

## The Role of Plurilingualism and Metacognition in Literary Creative Writing

دور التعددية اللغوية وما وراء المعرفة في الكتابة الأدبية الإبداعية

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### Abstract:

This study demonstrates the impact of plurilingualism on the students' metacognition and creative writing. Plurilingualism helps metacognition become an essential part of a successful learning environment; it enables individuals to better manage their cognitive skills. Hence, a questionnaire on plurilingualism was administered to 40 BA students to check whether the stronghold connection with the practice of writing and learners' prior knowledge through plurilingualism exists or not. The questionnaire analysis and findings have witnessed a growing advantage for plurilingual students to develop metacognitively in literary creative writing in comparison to their mates the monoglots.

**Keywords:** plurilingualism; metacognition; literacy; development; impact.

### الملخص:

توضح هذه الدراسة تأثير التعددية اللغوية على ما وراء المعرفة لدى الطلاب والكتابة الإبداعية. تساعد التعددية اللغوية على أن يصبح ما وراء المعرفة جزءًا أساسيًا من بيئة التعلم الناجحة؛ تمكن الأفراد من إدارة مهاراتهم المعرفية بشكل أفضل. ومن ثم تم إجراء استبيان حول التعددية اللغوية لـ 40 طالبًا من طلاب البكالوريوس للتحقق مما إذا كان هناك ارتباط قوي بممارسة الكتابة والمعرفة السابقة للمتعلمين من خلال التعددية اللغوية أم لا. شهد تحليل الاستبيان ونتائجه ميزة متزايدة للطلاب متعددي اللغات لتطوير ما وراء المعرفة في الكتابة الإبداعية الأدبية مقارنة بزملائهم أصحاب اللغة الواحدة. الكلمات المفتاحية: تعدد اللغات؛ ما وراء المعرفة؛ معرفة القراءة والكتابة؛ تطوير؛ تأثير.

### Introduction:

Many studies have shown that plurilinguists write better than monolingualists. Thus, knowing many languages is a positive asset in the development of literary creative writing. Students in the same class differ in their classroom assignments in the way they write, in the degree that languages make upon them and in the freshness of their imagination to produce. Scrutiny to the results of the study

has shown that those who resort to their prior knowledge in languages they already know write better. This will be the core discussion of the present article.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1 Definition of Plurilingualism**

Plurilingualism is the endeavour one puts himself into when trying to use one's linguistic knowledge and skills to communicate with others in many different cases and situations. Plurilingualism is the ability to use several languages, as an integrated whole, for communication and to take part in intercultural action (Canagarajah, (2009) and García, & Baetens, (2009). Plurilingualism is a broad, strategic notion that helps us address what Cogolin (1994) has defined as "the monolingual disposition" in which languages are studied separately, focusing "on the minority of the world's population -monolingual or predominantly monolingual speakers – [driven by the idea that] only when we find how 'things working monolingual speakers-listeners will be able to extend the findings to speakers of more than one language"(Pavlenko 2005:xii).

Plurilingualism can better be seen when one can show and demonstrate his ability to speak within a national and multinational context where both similarities and differences in cultural values and beliefs are put to challenge. Plurilingualism, the concept promoted by the Council of Europe in its Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR for short), is the attempt to use one's linguistic knowledge and skills to communicate with others in many different situations. It means the ability to use language mind effectively and being connected in a multinational and multicultural community. (Council of Europe, 2001, p.168)

In general, most people consider plurilingualism as an asset that enables them to infer more meanings when discussing with others. It is an impetus to gain and a tool to use in case of intercultural constraints. Plurilingualism can effectively develop if the ground is appropriately set up. Today, most people favour plurilingualism because the modern world has witnessed many changes in the milieu where they live. Hence, the modern world with its multiple cultures has incited man to be more exposed to these cultures where he has to adapt himself within.

### **2.2 Pluricultural Competence**

The ability to speak requires the appropriate use of linguistic forms but as communication and interaction demand more than just the use of words and items, a pluricultural competence is sought-that is both words and culture are needed for a positive effective interrelationship. The concept of a plurilingual and pluricultural

## ===== **The Role of Plurilingualism and Metacognition in Literary Creative Writing**

competence involved important paradigmatic shifts (Coste, 2001, Moore, 2006, see also Blanchet, (2007):

- It developed a wholistic and multiple, rather than segmented vision, of language skills and language, identity and culture;
- It insisted on disequilibrium and partial competence, rather than on the balance of skills;
- It insisted on potential linkages, rather than on separateness of its various components;
- It developed a dynamic vision of competence, situated, contextualized, and changing over time and circumstances;
- It included circulations, mediations and passages between languages and between cultures;
- It considered competence as highly individualized, and dependent on life paths and personal biographies, and as such, subject to evolution and change, whether in or out of school.

