

Bilingual Kids going to School

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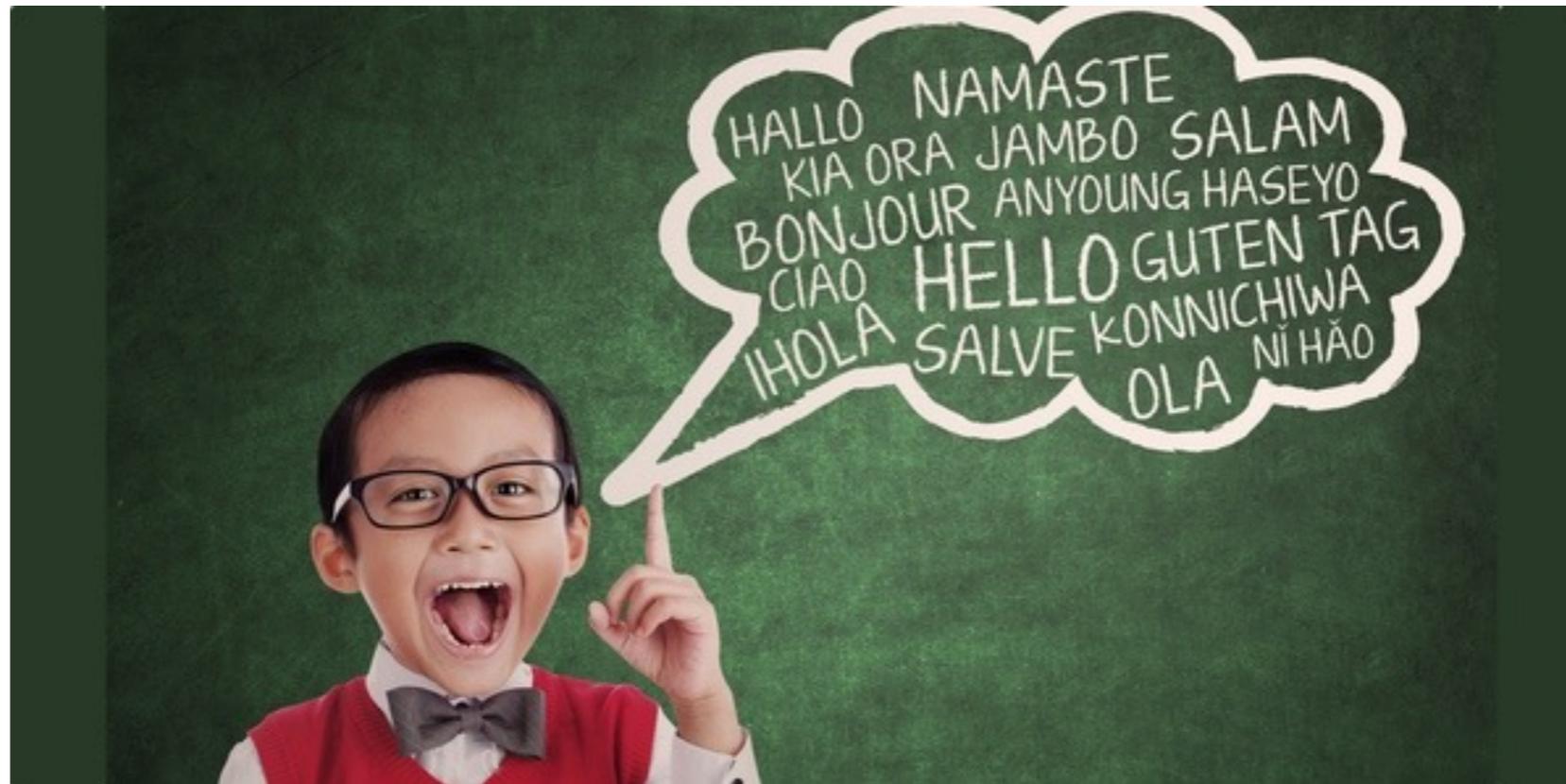
***My child has
only additional languages!***

- Benefits: Cultural, Social, economic ...
- Challenge: going to school!

Why school a challenge?

- Bilingual children are linguistically “behind”
—> challenge to achievement in English.
- English takes over—> challenge to maintaining bilingualism.

