and Kalantari, 2011).
In the last decade or so as knowledge of the breadth of bilingualism has grown, discussions of bilingualism have concentrated on “the many kinds and degrees of bilingualism and bilingual situations” (Crystal, 2003, p. 51), leading to in depth descriptions of the varied circumstances involved in bilingualism, anticipating the recent call for understanding the bilingual situation through its context and its purpose (Edwards, 2004).

Dewaele and Li (2003) believe, the very elastic definition of bilingualism is, “the presence of two or more languages, which reflect the awareness of the interdisciplinary nature of studies in bilingualism. the present study was to find out whether there is a relationship between gender and reading comprehension ability or not. It means, Numerous studies have discerned gender differences in language learning strategy use in both ESL and EFL contexts. This study basically attempted to answer the question about the effect of choosing topics by male and female learners by regarding to their monolinguality or bilinguality. Therefore the following hypotheses are formulated:

H1: There would be significance difference between monolingual and bilingual males in General English proficiency.
H2: There would be significance difference between monolingual and bilingual females in General English proficiency.
H3: There is significance difference between monolingual males and monolingual females in General English proficiency.

2. Methodology
2.1. Participants
The initial sample of this study consisted of 220 students with the age range of 15-18. They consisted of two groups: 1) Monolingual students have been lived in Arak for more than 7 years. 2) Bilingual students have been lived in Farahan for more than 7 years. By means of a background questionnaire some information about subjects were elicited, so by using the background questionnaire the subjects divided into two groups as:

Group A (50 male and 50 female monolinguals)
Group B (45 male and 48 female bilinguals).

2.2. Materials
The different materials which were used in this paper includes:
a) Background questionnaire: It was utilized to elicit some information as: the subjects’ full name, their age, name of their school and the language/languages they use. (see Appendix1).
b) Language Proficiency Test (Transparent): This test was composed of multiple choice cloze passage, 30 questions about grammar, 10 questions about vocabulary and 10 questions for reading comprehension, totally it contained 50 questions. (see Appendix2).

2.3. Procedures
Firstly, the subjects were informed that their performance will be kept confidential and will not have any effect on their final exam scores. The following procedures were adopted in order to meet the objective of this study.

Phase 1: The Background questionnaire was given to the subjects to fill them out.
Phase 2: The Transparent test was given to 220 (Persian-Turkish) male and female high school students who were monolingual and bilingual. Two groups of High and Low language proficiency levels were identified, that is, those whose scores were 1SD below the mean were taken as Low and those whose scores were 1SD above the mean as High level, making 193 students in total. The time allowed as determined at the pilot study was 45 minutes.
3. Results and Discussion

In order to see if the hypotheses of this study were approved or rejected, the one-way ANOVA and t-test statistics were calculated between the scores obtained by monolingual and bilingual subjects on the General English proficiency. Table 1 indicates mean proficiency scores of monolingual and bilingual males in General English proficiency.

Table 1. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual and bilingual males in General English proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Standard error mean</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>monolingual</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23/50</td>
<td>7/08</td>
<td>1/001</td>
<td>0.008</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bilingual</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28/00</td>
<td>9/09</td>
<td>1/356</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding to obtained means, there is significance difference between monolingual and bilingual males in General English proficiency. (p < 0.05). The results indicated that bilingual males outperform monolingual males, so the first hypothesis was accepted.

![Figure 1. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual and bilingual males in General English proficiency.](image)

According to second hypothesis, there is significance difference between monolingual and bilingual females in General English proficiency.

Table 2. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual and bilingual females in General English proficiency

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Standard error mean</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>monolingual</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21/7</td>
<td>7/19</td>
<td>1/03</td>
<td>0.017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bilingual</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25/14</td>
<td>6/82</td>
<td>0/965</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Regarding to obtained mean, there is significance difference between monolingual and bilingual females in General English proficiency (p<0.05). The results indicated that bilingual females outperform monolingual females, so the second hypothesis was accepted.

![Figure 2. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual and bilingual females in General English proficiency.](image)

In third hypothesis (There is significance difference between monolingual males and monolingual females in General English proficiency).

Table 3. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual female and male in General English proficiency.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard deviation</th>
<th>Standard error mean</th>
<th>P value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monolingual female</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>21/70</td>
<td>7/19</td>
<td>1/038</td>
<td>0.217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monolingual male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23/50</td>
<td>7/08</td>
<td>0/001</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Regarding to obtained mean, there isn’t significance difference between monolingual males and female in General English proficiency (p>0.05). Therefore the third hypothesis was rejected.

Research shows that bilingual participants take longer and make more errors than monolinguals on naming tasks. Using the Boston Naming Task (Kaplan, Goodglass, & Weintraub, 1983), bilinguals produced fewer correct responses (Roberts, Garcia, Desrochers, & Hernandez, 2002; Gollan, Fennema-Notestine, Montoya, & Jernigan, 2007) and made more errors on a speeded version of the task (Bialystok et al., 2008a) than did monolinguals. On timed picture naming, bilinguals performed more slowly than did monolinguals (Gollan, Montoya, Fennema-Notestine, & Morris, 2005). Similar results (slower responses in bilinguals) are found in both comprehending (Ransdell & Fischler, 1987) and producing words (Ivanova & Costa, 2008), even when bilinguals...
respond in their first and dominant language. The simple act of retrieving a common word seems to be more effortful for bilinguals. (Ellen Bialystok, Fergus I.M. Craik, David W. Green, and Tamar H. Gollan, 2009).

