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*Iranian Journal
of
Language Teaching Research*

BOOK REVIEW



Urmia University

***Bilingual Development in Childhood*, Annick De Houwer.
Cambridge University Press (2021). 85 Pages. ISBN: 978-1-108-79139-7.**

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Interest in research on bilingual children has witnessed an exponential rise in the last 25 years (Bayram et al., 2018). Based on a broad range of data collection methods, *Bilingual Development in Childhood* by Annick De Houwer is a well-organized systematic review, explaining how various language learning settings at different stages of childhood dynamically affect bilingual children's oral language learning trajectories, with a brief examination of the possible role of socioeconomic status in bilingual development. This much needed book comprises 6 chapters and addresses all the fundamentals as well as some critical topics related to child bilingualism.


Chapter 1 provides a clear outline of three life stages of children who have more than a single spoken language: infancy, early childhood, and middle childhood (Steinberg et al., 2011) as the organizing structure of the book, followed by definitions of three language learning settings namely Bilingual First Language Acquisition (BFLA), Early Second Language Acquisition (ESLA), and Second Language Acquisition (SLA). A dichotomy of societal and non-societal languages, which is based on the concept of social hierarchy, is introduced in this chapter to highlight how this hierarchy influences children's bilingualism. The chapter continues by explaining why learning foreign languages (especially English) is important in Europe and once again accentuates the role of language learning environments on children's language learning trajectories.

Chapter 2 is dedicated to bilingualism in infancy, starting with what it means to be born into a bilingual family and how newborns are exposed to a bilingual language input environment through three different patterns. Accompanied by elucidating online audio-visual examples, the author clarifies how parents provide language input to infants using infant directed speech (IDS) and intonation patterns by reporting a number of studies and comparing IDS to ADS (adult-to-adult speech). Next, the author provides facts on bilingual infant phonological development and speech perception with a comprehensive discussion on the differences between tone and non-tone

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 10.30466/ijltr.2022.121127

languages as well as phonemes and allophones that are used to form words in different languages. How bilingual infants learn words in two languages is the topic of discussion in the next section of this chapter: The overlap between words across two languages, created by cognates and translation equivalents (TEs), may play a role in the process of vocabulary learning. The author believes that, on the contrary to common conceptions, there is no difference between monolingual and BFLA peers' comprehension vocabulary repertoire in one particular language. A separate section is allotted to bilingual infant language production where different stages of production are explained in chronological order. The author also elucidates phonological development in production, considering it a long-winded journey for infants. Considering it a common experience for people globally, it is believed that BFLA infants understand more words than they utter (De Houwer, 2009). Two types of comparison between bilingual and monolingual infants' production vocabulary size are introduced: (1) Based on children's total production vocabulary which covers words in both languages for bilinguals, and (2) based on production vocabulary in a single language. This chapter also includes short excerpts concerning choice of language for bilinguals as well as uneven bilingual development in infancy highlighting the fact that BFLA infants do not develop each language at the same pace as a matter of course. Finally, the author tries to explain factors that can affect bilingual development in infancy, namely children's age and the characteristics of the input they are exposed to. He further clarifies this by introducing monolingual and bilingual discourse strategies such as "Minimal Grasp Strategy," "Adult Repetition," and "Move On Strategy."

Chapter 3 focuses on bilingualism in early childhood with a discussion of children's developing language comprehension based on an array of studies relying on Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT) which measures comprehension vocabulary size indirectly. According to the author, there is little research in terms of early childhood speech perception and comprehension vocabulary size. What is certainly clear is that BFLA preschoolers show high speaking skills, often in two languages, but can use the societal language better and at levels proportional to those of monolinguals who speak the same societal language as their single language. This chapter also includes sections on monolinguals who are exposed to L2 through Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and who are referred to as ESLA preschoolers. When it comes to comparison between BFLA and ESLA preschoolers, the author thoroughly attends to some differences and similarities with regards to language comprehension and production, morphosyntactic structures in their societal language utterances, and the influence of foreign accent on their productions. BFLA toddlers and preschoolers' choice of language depends on their interlocutor's choice of language. Nevertheless, uneven development may affect their language choice. The remainder of the chapter offers a highly selective review of the previous research on internal (age, processing ability, and knowledge of the other language) and external (the amount and quality of input and unequal proficiency levels) factors affecting bilingual development in early childhood.

Chapter 4 deals with bilingualism in middle childhood with sections focusing on BFLA, ESLA, and SLA Children who are hearing the second language at school and who need to learn it from scratch. Based on a number of studies, the opening of this chapter offers insights on BFLA and ESLA schoolchildren's language development highlighting a gap in literature concerning morphosyntactic features of ESLA schoolchildren's L1. With regards to SLA schoolchildren's development, the author believes that there are a few detailed and comprehensive studies on the course of language development in schoolchildren hearing an L2 in middle childhood. However, it is reported that most SLA schoolchildren can have great improvement in L2 English comprehension throughout their first school year, achieving the level equal to those monolinguals who are 4.5 years old. On the other hand, in order for SLA schoolchildren to start forming sentences of their own making, shorter "silent period" is required compared to so many younger ESLA Children. Considering uneven bilingual development, the author found that in BFLA settings, children may not use the non-societal language they hear from their parents at home, while this is rare for ESLA or SLA not to speak the only non-societal language they hear at home. The next section in this chapter is devoted to language choice in middle childhood. Based on several

reported studies, it is much easier for BFLA schoolchildren to switch between two languages they speak, while younger children often do so according to their interlocutors. From a different perspective, many BFLA schoolchildren do not speak the non-societal language in bilingual homes as most of them address their parents in the societal language.

The shortest chapter in the book, Chapter 5, discusses the role of socioeconomic status (SES) in the process of bilingual development in childhood by reporting some studies on Italian, German, and Spanish children, reporting contrasting findings for different languages. In fact, SES could influence a linguistic measure in one language but not in the other. The author believes it is of vital importance to consider both maternal and paternal SES measures in bilingual settings, explaining some problems rooted in using a single type of measure to define SES. This chapter ends with recommendations for developmental scientists on how to document and report variables related to children's language backgrounds and SES.

Chapter 6, as the last one, highlights several generalizations as a function of BFLA, ESLA, and SLA learning environments, and mentions an important factor to consider in clinical practice (De Houwer, 2018) and in research, namely the heterogeneous nature of individual profiles. The author also reports that many studies on language development have not included child gender as a variable. Contrary to the strong belief in "the earlier, the better", it is concluded in this book that learning to use two languages proficiently in childhood requires a great length of time and practice for both children and those who engage with them. However, the older children become, the faster they can learn a new language naturalistically. The last topic discussed is about feelings and attitudes of bilinguals who no longer speak their non-societal language.

Overall, the book provides an in-depth perspective for what bilingual development is at different stages of children's life, highlighting the gaps and limitations in the contemporary literature. For years, there has been a deep-rooted bias in many western societies which is the reason why bilinguals fail to experience harmonious development. The book highlights the need for more clinical studies as well as research on child bilingualism, without the still all-too-frequent focus on comparisons with monolinguals, and concepts of "accelerated" or "delayed" development in bilinguals, inviting scholars everywhere to support harmonious bilingualism via investigating it with a focus on several factors that threaten or foster it. As a way of improvement and to make the book more coherent, redundancies in chapters 2, 3, and 4, where the same issues on factors affecting bilingual development are revisited every now and then, can be removed in a later edition or could be summarized as a separate chapter to allow more space to discuss the content more succinctly.

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