The Ups and Downs of the Monolingual Bias and the Bilingual Turn in Second Language Acquisition: Getting Down to Some Specifics

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Cognitive and linguistic approaches to second language acquisition (SLA) (Corder 1963, Dulay, Burt & Krashen 1982, Selinker 1972, White 2003) derive their meaning from the epistemology and methodology of the Chomskyan paradigm.

Emphasis on the study of language as a formal cognitive system.
Guiding Questions

- How does L2 acquisition by adults differ from L1 acquisition by children? (process)

- Why do L2 learners rarely, if ever, reach the level of ultimate attainment of an adult, mature native speaker? (outcome)

- Focus on the formal (linguistic) properties of language as a cognitive system.
Cognitive approaches to SLA have dominated the theoretical landscape in the last 50 years.

“Skewed perspective which conceives of the L2 speaker as a deficient communicator struggling to overcome an underdeveloped L2 competence of an idealized native speaker.”

SLA requires a significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language.
Another Turn? Ortega (2013)

A reframing of the field of SLA is needed to gain transdisciplinary relevance.

- Comparing adult L2 acquisition to L1 acquisition is a narrow approach.

- It limits the discussion to a dialogue between two fields.

- It fails to connect with other disciplines that investigate other relevant types of acquisition.

- It fails to contribute to the ontogeny of human language.
Three Reframings

Moving Away from Comparing L2 Learners to Native Speakers

A Bi/Multilingual Turn for SLA

- Attrition
- Second dialect LA
- Adult second LA
- Child second LA
- Monolingual first LA
- Bilingual first LA
- Successive monolingual LA
- Delayed first sign LA
Ortega (2013)

Acquisition types vary across two main parameters:

1. Timing (early vs. late)
2. Number of languages (one or more)

SLA’s transdisciplinary relevance can be greatly enhanced in the future by understanding the place of SLA in the wider landscape of fields that study language ontogeny.
Ortega (2013)

- L2 researchers “often choose a negative framing in which cognitive and social maturity are portrayed as confounds that on the one hand complicate the study of SLA and on the other hand hinder any linguistic development that may happen later in life”.

- SLA researchers need to invest in positive reframings of the field.

- Explaining how late bilingualism is possible and even normal, not impossible and exceptional, would be part of this overarching research program.
The Bilingual Turn

- SLA should be studied as part of bilingualism and develop a positive framing with transdisciplinary relevance.

**Implications**

- The study of SLA should move away from the monolingual bias and the notion of native speaker.
- This calls for a bilingual research approach.
Outline

1. Some history of the monolingual bias in the study of language and second language acquisition and its justification.

2. SLA and other fields: The ontogeny of language and cognitive approaches.

3. Why monolinguals are important to keep and study

4. The monolingual bias in bilingualism.

5. What would it mean to adopt a bilingual approach in SLA?
1. Some History

- The assumption that language and its users are abstract unitary constructs dates back to the Middle Ages if not earlier (Mack 1997).

- The study of Language as a formal system also dates back to the Middle ages if not earlier.

- The study of second language acquisition and how and why it differs from child L1 acquisition also dates back to antiquity (Thomas 2004).
Structuralism

- Bloomfield (1933)
- Chomsky (1957 onwards)

“Linguistic theory is concerned primarily with an ideal speaker-listener, in a completely homogeneous speech-community, who knows its (the speech community’s) language perfectly and is unaffected by such grammatically irrelevant conditions as memory limitations, distractions, shifts of attention and interest, and errors (random or characteristic) in applying his knowledge of this language in actual performance.” (Chomsky 1965: 3)
Linguistic Norms

- Based on the purity of certain living or dead languages (philology)
- Idealized language user

The notion of linguistic norms has played a paramount and crucial role in linguistic analysis.

Londhal (2013): Chomsky’s approach was correct and justified then, now theoretical linguistics should take multilingual phenomena into account when constructing theories of grammar.
Is this approach unique to linguistics?

- Psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics have also been mostly concerned with the (monolingual) native speaker.
- Psycholinguistics: is about the American undergraduate native speaker (Fernald)
In fact, we work with real speakers

- Psycholinguistics
- Neurolinguistics
- Second Language Acquisition
- Bilingualism

We collect data from real speakers, not ideal speakers.
What is a native speaker?

