

## THE SOCIAL DIMENSION OF LANGUAGE CHOICE IN ADULTS AND CHILDREN

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### Introduction

This paper is a review of studies of language choice from a qualitative and quantitative perspective. It focusses first on the general factors affecting language choice in the monolingual as well as in the bilingual population and depicts *qualitatively* the processes at work in daily communication. It then examines four specific studies which analyse *quantitatively* the language choice of young bilingual children.

### Language choice in monolingual and bilingual adults and children

#### *Participant, place and topic as congruent factors*

'Who speaks what language to whom and when?' is a question in the title of an article by Fishman (1965) which revised and expanded work by Ferguson (1959). Ferguson (1959) had observed a situation, which he called 'diglossia', in a number of monolingual communities, where adult speakers were found to use different varieties of the same language to fulfil separate functions - a 'Low' language variety was associated with informal functions and used in conversations with family and friends while a 'High' language variety fulfilled formal functions and was used in the workplace, in church and in written communication. In Fishman (1965), three factors are identified as determinants of language choice: (1) the participants in a conversation, characterized by such features as age, sex, social status and socio-economic background; (2) the situation or place in which one finds oneself at the moment when the communication takes place; and (3) the subject or topic one is discussing. When these three components are congruent, we have the basis for what Fishman (1965)

calls 'domains' such as that of home, school, and work, or at a higher level of abstraction, such as intimate, inter-group, informal and formal domains. In a study involving elementary-school children (Cuban Americans in Miami; Mexican Americans in Austin, Texas; and New York City Puerto Ricans), the same tendency towards diglossia usually found in adult speech communities was also evident in the three groups of children studied. Laosa (1975; cited in Fasold, 1984: 186) describes a diglossia-like pattern of language choice in all three communities where Spanish was used most often by the children in the family context, less often in a recreational setting, and least often in the classroom.

#### *The social psychology of language choice*

In work on the social psychology of language choice, Herman (1961) proposes that language choice depends on situations where personal needs, background situation, and immediate situation may overlap. Herman (1961: 150) claims that potential conflict exists in any of these three situations: (1) when a speaker has to choose between a language "in which he is most proficient" and the language expected by his social group "which he may speak with difficulty" (ibid.); (2) where the people involved are actually present so the group is an 'immediate' one for the speaker; or (3) where the people "are not directly involved in the immediate situation but yet may influence the behaviour" of the speaker by being in the 'background' (Herman, 1961: 151). Various language choices are made depending on the salience of one of these three situations over the other two. The situation with salience is the most prominent one that a speaker will respond to at a particular time.

#### *Accommodation theory*

Giles and his associates (Giles, Bourhis and Taylor, 1977; Giles and Smith, 1979) have looked at language choice in terms of the speaker's desire to emphasize or weaken ties with respective language groups and have come up with the notion of 'accommodation'. Basically, accommodation theory proposes that speakers will nor-

mally 'converge' and choose to shift their speech styles to become more like that of their interlocutors. Convergence increases linguistic similarities and is said to reflect a speaker's desire for his listener's social approval and to encourage further interaction. The theory also allows for the opposite effect, 'divergence', where a speaker may wish to distance his or her language from that of another speaker or speakers. Divergence can be a powerful symbol whereby members of a group can display their intention of maintaining their identity and cultural distinctiveness. In such a case, speakers may wish to accentuate the differences between themselves and others. Besides explaining style shifts within one language, accommodation theory has also been applied to the notion of choice between languages.

### *Audience design*

Bell (1984) believes that his concept, 'audience design', is a possible synthesis of various explanations of language choice. Audience design is based on the notion that speakers modify their style of speaking according to a present, or absent but salient, audience where 'style of speaking' can be interpreted as applying equally well to monolingual and multilingual situations (cf. Bell, 1984: 145). Reminiscent of the notion of convergence in accommodation theory, Bell (1984: 145) states that "in audience design, speakers accommodate primarily to their addressee". According to Bell (1984: 151), "variation on the style dimension within the speech of a single speaker derives from and echoes the variation which exists between speakers on the 'social' dimension". Bell's (1984) 'social' dimension involves class, sex, age and social level - factors which have been correlated with linguistic variation in adults, for instance, in the work by Labov (1972). According to Bell, the social value assigned to a given variety or feature and to the group which uses it is the essential motivating force in style and language shifts so that intraspeaker variation can be said to be derived from interspeaker or social variation. So in language learning, the range of styles which a child is able to produce would depend on the linguistic range

to which he or she is exposed.

