

Part I Overview and Foundations

Introduction

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The investigation of bilingualism is a broad and complex field, including the study of the nature of the individual bilingual's knowledge and use of two (or more) languages as well as the broader social and cultural consequences of the widespread use of more than one language in a given society. The two chapters that make up part I provide a general orientation to this complex field.

In "Foundations of Bilingualism," John Edwards provides an insightful bird's-eye view of the field by examining a wide range of issues that are addressed in greater depth in later, more specialized chapters in the book. A matter of central importance is the very notion of a "bilingual" – who is and who is not a bilingual? Edwards addresses this question as a matter of both degree and type of mastery of the second language. The process of second language acquisition – of becoming a bilingual – also receives some attention in the chapter in terms both of observational results and of theories and models of the process. The study of the relationship between bilingualism and intelligence has a long and checkered history, which Edwards also reviews. A central and continuing question in the field concerns the interaction between the bilingual's two language systems, including the influence that each system has on the knowledge and use of the other ("interference," in a special, technical sense without negative connotations) as well as the form and motivation for using both languages in the same discourse (code switching) and the longer-term phenomenon of borrowing between languages; Edwards addresses questions concerning these effects of bilingualism. Collective bilingualism of the kind one finds in India and other highly multilingual societies raises its own range of questions, including those concerning the social identity of individuals who are members of those societies; Edwards addresses those issues as well.

François Grosjean's chapter, "Studying Bilinguals: Methodological and Conceptual Issues," discusses five issues of central importance to experimental work with bilingual individuals. First, like Edwards, he is concerned with what it means to be a bilingual – specifically, what sort of characteristics

should the participants/subjects in an experiment on “bilingualism” exhibit to allow conclusions about bilinguals to be drawn from the experiment? Second is the important question – raised by several other contributors – as to what “language mode” the individual is in at the time of the experiment – that is, to what extent is the bilingual set to use either language or a mixture of the two? Third and fourth, Grosjean is concerned about problems arising from the stimuli and the tasks used in experiments with bilinguals. Finally, he addresses the complex issue of what models of the bilingual are appropriate, given what we know at this point, emphasizing – as he has in previous publications – that the bilingual is not to be regarded as simply two monolinguals in one brain but as something quite different.

1 Foundations of Bilingualism

JOHN V. EDWARDS

1.1 Introduction

Everyone is bilingual. That is, there is no one in the world (no adult, anyway) who does not know at least a few words in languages other than the maternal variety. If, as an English speaker, you can say *c'est la vie* or *gracias* or *guten Tag* or *tovarisch* – or even if you only understand them – you clearly have some “command” of a foreign tongue. Such competence, of course, does not lead many to think of bilingualism. If, on the other hand, you are like George Steiner (1992), who claims equal fluency in English, French, and German, and who further claims that, after rigorous self-examination – of which language emerges spontaneously in times of emergency or elevated emotion, which variety is dreamed in, which is associated with the earliest memories – no one of the three seems dominant, then bilingualism (actually trilingualism in this case) does seem a rather more apt designation. The question, of course, is one of degree, and it is a question that continues to exercise the imagination, and a matter of importance in research studies.

Competence in more than one language can be approached at both individual and social levels, and these need not be as neatly connected as might first be thought. While it is true that a country full of multilingual people is itself multilingual in an obvious sense, it may nevertheless recognize only one or two varieties and thus, in another sense, be something less than multilingual. Conversely, a country may be officially bilingual or multilingual and yet most of its citizens may have only single-language competence. Many states in Africa, for example, have two official languages – usually a strong indigenous variety and an important European one – for highly heterogeneous and multilingual populations. On the other hand, countries like Switzerland (where recognition is granted to four languages) or Canada (which officially sanctions two) hardly resemble the linguistically rich and varied settings of Africa. Both individual and social manifestations of bilingualism are of course important, but it should be noted that the emphases are quite different; a thoroughgoing

discussion of individual bilingualism involves, for example, linguistic and psycholinguistic dimensions which figure much less prominently, if at all, at the social level where other dimensions – historical, educational, political, and so on – arise for consideration.

1.2 Defining and Measuring

As may be imagined, it is easy to find definitions of bilingualism that reflect widely divergent responses to the question of *degree*. In 1933, for example, Bloomfield observed that bilingualism resulted from the addition of a perfectly learned foreign language to one's own, undiminished native tongue; he did rather confuse the issue, however, by admitting that the definition of "perfection" was a relative one. With this admission, Bloomfield did not remove the question of degree, but he did imply that any division between monolingualism and bilingualism should occur nearer to the Steiner end of the continuum than to the *c'est la vie* one. Others have been purposely vaguer: Weinreich (1953) simply defined bilingualism as the alternate use of two languages; in the same year, Haugen suggested that bilingualism began with the ability to produce complete and meaningful utterances in the second language. This suggests that even members of the *c'est la vie* camp are bilingual. Generally speaking, earlier definitions tended to restrict bilingualism to equal mastery of two languages, while later ones have allowed much greater variation in competence. But since this relaxation proves in practice to be as unsatisfactory as an argument from perfection – at least for the purpose of defining bilingualism in any generally applicable fashion – most modern treatments acknowledge that any meaningful discussion must be attempted within a specific context, and for specific purposes.

Further complicating this matter of degree, this question of where bilingualism starts, is the fact that any line drawn must cross not just one general language dimension, but many more specific threads of ability. Consider, first, that there are four basic language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Consider further the possible subdivisions: speaking skill, for example, includes what may be quite divergent levels of expression in vocabulary, grammar, and accent. There is thus a substantial number of elements here, all of which figure in the assessment of bilingualism; it does not follow that strength in one means strength in another:

a pupil may be able to understand spoken English and Welsh, speak English fluently but Welsh only haltingly, read in Welsh with a reading age of six and in English with a reading age of eight, write poorly in English and not at all in Welsh. Is that pupil bilingual? (Baker, 1988, p. 2)

In general, given both the basic skills, and their subdivisions, there are at least twenty dimensions of language which could or should be assessed in order to

determine bilingual proficiency. It may be, as Weinreich observed, that a rough gauge of relative proficiency may be easily accomplished, that in many cases we can with some certainty say which language is dominant, but these matters are not always simple, and a rough reckoning may be quite inadequate if we wish, say, to compare groups of bilingual individuals, or if we wish to study the relationship between bilingualism and other personality traits.

Many tests have been used to measure bilingualism; these include rating scales and fluency, flexibility, and dominance tests. The first of these can involve interviews, language usage measures, and self-assessment procedures. In some ways, relying upon self-ratings has a lot to recommend it, but the strengths here rest upon the capacity of an individual to self-report accurately, a roughly equivalent sense across individuals of what competence means, and a disinterested and unbiased willingness to communicate proficiency levels. None of these can be taken for granted, and the inaccuracies of census information about languages (as an illustrative example) often rest upon self-assessment difficulties. Indeed, some of the problems here can also affect the apparently more objective tests of fluency and flexibility. We might, for example, ask people to respond to instructions in two languages, measure their response times and, on this basis, try to ascertain dominance. Or we could present picture-naming or word-completion tasks, we could ask subjects to read aloud, or we might present a word which occurs in both languages (*pipe*, for example, occurs in both French and English) and see how it is pronounced. We could simply test for extent of vocabulary, or see how many synonyms for a given word a person can come up with. Yet, although the results of such tests often intercorrelate, they are clearly far from perfect.

