

## **Family choices**

References:

- Harding and Riley 2003
- Baker 2001 ch5
- Lanza 2007

Introduction. Read Baker 2011

### **1. One parent one language**

- Requires a lot of parental effort
- Deeply linked with home rearing, and attitudes of parents
- Rarely works when the other parent does not speak, or, as a minimum, understand the other language
- Rarely works when there is not significant language use beyond Y3, even if it is occasional eg holidays with relatives.

Lanza p54. In her study of the discourse structures of parents in bilingual families, Döpke (1992) illustrates quite effectively the complexity of the One Person – One Language strategy of interaction. This research was based on data from bilingual German-English families in Australia, including recordings of four children, aged 2;4 or 2;8 at the onset of the study, in naturally occurring interactions with their parents. The goal of the study was to investigate the type of input that could result in the child's use of the minority language. What Döpke's analyses revealed is that the greater the degree of child-centeredness the parent's interactional strategies were, the greater the chance that the child would become an active bilingual, using the minority language. A child-centered mode of interaction was defined as the use of various discourse structures that encouraged the child's contributions in conversation. The overall idea is that quality is more important than quantity in parent-child interaction. These findings have been an important contribution to the study of language socialization in the bilingual family.

### **2. L1= home, L2/3 = society**

### **3. Mixed language**

The parents speak both languages to the child. Codeswitching and codemixing is acceptable in the home and the neighborhood. The child will typically codeswitch with other bilinguals but not with monolinguals. However, some domains (e.g. school) may expect separation of language code. The community may have a dominant language or not. (Example: mother and father speak Maltese and English; the community language is Maltese and English.)

### **4. Delayed L2**

### **5. Comment**

One main limitation of the Harding-Esch and Riley (2003) and Romaine (1995) category system is that most types are concerned with 'prestigious bilingualism', where there is a relatively stable **additive** bilingual environment and a family commitment to bilingualism.

In communities where **subtractive bilingualism** operates, and **assimilation** (see Chapter 18) is politically dominant, **childhood bilingualism can be much less stable**. Piller (2001) also suggests that, of the four types listed above, types one and two have come to be regarded as successful strategies, and that types three and four are more negatively evaluated. However, this masks a social class difference. Type one is associated particularly with 'elite' and middle class families. Types three and four are often found among relatively economically disadvantaged heritage language groups, immigrants and working class families.

## **6. Child preferences**

Children's own preferences can be highly influential (Tuominen, 1999). Sibling interactions are also a major determinant of language choice (Barron-Hauwaert, 2011). Older and younger brothers and sisters play their part in shaping language interactions in the family. Multilingual extended families may have increased choices of language, particularly if coming from 'elite' circumstances. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins and carers can all affect which language a child speaks with whom, when and where. Other families may not always have the luxury of various options (e.g. less educated or disadvantaged minority language parents in a majority language community).

## **7. Lanza 2007. NB, READ Yourself. Multilingualism and the family**

- a. The focus is on the environment where the minority language(s) do NOT have community support.
- b. A significant variable is whether BOTH parents speak the language in the family.
- c. The importance of deeply held convictions and beliefs, which Lanza calls ideology. The ideologies express themselves in explicit talk about language.
- d. "...language use in bilingual families is deeply intertwined with the experience of childrearing". p51.
- e. p52. Parents may have positive or negative attitudes towards bilingualism, towards specific bilingual praxis such as code-switching, towards particular languages, or even towards particular types of interactional strategies. De Houwer (1999: 83) refers to an "impact belief", which she defines as "the parental belief that parents can exercise some sort of control over their children's linguistic functioning". Such impact beliefs may be strong as when parents, for example, provide negative sanctioning to certain linguistic practices, and thus employ control over the child's language use, or they may be fairly weak in that there is an attitude of 'anything goes'. Hence, as De Houwer points out, parental beliefs and attitudes will influence parents' own linguistic practice and interaction strategies with their child, and this in turn will have an impact on the child's language development. De Houwer concludes (92) that the best chances for active bilingualism will come about in family situations in which the parents "have an impact belief concerning their own possible role in the language acquisition process, and where there is a general positive attitude towards the languages involved and to being bilingual". Such beliefs and attitudes shared by parents we may generally refer to as a local language ideology within the community of practice of the family. It is, however, important to point out that parents may share the same language ideology overtly, yet covertly make different linguistic choices (Lanza 1997/2004). Moreover, they may in fact hold different ideological stances, which could potentially lead to conflict in language planning in the family, as discussed in Piller (2002).
- f. p52-3. IL. Note that language ideologies are closely linked to ideas of good parenting and child rearing practices.
- g. p53. "...there is a paucity of studies on the field of bilingual first language acquisition that focus on conversational interaction in the family, compared to studies examining other aspects of bilingual development."

