

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.

Phase1: The Background questionnaire was given to the subjects to fill them out

Phase2: 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

male	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean	P value
monolingual	50	23/50	7/08	1/001	0 008
bilingual	45	28/00	9/09	1/356	

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 out perform monolingual males ,so the first hypothesis was accepted.

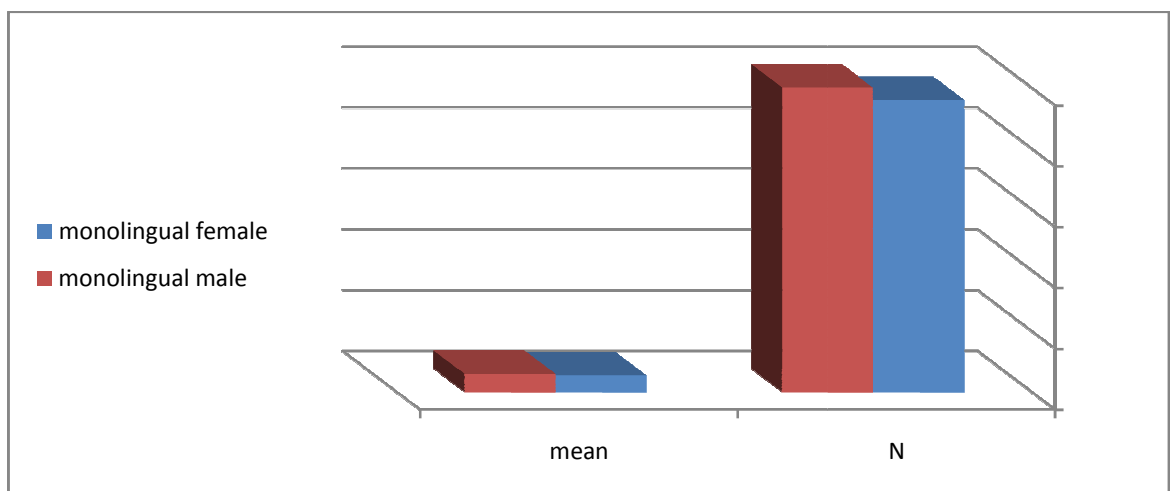


Figure 1. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual and bilingual males in General English proficiency.

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

female	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean	P value
monolingual	48	21/7	7/19	1/03	0 017
bilingual	50	25/14	6/82	0/965	

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 out perform monolingual females ,so the second hypothesis was accepted.

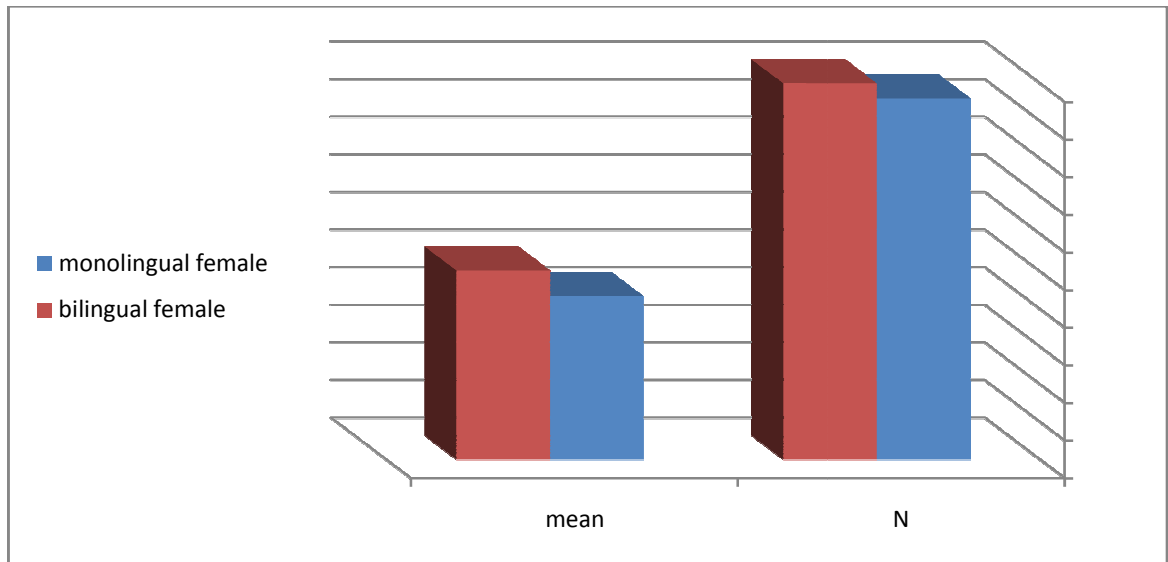


Figure 2. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual and bilingual females in General English proficiency.

