LANGUAGE ACQUISITION IN BILINGUAL CHILDREN: CHALLENGES AND STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This meta-synthesis explores the correlation between language acquisition and learning. Children who are bilingual have advantages and disadvantages to how they learn. When research first started on this idea, common opinion was that it was a disadvantage to be bilingual. However, as research has progressed more advantages than disadvantages of being bilingual have been found. The study analyses how growing up with two languages influences cognitive flexibility, vocabulary acquisition, and codeswitching. The findings suggest that while bilingual children may initially lag in vocabulary development in one language, they exhibit a broader overall lexicon across both languages. An important factor of language acquisition is for children to be fluent in one language before they learn a second language. Children that do not have a firm grasp of their first language combine two language patterns and create a different language. The combining of languages causes them to have challenges throughout their education. Attentional Control Theory holds that anxiety disproportionately impacts processing efficiency (typically measured via reaction time) in comparison to accuracy (performance effectiveness). We administered eye tracking and behavioural measures of inhibition to young, healthy monolingual and highly proficient bilingual adults. We found that trait anxiety was a reliable risk factor for decreased inhibitory control accuracy in bilingual but not monolingual participants.

Keywords: *acquisition and learning, bilingual, vocabulary acquisition, and codeswitching, healthy monolingual, bilingual adults.*

INTRODUCTION

Bilingualism is an increasingly common phenomenon in our globalized world. Children growing up in bilingual environments navigate two linguistic systems, leading to a unique path of language acquisition. While the cognitive advantages of bilingualism, such as enhanced attention and problem-solving skills, are well documented, there are also challenges, including potential delays in vocabulary development and grammatical milestones. This article investigates how bilingual children acquire language compared to their monolingual peers and explores how code-switching aids in bridging linguistic gaps. Bilingual children often demonstrate impressive metalinguistic awareness, recognizing and understanding the rules and structures of both languages. Language acquisition is the study of the development of a person's language, refers to the way people learn their native, first, second or other languages. More specifically, it may refer to the time a language feature has been acquired. This may vary from the first emergence or onset of a language item to the time of its accurate use. As a field of study, it is the subject of linguistics, psychology, and applied linguistics. The debate is currently deadlocked over the question of which results are more valid – those that show positive effects of bilingualism or those that show no difference between groups – with new evidence for each side being added regularly. To our knowledge such cases are extremely rare, suggesting strongly that there is a positive effect of bilingualism that needs to be understood. Others have argued that null results have been underestimated because of publication bias that favors positive results, but that argument speaks to the ratio of positive and null results, not to the validity of the positive ones. Even if positive results are over-represented in the empirical

record, they require an explanation. Furthermore, a large portion of these studies use conflict tasks such as Stroop, flanker, and Simon in which the dependent variable is the reaction time difference between congruent and incongruent trials.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Ruth Kircher (2022) Many infants and children around the world grow up exposed to two or more languages. Their success in learning each of their languages is a direct consequence of the quantity and quality of their everyday language experience, including at home, in day-care and preschools, and in the broader community context. Here, we discuss how research on early language learning can inform policies that promote successful bilingual development across the varied contexts in which infants and children live and learn. Throughout our discussions, we highlight that each individual child's experience is unique. In fact, it seems that there are as many ways to grow up bilingual as there are bilingual children. To promote successful bilingual development, we need policies that acknowledge this variability and support frequent exposure to high-quality experience in each of a child's languages.

Craik, F.I. (2022) It has been claimed that bilingual experience leads to an enhancement of cognitive control across the lifespan, a claim that has been investigated by comparing monolingual and bilingual groups performing standard executive function (EF) tasks. The results of these studies have been inconsistent, however, leading to controversy over the essential assumptions underlying the research program, namely, whether bilingualism produces cognitive change. We argue that the source of the inconsistency is not in the evidence but rather in the framework that has typically been used to motivate the research and interpret the results. We examine the componential view of EF with its central role for inhibition and argue that it provides a poor fit to both bilingual experience and the results of these studies. As an alternative, we propose a more holistic account based on attentional control that overrides the processes in the componential model of EF and applies to a wider range of tasks. The key element in our account is that behavioral differences between monolingual and bilingual individuals reflect differences in the efficiency and deployment of attentional control between the two language groups. In support of this point we show how attentional control provides a more satisfactory account for a range of findings that cannot reasonably be attributed to inhibition.

