

## Factors Influencing Jordanian Bilingualism

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### Abstract

The study aims at highlighting factors responsible for bilingualism in Jordan context. The study provides an overview of the relationship between these factors and a bilingual's choices of language-switch, then pinpoints the connection between them. It explains the essence and kinds of bilingualism. The study illustrates the reasons for the adoption of the bilingualism concept in Jordan. At the methodology aspect and section, descriptive and analytical approaches and basic guidelines were employed. The population of the study includes 52 participants of both genders. While a total number of 42 participants were chosen in the urban area, 10 participants were selected in Jordan rural areas. The study emphasizes on the promising factors bilingualism could offer in the case of Jordan. The study suggests more in-depth study on bilingualism. It recommends how several problems emanating from bilingualism could be solved, managed and overcome in Jordan.

**Keywords:** Bilingualism, Language-Switch, Urban, Rural

### Introduction

Bilingualism is a relative term and a subjective phenomenon. Languages are not inanimate objects acquired once and then stored in the brain's memory, rather, they are living objects that capture our imagination and shape our reality. Language is not a source of communication but rather a way of communication.

In the age of globalization, no one can deny the benefit of a student mastering several languages. From a scientific point of view, researchers agree that learning languages in a balanced way depends strongly on the age at which the language is learned. The connection between language and thinking is one of the important issues that has a strong impact on raising the status of bilingual education. If language is a tool for thinking, then this means developing the thinking skills of individuals who speak the language. Likewise, the mastery of a bilingual person means his ability to access the culture of this language from information and sciences.

A number of independent school principals raised some educational proposals to generalize materials and sciences in Arabic and English in balance, while enabling students to deal with

educational material in Arabic and English through studying terminology and applying many means and programs in it, within what is called the “bilingual” approach.

The theory of bilingual education appeared in the sixties through the first language used at home being harmful to intellectual and personal development, so these scholars recommended delaying the introduction of the second language as much as possible, for example until the age of twelve. The most famous study of Al-Qaed and Mujahid (1959) mentioned that the prevailing theory was in favor of bilingualism as a solution to certain social or educational problems. Perhaps this is due to the shift in the view of bilingualism as an educational issue that can be controlled through its goals, activities, and teaching methods. Thus, bilingual education has become a necessary option for many countries that have begun to feel the importance of learning other languages, or at least one language that is more widespread and high, such as Arabic and English.

What draws attention and calls for focusing on the importance of languages in the lives of individuals is the conclusion that this matter is being addressed at the international level that “The interest in linguistic skills is no longer limited to developing countries, but is also an international interest. Developed countries also see the levels of attainment of basic language skills as extremely important, and it is positively linked to achieving better levels of attainment of other skills” (Ministry of Education, 1998). Languages in different societies maintain a degree of communication between these societies with different languages, and the resulting rapprochement and understanding between civilizations and cultures at the global level.

One of the objectives of developing a bilingual curriculum in schools is to form ideas that do not use traditional methods of learning some sciences and do not focus on textbooks only in the learning process, but rather enable them to apply sciences in daily life and preparing students to face future life (Ernawati, 2012).

Maesto (2012) explained that content and language are inextricably linked. Learners cannot develop academic knowledge and skills without access to the language in which they are embedded, discussed, constructed or assessed. Nor can they acquire academic language skills in a context devoid of academic content. Content categories provide rich opportunities for language development. Language policy can clarify how to support bilingual learning. Each school will have its own language profile, so it is important that this is reflected in a policy that recognises the language needs of different groups and learners (Maesto, 2012).

The current era is characterized by multilingualism and diversity, communication in different languages, openness to global languages, and not being closed off and confined within a local space in light of the continuous accumulation of knowledge, the growing scientific revolution, and the revolution of communications, computers, and the Internet. All of these have led to successive transformations in various fields: economic, political, social, and educational.

The Arabic language - which is one of the most important factors in unifying Arab peoples - faces major challenges in the current era, the most important of which is the weakness that has clearly appeared on the tongues of its speakers. Reality testifies to the weakness that has spread on the tongues of school students, and this weakness includes poor expression that affects linguistic communication (Banani, 2015), and leads to its change or change of new characteristics and qualities from other languages. In some societies, two different languages

coexist due to certain circumstances, and an individual may also learn one or more languages. Here there is the phenomenon of bilingualism other than mother tongue, such as the Arabic language alongside the English language, for example (Mahmoud, 2002).