- Everybody knows a native speaker when you hear one.
- What are the characterizing features of a native speaker?
- How do these relate to biographical variables and language learning experience?
Stability vs. constrained variability

- Abstract linguistic knowledge (Chomsky)
- Sociolinguistic variation (Labov)
- Psycholinguistic variation (working memory, executive control)
Knowledge of language

- Birth
- 4 yrs
- 12 yrs
- 18 yrs
- 40s

Knowledge of language is developing over time, with complete and stable knowledge achieved by 18 years. For many, fluency continues to develop and stabilize in the 40s.

- Developing Native Speaker
- Fully Fluent Native Speaker
Examples of complete, fluent knowledge of language

Mature educated native speakers

- Pronounce the sounds of their language well
- Do not make morphological errors of omission or commission. They are more than 90% accurate on the use of morphology in obligatory contexts.
- Know how to conjugate their verbs and make agreement in phrases
- Know many words in their language
- Speak and write in grammatical sentences.
- Understand different meanings of words and phrases
- Know how to use language in different sociolinguistic contexts
- Have pragmatic competence
- Show consistent ceiling performance in tasks of grammatical ability regardless of modality of task
Key variables that define and affect the developing native speaker

- Exposure to the language from birth
- Use of the language at home
- Schooling in the language
- Socialization beyond the home in the language
- Consistent exposure and language use in a variety of contexts and communicative situations until about early adulthood
- Abnormal language development (SLI, down syndrome, autism, etc.)
Typology of Native Speakers

- Monolingual native speakers
- Bilingual native speakers
Monolingual native speakers vary in

**SES:** low, mid, high SES

**Literacy:** literate, semiliterate, illiterate

**Pathology:** healthy vs. language impaired

**Other**
Bilingual native speakers vary in

- All dimensions of monolingual speakers as well as in
- Age of acquisition of the 2 languages
  - Simultaneous bilinguals
  - Sequential bilinguals
- Degree of use of the language/s
  - Fluent vs. non-fluent
Typology of Bilingual Native Speakers

- The **fully fluent** native speaker
- The **interrupted** native speaker (heritage speakers, international adoptees)
- The **attrited** native speaker
- The **bilingual aphasic** native speaker
- Other?
Native and non native speakers in other fields

- **Psycholinguists** who do not know about SLA do not describe their subjects in detail.

- They assume that any native speaker is a native speaker and that any person with some knowledge of another language is a bilingual.

- **Sociolinguists** focus on gender, SES, geography, but rarely control for knowledge of another language.

- **Corpus linguistics**: Who are the speakers in their samples?
Native and non native speakers in SLA

- In SLA we have taken seriously the notion of the NS and of the NNS
- We have come a long way in learning to tease apart and control for different variables that characterize native and non-native speakers
  - L2 learners
  - Near-natives
  - L3 learners
  - L1 attritters
  - different types of bilinguals (seq., sim.)
2. Transdisciplinarity within Cognitive/Linguistic Approaches

- Linguistics/Psycholinguistics and SLA (Bock 1990-Foote 2012, Clahsen & Felser 2006, Kim, Montrul & Yoon under review)

- Child L1 and Adult SLA (Kempe and Brookes)

- Child L2 and Adult SLA (Unsworth, Prévost, Lichtman, Paradis, special issue of Language Acquisition 2013)

- Monolingual vs. Bilingual First Language Acquisition (Genesee, Meisel, Paradis, Müller & Hulk, Kupisch, among many others).

- Monolingual SLI and normal bilingual and bilingual SL1 (Paradis, Gutiérrez Clellen, Grüter)

- SLI and Adult SLA (Grüter)
SLA and other fields

- L2 and L3 acquisition (Bardel & Falk, Rothman, Leung, Cenoz).
- Adult SLA and L1 attrition (Gürel, Bylund, Sorace)
- Adult SLA and incomplete acquisition in heritage speakers (Au et al., Montrul)
- Adult SLA and International Adoptees (Hyltenstam et al.)
- Adult SLA and other Adult Simultaneous bilinguals (Kupisch)
In short,

- As Ortega proposes, all these fields within cognitive, linguistic and neuro- or psycholinguistic approaches have compared different populations who differ on number of languages acquired and age of acquisition.