### **2.3. What is Metacognition**

John Flavell originally coined the term metacognition in the late 1970s to mean “cognition about cognitive phenomena,” or more simply “thinking about thinking” (Flavell,1979, p.906). Metacognition is the knowledge and control children have over their thinking and learning activities” (Cross & Paris( 1988), p.131). For Hennessey, (1999) metacognition is an “Awareness of one’s thinking, awareness of the content of one’s conceptions, an active monitoring of one’s cognitive processes, an attempt to regulate one’s cognitive processes concerning further learning, and an application of a set of heuristics as an effective device for helping people organize their methods of attack on problems in general” (Hennessey, p.3) and for (Martinez, p.696), it is “The monitoring and control of thought”

Metacognition is the process of planning, assessing and monitoring one’s thinking; the pinnacle of mental functioning (Cotton, 2001). For” (Kuhn & Dean, (2004) p.270), metacognition is an “Awareness and management of one’s thought”, they explain, metacognition is what enables a student who has been taught a particular strategy in a particular problem context to retrieve and deploy that strategy in a similar but new context. Further, Schraw (1998) describes metacognition as a multidimensional set of general, rather than domain-specific, skills.

In simpler terms, this means that metacognition is being aware of what you know and you don't know, understanding what you will need to know for a certain

task and having an idea of how to use your current cognitive skills and beyond to learn what you don't know.

## **2.4 Metacognitive Literacy**

Researchers have reported an extensive list of cognitive strategies that language learners have been observed using or described using either through think-aloud techniques or in diaries (Rubin, 1975; Rubin and Henze, 1981; Chamot et. al., 1988). Knowledge of the functioning of metacognition in language learning has been greatly expanded through the work of (O'Malley et al, 1985). Building on the work of cognitive learning theorists especially Flavell, 1979 and 1981, Brown and Palincsar, 1982 and Anderson, 1983, they have elaborated two major components to metacognition: knowledge about L2 learning and control of the learning process. Of equal importance is the control function in learning. Good learners can plan their learning approach monitor their success, and modify their approach as needed.

This concept of 'executive control' comes from an information-processing model of human cognition. Learners use it to plan and regulate their learning. They recognize when their learning goals or strategies are effective or need revising.

Wenden (1982), (1986) was the first to systematically examine how language learners regulate their learning by planning, monitoring, evaluating and revising their learning activities. Learners can and do plan all aspects of learning from what they are going to learn on any particular day (focusing on verb forms, spelling, grammar among others) or in any particular course (by selecting courses that focus on reading, writing, language for special purposes among others) or what strategies they are going to use to complete a particular literary creative task.

Learners may also select the resources they will use to learn. In this planning, they also may specify to themselves or others why they are choosing a particular strategy, text, or course. They also can prioritize their learning specifying when they will focus on a particular goal.

Having selected their language goal, text, and strategy, good learners monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of a strategy in accomplishing their goal. They may determine that they need to revise their planning by clarifying or modifying their choice of goals, resources, and strategies. There is ample research evidence that for the effective learner 'learning is goal oriented' as students strive to reach two goals: to understand the meaning of the tasks at hand and to regulate his/her learning. (Beau Fly Jones, 1987). These two goals constitute a combination of cognitive and metacognitive processing.

### **2.5. Developing Meta cognitive Literacy**

Promoting metacognition begins with building awareness among learners that metacognition exists, differs from cognition, and increases academic success. The next step is to teach strategies, and more importantly, to help students construct explicit knowledge about when and where to use strategies. A flexible strategy repertoire can be used next to make careful regulatory decisions that enable individuals to plan, monitor, and evaluate their learning.

### **2.6. The Role of Teachers in Establishing Metacognitive Environment**

The rapid changing world requires teachers to help learners engage themselves in metacognitive processes using their strategies to add to their cognitive powers. Teachers will profit from the existence of pluralism in the use of languages to help learners use them in their creative literary writings especially poetry, fables writing, and short story. Students are helped in inspiring and resorting to what they previously know from other languages. In this respect, teachers have come to foster their students' metacognitive potentials to become good thinkers, successful problem-solvers and lifelong learners as well as literary creative writers.

In the creation of a metacognitive environment, teachers monitor and apply their knowledge through what they impart, deliberately modeling metacognitive behaviour to assist students in becoming aware of their thinking processes and hence see their behaviour change step by step from information receivers to information producers through their conscious processes of connecting new information to former knowledge, to unconsciously embrace selective strategies and finally to control, plan and monitor their thinking processes. (Dirkes, 1985).