This phenomenon exists in all languages, and affects speaking and writing, but its effect is greater in speaking; This is because spoken language is more susceptible to change and difference than written language. The student acquires the basics of his mother tongue to be able to express himself, so if a second language is introduced in the stage of first language development, it will affect the student's acquisition of his language skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing (Sadiq et al., 2017).

One of two things may happen to individuals due to bilingualism. First, they may switch languages in speech, which may lead them to switch to the other language, or adapt the word phonetically to the base language, and then they carry out the process of borrowing. There are two types of interference: fixed interference, which reflects the effects of the other language such as a permanent accent, expansions in the meaning of certain words, and certain grammatical structures, to the other language, as in the case of an accidental mistake, temporary interference to the end, and variable interference, which is a change in the stress pattern in one of the words due to the stress rules in the other language, or the temporary use of a grammatical structure taken from the language or languages that are not used in speech, and may include, for example, any excessive generalizations (such as treating irregular verbs as if they were standard), simplifications (dropping the signs of plural and tense, deleting functional words, and simplifying the grammatical structure), in addition to excessive corrections and avoiding words and certain expressions.

Interferences can occur at all levels of language. Interference may be a direct reflection of the foreign language (phonetics and meter), where its effects are permanent (it is simply the accent you have when speaking a certain language), or temporary (such as occasional errors in pronouncing a sound, or stressing the wrong part of a word, or intonation of a phrase in your stronger language) (Grogon, 2017). As for the direction of interferences, if there is a dominant language among bilinguals, the direction of interference is; The stronger language influences the weaker language, whether it is in a permanent manner (which is variable interference), but if it is for a period (perhaps in the form of a change), or temporarily, the interference may occur in either direction (Grogon, 2017).

The psychologist Bandura believes that humans have an innate tendency to imitate the behaviors of others, even if they do not receive any reward or reinforcement for doing so. He used several terms to refer to this phenomenon, such as learning by observation, social learning, or imitation according to a specific model (Al-Zahir, 2015). The model or example constitutes a major basis for learning, and hence the necessity for the learner to let teachers realize the importance of presenting the desired behavior to learners, as learning by example is one of the most successful learning methods, especially when combined with explanations or instructions provided by the model or role model (teacher) while doing the work (Mahmoud, 2012).

Learning by modeling is in modifying existing behavioral patterns through behavioral examples presented by models, and is not limited to acquiring new behaviors only (Abdul

Rahman, 2002). Jabir (2012) believes that learning by modeling helps in teaching many behaviors, including information and skills by explaining them, then asking the learner to practice and repeat what he saw, as Al-Khatib (2014) pointed out that individual's behavior is affected by observing the behavior of other individuals, as a person learns many behavioral patterns - whether desirable or undesirable through observing others and imitating them, and this is what is called modeling.

Therefore, problems resulting from bilingualism can be solved using the modeling strategy. During that period, the teacher is keen to provide good models that the students can imitate, because acquiring any skill begins at the level of observation and imitation, and students at that stage learn a lot through imitation.

### Research Problem

The research problem arose from the following evidence:

**First - The researcher's observation:** Through the researcher's field visits to schools, he noticed the presence of problems in speaking among school students in language schools resulting from bilingualism; these schools do not only teach English, but they also teach the rest of the subjects in it; which affected the students' performance in the Arabic language, especially in speaking.

**Second - Reviewing the results of previous studies and their recommendations:** Most of the research conducted in this field has concluded that bilingualism has a negative impact on student's linguistic, cognitive and educational development, and a large percentage of children suffer from difficulties in language development, including: the inability to understand familiar words or follow instructions appropriate to the student's age; the use of words; difficulty in producing words or phrases or learning the language in a strange way; the occurrence of delays in other areas of development; and the presence of multiple behavioral problems (Grogon, 2017).

Bilingualism also affects the learner's academic achievement, as he tends to learn and speak English, and neglects the Arabic language and describes it as complex. This is due to the methods of teaching the Arabic language, which focus on rules, not practice (Al-Marzouqi, 2015). The results of many studies that confirmed the existence of problems resulting from bilingualism were analyzed, such as: studies by: Al-Dhafiri (1999), Mahmoud (2002), Al-Qahtani (2010), Falakawi (2010), Al-Assaf (2012), Banani (2015), Hassan (2015), Jabrouni (2016), and Aishi (2017).

