



Concept Paper

A Conceptual Viewpoint on Multilingualism in L2 Acquisition

Richelle Jane D. Erivera ^{1, 2, *} 

¹ DepEd Sorsogon Province, San Pedro, Irosin, Sorsogon, Philippines

² Annunciation College of Bacon Sorsogon Unit Inc., Philippines

* Correspondence: richellejaneerivera592@gmail.com

<https://doi.org/10.59652/rem28g27>

Abstract: This paper presents a conceptual perspective on the significance of multilingualism in second language acquisition. This paper examined the advantages and obstacles of multilingualism, as well as the tactics and metacognitive processes involved, to attain a greater comprehension of its significance in language acquisition and learning. Multilingualism enhances metalinguistic awareness, cultural awareness, and cognitive skills and adaptability. This research identifies challenges like language interference and domination, as well as inadequate support and training for multilingualism, which must be addressed through appropriate measures. This research also acknowledges the sociocultural variables influencing multilingualism and language acquisition, including acculturation, motivation, and cultural knowledge. This indicates that language acquisition is a multifaceted process that cannot be effectively achieved without the assistance of others. The findings have educational consequences, advocating for policies and strategies that promote multilingualism to achieve competency in the target language. Multilingualism could strategically enhance the language acquisition process by cultivating a multilingual-friendly learning environment. Teacher interventions are advocated to foster multilingualism and metacognition in language learning and acquisition. Empowering multilingual L2 learners enhances the overall language proficiency of students.

Keywords: cultural factors; L2; multilingualism; sociolinguistics

1. Introduction

Multilingualism is increasingly recognized in the realm of second language (L2) acquisition, as it facilitates connections between learners and speakers across diverse linguistic environments (Cook & Wei, 2016). This research offers a metacognitive analysis of multilingualism regarding L2 acquisition, emphasizing the interplay between metacognitive processes, language learning strategies, and the advancement of language proficiency. This review employs metacognition and L2 acquisition theoretical frameworks to elucidate the advantages, challenges, and pedagogical implications of multilingualism in L2 learning.

Multilingualism influences L2 acquisition by contesting conventional monolingual frameworks and embracing linguistic intricacy. This work examines how multilingual individuals cultivate distinctive multicompetence, differing from additive bilingual theories, wherein existing languages augment rather than impede the acquisition of new ones (Estremera, 2017). Multilingualism perceives L2 acquisition comprehensively, incorporating metalinguistic awareness and cross-linguistic tactics spanning speaker, language, and context (Estremera, 2023). In contrast to sequential L1-to-L2 theories, multilingual acquisition promotes creativity via translanguaging and dynamic competence. Prominent frameworks such as multicompetence dismiss the native-speaker ideal, asserting that multilingual individuals are fundamentally distinct learners (Cook & Wei, 2016). The multilingual turn underscores the educational integration of languages for enhanced efficiency (Estremera & Gonzales, 2021).

Along this line, a rich theoretical framework that emphasizes cognitive benefits and dynamic language exchanges is provided by multilingualism in L2 learning (Yao et al., 2025). Due to changes in policy and worldwide migration, its relevance has increased. Furthermore, by emphasizing improved executive skills like working memory and cognitive flexibility from handling several languages, multilingualism reframes L2 acquisition beyond monolingual

Received: January 9, 2026
Accepted: March 1, 2026
Published: March 29, 2026



Copyright: © 2022 by the authors.
Submitted for open access publication
under the terms and conditions of the
Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY)
license
(<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).



theories (Thao et al., 2023). Theories that also integrate metalinguistic awareness and transfer effects across repertoires, like the bi/multilingual turn, see second language acquisition (SLA) as late multilingualism. Consequently, by supporting dynamic, usage-based frameworks where previous languages enable pattern identification across typological distances, this contradicts conventional Universal Grammar based assumptions (Cong-Lem, 2025). Furthermore, current research supports the value of multilingualism. Despite migration and tech-driven diversity, 2025 UNESCO study addresses 250 million out-of-school adolescents and calls for multilingual education policy for inclusion. Hence, the need for democratic, culturally responsive in multilingual pedagogy is highlighted by a trend in digital-age paradigms.