![Figure 3. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual female and male in General English proficiency](image)

4. Conclusion

Analysis of data vividly shows that there is a significant difference between mono and bilingual males in general English proficiency where bilingual scored higher than monolingual. Thus, the result of the this study supports the findings of other researchers such as Burstall (1975), Boyle (1994) and Maghsoudi (2007). So the first hypothesis was accepted.

Data analysis indicated bilingual females scored significantly higher in English proficiency than monolingual females. Therefore the second hypothesis was accepted.

However, the third hypothesis was rejected, because there wasn’t any difference between monolingual male and female in General English proficiency.

The study of language groups in Iran shows that despite the considerable difference in the language behavior all groups value the knowledge of Persian, the common language used in day-to-day communication as well as the official language used in the educational and other formal establishments. At the same time, all minority groups express strong desire for the retention and use of their mother tongue (Khadivi and Kalantari, 2011).

Future research should also examine effects of bilingualism on other general skills in different part of the world.

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Openly accessible at [http://www.european-science.com](http://www.european-science.com)


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# Appendix 1

**Background Questionnaire**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>O.</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Name:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Age</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Gender:</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Name of school:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Language or languages which are used at home</td>
<td>a) Persian فارسی‌ی  b) Turkish ترکی‌ی</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(home language)</td>
<td>c) English انگلیسی‌ی  d) Others دیگره</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(specify...)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

# Appendix 2

**Full name:**

**Gender:**

**Part I: English Grammar**

Select the best answer.

1. Juan__________ in the library this morning.
   - A. is study
   - B. studying
   - C. is studying
   - D. are studying

2. Alicia, _________ the windows please. It's too hot in here.
   - A. opens
   - B. open
   - C. opened
   - D. will opened

3. The __________ the book.
   - A. as
   - B. as good
   - C. good as
   - D. as good as

4. Eli's hobbies include jogging, swimming, and _________.
   - A. to climb mountains
   - B. climb mountains
   - C. to climb
   - D. climbing mountains

5. Mr. Hawkins requests that someone _________ the data by fax immediately.
   - A. sent
   - B. sends
   - C. send
   - D. to send

Openly accessible at [http://www.european-science.com](http://www.european-science.com)
6. Who is ________, Marina or Sachiko?
   A. tallest  B. tall  C. taller  D. the tallest

7. The concert will begin ______ fifteen minutes.
   A. in  B. on  C. with  D. about

8. I have only a ______ Christmas cards left to write.
   A. few  B. fewer  C. less  D. little

9. Each of the Olympic athletes ________ for months, even
    years.
   A. have been training  B. were training  C. has been training  D. been training

10. Maria ________ never late for work.
    A. am  B. are  C. were  D. is

11. The company will upgrade ______ computer information systems next month.
    A. there  B. their  C. it's  D. its

12. Cheryl likes apples, ______ she does not like oranges.
    A. so  B. for  C. but  D. or

13. You were ________ the New York office before 2 p.m.
    A. suppose call  B. supposed to call  C. supposed calling  D. supposed call

14. When I graduate from college next June, I ________
    a student here for five years.
    A. will have been  B. have been  C. has been  D. will have

15. Ms. Guth ________ rather not invest that money in the
    stock market.
    A. has to  B. could  C. would  D. must

**Part II: English Grammar**

Select the one underlined word or phrase that is incorrect.

16. The majority to the news is about violence or scandal.
    A. The  B. to  C. news  D. violence

17. Takeshi ________ one hundred laps in the pool yesterday.
    A. swam  B. hundred  C. in  D. yesterday

18. When our vacation, we plan to spend three days

A. When  B. plan  C. days  D. diving
19. Mr. Feinauer does not take critical of his work very well.
   A. does  B. critical  C. his  D. well
   13
20. Yvette and Rinaldo send e-mail messages to other often.
   A. and  B. send  C. other  D. often
21. Mr. Olsen is telephoning a American Red Cross for help.
   A. is  B. a  C. Red  D. for
22. I had a enjoyable time at the party last night.
   A. a  B. time  C. at  D. last
23. The doctor him visited the patient's parents.
   A. The  B. him  C. visited  D. patient's
24. Petra intends to starting her own software business in a few years.
   A. intends  B. starting  C. software  D. few
25. Each day after school, Jerome run five miles.
   A. Each  B. after  C. run  D. miles
26. He goes never to the company softball games.
   A. never  B. the  C. softball  D. games
27. Do you know the student who books were stolen?
   A. Do  B. know  C. who  D. were
28. Jean-Pierre will spend his vacation either in Singapore nor the Bahamas.
   A. will  B. his  C. nor  D. Bahamas
   29. I told the salesman that I was not interesting in buying the latest model.
   A. told  B. that  C. interesting  D. buying
30. Frederick used work for a multinational corporation when he lived in Malaysia.
   A. used work  B. multinational  C. when  D. lived in
   14

