

The benefits of learning English as a second language

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Abstract

Bilingualism is becoming a progressively necessary and essential skill for anyone. English language is taught in every school in our country but also in many countries around the world. There are lots of advantages of learning English as a second language: the first language is improved, it enhances networking skills, it boosts communicative proficiency, it improves Functioning In Other Academic Areas, it is easier to learn other languages, it boosts creativity, It builds up self-confidence, it improves Brain Power and Memory and it provides Better Career Choices. We will analyze each of these benefits in the following article.

Keywords: Second language, Learning, Brain, Children, Education, Benefits, Improve

Título: Los beneficios del aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Resumen

El bilingüismo se está convirtiendo en una habilidad cada vez más necesaria y esencial para cualquier persona. El inglés se enseña en todas las escuelas de nuestro país, pero también en muchos otros lugares del mundo. Hay muchas ventajas de aprender este idioma: se mejora el español, mejora las habilidades de comunicarse, beneficia al aprendizaje de otras áreas académicas, es más fácil aprender otros idiomas, aumenta la creatividad y la confianza en sí mismo, mejora la capacidad mental y la memoria y proporciona mejores opciones laborales. Analizaremos cada uno de estos beneficios en el siguiente artículo.

Palabras clave: Lengua extranjera, Aprendizaje, Cerebro, Niños, Educación, Beneficios, Mejorar.

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INTRODUCTION

Knowing a foreign language is nowadays a mere necessity for social and educational reasons. The integration in the European Union, trips abroad and cultural and communication exchanges, make the learning of a foreign language a social demand. Among all the languages spoken in our world, the Chinese language is the most spoken, but the English language is the most widespread, 80% of the information stored electronically and 75% of the scientific literature is available in this language. In addition, this is the official language of many international organizations, such as the European Union and the United Nations. For these reasons, nowadays it is the language that is taught as mandatory in all of our schools, followed by French and German.

As the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein said “the limits of your language are the limits of your world”. However, it is not only the social needs that shape the contents and functions of this area. There are more important educational reasons. We will analyse the main benefits of learning English as a second language in the following lines.

THE FIRST LANGUAGE IS IMPROVED

In the first place, learning a foreign language also makes the knowledge of the mother tongue much more deeply. Terms such as vocabulary, grammar, comprehension and sentence structure become everyday phrases, whereas your own language is probably absorbed more profoundly. **The assertive cognitive effects of learning to speak English as a second language could coach the brain to analyze different linguistic frames.**

ENHANCES NETWORKING SKILLS

Secondly, only by studying a foreign language the pupils will be able to communicate with other linguistic societies, value different lifestyles and cultural ideas positively and thus learning a foreign language will contribute to the development of a feeling of social and cultural tolerance. Opening up to a culture enables children to be more open

mindful and grateful of other people's opinions. Learning a second language improves their ability to convey in today's globally on-line world.

According to Katherine Bjornson, "learning a second language and connecting with other cultures can expand your world view, and expanding your world view can help you gain perspective on your own life and culture".

BOOSTS COMMUNICATIVE PROFICIENCY

As far as general aspects of formation are concerned, we can say that by learning a second language the pupils' communicative competence improves in general with the acquisition of new concepts, strategies, abilities, attitudes and linguistic codes.

Thus the main aim of the area of foreign language teaching in Primary Education is to learn to communicate in that language, favouring its instrumental use. This implies adopting an approach based on communication and the progressive development of communicative competence.

Our law also pays attention to this necessity of learning a foreign language, encouraging and emphasising the teaching and learning of English in Primary Education. The "Ley Orgánica 2/2006 May 3rd de Educación" which establishes the teaching requirements for Primary Education, claims that our main aim is to enable children to reach a certain level of Communicative Competence in the foreign language. It refers to oral and written receptive and productive skills which have to be worked integrated.

Consequently, the aim of learning the new language will be the message and the discourse understood globally and arising from texts which will be coherent and adequate.

