

Challenges and benefits of teaching bilingual and multilingual children and teens.

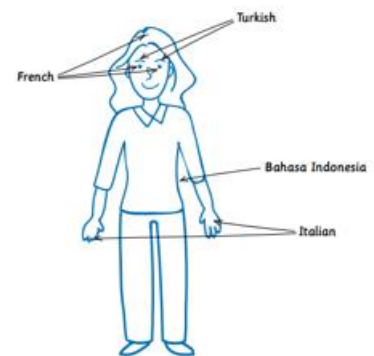
Webinar handout

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Activities for discussing bilingualism and multilingualism in class

- Benefits of being bilingual B2/C1 Lesson plan & student worksheet
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/teaching-resources/teaching-secondary/lesson-plans/upper-intermediate-b2/benefits-being-bilingual>
- Mapping your languages (see page 49 for this creative activity):
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/resource-books/using-multilingual-approaches->
- Drawing Your Languages (see page 26 for this activity – an extract and image are below)
<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/publications/resource-books/using-multilingual-approaches-self-study-booklet>

'French is in my brain and eyes. I learnt it at school so I can read it well and speak OK. But it's easier for me to speak when nobody is French and we use it as a lingua franca. We don't worry about mistakes in grammar or pronunciation, and just 'go for it'! Turkish is in my eyebrows – a tiny up-movement is 'no'. Italian is in my fingers for gestures and hand movements. I notice that my mother and sister use their hands and arms a lot; they also point, which seems a bit rude to me after living in many places where this isn't done. Indonesian is on my back – it isn't polite to show it when you leave a room. Everyday greetings are on my mouth, tongue and in my memory. It wasn't easy for me to read Indonesian colleagues' faces or understand what they were thinking.'



Challenges and benefits of being a bilingual/multilingual young person

Challenges	Benefits
Having a 'spiky' profile at school	Contact with family friends and more
Being an unpaid translator	More open-minded
Expected to know two words for everything	Can 'fill in the gaps'
Being expected to be fluent in both or all languages	Accept two or more ways of saying something
Struggling to keep using a language over time	Can transfer learning languages skills across languages
Stopping using one language	Facility to pass certain exams
Able to understand a parent's language but not reply to them in conversation	Wider cultural knowledge
Not being able to read or write at age-appropriate level	Playfulness and copying accents/dialects
A country or school language takes over the home language	Quick to pick up new expressions and words

Further reading

- Read the article *Highlighting the benefits of being bilingual*, by Christine Boatman <https://www.edutopia.org/article/benefits-being-bilingual>
- Read the article *A few more myths about speakers of multiple languages*, by Dr Nayr Ibrahim <https://www.britishcouncil.org/voices-magazine/few-more-myths-about-speakers-multiple-languages>
- Read the article *Bilingualism* by Professor Ellen Bialystok <https://serious-science.org/bilingualism-6172>
- Read the article *Language Strategies for Bilingual Families* by Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert <https://www.multilingual-matters.com/page/detail/Language-Strategies-for-Bilingual-Families/?k=9781853597145>
- Read the article *Bilingual Siblings: Language Use in Families* by Suzanne Barron-Hauwaert <https://www.multilingual-matters.com/page/detail/Bilingual-Siblings/?k=9781847693266>

A recording of Suzanne's webinar can be watched here:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-and-events/webinars/webinars-teachers/multilingual-matters-mini-event>