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.

male	Number	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error mean	P value
Monolingual female	48	21/70	7/19	1/038	0 217
Monolingual male	50	23/50	7/08	0/001	

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).

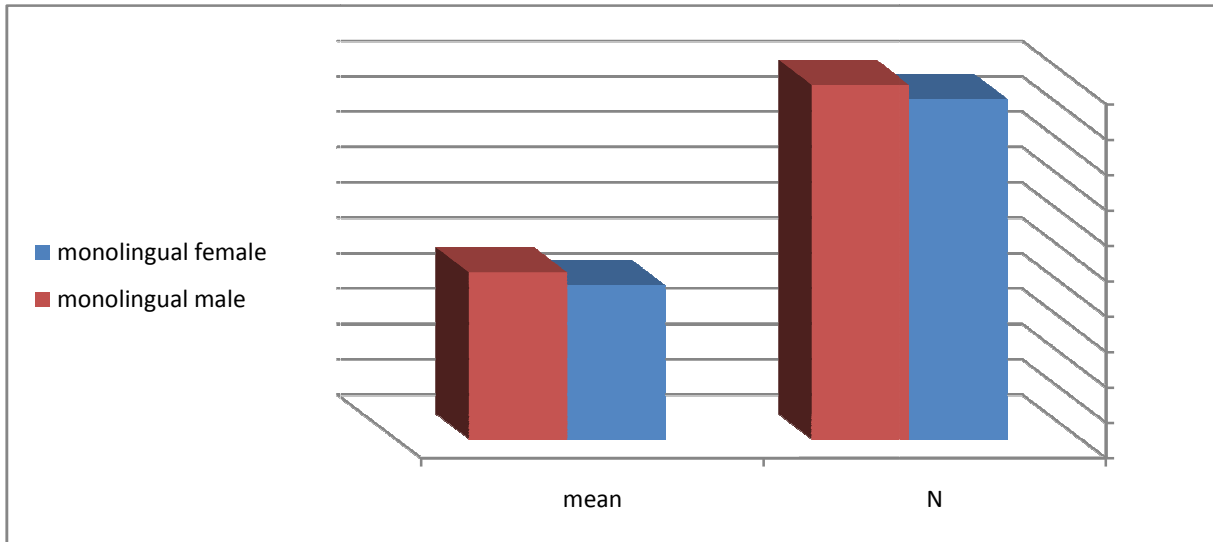


Figure 3. Results of t-test and one-way ANOVA for mean scores on monolingual female and male in General English proficiency

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 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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Appendix 1

Background Questionnaire

O.	Question	Answer
.	Name: نام	
.	Age سن	
.	Gender: جنسیت	Male(مذکر) Female(مونث)
.	Name of school: نام مدرسه	
.	Language or languages which are used at home(home language) زبان یا زبانهایی که در خانه استفاده میکنید.	a)Persian فارسی b) Turkish ترکی c)English انگلیسی d) Others (specify...) (مشخص کنید)

Appendix 2

Full name:.....

Gender:.....

Part I: English Grammar

Select the best answer.

- Juan _____ in the library this morning.
 A. is study B. studying C. is studying D. are studying
- Alicia, _____ the windows please. It's too hot in here.
 A. opens B. open C. opened D. will opened
- The movie was _____ the book.
 A. as B. as good C. good as D. as good as
- Eli's hobbies include jogging, swimming, and _____.
 A. to climb mountains B. climb mountains C. to climb D. climbing mountains
- Mr. Hawkins requests that someone _____ the data by fax immediately.
 A. sent B. sends C. send D. to send

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 swimmed one hundred laps in the pool yesterday.
 A. swimmed B. hundred C. in D. yesterday
18. When our vacation, we plan to spend three days

scuba

diving.

- 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

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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 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

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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

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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

Date: May 16, 1998
 To: Megan Fallerman

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. staffmeeting presentations

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 *Hollsville 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 college students to study broadcasting B. to encourage

C. to recognize Ms. Szewczyk's accomplishments
Hollsville

D. to advertise a job opening at the
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.