Apart from the hazards already noted, it can easily be seen that factors such as attitude, age, sex, intelligence, memory, linguistic distance between the two languages, and context of testing are all potentially confounding. Furthermore, even if we were able to gauge with some accuracy, there would remain problems of adequate labeling; that is, it is hardly to be expected that measured individuals would neatly fall into one, or two, or four neat categories of ability, or degrees of bilingualism. There even remains confusion as to what term ought to be applied to those much sought-after individuals whose bilingual capacities are great: are they to be known as *balanced bilinguals*, or *ambilinguals*, or *equilinguals* (to cite only three such terms)? Baetens Beardsmore (1986) described the ambilingual as a person who, in all contexts, can function equally well in either language, and who shows no trace of language A when using B. Given, however, that such individuals constitute a "rare if not non-existent species" (p. 7), the term "balanced bilingual" (or, less commonly, "equilingual") is reserved for those whose mastery of both varieties is more roughly equivalent. What we see here, in effect, is a continuation of those difficulties and hazards, of those confounding factors, to the very highest levels of ability. What is clear, however, is that the vast number of those to whom the term "bilingual" can be at all reasonably applied fall into the category of "non-fluent" bilingualism.

There are some other basic matters that cut across the larger topic of degree of fluency. For instance, a useful distinction can be made between *receptive* (or passive) bilingualism, and *productive* (or active) competence; the difference here is between those who understand a language – either spoken or written – but cannot produce it themselves, and those who can do both. A receptive competence only has been referred to as *semibilingualism*. This term should not be confused with another, *semilingualism*, which refers to a lack of complete fluency in either language. (In 1927, Bloomfield made a famous characterization of “White Thunder” as a man who “may be said to speak no language tolerably” (p. 437).) More recently, the idea of knowing neither of two languages well has been advanced in connection with ethnic minority-group speakers (for example, Hansegård’s notion of the *halvspråkighet* affecting Finnish-Swedish bilinguals; see Romaine, 1995), and this has meant that semilingualism has become extended from a solely linguistic description to a catchword with political and ideological overtones relating to majorities and minorities, domination and subordination, oppression and victimization.

Added to all this is the common metaphor of some finite “containerized” competence which has bedeviled the literature for some time. At its simplest, this suggests that what you gain on the swings of one language you lose on the roundabouts of the other. But using such a container metaphor for language acquisition and skills may be quite mistaken, and it need hardly be said that naive efforts to come to grips with complexity may do more harm than good. As well, even if we were to acknowledge some finite-capacity model, all that we know of intellectual structures and functions would suggest that the capacity – for languages, among other things – is quite large enough that we need not worry about exceeding our limits. If there is any credibility at all to the idea of semilingualism, it must rest upon a rather rare complex of social deprivations and should not particularly be seen as any sort of looming danger attaching to linguistic duality – for which it represents only “a half-baked theory of communicative competence” (the title of a piece by Martin-Jones and Romaine, 1985), coupled with the view that the usual goal of the bilingual speaker is to have each language container hold not only equal but “full” amounts (see also Baetens Beardsmore, 1986). In short, semilingualism is another species of the argument from perfection. We should remember that for all “non-fluent” bilinguals (i.e. the overwhelming majority, perhaps all), the second language may be weaker than the first which, itself, will never reach perfection, and that all language matters interact strongly with demands of function and context.

Not to be confused with all of this is another distinction, that between *additive* and *subtractive* bilingualism. In some circumstances, the learning of another language represents an expansion of the linguistic repertoire; in others, it may lead to a replacement of the first. The different outcomes here reflect different social pressures and needs. Additive bilingualism generally occurs where both languages continue to be useful and valued; a classic example is found in the bilingualism of aristocracies and social elites in systems in which it was

considered natural and proper that every educated person know more than one variety. Subtractive bilingualism, on the other hand, often implies a society in which one language is valued more than the other, where one dominates the other, where one is on the ascendant and the other is waning.

Yet another common distinction is between *primary* and *secondary* bilingualism, between a dual competence acquired naturally, through contextual demands, and one where systematic and formal instruction has occurred. These are not watertight compartments, of course – one might, for example, pick up a conversational (and quite fluent) grasp of a language in a relatively informal way, and then feel the need later to add some grammatical skills, for reading and writing, in a more rigorous fashion. This would, incidentally, recapture the process by which a mother tongue is developed, and it is noteworthy that more enlightened school language curricula have tried to reflect this in their second-language programs. Still, it is not difficult to appreciate that there are some interesting and broadly based differences between primary and secondary bilingualism, some of which go beyond language itself and touch upon the interweaving of language with culture. As a contemporary example, compare those English-Gaelic bilinguals, in the west of Ireland or in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland, whose fluencies result from growing up in a particular location, with those who, in Dublin, Glasgow or Edinburgh, have more self-consciously set themselves to become bilingual. Consider further the ways in which lumping these two groups together, under a single “bilingual” rubric, might give a rather inaccurate picture of the state of health of Irish and Scots Gaelic. (For further discussion of types of bilinguals, see chapters 2–5, 7–10, 22.)

1.3 Acquiring Bilingual Competence

The fact that a majority of the global population has at least some level of multilingual competence surely indicates that adding a second language is not a particularly remarkable feat. And yet, especially within powerful linguistic groups, it is common to find references to the difficulties involved or to the peculiar lack of language talents supposedly possessed. In the modern world, for example, English and American monolinguals often complain that they have no aptitude for foreign-language learning. This is usually accompanied by expressions of envy for those multilingual Europeans, and sometimes (more subtly) by a linguistic smugness reflecting a deeply held conviction that, after all, those clever “others” who don’t already know English will have to accommodate in a world made increasingly safe for anglophones. All such attitudes, of course, reveal more about social dominance and convention than they do about aptitude.

Second-language acquisition has been dichotomized as *simultaneous* or *successive*. The first describes exposure to more than one variety from the onset of speech or, at least, from a very young age (some commentators have suggested

age three or four as a rather arbitrary cut-off) while the second refers to the addition, at a later age, of a new variety to an existing maternal one. Simultaneous acquisition is often associated with the “one person, one language” principle – commonly found, for instance, where a child speaks different languages to each parent. There are some classic accounts of this (e.g. Ronjat, 1913; Leopold, 1939–49). Given earlier (and sometimes continuing) reservations about bilingualism – in the popular mind, to be sure, but also to be found in the writings of well-known professionals (including Firth, 1930/1970 and Jespersen, 1922, for example) – it should be noted that the literature strongly suggests that general linguistic and mental development are not adversely affected. Bringing up children bilingually need involve few risks. Furthermore, where negative consequences have been observed, these are almost always due to social, personal, cultural or other factors – and not to the bilingualism process itself. Indeed, most observers point to the advantages of an early-acquired bilingual competence; these tend to reflect, above all, the relative ease of early learning and the higher levels of fluency, vocabulary and so on. There are some controversies as to just *when* in early life bilingualism is best set in train – from birth, from the age of three? – but early childhood is generally better than anything later (particularly, perhaps, for native-like pronunciation ability). It is sometimes argued that the young brain is more “plastic” and “flexible” than the older one. On the other hand, an over-emphasis upon early acquisition and brain malleability, and the idea that there is some ethological “critical period” for adding another variety are open to criticism. Older learners have cognitive experience lacking in small children and, providing the motivation is sufficient, can often prove to be better learners. If one could combine the maturity and articulated necessity of the older with the impressionability, imitativeness, spontaneity and unselfconsciousness of the younger, we would surely have a recipe for rapid and proficient bilingual acquisition.