- They all have as underlying concern an understanding of the formal/structural properties of human language as it is represented in the mind, and the genetic and environmental factors that play a role in its ontogeny and development.
Is the notion of native speaker necessary?

- Absolutely!

- We need to understand linguistic knowledge in monolingual native speakers.

- We have not yet learned everything there is to know about monolingual speakers.

- We need to understand linguistic knowledge in bilingual native speakers.
Monolingual native speakers

- Sociolinguistics
- Psycholinguistics
- Neurolinguistics
- Psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic variability

Perhaps smaller population of speakers, but they exist and should be studied before they disappear.

Some languages no longer have monolingual native speakers (Basque, Catalan, etc.)
Value judgments

Are monolingual native speakers superior to bilinguals?

- Language/interlanguage
- Monolingual/bilingual
- Native/non-native
- Successful/unsuccessful
- Complete/incomplete
Consequences of avoiding comparisons between monolinguals and bilinguals (Mack 1997)

- We would not be able to gather information about the organization of the brain in bilinguals (Potter, Kroll)
- It would be impossible to test the hypothesis that there is a critical/sensitive period for L2 acquisition (Abrahamsson, Hyltenstam, Long, DeKeyser)
- We would not be able to obtain critical information about the linguistic, metalinguistic, and cognitive consequences of bilingualism (Bialystok’s work)
Other consequences

- We would not be able to answer the question of whether simultaneous bilingual children start their acquisition process with one linguistic system like monolinguals or two.

- We would not be able to understand how one language influences the other during development, or to tease apart developmental versus transfer errors in L2/bilingual acquisition.

- We would not be able to understand diachronic language change in a language versus change in the same language in contact with another language.
More Consequences

- We would not be able to understand what changes in first language attrition in a bilingual environment when we cannot do a longitudinal study (Bylund, Schmidt).

- We would not be able to understand clinical work in neurolinguistics, which depends on studying healthy brains in order to understand bilingual aphasia or bilingual SLI (M. Paradis, J. Paradis)
We cannot get rid of the notion of native speaker

We cannot ignore the study of native speakers

We still need the native speaker to be able to answer many questions in SLA and bilingualism.
4. Monolingual Bias in Bilingualism

- If by monolingual bias we mean making monolinguals the norm and the standard to reach, as Ortega and other suggest, then the monolingual bias is not unique to SLA.

- There is a monolingual bias in the field of Bilingualism as well, justified by the research questions.


- We rarely study the two languages of bilinguals and how they interact.
Half of the articles if not more include a control group of native speakers when the research questions warrant it.

- Work on the bilingual lexicon and lexical access.
- Work on syntactic and morphological processing.
- Work on phonological processing.
- Work on the role of bilingualism on executive function.
As in SLA, in Bilingualism as well

- There are compelling theoretical and practical reasons for keeping the (monolingual) native speaker in our research designs.

- At the same time, we should be aware of unintended negative implications or interpretation of our findings.

- The monolingual native speaker is a linguistic reality and an empirical necessity (Mack 1997).
5. A Bilingual Approach to SLA and Bilingualism

What does it mean?

If a bilingual has two languages, at minimum we should study and compare the bilingual’s command of the two languages either longitudinally or cross-sectionally.
Bilinguals usually acquire and use their languages for different purposes, in different domains of life, with different people. Different aspects of life require different languages” (Grosjean 2008, p. 23)

Bilingual “balance” and “dominance” are reflections of the Complementarity Principle.
The Complementarity Principle
Consequences

- Level of fluency attained in a language will depend on need for that language and will often be domain specific.
- If reading and writing skills are not needed, they will not be developed.
- If a language is not needed in a context or for a purpose, the vocabulary and linguistic properties associated with the context or purpose will not be developed.
Bilinguals are not often very good translators and interpreters, especially in domains covered by just one language.

They may lack vocabulary (religion, work, home, school).

They may lack the stylistic varieties needed in a domain or may lack cultural knowledge (pragmatic competence) in domains typically covered by the other language.
Linguistic Restructuring

- New situations and linguistic needs will cause the languages to restructure, in the sense that they will expand or retract based on need.

