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# **BILINGUALISM: BUILDING BLOCKS FOR BILITERACY**

**CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS**  
of the Bilingual Children's Interest Group  
and the Language Acquisition Research Centre

Edited by

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## **FORWARD**

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### **BILINGUALISM: BUILDING BLOCKS FOR BILITERACY**

#### **Third annual conference of the Bilingual Children's Interest Group**

The Bilingual Children's Interest Group is an advocacy forum made up of interested and concerned individuals involved in the care and education of young bilingual children. The group was formed in 1996, and since that time it has organised two annual conferences which have addressed issues associated with raising and educating bilingual children particularly in relation to home language retention and bilingual / biliteracy development. The group is a non funded community based interest group, and much of its activities are undertaken by members on a voluntary basis.

The following objectives which are central to the group activities aim to;

- Act as a focal point of information and support to families endeavouring to raise their children bilingually;
- Promote the specific rights, roles and responsibilities of families, caregivers and educators in maintaining and developing the language skills of bilingual children;
- Actively promote positive community perceptions towards bilingualism, biculturalism and valuing of cultural / linguistic diversity;
- Raise awareness of staff in early childhood and school settings around issues of bilingualism, its benefits and implications for living in a multicultural / multilingual society;
- Identify and support current research and innovative projects in the provision of bilingual education and home language support programmes with particular attention to the early childhood years;
- Ensure that adequate and appropriate resources are available in order to maintain and develop the language resources of Australia;
- Advocate for the inclusion of bilingual children from birth to five years, in language and literacy related policies and procedures at national and state levels;
- Seek funds for the Bilingual Children's Interest Group in order for it to implement the aims and objectives as identified.

In 1997, the Bilingual Children's Interest Group in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training and the Faculty of Education and Languages of the University of Western Sydney convened a successful and well attended conference, titled 'Bilingualism: Building Blocks for Bilingualism'. The conference was held at the University of Western Sydney, Macarthur at the Bankstown campus, on Saturday, 9th August, 1997. The aims of the conference were to bring together professionals and family members involved in the care and education of bilingual children to discuss issues and concerns related to the language and literacy development of bilingual children. Consequently, the theme for many of the papers, seminars and workshops focussed on bilingualism and biliteracy.

The conference was a huge success. Approximately two hundred participants, including both families and professionals attended. The three keynote speakers included Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis, Executive Director of the Ethnic Child Care Family and Community Services Co-operative and Criss Jones Diaz, Lecturer in Diversity and Bilingual Education of the University of Western Sydney. The afternoon Feature Address was conducted by Dr John Gibbons, Senior Lecturer in Linguistics of the University of Sydney. We would like to thank them for contributing their valuable expertise to the conference.

The conference organisers invited speakers with knowledge and experience in the area of bilingualism and biliteracy. The presentations included information on a range of areas including recent research undertaken into bilingual language retention and development; ideas and strategies for promoting bilingualism and biliteracy in children at home and programming and teaching strategies for promoting and developing bilingualism / biliteracy in early childhood and school settings. The workshops and seminars were well attended and they provided many opportunities for discussion and reflection on these vital issues.

The conference papers in this collection, includes a rich variety of topics and themes associated with bilingualism and bilingual education. The keynotes in particular raise important issues related to language shift in early childhood and a number of key recommendations are offered. Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis's paper is a critical reflection and historical overview of how growing up in Australia under the Assimilation policies affected many immigrant families. Criss Jones Diaz's paper highlights the links between bilingualism and biliteracy, emphasising the socio-cultural, linguistic and cognitive gains available to children if an additive approach to bilingual and biliteracy development is undertaken. Emphasis is placed on the need for recognising bilingual children's early biliteracy experiences that can promote positive transfer between the first and second language and literacy learning.

In addition, Leonie Arthur and Bronwyn Beecher's paper explores the connections between play and emergent literacy which includes a variety of programming and planning strategies that effectively assist teachers in promoting biliteracy play. Stuart Fergurson's paper offers a case study of childhood bilingualism through his interpretation of Elias Canetti's autobiographical prose. His paper highlights the complex relationship between multiculturalism, assimilation and symbolic ethnicity. Meanwhile, Marika Kalyuga's paper is a study of the lexical errors of Russian / English bilingual children. Her discussion provides an overview of the different types of errors due the transference and influence between the two languages. Xue Feng Zhang discusses the positive contributions offered by Saturday school of community languages in amongst the many constraints experienced by communities participating in these programmes. Finally, Ruying Qu and Sheila Xiaoying Qi's paper examines issues associated with language shift / retention in mainland Chinese children between four and twelve years of age living in Sydney.

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## CONTENTS

---

1. Bilingualism, Biliteracy and Beyond 1  
Keynote Address  
  
Criss Jones Diaz  
Early Childhood Division  
Faculty of Education and Languages  
University of Western Sydney, Macarthur
  
2. Children's Rights to Language Development 20  
Keynote Address  
  
Vivi Germanos-Koutsounadis  
Ethnic Child Care Family and Community Services Co-operative
  
3. Literacy and Play 28  
  
Leonie Arthur & Bronwyn Beecher  
University of Western Sydney, Macarthur  
Early Childhood Division  
Faculty of Education and Languages  
University of Western Sydney, Macarthur
  
4. Community Saturday School (Datong Chinese School)  
Its Positive Roles and Constraints 55  
  
Xue Feng Zhang  
NSW Department of Education and Training
  
5. The Multicultural Child in the Monocultural Man 67  
  
Stuart Ferguson

- 6 Lexical Errors in Russian-English Bilingual Children 104
- Marika Kalyuga  
School of Modern Languages  
Department of European Languages  
Macquarie University
7. Learning to Interact in Two Languages: Society,  
the Meaning Group and Language Development 117
- Maria Piccioli  
School of Arts and Sciences  
Australian Catholic University
8. Language Maintenance and Shift of Chinese-Born  
Children in Sydney 132
- Ruying Qi  
Division of Languages and Linguistics  
Faculty of Education and Languages  
University of Western Sydney, Macarthur
- Sheila Xiaoying Qi  
Cabramatta High School, Sydney

## **Bilingualism, Biliteracy and Beyond**

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### **Abstract**

Often, in the quest for early bilingual attainment in young children, the challenges in maintaining and developing bilingual proficiency become the primary focus. This is most obvious in the early years, in which adequate levels of first and second language proficiency are of central concern, resulting in a greater emphasis on bilingual development and a subsequently lesser emphasis on biliteracy development. Bilingualism does not automatically lead to biliteracy and being bilingual does not necessarily mean that one is able to read and write in two languages. However, given that the desired outcome of balanced bilingualism is literacy attainment in the languages spoken, one would expect that many young bilingual Australians would be placed in favourable positions to fully achieve this. Unfortunately for many children, this outcome is mostly unattainable.

This paper aims to highlight the crucial importance of the relationship between bilingualism and biliteracy. It will also explore the benefits gained in being bilingual / biliterate, and the issues preventing many young Australian children in developing full bilingual competence, so that as parents, caregivers and teachers, we are better able to make use of the variety of opportunities / or lack of, that develop / impede biliteracy attainment. Finally, the issues related to the rights, roles and responsibilities of children, families, caregivers, teachers, communities and government bodies in providing maximum opportunities for bilingual and biliterate development for our children will also be discussed

## **Introduction**

Bilingual children entering day care and school settings bring with them diverse linguistic and cultural knowledge, skills, resources and potential. A strong recognition of this potential is crucial in acknowledging the social, cognitive and linguistic advantages of bilingualism. These advantages provide convincing arguments that clearly emphasise how opportunities to maintain and develop the home language in day care and school settings can promote self esteem, family cohesion, socio-cultural identity, and an openness to alternative views and ways of thinking (Jones - Diaz 1991).

Children's developing sense of 'self', is clearly linked to their understandings of themselves, and others. When children are given clear and positive messages by teachers and caregivers, about their bilinguality, feelings of self worth and self affirmation can be enhanced. Unfortunately, it is often what teachers and caregivers *don't* say to children that can have the most damaging impact on their self esteem and identity.. Disinterest in children's bicultural and bilingual identity, through what is not said can be influential in the construction of negative messages about linguistic and cultural diversity. For example, if children are not encouraged to use their home language with peers who also speak that language, they will shy away, or avoid using their language with each other. Consequently, they will often seek to identify with the dominant cultural group, believing that this will bring them greater benefits in making friends and seeking the teachers' approval.

Family members and local communities also play a crucial role in promoting self esteem in bilingual children. They too are capable of passing on either negative or positive messages about being bilingual. If families demonstrate disinterest (for whatever reason) by not using their language with their children or by simply not acknowledging their children's efforts, along with constant over correction, children's willingness to use the language can be reduced and will often lead to their rejection of and disinterest in their language and cultural identity.

The link between literacy, biliteracy and 'self' is obvious here. If children's efforts are encouraged and the first language is seen as valuable and useful, they are more likely to feel confident and engage more readily in literacy related tasks. It is essential that teachers and caregivers actively value and acknowledge children's emerging efforts and approximations in reading and writing in the first language and in doing so, every opportunity to encourage young children to engage in purposeful literacy based experiences with the first language should be provided. Similarly, family members should also encourage and praise their children's efforts in literacy learning, accepting approximations and representations as part of the learning process.

The construction of a positive sociocultural identity in bilingual children is closely linked to bilingualism and biliteracy. Children's rejection of their language is often paralleled by their disinterest in their cultural identity and ethnic community (Wong Fillmore, 1991; Makin et al 1995). Romaine (1991: 150 - 151) argues that the expression of either solidarity with a social group or distance from a social group, strongly influences language choice in bilingual situations and is an important factor in determining whether language shift will take place. Children's understandings of the relationships between language and power in connection to English and their home language play a significant role in the construction of their socio-cultural identity. Pre-schoolers are capable of understanding that English is a dominant language, and speaking it with peers, teachers and community members brings social inclusion and acceptance. Similarly, young children can be extremely vulnerable to social pressures and negative messages associated with cultural and language 'differences' (Wong- Fillmore 1991).

The dominance of the English language becomes a strong motivator for children to learn English, not only because peers and adults may not speak their language, but survival in the playroom, playground or classroom, is dependent on English proficiency. Furthermore, educational environments, where the emphasis is on English language and literacy only, will also enhance this motivation for English language learning. These environments, although effective in promoting English language and literacy development, may do so at the expense of the first language. Cessation of first language development actively impedes second language literacy (Skutnabb-Kangas & Toukoma 1976; Troike 1981; Burt, Dulay & Krashen, 1982; Cummins 1991). Therefore, educational environments should maximize every opportunity to promote print and other literacy codes, which are relevant to the languages and cultures represented by the children. These representations should be meaningful and relevant to children's daily experiences which allow them not only to explore and learn about different print forms, but to value their home language as having a communicative and meaningful purpose.

As children develop competence in English language and literacy, there is often an attitude shift where the preference for English can be associated with perceptions of their own levels of proficiency. This is clearly highlighted in the following comment from an Arabic speaking child.

"I don't know how to read Arabic, I know only English"  
(Beecher 1983).

Children's negative constructions of their own capabilities in the home language and their growing preference for English are a major issue of concern. If teachers, caregivers and families do little in acknowledging negative constructions such as the above example, negative views about their home language, along with a cultural shift away from their community and culture can emerge.

Family members, teachers and caregivers also need to acknowledge and value children's interest in the print, form and function of the first language and pass on to them the value and purposefulness of their home language. In doing so, children's self esteem will be further enhanced and a more positive construction of their own capabilities in using the home language will develop. For example, opportunities for children to observe family and community members reading newspapers, writing letters and greeting cards and so on, will promote the home language as a useful and valuable tool in daily communication contexts.

Families and communities play a crucial role in passing on important socio-cultural knowledge to their children. This is fundamental in the socialisation process, whereby family cohesion and communication are often dependent on the use of the home language. Wong-Fillmore's interview study, of 1,000 families (1991c), clearly explores the relationship between family cohesion and language maintenance. Her study documented that more than 60% of families viewed monolingual English day care settings as having direct influence on family communication, associated with the loss of their children's first language. Unfortunately, bilingual day care settings were only marginally more effective in maintaining family communication, with 50% of respondents reporting a less negative impact. In contrast to the above settings, programmes, which utilized children's first languages exclusively were attributed to significantly less language loss. Her study concluded, that the breakdown in communication between parents and children is primarily due to first language loss.

This clearly indicates, that educational settings, whether they be day care or school, can have a significant impact on the relationships between family communication and language loss. "We should be fostering an environment which enables bilingual (and monolingual) children to continue, if they wish, to make links and contacts across communities, rather than a one-way journey away from their parents" (Major 1988: 123).

### **An additive approach to biliteracy**

In classrooms or day care settings, there exists a diversity of language and literacy proficiency levels amongst bilingual children. Apart from the fact that many children are already literate in their first language, or may even be gifted in literacy development,

children's experiences of bilingual situations may be *additive*, *balanced*, *subtractive* or *receptive*, depending of the levels of exposure and usage patterns at home, day care or school. Additive situations allow children to develop both languages, often simultaneously, or successively, without any loss of or negative impact on either language. This is usually supported by environments and educational experiences which place high value on the minority language and second language learning. Additive bilingual situations facilitate balanced bilingualism where children achieve age-appropriate levels in both languages. However, many bilingual children have a dominance in one language or the other, and a preference for one language over the other, depending on the domain or social context in which the language is used (Saunders 1991; Fantini 1985 & Genesse 1987).

In contrast, unfortunately many children experience forms of subtractive bilingualism, a process by which children learn the second language at the expense of the home language. This will almost certainly lead to monolingualism or receptive understanding of the minority language (Lambert 1975, 1977; Cummins 1991; Siren 1991; Wong-Fillmore 1991; Klinger & Diaz 1991). There are a variety of factors which impact on the process of subtractive bilingualism. Clearly, children's initial loss of interest in responding to siblings and family members in the home language from as young as two years of age is of major concern for family members struggling to maintain the home language. Early exposure to English-only environments in day care settings and the lack of acknowledgment and positive valuing of linguistic diversity are also important considerations. The problem is further provoked when family members who are misinformed about bilingualism and strategies for language maintenance, unwittingly respond to their children in English, setting up patterns of communication where the use of English becomes increasingly dominant. This can also often result in the home language being reserved for older family members and relatives.

Educational settings play a crucial role not only in ensuring that children's home languages are maintained and developed, but in promoting second language learning as a positive and beneficial process. Unfortunately, educators, families and communities have few opportunities to access correct and reliable information about bilingual and biliteracy development and its benefits. Indeed, families can feel isolated and unsure, often wondering if it is worth the effort when there is little support and encouragement available.

The limited hours available for LOTE and Community Language instruction, in most schools and the relatively few bilingual day care programmes offered to communities, has meant that at best the approach to bilingualism and community language learning has been transitional, where the emphasis on maintenance of the home language decreases as

children's proficiency in English increases. Transitional approaches may provide some temporary support to the home language; best described as an '*additive oasis*' (in the words of Kenji Hakuta, cited in Diaz & Klinger 1991); however, as proficiency in the majority language becomes established, support to the first language is often withdrawn. In this way, transitional programmes frequently result in subtractive bilingual processes, leading to eventual loss of the home language (Hakuta 1987; Makin, Campbell & Jones Diaz 1995)

With increasing numbers of infants from bilingual backgrounds using child care services, it can not be assumed that prior to school entry, bilingual children having attended day care and preschool settings, will have had adequate opportunities for first language maintenance and development. Furthermore, proficiency levels in the first language will not necessarily be stronger than in English. A recent and comprehensive study of language maintenance and shift in early childhood conducted by Siren (1991), involved at least 600 families in the Stockholm area who spoke a language other than Swedish in the home. According to Siren, (the language of child care had a dramatic impact on children's fluency in their home language. Children using day care settings where the minority language was used exclusively, retained overwhelmingly high levels of fluency in the home language, 86 per cent, with 8 per cent having equal fluency, and 5 per cent having more fluency in Swedish. Day care settings which provided some home language support, only 25 per cent of the children retain the home language with greater fluency, 12 per cent having equal fluency and 63 per cent having less fluency in the home language. In contrast, when children remain at home rather than going to daycare, 64 per cent retained fluency in the home language, 6 per cent having equal fluency in and 30 per cent with more fluency in Swedish. (Siren 1991: 185)

These figures should direct and guide our thinking about the crucial role day care and school settings have in language maintenance. Given the lack of research into early childhood language maintenance and shift in Australia, one must assume that a similar pattern of occurrence would be the case. It is of paramount importance that similar research is undertaken in this country, in order to draw reliable and correct conclusions about language shift in the early childhood years.

### **Cognitive and linguistic advantages in childhood bilingualism**

Apart from the social benefits, discussed earlier, cognitive and linguistic benefits have been consistently documented in the literature and in current research findings related to bilingualism and language learning. Over the past thirty years, this research has clearly pointed to the cognitive and linguistic advantages in either simultaneous bilingualism, or

learning a second language in childhood. In particular, comparative studies between monolinguals and bilinguals, have shown that bilingual children demonstrate more sophisticated cognitive skills including advanced concept formation, classification, divergent thinking and problem solving. (Diaz 1983; Hakuta Ferdman, & Diaz 1987; Cummins 1979,1991; Pearl & Lambert 1962; Genesee 1987; Góncz & Kodzopeljíc 1991, 1991 & Campos 1995). In addition, bilingual children have demonstrated a more refined awareness of language processing and are sensitive to language form and function (Zeev 1977; Bialystok 1986). This ability to critically analyse the way language works is commonly known as metalinguistic awareness.

### **Metalinguistic awareness**

Research into the relationship between bilingual children's cognitive development, metalinguistic awareness and literacy development, supports the assumption that because of early and rapid metalinguistic development in the early years, early literacy development appears to be enhanced and promoted in children exposed to early bilingual experiences (Goncz & Kodzopeljic 1991).

Explorations of the relationships between bilingualism and metalinguistic awareness have been guided by the theoretical works of Leopold (1939 - 1949) and Vygotsky (1962) Although, Vygotsky is best known for his theories on the relationship between thought and language, his work has direct relevance to bilingualism and cognition. He asserted that bilingualism facilitated certain types of language awareness and that when children perceived their language as one system among many others, they were able to develop a special awareness of linguistic operations. (Malakoff & Hakuta 1991; Diaz & Klinger 1991). Similarly, in Leopold's study of his daughter's bilingual development, her early separation of word and referent, was directly attributed to her early bilingual experiences.

Current research refers to metalinguistic awareness as "a set of abilities involving an objective awareness and control of linguistic variables, such as understanding the arbitrariness of word - referent relationships and the capacity to detect and correct syntactical violations. (Diaz & Klinger 1991: 173). In very young bilingual children, such abilities may include a heightened awareness of the existence of languages other than English in the community; the ability to switch from one language code to another; the knowledge that people speak different languages; that the meaning in one language can be translated to another (Makin 1996). In older preschoolers, metalinguistic awareness might refer to the awareness that words can sound the same but have different meaning, ie bark and bark; and that words can sound the same but look different and so on.

The link between cognitive advantages and metalinguistic awareness associated with early bilingualism has been clearly summarized by Diaz & Klingler (1991:183) in the following;

- Bilingual children consistently demonstrate increased verbal and non verbal abilities
- Bilingual children demonstrate advanced metalinguistic abilities, particularly in relation to the way language is processed.
- Simultaneous acquisition of two languages can lead to cognitive and metalinguistic advantages
- The cognitive benefits of bilingualism appear in early childhood, and contrary to Cummins' (1976) *threshold hypothesis* , (which claimed that a certain degree of balanced bilingualism is necessary before any cognitive gains can be achieved), high levels of bilingual proficiency, nor balanced bilingualism is required
- Bilingual children make greater use of private - speech utterances for problem solving which gives them cognitive advantages in thinking more creatively and divergently
- Bilingual children are able to easily switch language codes according to the context of communication, However, there is no evidence to suggest that bilingual children spontaneously switch languages as a problem solving strategy ( in Diaz, Padilla & Weathersby 1991)

### **Bilingualism and biliteracy: Literacy for all languages**

Much to the amazement of many pre-school, primary teachers and families, early literacy development does not begin the moment children enter a kindergarten classroom, nor is literacy about decoding messages from the page (Makin, Campbell and Jones Diaz 1995). In fact, children's developing knowledge of the way print works, its relationship to our social world and its functionality and purposefulness, is an emerging process in which children are actively engaged from birth. This involvement includes functional knowledge about print directionality, environmental print, recognition of familiar words and family names, early formations of script, characters or letter symbols and early representations of different genres, such as recipes, shopping lists, labels, menus and on. The value of play in developing these emerging skills plays a significant role as children are able to explore print and texts in meaningful and contextual ways.

Within the last ten years, there has been much emphasis on young children's developing literacy skills and there is a growing recognition of the active role children play in constructing literacy based knowledge. In the early childhood context, current research emphasises the importance of emergent and early literacy experiences, and many of these findings continue to inform teaching practices, particularly in K - 2 classroom settings.

(Health 1983; Schickendanz 1986; Clay 1986 & Hill 1994). However, there is little research into and documentation of bilingual children's experiences of the literacy process, in particular, their experiences in home language literacy. Due to this, it is not surprising that many teachers and caregivers are unfamiliar with biliteracy development and consequently, unfamiliar with the different types of literacy related tasks in which their children might engage. For example, not knowing what to expect of children's print conventions in languages other than English, might result in important literacy related milestones being unwittingly disregarded and overlooked.

Bilingual children who have exposure to print and literacy related tasks in both their first and second languages have the potential to develop certain sophisticated knowledge and awareness about print, print conventions, appropriate book behaviours, print directionality, the relationship between print and speech, the relationship between illustrations and text, and socio-cultural knowledge related to literacy and so on. They are able to compare and contrast the differences and similarities in book conventions and literacy events. As with oral language, an awareness of literacy develops from birth and this awareness is heightened when literacy related experiences take place in two languages.

The samples of children's work below, clearly indicate their capabilities in this area when given opportunities to explore print in their home language. Trishna at 5 years of age has developed sophisticated knowledge about appropriate print directionality and print conventions in Hindi.

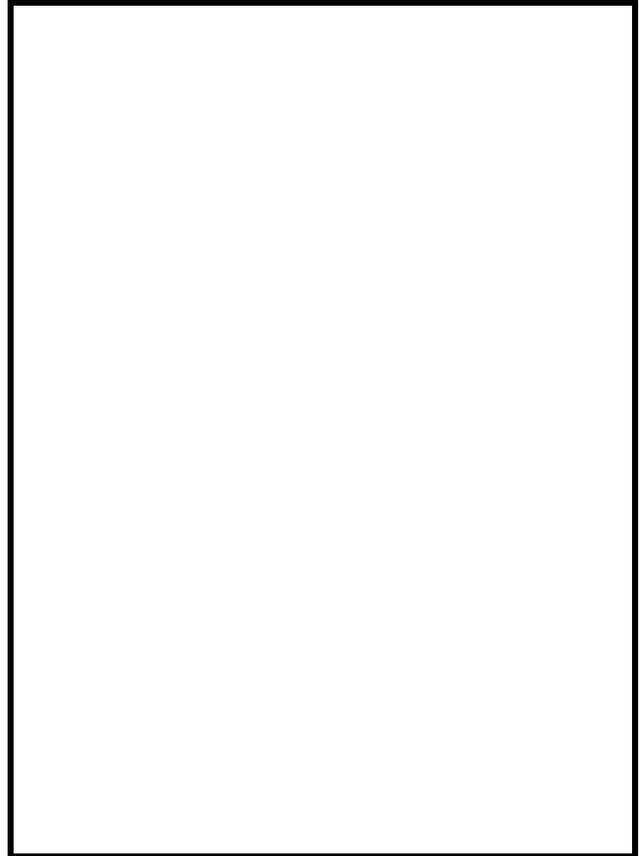
Figure 1



Source: Trishna, aged 5 years  
Globe Kindergarten

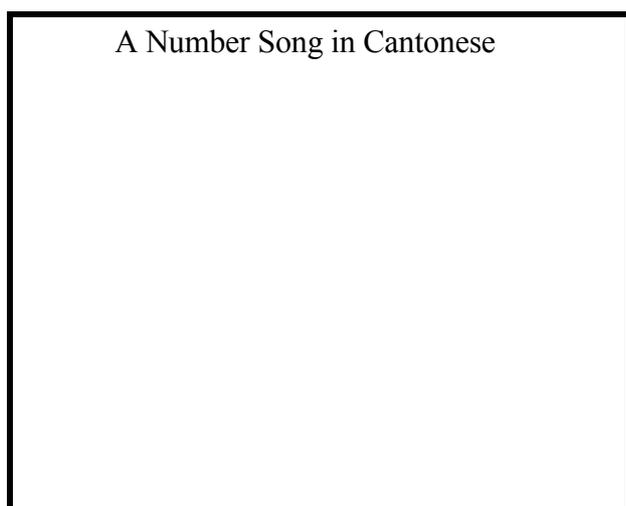
Trishna understands appropriate Hindi print directionality. She wrote from left to right, and bottom to top of the page.

Figure 2



Similarly, Delia makes use of environmental print displayed near the writing corner, by copying Cantonese words and numbers. She is able to write numbers from one to ten in both Cantonese and English. Much younger children are also capable of exploring print in meaningful ways. Joanne at 3 years of age at the writing table appears to be mixing Cantonese number and letter forms. Environmental print plays a significant role here by providing appropriate support to children's developing understandings about number and letter forms.