We have moved here, of course, from more or less simultaneous bilingualism to early successive and later successive forms. What links and fuels them all is necessity. This clearly drives the older or adult learner, but it also informs the home situation of the young “simultaneous” learner, even if the latter cannot express it. In the process of becoming bilingual, native aptitude, age and intelligence are less important than a supportive context of necessity. With the right social conditions, then, bilingualism becomes just as “natural” as monolingualism in others. There is a large literature on the specifics of second-language acquisition, both “natural” learning and that which occurs formally, at school. Given sufficient motivation and opportunity, all normally intelligent people can learn another variety; those who claim they are “no good” at foreign languages are usually lacking in one or both of these. This is not to deny that there may exist individuals who have a greater innate or acquired aptitude – a “good ear” may be helpful, as well as a good memory and a capacity for self-initiated application. Beyond these, adaptability and genuine interest in other cultures are no doubt important. It can be seen,

though, that virtually all of these qualities are of general value and do not form a package specifically implicated in language learning.

There are many formal methods for teaching languages; very generally, older ones tended to emphasize the memorization of grammatical rules and lexicon in the service of literary study; little attention was given to spoken language. In more contemporary school settings this has changed, although even high-tech language laboratories sometimes merely individualize older approaches, rather than signaling a change of course towards more conversational competence. Still, while it remains difficult for the classroom to become a representation of the street, the tendency is for more and more conversation. Students are encouraged to speak before learning formal grammar, and the use of the maternal variety is often kept to a minimum; in short, second-language acquisition is meant to resemble first-language learning. (For more on bilingualism and second language acquisition, see chapters 4 and 5.)

1.4 Theoretical Perspectives

Most contemporary theories of second-language acquisition reject a simplistic behaviorist approach – which has, besides, been shown as woefully inadequate for understanding mother-tongue learning – and endorse a cognitive conception in which rules are formulated and tested. Learning occurs in a series of non-random stages, each of which is characterized by a sort of interlanguage. It can easily be seen here that the analysis of errors made at different points in the progression is very important, since they can reveal a misapplied rule. If someone says “sheeps,” for example, it is clear that the “s-forms-the plural” rule has been learned but overgeneralized (this sort of error is also common, of course, in children working out the refinements of the mother tongue).

Theories within social psychology have paid particular attention to the motivational features already noted in passing, and this makes a good deal of sense. If we agree that language is a social activity, and if we accept that almost everyone is cognitively capable of learning second (and subsequent) varieties, then it follows that the force of the situation, and the attitudes it provokes in potential learners, are central. A distinction first made in the 1960s was that between *instrumental* and *integrative* motivation for second-language learning. The former refers to a desire to learn for utilitarian purposes, the latter to language learning as part of a wish to know more about, to interact with, and perhaps ultimately to immerse oneself in another culture. Perhaps, however, a well-fleshed instrumental attitude must include at least some integrative motivation, and one can also imagine a development of the former into the latter. In any event, a well-known framework for second-language learning is that of Gardner (Gardner and Lambert, 1972), who attempts to link the social context, and the cultural beliefs within it, to individual learner capacities – including, of course, motivational levels – and the formal/informal settings

in which the language is to be learned. Throughout, he stresses the influence of integrative motivation upon positive outcomes. Clément's model (see Noels and Clément, 1998) aims to embed individual motivations still more deeply in the social setting. In particular, he notes that a tension exists between an integrative motivation and fear of assimilation; hence his model has particular relevance for those language learners who are also minority-group members, and whose first language is threatened by the forces of those speaking the second. Clément's emphasis upon collective forces and outcomes is carried further in the formulation of Giles and his colleagues (see Giles and Coupland, 1991). Here, language learning is seen, above all, as an intergroup process. Much more consideration is thus given to assimilative tendencies and apprehensions, to the preservation of ethnic-group boundaries and identities; this is tied closely to Giles's conception of *ethnolinguistic vitality*, in both an objective and a perceived sense, and its ramifications for language-learning motivation.

A "general theory" of second-language learning has been proposed by Spolsky (1989). It aims to synthesize earlier and more particularized efforts and, indeed, also touches in important ways upon first-language acquisition. Spolsky's approach has five pivotal features: it attempts to bring all aspects of language learning under the one roof; it aims for precision and clarity so that the broad coverage does not blur details of varying contexts, goals and outcomes; it assumes that all aspects of learning are interactive – although they need not be operative in all contexts, they all interpenetrate (on the subject of motivation, for example, Spolsky wants to detail types and strengths); it argues that all language learning must be seen within a social setting; it holds that some conditions for learning are "graded" (i.e. the more intense or favorable they are, the more likely a linguistic consequence becomes) while others are "typicality" states (i.e. they occur usually but not necessarily).

Application and prediction are the acid test in all such theoretical models – for a recent overview, see Mitchell and Myles (1998) – and some might suggest that the latter have done little more than codify and formalize what has been known for a long time. Nonetheless, they all scotch the myth that some people, or some groups, have no "head" for languages and that second-language aptitude is a rare commodity usually best seen in non-anglophones. Instead, they stress the power of the setting and, within it, the desires, needs, attitudes and motivations of ordinary people. It should be apparent that the social factors impinging upon language learning are, quite simply, the most important ones. We might also recall that, for those millions of people who pick up bilingual or multilingual competence in the informal realm of daily life, simple necessity is the great motivator and the great determiner of how far this competence develops. It can dwarf all other features and, in particular, can ride roughshod over personal attitudes and motivation. Most historical changes in language use have a bilingual component, and most owe much more to socioeconomic and political exigencies than they do to attitude. The adoption of English by the Irish population, for example, was not accompanied – for the masses – by favorable attitudes, much less integrative ones. There may have been a

grudging instrumentality at work, but it certainly was not of the type which pushes students to study French or German in the hopes of joining the diplomatic service. (For more on models and theories of bilingual functioning, see chapters 2, 3, and 7–9.)

1.5 Bilingualism and Intelligence

It is one thing to say that all normal people have the basic capacity to expand their linguistic repertoires, and that doing so exacts no cognitive price. But what of the notion that bilingualism can *increase* intellectual scope? It is an historically common view that one's personality grows with extra languages – particularly among those already bilingual and, more particularly still, among the social elite for whom an additional language or two was always an integral part of civilized life. (There have also been those who demurred. In the seventeenth century, for instance, John Milton (1644/1958) and Samuel Butler (1662; see Hazlitt, 1901) argued that expanded repertoires do not, in themselves, imply intellectual breadth – the latter pointing out, in one of his “satyrs,” that “the more languages a man can speak, his talent has but sprung the greater leak.”)