- The weaker language will often be influenced by the stronger language.

- Extreme cases of restructuring can be language forgetting and a return to functional monolingualism, be it in the person’s first, second, or third language.
Empirically, this requires

- testing our participants in the two languages instead of only in one,
- assessing dominance and proficiency in the two languages,
- that the researchers know the two languages.
Montrul (in press)

DOMINANCE

Biographical variables
- Age of Acquisition
- Place of birth, place of residence,
- Languages of the environment

Input and use
- Amount of input
- Type of context
- Degree of language use

PROFICIENCY
- Textual, grammatical, phonological, and lexical ability
- Fluency and processing speed
May be justified in some cases but not in every study . . .

- To determine the influence of the L2 on the L1.
- To trace L1 loss as a result of L2 acquisition in L2 learners in an immigrant situation.

L1 attrition, incomplete acquisition, language shift

- To investigate potential restructuring in the two languages throughout development (longitudinal study) Has this been done?
Examples of Bilingual designs in SLA/L1Attrition

- Yeni-Komshian, Flege & Liu (2000)
- Bylund, Abrahamsson & Hyltenstam (2012)
- Montrul & Ionin (2010)
Aims

- to determine if native L1 pronunciation is retained when an L2 is acquired,
- to examine age effects on L2 pronunciation learning
- to compare the relative balance between L1 and L2 pronunciation proficiency, and to examine background factors that may contribute to different patterns of L1/L2 proficiencies.
240 Korean bilinguals (KB), immigrated to the USA between the ages of 1 and 23 years.

They all had Korean as their L1 and learned English as their L2.

The 240 KB participants were placed into one of 10 subgroups (n = 24) based on AOA.

two groups of monolinguals: 24 Korean (KM) and 24 English (EM), were tested.

They produced sentences in Korean and English which were listened and evaluated for pronunciation.
### Table 1. Group descriptions and labels. The average and standard deviation of age at testing (T/Age), length of residence, highest educational achievement in the USA, and highest educational achievement in Korea

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group Description</th>
<th>Label</th>
<th>T/Age</th>
<th>LOR</th>
<th>HAU</th>
<th>HAK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AOA 1–3</td>
<td>KB3</td>
<td>22.7 (2.4)</td>
<td>20.0 (2.3)</td>
<td>15.6 (0.6)</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 4–5</td>
<td>KB5</td>
<td>21.2 (2.5)</td>
<td>16.4 (2.7)</td>
<td>14.8 (1.7)</td>
<td>none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 6–7</td>
<td>KB7</td>
<td>23.6 (3.2)</td>
<td>16.9 (3.2)</td>
<td>15.9 (1.4)</td>
<td>0.5 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 8–9</td>
<td>KB9</td>
<td>23.5 (2.9)</td>
<td>15.0 (3.2)</td>
<td>15.8 (1.4)</td>
<td>2.3 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 10–11</td>
<td>KB11</td>
<td>24.2 (4.7)</td>
<td>13.5 (4.7)</td>
<td>15.5 (1.5)</td>
<td>4.4 (0.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 12–13</td>
<td>KB13</td>
<td>24.1 (3.1)</td>
<td>11.7 (3.2)</td>
<td>15.4 (1.1)</td>
<td>6.2 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 14–15</td>
<td>KB15</td>
<td>27.2 (5.5)</td>
<td>12.5 (5.4)</td>
<td>15.6 (1.6)</td>
<td>8.1 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 16–17</td>
<td>KB17</td>
<td>29.1 (4.3)</td>
<td>12.5 (4.2)</td>
<td>15.7 (1.6)</td>
<td>10.0 (0.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 18–19</td>
<td>KB19</td>
<td>32.1 (5.0)</td>
<td>13.7 (5.1)</td>
<td>16.5 (2.0)</td>
<td>11.6 (1.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOA 20–23</td>
<td>KB21</td>
<td>34.5 (4.7)</td>
<td>13.5 (4.5)</td>
<td>15.5 (4.0)</td>
<td>13.4 (1.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English monolinguals</td>
<td>EM</td>
<td>27.0 (6.7)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>16.6 (1.2)</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Korean monolinguals</td>
<td>KM</td>
<td>20.3 (2.3)</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>13.8 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