IMPROVES FUNCTIONING IN OTHER ACADEMIC AREAS

As a consequence of superior cognitive abilities, studies demonstrate that the profit of learning a extra language incorporate advanced scores on other areas. Bilingual students get better marks than monolingual students in standardized maths exams, text analysis comprehension or vocabulary tests. When the children become skilled at flipping from one language to another, they master their multitasking capacities.

Bilingual kids have also been shown to be more rational, having superior decision-making abilities and being more conscious of their background. For those reasons foreign language knowledge helps to expand solid cognitive abilities, such a better concept creation, mind adaptability, multitasking , listening aptitudes an problem-solving, aspects that will improve functioning in other academic areas.

IT IS EASIER TO LEARN OTHER LANGUAGES

Learning a second language helps to learn other languages in an easier way. When kids start to study a second language they will find that the attainment strategies they are using can be useful to learn other languages. They are increasing their skill to repeat the same procedure through several languages. This is called "metalinguistic awareness", it happens when their brains learn to identify the methods of learning a language and break down into a sequence of tasks. It cannot happen learning our mother tongue because none of us are conscious of this process. In conclusion, once learning one language, they will naturally recognize how to learn a language and how different languages are organized, understanding the concepts of grammar and sentence structure.

BOOSTS THEIR CREATIVITY

Studying English as a second language progresses not only their capacity to resolve problems and to reflect more rationally. Mastering their English language abilities forces students to connect their brain connections to look for different words or expressions. It happens because when you form new grammatical structures in a language different from yours, you are "forced" to be creative. You often have to think of an alternative word that you are not used to using. For those reasons we could say that learning a foreign language improves our creativity.

IT BUILDS UP SELF-CONFIDENCE

Self-belief increments when a new ability is dominated, and learning a second language is not different. Learning a second language increments the students' self-confidence, what is essential for their lives and helps them to feel happier with themselves. Eric Holtzclaw, a well-known coach and author of the work "Lean Forward" states the following: "A small step in the perspective of oneself gives you the necessary impetus to take on the next challenge."

IMPROVES BRAIN POWER

Any language is a complete new complicated scheme of regulations, structures, and lexis. Learning a new language, English in this case, means that the student' brain has to adapt with complexity as it makes sense of and assimilates new designs.

As our brains work out the significance, endeavoring to communicate, we expand key learning abilities such as cognitive thinking and problem-solving. Highly created significant thinking skills are a considerable advantage both individually and professionally.

Johan Martensson's research shows that after three months of studying a foreign language, learners' brains grew in four places: the hippocampus, middle frontal gyrus, inferior frontal gyrus, and superior temporal gyrus (gyri are ridges on the cerebral cortex).

IMPROVES MEMORY

It is a basic fact, the more the brain is used, the better its capacities do. A new tongue requires not simply experience with words and regulations, but also being able to rememeber and use all this information.

Learning a language gives children's memory a proficient work out in their minds. This implies that multilingual kids control brains that are more worked out and fast to bring for example names, commands, facts and figures.

In summary, students who speak two or more languages have a stronger working memory than those raised in a single language. This means that they are better for mental calculation, reading and many other vital skills, because their brains worked faster, pulling information and identifying problems in a more logical way.

PROVIDES BETTER CAREER CHOICES

Finally, and as a consequence of all the other benefits, learning English helps students to get more opportunities in their future labour life. They will be able more trained and they will have better career choices. Nowadays knowing English has become an exclusive requirement in the most of the job offers, so the soon children start learning it the better opportunities will have in the future.

CONCLUSION

Learning English as a foreign language at an early age improves the communicative competence in that foreign language, but it also helps to understand better their mother tongue. In addition, this learning will influence the development of cognitive and socio-personal functions that will help them both in their academic training and in the personal life. But also by studying a second language the children acquire a useful tool to understand new challenges in their future, taking the opportunity to expand their cognitive thinking and acquire more awareness and global knowledge.

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