Bell (1984: 159) describes audience design as being based on four levels of hearer to be taken into account, ranging in salience from addressee through auditor and overhearer to eavesdropper:

The proposed framework [...] assumes that persons respond mainly to other persons, that speakers take most account of hearers in designing their talk. The *speaker* is first person, qualitatively apart from other interlocutors. The first person's characteristics account for speech differences between speakers. However, speakers design their style for their audience. Differences within the speech of a single speaker are accountable as the influence of the second person and some third persons, who together compose the audience to a speaker's utterances (Bell, 1984: 159).

According to Bell, even nonpersonal factors like setting or topic derive from audience design. He points out that the five domains mentioned in Fishman (1972: 22) - family, friendship, religion, education, and employment - are readily characterized in his framework as the province of certain addressees, associated with typical topics and settings. Such clusters of situational factors are to be seen as centred on the addressee rather than a co-occurrence of equally important variables. In other words, variation according to topic or setting or any other nonaudience factor in the situation presupposes variation according to addressee.

A weakness of audience design which becomes more apparent in practice than in theory is that it does not make explicit what aspect of the addressee (or participant) is important or the most important for the speaker's language choice. Grosjean (1982: 136), for instance, lists quite a few factors affecting language choice under the heading of 'participants'. If we consider the following - (i) the language proficiency of the speaker and the interlocutor, (ii) language preference, (iii) socioeconomic status, (iv) age, (v) sex, (vi) occupation, (vii) education, (viii) ethnic background, (ix) history of a speaker's linguistic interaction, (x) kinship relation, (xi) intimacy, (xii) power relation, (xiii) attitude toward languages, and (xiv) outside pressure - to what degree do they affect language choice?

*The importance of the interlocutor*

It is not difficult to find support for the effect of the interlocutor on a speaker's language choice in the literature on language variation in adults and children. Coupland's (1980; 1984) work is one example that provides solid linguistic support that interlocutors affect a speaker's speech. For his study, Coupland collected tape-recordings of interviews of an assistant in a travel agency with 52 different local clients. Coupland (1984) showed that the occurrence of four regionally marked linguistic features was correlated with the social class of the client, and further that the rating for the assistant's own usage varied and correlated with the client she was addressing. Bell (1984: 165) reanalysed Coupland's data to study the quality and quantity of the travel assistant's accommodation and found that the convergence (assessed through four phonological variables; cf. Coupland, 1984: 55, for details) is consistent and massive towards lower class clients (on the average over half-way), but less consistent in the case of higher class clients. Nevertheless, the travel assistant is shifting "on average some 55 percent of the distance from her own 'input' level to the 'target' level of the client's speech" (Bell, 1984: 164), thus showing that she is going more than halfway in a literal sense to meet her clients. Zentella (1981) reports that children in two Puerto Rican bilingual classrooms (children in grades three and six - therefore, children about eight and eleven years of age respectively) in New York were sensitive to their interlocutor, specifically to the language used by the bilingual researcher. In individual interviews with the children from these two classes, it was found that:

All the children interviewed, with one exception (30/31), responded in the language of the interviewer. Seventy-four percent (23/31) followed the interviewer's unexpected language switch in the middle of the interview with a switch of their own to the other language without comment (Zentella, 1981: 114).

Of the eight children who did not switch, four were monolinguals and the remaining four were either English-dominant or unwilling to switch. Zentella (1981: 118) concludes that "the language choice of the teacher had a clear effect on the language