Jayasundara, Niruba. (2020) This study is to explore the extent to which the bilingual acquisition research plays a major part in bilingual acquisition theories. This study reports the language development of a bilingual child from a Tamil and English language speaking home from the first vocal sound to the holophrastic stage.it elaborates how in each stage the child develops her bilinguality in both comprehension and production. The study was carried out by maintaining the proper records of the child's utterances in the form of 'diary' and digital recording and the traditional method of phonetic transcription was used to record utterances. The research method applied in this study is longitudinal and naturalistic observational sampling in nature, as most of the early bilingual researchers apply. The results of this study reveal contrary to the myth in bilingual language acquisition both the skills of comprehension and production in one language is always dominant, parallel and equal than the other language at a given time. This study falsifies the myth the comprehension skill is more dominant in one language (English) than the other language (Tamil), and at the same time production is vice

versa (more dominant in Tamil than English). This case study reveals that the skills of comprehension and production are not language oriented but the accessibility of child, based on language choice.

Bialystok, E. (2016) Bilingual education has been an educational option in many countries for over 50 years but it remains controversial, especially in terms of its appropriateness for all children. The present review examines research evaluating the outcomes of bilingual education for language and literacy levels, academic achievement, and suitability for children with special challenges. The focus is on early education and the emphasis is on American contexts. Special attention is paid to factors such as socioeconomic status that are often confounded with the outcomes of bilingual education. The conclusion is that there is no evidence for harmful effects of bilingual education and much evidence for net benefits in many domains.

S. Alladi. (2014)

Lew-Williams C. (2013) Many children in North America and around the world grow up exposed to two languages from an early age. Parents of bilingual infants and toddlers have important questions about the costs and benefits of early bilingualism, and how-to best support language acquisition in their children. Here, we separate common myths from scientific findings to answer six of parents' most common questions about early bilingual development.

First Language Acquisition and the Language Acquisition device

Noam Chomsky's work aroused interest in the way the children learn their first language. He believes that children are born with the ability to learn a language, i.e. they are born with a 'language acquisition device'. The latter is species-specific/only for human, language specific /only for their first or native language, and innate/only inborn. He also claims that this ability is unconscious and children learn their native language by exposure to it and by using it, and not by being taught or corrected. He argues that as children acquire their native language, they are able to produce sentences that they have never heard before.

Bilingual Acquisition

Bilingual first language acquisition is defined as the parallel acquisition of two languages, which is, supposedly evenly paced process. Children growing up exposed to two or more languages acquire each of them in much the same way as monolinguals. Bilingual acquisition during childhood can thus be regarded as an instance of simultaneous acquisition of two 'first' languages.in fact, if children are exposed to more than two languages simultaneously, they are able to acquire full competence of each that does not substantially differ from the speaking ability of monolinguals; bilingualism is therefore a special case of multilingualism. Comparison with monolinguals is one of the main issues in research on bilingual acquisition. It can be extended to all types of acquisition where more than one language is learned, independently of age of onset and proficiency attained in each language. The present research, however, is limited to child bilingualism. Whether types of bilingual acquisition should, in fact be distinguished according to the age of onset of learning ('bilingualism' vs 'foreign language learning') depends ultimately on the results obtained in these comparisons. Given our current state of knowledge, it is plausible to assume that age of onset is a crucial factor causing fundamental differences between child and adult language acquisition. Consequently, it is necessary to distinguish between simultaneous and successive acquisition of bilingualism. 'Simultaneous' acquisition does not necessarily imply that the child has been exposed to both

languages from birth, although this interpretation has occasionally been suggested. The controversial issue here is the age range during which changes occur, which result in qualitative differences between first and second language acquisition. Although sufficient evidence is not yet available, the period around three years of age appears to be of particular significance. The most widely accepted view is that one may qualify as 'simultaneous' those instances of bilingual acquisition where the child is exposed to two languages before the age of three. In this case, each language of the bilingual is predicted to share crucial similarities with that of the respective monolingual speakers but to exhibit differences in comparison with languages learned at the later age.