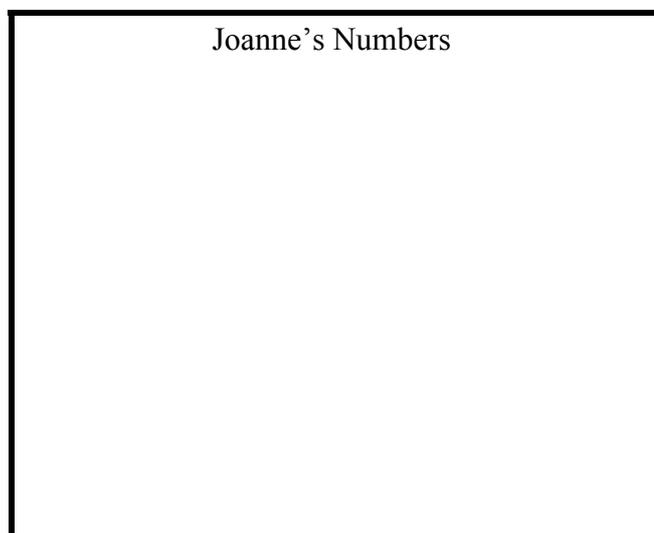
Figure 3



Delia was writing at the writing table set up in front of a display of songs in Chinese and Greek.

Source: Delia, 5 years  
Tillman Park Child Care Centre

Figure 4



Joanne at the writing table experiments with Chinese numbers and words.

Source: Joanne, 3 years, 10 months  
Tillman Park Child Care Centre

Over recent years, research has consistently indicated that the role of the first language is paramount in facilitating second language learning (Cummins 1984, Burt, Dulay and Krashen 1982, Skutnabb-Kangas 1979; 1981; Wong-Fillmore 1991; Macias & Quintero 1992; Makin et al 1995). Such research parallels the existence of positive transfer from first language literacy to second language literacy. It is argued that the visual, linguistic and cognitive strategies involved in first language reading are applicable to the second language literacy process. (Ovando & Collier 1985; Hudelson 1987). Hudelson (1987) claimed that the task of reading and writing a language that one can speak fluently will be more easily accomplished, because one is able to make better use of the cueing systems. Hudelson also argued that first language literacy provided children with resources that could be used when involved in second language reading and writing. This is further supported by Bialystok (1991) who claims that bilingual children who are also biliterate have had the experience of

analysing two linguistic systems, resulting in a more powerful knowledge base about the use of language. In fact, research conducted by Swain, Lapkin, Rowen & Hart (1990), clearly indicate that literacy in the first language enhances third language literacy learning.

Unfortunately, for many Australian children from bilingual backgrounds, opportunities for first language literacy before second language literacy are few and far between. This means that for many of these children, literacy development occurs in the second language where the benefits of first language literacy transfer is not available. This does not mean, however, that literacy development in the second language is not possible, if children are not literate in the first language. Nor does it mean that they are unable to become literate in their second language. It does however, point to the importance of providing bilingual children with literacy based experiences in the home language, in order to maximise both oral and literacy development in both the home language and the second language.

The adult's role in facilitating children's literacy development of English and the home language, is of paramount importance. Their willingness to allow children to transfer knowledge and draw on familiar experiences gained in both the first and second language will assist children. This means that teachers and caregivers should provide daily experiences that allow for active engagement through play in both the home language and English. For example, a print rich environment that encourages ongoing exploration and investigation of literacy is not enough, if teachers and caregivers do little in scaffolding children's understandings about print and literacy within a socio-cultural context. In under-five settings, teachers and caregivers should be aware of bilingual children's early experiences of literacy in their home language, and make every effort to provide experiences that extend on their existing knowledge. Similarly, in mainstream primary classrooms, teachers should extend on children's developing abilities in LOTE by representing diverse literacy codes in the environment. Additionally, an interest in and valuing of children's home language literacy learning in contexts outside of school, such as Saturday school or Ethnic school should extend into the mainstream classroom. A whole school approach to biliteracy will ensure that resources, skills and expertise in the various languages taught, are made available to all teachers. LOTE and Community Language teachers are very often isolated and marginalised when there is little recognition and acknowledgment of the important role they play in biliteracy development. Furthermore, it can be very frustrating for mainstream classroom teachers, trying to promote children's biliteracy development when there is little access to information and support regarding appropriate literacy conventions of the languages represented in the classroom..

An additive approach to bilingualism and biliteracy for all children involves the provision of whole school K - 6 LOTE or Community Language programmes. This approach extends the provision of non-dominant languages beyond the early years of schooling where the goal is for "children to become fluent speakers of both the dominant and the non-dominant language. For children to become fully bilingual, an extended and articulated language and literacy program in both languages is the ideal" (Makin, et al 1995:80). In order for schools to teach languages effectively, they need to ensure that adequate planning and research into local community and family language needs are undertaken. In this sense, the role of policy and procedure is crucial in providing specific guidelines to schools that enable them to make appropriate decisions about which language/s to introduce.

When school communities have high representations of minority community languages, every effort should be made to offer those languages, rather than offering a language that has a higher economic and social status. This would provide a more effective use of existing language resources that represent family and local community profiles. By offering local community languages in the school curriculum, many socio-cultural benefits can be gained, such as a greater understanding about and respect for cultural diversity and difference; increase in self esteem for bilingual children as they see their language being recognised and taught as part of the school curriculum and finally, home-school partnerships become strengthened and enhanced through family involvement as family members see their language and culture being valorised by the school community. Furthermore, these benefits have a direct influence on the relevancy of the languages being taught to all children, as opportunities for using languages that are represented in the community can become available to children outside of the school context.

### **The role of government in supporting bilingual development in all children.**

Clearly, the role of government support is a matter of great urgency. Government bodies involved in the care and education of children at all levels need to ensure that adequate provision of funding and programme support is available. Providing equitable access to quality bilingual resources such as dual language books, curriculum and teaching materials is the responsibility of both Federal and State government bodies involved in funding early childhood, primary and high school settings. Bilingual families can not be expected to develop Australia's linguistic resources alone, without due support and assistance

The level of rhetoric and commitment to access and equity issues in the early childhood field is somewhat limited in its lack of acknowledgment for the provision of programmes that support and extend children's home language and literacy development. Piccioli (1996)

argues that although there appears to be a level of goodwill and support, the ultimate aim of the institutions involved in early childhood care and education is,

"..that of improving English language skills to allow for a smoother transition into primary school with the subsequent result of turning potential bilinguals into monolinguals. No explicit reference is ever made to language maintenance and a structured programme to implement it as an Institutional level" (4).

This is not to say however, that the relatively few bilingual and home language support programmes that do exist are ineffective. Quite the contrary is true. Many of these programmes are highly committed to the principles of bilingual education. In addition, many early childhood educators and caregivers are keenly aware of the need for language support in the early years. However, the lack of formal recognition in funding and policy development and direction, places these programmes at risk of being adhoc and temporary. Staff turnover and changes in the cultural and language profile in the centre, often result in the programme being abandoned, where the benefits gained are easily lost and the responsibility of home language and literacy development again becoming the central concern and responsibility of individual bilingual families.

The following recommendations are based on a list of initiatives submitted to the recent Review of Languages Policy in NSW, on behalf of the Early Childhood Division of the Faculty of Education

- \* Research to be undertaken that documents the phenomenon of subtractive bilingualism in the early years, investigating the social, linguistic and cognitive impact of day care and schooling on the loss of the home language.
- \* The inclusion of bilingual children under 5 years of age at national languages and education policy levels (ALLA recommendation 1995).
- \* Articulation across Federal and State funding bodies involved in the care and education of children between the ages of birth to eight years. This involves co-ordination between government bodies such as Department of Health & Family Services; Department of School Education and Department of Community Services, to bring about clearer policy direction, increased programme support and more effective continuity between day care, primary and high school in order to maximise bilingual children's language and literacy learning outcomes.
- \* Increased funding and availability of human and non human resources that reflect cultural and linguistic diversity and difference and greater collaboration between

Federal, State and Children's Services bodies to bring about more effective resource development and supply.

- \* Increased funding and resource support to Ethnic Schools, Saturday Schools, and early childhood settings that implement bilingual and home language support programmes.
- \* Full recognition of young children's bilingual and biliteracy development during the first years of school through adequate provision of Community Language and LOTE programmes from kindergarten.

### **Conclusion**

Families, caregivers and teachers play a significant role in first and second language and literacy development of bilingual children. Together, they have shared responsibilities and functions in providing the best opportunities for language and literacy learning. Without the support of governments, schools, children's services' bodies and community agencies, their efforts can become futile and directionless. They can't do it alone! Nor should they be expected to continue to do so. The complexity of the task at hand can never be underestimated.

This paper has highlighted the links between bilingualism and biliteracy, emphasising the socio-cultural, linguistic and cognitive benefits that can be gained if an additive approach is undertaken in developing bilingual and biliteracy development in children. Some emphasis has been placed on the need for recognising bilingual children's early literacy experiences which may include knowledge about print and other literacy codes in both the home language and the second language. Further, the active recognition of the positive transfer of visual, linguistic and cognitive strategies involved in first language reading and writing are directly attributed to success in second language literacy.

Bilingual children, regardless of their age have significant rights to care and educational programmes that provide appropriate learning outcomes for home language literacy development. Given the diverse and rich potential of the cultural and linguistic resources that exist in the Australian community, teachers, caregivers, families, communities and government bodies are placed in key positions where the opportunities to develop these resources should be abundant in supply.

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## **Children's Rights to Language Development**

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### **Abstract**

This paper raises important issues associated with language maintenance and shift in bilingual children. In particular, the importance of maintaining the home language from a sociocultural perspective is discussed with an emphasis on the need for the availability and provision of adequate resources for communities and families. The consequences of language shift for children, families and communities are highlighted and recommendations for governments and education systems are outlined.

Chairperson, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. I wish to thank the organisers for inviting me to deliver the opening address of this 3rd bilingual children's conference and congratulate them for their efforts in continuing to work and promote the issues of bilingualism and biliteracy, the implications of these on children and families their attempts to draw attention to the responsibilities of various government and non-government bodies and the implications for policy at a national level in maintaining and developing the language resources of Australia."

Being a bilingual person myself but not biliterate because I never had the opportunity when I came to Australia in 1954 at the age of 8 years, at the height of the assimilationist era, to continue my Greek language side by side with English but as a matter of fact the school which I attended religiously taught me every day that my Greek language was not important and I should learn English and forget it. I am grateful to my parents who insisted that I speak Greek at home as they could not understand a word of English and if it wasn't through their perseverance, I and my two younger brothers would not have been able to communicate with them at all.

I remember the anguish and trauma of hundreds of parents whose children became assimilated and lost their home language and could not communicate with them. The situations when I was working as a Welfare Worker where children and parents at crisis points were not able to tell each other how they felt to express their deep emotions of love, resentment, anger, hate, the misunderstandings, misconceptions and assumptions each had for one another because they did not have a common language. I mediated and interpreted for them and in many instances it was the first time in their lives when they understood each other and they were able to speak with their hearts.

I, and thousands of NESB children are also grateful to the many ethnic community and church schools which provided the afternoon language classes to teach our home language and kept alive and nurtured multiculturalism long before the governments, both State and Federal, took any interest in the rich language and cultural resources which are in existence in Australia.

It was through the pressure of the various ethnic community organisations like the Ethnic Communities Councils, the Federation of Ethnic Schools which forced the government to reluctantly acknowledge the value of other languages than English and accept that these were spoken by one quarter of the population.

My awareness of not being biliterate was highlighted when I went to the University of Sydney to study Modern Greek and I realised that I had missed the elementary and basic grammar which is taught at school at an early age and although my spoken Greek was excellent, my written was not at university or even high school level and it was too late for me to go back and pick it up. Thousands of other bilingual children faced the same problem because of the attitude of the education systems and the government that English was the most important language and by continuing the home language it will preclude NESB children from learning English. I faced this argument with teachers constantly when I tried to encourage them to allow the afternoon classes to operate from the school premises as this would be better for the children both physically, emotionally and psychologically. Physically, because in those days the classes were held in impoverished environments.

Emotionally, because the children did not feel so different from their friends in doing the classes after hours away from the school. Psychologically, being at their school, they accepted it as part of their education and did not transfer their negative feelings and resentment on their parents and their ethnic community as often, parents forced them to attend the home language classes because it was important for them to teach their children their language and culture and heritage of their country of origin where they had left their families. Children needed to have their language to be able to communicate with them, maintain their family ties and know their roots.

When I attended university in late 1960's there were very few studies about bilingualism either in Australia or overseas, therefore, to have information to argue with the teachers, I did my Post Graduate thesis on Psychology on "Bilingualism and its effects on the intellectual development and English attainment of Greek children in Australian schools".

The participants in my study were Greek and Australian first year high school students. They were administered a verbal and non-verbal Intelligence Test, and the ACER English usage test. The results were that there were no differences in intelligence test and English test between the two groups of children and bilingualism had no effect on the intellectual development and English learning of the Greek children.

Also S.J. Evans of Wales (1953) argued that the teaching of Welsh along with English, does what the efficient study of any two languages must do:-

“It frees the mind from the tyranny of words. It is extremely difficult to dissociate thought from words, but he who can express his ideas in two languages is emancipated”.

Although more studies on Bilingualism have been done since then and these demonstrate the benefits and support the teaching of languages simultaneously, this had little influence on the attitudes of teachers, and governments regarding LOTE.

Since the early 1970's policies have been developed to support the promotion of other languages, however, there is not enough commitment and allocation of resources to implement the policies. We had the National Language Policy but it only concentrated on ESL and some programs here and there to show that something was being done. The policy did not have anything about early childhood language learning and State and Federal governments passed the responsibility from one to the other but no-one making any effort to seriously provide resources for home language maintenance in pre-schools. Of course there is the Access and Equity policy under which resources are allocated to provide for the special needs of children from NESB, ATSI, Disability and Remote and Isolated but there were no programs for home language maintenance.

When requests were made to the Office of Childcare which had responsibility for pre-school funding for home language maintenance, the answer was that it was not their responsibility to teach and maintain language, It was the Department of Education matter. The Federal Department of Education, did not see it as their responsibility as the States had the responsibility for education.

I have been hearing this for the last 25 years and today I am gravely concerned to hear that the language needs of NESB children will be serviced by the mainstream and they do not require special services. For example, the Special Needs Subsidy Scheme (SNSS) concentrates on children with disabilities and hardly considers NESB and ATSI children as having language and cultural needs which need to be met. Similarly, the SUPS program which was established in 1986 to enable NESB, ATSI and children with disabilities to utilise children's services and have equal access to quality child care, and were identified under the three categories is now being generalised and those who will be disadvantaged will be the NESB and ATSI children as it is not possible for all SUPS workers to have expertise in language, Aboriginal, cultural and disability issues to meet the specific needs of each group.

It is a tragic loss to the child, family and nation where hundreds of thousands of children enter the preschool system with a first language other than English and when they finish at the age of five they have lost it or if they still maintain some of it through the efforts of the parents and families, they will lose it at primary school level. There is evidence that many of these children do not learn their home language nor English adequately and are not literate in either of them. Many suffer from identity crisis, alienation from their ethnic communities, ambivalence about themselves, their culture, language and community and cross cultural conflict between them and their parents which if not resolved sometimes leads to the young people rejecting their parents, their culture language and communities, in antisocial behaviour and crisis situations in the families.

Recently, I attended the International Interdisciplinary Course On Children's Rights which was organised by The Children's Right Centre of the University Of Gent, Belgium and was attended by 74 people from all over the world and representatives from UNESCO and UNICEF and various sections of the European Union. In most countries languages other than the national language are compulsory and part of the school curriculum in the primary and high school system and most of the people present were bilingual and trilingual. The majority of academics and professionals are proficient in other languages and see it as a necessity to be conversant in more than one language.

Some countries such as Belgium have bilingual education. In Greece primary school children do English, French and German as part of their curriculum and most of them speak another language other than Greek.

In Australia we place no value on languages although there are 120 languages and dialects spoken by our multilingual and multicultural population and we have the advantage of these people actually using their community language every day. Instead of promoting these languages and for these to be learned simultaneously with English, we still hold the attitude that LOTE is the concern of the family instead of the government. Resources allocated to the early childhood area for these languages should be increased so that we can provide adequate bilingual and biliterate education for our children.

Negative attitudes regarding linguistic diversity were disastrous for the Aboriginal people who spoke some 250 languages and dialects prior to white contact, and only very few of these languages survive today because of the policies of assimilation of the Aboriginal people into white society.

The policy of assimilation to be effective was to remove the children from their families, because language is one's identity and the link to one's culture and heritage, thus the stolen generation of Aboriginal children as the Inquiry into the issue has shown recently.

Article 30 of the Convention on the Rights of Child which Australia signed and ratified specifically states that:-

“In those states in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities or persons of indigenous origin exist, a child belonging to such a minority or who is indigenous shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of his or her group, to enjoy his or her own culture, to profess and practice his or her own religion, or use his or her own language”,

Australia has an obligation to these children and the Committee on the Rights of the Child in examining Australia's report on the Convention has questioned them on what is being done for the minority and indigenous children in relation to this article.

Some attempts have been made by the Australian and State governments to implement this article but generally the rights of minority and indigenous children to their language and culture have been denied to them and left up to the parents to provide. It is unfortunate that governments have a micro view of maintaining and developing our language resources and always link this important development to the Budgets without looking at the macro level and important role that our linguistic resource can play in economics and our standing in the international sphere and globalisation of the future.

Further, as we are developing National Competencies for Training in most industries, and looking at the multi-skilling of our workforce, bilingualism and biliteracy should be important components of these competencies and hopefully this will persuade governments to allocate resources for LOTE study from pre-school to university level.

With the neglect of governments and xenophobic reactions to people from NESB, we in Australia have been wasting our language resources whereas other countries have been trying to build them up. With the policies of multiculturalism an attempt was made to stem this waste. However, it is sad that at present we are again reverting to the arguments of old and consider that English learning is the panacea for all and the maintenance of other languages as waste of time and money.

The responsibility for bilingualism and biliteracy rest on all of us, as it is an issue of national significance and our future development as a nation. The parents, the ethnic and general communities, academics and educational institutions at all levels, teachers, the private sector, the peak general and ethnic Children's Services organisations in the Early Childhood field at national and state level should take up the issue and lobby the State and Federal governments for their real commitment to the survival and promotion of one of our most valuable national resource, the many languages spoken by the people of Australia.

I and all of you who are here to-day have been working to promote bilingualism so that our children would have the opportunities to develop their language potential, however, I am frustrated that my 11 year old son who is truly bilingual, will not be biliterate like me because he cannot take Greek at his school and has to attend an afternoon school which has limited resources to enable him to learn Greek at the same level as English and I am sure that other second and third generation children have the same problem.

We do not accept the rationale of those who purport that there are too many languages and there are no resources to accommodate them all in our education system, neither do I accept the argument that English is more important than other languages and we should concentrate our efforts on this. English will always be our common language of communication, however, this does not mean that other languages have less value and are not needed. If we believe in a "fair go" we must give equal value to all languages and the diverse groups which make up our multicultural Australia.

As we are entering the second millennium and three years to the 21st century, we cannot regress back, we must go forward and build on what we have done in the past and give opportunities to our children to develop our language resources in a more organised way with a National Language Policy which truly reflects the reality of our multilingual and multicultural Australian community. No one can alter this indisputable fact.

The conference themes are impressive, let us all contribute our expertise and develop recommendations to present to the various bodies for consideration and action for the sake of our children.

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## **Literacy and Play**

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## **Abstract**

This paper explores some aspects of the nature of play and emergent literacy before defining literacy learning through play. Themes in children's literacy and biliteracy play and the dimensions of the adult's role are closely examined. The paper concludes with details on resources and strategies available to the adult to promote biliteracy play.

## **What is play?**

All children constantly engage in play, as they investigate, role play, create and construct. Their play reflects what they are learning about themselves, their family and their environment. Whilst children are engaging in this wide range of activities, they are highly involved in diverse and complex learning and development. They explore, question, role play, practise and problem solve as they play for their own purposes.

Play is usually identified by particular characteristics as identified by Rubin, Fein and Vandenberg 1983 in Rogers & Sawyers 1988:1. Firstly, children are intrinsically attracted to and motivated to participate in play, without necessarily needing any support or direction from adults. Children will find opportunities to play wherever they are: riding on a bus, helping make a sandwich or eating their lunch. Secondly, their play has its own momentum and focus, and is largely free of rules set by adults and others outside the play. Children play with a toy car and make their own play about roads and races without needing any direction from adults. Thirdly, they engage in play as if the activity was real, for example, blowing out the candles on the sand birthday cake. Fourthly, children's play focuses on the process and they respond spontaneously to current events, rather than focusing on the final products, for example, a child exploring paint mixing, pattern making, name writing and painting over the name writing is engaged in the process of play rather than just focusing on the production of the final painting. Fifthly, children are the key participants and influences within their own play. They may have props/ resources but what the children do with the resources constitutes the play. For instance, a block becomes a phone or a fire engine since the child is directing the play in that way. Sixthly, children's active engagement is paramount, since when children are not active in their own play, there is no play.

Children participate in different types of play and different categories of social play, according to the purposes of their own play and the nature of their environment. There is nothing simple about this thing called play, it is a most complex and challenging means of learning for the child across all areas of development.

Researchers view play in terms of its contribution to the child's cognitive and social development. Various types of play are related to cognitive stages of development (Piaget 1951, 1962 in Rogers & Sawyers 1988:12-20) whilst various categories of social play influence social development (Parten 1932, Smilansky 1968, Pellegrini 1991: in Rogers & Sawyers 1988) .

Practice play can be seen in repeatedly pulling lego apart and snapping the same pieces back together in the same way or repeating rhymes or silly phrases, such as Evan the Bevan, or when children repeatedly write their name. Children repeat and practise some aspect because they choose to when they are engaged in play, rather being asked to practice by adults. Symbolic play occurs when children create or utilise an object/symbol to represent another idea/ process. This occurs constantly in dramatic play, when the sand on the plate becomes the cake and the empty cup holds the drink or when the child draws themselves as distinct from writing their name, all these examples illustrate different symbolic systems.

Games with rules occur when the children have decided on their rules for how to participate in their game; often this is negotiated as the play progresses. Alternatively children can utilise or adapt traditional rules for the game such as hopscotch or monopoly. Children engaged in constructive play (Smilansky 1968 in Rogers & Sawyer 1988:21) create and build items of their own choosing, i.e. collages, buildings, towers. These constructions remain after the play has finished. Rough and tumble play (Pellegrini 1991 in Arthur, Beecher, Dockett, Farmer & Death 1996) occurs when children 'play fight'. This occurs as children negate roles and plan their physical and role play as seen in superhero play, for example, Power Rangers or Hercules.

Whilst playing, children are socially aware and interact with others to various degrees within different social contexts (Parten 1932 in Rogers & Sawyers 1988:20,21). The child can be involved in unoccupied play where he/she is not involved in any way with the ongoing play of other children other than just watching them. Onlooker play occurs when the child goes beyond watching other children playing and initiates some interactions.

Where the child engages in and concentrates on play by themselves, such as drawing in the sand, or constructing a tower, they are involved in solitary play. When the child is playing, for example, with blocks and is aware of others playing with blocks besides him or her, the child is said to be involved in parallel play. If the child starts to interact for short period of time with other children, say for sharing or exchanging blocks, the play is seen as associative play. With further and further extensive interactions and negotiation, the child can become engaged in co-operative play where the children have a joint goal or purpose to which all children are working, and reflect more defined roles, as in construction of a house building out of blocks.

### **Emergent literacy**

Literacy is not something that children are “taught” at school, but rather something that gradually evolves - as Doake (1988) argues “reading begins at birth”. Researchers such as Holdaway (1979), Goodman (1986), and Harste, Woodward and Burke (1984) have broadened the traditional definition of literacy to include such things as notions of story, concepts of print, book handling skills and scribble writing. They all emphasise the importance of focusing on the processes and experiences rather than the end product of children’s early literacy attempts. The term emergent literacy is used to emphasise the developing understandings that children have about literacy, long before they can read and write in the conventional sense.

### **Emergent writing**

In the early stages of emergent writing, children begin to understand that print has meaning. They will often engage in role play writing (First Steps developmental continuum), where they incorporate writing into their play, for example by writing a shopping list. From an early age children understand that writing and drawing are different (Figure 1) and demonstrate their awareness that print is for others to read by writing on postcards, birthday cards and so on (Figure 2). Before they are able to write conventionally, children are aware of different purposes for writing and different text types and may make approximations of text types such as letters, lists and crosswords (Figure 3).

At first children engage in scribble writing, often making up a story to accompany the writing. As they develop further they start to make horizontal, linear marks that more closely resemble conventional writing and that demonstrate a developing understanding of directionality of print (Figure 4). At a later stage children begin to make approximations of letters or characters that they know, most often the letters in their name (Figure 5), or characters or words they are familiar with from their environment. Children will use whatever resources they have to assist them with their writing, for example copying words from the environment around them, such as the word Aladdin found on a pencil. As children develop control over the form of print they will often repeat strings of letters or characters they are familiar with and may engage in pattern-making with familiar letters or characters. Children’s writing progresses to a stage where it more closely resembles adult writing, which in English includes invented spelling and developing understandings of the structure of words and sentences and the use of punctuation.

## **Emergent reading**

Children are emergent readers from the time that they are interested in and begin to respond to print. This may include a range of printed materials such as newspapers and magazines, street signs, birthday cards and food packages, TAB and lotto forms as well as books. Often the first thing that children are able to read is environmental print, such as the sign for Macdonald's. Children will also frequently recognise familiar letters and words in the print in their environment, such as the letters in their and their friend's names. Environmental print is also used by children to develop their understandings of the purposes of print and to test out their developing hypotheses about print. An example is a child at the local pool who ran her fingers under the letters MMC on the garbage bin and read *gar-bage bin*.

