

BOOK REVIEWS

Göncz, L. (2021). *The Psychology of multilingualism: Concepts, theories and application*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2021, Pp. 247. ISBN 1-5275-7062-2 (hardback); ISBN 1-5275-9698-2 (paperback)

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Abstract. This review critiques *The Psychology of Multilingualism: Concepts, Theories and Application* by Lajos Göncz whose research contributed extensively to the field of psychology of bilingualism and minority studies. In light of the quintessential body of research investigating bilingualism and multilingualism as intriguing complex phenomena, this book provides a comprehensive multidisciplinary approach to the research of bi- and multilingualism. Göncz approaches bi-/multilingualism as a cognitively challenging experience from a psychological, individual, and societal perspective. Basic concepts, theories, and definitions related to the psychological regularities of multilingualism are discussed in the book. Göncz also explores bi-/multilingualism from the perspective of developmental and personality psychology, elucidating the effect of speaking multiple languages on emotions, behavior, and cognitive development. Additionally, issues pertaining to the social psychology of multilingualism, including biculturalism, multiculturalism, and cultural diversity, are scrutinized, offering insights into the importance of preserving minority languages and cultures. The book also touches upon the educational aspects of the psychology of multilingualism, revisiting models of bi-/multilingual education that might be implemented to stimulate language development in the dominant as well as in the minority language.

Multilingualism, including bilingualism, has garnered international public interest, as most of the world's population lives in either bilingual or multilingual linguistic environments. The need for cross-cultural communication and the growing concern to preserve linguistic and cultural diversity have increased the number of people learning multiple languages. A substantial body of research has investigated the complex vibrant phenomenon of multilingualism from different disciplinary perspectives. *The Psychology of Multilingualism: Concepts, Theories and Application* provides an overarching multidisciplinary approach to multilingualism research. Although the book focuses on the psychological aspects of multilingualism, it offers insights from linguistics, pedagogy, cognitive neuroscience, sociolinguistics, and psycholinguistics.

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Lajos Göncz, the author of this book, was a psychology professor at the University of Novi Sad, Serbia, whose research interest focuses on the psychological consequences of multilingualism and multiculturalism in minority groups. Göncz immensely contributed to the field of psychology of bilingualism.

The book encompasses six chapters that aim to define the psychology of multilingualism as a distinct field of research investigating one's personality development, behavior, and experiences in multilingual settings. The first chapter introduces the psychology of multilingualism as a bivalent interdisciplinary field of research closely related to the sciences of multilingualism and psychology. It attempts to answer general questions about the topics, methods of research, tasks, development, and domains of the psychology of multilingualism. From accidental and systematic observation to natural and laboratory experiments, the psychological regularities of multilingualism are explored as the core topic of the psychology of multilingualism which strives to define psychological aspects of different multilingual situations and their effect on one's inner life, experience, and behavior (answering the question of *what*) and to answer the questions of *how* and *why* these phenomena occur and affect personality and psychological development.

Basic concepts and concept-related knowledge related to the psychology of multilingualism and derived from the psychology of language, the sciences of bilingualism and multilingualism, developmental and educational psychology, cognitive neurosciences, and sociolinguistics are discussed in Chapter 2. Since the psychology of multilingualism is concerned with the application of systems of signs and rules pertaining to different languages in various speech situations and its ensuing consequences, Göncz discusses the developmental stages of language acquisition and the pace of speech development in children, while touching upon the psychophysiological mechanisms of speech and the main theories of language development, namely behaviorism and generative grammar. The first part of the chapter also addresses the relationship between speech and thought from the different views of the Piagetian cognitive thesis, the Vygotskian theory of internal speech, and the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis of linguistic relativism and determinism. Drawing on the sciences of bilingualism and multilingualism which have enriched the psychology of multilingualism with the definitions of bi- and multilingual phenomena, key concepts and knowledge related to the mother tongue, bilingualism and multilingualism, and the significant types of bilingualism and multilingualism, including distinctions between additive and subtractive, elite and folk, balanced and dominant, and coordinate and compound bilingualism, are presented. Other distinctions between majority and minority languages, linguisticism and ethnicism, assimilation and integration are also highlighted. Definitions and related knowledge on notions related to developmental and educational psychology, sociolinguistics, and cognitive neurosciences are explained in the second half of the chapter.

Chapter 3 expands on the studies of bilingualism and multilingualism from the perspective of experimental psychology and experimental psycholinguistics. It focuses on the interaction between language systems in bi- and multilinguals. The chapter starts with an overview of the research results on associations and meaning in the field of experimental psychology and psycholinguistics, which gives a sound background for exploring the dichotomy between balanced-dominant and coordinate-compound

bilingualism. Empirical studies have shown that language systems in coordinated bilinguals are functionally more independent on the semantic level than in compound bilinguals, since the languages of coordinated bilinguals are learnt from separate sources as opposed to the languages of compound bilinguals which are derived from the same source. Göncz reports that by crossing the dimensions of coordination-complexity and balance-dominance, four types of bilingualism can be distinguished, with the coordinate balanced groups having a much more independent language system as compared to the compound and dominant groups. Investigating the phenomena of language independence and language interference, it has been revealed that the connotative and associative meanings of words are more different in coordinated bilinguals than in compound bilinguals. The process of cross-linguistic coactivation and the inhibition of irrelevant languages in bilinguals and multilinguals have also been discussed in this chapter with relation to executive functioning.

