

Piotr Romanowski, Małgorzata Jedynak (Eds.): Current Research in Bilingualism and Bilingual Education

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Current Research in Bilingualism and Bilingual Education is the 26th volume of the book series Multilingual Education which, according to the series editors, presents “empirical research on multilingual language acquisition, language contact and the respective roles of languages in contexts where the languages are not cognate and where the scripts are often different” (Kirkpatrick and Adamson 2019). The collection under review inscribes itself perfectly in the above thematic areas with its strong focus on the exceptional phenomenon of using and understanding more than one language. Under the skilful editorship of Piotr Romanowski and Małgorzata Jedynak, it brings together 15 international contributors in an attempt to both expand the theoretical and explanatory scope of bilingualism as well as provide empirical evidence for the relevance of bilingual education and skills in the modern world.

As can be learned from the notes on contributors, the authors of the studies included in the book are affiliated with different institutions, concerned with various languages, and their contributions pertain to diverse European research contexts. The latter, as the editors themselves stress in the introduction, constitutes the chief novelty of the volume, which in contrast to many previous explorations of bilingualism and bilingual education, shifts its attention away from the North American context. A further attraction lies in the fact that while some of the papers add to the ongoing discussion of well-established phenomena, others attempt to explore somewhat controversial territories such as Non-Native Bilingualism.

The monograph is easy to navigate, as the twelve studies included in it are organized into three major parts, entitled respectively *Language Acquisition and Linguistic Aspects of Bilingualism*, *Language Teaching Aspects of Bilingualism* and *Language Education Aspects of Bilingualism*. These titles function as explicit signals to the readers as to the specific aspects of bilingualism and also multilingualism around which the works collected in each part revolve. The main body of this 241-page book is preceded by a succinct introduction containing editorial encouragement to go beyond the presented general overview of the volume’s contents and contributors’ main aims.

The first five studies are primarily concerned with a nexus of diverse relations between languages, their acquisition and use by bilingual and multilingual individuals. The opening chapter, written by one of the editors – PIOTR ROMANOWSKI – is titled *Strategies of Communication in an NNB Family: On the Way to Bilingual Maintenance in a Monolingual Context*. The author explores the interesting category of Non-Native Bilingualism, which consists in raising children bilingually in a monolingual community by addressing them in a target language that is not native to its speakers, mostly parents. Based on empirical

findings from 22 case studies of such families, ROMANOWSKI attempts to determine which and possibly to what extent the different communication strategies employed by parents contribute to the bilingual development of their children. Through a detailed analysis of the linguistic profiles of the researched families, strategies applied in the children's linguistic upbringing as well as parents' attitudes towards bilingualism, the paper comes to the conclusion that despite the controversies surrounding the discussed approach, it proves effective if accompanied by the patience and persistence of those practising it.

ZOFIA CHŁOPEK's *Is There a Relationship Between Language Competences and Metalinguistic Awareness?* focuses on the potential interdependence between complex linguistic knowledge and foreign language competences of multilingual speakers. In view of inconclusive evidence on this matter, the researcher analyses the translations of 122 multilingual students of German Philology, which they conducted from an unknown language into their mother tongue. The results, validated by statistical calculations, indicate that there indeed exists a link between metalinguistic awareness and the number of appropriated languages as well as the level of their attainment. What CHŁOPEK considers as unclear in this context is the nature and direction of influences between these factors. What, however, she finds indisputable is that multilingual people do have a high level of metalinguistic awareness, which helps them to process new languages.

DOROTA GASKINS' study *Two Grammars in the Input: Two Different Strategies to Process the Input. The Usage-Based Perspective on the Development of Nominal Inflections in a Bilingual Child* provides an interesting account of how a bilingual toddler receiving an imbalanced exposure of two typologically different languages, Polish and English, starts to acquire grammar by assimilating the knowledge of noun inflections. The discussion is couched within the usage-based theory of Radical Construction Grammar proposed by Croft (2001), the key principle of which, input frequency, is tested as a potential factor influencing this type of acquisition. An exceptional merit of the study is that it draws on the researcher's own child, which enhances the quality and authenticity of the collected data. The final conclusion emphasizes that the effects of input frequency as a factor facilitating language development depend on the specific conditions under which acquisition takes place.