In this respect, teachers will enhance learners to discover by themselves that understanding and transferring what they have understood are the out product of both understandings, knowing, analyzing, synthesizing and evaluating their literacy achievements.

This is how teachers want students to approach new learning, with students feeling empowered and not overwhelmed, armed with a toolbox of strategies that help them tackle new learning and easily make connections to what they already know. Because these strategies do not come naturally to a lot of students, teachers must explicitly teach them, and research shows it makes a big difference in their performance and this is quite apparent for learners who are plurilingual, motivated and metacognitively ready. One specific area in which teachers can develop the metacognitive awareness of students is related to teaching literary creative writing. But what is meant by this?

## **2.7. Classroom Literary Creative Writing and Plurilingualism**

The study of literature should encompass a great mind ready to get beyond the limited atmosphere surrounding the writer, the artist and the poet. In essence, literature is 'an expression of life through the medium of language' (Hudson, W. H. p.10). Literature is a process of communication, it 'helps us to understand life'. (Reeves, J. p.16). And since literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life; what they have experienced of it, what they have thought and felt about those aspects of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest for all of us. (Hudson, p. 10).

Consequently, literary creative writing embraces any writing that goes outside the bounds of normal professional, journalistic, academic, or technical forms of literature, typically identified by an emphasis on narrative craft, personal attempts in writing about poetry, fiction and drama, character development, and the use of literary devices. So, a delving into the secrets of the world of literature deserves a stand where the creative writers sit to muse upon the topics they are going to treat as well as their audience; hence, it is not only a question of the artist looking into himself but also the way he should look into others with the experience he has of himself. He writes with sympathy because he feels that the other man is like him. (Georges Simenon, in Dick (1972).

## **3. Methods and Material**

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. In addition, a descriptive-analytical approach was also sought.

### **3.1. Subject of the study**

The population were two groups of BA third-year English stream constituting 80 students. A sample of 40 students -35 female and 05 male -making 50% was selected and studied.

### **3.2. Data Collection and Analysis**

Data was collected from the questionnaire administered to the sample that embraces 15 questions including yes, no questions as well as open questions. A written test was also handed over to students to produce a piece of literature mentioning the effects of plurilingualism on their writings. The questionnaires were collected, coded then randomly selected and analyzed. The produced pieces were also corrected and analyzed.

### **4.1. The Impact of Plurilingualism on Students' Meta cognitive Literacy**

Plurilingual writers, whose diverse treatment to given topics from their different linguistic angles, will surely seek to deeply study and work out literary texts by

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## **———— The Role of Plurilingualism and Metacognition in Literary Creative Writing**

examining their contents and hence construct knowledgeable meanings thanks to their mastery of the various languages-an asset the monolinguals do not have for “Given the appropriate environment, two languages are as normal as two lungs” (Cook 2002:23). Consequently, this unique trait will give them the ability to transcend the limited scope to contribute to the diverse potential study of other types of literary discourse.

Writing through plurilingualism brings confidence and adds richer elements to the original texts. The plurilingual thrives his material by inspiring from other languages and hence he strengthens his previous knowledge through literary sources which give him more motivation to write. Thus, personal motivation is an essential characteristic of literary writing, especially when coined with plurilingualism. Here is an example of Ernest Hemingway who gives his reasons for writing:

From things that had happened and from things as they exist and from all things that you know and all those you cannot know, you make something through your invention that is not a representation but a whole new thing truer than anything true and alive, and if you make it well enough, you give it immortality. That is why you write and for no other reason that you know of (Dick (1972), p. 196)

### **4.2. The role of Plurilingualism in literary creative writing**

One of the best ways for developing student literacy in the various communicative skills is through literary creative writing exercises that aim at developing the students’ reading and writing skills as well as their underlying metacognitive processes. In doing so, students feel a stronghold connection with the practice of writing; thus, motivating them to develop higher-level literacy skills. In this respect, the study questions how can plurilingualism amongst young tertiary learners be diverted and consecrated only to creative writing tasks and activities with the intent to help those learners identify their plurilingualism assets and develop them for the benefits of metacognitive literacy creative literary writings.

As different students do not write in the same vein and hence they do not show the same things, the notion of ‘literary writing’ is surely related to conventions of artistic merits and geniality that writers are distinguished upon-true qualities that ranked high as qualities not endowed to anyone and that what makes the difference.

The example of tertiary students who are encouraged by their teachers to produce some literary artistic creative works had surely resorted to their previous knowledge and reading in other languages they have already mastered. For sure, their insights in producing good creative pieces could be better than those who possessed no

knowledge about other languages. Results had shown that the majority making 70 % of the sample demonstrated their abilities in writing through their past experiences and through what other languages had enhanced them into.