A substantial variety of problems in the field of developmental psychology and psychology of personality have been touched upon in Chapter 4. Monographs, written by linguists to describe simultaneous multilingual development in children, have been presented, with the conclusion that multilingualism has mostly desirable rather than detrimental effects. However, early cross-sectional and correlational studies showed that monolinguals outperformed bilinguals on intelligence tests, speech development, and academic achievement, which was debunked by the Peal and Lambert study of 1962 proving the effect of bi- and multilingualism on cognitive development. Results of later empirical research on the effect of bilingualism on different behavioral aspects have demonstrated that in additive bilingual situations, early bilingualism promotes cognitive, linguistic, and academic development. Furthermore, modern research on multilingualism has shown its impact on one's inhibition ability, monitoring, and attention control. Being a form of mental gymnastics, multilingualism is proven to prevent cognitive decline, reduce levels of psychopathy and ethnocentrism, enhance working memory which is related to personality, and develop metalinguistic awareness. It has also been evidenced that the first language of a multilingual is more emotional than the later acquired languages. Nonetheless, in subtractive multilingual situations, disadvantages, including smaller vocabulary, delay in vocabulary and grammatical structures, less rapid lexical retrieval, lower academic performance of bi- and multilingual minority children, and affective and socio-cultural difficulties, are reported.

Chapter 5 elaborates on three main aspects pertaining to the area of social psychology and sociolinguistics of multilingualism. Multiculturalism, as a social or individual phenomenon, and its consequences, mainly with regards to acculturation, have been first discussed. Depending on the degree of differences between the cultures in a heterogeneous community, acculturation can lead to internal conflicts where national identity becomes a burdensome heritage and forced assimilation can result in minority complexes. Nevertheless, this is not necessarily the case as four different acculturation strategies, namely integration, separation, assimilation, and marginalization, can be adopted. The chapter also discusses the contact variants of multilinguals' languages used in heterogeneous communities. In fact, multilinguals can experience digression from grammatical correctness and contact effects regarding their first language, which is described in the situation of Hungarian minorities living in different bi- and multilingual communities outside the borders of post-Trianon Hungary.

The last part of the chapter elaborates on the decrease of linguistic and cultural diversity and its psychological consequences. Revisiting key aspects including multiculturalism and interculturalism, Göncz discusses the pluralistic view, which advances the belief that dominant and minority languages and cultures are natural resources that should be preserved, and the antipluralistic belief that language replacement and assimilation are adaptive responses to the changes in the environment. It is also stated that the loss of linguistic and cultural diversity can be explained by a range of psychological issues, including cumulative frustration, personality disorders, behavioral abnormalities, and cultural shocks, that multilinguals might face in a heterogeneous community favoring the dominant group. Consequently, effective models of multilingual education are required to maintain diversity.

Educational aspects of the psychology of multilingualism are further explored in Chapter 6. Glottodidactics is introduced as a basis for different language-teaching methodologies, including the direct, audio-lingual, and audio-visual methods, which are influenced by the goals of education deduced from theories of transfer. Hence, changes in these educational goals result in changes in the methods of language teaching. The role of language learning abilities and integrative motivation are discussed as factors determining success in learning second/ foreign languages. Göncz also revisits models of bi-/multilingual education and concludes that autochthonous and minority children should be taught through the medium of their mother tongues while having the majority language taught as a subject. The last part of the chapter highlights what decision makers, primarily parents, need to consider when choosing or changing the language of instruction for indigenous minority students. It is stated that decision makers need to distinguish between additive and subtractive bilingualism and surface and cognitive linguistic competence. Parents need to promote their bilingual children's linguistic competence so cognitive development potentialities expand. It is also necessary to fathom that linguistic competence in the second language depends on the competence achieved in the first language. Decision makers need to understand that education in the dominant language leads to different results than education in the mother tongue in indigenous children. Maintenance programs stimulating language development in the first as well as the second language are proven to be effective. Based on the results of evaluative research, it is concluded that educational shifts from mother tongue to second languages need to be carefully considered as they can result in lower school achievement due to the lack of cognitive language competence in the new language of instruction.

To conclude, this book is an overarching introduction to research on multilingualism and a valuable source for researchers, professionals, policymakers, and parents interested in the psychological regularities of multilingualism. It highlights the stimulating effects of speaking multiple languages on cognitive and personality development as well as on executive functioning. Alongside exploring theoretical issues, Göncz calls for adopting effective educational models to maintain languages of children from minority groups and to promote additive multilingualism in general. A few typographical errors and inaccuracies were detected in the book. The extensive unnecessarily prolonged endnotes seem to detract readers from the main points discussed in each chapter. The book also includes repetitions of concepts and explanations, which makes some parts of the chapters redundant.