I have already touched upon the more linguistically informed misgivings of Firth and Jespersen, and Weinreich, in his classic *Languages in Contact*, was able to cite many expressions of the problems allegedly faced by bilinguals; these included split national loyalties and problems of “marginalization” (or *anomie* – to use Durkheim's famous term), emotional difficulties, moral depravity (through receiving inadequate religious instruction in their mother tongue), stuttering, left-handedness, excessive materialism, laziness, and detrimental consequences for intelligence. All these ideas seem dated, to say the least, and Weinreich himself was generally dismissive, preferring experimental evidence – which is always, of course, in shorter supply than the speculation underpinning most of these assertions. He cites with approval, for example, a study that demonstrated that the problems of bilinguals are much more likely to stem from social factors in bilingual households than from linguistically driven “mental conflict.” This is much more in line with modern thinking, although if it were true that bilingual families have a heightened level of social tension this could be taken as an indirect discouragement of bilingualism. No such evidence is available. One can imagine, of course, families applying the “one-parent-one-language” principle to children in a unduly rigid or harsh way; no doubt this occurs, and no doubt this can create problems associated with the growth and use of bilingualism. But again, there is no reason to believe that such practices are anything more than aberrations of an unsystematic kind.

Generally speaking, early studies tended to associate bilingualism with lowered intelligence, and it is unsurprising that many of them were conducted, in America, at a time of great concern with the flood of immigrants from Europe (roughly, 1900–20). The story of the intelligence-testing movement itself, which

flourished at this time, is a fascinating and detailed one, as well as an example of the misuse of "science" allied to ignorance and prejudice. Suffice it to say here that the "objective" intelligence tests of the time reflected a very culture-bound ideal and, consequently, immigrants – especially those who were non-white, non-English-speaking, non-northern-European, non-educated, and so on – did not fare well. In such a climate it is easy to see that the "feeble-minded" immigrants (or hopefuls) were handicapped by their languages, and that the greater their use of English, the higher their measured intelligence. One well-known study concluded, for example, that "the use of a foreign language in the home is one of the chief factors in producing mental retardation" (Goodenough, 1926, p. 393). Incredible assertions like this are understandable only in their context but even so, even allowing for general intolerance and nativism, even understanding the feelings of those concerned to protect the *status quo* from a horde of barbarians (in the Greek sense of that word), it is still chastening to think that such comments could appear in respected academic journals.

In addition to negative associations between bilingualism and intelligence which stemmed, somewhat indirectly, from social fears of immigrants, there were more disinterested studies which pointed to problems. They are, however, flawed by inadequate controls in their experimental procedures. One typical study, for example, showed no IQ difference between urban monolinguals and bilinguals, but a substantial one for rural children – and yet it did not take into account obvious social-contact differences between the city and country dwellers, nor occupational and social-class variation among the parents (see Edwards, 1995). There is also, in all such work, a problem of statistical inference: if one observes a correlation between low intelligence and bilingualism, then has the first caused the second, or vice versa (or is there a third factor, perhaps unknown or unmeasured, which influences both and thus accounts for their relationship)? Correlation need not imply causation.

Later research tended to show essentially no relationship between intelligence and bilingualism, and this work was generally more carefully done than the earlier studies. Controlling sex, age and social-class differences became common procedure, and the lack of such control was increasingly seen to have produced the negative associations found in previous work.

What some have seen as a turning-point came in the early 1960s, when findings showing a *positive* relationship between intelligence and bilingualism began to appear. In Montreal, Peal and Lambert (1962/1972) more carefully controlled the relevant variables in an examination of ten-year-old bilingual and monolingual children. In particular, all the subjects were from middle-class backgrounds and all the bilingual youngsters had equal proficiency in French and English. The bilinguals were found to outperform their monolingual counterparts on both verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests and the authors concluded that the bilingual child had "mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities." However, they also noted that "it is not possible to state from the present study

whether the more intelligent child became bilingual or whether bilingualism aided his intellectual development" (p. 277).

Following Peal and Lambert's study many others have appeared which support a positive linkage between bilingualism and intelligence. There have also been some dissenting views, as well as cogent criticism of the 1962 study itself. The latter centers upon the limitation just cited from Peal and Lambert themselves and upon the generalizability of the results. Important here are the restriction, in their study, to only "balanced" bilinguals, and questions about the representativeness of the sample of children and the difficulty of equating home backgrounds simply by holding socioeconomic status constant.

Some of the difficulties involved in attempting to show a relationship – positive or negative – between bilingualism and cognitive development, mental flexibility, intelligence, and so on involve the following questions. First, how do we adequately define bilingualism itself; do we require perfectly balanced bilinguals for the "best" contrast with monolinguals, and how do we measure bilingualism, balanced or otherwise? Second, how do we define intelligence; relatedly, how do we know that IQ tests adequately assess this quantity? Third, how do we ensure comparability between groups of bilinguals and monolinguals; controlling for age, sex and some other variables may not be difficult, but what about socioeconomic status? Most measures of this may not come to grips well enough with home differences of vital importance. Fourth, how do we interpret any relationship found between bilingualism and intelligence? Is it a causal one, and, if so, in which direction? Does bilingualism lead to increased IQ, for example, or does a higher IQ increase the likelihood of functional bilingualism?

These and other difficulties mean that strong conclusions about bilingualism and cognition are not warranted. Some feel that there may be some link between the two, but that any cognitive advantages attaching to bilingualism are rather slight. Others have been mainly concerned to show that there is not a cognitive price to be paid for bilingualism. As McLaughlin (1978, p. 206) noted: "almost no general statements are warranted by research on the effects of bilingualism . . . in almost every case, the findings of research are either contradicted by other research or can be questioned on methodological grounds." We should understand that social factors are virtually always of great importance in accounting for contradictory reports about bilingualism and cognition. Most positive findings come from studies of immersion children (where language attitudes are favorable), most negative ones from those "submersed" in second-language education (leading to subtractive bilingualism).

In essence, being bilingual (or multilingual, for that matter) is unlikely to mean any significant increase in cognitive and intellectual skills, although it is also clear that bilingualism need not lead to decreased or weakened capacities. It would be perverse, however, to deny that bilingualism can represent another dimension of one's capacities, and in that sense be a repertoire expansion. I see nothing controversial about this, just as I would see nothing controversial in the statement that a number of years' devotion to the study of great literature

can lead to a heightened or, at least, altered sensitivity to the human condition. (For additional material on bilingualism and intelligence, see chapters 5, 15, 17, 22, and 23.)

1.6 Borrowing, Interference and Code Switching

Outright language choice is obviously available to bilingual individuals. It is also common to find linguistic alteration occurring within one unit of speech directed to one listener. In his classic volume, Weinreich (1953, p. 1) stated that all such “deviation from the norms of either language” may be referred to as *interference*. It seems evident, however, that not every switch from one language to another results from the unwelcome intrusion which this term suggests; speakers may often switch for emphasis, because they feel that the *mot juste* is found more readily in one of their languages than in another, or because of their perceptions of the speech situation, changes in content, the linguistic skills of their interlocutors, degrees of intimacy and so on. Some writers have thus opted for the more neutral term *transference* which implies, among other things, a greater element of volition. The most commonly investigated variety is *code switching* – “sometimes I’ll start a sentence in English *y termino en español*” (as Poplack’s 1980 title runs).

