

THE INFLUENCE OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES ON OUR EDUCATION

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Abstract. *The influence of foreign languages on education is profound and multifaceted, significantly contributing to cognitive development, cultural awareness, and career opportunities. Learning a foreign language enhances critical thinking and problem-solving skills, fostering a more versatile mindset among students. It encourages cultural appreciation and global awareness, essential in today's interconnected world. Moreover, proficiency in foreign languages prepares students for a competitive job market, where bilingualism or multilingualism is increasingly valued across various industries. Educational institutions recognize the importance of foreign language programs, integrating them into curricula to enhance overall academic experiences. This abstract explores the vital role of foreign languages in shaping not only individual growth but also societal progress, underscoring their significance in fostering communication and understanding in a diverse, global landscape.*

Keywords: *Foreign Languages, Education, Globalization, Communication, Cognitive Development, Cross-Cultural Understanding, Academic Achievement, Professional Opportunities, Language Proficiency and Interconnected Society*

INTRODUCTION.

In an increasingly globalized world, the ability to communicate across linguistic boundaries has never been more critical. The influence of foreign languages on education extends far beyond simple communication; it shapes our cognitive abilities, cultural perspectives, and career trajectories. As students engage with foreign languages, they cultivate essential skills such as critical thinking, empathy, and cross-cultural understanding. This multifaceted educational approach not only enhances academic achievement but also prepares individuals to thrive in diverse environments. Furthermore, as businesses and organizations operate on a global scale, proficiency in foreign languages opens doors to myriad professional opportunities. By examining how foreign languages impact our education, we highlight their crucial role in fostering a more informed, interconnected, and adaptable society.

Foreign language study creates more positive attitudes and less prejudice toward people who are different.

Studying a foreign language will improve your chances of getting a job.

Studying a new culture helps you meet new and interesting people.

Dealing with another culture enables people to gain a more profound understanding of their own culture.

The study of foreign languages boosts confidence.

Graduates often cite foreign language courses as some of the most valuable courses in college because of the communication skills developed in the process.

International travel is made easier and more pleasant through knowing a foreign language.

Skills like problem solving, dealing with abstract concepts, are increased when you study a foreign language.

Foreign language study enhances one's opportunities in government, business, medicine, law, technology, military, industry, marketing, etc.

A second language improves your skills and grades in math and English and on the SAT and GRE.

Analytical skills improve when students study a foreign language.

Foreign languages provide a competitive edge in career choices: one is able to communicate in a second language.

Foreign language study enhances listening skills and memory.

One participates more effectively and responsibly in a multi-cultural world if one knows another language.

Your marketable skills in the global economy are improved if you master another language.

Benefits of Learning Foreign Languages

There are many undeniable benefits of learning foreign languages, which is probably the main factor that motivates people to engage in this activity. For travellers and tourists, mastering foreign languages can make the difference between a successful vacation or no vacation at all. In today's globalized world, not being able to communicate in foreign languages makes people eyeless and deaf in foreign countries. The advantages are numerous, ranging from reading favorite foreign writers in the original, watching foreign movies, making friends, following international news, or doing business. According to The Economist (Special Technology Quarterly, 8 June 2002), there are 11,404 languages spoken in more than 220 countries. 2. Tourism is seen as the latest sign of a leisure-oriented society, and both during the communist era and after 1989, see tourism as a good opportunity for developing underdeveloped regions by promoting their natural and ethnographic resources, unique sites, traditional crafts, and local cuisine. The public and the local businessmen seem to be more and more concerned with developing regions' potential, which they usually associate with the heritage of those territories. Foreign languages play a crucial role in this process and deserve to be considered a valuable skill required in the development of any region. Knowing the language of the tourist, the fact that they are often accompanied by professional guides could be ruled out, and may give local people an unexpected feeling of autonomy, and at the same time, bears the promise of contact opening doors for the accomplishment of special needs, personalized tours, advice for taking advantage of relatively simple and probably unnoticed opportunities.

Another advantage of learning foreign languages is that people who master more than two or three languages have the ability to communicate more. This does not only refer to more dialogue and additional interaction, but also to improved quality of contact among people. Therefore, by learning a few foreign languages, we can get to know additional customs, traditions, food, cultural aspects, and certainly history of that country or countries. On the other hand, often such knowledge can help people solve a certain problem, overcome misunderstandings, solve arguments, clarify certain subjects, etc. Secondly, we know that often people are more open, accept and trust some group of people if people are able to speak and write in their mother tongue, or at least in the language that they use on a daily basis.