In the context of this article, it elucidates the relationship between multilingualism and L2 competency, contributing to the current literature on the cognitive and metacognitive processes involved in the multilingual language learning experience (Jessner & Allgäuer-Hackl, 2022; Dolas et al., 2022). This paper seeks to enhance the knowledge of the language learning process in intricate linguistic contexts by thoroughly examining aspects associated with multilingualism and SLA. This review is pertinent for educators as it advocates instructional strategies that can effectively assist multilingual learners and improve the language acquisition process.

2. Multilingualism: Definition and Scope

In the context of this paper, using more than two languages by individuals or communities and creating dynamic repertoires that go beyond isolated systems is known as multilingualism (Raofi et al., 2014). It is holistic in character, combining social, emotional, cognitive, and linguistic aspects with co-activation and multidirectional interactions experiences (Braad et al., 2022; Marantika, 2021). In effect, the scope covers everything from societal levels, such as migration-driven superdiversity and digital connectivity, to individual proficiency (e.g., metalinguistic awareness facilitating L2 transfer).

It correspondingly includes interferences and positive transfers (pattern recognition), which help to shape intricate interlanguages in SLA. In light of UNESCO's push for multilingual education, it responds to the demands of the twenty-first century for intercultural competency on a global scale (Li & Yuan, 2021; Ruiz de Zarobe & Smala, 2020; Reitbauer et al., 2018). The adoption of translanguaging to break monolingual pre-conceptions and enable flexible L1 use for scaffolding and identity affirmation has likewise been underscored. As a recommendation, there is a need to create curriculum that incorporate content and language integrated learning, multimodal resources, and cross-linguistic challenges to improve content and L2 acquisition (Estremera, 2017).

This paper therefore affirms to adopt translanguaging pedagogy, allowing strategic L1 use to scaffold L2 tasks and build metalinguistic awareness. Integration of cross-linguistic comparisons via tasks highlighting transfer as well as boosting pattern recognition have also been necessary. The use of multimodal instruction with visuals and technology will also promote diverse proficiency levels.

3. Advantages and Benefits of Multilingualism

Proficiency in multiple languages offers distinct advantages, particularly in the realm of language acquisition. Research indicates that multilingualism confers an advantage in the acquisition of a second language (Asne & Estremera, 2025). This is ascribed to the viewpoint that proficiency in multiple languages cultivates an individual's ability to discern linguistic patterns, excel in language analysis, and comprehend language structures. Multilingualism can markedly enhance the communication abilities, cultural awareness, cognitive processing, and overall linguistic proficiency of the learner (Estremera, 2024; Haukås et al., 2024; Drobot, 2022).

When educators and students comprehend the advantages of multilingualism and its integration in language acquisition, policies and practices may be adjusted to foster an environment supportive of multilingual learners. With the foregoing claims, this paper underscores that multilingualism yields cognitive advantages like enhanced executive function, working memory, cognitive flexibility, delayed dementia onset, and superior problem-solving.

Communally, it fosters empathy, intercultural competence, and creativity through diverse perspectives. Conversely, challenges monolingual SLA models, supporting dynamic systems theory where repertoires enable positive transfer and multi-competence. It therefore



reinforces the multilingual pedagogy, emphasizing holistic language activation. Most significantly, leveraging home languages via translanguaging for scaffolding L2 tasks, boosts metalinguistic awareness. To this effect, an inclusive curriculum with cross-linguistic activities and portfolios to affirm identities, enhance motivation and equity are indispensable.

4. Challenges Faced by Multilingual L2 Learners

Multilingualism offers numerous benefits in SLA; yet, it presents certain concerns and challenges. Prior research emphasized the potential for first language interference or cross-linguistic interference, which can impede the acquisition of a new target language, as multilingual L2 learners may experience confusion when the target language exhibits significant similarities and differences with a previously learned language (De Bruin et al., 2023; Guamos & Estremera, 2025). When a more dominant language exists alongside other acquired languages, maintaining proficiency in all languages can be challenging. L2 learning may be impeded when language instruction does not align with the learner's main language (Habók & Magyar, 2020). Lartec et al. (2014) further underscored the importance of training language educators to effectively manage multilingual learners.