choice of the children in most situations” in the classrooms. In a study of young Mexican-American children living in the United States, McClure (1981) found that setting and topic did not have an effect on the children’s language choice to the extent that certain characteristics of participants did. Setting alone did not determine language choice since English was heard in the Spanish-speaking homes and Spanish was spoken at school in the classroom and on the playgrounds among the Mexican-American students even when English was the only language of instruction and response. The topic of a discourse also had little influence on the language choice of the children studied as they conversed about anything in their experience in their two languages. Although a higher incidence of language-mixing and language-changing was found when the children discussed topics habitually discussed in one language, topic never constrained these children to a particular language. Instead, the characteristics of the participants - particularly, language proficiency, language preference, and social identity - were the most important determinants of language selection. According to McClure (1981: 74), young children (no age is specified but McClure studied children ranging in age from three to fifteen) made binary judgements of an interlocutor’s language proficiency - either that person knows a language or he or she does not - and children rarely made an inappropriate choice of language when addressing monolinguals. But unlike adults and older children, those children five or younger did not allow assessments of relative ability to enter into their decisions about language choice. When they were Spanish dominant, they would speak Spanish to McClure even when their English was more fluent than her Spanish. Older children, however, seemed to consider not only the absolute degree of the hearer’s proficiency in both languages but also the relative language proficiencies of the speaker and the hearer. As for language preference (based on the language a bilingual child likes to use the most frequently), McClure (1981: 75) found an increasing preference for English with increasing age. Finally, McClure (1981: 76) also claims that social identity affects language choice. By this she meant the identity relationship existing

between the child and his or her interlocutor as between child and parent, pupil and teacher, child and Mexican-American adult or Anglo adult and between child and child. McClure (1981) observed children at play who switched from Spanish to English when switching from a peer relationship to a teacher-pupil one. In another study involving Spanish-English bilingual children, Genishi (1981) studied four six-year-olds (three boys and one girl) whose parents were Mexican or Mexican-American (with the exception of one Anglo father). Genishi (1981) found that these four children were able to choose and maintain the language that their listeners spoke best in both instructional and noninstructional settings. Although there were wide individual variations when they spoke to bilinguals, all four spoke Spanish to Spanish monolinguals and English to English monolinguals between 84% and 100% of the time. The children appeared to operate with the following two main rules (cf. Genishi, 1981: 145): (1) Choose the language your monolingual listener speaks; and (2) Choose the language of the monolingual when interacting at the same time with a listener who is monolingual and one who is bilingual. Another rule observed by the four children and others in the setting was termed the *inertial* rule, or "Speak the language in which you were just addressed" (Chambers, 1975; cited in Genishi, 1981: 145).

The language associated with a particular person through habitual use appears also to be an important factor in all studies of language choice in young bilingual children. Even though Ronjat's (1913: 87) son, Louis, was aware by the end of his third year that his parents were bilingual, he continued to use his two languages following the one-person-one-language approach. Ronjat (1913: 85; footnote 1) stresses how through habit the abbot Rousselot, bilingual from birth, had only ever spoken a dialect of Celledrouin (patois) up to his fiftieth year with his mother. The abbot had always spoken in French to his father and never thought to use French with his mother. When all three were in conversation, Rousselot would address his father in French and continue in dialect when addressing his mother and vice versa. The association of a language with a particular person is weakened, according to Ronjat

(1913: 107), when a method other than the one-person-one-language one is used in raising a child bilingually. A friend of his, Saugrain, who taught in a college in Vienna, had a daughter, Addi, whom Ronjat compared with Louis. Addi's parents spoke to her alternatively in French and German. While Louis would answer his mother always in German even when his mother spoke some words in French, Addi would answer her father or her mother in the language that was used to address her (cf. Ronjat, 1913: 107). Ronjat (1913: 107) claims that Addi was aware earlier than Louis of being bilingual and having two languages because of the way that she was exposed to her two languages. Ronjat (1913: 108) suggests that from 2;6 (age in years and months) it was affection for his mother that encouraged Louis to continue speaking in German to his mother even when everyone except his mother spoke French to him. While Ronjat (1913: 110) believes that familial attachments are a great influence on a child's language choice, it would be reasonable to suppose as well that Louis was used to speaking German with his mother and old habits were hard to break.

### **Case studies of language choice in young bilingual children**

Quantitative analyses of the language used by young bilingual children support the general finding that participants affect language choice. More importantly, such studies suggest that it is the language used by the interlocutors which play a major role in young bilingual children's language selection. Two studies, Saunders (1980; 1988) and Döpke (1992), are similar in their practical orientation towards the subject of raising children bilingually. Saunders (1980: 113) describes how English-German bilingualism can be established in an Australian home even when "English is the native language of *both* parents and is also the dominant and official language of the community" (Saunders's emphasis), while Döpke (1992) examines features in the children's language environment such as parental discourse, attitudes, teaching behaviour, etc., which help children to acquire an active command of German in the Australian English-speaking community where they live. The other two studies, De



Houwer (1990) and Lanza (1990), are more theoretically oriented. All four studies will be discussed in detail.