Some students are born in an international or intercultural environment and they acquire cultural understanding and respect from their surroundings. However, for a major part of the world, lessons on interculturality and cultural sensitivity are a necessity to sensitize young people about the necessity to be open and understanding towards the habits and cultures of others. Foreign language teaching can serve as a platform to help develop respect and understanding and get a sense of the differences and similarities between one's own culture and those of others. It can also help develop sensitivity towards cultural expressions of others, be it food, music, fashion, or art. Similarly, foreign language teaching can help develop empathy towards the learning style of others. Also, a little knowledge of the language(s) of the immigrants can break the usual cultural stereotypes and create a better feeling of inclusion of the migrants in the newly-established place.

These significant factors have contributed to extensive job opportunities for graduates with proficiency in foreign languages. Because the demand for language skills is so great, foreign language graduates can command impressive salaries across the career spectrum. Foreign language abilities are valuable and marketable assets in many careers. Many graduates with computer, technical, engineering or scientific skills need people who have language skills for international projects. Graduates in science, engineering, commerce, nursing, medical, legal and social fields can complement their specialized study with foreign language training and make themselves even more marketable when they enter the workforce. They will be completely bilingual/multilingual

individuals and will have acquired extensive knowledge of the target culture. A certificate in language study can be an important part of their professional portfolio and can open doors to business, education and government agency clients in the U.S. and abroad. Today's job market increasingly prefers graduates who possess both specialized knowledge and effective communication skills.

Challenges and Solutions in Language Learning

Despite its settings and functions, language learning is an activity that is rife with challenges. This varies depending on situational conditions such as whether language learning is primarily location-bound or technology-driven, or whether it is taken up as a formal, non-formal setting or an informal one, and then the level of proficiency sought, as well as whether the learning takes place using one's native language as the medium of instruction or a foreign language. With regards to locational settings, many non-Anglophone countries have national language pledge frameworks to ensure that students speak, read, write, and communicate in their place of learning. The idea is to create an environment that supports and encourages A2 learners to practice their new language as much as possible, so as to acquire it as well as, or at least nearly as well, as A1. One main challenge is that students often revert to A1 as they lose confidence, and when homework is done and activities completed, they may drift back to speaking in A1, which is considered more convenient to avoid misunderstanding, embarrassment, or being singled out. This is increasingly difficult in a digital age when students are adept at quickly using online translator services for individual words or entire sentences. While these services are frowned upon in classrooms and during assignments, as they provide shortcuts that advantage learners who use their A1 to understand and complete the exercise, students continue to rely on them as shortcuts to learning. Considering the importance of helping students to use their A2 as much as possible, exposing them to cultural and linguistic differences is widely employed as a strategy across different educational settings.

Effective Language Learning Strategies

Because of the inadequacy in language learning as the present status of learners, the author suggests that language learners need to be aware of the learning strategies employed. The employment level is divided into recognition, control, and intention by the author. It is of high significance for the strategies by classification that language learners can find out their own strategies and become able to improve them based on the process. As two applied English-major freshmen of National Kaohsiung Normal University are the study object, the author starts the study to find out the learning strategies they employed. The PALS (Strategy Use Scales) was adopted in this study to administer the strategies that subjects are employed. The given results show that these subjects employ only a limited number of learning strategies in the process of English learning. Furthermore, they mainly know and make use of metacognitive strategies and person-variable strategies than cognitive and affective strategies. Personal and situational differences have been particularly important in self-regulated foreign-language learning. In order to gain an understanding of the varieties of self-regulated English learning and the factors that affect these varieties, this qualitative study uses semi-structured interviews with 23 students to collect data.

In a world which is confronted with the rise and growing influence of new political and economic powers, it is of the utmost importance that the so-called democratic countries create a new world based on economic and political fairness and a healthy acceptance of each other's cultural differences. History repeatedly tells the tale of the rise and fall of empires and civilizations, and it is now time for the twentieth century to step to the gauge. An antidote, a possible solution, is neither bizarre nor hard to imagine. Learning a new language, a language from a foreign country, can ensure a more honest and open understanding of the cultural values embraced by the members of the other community or country. Therefore, the importance of learning foreign languages in a globalized world becomes self-evident. As a matter of fact, learning a language has gradually evolved from being an option to a requirement in early education. By all accounts, leaving the educational system without proficiency in at least one foreign language will be considered a hand-me-down from history that might be troubling to the world of tomorrow.

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