This may impact the efficiency and participation of the class, potentially resulting in a decline in language proficiency (Sevilla & Estremera, 2025). Awareness of these issues is crucial for teachers and students to select suitable tactics and materials for the L2 acquisition process. This paper emphasizes that multilingual L2 learners facing linguistic challenges like crosslinguistic interference, phonological/syntactic mismatches, and vocabulary gaps from typological distances are some of the challenges in multilingual learning spaces. Cognitively, the divided attention across co-activated languages causes processing overload; socially, they encounter bias, isolation, and limited access to resources. Thus, a targeted intervention along cross-linguistic explicit instruction, multimodal scaffolding, and anxiety-reducing strategies like peer pairing are significant to build confidence and equity in multilingual classrooms.

5. Multilingualism and Language Awareness

In their review about the interplay of multilingualism and language awareness, Finkbeiner and White (2017) suggested that due to the advancement of the scope of multilingualism and language over the years, it becomes more apparent that these two concepts could be combined to improve language education and learning. When people are more aware of the structure and contextual usage of language, they could learn other languages better thus, could help people become multilingual. In a different prospective, being multilingual also enables learners to become more aware of the nature and roles of the language in the society (Jalmasco & Estremera, 2025; Okal, 2014). Improving multilingualism and language awareness would positively impact the student's language learning experience and outcomes. As language learners and teachers recognize the influence these key concepts have, they could leverage these so students could be more involved in their language learning.

To put emphasis, this paper argues that multilingualism fosters heightened language awareness, enabling learners to analyze linguistic structures, notice patterns, and reflect on language use across repertoires. It similarly supports the multilingual turn in SLA, where metalinguistic awareness emerges from multi-competence, enhancing transfer and explicit knowledge over monolingual baselines. Thus, for teachers, incorporation of awareness-raising tasks like cross-linguistic comparisons and language portraits to boost noticing skills, motivation, and autonomy in diverse L2 classrooms have been vital to promote SLA inclusivity.

6. Sociocultural Factors Affecting Multilingualism

Language is also a way of cultural expression and carries a lot of social elements; thus, it is intelligible that these two could language acquisition as a whole. Sociocultural factors such as acculturation, motivation, and cultural learning could affect multilingual L2 learners (Jia et al., 2017). For example, when a person tries to learn a language, acculturation can play a significant part on the success of language acquisition. Acculturated individuals could understand the speakers of target language better giving them more opportunity to engage in conversations and practice the language (Estremera & Gonzales, 2025; Salih, 2021; Sánchez-Hernández, 2018). Understanding that these sociocultural factors could influence language learning, teachers and students could be able to create a learning environment that promotes interaction and collaboration and cultural awareness for the overall improvement of language



acquisition.

As an affirmation, this paper accentuates those sociocultural factors like language hierarchies, cultural identity conflicts, power imbalances, and resource inequities shape multilingualism, often marginalizing minority languages (Busse et al., 2020). Theoretically, this affirmation aligns directly with Vygotskian sociocultural theory, considering language learning as mediated by social interactions, identities, and communities of practice. It nurtures transdisciplinary frameworks integrating context over decontextualized cognition. Pedagogically, it promotes inclusive translanguaging to affirm identities; contextualize lessons with local cultures; train teachers in culturally responsive strategies; and foster community partnerships for resource equity, in the long run.

7. Conclusions

This research examines several facets of multilingualism concerning L2 acquisition. Exploring the benefits of multilingualism, its strategies, challenges, and metacognitive processes shows that multilingualism offers more advantages in language learning as it enables learners to develop different linguistic abilities. Multilingual L2 learners, as indicated by this study's findings, possess the potential to succeed in acquiring their target language due to their enhanced ability to analyze language, discern patterns, and comprehend structures. Multilingualism enhances linguistic and cultural awareness, communication abilities, and general language ability, resulting in mastery of a second language. Multilingualism can significantly improve the L2 acquisition process and outcomes, thereby holding substantial educational consequences. Language educators and learners must optimize the benefits of multilingualism to comprehend their target language, enhance confidence in their linguistic proficiency, and take responsibility for their own education. This indicates that suitable pedagogical strategies must be employed to incorporate pupils varied linguistic capabilities. Furthermore, emphasizing the cultivation of language awareness through metacognitive strategies may enhance multilingualism and SLA; therefore, meticulous planning and execution of suitable strategies are essential to ensure that the learning environment fosters multilingualism.