## **8. Case studies**

Some of the earliest research on bilingualism concerns detailed case studies of children becoming bilingual (see Deuchar & Quay (2000) and Yamamoto (2001) for a review). For example, Ronjat (1913) described a case of the mother speaking German and the father speaking French in a French community. Ronjat's (1913) case study introduced the concept of 'one parent – one language'. That is, the case study announced the idea that a very effective method of raising children bilingually was for each parent to speak a separate language to the child.

While there have been a number of case studies of children growing up bilingually since Ronjat's first study, one of the most detailed of case studies is Leopold's (1939 to 1949). Leopold's classic study of his daughter Hildegard was based on the father speaking German in the home and the mother speaking English. Leopold was a phonetician by training and made a comprehensive record of the development of Hildegard's speech, which he published in four books.

One important aspect of Leopold's studies is the shifting balance of the two languages in childhood. When Hildegard went to Germany, her German became stronger. When back in the United States and attending school, Hildegard's English became the dominant language. Many bilingual situations are changeable, where, at an individual level (and not just at a societal level), the languages shift in dominance. Hildegard, for example was reluctant to speak German during her mid-teens, with German becoming the weaker language. Leopold's second daughter, Karla, understood German but spoke very little German to her father. In childhood, Karla was a passive bilingual. Yet at the age of 19, Karla visited Germany where she was able to change from receptive German to productive German, managing to converse relatively fluently in German.

Other examples of shifting bilingualism in childhood are given by Fantini (1985) who details a child's shift between English, Italian and Spanish, and Yukawa (1997) who examines three cases of first language Japanese loss and re-acquisition. Yamamoto (2002) found in Japan that 'many parents testify, however, that in spite of their full-fledged care, their children have not developed active bilingual abilities' (p. 545). De Houwer (2003) found that among some 2500 bilingual families, 1 in 5 children reared bilingually do not later use one of those languages. But as Quay (2001) concludes with regard to trilinguals: 'passive competence is valuable as the potential exists for his two weaker languages to be activated and used more actively later on ... The status of strong and weak languages can change over the course of the child's life' (p. 194). De Houwer (2006) suggests that passive competence can rapidly change to productive competence by a major increase in input and a need to speak that language (e.g. visiting monolingual grandparents, a vacation).

Apart from the 'one parent – one language' method of raising children bilingually, there are other case studies showing different approaches (see Romaine, 1995; Schinke-Llano, 1989). Two of these approaches have already been mentioned: each parent speaking a different language to the child; and parents speaking a minority language to the child who acquires a second language in the community or extended family. A third approach occurs where both parents (and the community) are bilingual and use both their languages with the children. Romaine (1995) considers this 'a more common category than it might seem on the basis of its representation in the literature' (p. 186). For example, along the US–Mexico border there are many communities where English and Spanish are mixed. This is supported by Lyon (1996) who found that, in families in Wales, mixed language input with little apparent self-monitoring or awareness was quite typical. E.E. García (1983) showed that a parental mixing of languages can still lead to a child communicating effectively in two languages so long as the child learns that the two languages have relatively distinct forms and uses.

An example of parents using both languages with their first-born is by Deuchar and Quay (2000). A simplified profile of such dual language use with Deuchar's daughter (from 10 months to 2 years and 3 months) follows:

Mother: Born in UK, native speaker of English, learnt fluent Spanish in adulthood.

Father: Born in Cuba, later lived in Panama and then UK, native speaker of Spanish, began learning English at high school and became fluent in English.

Language spoken to daughter by mother: English up to age 1, then Spanish. Spanish used by the mother when talking to the father; English when in the company of English speakers (e.g. crèche) or in a specific context (e.g. University campus).

Language spoken to daughter by father: Spanish except when English speaker present, then he used English.

Language spoken to daughter by maternal grandmother/carers/crèche: English.

Community: English.

Trips abroad: Spanish.

What is significant in this case study is that the daughter experienced her parents speaking both languages, with the context providing the rule-bound behavior. Both parents were fluent and effective role models in both languages, although each parent was a native speaker of one language and a learner of a second language. The switching between English and Spanish was not random but governed by the situation (e.g. presence of others, crèche).

