



# To what extent is bilingualism a positive influence on language development in young children?

Shirah, Upper 6

## EXTENDED PROJECT QUALIFICATION

I was raised only speaking Urdu as a baby and, as I did not go to nursery, my first exposure to English wasn't until I was four and starting primary school. I really struggled at first and I wasn't fluent until I was six. This made me wonder what other bilingual children go through and if there were advantages that come from knowing how to speak multiple languages. I decided to do my EPQ on bilingualism as it was personal to me and also because I love linguistics often finding myself doing Duolingo courses in the hopes of being a polyglot!

I found so many interesting things whilst researching for my EPQ: I found the reason why children can learn easier than adults is rooted in the plasticity of their brains and that when I change languages unconsciously this is called code-mixing and a unique skill that leads to greater proficiency in both languages. I was surprised to find 40% of the world was bilingual as I did not expect it to be such a high statistic, however, for such a high percentage there isn't enough research done into it and I hope in the coming years it becomes a widely researched field. Whilst researching I came across a case study of a young bilingual girl that was recorded to code mix 201 times in her conversation with her mother and when reading further, I found myself relating to her a lot.

Overall, I learned so much more about myself and really enjoyed researching this and writing my essay. It seemed really daunting at first but after finally sitting down to do it I was immersed in my sources and it became a lot easier. I was originally going to do 4 A levels but decided to do 3 A-levels and an EPQ alongside them and as it had elements of psychology it fit well with my options. My plans after Sixth Form are to study management and psychology at university and also work on my goal of being a polyglot!