ANNE-MARIE BEZZINA and JOANNE GAUCI's contribution titled *A Sociolinguistic Perspective of Codeswitching in French as a Foreign Language Class in Malta and its Implications for Learning* discusses the effects that alternating between Maltese L1, English L2 and French as the target language may have on the learning outcomes of secondary school learners in bilingual Malta. In a detailed corpus analysis of the recordings of 16 French as a foreign language lessons, the authors concentrate on teachers, investigating the quantitative extent to which they use each of the three languages as well as the structural characteristics and functions of all such instances of codeswitching. A

disturbing finding is that teacher-talk dominates classroom interactions, leaving little space for the learners' practice of the target language, though codeswitching contributes to classroom management and improves clarity and comprehension of content.

ANNA VERSCHIK and Elīna BONE's paper on *Understanding Linguistic Features of Estonian-Latvian Bilingual Speech* investigates bidirectional impact of L1 Estonian and L2 Latvian in a balanced bilingual individual, discussing the cognitive and linguistic mechanisms observed in L1 > L2 imposition and L2 > L1 adoption. The study participant's speech is analysed within the Code-Copying Framework developed by Johanson (1993, 2002), which the researchers find useful owing to its holistic approach to all language contact phenomena. In essence, the examined case of bilingualism involving two genetically unrelated languages is marked by a high degree of symmetry in Estonian-Latvian code-copying as well as in the frequency with which each language is activated, which suggests that the bilingual mode is a standard way of communicating for the participant.

The second part of the volume contains four contextualized investigations of how languages are taught and learnt in bilingual and multilingual educational settings. In the opening contribution titled *Learning Fractions Through Two Languages in an Elementary Classroom: The Interrelation of Maltese and English with the Mathematics Register(s)*, MARIE THERESE FARRUGIA examines the relationship between the medium of instruction and mathematical language. Interestingly, to obtain material for analysis, the researcher herself delivered five lessons of mathematics to primary school children with Maltese as their home language and English as the academic language of the discipline, who nevertheless were familiar with schooling conducted in both of Malta's official languages. FARRUGIA explores how everyday, school and technical registers are expressed through Maltese and English, and in essence reaches the conclusion that the use of translanguaging practices in the bilingual classroom facilitates the process of teaching-learning mathematical discourse.

PILAR SAFONT's *Are Classroom Requests Similar in All EFL Settings? Focusing on a Young Multilingual Learning Environment* provides an intriguing insight into teachers' and learners' requestive behaviour in the L3 English primary education classroom, which she tries to compare with the requestive actions observed in EFL and CLIL contexts. The researcher attempts to find out how the multilingual learning environment under investigation influences pragmalinguistic and sociopragmatic competence to perform the speech act of requesting. To this end, SAFONT analyses transcripts from 12 videorecorded English as L3 lessons, focusing especially on the forms and goals of requests, the modification items that accompany them as well as the type of classroom register in which the different request acts are produced. The results clearly indicate that the young L3 classroom examined is similar to EFL and CLIL settings in terms

of the request formulas used, but different as regards the request goals and the register in which they occur. The study also emphasizes that L3 requestive behaviour is dependent on the language program adopted by the school.

DANIEL XERRI's *Teaching English in a Multilingual Classroom: Addressing Challenges Through Teacher Education and Development* concentrates on the attitudes, beliefs and practices of primary school teachers who teach English in a multilingual environment. The case study reported is set in Malta, where many learners come from a variety of L1 backgrounds. Within the chapter XERRI discusses the problems encountered by teachers in such classrooms, their complaints about the lack of proper university preparation and training as well as their specific needs and requests that should be addressed to help them to deal with these challenges. The paper generally calls for giving more serious consideration to the complexity of a multilingual classroom context in the process of teacher education and development, and gives interesting implications as to how such dilemmas may be resolved.