*Establishing bilingualism in the home (Saunders, 1980; 1988)*

All the examples given in Saunders (1980) on the language choice patterns of his two sons, Thomas and Frank, are examples from about age four and above (age 3;5.3 - year;month.day - is the earliest age reported for one incident). According to Saunders (1980), the boys communicated in German with their father unless a monolingual English speaker was also present and in English with their mother. The parents spoke English to each other and the children spoke English together for the most part except in the presence of their father. When both parents were present, the boys would choose German or English depending on whether they had eye contact with their father or their mother. Saunders (1980: 117) writes that "since all family members understand both languages, no-one is left out of a conversation". Departures from normal language choices would occur when the children wanted to quote speakers in their original language. They were aware, for instance, that their father would understand any English quotations they inserted into otherwise German utterances (examples in Saunders, 1980: 126). When the children came into contact with other German-English bilinguals, "the nature of the first encounter [was] crucial as far as determining which language will be used with that person on that first occasion and in the future" (Saunders, 1980: 127). Once the multilingual interlocutor had spoken in one language in an initial interaction with the children, that language was always chosen by the children in future encounters.

Saunders (1980: 129-130) reports that both children went "through short periods where they have shown reluctance to speak German to their father, preferring to address him in English". At age 3;5.3, Thomas directed only 28% German words (in tokens) to his father on a 45-minute tape (cf. Saunders, 1980: 130; all percentages cited are based on an analysis of taped corpus). The same situation did not occur when Thomas spoke English. Three days earlier, 97.8% of the words (tokens) spo-

ken to his mother were completely English ones. Saunders (1980: 130) attributes this imbalance in the use of the two languages to the fact that “virtually all linguistic contact at that stage, apart from with his father, was with English-speakers”. But Saunders (1980: 130) persisted not only in speaking German to Thomas but also in “eliciting German responses from him” and three months later at 3;8.8 there is a marked increase to 74% German words directed to his father and a month later at 3;9.5 to 98% German utterances to his father. From age 3;10.7 onwards, Thomas never used less than 98% German words in his conversations with his father, and “in the 17-month period from 3;10.7 to 5;3.6 Thomas used an average of 99.4 per cent German words to his father and 99.6 per cent English words to his mother” (Saunders, 1980: 132).

Saunders (1988) is basically a book-length expansion of Saunders (1980). The same topics are discussed but with more detail and include examples from his daughter, Katrina, who was born on February 1981 (7 years and 3 months after Thomas and 5 years and 4 months after Frank). Saunders (1988: 56) states that “with regard to the separation of the two languages by conversation partner [...] it was not really until the age of 3;9 that Thomas was addressing [him] predominantly in German (98%), whilst Frank and Katrina reached this point much sooner, Frank already speaking 95% German to [him] at age 3;0, and Katrina 99% German to [him] at age 2;6”. Like Thomas, Frank also had a short period at about age 2;7 when he was reluctant to speak German. But like his elder brother, Frank did not resist speaking English at any point. Meanwhile, “unlike her brothers, Katrina has never gone through a period of reluctance to speak German”. (Saunders, 1988: 127). At age 2;6, 99% of Katrina’s utterances to her father were already in German. According to Saunders (1988: 127), the fact that Katrina has never been reluctant to speak predominantly in German to him stems from having two much older brothers as models of appropriate linguistic behaviour and she “also hears much more German, and a greater variety and complexity of German, than did her brothers at a similar age, simply because she is often

present during conversations between her father and Thomas and/or Frank” (Saunders, 1988: 127-128).