Different types of language transfer can be easily understood. For example, if a Brussels French speaker uses the Dutch *vogelpik* for a game of darts, rather than the standard French *fléchettes*, this is an example of lexical transfer. Further, *vogelpik* in this context constitutes a *loan word* since it is an “intrusion” regularly used in unchanged form. It may, however, be given a French pronunciation, which indicates another type of “change,” an attempt to bring the foreign element into the maternal fold. Sometimes loan words become very widely used and, if we go far enough, we reach the level of permanent inter-language borrowing (as English, for instance, has taken in Arabic words like *alcohol* and *algebra*). Not all languages can incorporate borrowed elements equally easily. Between two languages widely removed from one another typologically, for example, the grammatical constraints may be such that borrowing may be less frequent than it is between closely related varieties. More simply, borrowings from language A may not fit as easily into B as into C.

Another variety of lexical transfer occurs when loan *translation* occurs: for example, the adoption of the English *skyscraper* into Dutch (as *wolkenkrabber*), German (*wolkenkratzer*), French (*gratte-ciel*), and Spanish (*rascacielos*). Such words are called *calques* (literally, “copies”). *Morphological* transfers occur when a word in language A is more fully embraced by language B: the Dutch *kluts* (dollop) becomes, in Brussels French, *une clouche*, and *heilbot* (halibut) becomes *un elbot*. *Syntactic* transfer occurs in such examples as “*Tu prends ton plus haut chiffre*” (“You take your highest figure”) – said by a native Dutch speaker, who makes his adjectives precede the noun, as they would in Dutch (“*Je neemt je hoogste cijfer*”) but not as they would in French. *Phonological* transfer is very

common, of course, and is a most difficult area in which to avoid interference (think of fluent adult speakers with “horrible” accents). Equally, *prosodic* transfer – subtle differences in stress and intonation between languages, such that one’s dominant variety influences the other – may also be difficult to avoid.

This discussion only scratches the surface, of course, but it does reveal something of the variety of transference and, more importantly, the variability in terms of conscious intent. That is, bilingual speakers may *choose* to use *vogelpik*, and their choice may be determined by non-linguistic, social factors; syntactic and phonological interference, on the other hand, is presumably less subject to such factors or, more accurately perhaps, is less easily or directly influenced by them, necessitating more effort to remove it. One might roughly view interference phenomena as those determined by internal factors, and code switching as more influenced by extra-linguistic constraints. This is, however, a very general statement.

However we divide the subject up, and whatever labels we apply – interference, code switching, mixing, transference, and so on – it is clear that in all cases something is “borrowed” from another language. Further, the degree to which the borrowed element is integrated (or can be integrated) into the other code may be of considerable interest for studies of group contact, of relative linguistic prestige, of the perceived or actual ease with which different languages deal with given topics. Borrowings may be on a “nonce” basis or may represent more established practice, but the latter grows from the former and presumably reflects stronger and more widespread need. However, a further subdivision has been suggested for these established borrowings; some are indeed necessary – words filling lexical gaps in the other language, for example – but some seem gratuitous, since an equivalent item already exists. The motivation here is most often perceived status and prestige, and common examples include the use of foreign words or phrases. One can observe the trendy status of English around the world, for instance, even among non-speakers. Shops in many countries often find it easier to sell their products if they are labeled in English. No English competence is implied or required in either seller or buyer; simple recognition and cachet do the trick. (For further discussion of bilingualism and borrowing, see chapters 2, 6, 28.)

It is interesting, in all of this, to recognize that attitudes towards code switching are often negative, particularly on the part of monolinguals who are sometimes inclined to dismiss it as gibberish. Terms like *Tex-Mex*, *Franglais*, *Japlish* (and many others) are often used, and often meant pejoratively. Bilinguals, too, are wont to see their behavior here as “embarrassing,” “impure,” “lazy,” even “dangerous,” but the reasons they give for the practice – fitting the word to the topic, finding a word with a nuance unavailable in the other variety, helping out a listener, strengthening intimacy, and so on – make a great deal of sense (see Myers-Scotton, 1992). If you have two languages to draw upon, why not maximize this happy circumstance as appropriate? The chimeras of impurity and laziness are exposed when we realize that, very often, switching involves the *repetition* – for emphasis, for intimacy – of the same idea in both

languages. We see, then, speakers whose twin bow-strings allow them not only the style-shifting available to monolinguals but also full language-shifting. It is hard to imagine that this is anything but a valuable addition. (For more on code mixing and code switching, see chapters 2–4, 10–14, 25, 26, 28, 29, and 31; for a general proposal on the relationships between code mixing, code switching and interference, see chapter 6.)

1.7 Some Social Aspects

If we understand that bilingualism, switching and other dual-language phenomena are still seen as suspicious by some and as arcane marks of erudition by others, we should also recall their global nature. Expanded linguistic competence is usually driven by necessity but it has also historically reflected and supported upper-class boundaries. There is a distinction, in other words, between elite and folk bilingualism. In different ages, not to have known Latin or Greek or French in addition to one's mother tongue would have been simply unthinkable for educated people. At other levels and for other reasons more humble citizens have also been bilingual from earliest times: we know it was necessary under the Ptolemies to acquire Greek, even for quite minor posts, and Athenian slaves – representatives of the lowest class of all – were often bilingual as they were pressed into domestic service and teaching.

There are important differences between individual bilingualism and collective or social bilingualism, regardless of whether or not the latter is officially endorsed. Collective bilingualism in many settings, ancient and modern, is an enduring quantity, unlike the impermanent, transitional variety common in many immigrant contexts in which, in fact, bilingualism is a generational way-station on the road between two unilingualisms. The classic pattern for newcomers to the United States, for example, was bilingualism (mother tongue and English) by the second generation and English monolingualism by the third. The more permanent collective bilingualism remains, of course, largely because of a continuing necessity which is absent among most immigrant populations, and this necessity usually rests upon different social functions and different domains of use for each language. This situation is now commonly referred to as *diglossia*. This word is simply the Greek version of *bilingualism* and, on the face of it, would not seem to be a useful innovation; it doesn't, for example, logically encompass the social, collective aspect that, in practice, it refers to. However, "*la logique n'est pas maître de la terminologie*" (Mackey, 1989, p. 11). (For more on diglossia, see chapters 15, 28, 29, and 31.)

While diglossia, as collective bilingualism, is seen to be a stable condition, it should be remembered that even stability is relative. The French-English diglossia that prevailed in England after the Norman Conquest eventually broke down, for example. As well, the stability of diglossia is apt to be upset by political pressure. When the "colonels" overthrew a liberal Greek government in 1967, the previous program of extending the use of *dhimotiki* (demotic

Greek) was reversed – because of its leftist associations – and *katharévusa* (the classical “higher” form) was supported. In 1975, constitutional government returned and *dhimotiki* was declared the country’s official language the following year.

The arrangement of societal bilingualism is of course variable, and the Canadian example is illustrative. Prior to the *Official Languages Act* (1969), which legally underpins French and English in Canada, a government commission on bilingualism and biculturalism was established to study and make recommendations. Paying special attention to the linguistic situations in Belgium, Finland, Switzerland and South Africa, the commissioners closely examined the so-called “personality” and “territorial” principles relating to bilingualism. In the first of these, rights are seen to inhere in *individuals*, wherever they live within a state. This operates most clearly in South Africa. According to the territorial principle, however (as in Belgium), rights vary from region to region and the linguistic arrangement is commonly some sort of “twinned” unilingualism. The distinction between these two approaches is not unlike that made by political scientists between “consociation” and “universalism”; if consociation is sometimes seen as the democratic alternative best suited to divided societies (as in Belgium and Switzerland), it is also often an elaborate and fragile system of checks and balances among ethnic groups. Universalism, with its first emphasis on individual rights, is the preferred approach in most modern democracies but it can be seen that ruling “group rights” out of court is not always possible or desirable.