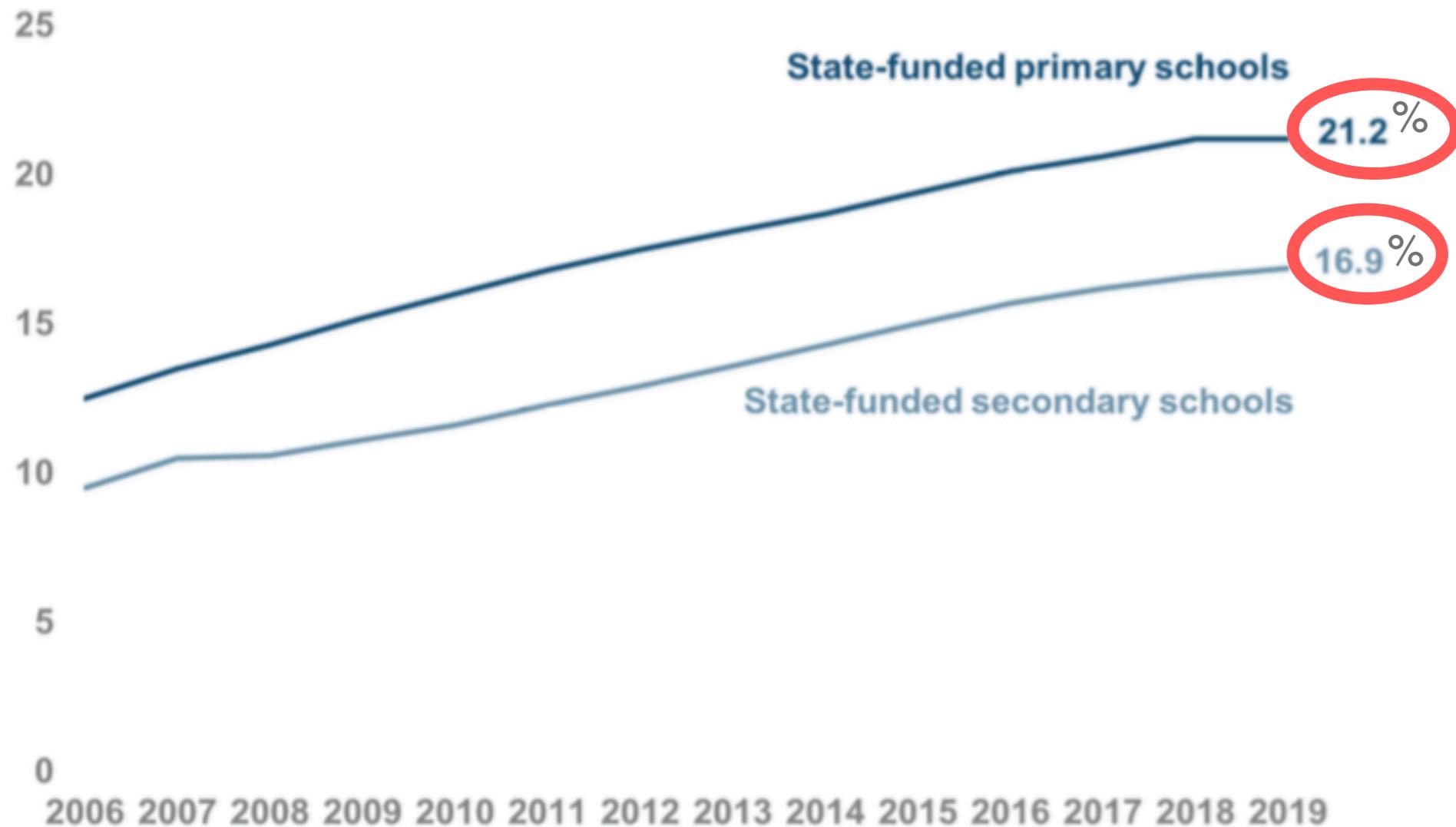
Who is bilingual?



2/3 of children in the world!

Who is multilingual?

In the UK, the percentage of **EAL** (English as an Additional Language) children is also high!