Children who engage in regular book experiences generally have favourite books that they request be read over and over, and that then become familiar books. These familiar books are the ones that children then begin to join in reading with the adult, by joint or echo reading or by filling in the gaps when the adult pauses.

Children will often be able to retell a familiar story, focusing on the meaning and often using some of the language of the book. Book language such as *ogling ogres*, and *I'm slithering and sliding in the snow* (used by Toby at age 2;9) is also frequently incorporated into children's play, as well as familiar rhymes and chants.

Young children often engage in role play reading (First Steps developmental continuum) where they pretend read an item such as a book, magazine or shopping catalogue. They may choose a younger child or doll for an audience (Figure 6), often using the same intonation patterns as the adult when reading.

Another aspect of emergent literacy is understanding the structure of different text types and the ability to use these. Children who are familiar with lots of told stories where the emphasis is on entertainment value, will develop expertise in this area. Those children who are familiar with factual texts will develop control of this genre, while children who are exposed to many fictional stories will develop control of narrative structure.

## **Learning literacy through play**

There are many ways that children are learning about literacy in the informal context of play. Children are learning about the symbolic nature of written language, developing understandings of a variety of text types and of the uses of literacy, as well as developing control of form in a non-threatening environment.

In dramatic play children transform objects, as they pretend a block is a phone, or a pile of sand is a cake, for example. The link between dramatic play and literacy has been asserted by a number of writers, including Vygotsky (1978). It has been indicated that children use symbols in their make-believe play and use more complex symbols, or signs, in the process of reading and writing. Wolfgang and Saunders (1981) argue that play is the “ladder to literacy”, with reading as the top rung of representational growth.

A number of studies cited by Pellegrini and Galda (1993) and Christie (1991) indicate that there are links between symbolic play and literate language. As children act out their own stories in dramatic play, they are enhancing their literacy development as they increase their understanding of narrative structure as well as the ability to use decontextualised language. Talking about the play, the characters and plot, also develops metalinguistic awareness, which is linked to later reading awareness.

Children view play as fun, so when literacy is incorporated into play, children also view literacy as something that is enjoyable. This results in children having a positive disposition towards literacy, and being motivated to make sense of the printed word. As play focuses on the activity and the processes rather than the end-product, it provides a safe and secure environment in which to experiment with print. Children are able to take risks without fear of being wrong or making a mistake. When children incorporate literacy into their play, for example by writing bus tickets or shopping lists, they understand the purposes of print. According to Hall (1991:22)

*Play can allow both learning about literacy and the demonstration of what has already been learned about literacy.*

Play provides children with an environment where they can test out new ideas and consolidate learning.

Research into play and literacy development in the United States has highlighted the links between symbolic play with literacy objects and emergent literacy. Morrow (1990), Schrader (1989;1990), Vukelich (1993) and Neuman and Roskos (1992) have focused on children playing at literacy, by adding literacy props, such as notebooks and pens, to dramatic play areas. Play contexts such as a shop, restaurant, or doctor’s surgery provide many opportunities to incorporate literacy related play materials. It is important that the literacy play contexts selected are relevant to the children’s lives and include literacy props that are familiar to the children. As Neuman and Roskos (1993) note, literacy play materials need to be authentic, in that they are real objects that children see adults using for literacy purposes.

Neuman and Roskos (1993) further state that literacy objects added to children's play should be developmentally appropriate and useful, so that children can easily incorporate them into their play.

A number of common themes emerge from the American studies. These are supported by small studies in Sydney. One of the researchers set-up a library area in a long day care setting in inner-Sydney, with literacy props such as lined paper and pens; a typewriter with letterhead paper; library borrowing forms; a telephone message pad; as well as posters and books. Another researcher observed children in play sessions, a regular part of the daily program, in a Kindergarten classroom in a school in the western suburbs of Sydney. Almost all of the children in this classroom spoke their home language as well as English. The common themes in children's literacy and biliteracy play and learning are listed below, with examples from both studies in Sydney.

### **Play with literacy props:**

#### **i) Results in an increase in literacy activities**

Adding literacy props to children's play increases the frequency and duration, but most importantly the complexity, of children's literacy play. When literacy artefacts focusing on the theme of a library were set up in the long day care centre, children flocked to the area and were very interested in writing. Many children spent long periods of time interacting with the literacy resources, and also revisited the area. Children spent time writing on forms and in diaries, typing letters, writing telephone messages and so on. In the school setting, a book centre was set up on the verandah with soft rugs, cushions, soft toys, books, magazines and newspapers. Children readily participated in book readings with their teacher as well as exploring at length books in their home languages as well as in English (See Figure 7).

#### **ii) Encourages purposeful uses of print**

When literacy props are incorporated into children's play, children use the props in purposeful ways to extend their play. Furthermore, incorporating print props that relate to a context is likely to encourage meaningful experimentation with print, rather than exploration of print objects when there is no context. This was evident in the library area set up in the long day care setting, where children incorporated print into their play in many purposeful ways. For example, a three year old child, realising that there was a queue for use of the typewriter with a list of who was waiting for a turn, spontaneously wrote her name at the bottom of this list. Other children were engaged in filling out forms in order to borrow books.

In the school setting, following the book sharing with the teacher and with peers, three children explored a couple of puppets in rough and tumble play by running around, tapping on the windows and play fighting with the puppets. With adult facilitation - “Why don’t you sit down and work out a story for the puppets?”, the children accessed a book to guide their story, and then later organised the furniture and other children to represent a stage and audience. The child initiated group grew to 8 children as one child retold, in his version of Chinese, the story from the book and directed the puppeteers (See Figure 8). This child, Sam, was monolingual, and wanted to join in so much that he created his own version of a Chinese language which the other children thought was hysterically funny. Whilst he role played a bilingual child, he directed the puppet play with his pseudo Chinese language from the book, the children demonstrated much confidence, amusement and acceptance of their diversity of languages as well as purposeful use of the book to guide the action of the puppet show.

**iii) Provides opportunities for peer interactions focused on print**

As children use print in purposeful ways they engage in many literacy activities with each other. For example, one three year old in the child care setting, wanted to borrow a book and was told by the child acting as the librarian that he needed to fill out a form and have it stamped. He proceeded to make marks on the form in the appropriate places and handed it back (Figure 9). Another child, who had recently arrived at the setting with no English, wrote down telephone messages and handed them out to the other children.

The writing centre in the school classroom, offers children the opportunity to learn from texts (Figure 10) as well as from each other as they use print in meaningful ways. This is readily demonstrated by Carmen and Teresa, two close friends, as they have written personally meaningful print in their books: their own names in Mandarin and in English as well as the name of a special friend; the alphabet ; numbers; words in Mandarin and English (see Figure 11). They frequently interact together in their home language Cantonese, as well as English, and write and read in Mandarin. They are very aware of print and constantly draw each other’s attention to it.

**iv) Gives children a frame of reference for their writing**

Authentic props, as Neuman and Roskos (1992) have noted, provide children with specific frames of reference for their emergent writing and encourage writing for a range of purposes. For example, children engaged in letter writing and form filling (Figure 12).

In the school classroom, an old typewriter was a valued and popular prop amongst the children. Children were highly engaged and demonstrated high levels of co-operation with each other as they sought to identify and locate needed letters to write their name and then peer at the print they typed as in Figure 13.

**v) Can be enhanced by adult involvement**

Children engage in more literacy acts of greater complexity when guided by adults. Effective adult guidance that is sensitive to children's play themes was found to extend children's literacy understandings.

At the painting centre in the school classroom, the teacher's considered facilitation (providing fine paint brushes and suggesting the children write their names) stimulated much literacy play. The children responded by writing their own names, then the names of all children around the table and other names and words they could remember. They competently spelt most names since children's names were familiar and important texts in this classroom. Carmen readily wrote her name in English, then proceeded to write her name and numbers in Mandarin. Teresa wrote clearly in Mandarin and then sought to teach the observer how to read: fish, boat, clock (right to left - See Figure 14).

**The role of the adult**

Often early childhood educators are reluctant to join in children's play, either for fear of taking over or because they view it as "just play" and an opportunity to go off and do other things. However, the role of the adult should be one of observing children's literacy play and then extending their literacy development. This may be by providing relevant information or demonstrations, by giving feedback or by suggesting new directions. It may at times involve the adult joining in the play. This requires sensitivity so that the adult is able to assume a role in the play without taking control away from the children. Other aspects of the adult's role include sharing children's learning with family and staff as well as critically exploring issues in order to promote literacy and biliteracy learning.

### **Teaching strategies continuum**

Many researchers, for example Roskos and Neuman (1993); Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992); Christie and Enz (1992), have argued that there is a continuum of teaching strategies and that different types of teaching behaviours are appropriate for different children in different contexts, depending on how much support they need.

The strategies suggested by Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992) range from non-directive ones such as acknowledging children's play, modelling desired behaviours or facilitating play; to more directive strategies, for instance demonstrating or directing. Other strategies in the middle of the continuum focus on the adult playing a mediating role. This includes providing physical or verbal support, scaffolding or co-constructing. Each of these strategies will be outlined, with particular reference to literacy development.

### **Acknowledgment**

At the least directive end of the continuum, acknowledgment occurs when early childhood educators take notice of and comment on children's behaviour, for example "You're doing some interesting writing there". Early childhood educators in this role remain outside children's play, but offer encouragement for them to experiment with literacy and respect their efforts. While these responses nurture literacy development, Enz (1995) argues that they sustain rather than extend literacy play.

### **Modelling**

Moving along the continuum, the next strategy is modelling. Early childhood educators can model literacy behaviours by using print for a variety of social and cultural purposes throughout the day, in ways that children can observe. This may include reading a recipe to obtain information, reading a book for pleasure, or writing a notice to inform parents. Another way that adults can model the writing process for children is by acting as scribes. Early childhood educators can also model literacy behaviours in play situations and introduce new functions of print. Jones and Reynolds (1992) suggest that if adults model reading and writing then children will incorporate these practices into their play.

### **Facilitating**

Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992) refer to the next strategy as facilitating. Adults can facilitate children's literacy learning by providing experiences that are appropriately challenging for each child. This means providing new experiences, as well as opportunities to revisit familiar ones. Providing appropriate space, time and resources can also encourage literacy play. The adult may become what Christie and Enz (1992) term a **stage manager**, suggesting literacy activities relevant to the children's existing play theme, making props and

costumes, organising the set and making script suggestions. It is important to actively encourage all children to become involved in literacy experiences, and to design literacy environments that complement and extend on what is in the home.

### **Supporting**

Moving towards the middle of the continuum, early childhood educators can support children's learning by being available to give assistance when needed and by offering physical or verbal support. This may mean providing verbal support for a child's retelling of a familiar book to encourage them to keep going, or supporting a child to have a go at writing when he suggests that he doesn't know how to write.

### **Scaffolding**

Another mediating strategy referred to by Bredekamp and Rosegrant (1992) is scaffolding. Scaffolding provides a supportive framework, thus enabling the child to build on her learnings. This framework needs to be flexible, allowing the adult to follow the lead of the child. A significant feature of scaffolding is that it assists the child in bridging from old to new understandings. Play in itself, as Vygotsky (1978) has argued, scaffolds development. The early childhood educator also has a significant role in joining in children's play and assisting children to work up the upper end of their potential.

### **Co-construction**

Adult involvement increases as we move along the continuum to the next strategy of co-construction. Co-construction occurs when the early childhood educator and the child are jointly involved in an activity. For example, co-operative writing, where both child and adult are composing and writing, sharing responsibility and skills.

Similarly, Neuman and Roskos (1993) use the term **player**, and Enz and Chrisite (1993) the term **co-player**, to describe the adult who takes on a role within children's play. The adult follows the lead of the children, fitting in with their theme while perhaps suggesting plot extensions, and adding related literacy props and activities. Enz (1995) suggests that both the stage manager and co-player roles encourage children to engage in a great deal of talking about what they are doing, and provide opportunities for children to act out their literacy knowledge.

### **Demonstrating**

Demonstrating is at the more interventionist end of the continuum, however there are times, particularly in literacy learning, where adults need to provide clear demonstrations for children. This may include demonstrations of writing conventions such as letter formation

and punctuation. These are most relevant if provided for children on an individual or small group basis, in response to children's needs and interests.

### **Directing**

The most interventionist strategy on Bredekamp and Rosegrant's continuum is directing. Explicit instruction may be appropriate when children are introduced to something for the first time, for example the computer.

Enz and Christie (1993) suggest that there are times when adults need to become involved in children's play as **play leaders**. Play leaders deliberately take steps to structure children's play, planning ahead and introducing specific literacy props or introducing plot conflicts, while remaining sensitive to the direction of children's play.

Observations collected by Roskos and Neuman (1993) suggest that leaders use children's play as an opportunity to introduce new literacy materials and routines in a more directive way. They see the leader as a coach, "demonstrating 'how to do', providing explicit directions and stimulating skills" (Roskos and Neuman, 1993:88). Enz (1995) argues that this interaction style has the greatest potential to stimulate children's language and literacy production.

It is important to remember that different strategies are appropriate at different times. As Roskos and Neuman (1993) note, literacy-assisting roles are dynamic and flexible, with early childhood educators moving in and out of a number of roles within one play episode. This suggests that they need to be responsive to children's play intentions as well as their emerging literacy. Skilled early childhood educators need to be able to interpret the literacy in children's play and guide it towards greater complexity.

### **Sharing children's learning with others**

It is important for the early childhood educator to continually observe and document children's literacy development to share this information with families, and with other members of staff, as well as the primary purpose of future program directions. Observation and the keeping of accurate records is essential in order to monitor children language and literacy development. Observations in notebooks, on post-it paper or on class sheets do not have to be extensive but do need to be dated and focused. Observation comments & dates added to photos and samples of drawing, writing and so on, quickly help build up a comprehensive picture of a child's literacy learnings and development over a period of time. Organisation of such information is essential, so that you can quickly access and

analyse development to guide future planning. Individual folders or scrapbooks of selected items could be suitable to your situation.

Once the information is gathered, it is worth cross checking with family and staff members, what particular aspects reflected in the samples mean. This is a rapid way of increasing our understandings about the child as well as the language/literacy which they are developing.

Another means of investigating children's literacy development through play, is to interact with children during their play. From some knowledge of the child as well as close observation of the current play, early childhood educators can identify appropriate times to enter the play, either to initiate the child's participation in literacy play, for example, by offering a notebook and pencil to the child using the phone in the home corner, or to extend and complicate the child's literacy play, for example, by providing appropriate diagrams and texts for children attempting to construct a kite that really works. These types of interaction can directly further assist the child's literacy play as well as enabling the early childhood educator to make much closer observations and so further extend understandings of what and how children are learning through literacy /biliteracy play.

On some occasions, it may be useful, after the play session, to discuss and conference with children about what they have been utilising or investigating in relation to literacy/biliteracy, such as uppercase/lower case letters in their name, genre for a birthday card greeting, or procedural writing for the pancake recipe.

Another aspect of the early childhood educator's role is to analyse collected information regarding the child's literacy/biliteracy development to guide future planning. Sorting information (observation comments and samples, photos etc.) in chronological order is important through the ongoing use of date stamps on samples, individual folders and sticking selected samples in learning diaries or scrapbooks. Once organised, patterns need to be analysed in the child's development in terms of great progress or stagnant plateau. Analysing information, can be confirmed or extended through consulting with resource people, such as family members, and other staff. With increased understandings of the child's literacy/biliteracy development, as well as our own understandings of various languages & literacies, it is then easier to integrate opportunities for future learning into other parts of the daily program. For instance, in relation to Carmen's biliteracy development, consultation with staff who knew about Mandarin, extended understandings that Mandarin is now written left to right, top to bottom as in English, as well as top to bottom, right to left, so that Carmen, in Kindergarten is learning different systems of symbolising languages

as well as different languages and different scripts. The complexity of her learning is quite extensive!

Issues often arise, through reflection upon our observations as well as our consultation with others, especially in the areas of language, literacy development, play and bilingualism. It is important to explore these issues with others to further clarify everyone's understandings and to challenge the myths and the stereotypes. Although these issues sometimes appear daunting and complex, the early childhood educator has an important role in sharing the child's development and in promoting critical thinking about associated issues. For instance, the benefits that you see with literacy play for bilingual children may not be acknowledged by other children, families and staff.

Maybe the advantages of literacy play need to be more clearly articulated in your setting, for instance, reflecting and valuing the background languages and cultures of the bilingual child usually increases the bilingual child's self concept and self esteem, therefore greatly enhancing the child's attitudes to learning.

Other advantages may include: literacy play starts where the child is a competent learner and language user, for their stage of development and in terms of their individual experiences, so the learning context and play experiences are very relevant and purposeful to the child. Literacy play promotes additive bilingualism (languages co-existing together), rather than subtractive bilingualism (majority language (English) replacing the child's home language) for the child. Subtractive bilingualism often damages the child's communication and contact with their family and their extended family. Where the child's home language is not positively reflected and encouraged, the child can start to deny their home language, as early as the age of four (Beecher 1983), probably due to the influences of siblings, peers, the media, advertising or family perceptions. Silvana, by age 4, already had decided which language she preferred "I know only English", even though her language structures and vocabulary were much more refined and developed in her Arabic language.

With such situations, it is possible that children by the age of 6 or 7 years can have well developed English language and literacy but with little development in or positive disposition to their first language. Requests such as "Ask your family what their day at school was like when they were 6 or 7.", as part of a HSIE unit can sometimes prove too difficult as the child has lost their competence with their home language and the parents have had little opportunity to develop English.

Other issues could be associated with understanding of family expectations about their child's learning and language/literacy learning in particular. Some families may want their child to learn English, at the expense of their home language. They may become worried that you group their child with other children who speak Vietnamese, or play Mandarin tapes or encourage children to speak their home language in other ways.

Some families may believe that children are best to use English as soon as possible and as much as possible, whilst other families have left their home land to escape traumatic circumstances and so want to start afresh without that particular language and culture. Whilst current research is clear about advantages of supporting and extending the child's home language, it is important to understand each family's situation.

Another issue is often related to staffing constraints in early childhood settings. Staff are frequently nonspeakers of the languages of the children with which they work. There are many ways of effectively using resources around this limitation, as is explored below.

As early childhood educators, we have much potential in our role to support and extend children's literacy and biliteracy development through play sessions in the daily program, in long day care, preschool as well as school. Play is a most powerful means of learning. It can offer great possibilities for children's literacy /biliteracy development as well as promoting children's positive dispositions and attitudes towards learning and literacy/biliteracy.

### **Resources and strategies**

Much of the research in this area has focused on middle-class settings where English is the main language. The challenge is to consider ways of incorporating diverse experiences and languages. This may mean including items such as store catalogues, television and racing guides, and TAB forms, as well as books, magazines, empty food packages, forms and posters in relevant community languages.

Some practical strategies are outlined below. These are adapted from Arthur (1995). Linguistic diversity, in B. Creaser and E. Dau (ed.) *The anti-bias approach in early childhood*, Sydney: Harpers.

- Find out about the language/s and/or dialects each child speaks at home and the language/s of the literacy materials in the home.
- Ensure that each child and family member's name is pronounced correctly and that appropriate forms of address are used.
- Encourage family members to tell stories, sing songs, and read (if appropriate) to their children at home in their home language.
- Support and value children attending Saturday school to maintain and develop their home language.
- Demonstrate to each family that their language is valued by including it in the program/classroom and by translating important documents, e.g. philosophy/mission statement, transition to school documents, and messages to families.
- Cater for varying levels of literacy by providing opportunities for messages to be conveyed to families verbally in their home language as well as in writing.
- Identify staff members with community languages, cultural and/or religious backgrounds relevant to the children and families who can assist with information and/or language support.
- Investigate additional ways of incorporating bilingual staff in the setting and encourage them to use their language with the children.
- Group children at some times during the day in home language groups so that they can maintain their home language and use it to assist in their learning.
- Invite older children, such as grade 6, to work with younger children in same language groups at particular times, e.g. for Maths.
- Include environmental print such as signs, labels, and calendars in relevant community languages around the room and talk with children about these.

- Encourage children to write their name in their own script, e.g. on art work, contracts, and “sign-on” sheets.
- Ask children to tell a story in their home language about their painting or drawing and ask a bilingual aid or SUPS worker to write it down.
- Take photos or make drawings of children at play, on excursions etc. and ask children to tell a story in their home language to match the photos. These can be scribed if a bilingual worker is present or recorded for later scribing.
- Provide writing centres and incorporate literacy props into areas such as dramatic play and block construction to encourage children to experiment and practise with writing in their home language.
- Talk to or survey families to find out the literacy experiences that children are familiar with at home and in their local community, e.g. shopping, visiting the post office, playing board games etc. , and incorporate these into play experiences.
- Ask families to bring in resources from home, e.g. newspapers in community languages, food packages etc. to add to dramatic play areas.
- Borrow or buy resources from the local community, such as food packages and cooking equipment but check authenticity with families.
- Make your own resources, e.g. take photographs of signs in local community and make into puzzles, use community language magazines to make matching games etc.
- Use community language newspapers and magazines in art and craft experiences such as collage, in dramatic play areas such as the hairdresser or airport, and in the book area.
- Use multicultural resource centres such as Fairfield Children’s Resource Centre and Lady Gowrie Resource Centre at Erskineville to borrow bilingual resources.
- Make literacy prop boxes, e.g. doctor’s surgery, post office, library, that can be added to dramatic play areas, or borrowed by children to take home and play with family members.

- Include play props that relate to familiar stories so that children can act out these stories.
- Make boxes with a familiar book and props such as puppets so that children can act out the story with peers or take home and share with their family.
- Buy, borrow or make books in relevant community languages.
- Ask biliterate family members or resource workers, such as SUPS workers or bilingual aids to translate simple children's books.
- Ask these same people to read the book on to a tape and include book and tape at a listening post.
- Ask bilingual resource workers or family members to come and read or to tell stories, sing songs or teach games to children in relevant community languages.
- Be aware that family members may be able to speak but not read in their home language and may be more comfortable telling stories, or sharing finger plays and rhymes informally with small groups.
- Make or borrow tapes of children's songs and nursery rhymes in relevant community languages.

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**Community Saturday School (Datong Chinese School)  
Its Positive Roles and Constraints**

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**Abstract**

The values of bilingualism have long been acknowledged across the world. Well known linguists and language educators have expounded the advantages of bilingual education especially in regard to the intelligence and literacy developments of the children. However, in such a highly multicultural country as Australia, when parents send their children to a Saturday school of community language, their objectives and the outcomes achieved by the school may be somewhat different from those highlighted by the academics. Besides, despite its values, like the government controlled mainstream education, community language schools are also subject to a number of constraints, not only that of funding but also other social issues. This paper will discuss the positive roles of and a number of the constraints on a typical Saturday school of community language run by a Chinese community in Sydney. Hopefully, some suggestions at the end of this paper may arouse further discussion and promote more support for community schools of similar nature.

### **The long-established values of bilingual education**

Broadly speaking, being able to speak two languages means being able to think in two languages and, to some extent, to think in terms of two cultures. This certainly is a considerable advantage in the development of one's intelligence and social knowledge. As early as in 1962, two linguists, Peal and Lambert, had found out through their research:

“Intellectually [the bilingual's] experience with two language systems seems to have left him with a mental flexibility, a superiority in concept formation, and a more diversified set of mental abilities, in the sense that the patterns of abilities developed by bilinguals were more heterogeneous.”

(Peal and Lambert, 1962, P20)

Other studies also indicate that bilingualism can have a positive effect on intelligence and can give a child certain cognitive advantages over his or her monolingual peers. Some of these cognitive advantages can be summarised as follows:

1. Earlier and greater awareness of the arbitrariness of language
2. Earlier separation of meaning from sound
3. Greater adeptness at evaluating non-empirical contradictory statements
4. Greater adeptness at divergent thinking
5. Greater adeptness at creative thinking
6. Greater social sensitivity
7. Greater facility at concept formation

(George Saunders, 1990)

Apparently all the above stated have solid academic foundation and such acknowledgment has in the last two decades strongly helped promote bilingual education across the world. Given the limited scope of this paper, I wish not to dwell on the issue of bilingual education's values but to proceed to a more practical topic - the roles of community Saturday schools in our present Australian context.

### **The roles of community Saturday schools and community's expectations**

From the point of view of social linguistics, language teaching, even the teaching of an L2 or the maintaining of an L1, should not be based only on the need of intelligence development of the children. In fact, the great social values of maintaining a community language or home language is even more recognised than that of intelligence development in our highly multicultural society. If we make some research and analysis of any community Saturday schools around Sydney metropolitan areas, we will find that the positive roles such schools have played include not only just supporting and enhancing early literacy development of NESB students but also promoting family values, cultural diversity and, eventually, social harmony.

### **Brief introduction of Datong Chinese school**

Datong Chinese School was established in 1992 by Dr Li Zhong Zhang. From the very beginning it had a strong academic foundation. In 1992 and 1993 Dr Zhang edited and published 4 issues of *Chinese Study* and 12 issues of *English-Chinese Bilingual Digest* monthly magazine. This helped promote the popularity of the school. Besides, the English-Chinese Bilingual Society of Sydney University was also a support for the school. Therefore, the Principal of Ashfield Primary School was quite happy to rent two classrooms for the running of this Chinese Saturday school.

Starting at the beginning with only around 20 students, by now the enrolment number has increased to over 70. At first there were only two levels of classes: elementary and intermediate. Now there are 2 beginners classes, and 1 class for each level between intermediate to upper intermediate (altogether 5 classes of the Chinese language (Mandarin)).

All the teachers (including the principal) have very good teaching qualifications obtained from China and are experienced in teaching in the Australian context. Some of them have also completed further study in Australia.