In his contribution titled *Bilingualism with English As a "Second Language" and/or Broad Plurilingual Repertoires: A Swiss Point of View*, GEORGES LÜDI elaborates on the social and cognitive advantages of bi-/plurilingualism, stressing the benefits it can bring when practised at, outside and after school. The author adopts a language education policy perspective on the problem so as to depart from the puristic ideologies that are prejudiced against any manifestation of multilinguistic communicative competence, which they consider as dangerous. Doubts are also expressed as to whether English should really be a single *lingua franca* as well as to the feasibility of goals that are set in language classes. The discussion comes to the conclusion that the dynamism of the modern world could be successfully responded to by individuals whose multilingualism rests on plurilingual repertoires developed through a linguistically democratic curriculum.

The third part of the monograph is the shortest, as it comprises only three chapters that link theory and practice by discussing the conditions under which bilingual education can start to thrive. The opening paper by JOHANNA ENNSER-KANANEN and CHRISTINE MONTECILLO LEIDER titled *Stop the Deficit: Preparing Pre-service Teachers to Work with Bilingual Students in the United States* concentrates on pre-service English as Second Language teachers in American public schools and the training they need to effectively work with bilingual and immigrant students. The authors discuss the diminished status of such learners, who are often perceived as linguistically deficient, and call for a change in attitude by increasing teachers' awareness of the unique knowledge and skills their students already acquire in family homes. Offering a handful of practical suggestions on how to prepare pre-service teachers to activate their bilingual learners' full linguistic repertoire, the study finishes with a list of questions that teacher educators should ask themselves attempting to train unprejudiced, supportive and open-minded language teachers.

CORINNE A. SEALS examines *Discursive Techniques in Heritage Language Education*, focusing especially on the role of the teacher and various types of feedback for learners. The researcher analyzes naturally occurring classroom data collected over a period of three months within the Russian heritage language classroom at a mainstream primary school in the United States. All discourse events identified in the audio and video recordings are categorized and then carefully scrutinized to see how the teacher supports the students in identifying with and improving their heritage language, while simultaneously ensuring that they perceive themselves as legitimate speakers of both English and Russian, whose multilingual identity is developed without any biases towards one or the other language.

The closing chapter of the volume is MARÍA LUISA PÉREZ CAÑADO's *The Evolution of Bilingual Education in Monolingual Contexts: An Andalusian Case Study*. The study reports on the shift towards a plurilingual education model that has been recently observed in Spanish-speaking Andalusia, where CLIL programs have been implemented since 2005. The discussion takes a wide-angle view of this large-scale undertaking, as it presents a complex nexus of actions, including two governmental plans, that pursue plurilingual education in the region. The picture is made complete with a detailed account of prior research on the effects of these polyglot policies in the Andalusian community. Against this theoretical background, the author herself conducts a multidimensional CLIL evaluation project, the results of which indicate that the enterprise has been successful owing to the adoption of a continuous improvement approach as well as the effort, motivation and money invested in it.

To conclude, the value and usefulness of the volume cannot be questioned owing to its truly original contribution to a better understanding of “the principles of bilingual education”, which as the editors hope, will help “to benefit all learners”. The strength of this illuminating collection lies in the fact that it combines theoretical considerations with empirical findings, offering a high degree of research novelty that may stimulate other investigators in the field as well as attract readers interested in these topics, including parents caring about their children's plurilingual development. The book is highly recommended for anyone to whom the monoglot world of particular countries appears as “a world of terrifying blandness” that is deprived of the nuances and dynamics unique to multilingual communication (Peel, 2001: 14).

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