

READING (ЕГЭ задание 12)

Прочитайте текст и выполните задания 12–18. В каждом задании запишите в поле ответа цифру 1, 2, 3 или 4, соответствующую выбранному Вами варианту ответа.

Do different languages confer different personalities?

The advantages of bilingualism include better performance at tasks which involve the brain's ability to plan and prioritize, better defense against dementia in old age and the ability to speak a second language. One advantage wasn't mentioned, though. Many multilinguals report different personalities, or even different worldviews, when they speak their different languages.

It's an exciting notion, the idea that one's very self could be broadened by the mastery of two or more languages. In obvious ways (exposure to new friends, literature, etc.) the self really is broadened. Yet it's different to claim to have a different personality when using a different language. So what's going on here?

Benjamin Lee Whorf, an American linguist, held that each language encodes a worldview that significantly influences its speakers. This idea has its sceptics but there are still good reasons to believe language shapes thought.

This influence isn't necessarily linked to the vocabulary or grammar of a second language. Most people aren't symmetrically bilingual. Many have learned one language at home from parents, and another later in life, usually at school. So bilinguals usually have different strengths and weaknesses in their different languages – and they aren't always best in their first language. For example, when tested in a foreign language, people are less likely to fall into a cognitive trap (answering a test question with an obvious-seeming but wrong answer) than when tested in their native language. In part this is because working in a second language slows down the thinking. No wonder people feel different when speaking them. And no wonder they feel looser, more spontaneous, perhaps more assertive or funnier or blunter, in the language they were reared in from childhood.

What of bilinguals raised in two languages? Even they don't usually have perfectly symmetrical competence. But even for a speaker whose two languages are very nearly the same in ability, there's another big reason that person will feel different in the two languages. This is because there is an important distinction between bilingualism and biculturalism.

Many bilinguals are not bicultural. But some are. And of those bicultural bilinguals, we should be little surprised that they feel different in their two languages. Experiments in

psychology have shown the power of 'priming' –small unnoticed factors that can affect behavior in big ways. Asking people to tell a happy story will put them in a better mood. The choice between two languages is a huge prime. Speaking Spanish rather than English, for a bilingual and bicultural Puerto Rican in New York, might conjure feelings of family and home. Switching to English might prime the same person to think of school and work.

We are still left with a third kind of argument. People seem to enjoy telling tales about their languages' inherent properties. A group of French intellectuals once proposed that French be the sole legal language of the EU, because of its unmatchable rigour and precision. Some Germans believe that frequently putting the verb at the end of a sentence makes the language especially logical. But language myths aren't always self-flattering: many speakers think their languages are unusually illogical or difficult –

"Only in English do you park on a driveway and drive on a parkway; English must be the craziest language in the world!" What such pop-Whorfian stories share is a tendency to exoticize languages. We also see some unsurprising overlap with national stereotypes and self-stereotypes: French, rigorous; German, logical; English, playful. Neo-Whorfians continue to offer evidence and analysis that aims to prove that different languages push speakers to think differently. But strong Whorfian arguments don't need to be valid for people to feel differently in their different languages.

12. Introducing the idea that speaking a second language gives one a different personality the author appears to be ...

- 1) interested.
- 2) skeptical.
- 3) concerned.
- 4) persuasive.

13. In paragraph 4 the author claims that bilinguals ...

- 1) usually master both languages equally.
- 2) do tests in their first language more efficiently.
- 3) think faster when using their first language.
- 4) improve their second language at school.

14. "This" in "This is because there is an important distinction ..." (paragraph 5) refers to ...

- 1) a new language to be acquired.

- 2) general competence of a person.
- 3) ability to learn a second language.
- 4) variations in feelings of a bilingual person.

15. Bicultural bilinguals feel different in their languages because ...

- 1) their knowledge of the languages is not equal.
- 2) languages are associated with different social situations.
- 3) their upbringing affects their behavior and speech.
- 4) they are happier at home than at school or at work.

16. According to the article, the choice between languages for a bilingual person ...

- 1) is not important in communication.
- 2) may influence his/her mood.
- 3) is of primary importance.
- 4) may be very problematic.

17. According to the author, the inherent properties of the languages are ...

- 1) imaginary.
- 2) funny.
- 3) obvious.
- 4) complicated.

18. The author concludes that there is evidence that ...

- 1) a second language will turn you into a different person.
- 2) a second language improves your chances to socialize.
- 3) one's world outlook depends on one's native language.
- 4) people may feel differently working in different languages.