Bilingualism in the Early Years: What the Science Says

Bilingual parents are vocal in their desire to raise proficient, dynamic bilingual children. They have questions, and they want answers. But there is a complicated history of positive and negative press about raising children in bilingual households, to the point where some pediatricians—even today—recommend against exposing children to two languages. Attitudes against early bilingualism are often based on myths and misinterpretations, rather than scientific findings. Here, we aim to address the most frequently asked questions about childhood bilingualism using research findings from a variety of scientific fields including developmental psychology, cognitive psychology, education, linguistics, and communication sciences and disorders. This study is intended for parents and the many people who parents turn to for advice about fostering successful bilingual development: preschool teachers, elementary teachers, pediatricians, and speech-language pathologists.

bilingual children confused

One of the biggest concerns that parents have about raising children in a bilingual household is that it will cause confusion. But is there any scientific evidence that young bilinguals are confused? The first question to ask is what confusion would look like. Except in the case of neurological disorders, fluently bilingual adults can speak whatever language they choose in the moment, and are clearly not confused. But what about bilingual children and infants? One misunderstood behavior, which is often taken as evidence for confusion, is when bilingual children mix words from two languages in the same sentence. This is known as code mixing. In fact, code mixing is a normal part of bilingual development, and bilingual children actually have good reasons to code mix. One reason some children code mix is that it happens frequently in their language communities—children are just doing what they hear adults around them do. A second reason is that, just like young monolinguals, young bilinguals are sometimes limited in their linguistic resources.

bilingual children more likely to have language difficulties, delays, or disorders

Bilingual children are not more likely than monolingual children to have difficulties with language, to show delays in learning, or to be diagnosed with a language disorder. Parents' perceptions are often otherwise—they feel that their child is behind due to their bilingualism—revealing an interesting disconnect from scientific findings. Science has revealed an important property of early bilingual children's language knowledge that might explain this misperception: while bilingual children typically know fewer words in each of their languages than do monolingual learners of those languages, this apparent difference disappears when you calculate bilingual children's "conceptual vocabulary" across both languages. That is, if you

add together known words in each language, and then make sure you don't double-count cross-language synonyms (e.g., dog and perro), then bilingual children know approximately the same number of words as monolingual children.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Bilingual children must navigate different grammatical and syntactical structures in each language. Bilingual children may need to navigate different cultural norms and values associated with each language. Collect and analyse language samples from bilingual children to assess language proficiency and identify areas of challenge. Use standardized tests to assess language proficiency in both languages. Analyse language samples to assess vocabulary, grammar, and syntax. The word associations were classified as clang, syntagmatic or paradigmatic associations. In some cases these categories could not be applied, and two extra categories were added. The category 'other' comprised associations that could not be classified due to an unclear connection with the stimulus word, misunderstandings and repetitions, and the other extra category was 'no answer'. Designate specific times and places for each language. Provide explicit instruction on grammar and syntax rules in each language. Provide opportunities for the child to engage with both cultures through music, art, and traditional practices. Provide opportunities for the child to immerse themselves in each language through media, books, and social interactions. Bilingual children may struggle to differentiate between two languages, leading to language mixing or code-switching. Use flashcards, labeling objects, and reading books in both languages to support vocabulary acquisition. Conduct in-depth analyses of individual bilingual children to gain insight into their language acquisition processes. Use questionnaires and surveys to gather information from parents about language use and language acquisition. Using effective methodological strategies, researchers and practitioners can better support bilingual children's language acquisition and promote successful bilingual development.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The 15 children in the project group were assessed in grade 4, at 10–11 years of age as shown in Table 1 below. All had received bilingual education in both Swedish and Arabic from grade 1. To enable comparison, a control group of 32 age- and gender-matched Swedish-Arabic children in grade 4 participated.