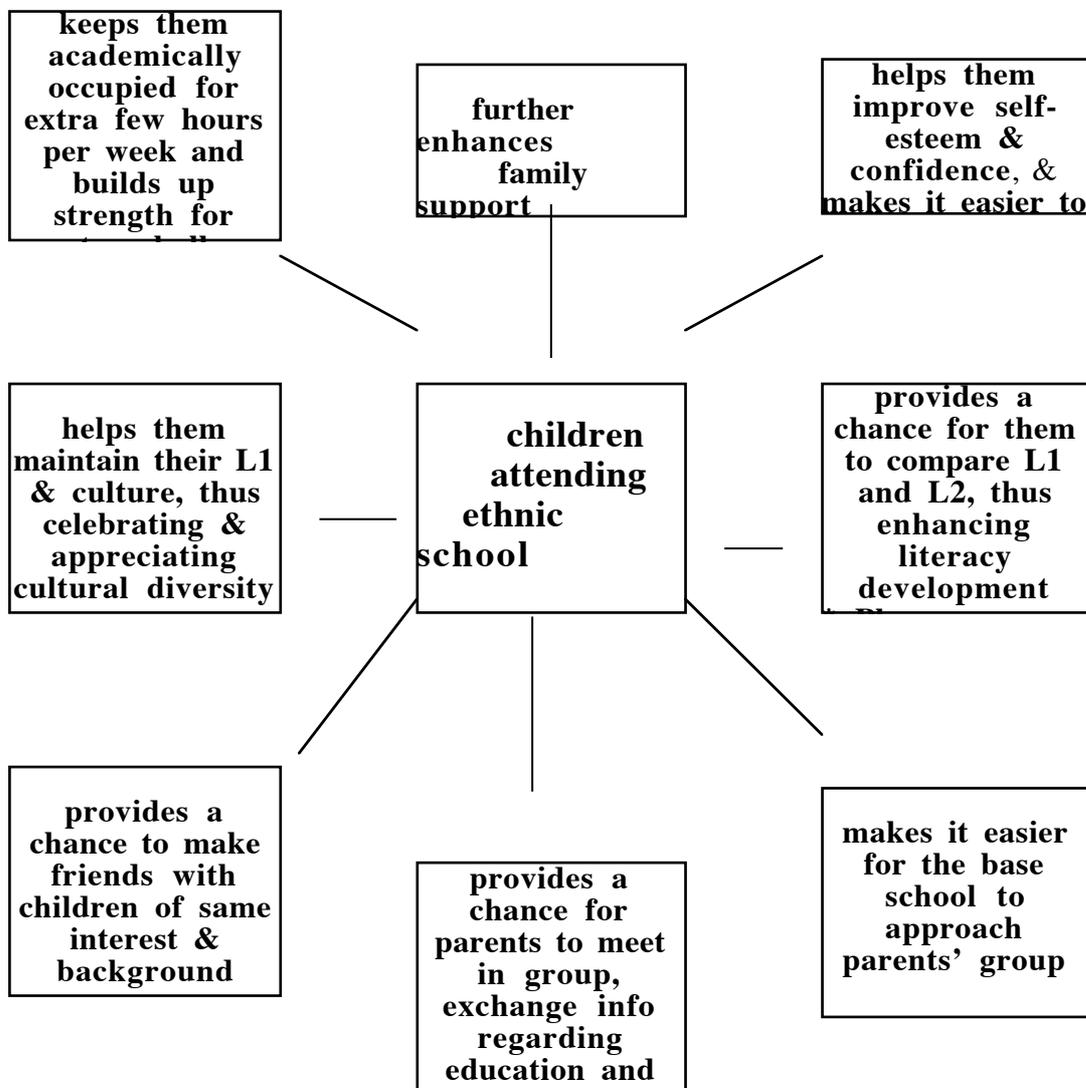
## Objectives and outcomes

The two main objectives of the school are:

1. provide Chinese language teaching service to school-age children of Chinese background and non-Chinese background and
2. promote Chinese culture among the younger generation.

Of course, in the practice of running the school, especially with the addition of supplementary elective courses, such as English/Math Tutoring, Visual Arts, Keyboard Music, and Chinese Martial Arts, the outcomes are quite multiple, which are also acknowledged by both teachers and parents. Please see *figure 1* below for details.

*Figure 1. Multiple outcomes*



In the First Outstanding Australian-Chinese Children All-Rounder Competition 1996, of the 24 prize-winners, 3 were from Datong Chinese School. Quite a number of children from the school have enrolled into Opportunity Classes or Selective Schools. Comments from the base school, Ashfield Public School, have also been positive. Most children who attend the Saturday school are reported to have achieved satisfactory literacy improvement, which in turn plays a very positive role in helping them to mix well with children from various cultural backgrounds and to do well in other learning areas.

### **Parents' expectations**

Parents' expectations vary from survival in a new country to high academic achievement, depending on each family's social and educational backgrounds. However, the majority give priority to the maintenance of L1 and traditional cultural values. This is very understandable for at least two reasons. First, linguistically, being a non-phonetic language, the Chinese language is comparative more difficult both to learn and to maintain. Speaking it at home does not really help much for the development (not even the maintenance) of the reading and writing skills. Second, there is a fear of communication breakdown between generations. We have seen tragic examples of such cases, in which the children have grown up to speak only English, forgetting their L1, while the parents speak only a little English and cannot communicate with their children in the home language. Many far-sighted parents also strongly believe that being bilingual is an advantage for further study and employment in the future. This is certainly very true. No matter what are their expectations, apparently all children have benefited from the multiple outcomes listed in *figure 1* above.

Early this year Datong Chinese School conducted a simple and direct survey, asking parents to complete a list of their expectations in sending their children to the school. Four expectations came out to be the priorities:

1. maintaining L1 and traditional cultural values
2. maintaining communication between generations
3. providing an opportunity for further study
4. securing a better opportunity for future employment.

Also worth noting, some parents claimed it is at least better to let their children have a few more hours of schooling instead of staying home on Saturday. In other words, they don't think children need to have two days totally off from study every week. Quite a number of parents may lack the skills of children behaviour management or helping children to learn at home. It is more beneficial for them to send their children to a Saturday school for a few hours.

### **Constraints**

Looking back at the past 5 years of its development, we find that what Datong Chinese School has achieved have been attained through the principal's and teachers' dedication to the teaching career. Fortunately, with their joint efforts, and with supports from the base school - Ashfield Public School - and the Board of Ethnic Schools of the DTEC, they are able to manage under a number of constraints on them.

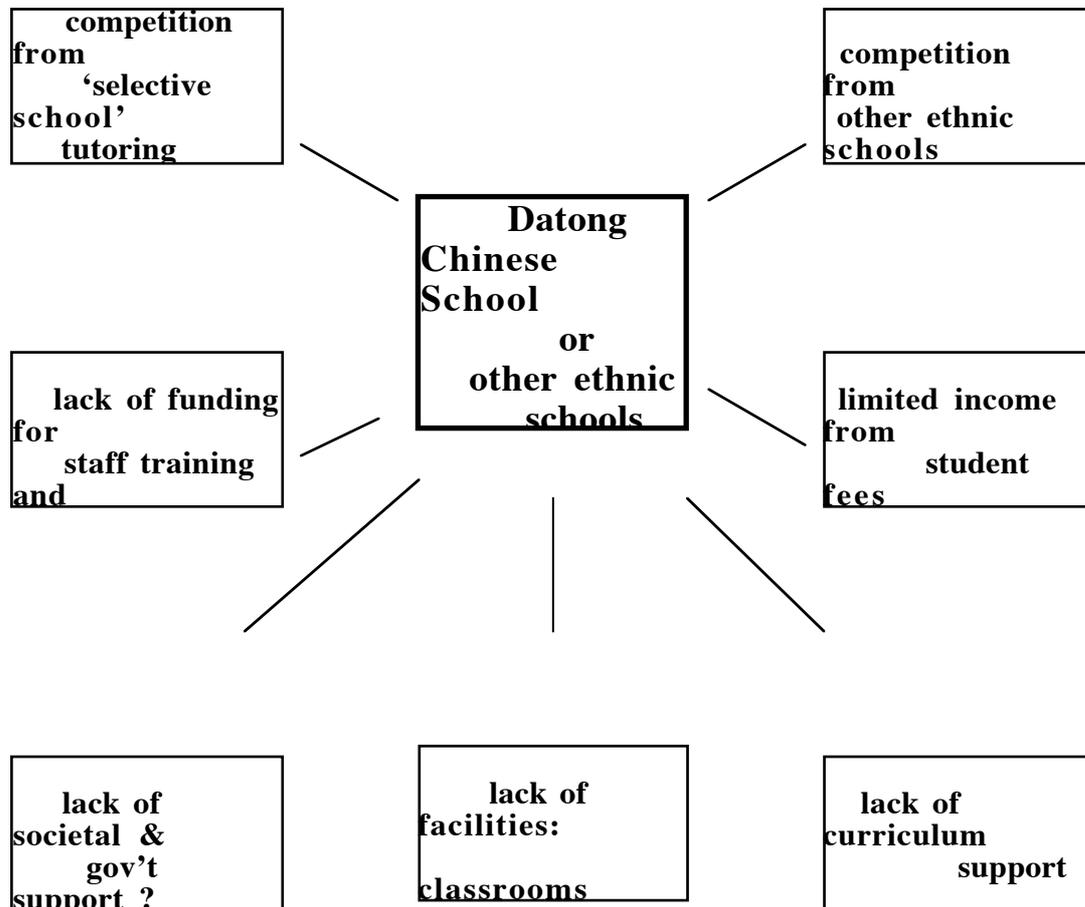
In modern times, economy has become more and more an important factor not only behind the government's major educational policies but also one of the major parts of people's daily life. Similarly, lack of funding is the major constraint on Datong Chinese School.

Despite the Government Grants (\$38 per student in 1996) and the free use of the public school premises, and despite the fact that teachers' payment is already at a minimal level (\$15 per hour), the survival of this school and other schools of similar nature simply depends on the parents' support. In other words, if for some reason they stop sending their children to such schools, then the schools will have to close down. This already happened just early this year to such a school which had used the premises of the same public school - as Datong Chinese School does - for more than 10 years.

With such a constraint, it is hard to maintain the service of good teachers, let alone the development of teaching materials appropriate for the Australian context. The Board of Ethnic Schools has run certificate courses of community languages teaching for quite a few years. These courses are mainly for the ethnic school teachers. However, quite a few such teachers may decide not to return to teach in the ethnic schools which had recommended them to do the courses.

The following *figure 2* may give us an overview of the constraints upon ethnic schools like Datong Chinese School.

*Figure 2. Constraints on ethnic Schools*



## **Recommendations**

In modern times more and more countries have adopted the 5-day-week system. With the rapid development of science and technology, efficiency and productivity have been tremendously increased. In fact, in Australia, even with the 5-day-week system, people are entitled to a flexi day off every 4 weeks. Of course, the increased efficiency and productivity are not the only factors that have brought about the 5-day-week system. Obviously, unemployment is also a major factor. As time goes on, who knows our weekly work hours may even be further reduced. Then there is a question: in our information explosion times, is the reduction of our normal schooling hours into the present system of 5-day weeks and 41 weeks per school year (approximately 200 school days per year) fully justified in the sense of quality education? If further reduction of work hours per week happens, should school hours also be reduced? No matter what happens, a few hours in a Saturday school seems not a bad idea. In fact, quite a large number of families (especially the better off) arrange for their children to have private tutoring lessons or some sorts of schools every weekend either for academic or recreational purposes. Apparently these families may not think their children have got enough from schools. This is one good reason why the government and educators in general need to further recognise the values of Saturday schools and give more financial and administrative supports to them. We wish to put forward the follow three recommendations.

First of all, there is a need for the wider society, especially the circles of educators, to be aware of and acknowledge the positive roles community Saturday schools are playing in support of the mainstream educational work and social harmony. Mainstream teachers' encouragement is very important for families to decide to send their children to a Saturday school.

Secondly, government agencies, such as the Board of Ethnic Schools, should have a better understanding as to how such schools manage to survive under so many constraints and, while giving out grants, have more reasonable expectations on them. For instance, in present condition, it is impossible for any community schools to design a language program either leading to or being equivalent to those of the HSC. To come up to that level, such schools need more funding, personnel and curriculum supports.

Thirdly, government agencies should provide more organisational support to registered community Saturday schools. It is necessary for the relevant government agencies to explore the possibility of subsidising families who send their children to community Saturday schools regular for study.

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## Presentation

**Brief self-introduction:** Before coming to Australia, Xue Feng Zhang had been teaching in a teachers college for quite a number of years. Having completed two postgraduate degrees in Education, Sydney University, he is now doing a research degree in Social And Policy Study, Sydney. He coordinated for Datong Chinese School in 1994-1995 and is now an advisor for it.

### Attachment One

#### OHT 1.

Samples of the writing of complicated Chinese characters

澳洲	--	Australia
幸福	--	happy
兴趣	--	interest
数学	--	math

#### Implications:

- 〈 The samples above show that the learning of writing Chinese characters requires a greater effort than that of English words made up of a number of letters. Repeated practice and good memory are needed for learning to write most of the multi-stroke characters. While this could be discouraging, it may also be very positive.
- 〈 The learning of writing Chinese may be helpful to the learning of sight words (such as *exit*, *office*, *poisonous*) . This is a valuable plus especially at the early literacy level. Chinese children who are also learning Chinese in Australia usually do not have much problem with the spelling of new words of English, although some of spelling seems to them not strictly phonetic, such as *school* instead of *skool*, *example* instead of *igzample*.

## OHT 2

### Similarity between basic Chinese sentence structure and the English deep sentence structure

#### Example:

**It makes the chemicals hot so they change.**

**Heating produces a chemical change.**

加热 产生 化学 变化。

#### Implications:

- 〈 The above figure shows that the basic Chinese sentence structure is quite similar to the more formal English sentence structure which is used commonly in the instructive context. This, perhaps, may explain to some extent why most new migrant secondary students of Chinese background have demonstrated a quick improvement in reading comprehension in English although their oral English is still far from the standard of the mainstream.
- 〈 It follows that maintenance and development of Chinese language with Chinese background students will help them to learn English better.

**Acknowledgment:** The above example was first used by Dr John Gibbons of Sydney University when he presented his paper in the Bilingualism Conference, UWS, August 1996. The Chinese sentence is added to the figure to further illustrate the similarity between the two languages.

**Attachment Two** (To be handed out at the presentation)

**The values of learning a foreign language and bilingual education**

**Quoted from:** David Crystal, *The Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language*, 1987

- \* Bilingual education is a necessity if a country is to exercise a role in world affairs.
- \* Bilingual education has an essential role in preparing children to cope with the new perspectives brought about by a rapidly changing society, not only abroad but within their own community.
- \* Bilingual education promotes understanding, tolerance, and respect for the cultural identity, rights and values of others, whether abroad or at home in minority groups.
- \* Success in the international world of commerce and industry is becoming more and more dependent on bilingual education.
- \* Bilingual education is becoming increasingly important as unemployment and reduced working hours add to people's leisure time.
- \* Bilingual education provides a valuable perspective for those whose interest is primarily in the mother tongue. Ultimately, the only way to appreciate the unique identity and power of a language is by contrasting it with others.
- \* Bilingual education is a primary educational right, which should be made available to all people, whether they avail themselves of it or not.

**The Multicultural Child in the Monocultural Man  
Elias Canetti's Infant Multilingualism and Child Bilingualism.  
Assimilation and Symbolic Ethnicity**

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**Abstract**

ELIAS CANETTI (1905-1994, Nobel Prize for Literature 1981), multilingual Bulgarian Jewish infant and bilingual child immigrant, has written about the curious evolution of his cultural identity through his multilingual upbringing in what constitutes a fascinating example of *One Childhood, Many Languages* (Makin, Campbell and Jones-Diaz 1995). I interpret Canetti's autobiographical prose as a case study in childhood bilingualism and as an insight into the problematic relationship between multiculturalism, assimilation and symbolic ethnicity.



## 1. Multicultural Problematic

I myself, just like anyone else, can examine the works of the Greats, which are present as texts. (Canetti, 1994:12. N.B. All translations from German originals are my own.)

The narrator of Elias Canetti's autobiographies (1972, 1982, 1985) reduces the author's life experience to the elitist biculturalism of an assimilated Habsburg Jew (cf. McCagg, 1992:225). This biculturalism blends the heritage of the Sephardic Jewish diaspora and Canetti's unique assimilation into the German language (cf. Cohen, 1988:34). This assimilation has been compared to a 'magical rebirth' (by Bollacher, 1985:329, 333). Yet the conservation of the Sephardic heritage in Canetti's writing means (for Bollacher, 1985:329) that he by no means typifies the assimilationism of Central European Jews (cf. "the anguish of assimilation" - Stern, 1987b:11, 459-549; cf. Stern, 1987a:97-191). The writing of the autobiographies has been interpreted as an act of cultural conservation characterised by ambivalence - an 'interplay of identification and distancing' (Bollacher, 1985:330). Because of such ambivalence, manifestations of the contradiction between initial multiculturalism and later acculturation in Canetti's autobiographies demand to be objectively assessed. We need to be suspicious of any attitudinal bias in Elias Canetti's autobiographical texts when Canetti's authorial self-concept - implicit in the title of his volume of articles and speeches, 'The Conscience of Words' (1976b) - is that of an ethical guardian of language. His literary endeavours have been idealised (by Bollacher, 1985:330) with respect to their metaphysical and ethical implications in relation to mythic representations, like the Biblical Tower of Babel, of multilingualism as a divine curse (cf. Steiner, 1975a). Attitudinal bias is manifest in sociocultural stereotyping based on naive notions of ethnic and linguistic purism.

The multicultural "problematic" (cf. Said, 1985:16, 259) arises out of Canetti's Bulgarian origins in the Danubian port of Ruse, 'that supposedly 'barbaric' Balkan period' (1982:82), pervading his entire literary oeuvre. Analysis of the multicultural problematic also strives for *implicit* comparative insights in relation to the multicultural societies of urban Australia and the literary expression of symbolic ethnicity by minorities and their forgeries like the Demidenko book by Helen Darville.

## 2. Multilingualism in Infancy

[F]or people of the most diverse origins lived there, one could hear seven or eight languages in one day. Apart from the Bulgarians, who often came from the countryside, there were also many Turks who inhabited their own quarter, and bordering on this lay the quarter of the Sephardics, our quarter ... There were Greeks, Albanians, Armenians, Gypsies. From the opposite bank of the Danube came Romanians, my wetnurse, who I do not however remember, was a Romanian. There was also the odd

Russian. I had no overview of this variety as a child, but I was in a position to feel its effects ceaselessly. Many a character has only remained in my memory because they belonged to a special tribal group and distinguished themselves from others by their folk dress. (1979:8)

There was often talk of languages, seven or eight different ones were spoken in our town alone, everyone understood something of them, only the small girls who came from the villages, could speak Bulgarian alone and were thus thought stupid. Each person would count up the languages which he knew, it was important to master many of them. (1979:37)

**2.1** The first language of Canetti's infancy is the variety of **Ladino** spoken in the Lower Danube region. His parents, Mathilde (née Arditti) and Jacques Canetti, had an ambivalent attitude to this vernacular. Canetti's mother, for instance, never read anything written in Ladino (1988:276). Canetti (1979:9) identifies strongly with his Sephardic heritage; the phrase which I have placed in italics is an uncritical expression of the cultural bias of this ethnic minority:

The first children's songs which I heard, were Spanish, I heard old Spanish ballads or 'Romances', but what was most powerful and irresistible for a child was a Spanish mentality. *With naive arrogance* one looked down on other Jews, one word which was always loaded with contempt was 'Todesco', it meant a German Jew or Ashkenazi. It would have been unthinkable to marry a 'Todesca'. I cannot recall one single case of such a mixed marriage.

The arrogance of the Sephardic community may have been an overcompensation for antisemitic experiences, but Sephardic Jews also felt superior to other Eastern European Jewish minorities because their congregations were more cohesive and pro-active (Bollacher, 1985:328).

In the first volume of his autobiography, Canetti's references to Ladino words concern the domain of the workplace. His description of the term for the family business is emotional (1979:11). The language is an integral part of the evocation of Canetti's infancy (Bollacher, 1985:327). Later as a child, Canetti (1979:57) is reminded of verses from Spanish ballads sung to him as an infant. Canetti (1979:51) recalls learning some ballads by heart at an uncle's instigation. His uncles would also translate Hebrew songs into Ladino so that the infant could understand them (1979:31). As a much older child, Canetti (1979:276) was adamant that Ladino be recognised by his Zurich class as his mother tongue. This is a little surprising for three reasons. He had just spent a couple of years assimilating into the English

language. He felt superior to the local 'half-educated' Sephardic Jews (1979:72). He also felt little cultural affinity with Ladino during adolescence (1979:179). Yet phonotactic transference provided an unbreakable link with his linguistic origins (1979:241).

His first wife, Veza Taubner Calderón, was from a Ladino speaking family on her mother's side (1982:71). His experience of Ladino's use as the communication medium of the Bulgarian Zionist movement taught him greater respect for the language (1982:88/89). Yet Canetti only really experienced a renaissance of his Ladino heritage under the enigmatic tutelage of the Semitic philologist, Dr Abraham Sonne, in the Viennese coffeehouse which both frequented.

I myself often speak about him, always when I want to say the most wonderful thing about people, I talk of Sonne. I made no record of the conversations which I had with him during four dire years of my life whose sole content consisted of him. But the conversations penetrated me in such a way that I consist of them, they are the most important ring of the tree which I sometimes regard myself as being, a four-year ring. (Canetti, 1994:173)

Proceeding from their conversations about the Spanish Civil War, Sonne gave Canetti an insight into Spanish poetry. This literary encounter with Iberian culture counteracted Canetti's reservations about the provincial narrowness, the snobbery and the Ottoman aspects of Bulgarian Sephardic culture. This may explain why Canetti (1979:15) felt it appropriate to maintain his Ladino vernacular when he was in exile: 'That was the actual vernacular and I have never forgotten it.' A summation of Canetti's affinities with his Sephardic linguistic and cultural heritage appears in his second journal publication (1987:44/45):

I really should collect all the Ladino words which were the earliest and as such have remained meaningful to me. In Ruse: the word 'Stambol'. The words for fruits and vegetables: calabazas, merengenas, manzanas; criatura (child), mancebo, hermano, ladrón, fuego (fire), mañana, entonces; culebra (snake), gallina (chicken, later sympathy for the Galls because of this word); zinganas (gypsies). Names: Aftalion, Rosanis, later Adjubel. A derogatory term of Grandfather's was 'corredor' (for someone who merely ran around and sat tight nowhere). He said it with such contempt that the word, the movement which it encapsulated, and people who always lived on the move, fascinated me from early on. I would gladly have been a 'corredor', but did not dare to be one.

The despised 'itinerant' whom Canetti would have liked to become is an ethnoculturally salient figure in the tradition of Ahasver, the Wandering Jew, an archetype of the Jewish diaspora (cf. Canetti, 1967:61). It is peculiar that Canetti, an

ongoing exile, did not see himself as fulfilling the criteria of itinerancy. Perhaps his sedentary work as a writer prevented him from doing so.

Those lexical reminiscences are much more realistic than the telescoped language history which Canetti provides when giving a description of his identity as an author during an interview with Horst Bienek published in 1961 (Cohen, 1988:41): 'My ancestors had to leave Spain in 1492 and took their Ladino to Turkey where they settled. This Ladino they kept pure in their homeland over 400 years, and it was my mother tongue too.' These notions of linguistic purity are foundless. The derogatory term for Ashkenazim mentioned in the third indented quote in this section is an Italian loanword. Canetti (1979:273) also mentions lexical transference in Ladino from other languages. Such sociolinguistic fictions as purity substantiate ethnic stereotypes.

- 2.2** Canetti's recollection of contact with the **Hebrew** language during his infancy is limited to Hebrew prayers which he spoke early on but did not understand (1987:44). There is a description of the Passover when, as the youngest family member, he had to enquire about the significance of the unleaven bread and bitter herbs consumed during the celebration. This "Ma-nischanah" had been memorised by Canetti (1979:30/31), but he had to pretend to read the question.

Canetti (1979:40/41) is conscious of the written word functioning as a core value within his Jewish culture. Because of the diglossia practised within the Sephardic community, where Ladino was the low variety used for most communication and Hebrew was only used for ritual purposes, Canetti did not learn the language as an infant. In England, in later childhood, Canetti (1979:101) was begrudgingly enrolled by his mother in a small private Talmudic academy in order to learn how to say the Kaddisch funeral prayer for his father who had died suddenly. In most respects, though, the usage of Hebrew was limited because Canetti was raised in a markedly secularised way by his mother (cf. "religiöse Emanzipation" - Bollacher, 1985:329).

- 2.3 Bulgarian** is the second language of Canetti's infancy. Monolingual Bulgarian farmgirls who worked as servants in the Canetti household, were his earliest playmates (1979:14). In the first episode of his memoirs (1979:7), the infant Canetti is threatened with having his tongue cut out by the lover of his nanny, so that he would not betray their secret meetings. That eponymous incident must have taken place in Bulgarian, since this is the only language understood by the nanny. Canetti can recall the details of the Balkan folktales which he heard in Bulgarian as a child (1979:15) and the Bulgarian songs which he heard on a voyage on the Danube as a young man

(1979:83). Canetti's experience of the Bulgarian language was receptive. His vivid recollections of the Balkan folktales are contained in the language of his adolescence and adulthood, German. Canetti (1979:15) emphasises: 'this mysterious transference may well be the most remarkable thing which I have to report from my youth'. It is characteristic of Canetti's preoccupation with linguistic issues that he is intrigued by this unintentional process of translation by which cultural material from a stage of receptive bilingualism is preserved in a language of much later dominance.