AOA = age of arrival in the USA, in years; LOR = length of residence in the USA, in years; HAU = highest educational achievement in the USA, the number corresponds to the level attained; HAK = highest educational achievement in Korea, in number of years; KB = Korean bilingual; EM = English monolingual; KM = Korean monolingual.
Figure 1. English pronunciation scores as a function of AOA for 240 Korean–English bilinguals and pronunciation scores for 24 English monolinguals (filled circles, top left). The fitted curve is the third order polynomial function between AOA and pronunciation.
Figure 2. Korean pronunciation scores as a function of AOA for 240 Korean–English bilinguals and pronunciation scores for 24 Korean monolinguals (filled circles, top right). The fitted curve is the second order polynomial function between AOA and pronunciation.
The results from this study effectively showed a significant negative correlation \( r = -0.47 \) between L1 and L2 pronunciation scores among those bilinguals who had started L2 acquisition before puberty (i.e., before age 12), but not for those who started beyond this point.

Figure 3. Average pronunciation scores (z-scores) in English and Korean for the 10 KB groups.
Does First Language Maintenance Hamper Nativelikeness in a second language?
Bylund, Abrahamsson and Hyltenstam (2012)

Aims

- To test the predictions of the Impediment Hypothesis (Flege 1999, Ventureyra et al. 2004)
- To supplement research on the relationship between L1 and L2 in ultimate attainment.
- To investigate how age of onset of L2 acquisition, amount of L1 use, and language aptitude contribute to native-like attainment in one, both, or neither language.
Participants

- Age of acquisition before 12 (mean 6; range 1-11; SD 3.2)
- Length of residence in Sweden 23.7 (range 10-41)
- 15 native speakers of Spanish and 15 native speakers of Swedish were recruited as **monolingual** controls (i.e., born and raised in Spanish or in Swedish)
- GJT in Spanish and in Swedish and semantic inference tested in a cloze test in each language.
Table 1. Cross-tabulation of the bilingual participants’ nativelike-non-nativelike scores on the GJT's

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Spanish GJT</th>
<th>Nonnativelike</th>
<th>Nativelike</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nonnativelike</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativelike</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Participants who were nativelike in the L2 were also nativelike in the L1. The L1 is not an impediment.
• Unlike Yeni-Komshian et al. (2000) no negative correlation between L2 proficiency and L1 proficiency.
• Degree of native-likeness in both languages was correlated with aptitude.

Table 2. Cross-tabulation of the bilingual participants’ nativelike-nonnativelike scores on the cloze tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Swedish cloze test</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nonnativelike</td>
<td>Nativelike</td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spanish cloze test</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonnativelike</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nativelike</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>19</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Does the stronger language influence the weaker language in heritage speakers? Montrul & Ionin (2010)

Aims:

- Investigate the **two** languages of adult Spanish heritage speakers

- to assess both the dominance relationship between the languages, and whether there is transfer from the dominant language onto the weaker language.

- To assess knowledge of meaning of definite articles with generic reference (and in inalienable possession contexts).
Spanish vs. English plural NPs with definite articles (Montrul & Ionin 2010)

- **Los elefantes tienen colmillos de marfil** (generic)
  
  “Elephants have ivory tusks.”

- **Los elefantes de este zoológico son marrones.** (specific)
  
  “The elephants in this zoo are brown.”

- **Pedro levantó la mano.** (inalienable possession)
  
  “Peter raised his hand.”
Participants

- 23 Spanish-English bilinguals (Spanish heritage speakers)
- Control groups of Spanish and English native speakers
- Cloze tests, acceptability judgment task, Truth value judgment task, picture matching task.
- The heritage speakers completed the same tasks in English and in Spanish
Results Proficiency Test

- Spanish: 96.8%
- Spanish Heritage: 81.6%

- English native speakers: 94.3%
- Spanish Heritage speakers: 92.2%
Results AJT: Overall

Mean accuracy on article use

Group

English native speakers
Spanish Heritage speakers

Mean accuracy on article use

Group

Spanish native speakers
Spanish heritage speakers
Bare Plurals
Results TVJT

**ENGLISH**

**SPANISH**
Findings

- The heritage speakers are native-like in English in this domain.
- Spanish is the weaker language.
- Transfer of semantic interpretations from the stronger language onto the weaker language
Not using monolingual comparison groups

- Morales (2013)
- Kupisch (2013)
Li (2012)

• Longitudinal study of six 7-9 year old Chinese children learning English in an immersion context in the US.