In conclusion, this paper highlights that with an awareness of how the preceding sociocultural elements may affect language learning, educators and learners can design a classroom setting that fosters communication, teamwork, and cultural sensitivity to enhance language learning in general. This research upholds those sociocultural factors, such as power disparities, cultural identity conflicts, linguistic hierarchies, and resource inequities, form multiculturalism and frequently marginalize minority languages. This assertion is theoretically consistent with Vygotskian sociocultural theory, which views language acquisition as mediated by identities, social relationships, and communities of practice. Transdisciplinary frameworks that integrate context over decontextualized cognition are fostered by it. Pedagogically, it nurtures inclusive translanguaging to affirm identities; contextualize lessons with home-grown cultures; train educators in ethnically responsive strategies; and foster community partnerships for resource equity.

Funding: This research received no external funding.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

References

- Asne, F. S., & Estremera, M. L. (2025). The Role of Vocabulary and Grammar in Second Language Reading Comprehension: A Systematic Literature Review. *BRU ELT Journal*, 3(2), 187-200. <https://doi.org/10.14456/bej.2025.13>
- Braad, E., Degens, N., Barendregt, W., & IJsselsteijn, W. (2022). Improving metacognition through self-explication in a digital self-regulated learning tool. *Educational technology research and development*, 70, 2063-2090. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11423-022-10156-2>
- Busse, V., Cenoz, J., Dalmann, N., & Rogge, F. (2020). Addressing linguistic diversity in the language classroom in a resource-oriented way: An intervention study with primary school children. *Language Learning*, 70, 382-419. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lang.12382>
- Cong-Lem, N. (2025). Intercultural Communication in Second/Foreign Language Education Over 67 Years: A Bibliometric Review. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 54(1-2), 1-21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2025.2456265>
- Cook, V., & Wei, L. (Eds.). (2016). *The Cambridge handbook of linguistic multi-competence*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107425965>
- De Bruin, A., Hoversten, L. J., & Martin, C. D. (2023). Interference between non-native languages during trilingual language production. *Journal of Memory and Language*, 128, 104386. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jml.2022.104386>



