

Kurt Braunmüller & Christoph Gabriel (eds.): *Multilingual individuals and multilingual societies*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins 2012, 474 pp.

Multilingualism is a fundamental characteristic of modern society. As highlighted by the editors of the volume, Kurt Braunmüller and Christoph Gabriel, in contemporary reality multilingualism is far more prevalent than monolingualism on a global scale represented by a variety of phenomena like diglossia, plurilingualism or receptive bilingualism. Multilingualism has been studied by linguists, psychologists, educational professionals, and social scientists, all of whom have endeavored to generate the state-of-the-art scientific understanding that may disclose potential and challenges that multilingualism poses for the individual in the context of her family, school, other institutions, and society in general. *Multilingual Individuals and Multilingual Societies* is the thirteenth book volume published in the series *Hamburg Studies on Multilingualism*. The present book volume provides a multidimensional perspective on contemporary research in multilingualism with a special focus on individual and societal aspects of this phenomenon. The volume consists of 25 contributions organized into three thematic blocks: (1) the acquisition of multilingualism, (2) historical aspects of multilingualism and variance, and (3) multilingual communication. Each block addresses a variety of issues as they relate to language acquisition, language change and language use in multilingual settings.

The acquisition of multilingualism

The first and largest part of the book addresses the question of how languages are acquired in multilingual settings. Twelve studies are included, covering a variety of typologically distant language combinations including Russian-Swedish, Dutch-French, English-French as well as German in combination with Turkish, Russian, Polish, Italian, Spanish, and English. Most studies focus on multilingual situations found within Europe; six are from Germany and the remaining six cover situations found in Italy, France, Switzerland, Sweden, and Canada. The linguistic phenomena that receive attention in Part I of the book include morphosyntax, aspects of lexical learning, segmental phonology, discourse organization, bilingualism and executive function, reading and writing skills. Topics in morphosyntax, including the acquisition of grammatical gender, case, negation, *wh*-questions, null objects, and the so-called mixed PDs, are especially highlighted.

As regards early bilingual acquisition, the grammatical development of simultaneous and early successive bilinguals is systematically compared to the development of age-matched monolingual children. In line with previous research in early child bilingual acquisition (De Houwer 2005, Genesee & Nicoladis 2007, Meisel 2011), several studies report that bilingual children's grammatical behavior is similar to the behavior of monolingual children and that the observed differences are mainly quantitative (cf. Schönenberger, Rothweiler & Sterner *ibid.* pp. 3–22, Brehmer & Rothweiler *ibid.* pp. 81–100, Žaba & Lleó *ibid.* pp. 121–136, Pirvulescu, Pérez-Leroux & Roberge *ibid.* pp. 171–188). One example is the case of object omission in French by French-English bilinguals (Pirvulescu et al. *ibid.* pp. 171–188). In this study a protracted period of null object usage is attributed to a longer reliance on the default grammar representation. This effect is argued to be a product of the characteristics of the bilingual child's input, which is less robust and more ambiguous than the input in monolingual acquisition, rather than a product of cross-linguistic influence. In another study, Brehmer & Rothweiler (*ibid.* pp. 81–100) find mainly quantitative differences in German-Polish successive bilinguals acquiring grammatical gender in Polish, their minority language. At the same time, bilinguals acquiring the same combination of languages experience similar difficulties as monolinguals when acquiring case marking in German, their majority language. This is especially interesting given the socio-cultural setting in Germany, where many German-Polish children start to get systematic exposure to German at the age of 3 when they enter German-speaking daycares, and thus have more exposure to Polish before this age. These findings are particularly relevant to recent developments within the critical age hypothesis that suggests that age four (or even younger) may be crucial especially for certain areas of morphosyntax (cf. e.g. Meisel 2009). The studies in this section raise such highly debated topics as whether morphology and morphosyntax are at risk in bilinguals with insufficient amount of exposure and how much exposure is sufficient for acquisition. These and other questions related to the topic of input in childhood bilingualism are the primary concern of a newly published collection of research entitled *Input and Experience in Bilingual Development* (Grüter & Paradise (eds.) 2014).

While the studies on morphological and morphosyntactic development have received considerable attention in this volume and elsewhere (cf. e.g. the international workshop on *Bilingual morphology at the crossroads: Multidisciplinary perspectives on word structure* at ISB10), investigations of bilingual chil-

dren's phonological development appear to be less common. Nevertheless, the study by Žaba & Lleó (ibid. pp. 121–136) presents new and important evidence showing that while in some areas of segmental phonology bilingual children exhibit a delay, there are other areas where bilinguals display more advanced knowledge than monolinguals; German-Spanish bilinguals are found to have a delay in their acquisition of German consonants while their understanding of the German underlying schwa is proposed to be accelerated due to the vowel's salience in the minority language, i.e. Spanish.