**Third - Consulting experts and specialists in the field of teaching language:** A number of experts and specialists in the field were consulted, and they indicated the need to address the problems resulting from bilingualism among language school students.

### Research Questions

The current research answers the following questions:

- 1- What are the speaking problems resulting from bilingualism among school students at Jordanian language schools?
- 2- What are the factors responsible for Jordanian bilingualism?

### Research Objectives

The current research aims to:

- 1- Identify the speaking problems resulting from bilingualism among school students at Jordanian language schools.
- 2- Explore the factors responsible for Jordanian bilingualism.

### Research limitations

The current research is limited to the following limitations:

- 1- Some speaking problems resulting from bilingualism (at the level of vocabulary, sounds, and structures).
- 2- The research group is selected among Jordanian school students due to the researcher's workplace and the availability of an appropriate number of students.
- 3- The second semester of the academic year 2024/2025.

### Importance of the Research

**Theoretical importance:** The current research may be useful in providing a theoretical framework for speaking problems resulting from bilingualism, and language school students.

**Applied importance:** The current research may benefit the school students in treating speaking problems resulting from their bilingualism. It may also benefit teachers in terms of providing them with a list of speaking problems resulting from bilingualism among their students. Curriculum developers may also be helped to perfect students' syllabus. Similarly, this research is expected to open new areas for researchers to conduct similar research in the axis of encouraging bilinguals and promoting bilingualism.

### Research Methodology

The current research used the descriptive approach when preparing the theoretical framework for the research, and when reviewing the educational literature, previous studies were reviewed and aspects of benefiting from them in the current research were highlighted.

#### *Speech Problems Resulting From Bilingualism*

**1- Bilingualism:** As for language, Ibn Jinni (2006) defined it as: "Sounds by which each person expresses their purposes." As for bilingualism, it is a linguistic phenomenon that means the use of two different languages by an individual or society in a certain region at the same time (Banani, 2015). It is a term that refers to the use of two languages or their coexistence side by side in a certain society (Omar, 2008).

Scholars of the Arab East have used the term Diglossia to denote linguistic duality and the term Bilingualism to denote linguistic duality. Diglossia denotes the contrast of two forms or two linguistic aspects or levels within the framework of Arabic itself, i.e. between classical and colloquial Arabic (Mahmoud, 2002). Among Moroccans, the term bilingualism refers to the use of two linguistic levels by an individual or group in one linguistic environment, or the competition between the written literary language and the colloquial dialect commonly used. As for the Levantines, the term bilingualism refers to the use of two different languages by an individual or group at the same time, i.e. the mother tongue and the foreign language.

The reason for this difference is that each of them is linked to the history of occupation. The Levantines were influenced by the English concept that considers bilingualism a state that

links two different languages, while the Moroccans were influenced by the French concept that considers bilingualism the use of two linguistic levels within one language. However, most researchers preferred to use the term bilingualism for the first concept (Jabrouni, 2016). This phenomenon has existed with humans since their existence, and wherever their language is found, different groups began to move in search of the causes of life. It spread to different regions on the face of the earth, and each group has its own language. With movement and mobility, these linguistic groups came into contact with others; Which led to the emergence of bilingualism, and this phenomenon continued, especially with the means of communication, commerce, work, immigration, etc (Mahmoud, 2002).

The Education Dictionary for Applied Psychology defined bilingualism as the use of at least two languages whether by a speaker or a group of speakers (Al-Dhafiri, 1999). Bilingualism is defined as the ability of an individual to use two languages, each of which can be considered, in one or more ways, a native language for him (Al-Marzouqi, 2015).

The opinions of linguists about bilingualism varied, and their definitions of it differed, and these are the most prominent of the above definitions (Mahmoud, 2002):

- The individual's complete proficiency in two languages.
- The individual's possession of the minimum level of one linguistic skill in a second language.
- The ideal use of two or more languages.
- The individual or group's use of the two languages with proficiency, and the mechanism of one of the language skills, and for any of the goals.

#### *Types of Bilingualism*

Bilingualism takes two forms: an individual form, in which the individual knows two languages, a social form, in which members of society use two different languages, whether equivalent or different, and a social form, in which they choose to use one of them in certain situations and use the second in other situations. They may use both languages in one communication situation at the same time (Al-Marzouqi, 2015). Bilingualism appears in different areas of life and in multiple aspects of society, and varies according to its appearance in individual or society as follows (Mahmoud, 2002):

**A- Individual bilingualism:** This type of bilingualism is related to individuals in particular. If the subject of the discussion is individual and his language, then this means talking about individual bilingualism. In such a case, bilingualism is studied as an individual phenomenon, and is called individualism because it is specific to the individual and attributed to him.