The commission opted for the application of the personality principle in Canada, even though official-language minorities were small in all provinces except Québec and New Brunswick. Difficulties in following the South African example were acknowledged (66 percent of whites there claimed to be bilingual, for example, as opposed to only 12 percent in Canada; and official-language minorities in South African provinces ranged in strength from 23 percent to 39 percent, whereas they were under 15 percent in nine of the ten Canadian provinces), and the commission recognized the advantages of territorialism. However, political factors (chiefly, the “symbolic” weight of the Canadian francophone population) and a highly mobile Canadian society were seen to suggest the personality approach – this despite the fact that the commission could have considered more “mixed” possibilities (as in Switzerland, for example, where the personality principle operates only at the federal level).

The recommendation, therefore, was for federal bilingualism and the provision of bilingual services at the provincial level – but only Québec, Ontario and New Brunswick were to become “officially” bilingual. As conditions became more viable for francophones outside Québec, other provinces would adopt official bilingualism (roughly, whenever French speakers came to constitute 10 percent of the population). In fact, at the time of the commission’s recommendations, Ontario was only about 7 percent francophone (and, in Québec, anglophones comprised about 13 percent). Only New Brunswick is officially bilingual today.

Now it seems as if the Canadian bilingual dream has faded, at least from the “personality” perspective. The country has moved steadily towards “twinning” unilingualisms – French in Québec and English elsewhere – with a “bilingual belt” in parts of Ontario and, especially, New Brunswick. This process has been assisted by the continuing assimilation of francophones outside Québec and the rejection, within that province, of bilingualism. “Territorialism” seems to have emerged, in other words, and some have suggested making it legal by giving only one of the two “charter” languages official status everywhere (except in New Brunswick). All of this suggests the importance of the political and social frameworks within which stable bilingualism occurs. A socially engineered policy – which is how some have described the Canadian arrangement – must ultimately, it seems, be reconciled with widespread, popular perceptions of social reality and self-interest. When perceptions differ among powerful ethnic groups – in Canada, the anglophones, francophones, aboriginals, and “allophones” (i.e. all the “others”) are all central players, though no group is itself monolithic – then centrally inspired conceptions of multiculturalism, bilingualism, and diglossia are seen to be quite delicate (see Edwards, 1994, 1995).

1.8 Bilingualism and Identity

Why should bilingualism (or multilingualism) be particularly important? After all, most people in the world have some sort of facility in more than one language and, as we are regularly informed nowadays, it is monolingualism that is an aberration, an affliction of the powerful, a disease to be cured. An ability possessed by the majority of human beings – most of them relatively uneducated, many of them illiterate – and which can be almost effortlessly acquired by the youngest of them might be thought to have attracted more than its share of academic attention. Language *per se* is not, of course, a completely open book to us, and this marvelous facility – which sets us apart, in tremendous degree if not in basic principle, from even those clever apes and dolphins – is not fully transparent in either development or use. Still, within the broader study of language, what happens once could easily be seen as (*mutatis mutandis*) happening again: why should a second or subsequent language warrant more than an extending footnote to the broader linguistic enquiry? Why should bilingualism occupy its own niche in the larger enterprise?

Of course, second-language acquisition cannot, in principle, be a precise replica of mother-tongue learning, for the simple reason of being second. Heraclitus told us, a long time ago, that you can’t step into the same river twice. Consequently, the complicated issues I have so briefly touched upon in the previous sections account for a great deal of what we may call the technical literature on bilingualism, a literature largely concerned with the variations among linguistic gears and axles occasioned by bilingual competence (see

Edwards, 1995). The point I wish to make here, however, is that the technicalities of this broad enterprise – vital and interesting as they are – cannot, themselves, fully explain its depth and its appeal. To understand these, we have to move beyond language itself, beyond psycholinguistics, beyond experimental studies and educational programs that illuminate and facilitate repertoire expansion. We have to go beyond instrumental matters altogether, and consider issues of psychology and sociology, of symbol and subjectivity. In a word, we must think about the relationship between language and identity, and how this relationship may alter when more than one variety is involved.

Language can certainly be considered as a marker at the individual level. The detail and nuance of psycholinguistic acquisition patterns, for instance, lead to the formation of unique *idiolects*. But, while this fine-grained individual approach has undoubted validity – notably in clinical or forensic investigations – it is generally only of anecdotal interest or concern. In fact, one could argue that even idiolectal usage is a social, or group phenomenon – on the simple grounds that all language implies someone to talk to, a communicative intent, a linking of the individual to others. Apart from this sort of argument, it is common to consider the linguistic associations with identity as group matters: the jargon of the club, the class or regional dialect, the language of the wider community. Initially, however, one or two points should be made at the personal level – or, more accurately, at the level on which the personal and the social intertwine.

Speaking a particular language means belonging to a particular speech community and this implies that part of the *social* context in which one's *individual* personality is embedded, the context which supplies the raw materials for that personality, will be linguistic. Disentangling the linguistic features from all others is not, of course, an easy task and so it has always been difficult to make a compelling case that membership in a given speech community has – in theoretical isolation, as it were, from other socializing threads – concretely specifiable consequences for personality. Whorfianism, at least in its “weaker” forms, is of course relevant here, but its implications are of more direct interest at the level of the group – the broadly stereotypic linguistic patterning of the thoughts, attitudes and habits of the collectivity. Indeed, a Whorfian perspective has been extended to cover paralinguistic features, too. Any cultural package which connects language and thought must also involve all sorts of accompanying communicative gestures (see Birdwhistell, 1970) and, by extension, virtually all aspects of the personal repertoire. In general, an influence of language upon personality may be assumed, if not easily demonstrated, but it will tend to link personalities and operate upon their socially overlapping spheres, rather than distinguishing between them or producing idiosyncratic dispositions.

One might suggest, however, that membership in more than one speech community could produce more immediately observable results at the individual level: if two or more languages are exercising some influence, then an individual could conceivably display an interesting pattern woven from

several linguistic threads, a pattern which might look quite distinctive against a more unidimensional one. Arguably, any distinctiveness here would be most apparent in social settings where bilingual individuals are relatively rare, or where – if more numerous – they are at least similar amongst themselves (in terms, say, of degree or type of bilingual capacity). The fact that neither of these conditions occurs particularly frequently is a complication. And there is another important factor here, too. A line of argument which is at least implicit in the literature implies that the joint influence of more than one language upon individual psychologies is best understood as a sort of *tension* – i.e. that the individual effects will reflect one language working against the other, as it were. In any event, it is clear that this sort of tension would, indeed, produce the most observable results; after all, if the joint linguistic influences were to seamlessly merge, to pull in harness, then the results might logically be thought to be, at best, a heightening or a strengthening of influences traceable to each speech community singly. This is one way, indeed, of thinking about that alleged consequence of bilingualism to which I have already alluded: increased cognitive capabilities and intellectual sensitivities.