- 2.4** Although Bulgarian-born, Canetti's heritage is partly **Turkish**. His family, like many other Bulgarian Sephardics, continued to travel on Turkish passports (1979:124) - much to his mother's resentment, for she had used an Italian passport as a single woman because her family originated from Livorno. Canetti recognised evidence of language contact between Turkish and Ladino. He refers to types of lexical transference from Turkish to Ladino twice (1979:9 & 273).

His maternal grandparents have Turkish characteristics which Canetti found alien - even negative. 'Low Turkish sofas ran the whole length of the walls of the large livingroom.' (1979:15) 'Of all the relatives she had remained the most Turkish. For the person accompanying me who had brought me there, she had some whinging sentences ..., but certainly she was very lazy in the Oriental way. [...] Grandfather sang never ending Turkish songs which involved holding many a high note for an especially long time.' (1979:23/24)

The racist stereotyping of Canetti's description of his maternal grandmother as 'Oriental' shows his acceptance of Western European prejudices. These prejudices were passed on to Canetti (1979:43) by his parents, particularly his mother (cf. 'Ruse which was too small and Oriental for them' (1979:56)). That Canetti too should express such ethnic prejudice is peculiar insofar as he also records how he himself was the object of such ethnic stereotypes during his English primary schooling (1979:56): 'that Oriental children matured much earlier than English ones'. The racist epithet, *Oriental*, recurs to express Canetti's own alienation from and condemnation of his native culture after he has taken up residence in Zurich (1979:179): 'On many an evening Mother's acquaintances would gather at our place, Bulgarian and Turkish Sephardics ... I did not like them very much, they were too Oriental and only spoke about uninteresting things.' The derogation of so-called Oriental culture seems to be quite unthinking, for Canetti (1979:209) can nostalgically recall thirty pages later: 'The origin of the name Yalta was unknown to me, yet it sounded familiar to me, because it had something Turkish about it.' And 'familiar', 'as if it came from a kind of

homeland', is Canetti's perception (1979:273) of 'Memorabilia from the Orient', an Oriental tale in Johann Peter Hebel's 'The Rhenish Friend of the Family's Treasure Casket' (1811). Familiarity may well breed contempt.

In a later comment on Canetti's attitude towards his ethnicity (1988:276), he makes an ambivalent statement which expresses a range of feelings, including shyness, inhibitions and awe, about his heritage. These feelings are drowned out by the arrogant sense of social superiority which Canetti (1988:276) hypocritically criticises in his family's attitudes to their Sephardic heritage:

I had earlier shied away from concerning myself more precisely with the Spanish Middle Ages. The proverbs of my childhood were unforgotten, but they had served no further purpose, they had remained stuck in me, frozen in the arrogance of my family who claimed a right to all things Spanish, as far as it served their caste pride. I knew people among the Sephardics who eeked out an existence in Oriental idleness, mentally less developed than anyone who attended school in Vienna, for whose life's joy it more than sufficed to imagine themselves superior to other Jews.

Canetti's "disguised ethnocentric race prejudice" (Said, 1985:149) is no less detectable here. Supposed Oriental inactivity is the *bête noire* of Eurocentric racist perceptions (cf. Said, 1994:202: "His master vice is idleness, which is his felicity."). Canetti here irrigates his prejudiced description from what Said (1994:181) calls the "reservoir of popular wisdom" (e.g. "the Malaysian native was essentially lazy, just as the north European was essentially energetic and resourceful" - Said, 1994:182; see Syed Alatas (1977) *The Myth of the Lazy Native*, London: Frank Cass.) In this respect, Canetti's thinking is not only ethnoculturally determined. It is also the product of *Zeitgeist*. For, as Said (1985:223) observes, "at no time did the convergence between latent Orientalist doctrine and manifest Orientalist experience occur more dramatically than when, as a result of World War I, Asiatic Turkey was being surveyed by Britain and France for its dismemberment. There laid out on the operating table, was the Sick Man of Europe..." I comment further on Canetti's Orientalism in the fifth section with that title below. As a closing remark at this juncture, I would just like to show how effectively the prejudice of Canetti's Orientalism is disguised for, as it were, native readers, like Bollacher (1985:355) who favourably interprets Canetti's reference to the Hebel story: 'The moral of Hebel's *Memorabilia from the Orient* so admired by the Zurich schoolboy - "one should carry for one's enemy neither a stone in one's pocket nor revenge in one's heart" - finds fulfillment in Canetti's ethos of humane responsibility which, for the writer in the middle of genocidal war, makes the sentence possible: ... I want no revenge, I want different human beings.'

**2.5** Another story from Hebel's anthology depicts irresolvable linguistic alienation: 'My life began with the experience of "Cannotunderstand" when my parents spoke to one another in a language unknown to me.' (1979:274) For another language was also used in the home of Canetti's parents. They conversed with one another in **German**. This was the language of their happy schooldays in Vienna and of their subsequent courtship. Their conversations in German were livelier than otherwise. Canetti regarded this use of another language by his parents as an act of exclusion. They refused to assist Canetti in his attempts to work out what their utterances meant. As with the Passover question in Hebrew, Canetti could do nothing except memorise what snippets of his parents' conversations he could retain, perfecting their repetition in secret as if they were magic spells. Canetti (1979:32/33) was eventually able to imitate his father so convincingly that he fooled his mother. In later childhood, after having moved to England with his immediate family, Canetti was no less spellbound by the German chamber song, 'Grave on the Heath', which Canetti (1979:52) remembered because, over and above its association with his father's sudden death, it was the first German text which his parents translated for him.

Canetti resented more his mother's resort to this language of privacy and intimacy than his father's use of German. One explanation for his bias may involve the fact that his father's reading the Viennese daily 'New Free Press' first interested the infant in the written word (1979:36). The resentment of his mother's using a foreign language in the home only abated after his father's sudden death when his mother taught him German. This gave her a new conversation partner in the second home language and enabled him to continue his schooling without interruption when they settled in Vienna. We shall return to Canetti's assimilation into what became his chosen language in the third section below, after dealing with his earlier experience of immigrant bilingualism.

## **2.6 The Multicultural Infant**

The descriptions of the experiences of the infant Canetti give us insights into the interrelationships between five of the seven or eight languages co-existing in Ruse. Other, for Canetti slightly less important, community languages include Romanian (spoken, for instance, by Canetti's wetnurse - 1979:8) and Slavic languages. Canetti was aware of being surrounded by five languages.

Yet he acquired only two of these. This proportion may seem especially low given his successive language assimilations as an immigrant in later life. Perhaps it would be

fairer to discount the Turkish language because of his nuclear family's ethnic bias against the culture. In other respects, though, the limitations on Canetti's infant multilingualism are far from being out of the ordinary. He grew up in Bulgaria as a fairly typical bilingual infant. Canetti achieved productive mastery of his home language, Ladino. He also gained a receptive command of Bulgarian. This language can be assessed in three ways. It is the national language spoken in the wider community. Because Canetti was an only child and had a nanny, it may be equally appropriate to regard Bulgarian as a subordinate home language - or even as a peer group language, since he also had contact with this language from his farmgirl playmates. The classic diglossic relationship which pertained between Ladino and Hebrew impeded Canetti's learning of the latter language. He was too young to participate in the religious institutions through which he would have had opportunities to learn Hebrew properly. Because his parents prevented his development in the direction of their Ladino/German bilingualism, the snippets of German which Canetti so skilfully imitated really only amount to idiosyncratic verbal play.

The main impact of the contact with the German, Hebrew and Turkish languages concerns their role in the cultural life of the ethnically diverse Danubian port of Ruse where Canetti spent his infancy. The confrontation of different cultures is substantiated by the human geography of Canetti's physical surroundings. On the opposite bank of the Danube lay the Romanian port of Giurgin (1979:14). The Sephardic Jews and the Turks inhabited separate, but contiguous districts of Ruse. Both the river and the suburban boundaries evince what Said (1994:154) calls "cultural cleavage". Canetti describes the multifarious influences on the cultural life of Balkan states. They are obvious in the variety of folk dress (1979:8). The multicultural setting is even inscribed in the five alphabets which the infant Canetti would have seen: the Aramaic and Hebrew scripts as well as the Gothic script of his father's Viennese newspaper in the home; the Cyrillic alphabet elsewhere in the Bulgarian port; the Latin alphabet of Romanian. Given this graphemic diversity, Canetti might well have resisted the negative and elitist attitudes of some Sephardic Jews towards multicultural Ruse.

He might have avoided referring to the exclusive ethnocentric German parameter of *Kultur* (1979:114): 'Ruse was mentioned with contempt by the Sephardics whom I knew in England and Vienna, as a provincial backwater lacking culture where people did not know at all how things were done in 'Europe'!' Yet Canetti preferred to adhere to, or even overplay, the value system of his Sephardic heritage in derogation, or even denial, of his native culture as uncivilised:

Rustchuk, to which he never refers as his 'Heimat', but rather as his 'Geburtsstadt'; and he remarks of his feelings for that town in his youth: 'Ich hatte Rustchuk mit einigem Hochmut hinter mir gelassen'. [...] He even visited Sofia in 1924, to see relatives who moved there over the years, but he evidently made no effort to re-visit his birthplace (although his mother took him there when he was ten, so that she might visit the scenes of *her* birthplace and childhood). (Cohen, 1988:33)

The inconsistencies between the multicultural facts and Canetti's negative perception of them produce not only discrepant readings of the experiential narrative, but also intertextual contradictions. How can we reconcile Canetti's longing for the letters of the alphabet stirred up by watching his father read a Viennese daily (1979:36) and a much later petulant reminiscence (1979:272) which denies the impact of the written words, these inscriptions of multicultural circumstances? 'I was accustomed to the presence of different languages from infancy on but not to that of different alphabets. It was irritating that there were Gothic letters in addition to Roman letters, but in both cases they were still letters from the same sphere and with the same use, also rather similar to one another.' A high standard of literacy and the effects of other elitist forms of acculturation lead Canetti to perceive parallels and similarities where difference is staring him in the face.

It is possible to interpret the multiculturalism much less stereotypically. Comparing historical and geographical co-ordinates it is possible to distinguish three main cultural forces during Canetti's infancy. These cultural impulses are themselves the outcomes of other cultures. Above the pervasive substratum of Sephardic Jewish tradition, there is a Danubian cultural superstratum. The Sephardic substratum itself is multicultural. It consists of the original Iberian component and subsequent Levantine elements. The origins of these later elements are obscured because the Balkans was only incorporated into the Ottoman Empire from the fifteenth to the eighteenth centuries.

Although Canetti describes his Turkish ancestry in negative terms, it is the Ottoman-Levantine culture which represents the point of overlap between the ethnohistorical substratum of Sephardic ethnicity and the contemporary sociocultural superstratum of the Danubian locality. Canetti's upbringing is thus characterised by cultural dislocation from the outset. For, while the prevalent culture of the wider community is Slavic, Canetti's parents perceive cultural life in relation to an East-West cultural axis which is distinct from the Sephardic-Mediterranean axis and also non-Slavic. As a domain of the Habsburg Empire (cf. Canetti, 1979:9), Bulgaria was in some ways an outpost of

Central Europe. Especially as a Danubian port, Cohen (1988:35) observes, Ruse "fell most decidedly under the cultural hegemony of Vienna at that time, not least for middle-class Jews, concerned to put distance between themselves and their Balkan neighbours." Canetti (1982:268) was adamant about such a monocultural orientation: 'In the house of my infancy all windows looked to Vienna.' Sadly for a multiculturally minded reader, this telescoped vision of Canetti's infancy relies to an irresponsible extent on an ethnically biased description of linguistic and cultural input. Yet it must be seen as a saving grace of Canetti's depiction that it records the profound impact of bilingualism at the earliest age.

Canetti's record of his infant multilingualism is so detailed that its evolution can be categorised according to four paradigmatic features which cover the full gamut of early childhood language experience. The contrasts which emerge in the following table reveal how each language had its particular functions for and special relationship to the developing infant.

**TABLE 1: EVOLUTION OF ELIAS CANETTI'S ETHNIC IDENTITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD**

*Paradigmatic Features (1-4)*

**LANGUAGE** (1) Developmental (2) Sociolinguistic (3) Attitudinal (4) Associative

LANGUAGE	(1) Developmental	(2) Sociolinguistic	(3) Attitudinal	(4) Associative
LADINO	Socialisation	Heritage	Positive Emotional	Identity
HEBREW	Sanctioned Imitation	Diglossia	Positive Social	Tradition
BULGARIAN	Reception	National	Positive Social	Fantasy
TURKISH	Sensitisation	Ancestral	Negative Social	Race
GERMAN	Illicit Imitation	Parental/Regional	Positive Social/ Trauma/ Negative Emotional	Intellect

**TABLE 2: EVOLUTION OF ELIAS CANETTI'S ETHNIC IDENTITY IN IMMIGRANT BILINGUALISM**

*Paradigmatic Features (1-4)*

**LANGUAGE** (1) Developmental (2) Sociolinguistic (3) Attitudinal (4) Associative Dialect

LANGUAGE	(1) Developmental	(2) Sociolinguistic	(3) Attitudinal	(4) Associative Dialect
LADINO	Socialisation	Heritage	Ambivalent	Identity
ENGLISH	Socialisation	National	Positive Social/ Literacy/ Negative Emotional	Father
FRENCH	Instruction/ Nonfluency/ Socialisation	Foreign/National	Anxious	Mother
GERMAN	Instruction/ Literature/ Socialisation	National	Positive Social/ Ambivalent Emotional	Mother
Swiss-German	Socialisation	Regional	Ambivalent Social	Individuality
Viennese	Socialisation	Local	Positive	Artistry

### 3. Immigrant Bilingualism in Childhood

Each new place, as strange as it seemed at first, won me over through the special thing which it left behind, and through its unforeseeable branchings. (1982:7)

- 3.1 The labyrinthine experience of migrancy began when Canetti was six years old and his parents took the family to live in Manchester where his father worked in a branch of the family textile business. His family socialised with Sephardic relatives and acquaintances residing there. Yet the home language situation changed: the father spoke to the children in **English**; consequently, the mother withdrew from them: 'She said, she was annoyed about Manchester because it was not Vienna; that she had remained silent when her father brought me English books to read and spoke to me about it in English. That was the reason why she withdrew from me completely at that time.' (1988:214) Canetti (1979:47) felt the loss of his complex native linguistic environment so acutely that he would secretly conduct conversations with the wallpaper. That is, until Canetti's English governess caught him at this infantile antidote for linguistic anomia and he was stopped from doing it.

Canetti's father spoke to the child in painstakingly correct, but stiltedly rehearsed English (1979:50). The father even insisted that Canetti tell him about what he was reading in English (1979:47). Canetti's two-year assimilation into English was, with its emphasis on literacy skills in the language, perhaps more thorough than many bilingual children's would be. Yet the linguistic demands were not overly problematic. His schooling in the language helped him to improve his fluency. Canetti (1979:53) remains grateful for his teacher's encouragement: 'She encouraged me whenever I recounted anything fluently in English, for in this language I was at a disadvantage in comparison to the other children at the beginning.' Canetti records a series of English words which made a lasting impression on him. The first two were picked up during conversations on walks with his father. Both are quintessentially English, *island* and *meadow* (1979:51). The second pair concerned the sinking of the Titanic, namely *iceberg* and *captain*. This disaster led Canetti to espouse an English mentality which he maintained throughout the First World War even after he moved to Austria with his mother and brothers (1979:59). In Vienna, Canetti maintained his English in a perhaps ritualistic way by rereading the many classics which his father had given him in Manchester (1979:97).

It also took some time before Canetti (1979:106) and his younger brothers would feel comfortable conversing in a language other than English, even translating names on the

basis of perceived morphemic and iconic correspondence or perhaps as an interlingual spoonerism:

The bandmaster, a thin person, was called Konrath, we boys called him 'carrot' in English among ourselves. With my little brothers I still had no qualms about speaking English, they were three and five, their German was rather uncertain, Miss Bray had just a few months ago travelled back to England. It would have been an unnatural imposition to speak anything other than English among ourselves and people knew us in the spa gardens as the little English boys ... and when Mother said to me that we should not shout so loudly in English while playing, I did not take much notice of it and the little ones even less of course.

Canetti's geopolitical allegiances first change in the aftermath of World War I (1979:198): 'when I saw that the Germans were not being treated as Wilson had proclaimed, I went over to their side'.

- 3.2** When residing in England as a child, Canetti's mother insisted that he also learn **French**. This was to counterbalance his assimilation into English which Canetti's father fostered so extensively (1979:63), but which his mother greatly resented (1988:214). To judge from Canetti's sonorous descriptions of his mother's conversations with a Russian woman named Olga, she was a highly fluent speaker of French (1979:121), yet Canetti received lessons from a French woman in the parlour. This indicates how seriously Canetti's parents took the learning of foreign languages. Canetti (1979:63) regarded himself as humiliated by the French language. He spoke French in a typically English way (1979:65). That is, until he shifted to Lausanne with his mother and brothers. After the frustrating course of private French lessons, this submersion in the language was effective (1979:91): 'in Lausanne where I heard French spoken around me everywhere which I picked up on the side and without dramatic implications'. This natural assimilation is contrasted with his fraught acquisition of the German language which was occurring at the same time. Yet Canetti (1976a:124) continued to be anxious about the French language's malevolence, 'the private and menacing shimmer of French'.
- 3.3** I was eight years old, I was to go to school in Vienna and my age would have placed me in the third primary school year. It was an intolerable thought for Mother that one might not put me in this class because of my ignorance of the language and she was determined to teach me German in the shortest time. (1979:82)

Canetti's culturally elitist mother presumably wished to enhance his instruction in the **German** language by taking him away from England and starting his crash course in the neutral territory of francophone Switzerland. Yet Canetti's German lessons from his mother suffered under her urgency and obstinacy, but even more under her old-fashioned teaching methods. This was perhaps the ultimate perversion of the one-person one-language approach to childhood bilingualism. Bollacher (1985:329) describes it as a "Radikalkur" while Cohen (1988:34) accurately terms it "forced implantation". Canetti's mother read aloud from an English-German grammar primer; Canetti (1979:83) was forced to repeat model sentences in German until he could pronounce them perfectly, whereas their English rendition had to be recalled after one go. Canetti was not allowed to go over the grammar primer outside lesson times. Nor would his mother repeat the model sentences at other times during the day. Two minor catastrophes occurred because of this ill-advised and disjointed methodology.

The initial development of Canetti's spoken German was more than a little stunted (1979:83): 'I stammered and was silent'. This may be not only evidence of the linguistic overload, which is evoked elsewhere (1979:84): 'I always had my German sentences in my head and their meaning in English'. The stuttering also indicates emotional stress. Cohen (1988:37) describes the special strain under which the mother placed the son: "She accused him of being either an idiot, or not her son, both the most wounding insults possible, the one suggesting a shameful flaw in the proud family line, the other, even worse, that he was an outcast from the family." Canetti (1979:84) sees some irony in this maternal anxiety about his linguistic abilities: 'She had given serious thought to me, she related afterwards, perhaps I was the only one in the vast extended family who had no talent for languages.' The ulterior motive for these excessive maternal pressures involves a multiple compensation for the grief and guilt which Canetti's mother experienced over her husband's sudden death.

As Canetti (1988:212-216) found out in late adolescence and was moved to explain at great length, his father's death was possibly caused by his mother's linguistic infidelity in the form of lively discussions in German with her spa doctor in Reichenhall:

He was entranced by her German, saying that she speaks German like no other, English would never mean as much to her. (212) Why hadn't they spoken French to one another? ... I was amazed that she did not grasp what she had done, for her infidelity resided in the very fact that she had used the language of intimacy between herself and Father with a man who was competing for her love. All the important events of their engagement, their marriage, their liberation from Grandfather's tyranny had taken place in German. Perhaps she was no longer so aware of that since Father had put so much effort into learning English in Manchester. But he really felt that she had passionately turned to German again and thought he could detect what the consequences actually were. He refused to speak to her before she confessed, he was silent an entire night and he kept quiet the next morning. He died with the conviction that she had cheated on him. I did not have the heart to say to her that she was guilty despite her innocence, for she had permitted words in *this language* which she should never have permitted. She had continued this conversation over weeks... (213) The German words which they had for one another were untouchable for him. These words, this language she had handed over to another. Everything which had taken place before their eyes on stage, had become love for him. They had told these things to one another countless times and had endured the constrainedness of their environment thanks to these words. (216)

This clash of resentment harboured by Canetti's mother and recrimination by his father provides a negative illustration of the emotional significance of language assimilation and discrepancies in assimilation and acculturation within a marital relationship. The one-sided initiatives of Canetti's father seriously undermined the couple's mutual lingual bond and also jeopardised the maternal bond with the children.

Canetti's description (1979:87) of German's special place in the mother-son polyglossia hints at his awareness of the emotional energy which his mother invested in implanting the German language in him: 'In no way would she tolerate that I give up the other languages, being educated consisted in her eyes of the literatures of all the languages which she knew, but German became the language of our love - and what a love it was.'

The second disastrous consequence of Canetti's mother's instructional methods concerned the fact that, because Canetti was left to his own linguistic devices outside the lessons, error petrification was rife in his German (1979:84): 'whereby it happened to me that I would practice an error which I had once made with the same obsessiveness as correct sentences. For I had no book to serve as a check ...'. It was Canetti's English governess who, although herself opposed to polyglossia (1979:85), realised that this language instruction was a recipe for disaster.

She solved the problem by suggesting that Canetti be taught how to read and write Gothic script. Given the permanency of the written word upon which to base his language-learning activities, his lessons with his mother soon proved to be a resounding success (1979:86/87): 'She thus forced me to achieve in the shortest time something which exceeded the powers of every child and that she succeeded in this had determined the deeper nature of my German, it was a latterly and truly painfully implanted mother tongue. But the pain did not linger, immediately thereafter followed a period of joy and that has permanently bound me to this language.' The graphemic consolidation served as a pendant to Canetti's introduction to the classics of world literature in English under his father's auspices (1979:87): 'It must have also fed the penchant for writing in me early on, for its was for the sake of learning writing that I wrested the book from her and the sudden turn to the better began at exactly the point when I learned German letters.'

The approach which Canetti's mother took to teaching her son the German language is bound up with her elitist attitude to multilingualism. Her elitism seems somewhat incongruous, however, because she favoured the regional standard variety of German spoken in Vienna at a time when the North German standard still reigned as unopposed international norm. In this respect she betrayed her Danubian origins: 'German of Viennese hue, remarks Erich Fried, was the educated language for all people in the Balkans who thought something of themselves.' (Bollacher, 1985:328) Canetti's mother's confidence in the Viennese dialect was outspoken when Canetti and his mother went to visit German speaking relatives. She explained that Aunt Linda was born and bred in Vienna and spoke especially 'nice' German (1979:87). While Canetti's mother may have simply been trying to encourage his affinities with the German speech community, the visit turned out to be a linguistic letdown (1979:90): 'It wasn't a very long visit, nor did I understand everything which was said, the conversation switched between German and French and I wasn't so up on either language, but especially not on French.'

One summation of Canetti's linguistic reorientation is both dramatic and noncommittal (1979:95): 'With the new language which I had learnt in violent fashion, I came to Vienna.' Yet the artificiality of the process leads him to denigrate (1979:95) the key figure in childhood second language acquisition, 'merely a mother as a teacher', despite the tremendous bond which resulted (1979:86): 'It was a sublime period which now started. Mother began speaking German to me, also outside the lessons. She herself had a deepseated need to speak German to me, it was the language of her trust.'

Once Canetti and his mother are in Vienna, his assimilation into the German speech community is normal - if not entirely uneventful. For one of Canetti's recollections is characteristic of his acute phonological awareness. This quality, which we encounter in Canetti's Viennese dramas (1978) where he applies the Krausian aesthetics of 'acoustic masks' (cf. Canetti, 1988), was also plainly discernible in the earlier description of his mother's spoken French, not to mention his convincing imitation of his father's spoken German. As Bollacher (1985:331) confirms: 'again and again Canetti quotes the story of his youth by means of the authoritatively acoustic formula which places reality at memory's disposal and assures it the meaning assigned to it by the writer... The means of linguistic evocation is frequently the reproduction of a succinct or formulaic expression, a type of code word as it were ...' Canetti applied his prodigious gifts of imitation to mimicking the Bohemian accent of the family's housemaid (1979:110), much to her irritation - 'for she felt mocked in her own language'. And already as a boy, he was able to distinguish not only the many regional accents and dialects to be heard in Vienna, but also aspects of sociolectal variation. This is evident from Canetti's recollection of his Viennese schoolfriend's 'educated speech' (1979:196): 'He always expressed himself in an 'educated' way and did not speak to me in dialect. Our friendship developed very naturally, we spoke about books.'

Cohen (1988:37) presents a different, sociolinguistically controversial and culturally elitist assessment of Canetti's initial assimilation into German:

The first Viennese period, from mid-1913 to the summer of 1916, appeared to have done no more than maintain [*sic* - surely 'consolidate'] his German as the language of daily use, while [...] English remained his literary language, the language of his reading, and the language of his inner self [*sic* - I find no evidence of this 'paternal' language still performing any such function. It is more logical to assume a phase of transition towards the 'maternal' language in self talk.]. However, even during this period he began to read Greek myths and legends in German. This came about due to his nightly drama readings with his mother, who found herself having to interrupt the readings to explain references to Greek gods. She gave him Schwab's *Sagen des klassischen Altertums*, whereupon the ten-year-old conceived a passion for these myths and legends that was never to leave him. The impression these made on him may be gauged by the fact that he devotes a chapter of his autobiography to this experience.