Furthermore, bilingual advantage is discussed in the study by Gagarina (ibid. pp. 101–120) focusing on German-Russian children's discourse production in Russian, their minority language. In this study bilinguals display more advanced discourse organization than their Russian-speaking monolingual peers exhibited in higher rate of utterances, higher MLU, and higher rates of the use of referential and relational cohesive devices. Bilingual children's narrative skills have recently received considerable attention in a variety of language combinations, which has provided new insights into the role of age of onset, input, language dominance and various cognitive factors in bilingual development (cf. e.g. IASCL 2014 workshop on *Macro- and microstructure in bilingual and monolingual children's narratives across languages*).

Qualitative differences, although relatively rare in early bilingual acquisition, are sometimes attributed to cross-linguistics differences, as for example in the study by Strik (ibid. pp. 47–62) who considers the acquisition of Dutch *wh*-questions in bilingual Dutch-French and trilingual Dutch-French-Italian children. The non-target *wh*-structures produced by both groups of children are argued to result from transfer from French and Italian in the bilingual and trilingual participants respectively. Interestingly, despite these interference problems trilingual acquisition in this study is not found to be more problematic than bilingual.

Cross-linguistic effects are discussed in several other papers in this volume (Ringblom pp. 63–80, Pierantozzi pp. 137–152, Carroll pp. 23–46, Stöhr, Akninar, Bianchi & Kupisch pp. 153–170, Hoti & Heinzmann pp. 189–206). Two of them, Ringblom (pp. 63–80) and Pierantozzi (pp. 137–152), focus on the early stages of bilingual acquisition, while the studies by Carroll (pp. 23–46), Stöhr et al. (pp. 153–170), and Hoti & Heinzmann (pp. 189–206) focus on adolescents and adult speakers. Carroll (pp. 23–46), for example, investigates lexical knowledge of L1 English L2 German learners with no prior knowledge of the German language. The observed L1-based lexical effects are

consistent with strong transfer theories, such as Full Transfer / Full Access. Stöhr et al. (pp. 153–170) take a different perspective; they explore the mastery of grammatical gender, one of the most deeply studied linguistic phenomena in bilingual acquisition. The end-state grammar of the simultaneous Italian-German adult bilinguals in this study reveals that the category of gender in German can be vulnerable if bilinguals are not provided with sufficient input. Thus, this is another case where gender shows traces of incomplete acquisition or attrition (cf. Polinsky 2008, Rodina & Westergaard resubmitted). The nature of this phenomenon in bilingual acquisition is yet not fully understood, but it is often related to language dominance, another phenomenon that researchers have tried to profile and measure for years. In some cases dominance is defined in terms of weak vs. strong language, majority vs. minority language, or based on the parental language choice; in other cases, it is operationalized with measurable variables like vocabulary size, mean length of utterance, etc. Most recently this discussion resulted in the whole new volume entitled *Language dominance in bilinguals: Issues of measurement and operationalization* (Silva-Corvalan & Treffers-Daller in press).

Finally, a note on methodology is in order. The majority of the papers in Part I discuss empirical data obtained through two frequently used offline tasks, elicited production and comprehension. These methods are also combined with naturalistic production in some of the papers. In addition there are three corpus-based investigations. Two papers deserve special attention here. Festman (ibid. pp. 207–220) presents the results of two research projects that go beyond a mere linguistic scope, and which instead aim to assess individual differences in multilingualism at a more cognitive, neuro-psychological level. Some traditional psycholinguistic methods, such as picture naming task and interview, are combined with more advanced methods including functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) as well as neuro-psychological testing and electroencephalography. Importantly, the in-depth investigation of the multilingual speakers' linguistic and cognitive abilities suggests that executive control should be considered a criterion by which multilinguals can be separated into homogeneous groups at the level of processing. Other interesting implications of various individual factors are discussed in Hoti & Heinzmann (ibid. pp. 189–206). They investigate the listening and reading skills in L3 French in Swiss primary schools. Most crucially they show that the children with bi- and multilingual family background exhibit an advantage compared to monolingually raised children when learning French (mainly in listening tasks). Given

this finding, they argue for a new educational model where existing language experiences of the students are taken into account.

In sum, Part I of the book presents new evidence and sheds light on several important issues in multilingual acquisition including individual differences and homogeneity, multilingual vs. monolingual approach, language dominance, bilingual advantage, quantitative vs. qualitative differences, as well as attrition. This research should allow for comparisons to be made with multilingual populations in other socio-cultural and linguistic settings. Storing datasets in open databases, like *The Tromsø Repository of Language and Linguistics* (TROLLing Database), should further enhance this process. These studies set a framework for future research, whereby it seems necessary to provide a more objective picture of multilingual language development by studying the linguistic capacity in all languages of a multilingual speaker rather than focusing on just one of them, which is not done systematically at present.