Much of interest rests upon the degree to which bilinguals possess either two (theoretically) separately identifiable systems of language – from each of which they can draw, as circumstances warrant – or some more intertwined linguistic and, perhaps, cognitive duality. As Hamers and Blanc (2000) point out, we are far from having compelling empirical data here. There is a difficult circularity at work, one that confounds all scientific attempts to link the observable to the intangible: the ambiguous or unclear results of the relatively few studies of the non-verbal repertoires (for example) of bilinguals do not provide clear indications of likely underlying mechanisms; on the other hand, plausible variations in rational accounts of these mechanisms make the interpretation of subtle behavioral differences hard to assess. Whether we are interested in verbal communication, its paralinguistic accompaniments or the broader reaches of personality traits generally, we find very little experimental evidence. It is interesting that, in their massive study of bilingualism, Baker and Jones (1998) give only six pages (out of more than 750) to a section on personality.

Consider, for instance, the “popular” (and, sometimes, academic) view that bilinguals must have some sort of split mentality – two individuals in one, as it were. Grosjean (1982) and others have reported that bilinguals sometimes feel, themselves, that language choice draws out, and draws upon, different personalities. But, as Baker and Jones (1998) and Hamers and Blanc (2000) note, the evidence here is anecdotal at best. Indeed, we could go a bit further, and point to the large logical and rational difficulties which some two-in-one arrangement would create. There is certainly, however, evidence that language choice may implicate different *aspects* of the personality: bilinguals responding to interviews and questionnaires are liable to give slightly different pictures of themselves, depending upon the language used. They may make different responses to objective or projective probes, responses may be more

emotional through one variety (typically, but not inevitably, their maternal language), they may more strongly affirm their sense of ethnic identity in one language than in another, and so on (see, for example, studies by Ervin, Gutfreund, Bond and others, usefully summarized in Hamers and Blanc, 2000). The fact that different social settings and variations in language–affect linkages lead to different patterns of self-presentation clearly does not imply separate personalities, although it does suggest an enhanced repertoire of possibility.

Language “tensions” at the individual level have been seen to contribute to emotional strains – *anomie* and lowered self-esteem, for example. These are often most pronounced in immigrant or minority-group situations, a fact which suggests very strongly that the stresses are essentially not linguistic in origin but, rather, result from broader pressures associated with cultures in contact, with cross-group antagonism and prejudice, with poverty and disadvantage (see above). Among immigrant and minority populations, as Diebold (1968) pointed out, bilingualism is often, itself, a response to the social contact which also produces psychological stresses and strains.

We have once again, then, linked the individual to the group, and have seen how the psychological intersects with the sociological. When Baker and Jones, Grosjean, Hamers and Blanc, and other able commentators suggest that those problems which seem particularly characteristic of bilinguals are social in nature, and not linguistic *per se*, they are reminding us of a broader set of relationships which embed the individual in his or her society. So it is apposite at this point to move more directly to that wider realm, and to consider the social implications of bilingualism itself.

People belong to many groups, and all groups – all, at least, that have boundaries possessing some degree of permanence – have characteristics which mark their identity. This marking is, of course, more or less visible at the level of the individual member. The implication is that each of us may carry the tribal markings of many groups, that our “group identity” is itself a mosaic rather than a monolith. Still, it is clear that, where language issues are central, the pivotal group is the ethnocultural community: overlaps of importance may occur because of simultaneous membership in gender, socioeconomic, educational, occupational, and many other categories, but the base here is an ethnic one.

The point at issue, then, is the significance of a bilingualism which links an individual to more than one ethnocultural community. How does it feel, we might ask, to have a foot in more than one camp? Is it this that could lead to that psychological splitting which we have rejected on more purely cognitive grounds? Or is such duality the origin of the expanded acuity and awareness that some have claimed for bilinguals? The short answers to these sorts of questions are all positive, or potentially positive, in a world where complicated patterns of social relations are made more intricate still by a very wide – theoretically infinite, in fact – range of linguistic capabilities. Of course, a great deal of bilingualism has very little emotional significance: the purely instrumental fluencies needed to conduct simple business transactions do not, after

all, represent much of an excursion from one's ethnic base camp. This is probably a rather larger category than is often thought. For example, breadth of multiple fluencies does not, *per se*, imply emotional or psychological depth – it may, more simply, reflect the exigencies of a complicated public life. On the other hand, it is certainly possible to hold dual (or multiple) allegiances, involving different-language groups, in the absence of personal bilingualism. The attachment felt by the English-speaking Irish or Welsh to a culture and an ancestry whose language they no longer possess is a psychologically real one, and demonstrates the continuing power of what is intangible and symbolic. Indeed, there often exists a continuing attachment to the “lost” language itself, seen as perhaps the most important specific aspect of that more general ancestry, and as the point of entry into cultural tradition. The fact that such attachments rarely lead to actual linguistic revival is regrettable in the eyes of those who feel that language is *the* pillar of culture, but this is not the place to explore the reasons why passive sympathies do not become active ones: the point is, again, that these attachments – however attenuated or residual – have a meaning, and represent a sort of symbolic bilingual connectivity. (For more on bilingualism and emotion, see chapters 9, 14, and 19.)

The argument has been made elsewhere (in Edwards, 1985, for instance) that a continuing sense of ethnic-group identity need not inevitably depend upon the continuing use of the original language in ordinary, communicative dimensions – again, this is a matter of considerable complexity which cannot be delved into here – but it can hardly be denied that linguistic continuity is a powerful cultural support. It is not the only pillar, but it is obviously an important one. There are many bilinguals whose competence is more deep-seated and whose abilities go beyond commercial instrumentality. These are the more “typical” individuals one usually has in mind when considering the relationship between bilingualism and identity. And, if we are to think about this socio-psychological relationship, it may be useful to consider the manner in which bilingualism arises. Yet again we are confronted with a topic whose complexity can only be acknowledged in passing. Still, there are two broad divisions of relevance: the first comprises those bilinguals who have a kinship attachment to each group (detouring once more around a large and often vexed literature, we can accept either real or perceived attachments for our present purposes); the second is made up of people who have, in a more formal way, acquired another linguistic citizenship, as it were (there is a redolence, here, of the *integrative* motivation once much discussed in the literature).

The latter division involves that elite bilingualism best exemplified by members of the educated classes whose formal instruction would, historically, have been seen as incomplete without the acquisition of another language or two. Typically, then, elite bilingualism involves prestigious languages – although the term could reasonably be extended to cover the competence of those whose maternal variety is of lesser-used status, as well as of those lucky, or intelligent, or industrious enough to have achieved upward mobility through education. Elite bilingualism is usually discussed in comparison with *folk* bilingualism

– where the latter signifies a necessity-induced repertoire expansion – and, indeed, the distinction seems apt, particularly when one considers that, historically, the elite variety often had as much to do with social-status marking as it did with a thirst for knowledge and cultural boundary crossing. In earlier times, as we have seen, not to have known Latin or Greek or French in addition to one's vernacular would have been unthinkable for educated people – but often unthinkable, perhaps, in the same way that it would have been unthinkable not to have had servants. Among those fortunate elite bilinguals, of course, there were – and are – many driven by purer scholastic motives. But acknowledging this also means acknowledging that elite bilingualism need not rule out motives of necessity more usually associated with the folk variety. It is just that necessity itself becomes a little more rarefied. Your intellectual pursuits and desires may demand, for example, the acquisition of other languages and the acquaintance of other cultures.