The thoroughness of Canetti's language shift from English to German and the extent of his linguistic reorientation in mid childhood is plain from how he spoke his newer language with relatives. With some he would have spoken Ladino in Bulgaria, like

Uncle Joseph Arditti (1979:117): 'He was a merchant and not a barrister at all, yet he understood the laws in many countries, which he quoted at length from memory, and in the most diverse languages which he would then immediately translate into German for me.' Yet with other interlocutors English had been the customary language of interaction (1979:233): 'I was amazed that Uncle Salomon spoke German fluently after all those years in England, it was a new language between us. I almost considered it elegant of him not to force me to speak English with him, for some time I had got out of practice with English, for the serious conversation which was expected, I felt more secure in German.' Canetti's shift to the German language made him a reliable source for his brothers to consult about the rules of its grammar (1979:283).

However, Canetti's confidence in German does not prevent adolescent inhibitions when the sole-parent nuclear family took up residence in a Frankfurt boarding house between 1921 and 1924 (1982:15): 'Now it happened extremely rarely that I ever said anything ...' Neither can Canetti (1982:85) comprehend complex scientific discourse: 'A group of German geologists was taking a look at the formations on the Iron Gate and discussing them in terms which I did not understand.' Canetti (1982:89) also greatly admires the passionate and resolute command of German of his cousin, the Zionist organiser, Bernhard Arditti: 'whose German words came out so round and sure as if German were his real language ...'

Unlike Canetti, Arditti's effectiveness in the German language has not changed his Judaic cultural affinities (1982:90): 'and only when I said that I wanted to write German, in no other language, did he shake his head in displeasure and said: "To what purpose? Learn Hebrew! That's our language. Do you think there is a more beautiful language?"'

- 3.4** In 1916 Canetti moved with his mother and his brothers to Zurich. Canetti gradually assimilated into the pervasive **Zurich dialect** of German when he attended a local primary school. Naturally his assimilation was again a process of acoustic acquisition (1979:161):

Among my fellow pupils only Zurich German was spoken, the instruction in this, the highest class in the primary school was in Standard German, but Mr Bachmann would lapse often, and not only when calling out our names, into dialect which was familiar to him as to all the pupils and thus it was only natural that I should gradually learn it too. I felt no resistance against it although I was amazed by it ... Thus I liked the powerful and unadorned sentences of the Swiss boys. I myself only spoke to them a little but I listened greedily and undertook here and there to throw in a sentence if it happened to be one which I could say like them without it sounding strange to them.

Canetti's mother opposed the use of Swiss German in their home, because she favoured the regional standard spoken in Vienna. Nevertheless, Canetti (1979:162) was determined not to forego his linguistic independence:

I soon gave up producing such sentences at home. Mother who stood watch over our speech and only permitted languages with literatures, was worried that I could corrupt my 'pure' German and when I in my eagerness dared to defend the dialect which I liked, she became angry ... I practiced Zurich German on my own, against Mother's will and kept my progress in the language secret from her. This was, as far as language was concerned, the first act of independence from her which I committed, and while I was still subservient to her when it came to all opinions and influences, I began to feel like a grown man in this sole matter.

Yet, because Canetti (1979:162) was not yet fully functional in Swiss German, his first Zurich schoolfriend was a Viennese: 'But I was too unsure of the new usage to forge real friendships with Swiss boys. I knocked around with one boy who had come from Vienna like me and a second boy who had a Viennese mother .

I was invited to her birthday by Rudi and found myself there in a circle of mad people which was much more alien to me than anything I ever heard in Swiss German.' Canetti (1979:163) has clear recollections of the diglossia prevailing in German speaking Switzerland: 'She spoke in Viennese intonation patterns, among the men were, as I soon recognised, Swiss who did not however lapse into dialect, all speeches were held in High German.' Canetti (1979:299) also fondly recalls the family holiday in Lötschen Valley in Canton Valais during which he was able to travel back in linguistic time: 'I knew how close Swiss German dialects were to Middle High German, but I had not expected that there would be something which still sounded like Old High German and I regarded this as a discovery of mine ... "Chuom Buobilu" [ 'Come laddy' - 1979:315 ] stayed in my ears as the only speech sound from the valley.' When debating with his mother the value of the national hero of Swiss German literature, Jeremias Gotthelf, Canetti (1979:302) is far from condemning the

dialect he has acquired: 'his language was that of the Emmen Valley, many a thing could scarcely be understood, Gotthelf was unthinkable without dialect, from this he drew his personal power. I made it clear that the "Black Spider" would have been lost on me, that I would never have gained access to the text, if I had not exposed myself to the dialect in the first place.'

Canetti (1979:319) remained in Zurich for five years, where he came to feel very much at home: 'the only perfectly happy years, the paradise in Zurich, were over ... the expulsion from Paradise'; 'I never got over leaving Zurich. I was 16 and felt so strongly bound to the people and places, school, country, literature, yes, even to the language which I had acquired against Mother's concerted resistance, that I did not want to leave ever again.' (1982:7) Just as the tempo of Ladino was transferred to Canetti's other languages (1979:241), so his German must have acquired some recognisably Swiss characteristics (1982:71): '[Veza] asked, 'Are you Swiss?' There was nothing which I would rather have been.' Canetti (1987:45) believes that it was his Swiss German schooling which, at some time after his language shift, completed his Germanic acculturation: 'Only by Swiss dialect was I thoroughly oriented towards German. In the early Viennese period, because of the war, the English mentality remained predominant.' Canetti's attitude to the Swiss German dialect (1987:46) also has an ethical basis: 'Swiss German was for me - I came from Vienna in the middle of the war - the language of peace.

But it was a powerful language with swearwords and unique terms of abuse, so this 'peacefulness' didn't have anything lukewarm or weak about it, this language could lash out, but the country was at peace.' Descriptions of the violent quality of the Swiss German idiom may arise from unpleasant memories. For in this so-called paradise, and for the first time in his life (cf. 'What I noticed of it in Vienna was not directed towards me.' (1979:240); cf. Petersen, 1990:12), Canetti (1979:243-248) was attacked verbally by his antisemitic schoolmates, until they eventually started making an exception in his case. Canetti (1979:249) ends up looking like an epitome of integrationism, when he reaffirms his philosemitic mentality which he then found convenient to conceal in order to assimilate into the school community: 'But the secret thoughts which I kept to myself, for who should I tell them to, concerned the fate of the Jews.' And it is this kind of ethnically nondescript persona which attracts Canetti to Dr Abraham Sonne during his postadolescent Viennese period in what resembles a surrogate paternal bond (1988:148):

The word 'Jew' he used neither about himself nor about me. It was a word that he let rest. Equally as a claim or as the target of hateful mobs, it was unworthy of him. He was filled to the brim with tradition without priding himself in it. He did not credit himself with the magnificent things about which he knew like no other. It seemed to me that he wasn't devout. The respect which he had for every human being prevented him from excluding anyone, even the lowliest, from the full entitlement to humanity.

Canetti's depiction barely acknowledges Dr Sonne's ethnic commitment as "the principal of the Jewish Pedagogical Institute in Vienna"(Lützeler, 1985:144).

### 3.5 Canetti lived in Vienna in two separate periods, firstly as a child between June 1913 and the summer of

1916 and then between 1924 and the end of 1938. His total period of residence in Vienna thus amounts to some nineteen years, which actually includes two periods in Berlin, amounting to about six months, in the summers of 1928 and 1929. (Cohen, 1988:32; cf. 14 years spent in Vienna - Bollacher, 1985:329)

There are far fewer explicit references to the Viennese linguistic environment in Canetti's autobiographical writing than is the case for German speaking Switzerland. The most linguistically significant passages describe the sculptors Fritz and Marian Wotruba (Canetti, 1988:99/100, 109/110).

The extent of these passages indicates ethnocultural bias. The sociolinguistic sensitivity of these descriptions and their poetic detail, such as the image of Marian's speech chiselling at the listener (1988:99), is at the opposite extreme to the perfunctory dismissal of his maternal grandmother's speech as 'whinging' (1979:23). This vivid linguistic description of the Wotrubas is matched by Canetti's earlier use of **Viennese dialect** in his creative writing; such as for the characterisation of the dwarf Fischerle in *Die Blendung* (1935) and for the Krausian acoustic masks of his dramatic characters (1978).

I read the first part of "Comedy of Vanity" in absolutely authentic Viennese dialect without any explanatory introduction ... and did not think that most of them did not at all understand Viennese dialect so consciously applied and consistently varied... For an hour he [James Joyce] was exposed to this Viennese dialect which he did not understand in spite of all his linguistic virtuosity. One single scene was conducted in the usual German and from it he had taken in the sentence about shaving in front of mirrors. His pathetic commentary referred to this. The frustration with the fact that he was

linguistically out of his territory here - he of whom it was said that he was master of countless languages - was combined with the phenomenon of looking in the mirror, about which he was dubious. (1988:186)

Given Canetti's linguistic cocksureness, it is little wonder that Franz Werfel dismissed Canetti's drama "Hochzeit" as the work of an animal impersonator (1988:121):

"An animal impersonator is what you are!", by which he meant me. He regarded that as a rebuke which could not possibly have been ruder, more inconsiderate, more disruptive, he wanted to make it impossible for me to read on, but he achieved the opposite effect, for this was exactly what I intended, each character should be so clearly differentiated one against the other like a special animal and that should be recognisable from their voices, I transferred the diversity of the animal kingdom to the world of voices and it struck me when I took in his abuse that he had recognised something right, but without having any notion of what the purpose of the animal impersonation was.

Canetti's fascination with the Viennese dialect continued into middle age to judge from a diary entry of 1965 (1994:85): 'Nestroy's words which I didn't even know were Austrian, many a naive and natural expression of mine, I read in astonishment what they mean in the commentary.'

### **3.6 The Trauma of Assimilation**

Elias Canetti's immigrant bilingualism turned him into an avowed quadrilingual: 'but we limited ourselves to four languages at home' (1979:103). The four home languages are Ladino (in a dwindling diglossic relationship to Hebrew), English, French and German. In this latter dominant home language, Elias Canetti is the only family member to be bidialectal, speaking both Viennese and Zurich dialects of German. Another peculiarity is the role of shock and trauma in determining Canetti's childhood language assimilation and acculturation. This process is wrenched along by, in turn, the sinking of the Titanic, the Lausanne German lessons, the victors' exploitation of the postwar situation in Vienna and schoolyard antisemitism in Zurich. This series of disasters may colour Canetti's later conception of polyglossia as a divine curse. It is paradoxical how so many of Canetti's negative or ambivalent attitudes towards immigrant bilingualism are linked to positive associations, as we see in Table 2 at the head of Section 3.

#### 4. Adult Multilingualism

And crossing borders as well as the representative deprivations and exhilarations of migration has become a major theme in the art of the post-colonial era. (Said, 1994:373)

Canetti lived mainly in Britain after his exile from Vienna from 1938: "He himself has said he could quite easily have written in English, once in London, and gave as an initial reason for not doing so, the fact that as he had commenced writing *Masse und Macht* ['Crowds and Power'] in Vienna, he continued with it in German as a matter of course". (Cohen, 1988:41) A further phase of English acculturation is thus minimised in order to conserve his German literary identity. Or is it childhood trauma again? 'English remained untouchable for me, because Father had learned it with such delight. He pronounced the words with confidence as if they were people whom he believed.' (1987:46) A ritualistic adjunct of Canetti's language maintenance is bizarre indeed, and reminiscent of his wallpaper chatter when he first moved to England as a child. "In the early London years [of exile] he would lock himself into his room and cover sheet after sheet of paper with German nouns, verbs, adjectives, without context or connection. Although he felt great satisfaction in doing this, he regarded it as pathological; it was one of the rare things he never confided to his wife." (Cohen, 1988:43) Canetti recognises the London 'Word Attacks' as a palliative against language shift in an acceptance speech of 1969 published under that title (1976b:160/161):

Word attacks of this type are certainly a sign that the pressure on the language has become very great, that one knows - in this case - English not only well, but that it imposes itself upon one often and with ever greater frequency. A redistribution in the dynamics of the words has taken place. The frequency of what one hears, not only leads to one's recalling it, but also to new opportunities, moments of release, movement and countermovement. Many an old, familiar word is immobilised by the struggle with its opponent. Others rise above every context and shine in untranslatability ... It is a matter of being delivered unto the foreign language in *its* precinct where all stand on its side and united and, with an appearance of righteousness, unworried, undeterred, unceasing, beat down on one with their words. Thus one is determined to understand everything which one hears; that is, as everyone knows, always the most difficult thing at first. Then one imitates it until such time as it is also understood. In addition, however, something happens which involves the earlier language: one has to make sure that it does not come up at the wrong time. Thus it is gradually pushed back; one closes it in, one pacifies it, one puts it on the leash; and for as much as one strokes it and caresses it in secret, it feels neglected and disowned in public. No wonder that it sometimes avenges itself and attacks one with swarms of words which remain isolated and do not conjoin to construct any sense and whose onslaught would be so ridiculous in others' eyes that it obliges one to even greater secrecy.

There are other, no less telling descriptions of the dynamics of language assimilation in Canetti's journal publications:

The writer in exile, and most especially the dramatist, is seriously weakened in more than one direction. Cut off from his linguistic breathing space, he lacks the trusty nourishment of names. He had earlier no desire at all to pay attention to the names which he heard on a daily basis; but they took notice of him and summoned him, round and sure. When he drafted his characters, he created from the certainty of a gigantic storm of names ... Now the emigré has not lost his memory of names, but there is no longer any vital wind which carries them to him, he guards them like a dead treasure, and the longer he has to remain apart from his former climes, the more miserly become the fingers through which the names are sliding. Thus only one thing is left to the writer in exile: to breathe the new air until it too calls him. It does not wish to for some time, it is dormant and silent. He feels it and is offended; it may be that he closes his ears to it and then no name can get to him. The alien air grows and when he awakens, there is a dried up old heap lying beside him and he stills his hunger with the cornseed of his youth. (1976a:47)

Everything English becomes increasingly important to me, but only in that language. I rarely relate to the people but the words seize me like those of a lost language. It still seems essential to me to be there, like a pressing duty; but perhaps the language would suffice. (1987:94)

Despite the pressures of assimilation and incipient language shift in exile, and even despite the destructive rampage of National Socialist Germany, Canetti's allegiance to the German language remained unshaken. It is peculiar that such German inhumanity is what makes him cling to the language. German is a verbal link with the perpetration of the Holocaust which enables Canetti to have something in common with the victims. It accentuates his acquired ethnic identity as an assimilated Habsburg Jew. 'The language of my mind will remain the German language, and for the very reason that I am Jewish. What remains of that country devastated in every possible way, I intend to conserve in me as a Jew. *Their* fate is also mine; but I also bring along my common human heritage. I want to give back to their language what I owe it. I want to contribute to their deserving gratitude for something.' (1976a:62/63) Canetti was intent on identification with the persecuted European Jews when he wrote that journal entry in 1944. He was no less intent on creating a verbal memorial for the dead, to judge from a journal entry from the summer of 1945: "'Keep people alive with words - is that not almost like creating them through words?'" in this are expressed the desperate efforts of the surviving writer to save through words and names those people

like the Jews "who have been progressively degraded from slaves to beasts to vermin", from death and oblivion.' (Bollacher, 1985:330/331) Another entry from that year focuses on the vanquished Germans and reiterates Canetti's feeling of being indebted to them because he has been privileged to acquire, write in and, as an exile, preserve their language (1976a:74):

At that time it still seemed of no deeper significance that he wrote and thought in this language. He would have found the same in another language, chance had sought out this one for him. It was submissive to him, he could avail himself of it, it was still rich and dark, not slippery in relation to the deeper things which he was trying to track down, not too Chinese, not too English ... The language, to be sure, was in its way everything; it was however nothing measured against his freedom. Today, with the collapse in Germany, that has all changed for him. The people there will soon seek after their language, which one had stolen from them and disfigured. He who always kept it pure, in the years of acutest madness, will have to hand it over. It is true, he lives on for all, and he will have to always live alone, responsible to himself as the highest authority; but he now owes the Germans their language; he kept it clean but he must also hand it over now, with affection and gratitude, with interest and compound interest.

In 1960 Canetti (1994:35/36) regretted his limited assimilation into the English speech community:

I sometimes regret that my mind never dressed itself in English garb. I have been here for 22 years. I have certainly listened to many people who spoke to me in the language of this land, but I never listened to them as poets, I merely understood them. My own despair, my amazement and my excess have never resorted to their words, whatever I felt, what I thought and what I had to say, presented itself to me in German words.

If one were to ask me why that is so, I would have some compelling reasons for them: pride was the most important one, in which I myself believe.

Today I am tempted to begin life in a new language. I love the place I inhabit more than any other, it is as familiar to me as if I had been born here. I have become at home here as an eternal alien: the separation between this homeland and my monologue is complete.

Canetti is also concerned with others' multilingual issues, such as the Galician suicide with whom Canetti shared a university laboratory (1982:175) and the struggling Hungarian poet, Ibbi Gordon, whose work Canetti (1982:245) helped her to translate into German. Canetti theorises about the existential problematic of multilingualism in the linguistic discourse of his study of human mass behaviour (1960), his essays on

literary topics (1976b) and his aphoristic texts collated in the journal publications (1976a, 1987, 1992).

That linguistic discourse is wideranging. It encompasses, for instance, etymology ([1960]:I/43) 'The word 'gairm' means 'shout, call', and 'Sluaghghairm' was the battlecry of the dead. From it came later the word 'slogan': the term for the warcries of our modern masses comes from the Highland armies of the dead.'; the ethnography of speaking ([1960]:II/154): 'It was unseemly to speak of his 'body' or to give the impression that he might have an ordinary human body. A special word was used in its place which stood for his person only. This word describes every action of his and also the command emanating from his mouth.'; language pragmatics ([1960]:I/226):

If I say to someone: "I'll crush you with my bare hand", I express the greatest conceivable contempt with this, I say more or less: "You're an insect. You mean nothing to me. I can do with you what I want, and even then you mean nothing to me. You don't mean anything to anyone. One can destroy you with impunity. No one would notice. No one would remember it. Me neither!.

In general one is no longer thinking of a living thing if there is talk of grinding someone to a pulp ... It is remarkable what great respect the human *grip* enjoys. The functions of the hand are so diverse that one cannot be amazed about the manifold turns of phrase which have to do with the hand.

The aficionado linguist even provides himself with more creative scope in 'The Earwitness' (1977).

Canetti (1976a:15) enunciates a rather naive and inaccurate summation of linguistic scholarship, when he states: 'Behind all linguistics is hidden the striving to trace all languages back to one.' Unless this is meant to be a veiled allusion to the deep-structure theories of generative transformation grammar (cf. Chomsky, 1965), Canetti's statement denies the outcomes of comparative linguistic scholarship which debunked ethnoculturally universal, mythic conceptions of a common origin of the world's languages (cf. Said, 1985:135 ff.). Canetti's assessment may be upholding the conventions of Bible-based language philosophy (cf. Steiner, 1975a), and thus again giving expression to his partly Judaic intellectual identity (cf. Bollacher, 1985:332). Or his motivation may reside in simplistic, or even fantastic, multilingualist conceptions of language. Another aphoristic text on the same page as that culturally biased pronouncement describes a proliferation of diglossia (1967:15): 'The different languages which one would have to have: one for his mother which he later never speaks again; one which he only reads and never dares to write; one in

which he prays and of which he does not understand a word; one in which he does his sums and all money matters belong to it; one in which he writes (but no letters); one in which he travels, in this one he can write letters too.'

It is salient to mention here that Cohen's bicultural interpretation of polyglossia (1988:43) idealistically elaborates on the contrast between the unitary and the binary in Canetti's cultural perceptions of his literary exile which include

the sense of hopelessness and isolation, not only from the reading public, but also from colleagues who have made the change to English. One feels, he says, as if one has remained true to a religion which in the meantime has been scorned by all around him. Canetti found himself 'internalising' in German, doubtless as an escape vent; the language became secret and special, analogous to the role of the sacred and profane languages, with German representing the former and English the latter: 'die zweite Sprache, die man nun ohnehin hört, wird das Selbstverständliche und Banale, die erste, die sich verteidigt, erscheint in einem besonderen Licht'.

[The second language which one now cannot but hear becomes a matter of course and banal, the first which defends itself, appears in a special light.] There is in fact a parallel in the ultra-orthodox attitude towards Yiddish and Hebrew ... Canetti leans strongly towards this sacred/profane duality in language, quite probably a legacy from Karl Kraus, ...

Kraus's philosophy of language criticism has certainly had a profound impact on the themes and style of Canetti's output as a creative writer and thinker. But Kraus's influence - especially given his own ambivalent attitude towards his ethnic group (cf. Petersen, 1990:21) - should not be overestimated in order to reinforce a tenuous link between orthodox Jewish religious practise and a writer like Canetti whose Judaic culture after early childhood is secularised. While Canetti's paternal grandfather was a devout orthodox Jew (1979:295), Canetti's mother had an attitude of 'religious emancipation' from traditional Sephardic orthodoxy (Bollacher, 1985:329). Her attitude would seem to be firmly inculcated in Canetti (1979:305) who never read the Bible (unlike his first wife, Veza - 1982:51) and loathed his grandfather's prayers. As a non-practicing Jew, Canetti (1967:78/79) refused an invitation to celebrate Purim. Nevertheless, this rebuttal of Cohen's approach is not intended to rob Canetti's fantasy of proliferating diglossia of all ethnic saliency. It is more relevant to the stable bilingualism of Habsburg ethnic minorities. Franz Kafka (1983:86), for example, believed that the German language obstructed his maternal relationship: 'that I did not always love Mother as much as she deserved and I was able to, only because the German language obstructed my doing so. The Jewish mother is no 'Mutter', this term for mother makes her a little comical.' (Steiner, 1975b:26)

Canetti's pronouncements on language are less intellectually or ethnically than experientially based. A prime issue here must be the dynamics of Canetti's psycholinguistic workings which often lie beyond the range of his linguistic insights. The primary dichotomy in Canetti's linguistic discourse is the contradiction between elitist bilingualism, which was instituted as a maternal compulsion but became his personal obsession with his literary activities, and the folk bilingualism which Canetti lived outside those endeavours. Such an abundance of language contact made a lame polyglott of Canetti's paternal grandfather which earned him some condemnation (1979:103):

He sought to speak to all people in *their* language, and as he had only learnt them by the by on his travels, his knowledge was, with the exception of the languages of the Balkans to which his Ladino also belonged, highly faulty. He would gladly count on his fingers how many languages he was supposed to speak, and the odd sureness which he brought the count - God knows how - sometimes to 17, sometimes to 19, was irresistible for most people despite his pronunciation. I was ashamed of these scenes when they took place in front of me, for what he presented was so faulty that he would have even failed in my primary school in Mr Tegel's class just as when in our home where Mother would point out the slightest error with merciless derision. By contrast we limited ourselves to four languages at home and if I asked Mother if it were possible to speak 17 languages, she said without mentioning Grandfather: 'No! Then one knows none!'

Canetti (1987:46) eventually reconciles the tension between multilingualism and ethnocentric aesthetic considerations:

It took rather a long time until I gained the conviction that there was no such thing as an ugly language. Today I hear every language as if it were the sole language in existence, and if I learn of one which is dying, it shocks me to the core as if that were the end of the Earth. Nothing can be compared to words, their distortion tortures me, as if they were creatures which feel pain. A writer who does not know that, is an incomprehensible being for me. But a language in which it is not permitted to form new words is in danger of suffocating: it constricts me.

Now that the aged Canetti (1987:13) is no longer capable of undergoing new proliferations of his multilingual competence, because he will no longer be displaced as he had been with his childhood migrancy and adult exile, he perversely envisions linguistic displacement in one spot: 'A country in which the language changes every ten years. Language exchange bureaux.' A later aphoristic text is less radical, but it clearly expresses the centrality of polyglossia to Canetti's perception of language (1987:94): 'I will never be able to exist in *one* language alone. That is why I have

succumbed so deeply to German because I also feel another language. It is correct to say that I *feel* it, for I am not conscious of it. But I am joyously aroused if I stumble across something which hauls it up in me.' Although psycholinguistically obscure, this description of Canetti's multilingual constitution is highly evocative. It is significant that the 'unconscious' pendant to the German language of his adolescence and later life is *another* language and not *the* other language. This suggests that one of several linguistic codes is able to take its place in opposition to the dominant language.

This in turn illustrates how the choice to assimilate and acculturate in German represented a welcome opportunity for Canetti not only to take the linguistic place of his father, but also to achieve some closure of his infant multilingualism, without denying the positive aspects of resulting interlinguistic tension. This tension, a prime feature of the polyglossic curse, is described in other aphoristic texts: 'Things of beauty, yes, but not in the language in which you write, in *other* languages.' (1987:155); 'A person who can speak in so many languages that he always answers in the wrong one.' (1992:45). It found earlier expression in relation to Canetti's work as a translator, principally from English into German (cf. 1982:293): 'The disappointing thing with languages: that they seem so reliable with their sounds and words and rules and that one can then say almost the same thing in quite a different way in another language. With translating the only interesting thing is what gets lost; to encounter that, one should sometimes do translation.' (1976a:114) Later comments on translation are ambivalent: 'Sieving one language through another, sense and nonsense of translation.' (Canetti, 1994:106) Unresolved tension can be observed in the way that Canetti's interlinguistic perceptions (1976a:302) are consciously paradoxical: 'There are sentences which only mean something in another language. They are waiting for a translator as for a midwife.' This effectively describes Canetti's admiration of Dr Abraham Sonne whose work as a Semitic philologist made him an intercultural 'midwife'.