This illustrates a danger of the 'one parent – one language' model in that it can restrict discussion to the home, as if the parents are almost the only language influence. In contrast, siblings, extended families, carers, crèche, pre-schooling, friends of the family and many varying contexts (e.g. religious, geographical mobility) often have an additional language effect (Barron-Hauwaert, 2011; Yamamoto, 2001). Parents may be able to plan language use when together as a nuclear family (e.g. one parent – one language). However, once other people enter the house, and especially in the child's language experience outside the home, parental control is limited. The development of a child's bilingualism is affected by both local (e.g. street, school) and regional contexts. For example, Chang (2004) found in Taiwan that children can find themselves in an awkward language context. The pressure is to gain perfect English, but if they become too Americanized, for example in emotional expression, they can be rejected for not being Chinese enough.

## Multilingualism

Note how strange it is, that it is strange to Baker and others, as if it was something remarkable!!

There are very few case studies of the development of multilingual children (see Quay (2001, 2010) and C. Hoffmann (2001) for reviews) and even less on demographics (see De Houwer, 2004 for a survey of trilingual families in Flanders). Wang (2008) provides a most comprehensive, detailed and thorough study as both an academic and as a mother. Her 11-year observation of her two sons acquiring French (their father's language), Chinese (Putonghua – their mother's language) and English (in the context of the United States) involved careful observation on a daily basis, videotaping and audiotaping. This remarkable study is refreshingly holistic, including linguistic and sociolinguistic perspectives, while at the same time revealing considerable parental insight and wisdom. Wang (2008) details the complexities, challenges and achievements of a decade of development, not only of three languages but also of related identity, personality and literacy.

Age of child	% English heard	% German heard	% Japanese heard
Birth to 11 months	70	30	0
11 months to 1:0 year	50	20	30
1:0 to 1:5 years	43	23	34
1:5 to 1:6 years	45	10	45

The table shows that

- this child was less exposed to German than English.
- At 1:3 it was not apparent that the child understood much German.
- Yet after two weeks in Germany at 1:3 the mother reports that he 'shocked us with how much he understood in German when spoken to by the extended family' (Quay, 2001: 174). This is also a common experience for families: understanding (and speaking) a second or third language quickly grows once there is sufficient exposure and incentive. However, Quay (2001) also shows that the child was a developing trilingual rather than an active trilingual. This child preferred to speak Japanese to his parents as he had more lexical resources in Japanese, and his parents understood and accepted his Japanese utterances. He tended to be a passive trilingual, understanding English and German, but speaking Japanese.

In a review of research on trilingualism, Cenoz and Genesee (1998: 20) conclude that 'bilingualism does not hinder the acquisition of an additional language and, to the contrary, in most cases bilingualism favors the acquisition of a third language'. Cenoz (2003: 82) also suggests that 'studies on the effect of bilingualism on third language acquisition tend to confirm the advantages of bilinguals over monolinguals in language learning.' The cognitive advantages of bilingualism such as a wider linguistic repertoire, enhanced learning strategies, cognitive flexibility and metalinguistic awareness (see Chapter 7) and the development of enhanced linguistic processing strategies may help explain this positive effect of bilingualism on acquiring a third language (Cenoz, 2000, 2003, 2009). The linguistic interdependence hypothesis (see Chapter 8) also suggests that positive influences may occur from bilingualism to trilingualism (Cenoz, 2003, 2009). Where advantages are not present, the context is typically subtractive. This will be returned to briefly in Chapter 12.

**Notes on Jessner 2008**

1. Over the last few years in the European context, the use of plurilingualism to denote individual multilingualism has become increasingly common as one of the terminological consequences of the European Union's enhanced emphasis on multilingual education. Multilingualism, in contrast, is used to refer to the societal use of more languages. Another term is 'polyglottism' but its use is less common. In this article the author prefers to use MULTILINGUALISM to cover both meanings.
2. In this article the reader will also notice that the terms LEARNING and ACQUISITION are used synonymously when applied in a general sense, because nowadays most researchers have become familiar with the continuum use of the two terms covering all sorts of learning, from implicit intake to explicit learning (see N. Ellis 2005).
3. Problem. Whether the term L1 refers to the language system acquired first or to the dominant language in a bilingual system.
4. "Due to their experience in language learning, multilingual learners use different strategies to monolingual students learning their first foreign language." SOME
5. The most well-known study on the good language learner, that is multilingual learners, was carried out by Naiman et al. (1996[1978]). In their large-scale interview study they found that learning success of good language learners was attributed to a number of strategies, such as an active learning approach, realization of language as a system, realization of language as a means of communication, handling of affective demands and monitoring of progress
6. expert language learners show a superior ability to shift strategies and restructure their internal representations of the linguistic system.
7. Kemp (2001) showed that multilinguals pick up the grammar of another language faster, i.e. they use more grammar learning strategies
8. Eurocom. Research this yourself.