**Table 1.** Students' Questionnaires response rate analysis (quantitative)

| Questions  | yes | %     | No | %     |
|--|-----|-------|----|-------|
| 1. Are you plurilinguist?  | 30  | 75%   | 10 | 25%   |
| 2. Does plurilingual help you in writing a literary piece?             | 25  | 62.5% | 15 | 35%   |
| 3. Does knowing other languages affect your own perception of writing? | 31  | 77.5% | 09 | 22.5% |
| 4. Is there any difference between a multilingual and a monolingual?   | 36  | 90%   | 04 | 10%   |
| 5. Being a multilingual, is it a good asset for you?                   | 37  | 92%   | 03 | 7.5%  |

source : tayeb Bouazid, (2021)

The first five questions of the questionnaire showed great optimism in terms of being multilingual. Students inner conviction is high in terms of the advantage this can impact on their writing using other languages, other experiences and other cultures. The following are answers to the open questions given in the questionnaire (A sample is selected).

**Table 2:** students' questionnaire open- ended response analysis (qualitative)

| Questions   | Justifications  |
|---|---|
| 1. When you are about to write a literary piece for the first time, what will be your reaction?                             | 1. I try to think first about the different elements to include, think of the general framework and see if I can recollect what I know with what I want to write about.     |
| 2. How does knowing about other languages help you collect material for your writing?                                       | 2. I generally resort to Arabic and French to collect material from because I feel they provide me with more inspiration, they are fresh ground for me.                     |
| 3. How does knowing other languages impact your way of thinking about literary creativity?                                  | 3. Literary creativity is always inspired by the cultures existing in other languages which, for me, are the butter and bread.  |
| 4. How does metacognitive plurilingualism help you make connections with your prior knowledge the moment you start writing? | 4. Being plurilingual plus thinking of my potentials, reflecting, pausing, self-evaluating what I know from my prior knowledge will add to the chain of knowledge I possess |

source : Tayeb Bouazid (2021)

## ===== The Role of Plurilingualism and Metacognition in Literary Creative Writing

In sum, tertiary students have shown great potential in shaping their creative material and have produced good literary pieces thanks to their multiculturalism and multilingualism where at least a second foreign language was resorted to in imbuing from other universal literature that monolingual students, their mates, could not achieve. Researchers have claimed that the skills which plurilingualism fosters students with offer immense creative potential amongst creative writers.

Persons who speak multiple languages have a stereoscopic vision of the world from two or more perspectives, enabling them to be more flexible in their thinking, learn reading more easily. Multilingual, therefore, are not restricted to a single world-view, but also have a better understanding that other outlooks are possible. Indeed, this has always been seen as one of the main educational advantages of language teaching. (Cook 2001).

**Table 3.** Sample result of a learner’s feedback on a literary piece of writing

| Table 3. Sample result of a learner’s feedback on a literary piece of writing<br>Sources resorted to for prior knowledge  | Student’s Feedback   |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The cicada and the Ant (<i>La cigale et la Fourmille</i>) (French)</li> <li>2. The laborer and his children (<i>Le laboureur et ses enfants</i>) (French)-</li> </ol> | <p>Essay Question: Write a literary piece on the advantages of being a hard worker</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Before I start writing I remembered having learnt two stories from French literature. <i>La cigale et la Fourmille</i> and <i>Le laboureur et ses enfants</i>-These two stories were the bread and butter of my writing. I could take lots of ideas from especially their moralistic hints. These two stories were a real instance of hard work and the value of land working and work in life.</li> <li>2. I could not believe writing on such a topic without the evocation of these stories. I believe knowing another extra language is a plus and this, at least, help in shaping the outline and generating ideas. It is good to know something to start with.</li> </ol> |

For Charlemagne (p.742/7 – p.814), King of the Franks is to have another language is to possess a second soul.—Hence, language learning and mastery can help learners to have a sharp vision about how things are going on; it opens up their horizons and get them aware of their perceptions-this “enhances children’s understanding of how language itself works and their ability to manipulate language in the service of thinking and problem solving” (Cummins 1981).

## **5. CONCLUSION**

Knowing more than one language is a great advantage for learners who tried their hands at writing fables and short stories relying on the knowledge they have acquired from other languages. Hence, this asset is apparent in their metacognitive extrapolation to other intercultural spheres where they borrow images, pictures, words and even the construction of sentences, style and other literary devices. In a nutshell, plurilinguists are to a great extent far better than monolinguals in this respect. Literacy can be absorbed and gradually got fused the more one opens up his mind to other languages where he concentrates more on the literary sphere where creative minds can enter into communion with one another.

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## **The Role of Plurilingualism and Metacognition in Literary Creative Writing**

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