*Two languages at a time (De Houwer, 1990)*

De Houwer’s (1990) study is based on nineteen one-hour audio recordings made over an eight month period when her subject, Kate, was aged between 2;7.12 and 3;3.16. Kate was exposed from birth to English from her American mother and to Dutch from her Flemish father. The family lives in Belgium and their social background is described as upper middle class (cf. De Houwer, 1990: 72). The parents speak English to each other as the father is more fluent in English than the mother in Dutch, which she understands better than she speaks. De Houwer (1990: 74) states that “on the whole, it might be said that for the period from 2;5 to 3;4, Kate has slightly more contact with English than with Dutch”. This apparently had no detrimental effect on Kate’s use of Dutch as in the four sessions - tape 4 at 2;9.0, tape 6 at 2;10.13; tape 18 at 3;3.9 and tape 19 at 3;3.16 - where she interacted only with Dutch speakers (De Houwer alone or with the father), an average of 92% of her total utterances in these four Dutch-only sessions were in Dutch. There were no sessions where only English-speaking adults were present although it would seem that session 14 at 3;1.13 may qualify as such. Although Kate’s father was present in the second half of the session, the child interacted mainly with her mother. In this particular session (tape 14), 85.8% of the total utterances produced were in English, 5.2% in Dutch, 6.7% Mixed and 2.2% non-language specific (cf. Table 4.5 in De Houwer, 1990: 87). None of the other remaining 14 sessions is so clear-cut with regard to a particular language context created by the adult interlocutors as they all have at least one English-speaking and one Dutch-speaking adult present. As De Houwer (1990: 77) acknowledges, the “most obvious disadvantage” of such data collection is “the fact that there was no strict control over how much each of the adults present would interact with the child, and consequently, to what extent one language would be used rather than the other, both by the adults and the child”. Language selection by the child for

these sessions thus vary according to the amount of interaction with each speaker of a particular language. In the entire corpus of 19 sessions, it was found that 85.7% of Kate's utterances were in Dutch when addressing a Dutch speaker and 89.3% were in English when addressing an English speaker.

De Houwer (1990: 94) also considers Kate's language choice as a function of the language that she was addressed in and obtained the following results:

On a total of 2987 utterances [initiating utterances were excluded from this analysis], 89.2% were in the same language as Kate was addressed in, 7.5% were in a different language than she was addressed in, and 3.3% were very similar to the language she was addressed in (this final group includes [Mixed Mainly Dutch] utterances in response to Dutch utterances, and [Mixed Mainly English] utterances in response to English utterances).

De Houwer (1990: 94) concludes that the results show that Kate's language choice depends on who her interlocutor is and on the language spoken by the interlocutor as "on the few occasions" that the adults addressed Kate in a different language than the one they usually use, "Kate tends to respond in the language addressed to her" (ibid.).

*Parental discourse strategies (Lanza, 1990; 1992)*

In Lanza's (1992: 637-638) study, monthly audiotape recordings were made by each parent as he or she interacted with the child, Siri, from about age 2;0 to 2;7 in free play or book-reading - the Norwegian father spoke Norwegian to Siri and her American mother spoke English. Recordings were also made of family interactions (when both parents were present) at mealtimes. The family lived in Norway during this period and both parents are bilingual and speak English to each other in the home.

According to Lanza (1990: 285), since "Siri's use of exclusively English turns increases while her use of exclusively Norwegian turns decreases" in interactions with her mother, this "indicates a **differentiation** in language choice over time" (Lanza's emphasis). Contrary to Lanza's (1990: 285) above statement about differentiation occurring "over time", it can be argued that there is in fact differentiation in language choice according to interlocutor from the beginning of her study. Even at

age 1;11.16 and 1;11.20 in Tape I, Siri directs a higher percentage of English (43%) utterances to her mother than to her father (20%) and a correspondingly much higher percentage of Norwegian (80%) is spoken to her father than to her mother (48%). In all later recordings after age 2;0 (with the exception of Tapes II and VII which have data only with one parent and which are excluded from this discussion), this pattern of language use with each parent continues as listed below (ENG = turns completely in English; NOR = turns completely in Norwegian; age of child in parentheses):

<b>Tape I</b>	43% ENG to mother as compared to 20% ENG to father;
(1;11.16/1;11.20)	80% NOR to father as compared to 48% NOR to mother.
<b>Tape III</b>	68% ENG to mother as compared to 37% ENG to father;
(2;2.3-2;2.8)	57% NOR to father as compared to 6% NOR to mother.
<b>Tape IV</b>	85% ENG to mother as compared to 18% ENG to father;
(2;3.1-2;3.4)	76% NOR to father as compared to 1% NOR to mother.
<b>Tape V</b>	76% ENG to mother as compared to 8% ENG to father;
(2;4.6/2;4.7)	88% NOR to father as compared to 6% NOR to mother.
<b>Tape VI</b>	86% ENG to mother as compared to 4% ENG to father;
(2;5.9/2;5.10)	89% NOR to father as compared to 1% NOR to mother.
<b>Tape VIII</b>	84% ENG to mother as compared to 11% ENG to father;
(2;7.9-2;7.13)	86% NOR to father as compared to 7% NOR to mother.