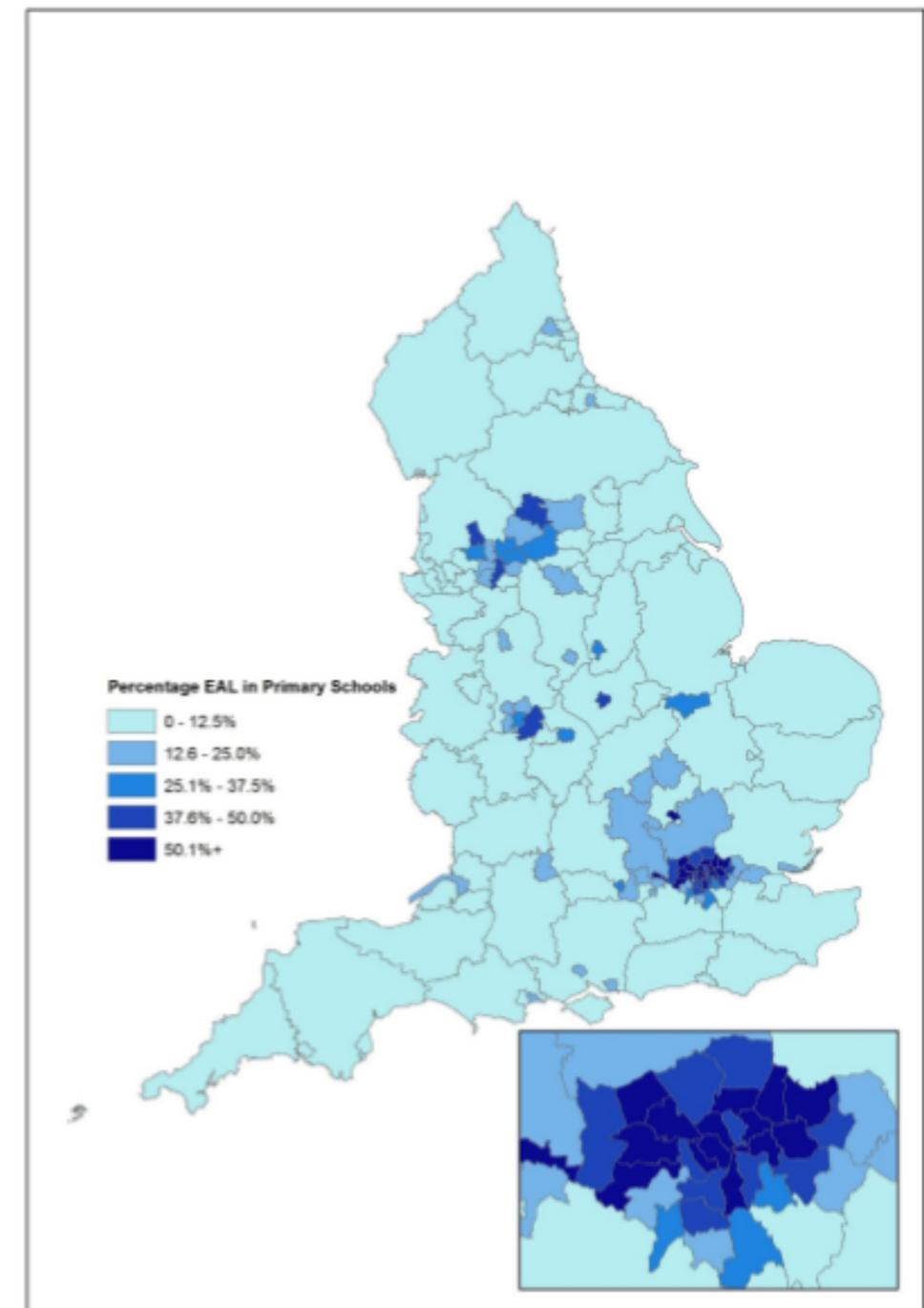


DfE (2019): Schools, pupils and their characteristics

Linguistic diversity in England

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------|---------|
| Polish | 546,000 | or 1.0% |
| Punjabi | 273,000 | or 0.5% |
| Urdu | 269,000 | or 0.5% |
| Bengali (incl Sylheti, Chatgaya) | 221,000 | or 0.4% |
| Gujarati | 213,000 | or 0.4% |
| Arabic | 159,000 | or 0.3% |
| French | 147,000 | or 0.3% |
| Chinese | 141,000 | or 0.3% |
| Portuguese | 133,000 | or 0.2% |
| Spanish | 120,000 | or 0.2% |
| Tamil | 101,000 | or 0.2% |
| Turkish | 99,000 | or 0.2% |
| Italian | 92,000 | or 0.2% |
| Somali | 86,000 | or 0.2% |
| Lithuanian | 85,000 | or 0.2% |
| German | 77,000 | or 0.1% |
| Persian | 76,000 | or 0.1% |
| Languages of the Philippines | 70,000 | or 0.1% |
| Romanian | 68,000 | or 0.1% |

Figure 2.3: Percentage of English primary school EAL students by local authority: 2013



Actual bilinguals!

- “the majority of bilinguals do not have equal fluency in their languages, many have an accent in at least one of their languages, and many acquired their other language(s) when they were adolescents or adults.... bilinguals use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, to accomplish different things.” (Grosjean, 2013) **2013:7**

Isn't it confusing?