Historical aspects of multilingualism and variance

Part II of the book consists of ten articles that investigate language variation and change in multilingual settings where contact-induced changes are considered from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. Crucially, these contributions bring together evidence from three mutually dependent areas: historical change in grammars, language variation, and acquisition. Contact-induced changes appear to be a multi-faceted phenomenon where external as well as internal linguistic factors are shown to play a role.

Höder (pp. 241–258) explores the long-term language contact between German, Danish, Old Swedish and Latin. This contact situation shows features of *interlingual transfer*, which is shaped into a common system by the multilingual speakers. This common system, also called an interlingual network of constructions, presents a special variety formed through the abstraction and generalization processes of language-specific structures in the contact area.

Another innovative change, a *fused lect*, is attested by Szabó (pp. 281–296) in the contact of German and Hungarian in Romania. In particular, the German dialect of Palota (Romania) is shown to undergo a language change, where the Hungarian particle *akar-* fills a gap in German by expressing a concessive conditional semantic relation, which was non-existent in the language before contact. The attested change is thus along the lines of Auer (1998): code-switching → language mixing → fused lects.

Elsig (pp. 223–240) and Heycock & Petersen (pp. 259–280) discuss lin-

guistic changes on a historical scale. Elsig (pp. 223–240) traces the historical changes in the grammar of Old French and Middle High German. According to Elsig, despite certain grammatical similarities between French and German, these languages already had different grammars for subject-verb inversion by the 13th century. In Heycock & Petersen (pp. 259–280), Faroese, despite being typologically close to Icelandic, reveals semantic and structural characteristics with pseudo-coordination in Danish.

The changes in sound structure appear in varying degrees. Pešková, Feldhausen, Kireva & Gabriel (pp. 365–390) claim that the “Italian” prosodic features of Porteno, the Spanish variety spoken in Buenos Aires, remain largely intact in their micro-diachronic investigation conducted by in 1983 and 2008. In contrast, the study by Sichel-Bazin, Buthke & Meisenburg (pp. 349–364) report a weakening of word accent in Occitan, which they claim is due to the prosodic interference from French. Similarly, in Spanish-Catalan bilingual context described in Benet, Cortés & Lleó (pp. 391–404), the production of voiced sibilant /z/ is influenced by Spanish, the dominant language of the district. Yet, internal linguistic factors, such as markedness and complexity, are said to account for Catalan speakers problems with affricate /dʒ/.

The study by Zerbian (pp. 335–348) is another example of dominant language interference. In this case, the dominant language background is found to be a significant factor in the perception of prosodic differences between South African English and other contact varieties, like South African Bantu languages and Black South African English. In contrast, in Brehmer & Czachór (pp. 297–314), the German-speaking dominant environment does not exert a significant influence on the heritage and late bilingual speakers of Polish as related to their use of the analytic future tense forms. Likewise in Kranich, House & Becher (pp. 315–334), English does not exert a significant influence on the English-German translations of popular scientific texts.

To conclude, cases of contact-induced language variation and change presented in Part II range from significant innovations to rather marginal interferences. Importantly, the new knowledge captured in these studies contributes to a deeper understanding of the nature of such changes and the mechanisms that trigger them.

Multilingual communication

Part III of the book investigates how multilingual speakers apply their linguistic repertoires and communicate in different environments, such as the workplace, the healthcare sector, the family and education. This section focuses on mul-

tilingual practices and forms in several European contact areas. Two of the three papers analyze language use in the healthcare system in Germany and Wales. Bühring, Kliche, Meyer & Pawlack (pp. 407–418) investigate the multilingual speaker's perspective at the workplace and uncover the challenges related to ad-hoc medical interpretation in German hospitals. The interpreter-mediated doctor-patient discourse production is used to illustrate how the participation of a multilingual speaker, who often does not have relevant technical knowledge and training, can create complex situations. This calls for a more professional approach and emphasizes the need for interpreter training programs for bilingual hospital employees.

Important implications for communication skills training in healthcare are also discussed in Prys, Deuchar & Roberts (pp. 419–436). This study investigates how such a widespread phenomenon as speech accommodation can be measured. Looking at the lexical level, i.e. the relative proportion of Welsh and English words in the pharmacists-patients interviews, the authors devised a method for calculating speech accommodation; this method can also be applied to other bilingual settings. Crucially, this work highlights the needs of bilingual service users for the healthcare sector.

Last but not least, the paper by Vettori, Wisniewski & Abel (pp. 437–456) reveals the challenges associated with becoming bilingual in the multilingual German-Italian contact situation in South Tyrol. In this study the linguistic and psycho-social aspects are shown to go hand in hand; individual motivation and integrative goals appear to be the strongest predictors of the adolescents L2 competences in Italian and German.

Thus, Part III of the book covers central research questions surrounding the study of multilingual practices, namely language choice, code switching, and language mixing in multilingual interaction. Furthermore it draws parallels between psycholinguistic and socio-linguistic research.

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