• Recorded once a month for 8 months in interactions with researcher.

• Past tense, agreement, nominative subjects
Lardiere 2007, White 2008: Patty’s (L1 Mandarin) and SD’s (L1 Turkish) accuracy on nominative case and tense and agreement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recording</th>
<th>Overt subjects</th>
<th>Null Subjects</th>
<th>3rd sing Agreement</th>
<th>Past tense Lexical verbs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Patty 1</td>
<td>99.5</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patty 2</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>34.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Patty 3</td>
<td>97.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>33.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 1</td>
<td>98.5</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SD 2</td>
<td>99.4</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>81.5</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Endstate

- Patty (L1 Mandarin): Overt Subjects - 98.3, 3rs agreement - 4.41, past tense - 34.6
- SD (L1 Turkish): Overt Subjects - 98.9, 3rs agreement - 79.7, past tense - 80.5

Legend:
- Overt Subjects
- 3rs agreement
- past tense
Child L2 acquisition of Spanish and of English

32 children learning Spanish in a total immersion school in Michigan

32 children learning English in a total immersion school in Puerto Rico

All children were tested in Spanish and English comprehension and production

Focus was agreement in Spanish and in English
Spanish L2 learners showed high accuracy in producing verbal morphology.

Most learners (n=20) within the native range (100% - 80%)

Learners’ performance in comprehension:
They performed native-like in the target items.
Results Spanish: Production vs. Comprehension (L2 learners)
Results Spanish :: Production vs. Comprehension (natives)
Kupisch, Lein, Barton, Schröder, Stangen & Stoehr (2013)

Aims

- to compare the acquisition of French in a minority and majority language context

- to identify the relative vulnerability of individual domains

- to investigate whether 2L1s are vulnerable to language attrition when moving to their heritage country during adulthood.
Participants

- 21 German-French adult simultaneous bilinguals (ages 21-40) who grew up in bilingual families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1. Overview of participants</th>
<th>2L1s who grew up predominantly in France</th>
<th>2L1s who grew up predominantly in Germany</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time spent in Germany after age 19 (months/age-19 years)</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>92.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze test in French (accuracy in %)</td>
<td>89% (range 76-100%)</td>
<td>72.3% (range 42-87%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloze test in German (accuracy in %)</td>
<td>80% (range 29-100%)</td>
<td>89% (range 67-98%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Focus

- Grammaticality Judgment Task
- Spontaneous production
- Global foreign accent and VOT measurements

Morphosyntax

Article placement, gender agreement, articles and genericity, prepositions
## Findings

Table 9. *Summary of significant differences between the two groups of 2L1s*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Significant differences between the two groups</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adjective placement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article use in generic contexts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use of prepositions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Foreign Accent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice Onset Time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
“According to Montrul (2008, p. 6), incomplete acquisition is a possible result--but not the only one--of language acquisition by children and adults in a dual language environment.

In fact, the heritage speakers in our study show a lot of evidence for complete acquisition.

Even though we have not included a control group of monolingual native speakers in all experiments, we have made sure by consultation and pre-testing with native speakers that our experiments and analyses were based on what monolingual native speakers accept as native-like behavior.”
Many studies within the cognitive-linguistic framework have been transcending other fields and have addressed comparative questions that involve different populations of language learners (monolinguals and bilinguals).

A bilingual approach has also been quite common in this perspective.
How do we change the framing?

- Theoretical approaches to SLA emerged out of a need to address pedagogical problems.
- Do we want to come back to this original goal?
- What are the crucial questions we want answered about second language acquisition and bilingualism?
A way to change the framing

- Begin to focus more on the **advantages** of knowing another language and of bilingualism instead of **differences** with monolinguals:
  
  At the cognitive level
  
  At the educational level
  
  At the social level
  
  At the economic level
  
  What else?
Thank you very much
Tack så mycket