

A sampling of topics in Bilingualism & L2 acquisition

Some terminology

- **Balanced bilingualism**
 - equal proficiency in two languages
- **Nonbalanced bilingualism**
 - higher level of proficiency in one language
- **Simultaneous acquisition**
 - Development of two languages prior to age 3
- **Successive acquisition**
 - Development of one language (L1) first and another later (L2)

Issue 1: code-switching

- A speech style in which fluent bilinguals move in and out of two (or more) languages
 - Ex: The students *habian visto la pelicula italiana*
(the students had seen the italian movie)
- Different from borrowing
 - Ex: Va a *imeilear* a su vecino.
(She's going to e-mail her neighbor.)

Possible reasons for code-switching

- To fill in a lexical/semantic gap
- Compensating for an inability to express himself or herself in one language
- Expressing solidarity with a particular social group

Code-switching is rule-governed

- Does not occur at all possible boundaries
- The students *habian visto la pelicula italiana*
the students had seen the Italian movie
- * The students had *visto la pelicula italiana*
the student had seen the Italian movie

Constraints on code-switching

- Equivalence constraint
- Free morpheme constraint

Examples of equivalence constraint

- You're almost done with school, verdad?
- Es muy cute.
- That's the lady que tiene cuatro hijos.
- *El niño le hit.
- *El jefe no want to pay us.

A. Eng.	I		told him		that		so that		he		would bring it		fast.
B. Sp.	(Yo)		le dije		eso		pa' que		(él)		la trajera		ligero.
C. CS	I		told him		that		pa' que				la trajera		ligero.

Examples of free morpheme constraint

- *Estaba runeando in the library.
She was running in the library.
- *No hay mal que por good no venga.
There is no bad that some good does not come of it.
- Frequently violated by children <10 years of age

Two other constraints?

- Subject pronoun + verb constraint
 - *Yo went to the store. (*I went to the store.*)
- Verb + infinitive complement constraint
 - *El perro no quiere eat his food.
(*The dog doesn't want to eat his food.*)

Issue 2: One lexicon or two?

- All languages share the same linguistic principles and thus the underlying brain areas that process & represent this information must be common
- Each language is stored and processed separately and is independent of other languages spoken

Data

- Bilingual aphasia
 - Majority of the time, damage is to both languages
 - But the damage is not always equal.
- Lexical competition across languages, using noncognate homographs
 - Ex: *four, pain* in French vs. English; *red* in Spanish vs. English
 - Frequency effects are language specific
 - But priming is not
- Naming performance

Simultaneous acquisition

- Rate and manner of development of languages appear similar in bilingual and monolingual children
- Initial language mixing, followed by slow separation?
 - Three stages
 - Arguments against this - Language mode (later slide)

From Grosjean, 1982; Owens, 2001

Successive acquisition

- Much more common
- Not necessarily faster than adults at learning L2, but endpoint is better

Issue 3: How to predict success in sequential acquisition?

- Are there factors about the individual that makes them better or worse at learning L2?
- Are there factors of the type of teaching that results in better outcomes?

Are these issues/divisions simplistic?

- Complementary Principle
 - Because bilinguals generally acquire and use their different languages in different domains of life, it may not be appropriate to compare performance to monolinguals.
- Language Mode
 - The state of activation of the bilingual's language & language processing mechanisms at a particular point in time

From interview with Grosjean, 2002