

Bilingual Children Who Speak One Language

Cynthia Patschke and Junko Shirai

要 旨

本稿は二言語併用児の二言語の理解に焦点を当てて分析したものである。これまでの定義によれば、二言語併用児は毎日の生活において二言語を理解し、用いていると考えられて来た。しかしながら、日常生活において主として一つの言語を用いているにもかかわらず、それとは別の言語も十分に理解し、使用する能力を持つ幼児も存在している。我々の収集した発話資料に基づき、このような幼児の存在から二言語併用研究において新しい視点が得られることを示し、二言語併用の定義の再検討の必要を主張する。

Objective

This study is part of an ongoing project which looks at bilingual language development, age 0 to adult. The purpose of this portion of the study is to confront the data which does not fit previously established definitions of bilingualism, namely the data of the monolingual (only) production by children of international marriages. We then reconsider definitions of bilingualism in light of this data.

Participants

We look at three children whose data cover the age range of 0 to 8, over a period of three years. All three children are children of international marriages, raised in Japan. One child, David, has a Japanese mother, and an American father who has lived in Japan for about 20 years of his adult life. John and Emily are the children of a Japanese father and an American mother who has lived all but five years of her life in Japan. All three children have been exposed to English from birth

but the two siblings speak only Japanese and David mostly Japanese.

Table 1. Participants

	Observation period	Place of residence	Home language
John	0; 11-3;08	Japan	English (mother), Japanese
David	2;04-5;04	Japan, UK	English (father), Japanese
Emily	5;01-806	Japan	English (mother), Japanese

Data and Data Analysis

The transcribed data used for this study includes only the conversations in which the adults are using mostly English, and the child is participating in Japanese. The data was then divided into two grammatical categories of English comprehension based on their Japanese answers (yes-no questions, and wh-questions), and 10 pragmatic categories of their Japanese language use based on their speech act or pragmatic intent (heeding, reinforcing, correcting, refusing to heed, negotiating, requesting clarification, arguing, humoring, explaining, and deducing). The list is by no means exhaustive, and many of the categories do overlap. We present below an example from each category: The listing is roughly ordered according to the age we first note the speech act, though the samples below are taken from various ages.

1. Y/N-qage: 5

* CYN: Did you come with shoes?

* EMI: *Un.*

‘Uh-huh.’

2. Wh-qage: 6

* MOT: Who said that Emi, who said that?

* EMI: *Eeto ne, Rina-chan.*

‘Um, Rina-chan.’

* MOT: Who’s Rina-chan?

* EMI: *Emi no tomodachi.*

‘My friend.’

3. Heeding (obeying)age: 8

* EMI: *Mama wa inu katteita?*

‘Mama, did you have a dog?’

* MOT: No, I didn’t have a *inu*. What did I have? Ask Cynthia.
dog

* EMI: (to Cynthia) *Nani katteta no?*

‘What did she have?’

* CYN: Blackie.

* EMI: *Nani-sore*.

‘What’s that?’

* CYN: Blackie was a big black cat.

4. ReinforcementJohn’s age: 3

* CYN: Um, who likes you?

* EMI: *Wakannai...Akane-chan*.

‘I don’t know...Akane-chan.’

* CYN: Akane-chan.

* EMI: *Un*.

‘Uh-huh.’

* MOT: She’s a girl.

* JOHN: Girl *dayo*.

‘She’s a girl.’

5. Correctionage: 6

%com: talking about blood types and personalities.

* MOT: I think it’s the opposite, I think you’re the *okorimbo*.

hot-tempered one

* EMI: *Chigaimasu--dosshi-n*.

‘No I’m not!’

6. Refusalage: 5

* MOT: Emi, go look at the *omocha*. You can’t buy anything but
toys

you can look. Go look.

- * EMI: *Kawanakkya, kawanakkya, kawanakkya iya!*
 'No, I want to, I want to, I want to buy!'