- Dolas, F., Jessner, U., & Cedden, G. (2022). Cognitive Advantages of Multilingual Learning on Metalinguistic Awareness, Working Memory and L1 Lexicon Size: Reconceptualization of Linguistic Giftedness from a DMM Perspective. *Journal of Cognition*, 5(1), 10. <https://doi.org/10.5334/joc.201>
- Drobot, I.-A. (2022). Multilingualism and awareness of cultural differences in communication. In *Multilingualism-Interdisciplinary Topics*. IntechOpen. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5772/intechopen.99178>
- Estremera, M. (2024). The CoP Theory in Reading Enhancement Programme(REP) from Pragmatic Lens of Language Development. *EIKI Journal of Effective Teaching Methods*, 2(1). <https://doi.org/10.59652/jetm.v2i1.151>
- Estremera, M. E., & Gonzales, J. T. (2021). Interplay between Philosophical Orientation and Musical Literacy Index of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers. *ASEAN Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 9(1), 98-112.
- Estremera, M. L. (2017). The Implementation of Mother Tongue – Based Multilingual Education: Viewing it from the Grade III Teachers’ Perspective. *Journal of Literature, Languages and Linguistics*, 40, 47-53. <https://www.iiste.org/Journals/index.php/JLLL/article/view/40070/41215>
- Estremera, M. L. (2023). Input Hypothesis (Ih) Behind Morphosyntax Adeptness Index: Case Of L2 Learners From Applied Linguistics View. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 19(1), 21-42. <https://www.jlls.org/index.php/jlls/article/view/5250/1848>
- Estremera, M., & Gonzales, J. (2025). Unveiling the 21st Century Pedagogical Implications of Dramatization and Lecture Approaches through the Lens of EFL College Students. *International Research and Innovation Journal on Education, Engineering, and Agriculture*, 1(2), 13-28. <https://doi.org/10.62960/irijee.v1i2.23>
- Estremera, M., & Sevilla, N. (2025). Ethnomathematical and Cultural Practices of Tribal Community in the Philippines from a Sociolinguistic Lens. *Journal of Contemporary Philosophical and Anthropological Studies*, 3(4). <https://doi.org/10.59652/s0bpps795>
- Finkbeiner, C., & White, J. (2017). Language Awareness and Multilingualism: A Historical Overview. In J. Cenoz, D. Gorter, S. May (eds), *Language Awareness and Multilingualism. Encyclopedia of Language and Education*. Springer. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-02240-6_1
- Guamos, L. P., & Estremera, M. L. (2025). Social media and L2 acquisition: a systematic review of digital affordance and learning outcomes. *Journal of Second and Multiple Language Acquisition*, 13(2), 787-802. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.17110303>
- Habók, A., & Magyar, A. (2020). The role of students’ approaches in foreign language learning. *Cogent Education*, 7(1). <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2020.1770921>
- Haukás, A., Storto, A., & Tiurikova, I. (2024). School students’ beliefs about the benefits of multilingualism. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 45(7), 2817-2830. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01434632.2022.2075001>
- Jalmasco, R., & Estremera, M. (2025). Motivating Language Learners: A Systematic Review of Motivation Theories in ESL Education. *Bulletin of Language and Literature Studies*, 2(4). <https://doi.org/10.59652/fceec28>
- Jessner, U., & Allgäuer-Hackl, E. (2022). Metacognition in multilingual learning and teaching: Multilingual awareness as a central subcomponent of metacognition in research and practice. *AILA Review*, 35(1), 12-37. <https://doi.org/10.1075/aila.22010.jes>
- Jia, F., Gottardo, A., & Ferreira, A. (2017). Sociocultural Models of Second-Language Learning of Young Immigrants in Canada. In *People’s Movements in the 21st Century – Risks, Challenges and Benefits*. InTech. <https://doi.org/10.5772/66952>
- Lartec, J. K., Belisario A. M., Bendanillo, J. P., Binas-o, H. K., Bucang, N. O., & Cammagay, J. L. W. (2014). Strategies and Problems Encountered by Teachers in Implementing Mother Tongue – Based Instruction in a Multilingual Classroom. *LAFOR Journal of Language Learning*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.22492/ijll.1.1.04>
- Li, M., & Yuan, R. (2021). Enhancing students’ metacognitive development in higher education: A classroom-based inquiry. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 112, 101947. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijer.2022.101947>
- Marantika, J. E. R. (2021). Metacognitive ability and autonomous learning strategy in improving learning outcomes. *Journal of Education and Learning (EdnLearn)*, 15(1), 88-96. <https://doi.org/10.11591/edulearn.v15i1.17392>
- Okal, B. O. (2014). Benefits of Multilingualism in Education. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 2(3), 223-229. DOI: 10.13189/ujer.2014.020304.
- Raoofi, S., Chan, S. H., Mukundan, J., & Rashid, S. M. (2014). Metacognition and Second/Foreign Language Learning. *English Language Teaching*, 7(1), 36-49. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/elt.v7n1p36>
- Reitbauer, M., Fürstenberg, U., Kletzenbauer, P., & Marko, K. (2018). Towards a Cognitive-Linguistic Turn in CLIL: Unfolding Integration. *Latin American Journal of Content & Language Integrated Learning*, 11(1). <https://laclil.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/LACLIL/article/view/9289>
- Ruiz de Zarobe, Y., & Smala, S. . (2020). Metacognitive Awareness in Language Learning Strategies and Strategy Instruction in CLIL Settings. *The Journal for the Psychology of Language Learning*, 2(2), 20-35. <https://www.jppl.org/index.php/journal/article/view/27>
- Salih, F. A. (2021). Subject Review: Acculturation and Second Language Acquisition. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences & Humanities*, 11(2), 117-126. <http://doi.org/10.37648/ijrssh.v11i02.006>
- Sánchez-Hernández, A. (2018). Acculturation and pragmatic learning: International students in the United States. In C. Pérez Vidal, S. López-Serrano, J. Ament & D. J. Thomas-Wilhelm (eds.), *Learning context effects: Study abroad, formal instruction and international immersion classrooms* (pp. 283-309). Berlin: Language Science Press. DOI:10.5281/zenodo.1300638
- Thao, L. T., Thuy, P. T., Thi, N. A., Yen, P. H., Thu, H. T. A., & Tra, N. H. (2023). Impacts of Emotional Intelligence on Second Language Acquisition: English-Major Students’ Perspectives. *Sage Open*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231212065>
- Yao, H., Gu, M. M., & Zhang, Y. (2025). From following to forging paths: Environmental self-regulation in digital extramural language learning. *System*, 135, 103860. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.system.2025.103860>