Part III. English Vocabulary
Select the best answer.
31. The rate of ________ has been fluctuating wildly this week.
   A. money  B. bills  C. coins  D. exchange
32. The bus ________ arrives late during bad weather.
   A. every week  B. later  C. yesterday  D. always

33. Do you ________ where the nearest grocery store is?
   A. know  B. no  C. now  D. not

34. Jerry Seinfeld, the popular American comedian, has his audiences ________.
   A. putting too many irons in the fire  B. keeping their noses out of someone's business
   C. rolling in the aisles  D. going to bat for someone

35. The chairperson will ________ members to the subcommittee.
   A. appoint  B. disappoint  C. appointment  D. disappointed

36. The critics had to admit that the ballet ________ was superb.
   A. procrastinate  B. performance  C. pathology  D. psychosomatic

37. Peter says he can't ________ our invitation to dinner tonight.
   A. angel  B. across  C. accept  D. almost

38. We were ________ friends in that strange but magical country.
   A. upon  B. among  C. toward  D. in addition to

39. The hurricane caused ________ damage to the city.
   A. extend  B. extended  C. extensive  D. extension

40. Many cultures have special ceremonies to celebrate a person's ________ of passage into adulthood.
   A. right  B. rite  C. writ  D. write

Part IV. English Reading Comprehension
Select the best answer.
Directions to Erik's house
Leave Interstate 25 at exit 7S. Follow that road (Elm Street) for two miles. After one mile, you will pass a small shopping center on your left. At the next set of traffic lights, turn right onto Maple Drive. Erik's house is the third house on your left. It's number 33, and it's white with green trim.

41. What is Erik's address?
   A. Interstate 25  B. 2 Elm Street  C. 13 Erika Street  D. 33 Maple Drive

42. Which is closest to Erik's house?
   A. the traffic lights  B. the shopping center  C. exit 7S  D. a greenhouse

To: Megan Fallerman
Date: May 16, 1998

Openly accessible at http://www.european-science.com
From: Steven Roberts
Subject: Staff Meeting

Please be prepared to give your presentation on the monthly sales figures at our upcoming staff meeting. In addition to the accurate accounting of expenditures for the monthly sales, be ready to discuss possible reasons for fluctuations as well as possible trends in future customer spending. Thank you.

43. The main focus of the presentation will be _____________.
   A. monthly expenditures  B. monthly salary figures  C. monthly sales figures  D. staff meetings

44. Who will give the presentation?
   A. the company president  B. Megan Fallerman  C. Steven Roberts  D. future customers

The B&B Tour

Spend ten romantic days enjoying the lush countryside of southern England. The counties of Devon, Dorset, Hampshire, and Essex invite you to enjoy their castles and coastline, their charming bed and breakfast inns, their museums and their cathedrals. Spend lazy days watching the clouds drift by or spend active days hiking the glorious hills. These fields were home to Thomas Hardy, and the ports launched ships that shaped world history. Bed and breakfasts abound, ranging from quiet farmhouses to lofty castles. Our tour begins August 15. Call or fax us today for more information 1-800-222-XXXX. Enrollment is limited, so please call soon.

45. Which of the following counties is not included in the tour?
   A. Devon  B. Cornwall  C. Essex  D. Hampshire

46. How many people can go on this tour?
   A. 10  B. an unlimited number  C. 2-8  D. a limited number

47. What can we infer about this area of southern England?
   A. The region has lots of vegetation.  B. The coast often has harsh weather.  C. The sun is hot and the air is dry.  D. The land is flat.

Anna Szewczyk, perhaps the most popular broadcaster in the news media today, won the 1998 Broadcasting Award. She got her start in journalism as an editor at the Hollisville County Times in Missouri. When the newspaper went out of business, a colleague persuaded her to enter the field of broadcasting. She moved to Oregon to begin a master's degree in broadcast journalism at Atlas University. Following graduation, she was able to begin her career as a local newscaster with WPSU-TV in Seattle, Washington, and rapidly advanced to national television. Noted for her quick wit and trenchant commentary, her name has since become synonymous with Good Day, America! Accepting the award at the National Convention of Broadcast Journalism held in Chicago, Ms. Szewczyk remarked, "I am so honored by this award that I'm at a total loss for words!" Who would ever have believed it?

48. What is the purpose of this announcement?
   A. to invite people to the National Convention of Broadcast Journalism  B. to encourage college students to study broadcasting

Openly accessible at http://www.european-science.com
C. to recognize Ms. Szewczyk's accomplishments  
D. to advertise a job opening at the Hollsville County Times

49. The expression "to become synonymous with" means
A. to be the same as.  
B. to be the opposite of.  
C. to be in sympathy with.  
D. to be discharged from.

50. What was Ms. Szewczyk's first job in journalism?
A. She was a T.V. announcer in Washington.  
B. She was a newscaster in Oregon.  
C. She was an editor for a newspaper in Missouri.  
D. She was a talk show host in Chicago.