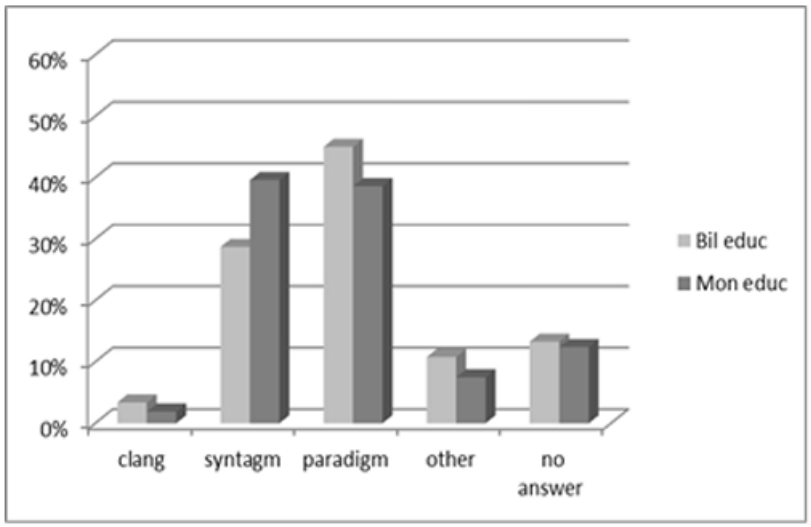
Table 1: Participating children

Gender	Project group age 10–11 yrs grade 4	Control group age 10–11 yrs grade 4	Total
Boys	4	9	13
Girls	11	23	34
Total	15	32	47

They had received education in Swedish only, but were offered two Arabic lessons a week by a mother tongue teacher.

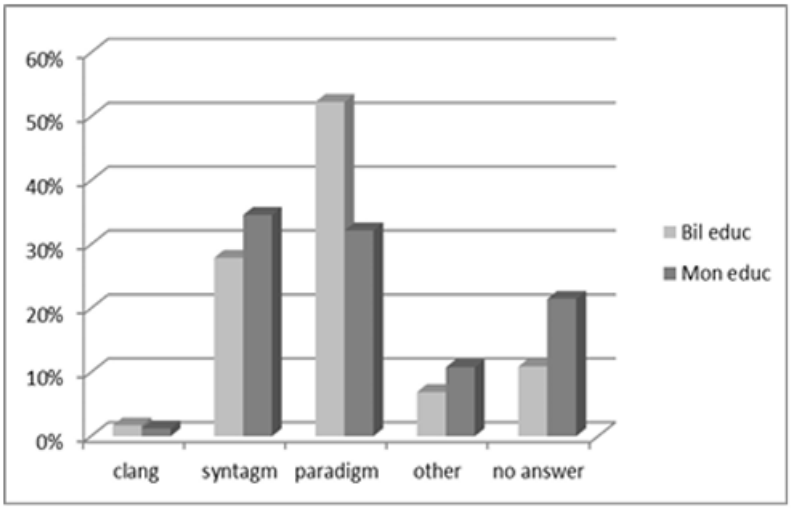
A comparison of proportions regarding paradigmatic and syntagmatic responses in Swedish in both groups is shown in graph 1 below. The project group (bilingual education) displays more paradigmatic than syntagmatic responses, while the control group (monolingual education)

displays more syntagmatic than paradigmatic responses, although they are educated in Swedish only. The difference between the proportions of syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses in each group was not significant.



Graph 1: Results from the Kent-Rosanoff list in Swedish

The results in Arabic regarding paradigmatic and syntagmatic responses are displayed in graph 2 below and display the same pattern as in Swedish with a higher proportion of paradigmatic responses compared to syntagmatic responses in the project group, who received bilingual education.



Graph 2: Results from the Kent-Rosanoff list in Arabic

The difference between syntagmatic and paradigmatic responses in Arabic is significantly larger in the project group. The children in the project group thus produce significantly more paradigmatic responses than syntagmatic compared to the control group. The children who were educated in both Swedish and Arabic produced a more hierarchical lexical organization in Arabic. Their results displayed significantly more paradigmatic responses compared to the control group.

CONCLUSIONS

Language learning is a process that every human being has to go through in order for them to communicate their thoughts, feelings and emotions to others. It is something that can be easy

for some and challenging for others. Despite the challenges, we are social human beings that need to know how to communicate to help us survive. This meta-synthesis showed how language acquisition and learning impacts the learning process. When I first started this research, I didn't realize how much language impacts a child's brain, and how they make neuron connections. This has caused me to use what I learned to help other teachers understand where students are coming from and the impact language has on a child. Nonetheless, we each learn to communicate in different ways. Understanding how a child acquires a language helps me to understand how to help the child grow in their communication skills. I can use what I have learned and help parents understand how important it is for them to communicate with their children when they are very young. I can also help other teachers understand why the students speak the way they do by presenting it to the school. To promote successful bilingual development, parents raising bilingual children should ensure that their children have ample opportunities to hear and speak both of their languages. As children get older, interacting with monolingual speakers (especially other children) is important for motivating ongoing language use, especially for minority languages not widely spoken in the community. As children get older, parents can start to teach them differences in the languages and how they are spoken. In this process it's okay to have challenges in school, and show them that I can help them learn through their challenges.

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