7. Negotiationage: 5

- * EMI: *Kuro no kaminoke ni shitemo ii?*
 'Can I make the hair black?'
- * CYN: *Eee!?*
 'What!?'
- * MOT: No, because it won't show up.
- * EMI: *E? Emi kuro de kaiterun-dakedo.*
 'What? I'm making it black though.'
- * MOT: Yeah, but afterwards we're going to cover it with all
 black, and then it won't show!
- * EMI: *Jaa, chairo. Emi no atama chairo dakara.*
 'Well then brown. 'Cause my hair is brown.'
- * MOT: Is *chairo* ok?
 brown
- * CYN: *Chairo*, it's ok, let's try it. *Iro iro kufuu-shite-miyou.*
 'Let's try all kinds of things.'

8. Clarification Requestage: 6

- * CYN: Can I have some of your *osembe*?
 rice crackers
- * EMI: *A, nani, osembei?*
 'Oh, what, rice crackers?'
- * CYN: Can I have some of your *osembe*.
- * EMI: *Un*, John's.
 Uh-huh
- * CYN: *Nande*, I'm asking you.
 Why
- * EMI: ha ha ha ha ha. *Iidesuyo~!*
 OK

9. Argument.age: 7

* EMI: *Mama. Empitsu doko yatta?*

‘Mama, where did you put my pencil?’

* MOT: I didn’t touch your *empitsu*.

pencil

* EMI: *Datte iro-empitsu no hitotsu nakunatteru mon.*

‘But one of my color pencils is missing!’

* MOT: Well, I don’t know where it is; I haven’t touched it.

* EMI: *Mama tsukatta jyan.*

‘Yes you did.’

* MOT: I didn’t *tsukau* it at all.

use

* EMI: *Tsukai mashita.*

‘You did too.’

10. Humoringage: 7

* EMI: *Mama, kinou ne. gokiburi no akachan ga ita yo.*

‘Mama, last night, there was a baby cockroach.’

* MOT: Don’t tell me that.

* EMI: *Konna chitcha--i.*

‘This tiny.’

* MOT: Where?

* EMI: *Kitchin*

‘Kitchen’

* MOT: No, I don’t want to know that.

* EMI: *Oshiete yokatta ne.*

‘Aren’t you glad I told you?’

11. Explanationage: 8

* CYN: Who’s going to take care of it?

* MOT: Emi, who’s going to take care of it?

* EMI: Me!

* MOT: Do you know how to take care of a dog?

* EMI: *Yes, datte, mou nouto ni sa, ichi, sampo ni tsureteku, ni,*

esa o yaru, san...

'Because, I already wrote in my notebook: one, take the dog for a walk, two, feed the dog, three...'

12. Deductionage: 8

%com: looking at family photos.

* MOT: Naomi looks just like Nath--Nathaniel when he was a boy.

* CYN: No. When he was a boy? When he was a little boy he was blonde and sweet-looking and Naomi always has a...

* MOT: Look at the face. It's Nathaniel all over.

* CYN: That's her brooding look. Nathaniel had the same look until he was in college.

* MOT: So what's Naomi doing now?

* CYN: She's working for the Human Rights Campaign in Washington, D.C.

* EMI: *Ne, nande Naomi nano, Naomi?*

'Why is she called Naomi?'

Table 2. Evidence of grammatical comprehension and pragmatic skills by age

John

	0;11	1;00	1;02	2;01	2;04	2;07	3;07
yes/no q							
wh-q							
heeding							1
reinforcement							2
correction							
refusal							
negotiation							
clarification requests							
argument							
humoring							
explaining							
deduction							

David

	2;05	3;03	3;06	3;09	3;10	4;00	4;08	5;04
yes/no q		1		2	1	4		
wh-q	2		1		1	3		
heeding		1	1					1
reinforcement								
correction				1	1	1	1	1
refusal								2
negotiation								
clarification requests								
argument								
humoring								
explaining					1			
deduction								

Eri

	5;10	5;11	6;00	6;10	7;01	7;03	7;06	8;06
yes/no q	1				2		1	
wh-q	6	2	1	5	4	1		4
heeding1								2
reinforcement								
correction				2				1
refusal	5		2	4		3		2
negotiation		2		2		2	1	
clarification requests			1	1		1	2	
argument				4	1	3	1	10
humoring				4	2	2	1	1
explaining					2			4
deduction					1	2	4	

Previous research on the pragmatic development of children is limited to age 0 to 24 months (Ninio and Snow, 1996), and no convention is established in terms of labelling the pragmatic functions or speech acts of older children. However, while there is no previously established norm to compare our participants to, we can say that the children appear to use the same pragmatic strategies in monolingual Japanese conversations as they do in the English conversations in which they are participating in Japanese, and that the language of the conversation does not hinder the pragmatic participation of the children.