Canetti (1987:53) also describes his fascination with the multilingual lexicon: 'With increasing frequency I am lured into viewing words which I carry in me, they occur to me singly from different languages and I wish for nothing more than to contemplate a single word for a long time. I hold it out in front of me, turn it around, I treat it like a stone, but a wonderful one, the earth in which I lay it, is me.' Canetti (1992:21) observes a barrier of exclusion between lexis and the realia it designates: 'He has a sack full of names, in many languages, the things themselves he left outside.' According to Bollacher (1985:332), Canetti made the tension between names and meaning the most important element ("Baustein") of his own writing. In an

internalised version of the Sapir-Whorf hypothesis (cf. Gumperz, 1982:14), Canetti (1992:103) speculates: 'In a different language one would remember differently. That should be more closely investigated and are you not actually the right person to do it?'

Canetti (1992: 78) addresses the limitations of his experiential critique of multilingualism: 'I shall never get to the bottom of the secret of words, of languages in relation to each other and how the words of different languages animate each other.'

Yet Canetti (1992:102) can still sound as confidently critical as Karl Kraus when he poses as an anti-corruption campaigner on behalf of diglossia:

That fellow has two languages: in the very stuck up one he praises the rare few praiseworthy people, plunders them, flatters them, always at the sublimest level, and it is as if his language were to come straight from the highest heaven and not to possess any earthly words. In the other one he speaks about the same people but as if they were lowly like himself and had only conducted themselves in mean-spirited ways. He glories in the way that life has treated them, he dips and bathes them in envy and disgust. But he never writes that down, he only writes in the other, the praise language.

Nor does Canetti (1992:113) retreat from the optimistic standpoint of projecting a metaphysical dimension of multilingualism: 'I see you at long last and wait upon a word. It will be the most beautiful thing, the most beautiful word of all the languages, since you are passing it on to me, the new language will spring forth from it.' The second person familiar pronoun reflects a secularised humanist projection rather than a deity of conventional religion (cf. "Wort-Religion" - Bollacher, 1985:331, 333). "For the linguist, language cannot be pictured as the result of the force emanating unilaterally from God." (Said, 1985:136) Foreign languages also evoke Canetti's notion of the future: whether in a closed form enunciated by an 'oracle' (Canetti, 1994:106); or as the epitome of openness: 'A man who only remembers words in new languages and gradually crumbles the old ones up. He is alive so long as sounds acquire new sense for him. He has the cheeriness of new meanings and unsuspected accents. He escapes from the tyranny of the beaten track. So what I used to speak was all wrong, he says to himself. At last I am now learning to speak .' (Canetti, 1994:163); or as a vague need: 'Other languages? But only to evade one's own, through clumsiness. One also needs "pidgins".' (Canetti, 1994:193)

All these diverse pronouncements on multilingualism share a certain cynicism arising from Canetti's focus on problematic aspects of interlingual transference for individuals, societies and the global community as a whole: on a pragmatic level

(1976a:15); on an aesthetic and demographic level (1987:13, 46); on a psycholinguistic level (1987:94); more often on an expressive level in relation to translatability and *dicum polyglossia*. Canetti's aphoristic texts thus record several instances where he identified the difficulties he went through and his ongoing unease with becoming and being multilingual and his resultant work as a translator, for example, of Upton Sinclair (1982:293).

## 5. Symbolic Ethnicity

[N]ativism is *not* the only alternative. There is the possibility of a more generous and pluralistic vision of the world. (Said, 1994:227)

Canetti keeps contradicting himself in the depiction of his ethnic identity because of a conflict between an hereditary identity as a Sephardic Jew reduced to a level of symbolic ethnicity and an acquired identity as an assimilated Habsburg Jew. These rival ethnic identities have found expression in different works. Sephardism - inspired by his Viennese talks with Dr Sonne and sustained by his marriage to Veza Taubner-Calderón and the consequent maintenance of Ladino (cf. 'I am a Spaniard, an old Spaniard today.' (1960) - Canetti, 1994:32) - motivates 'The Voices of Marrakech' (1967). The narrator of the second volume of Canetti's autobiography (1982:178/179) comments on the assimilationist ethos of others:

She took those Jews seriously who had assimilated perfectly thanks to the concomitant literature of a language, without becoming nationalist fanatics in the process, and because she consistently denied herself any prejudices of a nationalistic type, she only kept them for Jews whose progress towards this free mentality had been arrested ... 'Perhaps he is only a young Hassidic Rabbi', she said only once, to my consternation, 'but one who doesn't know it yet.' It transpired that she was no friend of the Hassidim. 'They are fanatics', she said.

Such internationalism is caricatured in the interethnic travesty (cf. Garber, 1992) of Madame Mignon in 'Voices of Marakesh' (1967). She is an exotic successor to the figure of the hunchbacked dwarf Fischerle in *Die Blendung* (1935), 'who grotesquely embodies the striving for assimilation and the selfhatred of the Viennese Jews: branded by his diminutive family name as a member of a discriminated race, he bears his first name, Siegfried (!), a Wagnerian, pan-German identifying mark of radical assimilation as it was preached in Vienna by Otto Weininger and Canetti's teacher Karl Kraus' (Bollacher, 1985:332/333). This caricature of self-hating assimilationism suggests one motivation of Orientalism. It serves as a psychological channel. Canetti projects

Eurocentric negative perceptions of his inherited ethnic identity as an Ottoman Sephardic Jew. He learned these negative perceptions in the main from his mother. He projects these perceptions onto members of the ethnic group from which he has become alienated by German acculturation. Projecting involves nonchalantly ascribing to the members of the ethnic group such negative characteristics as idleness and ignorance. However, the projection may also be willful. For Canetti's ambivalence towards his Judaic heritage has something adolescent about it in its rejection of its authoritative finitude regarding Jewish folklore: 'All Jewish things fill me with awe, because I might succumb to them. The familiar names, the ancient destiny, the question and answer format which penetrates to the very core of my mind. How can I remain *open* to everything, if I succumb to what I already am?' (Canetti, 1994:116); 'The Jews' obedience to God which has remained over the millenia, irritates me. In their most wondrous and miraculous stories - again and again this obedience to God.' (Canetti, 1994:178).

Canetti's self-serving application of a Eurocentric mentality to his own life experience relies on the "malleability and transportability of secondary or lesser cultures" (Said, 1994:134). Canetti's autobiographies illustrate how "the authority of the observer, and of European geographical centrality, is buttressed by a cultural discourse relegating and confining the non-European to a secondary, racial, cultural, ontological status" (Said, 1994:70). In this dual process of learned ethnic prejudice and gradual alienation, the burgeoning acquisition of otherness, the consequence of

The Occidental is a fallacious ethnic category opposing the Oriental characteristics which Canetti projects onto his own ethnic origins. The Occidental acts as a negative definition counteracting what is actually dwindling or suppressed ethnicity. (Regarding loss of Jewish ethnicity through assimilation, see 'Elements of Antisemitism' Part VII (Horkheimer/Adorno, 1988:216).)

The verbal and textual balance with which Canetti handles that Eurocentric contradiction, which is in fact the dis-Orienting actuality of Germanic acculturation, is an issue for the 'conscience of words' (cf. Canetti, 1976b). For as Edward Said (1994:336) asserts, "readers and writers are now in fact secular intellectuals with the archival, expressive, elaborative, and moral responsibilities of that role". "The job facing the cultural intellectual is therefore not to accept the politics of identity as given, but to show how all representations are constructed, for what purpose, by whom, and with what components." (Said, 1994:380) In judging the self-styled conscientious communicator Canetti by Said's standards of conscientiousness, I reject Bollacher's

narrow hermeneutic approach to Canetti's autobiographical writing (1985:331/332): 'belief in the name- and readability of the world and by extension a practically religious relationship to the word as a means of revealing reality'; 'reality always appears only in the form of its interpretation in language which is what is constituting reality in the first place'. Such authorial hermeneutics merely compound the "cultural tautology" (Garber, 1992:340) by which prejudice produces representations which confirm prejudice. Canetti may have been representing his experiences to himself in order to better understand them, but he, not to mention the staff of the Hanser and Fischer publishing houses, also allowed his autobiographical texts to be published. Their message or "detachable ethos" (Said, 1994:208), in addition to being a personal attempt at "self-definition" which "is one of the activities practised by all cultures" (Said, 1994:44) or even an attempt to "invent" the Judao-German assimilationist tradition (cf. Said, 1994:36), is now accessible to diverse interpretations - consonant with civilised human standards and otherwise.

A radical falsification has become established .... Culture is exonerated of any entanglements with power, representations are considered only as apolitical images to be parsed and construed as so many grammars of exchange .(Said, 1994:67) Texts are not finished objects. They are ... notations and cultural practices (Said, 1994:312).

Surely Canetti abdicates his responsibility as a canonical Judao-German author in the post-holocaust era by recording his acquiescence to violent antisemitic conformism in the Zurich secondary school he attended, which did not seem to detract from his love for German speaking Switzerland as his ethnocultural promised land. Neither is it responsible at a time of German xenophobia towards, predominantly Turkish, 'guest' workers to perpetuate Orientalistic antisemitism:

For the Jew of pre-Nazi Europe has bifurcated: what we now have is a Jewish hero, constructed out of a reconstructed cult of the adventurer-pioneer-Orientalist (Burton, Lane, Renan), and his creeping, mysteriously fearsome shadow, the Arab Oriental. (Said, 1985:286); ... the Semitic myth bifurcated in the Zionist movement: one Semite went the way of Orientalism, the other, the Arab, forced to go the way of the Oriental. (Said, 1985:307)

And nor is Canetti's ethnic bias (1994:90) legitimatised by aesthetics: "I never want to fall prey to adjectives. They are the oriental in Proust, the lust for precious stones. Canetti's Orientalism can be interpreted within a broader historical context, which remains more problematic than ever for the post-cold-war European order, as Habsburg and/or Balkan anti-Ottomanism. Yet that explanation should not excuse how Canetti's writing expresses ethnic prejudice for its own sake. Parts of his texts

constitute a culturally discriminatory expression of symbolic ethnicity which can be read as confirming racist stereotypes held by readers. The texts even raise these stereotypes to a level of high culture where civilised people might otherwise find them unacceptable. This serves to remind contemporary readers that, as Walter Benjamin insisted, "there is no document of civilisation which is not at the same time a document of barbarism" (Said, 1994:373). For Canetti's contradictory multiculturalism with its ethnocentric multivalency, an instance of the "extraordinarily intense reversion to tribal and religious sentiments" (Said, 1994:40), stands and falls as a subtly perverse paean to assimilationism. Given the contemporary significance of its Balkan origins and the historical context of the Gulf War, Canetti's reductivist cultural derogation might even be interpreted as a quasi "exterministic" outlook (cf. Markovits/Gorski, 1993:132-138). Within this context of crisis and violence, it may even be criticised as a cynical prophecy of genocidal Armageddon as symbolised by his powerful image of an archetypal multiethnic charnel house: 'The Tower of Babel made of bones and all languages unlearned.' (Canetti, 1992:68).

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## **Lexical Errors in Russian-English Bilingual Children**

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### **Abstract**

This report is devoted to the description of errors that Russian-English bilingual children make in Russian. The aim of this study is to investigate types of lexical errors and the reasons for their occurrence. The results imply that bilingual children make the following

types of lexical errors: changing of a phonological shape of a word; misunderstanding of word-meaning; use of one word instead of another; narrowing down or extension of word-meaning; mixing of words with an overlap in meaning; word coining (wrong word-formation); transference of meaning from an English word to Russian word; literal translation of idioms; and borrowing. These types of errors can be made because of an underdeveloped knowledge of Russian and the influence of English. Lexical errors of bilingual and monolingual children are similar when errors are caused by an underdeveloped knowledge of Russian. However children who live in English-speaking countries have a less-developed knowledge of Russian than Russian monolingual children.

## **Introduction**

Literature on bilingual's errors refers to different languages. However types of lexical errors of nine to twelve-year old Russian-English bilingual children who switched from Russian to English have not been studied before. In studies of lexical errors in Russian, researchers have focussed primarily on errors of Russian monolingual children or adult second-language learners. Data on which this paper is based was obtained from a survey of twenty four Russian ethnic school children between the ages of nine and twelve who have been living in an English-language environment for more than three years. Their parents are native Russian speakers with higher education. These children were born in Russia and became bilingual in primary school when they were brought to Australia (successive bilinguals). By that age a child's first language is quite developed in areas of everyday speech and their available vocabulary includes (according to different estimates) 3000 - 7000 words (Lvov, 1988, p. 174) or 8000-14000 words (Clark, 1993, p. 13; Carey, 1978; Kagen, 1981). Living in an English-language environment, their access to input and use of Russian was limited although they continued to speak Russian at home and at Saturday school.

The study has been carried out over three years, 1994-1997, and is based on the analysis of oral and written forms of bilinguals' speech such as storytelling, short essays, and answers to questions. For the purpose of comparison of bilinguals' and monolinguals' errors, bilingual children were also given different types of exercises which included words and patterns causing errors in the speech of monolingual children. For example, bilinguals were asked to define meanings of words from a list or translate them; to make up sentences using certain words; to fill in the blanks in the sentences with appropriate words; and to find errors in sentences and correct them. These exercises were intended to yield information about bilinguals' knowledge, understanding, and use of words. Examples of bilinguals' errors were compared with errors of monolingual children. Examples of lexical errors of monolingual children of the same age are taken from the research works of Tseytlin, 1981, 1982; Ivanov, 1966, Zhdanova, 1980, Fomenko, 1973.

## **What are Lexical Errors?**

Let us look first at what is understood by lexical errors. Some authors isolate lexical errors from stylistic errors but others regard lexical and stylistic errors as one type of error. There are many contradictions in the definition of a stylistic versus a lexical error. The following errors might be regarded as stylistic (if authors separate stylistic and lexical errors) or as lexical (if lexical errors are understood in the broad sense):

- stylistic dissonance (use of words from one stylistic level in a context of words from another stylistic level) (Lvov, 1988, pp. 92-93, 199);
- use of dialect and low- colloquial words (Lvov, 1988, pp. 92-93, 199);
- lexical anachronism (use of a word that belongs to another time) (Lvov, 1988, pp. 92-93, 199; Fomenko, 1973, p. 34);
- verbosity (Lvov, 1988, pp. 92-93);
- needless repetition of words (Lvov, 1988, pp. 92-93; Volkov, 1971, p. 35; Volkov, 1971, p. 35).

In this report, only specifically lexical errors are considered. Specifically lexical errors are errors in a phonological shape and meaning of a word. Errors in a phonological shape mean changing of some sounds in a word because this word is not fixed in a child's memory. These kind of errors have to be distinguished from orthoepic errors, which consist of incorrect pronunciation of sounds, a wrong stress, and a wrong intonation.

Lexical errors of bilingual children can be caused by an underdeveloped knowledge of Russian and by the influence of English on Russian. The analysis of errors in this paper is divided into two parts. In the first part I shall describe errors caused by an underdeveloped knowledge of Russian and in the second part - errors caused by the influence of English on Russian.

## **Errors Caused By an Underdeveloped Knowledge of Russian**

Bilinguals' errors caused by an underdeveloped knowledge of language are similar to those made by monolingual children. The difference is that because bilinguals' use of Russian is limited, errors in their speech may stay longer. Bilinguals may not know words or may make errors in words that are already familiar for monolingual children of the same age.

**a) Errors in a phonological shape of a word and word coining**

When a child does not know an exact phonological shape of a word (s)he can change one or several sounds in the word. *Prespektiva* instead of *perspektiva* (perspective) and *pendikoolyar* instead of *perpendikoolyar* (perpendicular) are errors made by monolinguals; *illyustritor* instead of *illyustrator* (illustrator), *razvodnya* instead of *razvodit'sya* (divorce) are errors made by bilinguals. Errors in changing of a word's phonological shape may be caused by an accidental resemblance between this word and another word. For example, the following errors were made by monolingual children. The word *pulover* (pull-over) was transformed to *poluver* because of existing the word *pol* or *polu* (half) in Russian. The word *konstatirovat'* (establish) was changed to *konstantirovat'* because of the word *konstanta* (constant) (Pokrovskiy, p. 42). A bilingual child changed the word *vstavat'* (get up) to *uvstavat'* by analogy with the word *ustavat'* (get tired). Both monolingual and bilingual children may change a phonological shape of a word because they do not know word-internal structure. Children may use a wrong suffix or wrong stem. These errors may be classified as derivational. For example, *retsenzisty* (instead of *retsenzenty* (critics)) is the error made by a monolingual child. The suffix *ist* is used instead of *ent*. *Sportnyy* (instead of *sportivnyy* (sports)); *opazdyvanie* (instead of *opazdanie* (lateness)) are similar errors made by bilingual children. In the word *sportnyy* the suffix *n* is used instead of the suffix *ivn*, the stem *opazdyva* is used instead of *opazda*.

**b) Error s in Word-Meaning**

A child may not know a phonological shape and the meaning of a word and may confuse words with similar pronunciation but with a different meaning (homophones). Words mixed by monolinguals in primary school are usually more similar in their phonological shape and grammatical form than those mixed by bilinguals. For example, monolinguals make errors by mixing words like *ekskavator* (excavator) and *eskalator* (escalator), *podelka* (article) and *poddelka* (imitation). The words *ekskavator* and *eskalator*, *podelka* and *poddelka* not only have a very similar phonological shape but also share the same gender, number and case. Words mixed by bilingual children may be well known by monolingual children of the same age. For example, bilinguals mix the words *sloog* (servants) and *sooproog* (spouse). These words are different in number and gender. The word *sloog* is the genitive or accusative plural and *sooproog* is the nominative singular.

If a child does not know a word, (s)he can try to gloss the meaning by guessing on the basis of words which resemble that word. Tseytlin gave the following examples of errors monolingual children made using words derived from the same root but with different meaning (paronyms): *udivitel'nyy* (astonishing) was understood as the word with the same root *udivlyayushchiysya* (wonder-struck); *zhelatel'nyy* (desirable) - as *zhelayushchiy* (anyone who wishes); *nakhodchidyy* (resourceful) - as *nakhodyashchiy* (anyone who finds things); *bezhentsy* (refugees) - as *beguny* (runners) (Tseytlin, 1981; p. 53).

When bilingual children were asked to define the meaning of these words, some of them made the same errors. The following errors are caused by children assuming a wrong meaning from the root of the word: *udivitel'nyy* and *udivlyayushchiysya*, *zhelatel'nyy* and *zhelayushchiy*, *nakhodchivyy* and *nakhodyashchiy*, and *bezhentsy* and *beguny*. Russian pronouns derived from the same root are difficult for both monolinguals and bilinguals. Here are some examples of errors made by monolingual children. They confuse the words *chey* (whose), *chey-to* (somebody's); *kakoy-libo* (somebody), *kakoy* (what sort of), and *libo* (the conjunction 'or') (Ivanov, 1966, pp. 61-66). Similar errors are made by bilingual children. They may confuse the words *chey-to* (somebody's), *chey by* (who ever), *nichey* (nobody's); *kakoy-libo* (somebody), *kakoy-nibud'* (somebody), and *lyuboy* (any). Besides errors caused by phonological resemblance, errors caused by similarity of meaning are also observed in the speech of monolingual and bilingual children. The word-meaning may be extended or narrowed-down. For example, the word *zhelezo* (iron) is often used by monolingual preschool and primary school children with the meaning 'metal' and the word *toptat'* (to trample, press by feet) may be used with the meaning *davit'* (to press) (Tseytlin, 1982; p. 52). Both examples show extension of word-meaning: iron ---> metal; to press by feet ---> to press. The same type of errors is made by bilingual children. For example, the word *zhelezo* (iron) was also used with the meaning 'metal' (extension of meaning); the word *zelen'* (greenery) was used with the meaning 'grass' and the word *tantsor* (dancer) - with the meaning 'partner in dance' (narrowing-down of meaning).

iron ---> metal;

greenery <--- grass;

dancer <--- partner in dance.

Words with an overlap in meaning can also be mixed by children. We found the following examples in the speech of bilingual children: *gromkaya* (loud, *making or uttering strongly audible sounds* (Costello, 1991, p. 804)) may be mixed with *shumnaya* (noisy, *making much noise* (Costello, 1991, p. 918)); *[sneg] kapaet* (to fall in drops) - with *[sneg] idyot* (to fall in flakes). Words that have a figurative meaning are semantically opaque and are especially difficult for monolingual and bilingual children. Children may not know which word has to be used to denote high intensity (strong speed or high speed) or low intensity (small breeze or light breeze). *Sil'naya skorost'* (strong speed) instead of *bol'shaya skorost'* (high speed); *malen'kiy veter* (small breeze) instead of *slabyy veter* (light breeze) are errors made by monolinguals (Tseytlin, 1981; p. 54). Children also may not remember idioms exactly. *Voshla ideya* (went to mind) instead of *prishla ideya* (came to mind); *chto eto mne delayet?* (What does it do for me?) instead of *chto eto mne dayot?* (What's the use?) are the same type of error made by bilinguals.

### **Errors Caused by the Influence of English on Russian**

When English becomes the language of greatest proficiency for bilingual children, its structures influence performance in Russian. Researchers have shown that bilinguals may confuse meanings of non-equivalent words that sound similar in different languages, extend the meaning of a word from one language to the word in the other language, literally translate idioms, and use words from the dominant language when speaking their less fluent language. Such words can be either phonetically or morphologically assimilated, or not assimilated at all.

#### **a) Errors in a phonological shape of a word and word coining**

Bilingual children tend to make analogies between the languages they know. If bilinguals do not remember the exact phonological shape of a Russian word they may mix the phonological shapes of English and Russian words. For example, they make the word *framochka* from the Russian word *rama* (or *ramochka*) and the English word *frame*, or the word *klapat'* from the Russian word *khlopat'* and the English word *clap*.

Bilingual children usually speak Russian at home, so words that they hear at home are rarely mixed with English words. English words that children confuse with Russian are mostly everyday school words. For example, break, geography, principle. When using English words bilinguals might add Russian affixes to them and assimilate them phonetically. For example, *judgi* instead of *sud'i* (the English word *judge* plus Russian plural ending 'i'); *zypy* instead of *molnii* (the English word *zip* plus Russian plural ending 'y'); *selfishnaya* instead of *egoistichnaya* (the English word *selfish* plus Russian plural ending 'y').

adjective suffix 'n', plus ending 'aya'), *pisusy* instead of *kuski* (the English word *piece*, additional element 'us', plus ending 'y').

**b) Error s in Word-Meaning**

Bilinguals may mix words that sound similar in Russian and English but do not have the same meaning. For example, the Russian word *klass* and the English word *class*, the Russian word *karta* and the English word *post-card*, the Russian word *film* and the English word *film*. The Russian word *klass* has the meanings 'a student's group of a certain year of study' and 'a room in school' but may be used with the meaning 'the period in which students study at school under the guidance of a teacher' by analogy with the meaning of the English word *class*. The Russian word *karta* (map) may be used to mean 'post-card' and the word *film* (movie) may be used like the English word *film* with the meaning 'film for taking photographs or motion pictures'.

Trying to find a way to express meaning, a child may translate a word from English into Russian, but without realising the differences in the other meanings of the word. For example, in English the word *night* is used to denote the period of darkness, and the word *evening* means the early part of the night. In Russian *noch* means time after the evening. So the English word *night* can be translated as *noch* or *vecher*. Bilingual children may not be consistent in using the words *noch* and *vecher* and may make errors such as in the following example: *Ona zabylya sdelat' uroki noch'yu* (She forgot to do her homework at 'time after the evening') instead of *Ona zabylya sdelat' uroki vecherom* (She forgot to do her homework at night). The word *room* can be translated into Russian as *komnata* (part of a house or flat), or *mesto* (space available for something). Children may use the word *komnata* instead of *mesto*: *Ty mne komnaty na divane ne ostavila* (You have not left 'part of a house' for me on the sofa) instead of *Ty mne mesta na divane ne ostavila* (You have not left room for me on the sofa). In English the word *to fill* has the meaning *napolnyat'* (to occupy a space completely by putting something into it) and *nasyshchat'* (to satiate). Bilinguals may make the following error: *Grechnevaya kasha menya nikogda ne napolnyayet* (Buckwheat never 'occupies' me) instead of *Grechnevaya kasha menya nikogda ne nasyshchayet* (I am never full after eating buckwheat).

A misunderstanding of the expression *free country* (*svobodnaya strana*) and the wrong translation of the word *free* - *svobodnyy* (possessing political liberties) as *besplatnaya* (without a charge) caused the following error: *Eto besplatnaya strana, ya mogu govorit', chto khochyu* (This country is 'without a charge', I can say what I want) instead of *Eto svobodnaya strana, ya mogu govorit', chto khochyu* (This is a free country, I can say what I want). The error in the sentence *Koshki khorosho pakhnut* (Cats smell good) instead of *koshki khorosho chuvstvuyut zapakh* (Cats have a good sense of smell) is caused by confusion of the words *pakhnut'* (smell, have an odour) and *chuvstvovat' zapakh* (smell, perceive the odour). The English word *cap* can be translated in Russian as *kepka* (a kind of covering for the head/ head-dress) or *kryshka* (the cap of a bottle). Children may use the word *kepka* (a kind of head-dress) with the wrong meaning (the cap of a bottle). The interrogative word *what* corresponds in different expressions to Russian words *kto, chto, kakoy, kak, skol'ko*, so bilingual children make the following errors in using these words: ***Chto*** *proshloye slovo bylo?* instead of *Kakoye bylo poslednee slovo?* (What was the last word?); ***Chto*** *eta bukva?* instead of *Kakaya eto bukva?* (What letter is it?); ***Chto*** *eto slovo po-angliyski?* instead of *Kak to slovo po-angliyski?* (What is this word in Russian?).