Siri's overall language choice patterns from age 2;0 to 2;7 indicate appropriate use with an average of 71% turns with English in interactions with her mother and an average of 84% turns with Norwegian in interactions with her father. Although Lanza (1990: 289) does acknowledge that "Siri's language choice patterns support the claim that the participant is a major constraint in language choice already at the early age of two as she does differentiate her language use according to the principle of participation", a large part of her work (Lanza, 1990 & 1992) concentrates on Siri's language 'mixing', a term which implies that random choices are being made by the child regardless of environmental, social or other factors. This is in fact not supported by Lanza's (1990; 1992) later discussions of the effect of parental discourse strategies on Siri's language choices. Language mixing (or inappropriate language choice) could

surely then only be interpreted as a sign of the child's lack of language differentiation if such inappropriate language use formed a larger proportion of the data under investigation than that of appropriate language use, and if, moreover, lexical resources were available. In Siri's case, it can be argued that even when Siri was 1;11.16 and 1;11.20 (Tape I), she was already showing sensitivity to the language requirements of her interactions with an English and a Norwegian speaker respectively by speaking more English to the English speaker than to the Norwegian one and more Norwegian to the Norwegian speaker than to the English one. A test of association, chi square, was applied to the numbers given for ENG and NOR utterances in Tape I (Lanza, 1990), to determine whether there is any significance in the difference in proportions of ENG and NOR utterances used to the English-speaking parent and to the Norwegian-speaking one. The chi square value (15.02) is significant at  $p < 0.001$ , thus providing evidence of an association between parental speech and the frequency of ENG and NOR utterances. Moreover, according to Lanza (1990: 304), when Siri was interacting with her English-speaking mother in Tape I, she produced 59 tokens of lexical items in Norwegian (the inappropriate language), of which there were 18 different types<sup>(1)</sup>. Of these 18 Norwegian words, Lanza (1990: 304-306) could only establish definitively that Siri had the English equivalents for *three* of them. Therefore, Siri probably did not have any choice but to use these Norwegian utterances in conversation with her English-speaking mother since she did not have English equivalents for a large proportion of the Norwegian utterances she produced in this session. When Siri was interacting with her Norwegian-speaking father in Tape I, she produced 16 tokens of lexical items in English involving 10 different types. Of these 10 English words, Lanza (1990: 314) could only establish that Siri had the Norwegian equivalent for *one* of them. This shows that we need to take into account the child's resources before determining whether inappropriate language choices are being made as the child should not be 'penalized' for a lexical gap in her vocabulary when she did not have a choice. Thus in Tape I, of the 28 lexical types categorized by Lanza as

'mixing', 25 of them did not even have equivalents in Siri's productive vocabulary. Lanza (1990: 323) could not find evidence in the recordings nor in the diary kept by Siri's mother as to whether Siri had the equivalents for many of her inappropriate lexical choices and states correctly that "a weakness in the analysis is the lack of absolute data on whether an item could be classified as a lexical gap or not".

Although both of Siri's parents are bilingual, Siri is reported to use more English lexical items for which she had Norwegian equivalents with her Norwegian-speaking father than Norwegian items for which she had English equivalents with her English-speaking mother. Lanza (1990) explains that this particular linguistic behaviour may have been due to different parental discourse strategies used by Siri's parents - strategies which either encouraged or discouraged the use of lexical items in the 'wrong' language ('wrong' in the sense of not using the language associated with that parent). It was found that Siri's mother "negotiated a **monolingual context** with her daughter" (Lanza, 1990: 355; Lanza's emphasis) in general by not indicating comprehension and asking for clarification when Siri used the 'wrong' language. The father, however, did not actively open negotiations for a monolingual context to the same extent as the mother. Lanza (1990: 407-408) claims that "the fact that he at times modeled [repeated] his daughter's mixed utterances, and that he usually spoke English to Siri's mother and that she usually spoke English to him may have also played a role in signalling her father's bilingual identity", resulting in Siri's production of more English items in interactions with her father than Norwegian items in interactions with her mother.