**B-Societal bilingualism:** This type is concerned with studying this phenomenon as a general phenomenon in society, dealing with the conflicting linguistic factors within society, and their interactions and effects in that society. This requires studying the languages used in that society, so we study the strongest language, the majority language, and the minority language, with the aim of developing a successful policy in education. This bilingualism means that there are two languages used in a society, and it does not mean that all members of society must use both languages.

### *Factors Responsible for Bilingualism*

Bilingualism has factors that lead to its occurrence, the most important of which are (Al-Anani, 2007):

**A- Political:** Among the most important factors leading to bilingualism are: mass migration due to political persecution or forced by customary or religious law or escaping poverty and homelessness, seeking for immigrants to learn the language of the host country, as well as the factor of military invasion that imposes on the occupying country the necessity of learning a second language.

**B- Economic Factors:** Such as economic transactions and commercial deals that take place between the parties of commercial clients. This commercial convergence results in linguistic convergence with the presence of a common language.

**C- Social and Psychological Factors:**

Social factors, such as: marriage between people of different nationalities, each of whom seeks to teach his children the mother tongue (the language of origin), and the desire of young people to immigrate to complete their education and then marry foreigners. The psychological factor is due to the lack of mastery and knowledge of the mother tongue. If the individual speaks it, he feels inferior to belittle its importance and consider it a second language, not a language that advances civilization. However, if he speaks a foreign language, he feels civilized and advanced.

**D- The Educational and Media Factor:** Education may contribute to the spread of bilingualism. If education is conducted in all its stages in the mother tongue, the language would have flourished and developed, and foreign languages would have been limited. However, the university educational scene in Jordan shows that many specializations are taught in foreign languages, especially scientific specializations; which creates bilingualism in the students by using terms in their foreign pronunciation. In addition, there are terms that do not have an equivalent in Arabic; which forces them to use the term in the foreign language without trying to Arabize it. Some reasons are also related to visual, audio, written media and what is observed in it of a departure from the mother tongue to foreign languages in an attempt to promote and claim that this is better, more refined, and attracts attention.

Mahmoud (2002) mentioned another group of factors, including: Mass migration; Military invasion and occupation; Annexation of countries to each other; National sense and defense of nationalism; Intermarriage between people of different nationalities; and Spread of beliefs and religions, along with their languages.

### **Concluding Thought**

As a matter of importance, the study submits that bilingualism in schools or education is the adoption and teaching of second language as the original language is taught, in addition to adopting it in teaching some school subjects, discovering the culture of the second language and interacting with it from its source, interacting with its values and specificity alongside the national language, its culture and its authentic values. Bilingualism is also concerned with the specificity of state policy and school planning in the educational program that is formulated based on it; the essence of which is adopting the second language alongside the national language (Banani, 2015). Bilingualism enhances the speaker's view of language, strengthens his ability to think; changes his view of the world and things around him; develops his ability to adapt and accept others; openness to civilization and culture of others.

Despite the fact that bilingualism education and the concept of bilingualism is still low in practice and adoption in Jordan, it is essential to observe the factors responsible for Jordanian bilingualism by encouraging students to study second and foreign language with authors who have a good command of the language and enjoy linguistic fluency; and by practicing, posting and publishing advertisements in the second language. Similarly, daily listening, writing, reading and speaking skills are essential in language two as prioritized in the mother language. It is important that these factors are adequately considered, monitored and adhered to. Jordanian students should be familiarized with how to play along with these factors; they should be educated about the skills required to cope with these factors; they should be trained to support and promote the concept of bilingualism; and finally, they should be equipped to overcome all sorts of challenges surrounding bilingualism.

In light of the results of the current research, it is possible to propose studying the following topics such as the extent of the existence of factor problems resulting from bilingualism among Jordanians; the programs and strategies to increase bilinguals in Jordan schools; curriculum for bilinguals at every stage of education in Jordan; alternative mode of developing reading, writing and speaking skills for bilinguals; effect of bilingualism on Jordan educational system; monolingualism and bilingualism in Jordan; guides to inclusive bilingual education; and the impact of bilingualism on the proficiency and use of English language in Jordan.

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