Teddy bear *maison*

Otro-one (instead of *another* one)

Mummy, *agua* please! (instead of, *water please*)

Estoy-horopidh-ando (instead of *esto saltando*)

Linguistic Creativity

- *Why don't you get some expensive money?*
(3ys)
- *Daddy, did your hair slip?* (3yrs to bold and bearded dad)

Creativity in kids language

- It's **crowdy** in here.
- I **sharped** them (speaking of two pencils).
- Are they **silling**? (being silly)
- Let's go by **sky-car**.
- It's very **nighty**.

Rules

- This is a wug.
- Now there is another one. There are two of them.
- There are two.....

Rules

- This is a wug.
- Now there is another one. There are two of them.
- There are two.....wugs. (Berko 1958)

Code switching

La maison du nounours

La casa del osito

The house of-the teddy-bear

The teddy bear house

The teddy bear **maison**

Code switching

Otro-one (instead of *another* one)

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So what is different?

- Vocabulary (concepts vs. words)
- Metalinguistic awareness (attention to sound, forms, structure and meaning)
- Communicative awareness

Language analysis

- **Bilingual kids are better linguists**
- **Attention to sounds, structure and meaning of words**

Which is the longest word? (Sorace 2010)

train



caterpillar



Communication: reading behind the lines

Version 1: George and his mother were in the living room. George asked his mother: "Mom can I buy an ice-cream?" His mother replied "There's money in my wallet".

Version 2: George and his mother were in the living room. George asked his mother: "Mom can I buy an ice-cream?" His mother replied "You are ill".



Advantages of multilingualism

- **Learning**

Multilingual children are **better** at learning additional languages later on in life, by virtue of being experienced language learners

In a recent study of more than 500,000 students in England, EAL students were substantially more likely to have higher scores in a Language A-level

Meanwhile there were no substantial differences in Maths or English A-levels

<https://d1eeqy5w9fvriv.cloudfront.net/app/uploads/2017/05/16105736/EALachievementStrand-1.pdf>

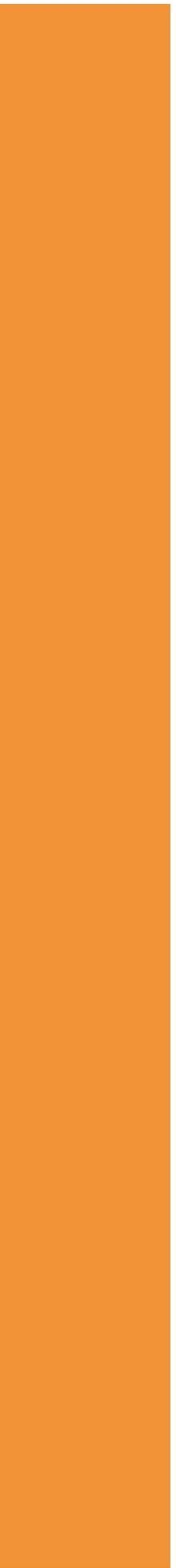
Literacy/Reading

Background skills

- Oral proficiency/vocabulary
- Metalinguistic awareness

- What about achievement in school?

- Vocabulary “gap” (for pre-school bilinguals the gap closes around 5th grade); evidence for challenges in secondary education in reading English <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics>
- Concepts vs. Words—Result of variable input (not cognitive ability).
- Achievement in national tests



- 
- Bilinguals have very different experiences

Reading and biliteracy

- Words used in children's books are considerably rare in comparison to those used in prime time television
- Higher linguistic complexity of written text
- Reading skills transfer

Advantages of maintaining your home language

- **Wellbeing & Socialisation**

When parents speak their home language and share their cultural heritage, **stronger bonds** develop within the family

Study after study shows that **conversation among family members** is the most important factor for family wellbeing

For many bilingual families, there is more harmonious and stronger relations if parents and children can talk about what really matters to them in their **home language**

Born Global Project

Seven out of ten employers believe that school and college leavers and graduates who only speak English are at disadvantage in the jobs market.

Eight out of ten employers believe that foreign language skills are equally important as STEM subjects to Britain's future

95% of employers believe that young people who speak a different language in addition to English in the home should regard bilingualism as an asset

Nurturing bilingualism

- Importance of use
- Importance of sustained and frequent input to nurture learning

Healthy linguistic Diet!

- **READING and Resources**

- <https://sites.google.com/site/cambiling/home>

- **Languages Society and Policy**

Ianthi Maria Tsimpli, 2017, **Multilingual education for multilingual speakers.**

Dianne Sutton, 2017, **Multilingual Britain—towards a coherent policy framework for children with EAL,**

Bak and Dina Mehmedbegovic, 2017, **Healthy linguistic diet: the value of linguistic diversity and language learning across the lifespan.**

Bernadette Holmes, 2017, **Global Britain requires more and better languages skills.**