Lanza (1990: 373) states that bilinguals can "find themselves in a monolingual or bilingual context, speaking to monolinguals or bilinguals" and negotiating this monolingual or bilingual context even "within the same interaction" (Lanza's emphasis). The continuum between a monolingual and bilingual context is depicted below along with the five discourse strategies used to negotiate a monolingual or bilingual situation (adapted from Lanza, 1990: 366-373):

Monolingual			Bilingual	
Context			Context	
Minimal grasp	Expressed guess	Adult repetition	Move on strategy	Code-switching

*Minimal grasp* is a discourse strategy where the adult conveys a meta-communicative message to the child as in 'this is a context in which to speak language A only' by not indicating comprehension and requesting clarification. *Expressed guess* occurs when the adult indicates comprehension of the child's use of the other language but requests clarification. A third strategy is for the adult to *repeat* the content of the child's utterance but using the other language. A *move-on-strategy* is exhibited when an adult continues the conversation and thus shows comprehension of the child's use of the other language. Finally, a bilingual context can be negotiated by *code-switching* as when the adult incorporates the child's inappropriate lexical choice into his or her own utterances or where the adult switches into the other language after the child's inappropriate language choice. Except for Tape I where Siri's mother used all five strategies, she tends to use mainly the first three, particularly Minimal Grasp and Adult Repetition in response to Siri's use of Norwegian utterances to her (cf. Lanza, 1990: 382). Siri's father, on the other hand, used the first three strategies in the first recording, the first four strategies in the next four sessions and all five in the last two (cf. Lanza, 1990: 399), thus showing that he negotiated more of a bilingual context in interactions with his daughter.

#### *Child-centred interactions (Döpke, 1992)*

Döpke's (1992) study follows in a sense smoothly from Lanza's (1990) as she too investigates the issue of parental discourse strategies in child bilingualism. Her study is based on two recordings with an interval of six months between each recording for each of six children, aged 2;4 or 2;8 at the onset of the study, in natural interactions with their parents. Five of the mothers spoke German to their child - three were native German speakers (mothers of Jacob, Agnes and Fiona) and two



were second-generation speakers (mothers of Alice and Trudy; cf. Table 2.1 in Döpke, 1992: 28). The one German-speaking father (of Keith) had learned German as a foreign language. All English-speaking parents were native speakers. While all German-speaking parents were bilingual, only Fiona's and Jacob's English-speaking parents had a good grasp of German (Döpke, 1992: 62). All children were first-borns from middle class families and live in English-speaking communities in Australia so that German is in effect the minority language. Döpke (1992: 46) claims that the children's 'willingness' to speak German can be used to separate the children "into two groups: on the one hand, Keith and Fiona, who were willing to speak German and who progressed in German, and on the other hand, Alice, Jacob and Agnes, who did not want to speak German and who did not progress. Trudy's German had progressed although she did not want to speak German any more during the second recording".

Döpke's (1992) study concentrates more on the parents than on the children in its aim to see what differentiated families who were successful in raising their children bilingually from those who were not. Thus her main interest in studying the children's language choices was to determine which child was bilingual and which was not after a six-month recording interval. This was done by comparing how much German was produced in the second recording in relation to the first. She found that "Keith's and Fiona's parents created language environments for their children which were superior to those of the other children" (Döpke, 1992: 80). Unlike the other parents, Keith's and Fiona's parents were consistent in using German or English respectively (>99% consistency) and always spoke English to each other (cf. Goodz<sup>(2)</sup>, 1989, on the difference between parental perception of their own language use and their actual language use). Keith's and Fiona's German-speaking parents also employed more high-constraint strategies that insisted on the child speaking German (cf. what Saunders, 1980 and 1988, did during the periods when his sons showed reluctance to speak German to him; and Taeschner's, 1983: 199, use of "What did

you say? I didn't understand ...” as a tactic to get her daughters to speak German to her). Döpke (1992: 103) “hypothesized that a child would be more likely to make active use of the minority language, German, if the interaction between child and German-speaking parent was equally or more child centred than the interaction between child and English-speaking parent” and she considered “a child centred mode of interaction to be one which is responsive to the child’s contributions to the conversation, which works to maintain a topic once introduced, and which is more oriented towards conversing with the child than controlling the child” (ibid.). Although her results support this hypothesis to a certain extent, she failed to find consistent results which differentiated “the two actively bilingual children from the four passive bilinguals” (Döpke, 1992: 107) and claims that this indicates how difficult it is to compare “the linguistic input which children receive in different families” (ibid.). Disappointingly, Döpke (1992: 181) was unsuccessful in finding out conclusively what promotes or inhibits bilingual language development.