Discussion and Conclusion

By examining portions of the data where the children are being both counteractive and participatory, we know that

- (a) the children understand the English conversation fluently,
- (b) the children are fluid in their participation of the conversation, albeit Japanese, and
- (c) they are age appropriate in their pragmatic language use.

Why are the children monolingual productively? The biggest factor, undoubtedly, is that since the parents are bilingual, there is a negative necessity factor for using English, and therefore they are unpracticed in production. Other factors that may come into play are language attitudes, possibly influenced by bullying, and who their playmates are. An example of this negative attitude can be found in the excerpt below:

* MOT: Say it in English.

* EMI: *Kiiro*

yellow

* MOT: Say it in English.

* EMI: *Ingurisshyu tte nani?*

‘What’s “English”?’

* MOT: Emily, your teacher told me that...

* EMI: *Teacher tte dare?*

‘Who’s “teacher”?’

* MOT: Your teacher told me that you can speak English really well.

* EMI: *Nande, yada, usotuki sensei!*

‘What, no, she’s lying!’

Note first of all, that she refuses to cooperate with our attempt to get her to speak English, and furthermore pretends to not understand, yet, she gives herself away when she switches from “what” to “who” when asking what “teacher” means. Other scenes we have, she bursts into tears when asked to say something in English. The children truly believe they cannot speak English. Yet, when placed in an all English environment for an extended period of time, these children become bilingual productively in a matter of weeks (this was in fact, the case, for Emily and David, when subsequent to our data collection, their respective families visited abroad), as opposed to the monolingual child, who is reported to take as much as two years to adjust (Yamamoto, 1999).

Are children who produce only Japanese bilingual? Going by conventional definitions of bilingualism such as found in reference books (see Table 3), our participants would not be considered bilingual.

Table 3

bilingual 1. (a) able to speak two languages equally well. (b) having or using two languages; 2 expressed or written in two languages Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 1995, Oxford University Press.

bilingual 1 having or expressed in two languages. 2 using or able to use two languages esp with equal fluency. Merriam Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary tenth edition 1997, Merriam-Webster, Inc.

“A **bilingual** (or multilingual) person is one whose linguistic ability in two (or more) languages is similar to that of a native speaker. The Linguistics Encyclopedia ed. 1991, by Kirsten Malmkjaer p. 57

There are many more definitions of bilingualism listed and explained in

texts on bilingualism (Beziers & Van Overbeke 1968, Baetens Beardsmore 1982, Hamers & Blanc 2000). We cannot possibly discuss all the definitions offered in these books; however, we can discuss several types of bilingualism as a point of contrast to the data we provide. Take for example *receptive bilingualism*. An alternative term for this is *passive bilingualism*. It is used for second language users who can understand a language in its spoken or written form, or both, but are yet unable to participate in conversation adequately. (The reverse of this is the *asymmetrical bilingual* who can make himself understood through a standardized model of the language, but who has difficulty in understanding what is said to him by native speakers.) The fact that our children were born and raised in a bilingual setting, obviously sets these participants apart from the second language students. And evidence points to skillful and age appropriate comprehension and participation in conversation, albeit with monolingual output. There simply is no previously established definition for these children.

We have no interest in creating yet another definition of bilingualism. We do wish to expand the definition of bilingualism to encompass these participants, as we maintain that children such as these **are** bilingual, *cognitively*.

What does it mean to be considered cognitively bilingual? Considering the social factors, we note that our participants have consistent exposure to two languages in their daily life, and that the older children develop a self-identity set apart from their Japanese classmates. Their grammatical and lexical comprehension skills are age appropriate, even if they do not speak English. Based on these facts, we provide a working definition:

A bilingual person is one whose responsive and participatory language use in a two language context evinces age appropriate cognition.

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