It is not difficult to see that the life's work of a sensitive scholar could depend upon or, at least, produce – as an incidental result of more specific researches – an extended allegiance or sense of belonging. Indeed, this scenario also theoretically applies to those whose excursions across boundaries are motivated by nothing more than interest. After all, given a threshold of intelligence and sensitivity, the difference between the scholar and the amateur lies in formality of focus. The general point here is that we can ally ourselves, by more or less conscious effort, with another group – and that a formally cultivated bilingualism can act as the bridge here. And it is important, I think, to acknowledge the depth that can be attained by such effort. Boundaries are really crossed, cultural and linguistic sensitivities are really enlarged, and allegiances are both refined and broadened.

What of the other broad category, those bilinguals who have some real or understood blood attachment to more than one language community? Setting aside the technicalities associated with the onset and timing of bilingual acquisition, it is surely the case that the deeper the linguistic and cultural burrowing into another community, the greater the impact upon identity. This in turn suggests that those whose bilingual competence is nurtured early will, other things being equal, have a firmer foot in the two (or more) camps. It will usually be the case, of course, that one camp will have psychological and emotional primacy. But there are some cases where home itself is difficult to establish, at least in any simple unidimensional sense. There are some cases, that is, where bilingual or multilingual capacities, linked to their several cultural bases, develop so early and so deeply that a primary allegiance is hard to discover. There are generally two ways to consider the situations of those whose bilingualism begins at the parental knees. The first is simply that two or more base camps are home simultaneously; the second is that one primary home indeed exists, but it is constructed – in a manner unique to the individual – from materials taken from the several sources. Steiner (1992), mentioned in the opening paragraph, is by his own account maternally and perfectly trilingual. Further, he has suggested that such “primary” multilingualism is an

integral state of affairs in itself. There has been virtually no research on the consequences for identity of multilingual tapestries so closely woven, but one imagines that there are subtleties here that go far beyond simple additive relationships. It is difficult to define and assess perfectly and fully balanced bilingualism, and even polyglots like Steiner might fall short under the most rigorous examination; nonetheless, more attention to deep-seated multiple fluencies is indicated.

As we move towards the bilingualism of more ordinary individuals, we move more obviously towards the idea of a unitary identity – woven from several strands, to be sure, but inevitably influenced by one language and culture more than by others. But, if we move from the Steiners (and Conrads, Nabokovs, Kunderas, Stoppards and all the rest) – whose literary power, and the ability to reflect in meaningful ways upon its multifaceted origin, are simply unavailable to most people – we must not imagine that we have moved away from enlarged identities *per se*. It is both the obligation and the fulfillment of intellectual life, after all, to express what less articulate souls may somehow feel or possess. When we consider that the language competences of most bilinguals are shallower than those of the Steiners of the world – broader, sometimes, but rarely as deep – and that neither the capacity nor the inclination to think much about identity is a widely distributed quantity, we realize again what important questions remain to be asked, what research – more psychological than linguistic – still needs to be undertaken. The intellectuals can look after themselves here: Steiner (1975) has written famously about the “extraterritoriality” of multilingual writers; Ilan Stavans argues that monolingualism is a form of oppression (see Kellman, 2000); others, from Goethe to Eliot, have argued over the ability – particularly the poet’s ability – to be fully expressive beyond the *muttersprache*. We need reports from more mundane quarters, too.

As it is, we rely largely upon inference to support the contention that it is the identity components, the symbols of the tribe, that energize languages beyond their instrumental existences. One large and obvious example here is the powerful association between language and nationalism. Since the latter is, among other things, a pronounced and often mobilizing sense of groupness, it follows that any language component will be carefully delineated. And so, historically, it is. The language in which you do your shopping, and which – if you thought much about it – is also the variety in which your group’s tradition is inscribed, can become a symbol of your oppressed state, a rallying-point, a banner under which to assemble the troops. Would people be so ready to sacrifice for something that was of purely mundane importance? We might regret that circumstances encourage us to put aside a familiar tool, and learn to use another – but we go to war over histories, not hammers.

The important associations of a particular language with a particular base camp are made clearer – and here we move from languages in general to languages in tandem – when we think about translation. This is an exercise driven by obvious necessity and, if language were not invested with emotion

and association, its operation would be unremarkable. While employing them, we might applaud those whose expertise allows them the access denied the rest of us, but we would rarely be suspicious. And yet the old proverb says *traduttori, traditori*. We would hardly equate translation with treason unless we feared that (as Steiner has put it) "hoarded dreams, patents of life are being taken across the frontier" (1992, p. 244). And what are "patents of life," if not the psychological collections of past and present that are unique – or are felt to be unique, at any rate – to ourselves? An informal Whorfianism tells us that every language interprets and presents the world in a somewhat different way, that the unique wellsprings of group consciousness, traditions, beliefs, and values are intimately related to a given variety. So, translation may mean the revealing of deep matters to others, and cannot be taken lightly. The translator, the one whose multilingual facility permits the straddling of boundaries, is a necessary quisling. But necessity is not invariably associated with comfort, and not even their employers care very much for traitors.

Both contemporary observation and the historical record suggest that language and identity can be tightly intertwined. The particular importance of this, for bilingualism, arises from the division within the former. And this, in turn, leads to a final inferential context of special relevance. For monolingual majority-group speakers in their own "mainstream" settings, the instrumentality and the symbolism of language are not split and, for most such individuals, the language–identity linkage is not problematic – indeed, it is seldom considered. Minority-group speakers, however, rarely have this luxury; for them, matters of language and culture are often more immediate. Now, while it is true that no simple equation exists between bilingualism and minority-group membership, it is also true that many bilinguals are found in the ranks of "smaller" or threatened societies. The implication is that a link will often exist between bilingualism and a heightened awareness of, and concern for, identity. Specific linguistic manifestations include attempts at language maintenance or revival, the use of language in ethnic or nationalist struggles, efforts to sustain at least some domains in the face of external influence, and so on. A more general consequence is that the position and the responses of minority groups focus attention on the possibility – and, in many instances, the inevitability – of a split between the communicative and the symbolic functions of language: you may have to live and work in a new language, a medium that is not the carrier of your culture or the vehicle of your literature. In these sorts of settings we see, in fact, an extended value to the study of bilingualism and identity. First, the attitudes and actions of bilinguals in situations of risk and transition have a special poignancy and visibility – identities, like everything else, are thrown into sharper relief when threats are perceived. Second, these same attitudes and actions can galvanize others, and can remind a larger and often unreflective society that matters of language and identity are not relevant for "ethnics" and "minorities" alone.

The importance of bilingualism, then, is of both intrinsic and generalizable value. We need to know more about it because it is an issue in its own right

– with all its many ramifications and technicalities – and, as well, because it may illuminate wider patches of ground. The importance of being bilingual is, above all, social and psychological rather than linguistic. Beyond types, categories, methods, and processes is the essential animating tension of identity. Beyond utilitarian and unemotional instrumentality, the heart of bilingualism is belonging.

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