### **Summary of literature on language choice and conclusion**

Quite a few features attributed to an interlocutor have been suggested in the literature as potentially affecting an adult speaker’s language choice. In the work on school-aged children, fewer features seem to affect children’s language choice and there is some suggestion that children will simply speak in the language in which they are addressed. Saunders (1980; 1988), De Houwer (1990), Lanza (1990; 1992) and Döpke (1992) examine their subjects’ language choice according to which adult is being addressed in an interaction. By doing so, they are accepting implicitly that the language spoken by the adult will affect the child’s language selection. Surprisingly, none of the studies reviewed has discussed in any detail how young children distinguish between the two languages to select one language rather than the other for use in a particular situation. If a child’s ability to distinguish between the two languages he or she hears is not in question (that is, if we accept that phonetic features, prosody and linguistic rhythm help us to distinguish one language from an-

other), then language itself provides the context for children's language choice (as well as for adults). Many of the aspects of an interlocutor mentioned such as language proficiency, language preference, social identity, age, ethnic background, language attitude and so on can therefore be considered within the confines of the actual language spoken by the interlocutor in any particular interaction with another adult or a child. This claim that the language spoken by an interlocutor is an important aspect of an interlocutor supports the work done in accommodation theory, audience design and in the social psychology of language choice and does not detract from other factors mentioned by different researchers. Such a stance is needed, however, for us to come closer to synthesizing the many interpretations to form a bridge between what affects language choice in very young children and what affects language choice in older children and adults. This 'bridge' can then help us to understand this social dimension of communication in speakers of all ages.

### Notes

- (1) 'Type' refers to a particular item while 'token' to the number of occurrences of that item.
- (2) Goodz (1989: 25) found in a study of parental language use to four first-born children in French-English bilingual families that parents who were "firmly committed to maintaining a strict separation of language by parent, model linguistically mixed utterances for their children". Goodz (1989: 38) showed that the frequency of occurrence of children's mixed utterances could be correlated with the frequency of occurrence of parental mixing, especially in mother-child dyads.

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## 大人と子供における言語選択の社会的側面

〈要約〉

スーザン・クエイ

当論文は言語選択に関する研究を質的かつ量的視点から論じた概観である。論文の前半では、モノリンガルおよびバイリンガルの集団における言語選択に影響を及ぼす一般的要因を取り上げ、話し手の言語選択に対する対話者の重要性についての議論に沿って、社会言語学そして社会心理学の領域から見た言語選択についての解釈が説明されている。後半では、年少のバイリンガルの子供の言語選択を量的に分析した四つの特定の研究について論じられている。これらの四研究はそれぞれ、モノリンガルおよびバイリンガルの大人と会話するバイリンガルの子供が、それぞれの言語のどれほどを話すかについてだけでなく、バイリンガルの子供の養育の問題についても取り上げている。これら四人の研究者は皆、被験者のバイリンガルの子供がモノリンガル・バイリンガルの大人と会話する時、それぞれどの言語を使うかを調べている。すなわちこれらの研究は、ある特定時に子供と接している大人の言語が子供の言語選択を決定するのではないかという推測に基づいている。この論文では、もしも子供が耳にする二つの言語を区別する能力に問題がなければ（すなわち、もしも音声上の特徴、韻律、そして言語学的リズムが、ある言語と別の言語を区別するのに役立つと考えるならば）、言語そのものが話し手の言語選択のコンテキストを提供する、と結論づける。この結論は、言語選択についての数多くの解釈を総合化することに近づけ、年少の子供における言語使用に影響を与えるものと年長の子供や大人における言語使用に影響を与えるもの間に架け橋を作るのに、役立つであろう。