A lot of errors are made because of literal translation of English idiomatic expressions. For example, the expression one piece [swim suit] was literally translated as *odin (one) kusok (piece)* instead of *sploshnoy*; one day - as *odin (one) and den'* (day) instead of *odnazhdy*; to give back - as *dat'* (to give) and *obratno* (back) instead of *otdat'*. Changing errors when a child shifts from dominance in Russian to dominance in English may be illustrated by the example of acquiring the word 'tetrad' (notebook). From the day of her birth my daughter heard the word *dissertatsiya* (thesis) and to all appearances she attached this name to papers on my desk. When she was three years old I went back to work. After that I often told her not to touch students' notebooks *tetradki* pointing to my desk. The word that my daughter first used for papers on my desk was *dissertatki*. The first part was from the word *dissertatsiya* (thesis) and the second part was from the word *tetradki* (notebooks). Soon she memorised the correct word and later at school she could often listen to and use this word. My daughter is thirteen years old now and after four and a half years in an English-language environment she started to use the word *kniga* (book) translating only one part of the English word *notebook*. Thus, errors in the word *tetrad'* shifted from errors caused by an underdeveloped knowledge to errors caused by the influence of English on Russian. Shift from dominance in Russian to dominance in English leads to an increasing number of errors caused by the influence of English on Russian.

Types of lexical errors and their causes are summarised in the following table:

<b>Types of errors</b>	<b>Causes of errors</b>	<b>Main difficulties</b>
Changing of sounds in a word	Underdeveloped knowledge of a word's phonological shape	Phonological resemblance of words
Wrong word-formation	Underdeveloped knowledge of word-internal structure	
Misunderstanding word-meaning	Underdeveloped knowledge of meaning and phonological shape of a word	Phonological resemblance of words
Use of one word instead of another	Underdeveloped knowledge of meaning and phonological shape of a word	Resemblance in phonological shapes or word-meanings
Narrowing down or extension of word-meaning	Underdeveloped knowledge of word-meaning	Resemblance in meanings of hyponyms Meaning
Mixing of words with overlap in meaning	Underdeveloped knowledge of word-meanings	Resemblance in meanings of near-synonyms
Changing of sounds in a word	Underdeveloped knowledge of a word's phonological shape influence of knowledge of English	Phonological resemblance of words in English and in Russian
Wrong word-formation	Lack of knowledge of a Russian word; influence of knowledge of English	

<b>Types of errors</b>	<b>Causes of errors</b>	<b>Main difficulties</b>
Use of one word instead of another	Underdeveloped knowledge of meaning and phonological shape of a word; influence of knowledge of English	Phonological resemblance of an English and Russian word
Transference of meaning from an English word to a Russian word	Underdeveloped knowledge of word-meanings in Russian; influence of knowledge of English	Resemblance in meanings of words in English and in Russian
Literal translation of idioms	Lack of knowledge of a Russian word; influence of knowledge of English idioms	Collocational restrictions
Literal translation of combination of words with prepositions	Underdeveloped knowledge of prepositions; influence of knowledge of English	Collocational restrictions
Borrowing	Lack of knowledge of a Russian word; influence of knowledge of English	

In conclusion, living in an English-language environment where Russian is used at home leads to the development of mainly everyday speech in Russian. The Russian vocabulary of bilingual children is smaller than that of monolinguals of the same age, and errors in speech persist longer. Lexical errors can be caused by an underdeveloped knowledge of Russian plus the influence of English. Children may not know an exact phonological shape and meaning of a word and may confuse similar words. An apparent similarity in phonological shapes or a word's meanings in one language or two different languages is the most common reason for lexical error. Resemblance between some Russian words or Russian and English words is particularly difficult for bilingual children. Consideration of the origins of bilinguals' errors is important in teaching them Russian. Knowledge of types of errors can help in creating methods of teaching bilinguals.

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**Learning to Interact in Two Languages:  
Society, the Meaning Group and Language Development**

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**Abstract**

This paper, is largely based on a case study, which aims to provide an overview of the bilingual development, in Italian and English, of a preschool age child brought up in Australia. The focus of the paper is on how a child learns the strategies to use in his/her everyday interactions. The framework adopted for analysing the ontogenesis of language is Halliday's (1975, 1985) Systemic Functional model and the Semantic Networks devised by Hasan.

The present account centres on the participation in natural dialogue and examines the child's growing abilities to use two languages in daily interactions with the meaning group. It necessarily illustrates stages of language development from eighteen months to the age of

four and the all important role of families and their responsibility in assisting in the progression and development to biliteracy.

**A description of the study in relation to the theme of the conference.**

It is a case study of one child, Cristina, brought up in multilingual Australia. The study begins at the age of eighteen months, when Cristina had just entered into her mother tongue - Italian, and had begun producing very rudimentary utterances in English, to which she had been exposed infrequently since she was seven months old. The study closes at Cristina's fourth birthday. By this time, there is evidence of almost equal mastery of Italian and English, Cristina's second language. During these three years, Cristina's circle of English-speaking acquaintances widened; it included not only day-care givers, but also some monolingual peers. Interaction with this meaning group, in different environments for different purposes, shaped Cristina's language from day to day, in her struggle to keep the channels of communication open.

The child's learning of language is a topic of considerable interest to scholars of language. This is evident from the vast amount of literature in this area. The interest in bilingual development, although of reasonably recent origin, is in theory great, if not greater in today's world, where the phenomenon of language in contact is so widespread (McLaughlin, 1978; Grosjean, 1982; Titone, 1972), that the interest in bilingual development is not limited to scholars alone. At a more general level, lay persons and indeed some educators are still uncertain about whether the learning of two languages might be harmful for the child. It is feared that the process may slow down or impair cognitive growth, thus creating confusion in the child's mind.

Grosjean states (1982: 67-75), that it was as recently as three decades ago that in the United States bilingualism was considered harmful to the process of Americanisation of ethnic minorities. It was only in the 1960s, as a result of the Black Civil Rights movements, that the revival of ethnicity ensued the school officials and education experts finally accepted that the Anglo-American English speaking public school system was not meeting the needs of children from minority backgrounds. The ethnic revival resulted in the formulation of "the Bilingual Education Act of 1965" and the subsequent establishment of federally funded bilingual education programmes.

Fortunately, now the degree of hostility to bilingualism is nearly absent from most countries in the West, but understandably a certain amount of unease about the effect of early bilingualism is still felt by those not well informed about language learning. From an academic point of view, it has still not been established conclusively whether the simultaneous learning of two languages is different from the learning of just one language, and if so, how it differs. We still lack information about the ways in which the growth of the second language differs or simulates that of the mother tongue.

More specifically still, in a multilingual country, such as Australia, issues related to bilingualism have a special relevance. If, as pointed out earlier, at age four, Cristina could be said to have a more or less equal mastery of both her mother tongue, Italian, and the other tongue, English, this is largely due to the linguistic situation in Australia.

### **Bilingual development: Some questions**

Bilingual development is a broad term which covers several issues. In considering simultaneous development in two languages, one needs to take into account the development of each of the two languages, as well as their functional usage.

As pointed out earlier, the study begins when Cristina is already eight months old. At this time her contact with English was very limited. Certainly she had not entered her routine interactions in that language, whereas her mastery of Italian had approximated the adult model. Therefore the study pays particular attention to tracing the growth of English.

The questions I have specifically raised are:

- (i) What stages does Cristina go through between eighteen months and the age of four in her ability to command, make offers, ask questions and give information, either in response or as an initiating move.
- (ii) How does Cristina's development compare across the 2 languages?

### **Basic speech function of language**

The focus on Cristina's interactive abilities revolves around the four speech functions mentioned above, which Halliday identified and described in his work (1985). The tracing of linguistic development of a child implies not simply a description of what meanings the child is able to exchange at a particular stage, but it also involves a description of the stages of the development of the form of language, i.e., lexico-grammar.

In the study there is thus a focus both on semantics and lexico-grammar. It is not only the growth in meanings, but also that of linguistic form that are taken into account. In the case of a small child, like Cristina, in the very early stages, there is no mastery of lexico-grammar. Nonetheless, the child's meanings are successfully understood and followed by adults in her meaning group, on the basis of shared understanding on the occasion of talk as well as of what the child is expected to mean in a specific circumstance. The study of social situation in the linguistic development of a child becomes an integral part of the enquiry.

In order to describe the continuities between context and language behaviour on the one hand and between meaning and lexico-grammar on the other, one requires a model of

language that will give a principled account of how these elements are related. It is for this reason that the Systemic Functional model appeared to be the most suitable to adopt. By arranging meanings into systems, through semantic networks, it allows one to pinpoint more precisely each particular meaning and to show the relationship between meanings within the semantic structure of language. (Refer to figure 2 on the following page).

Language learning is a gradual process. It is legitimate to ask if there are any general tendencies in learning to mean. A system network representation appears to possess the kind of flexibility needed to track the process. If we take statements, for example, it is possible to describe their development from the primary option through to the more delicate options. It is possible to establish chronologically the sorts of options that appear first and those that appear at a later stage.

Another important aspect of SF is the importance attributed to sociological aspects of language, which is viewed as a form of doing, rather than knowing. It examines development in terms of the ability to mean in multiple ways: ie, the acquisition of meaning potential.

The initial functions of language will change according to the demands made on the language by the child. "What the child masters are" direct reflections of the functions that language is being reported to serve in his life" (Halliday, 1976: 10). In young children's language the interrelationship between language function and language system is more direct than in adult language. In the course of linguistic development the child's original linguistic functions are gradually replaced by more highly organised and abstract functions in a process that Halliday has termed "functional reduction".

### **A comparison across the two languages**

In the initial stages of data analysis, at eighteen months, as mentioned earlier Cristina is still unfamiliar with English and is incapable of speaking it, like many other children from migrant backgrounds attending daycare. In some respects, she could almost be defined as an infant, still grappling with learning how to mean, and yet, in other respects, she is not. In Italian she has already passed through the transition stage (Halliday, 1975) and has entered the mother tongue, both from a semantic and a lexico-grammatical viewpoint.



I should now like to discuss and turn my attention to ethnographic detail as well as the input of her meaning group, which played a vital role in learning how to mean in two languages.

### **Ethnographic detail**

As mentioned earlier, the aim of this study was to examine the development of speech functions of a bilingual child. The case studied is based on data of naturally occurring speech of the subject, Cristina, from the age of eighteen months to fourty eight months. Although she was born in Australia, where the dominant community language is English, Cristina's first linguistic model was Italian.

Most longitudinal studies on the early stages of simultaneous language development (Ronjat, 1913; Leopold, 1939-49; Taeschner, 1983), report on the use of one different language by each parent to address the child. The strategy implies that one parent consistently uses one language to the child, whilst the other parent uses the other. In the present case study there were good theoretical and practical reasons for not adopting this strategy. One of the parents, the father, works long hours and contact time with Cristina would have been reduced to a minimum. Whichever language was to have been spoken to Cristina by her father would have received far less exposure than the language spoken by the mother. Consequently, although both parents are bilinguals, they only addressed Cristina in Italian.

For the first seven months of her life Cristina was only in contact with Italian. Apart from her mother and father, her paternal grandparents, who lived in the same house, interacted, cared for her, and played with her in Italian; Cristina's maternal grandparents were also part of her meaning group. They visited regularly and often Cristina was taken to their place.

### **The extended meaning group**

It was shortly after this period that Cristina's mother began to employ an English speaking monolingual baby sitter very occasionally to look after Cristina. This casual and infrequent exposure to English would be more substantial for the child than being taken shopping or being greeted by her mother's English speaking friends. However, as Cristina moved toward her protolinguistic stage and progressed to transition in her mother tongue - stages in early child language development recognised by Halliday (1975) - she showed hardly any awareness of English, whatever the development in her receptive capacities might have been.

At about 12 months, Cristina's exposure to English increased further, when she started attending a day care centre as well on a regular basis. She attended the centre one day a week from 9 am to 3 pm. Her caregiver's name was Elizabeth, who looked after three other children: Gretta, Chel and Kylie. Cristina had thus to compete with her peers to attract Elizabeth's attention. This represented a very real incentive for Cristina to learn how to mean in English, which received an even stronger impetus from her growing contact with her peer Kylie which by 18 months could be said to have developed into a steady companionship. Although Cristina had been exposed to the English talk of her baby sitter on a casual basis since she was about 8 months old, it was obvious that the experience had not prepared her to cope with the situation at the day care centre. Initially she was quite overwhelmed to find herself for the first time in the midst of English speaking peers and an adult who needed to devote her attention not just to Cristina, as her baby sitter did, but to other children as well. Not surprisingly, in the first few recordings, made at the day care centre at around the age of sixteen to eighteen months, Cristina was still hardly uttering a word of English, although by this time there was evidence of an ability to at least process English and to give some rudimentary responses, albeit often in Italian, to the English utterances of her baby sitter, Denise.

Cristina's baby sitter, Denise, was concerned not only to do her best as a caregiver, but also to communicate in English with Cristina and to help her learn the language. As pointed out earlier, Denise spoke no Italian and at the time when she was engaged as a baby sitter, she was training to be a Primary school teacher. Unknowingly, when interacting with Cristina, because of her background, she would often take on the institutional role of the classroom teacher. In assuming a teacher role, she assigned Cristina that of a pupil. As a result, she often tried to elicit English responses from Cristina, whose initial reaction was refusal to respond or to participate in the naming games Denise had set up for her.

Contact time with Denise was limited on an average to three hours, in the evening, twice a week. Cristina's dialogues with Denise took place at bathtimes, mealtimes, and/or bedtimes, just as many of her mother's dialogues did. There was thus a comparable material situational setting for the interaction in the two languages at home. It is important to emphasise here that although Cristina's contact with English began at approximately eight months, there appeared to have been roughly ten months of 'passive' reception. Up to around seventeen to eighteen months, when this study begins, Cristina did not use much English apart from 'yes' or 'no'. This is the reason for beginning the study at eighteen months.

In an Italian environment too, her meaning group extended to include two peers: Viviana and Emilio. Cristina would play with them at least once a week. These children, like Cristina, only spoke standard Italian at home. From a receptive role, when interacting in English, Cristina had the opportunity when interacting with her Italian peers to switch to an active participant role in Italian. The possibility of such active participation was further enhanced by a five week holiday in Italy at about 20 months. Between the ages of two and three years the Italian environment remained unchanged for Cristina. She still interacted regularly with both sets of grandparents, with her parents and her Italian peers Emilio and Viviana.

In the same period, the contact with English further increased: besides going to the day care centre, at Elizabeth's, once a week, Cristina started attending a kindergarten, also once a week. There she interacted with two teachers and English speaking peers. Cristina also started playing from time to time with another English speaking peer, her next-door neighbour Paul. Besides Denise, another baby sitter, Jackie, also started looking after Cristina occasionally in the evenings.

The further contact with English, and especially with English speaking peers, increased Cristina's confidence and interest in learning how to mean in English. While earlier Christina often made mixed use of Italian and English, it is at approximately the age of three that she begins to keep them separate as has been reported by other researchers (Taeschner, 1983; Titone, 1972, 1973).

Between the ages of three and four, that represented the last phase of data collection, Cristina's meaning group in the Italian environment changed only marginally. Daniela, an Italian student, who was on a work experience in Australia, came to look after both Cristina and her newly born sister for a few hours a day, three times a week. Daniela interacted with Cristina for four months only, because she had to return to Italy. Yet in this short time she was able to set up a very special kind of rapport with Cristina. The role assignments in the speech exchange on Daniela's part were established on a basis of equality, almost like a peer to peer relationship. The tenor of the discourse was rather different from the usual adult-child interaction. In playing with Christina, Daniela not only participated, but encouraged pretend play situations that Cristina had only occasionally experienced with her mother. To Cristina, Daniela was not only a caregiver, but a friend and playmate. When Daniela returned to Italy, Sandra, an Italian baby sitter, came occasionally. There were, however, only two recording sessions with Sandra.

Between the ages of three and four, Cristina's meaning group in English remained almost the same. The important factor was, however, that contact time in English increased. Cristina started going to kindergarten three full days a week and to Elizabeth's place occasionally. In this period, Cristina became more self-assured as she could make herself understood in English.

Most of Cristina's contact with English was in fact still at kindergarten and with her babysitters, at least twice a week, in the evenings. By the age of four, both languages had almost equal status; in fact language mixing started to occur in Italian.

I would now like to turn to examine some of the findings of my research with regards to the development of commands, statements, questions and offers in Cristina's speech.

Table 2: Speech Functions and Responses (Halliday, 1985)

	<b>Initiation</b>	<b>Expected Response</b>	<b>Discretionary Alternative</b>
Give goods & services	Offer	Acceptance	Rejection
Demand goods & services	Command	Undertaking	Refusal
Give information	Statement	Acknowledgment	Contradiction
Demand information	Question	Answer	Disclaimer

### **Commands in Italian**

In the initial stages, in Italian commands far outweigh the use of language to inform.

It is through demand of tangible commodities that the child initially grasps the principles of dialogue.

Stage 1 There are examples of use of modals with commands eg. Vo veder and suggestive commands eg. mettiamo. This can be traced to the fact that the mother often uses this form to address Cristina. Adult forms are mostly used eg. mettilo.

Stage 2 In an Italian environment when playing on her own, Cristina starts rehearsing in English.

Stage 3 No new developments occur in Italian. It is interesting to note that she now starts switching back and forth from English to Italian.

## Commands in English

In the first of the developmental stages of commands: *stage one*, in English, Cristina produces single lexical items in Italian to demand goods and services, eg. *mela*. Concurrently, she also issues commands only in Italian, eg. *nise, gioca così*. The semantic feature of these commands is non-suggestive and exhortative. Cristina also gives commands mixing L1 and L2, eg. *put sopra sedia*. At times, the element borrowed from L2 is a lexical item, at times, it is a Finite. It is language mixing that leads onto *stage two*. It is in the latter part of stage two, when Cristina is 33 months old, that she produces full commands in English, eg. *Come and stay with me*. From a lexico-grammatical point of view the structure of the imperative is well formed. No new semantic features are produced in this period. Commands are of the [non-suggestive: exhortative] kind. Some language mixing still occurs, as is indicated in Table 5.

In *stage three* there are dramatic changes as far as semantic features are concerned. The new features appearing in the data are [suggestive; exhortative] commands, as well as [non-suggestive; consultative] commands (refer to Table 6). By the age of four, Cristina is well into the adult model of English. At this stage virtually no more language mixing occurs.

## Offers

In the early stages of child language development, it is not very common to come across offers. It is likely that the child will offer goods and services on very few occasions, because of the egocentric nature of cognitive development (Piaget, 1926). Another possible explanation may be that the semantic features of offers are possibly more complex to produce.

*Stage 1* There are a very few examples of offers in an English speaking environment eg. at kindergarten Te = adapted from Italian to mean here you are as she offers toys to a peer.

*Stage 2* Again very few offers appear in an English speaking environment eg. with Paul, her peer: *vuoi un altro?* Italian is used.  
You un po' di puzzle? Where language mixing is evident.

*Stage 3* A very limited amount of offers is recorded with a peer at day care:

Here you can have mine  
You can have those both

Vuoi un altro?

Offers appear so scarcely that they do not constitute a significant part of the data.

### **Questions in Italian**

Stage 1 Mostly confirmation seeking eg. il latte, questo il latte? Nearing stage 2 questions increase and become more elaborate with attempts to use modal eg Voi mangiare il ditino?

Stage 2 Specification seeking questions appear eg. Vuoi un'altra puzzle/ as well as those with the feature explanation: reason eg. E io come scrivo allora/

Stage 3 In an Italian environment no new semantic features appear.

### **Questions in English**

Stage 1 Questions are produced in Italian eg. che e? Dov'è with her baby sitter. Cristina attempts to formulate questions of a minimal type in English, although most are ritualistic or direct imitations eg. What's that?

Stage 2 The first English questions start to appear. Their structure does not approximate the adult model, apart from a confirmation seeking question with the feature ask May I have this? Which is an imitation of a polite expression which was taught to her. Confirmation seeking questions appear along with specification questions eg. Why do he? How open now? Lexico-grammatically, the first few attempts at Subject Finite inversion in both the main clause and tag start occurring.

Stage 3 Cristina is able to ask questions using the conventions of English lexico-grammar. Three new patterns emerge: specification, method, circumstance representation occur. It appears that semantically she has caught up with her Italian development at stage 2.

### **Statements in Italian**

Cristina initiates information by expanding and commenting on statements previously made by her interlocutors; by announcing she is about to carry out an action and by rehearsing in a play situation in monologues in a similar manner reported by Weir (1970). She also reverts to use of unintelligible language on some occasions. Towards the end of stage 1, there is evidence Cristina is progressing to a regular usage of full clauses with Mood. There are only very few instances where Finite or the Predicator is ellipsed. By stage 3, Cristina's messages when initiating or responding further increase in delicacy. She is able to select any tense, apart from the subjunctives and uses hypotactic projection eg. *L'ho visto in Italia quando ero una piccina bambina.*

### **Statements in English**

*Stage 1* Cristina is an almost silent participant in the interaction as far as initiating is concerned. her usage of language could be best described as pragmatic eg. *I want....* She initiates discourse in Italian or by language mixing eg. *Noodles, bella cosa* as she addresses Denise the baby sitter.

*Stage 2* The situation changes and Cristina responds, connects and initiates dialogue playing with her peer Paul.  
Eg. Paul: *You naughty thing.*  
Christina: *I'm not naughty.*

*Stage 3* Cristina responds without any hesitation to previous questions or statements. As far as responses are concerned Cristina provides non minimal answers to confirmation and specification seeking questions and to commands. On occasions the structure of the clause reflects influence from L1 eg. in the inappropriate usage of prepositions and at times the finite is omitted.  
Eg: *No, I'm not coming (confirm negative)*  
*They're running at home (specification)*

By and large at the age of four, Cristina is able to participate actively in the dialogic process in English and language mixing is not so apparent.

## **Concluding remarks**

Some of the important findings that have emerged from the data are as follows:

- The findings of the research point to the fact that although the system of meanings is common to both languages, there are differences in the child's learning of the meanings in the two languages. If one semantic feature is learnt in one language it does not necessarily follow that it will also be exchangeable in the other language. Nor does it follow that if a semantic feature has not appeared in one language that it will not have appeared in the other.
- From the data it is furthermore evident that the development of semantic features such as propositions (statements and questions) is slower than that of proposals (commands). The findings are in keeping with Painter's (1984-5).
- Another important point that needs to be made and that was reiterated by McTear (1985) is "It is precisely in the way in which parents and caregivers try and make sense of the children's utterances, treating them as conversational contributions that they provide a model for the children of how conversation functions and what it is all about."

Language mixing appears to be an inevitable stage in the process of bilingual development.

- Although she did have sporadic contact with English through the baby sitter at home, it is only when Cristina moved out of the family domain to more institutional environments of the daycare centre and kindergarten that she became aware of the difference both in domains and in the language. She realised that in the latter domains she was expected to word her meanings differently. This is evident both at the day care centre and kindergarten and it is at this stage that language mixing starts to occur. It concurs with Leopold's (1949a) findings.

Cristina uses Italian as a stepping stone for her entry into English. She made use of her knowledge of Italian as appeared necessary to her to get her message across. First lexical mixing, then clauses in English with features of Italian eg. They're running at house, a literal translation to express what she intends to mean. Utterances such as the above have the effect of provoking native speaker correction, particularly an adult, which in turn serves the purposes of further language development.

- Rehearsing in monologues in dialogic play is another interesting feature of the process of language development which has emerged from the data.
- A further finding is that in Stage 1, when Cristina has practically no knowledge of English, when she interacts with her baby sitter Denise, who speaks no Italian, there are many instances of breakdown of communication and it is interesting to observe how through repetition, checking, giving a running commentary on the ongoing activity and or by announcing what she is about to do, Denise ensures that Cristina is able to follow her, Denise thus appears to assume the role of a teacher as she interacts with Cristina.

Finally, it is not so much “exposure” to language as was argued by transformational scholars following Chomsky, that is the essential condition of language development. Rather, what is necessary is active participation in linguistic activities (Halliday, 1978; Wells, 1981; Ervin-Tripp, 1973; McTear, 1985). These interactions are not important only because they provide formal characteristics of a language, permitting the child to “internalise the grammar”. They are also important because they become the vehicle of so much social learning. In the case of the child’s bilingual development, the interactions the child may participate in reflect the place of the two languages in society. Thus in a country such as Australia where one language is dominant, the effect of the dominance will be felt by the child in the increasing number of encounters that involve the dominant language. It is therefore up to the families to take up the responsibility, the all important role and challenge to assist their children in L1 maintenance and biliteracy.

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### **Abstract**

Most studies of language maintenance and shift in Australia concern older established community languages. Given the rapid change of LOTE profile of Australia, there is an urgent need to study the situation in the newer communities. The Chinese language has recently become the second most spoken community language in Sydney and the third in Melbourne (Clyne, 1997). The bilingual experience of Mainland Chinese speakers in Australia has been explored to some extent (Chen, 1997; Butcher, 1995; Smith, D., Ng Bee Chin, Kan Louie & C. Mackerras, 1993; Qi, 1997). But none of them have actually broaches the issues relating to mainland Chinese children. The bilingual experience and nature of mainland Chinese children has not yet been systematically explored. This paper is an attempt to describe and analyse the language behaviour of Chinese children from 4 to 12 years old who were born in mainland China and have settled in Sydney for a certain period of time. It will not describe the linguistic competence of these children, but rather their use of Chinese varieties and/or English in different situations from a sociolinguistic perspective (Clyne 1982; Cummins, 1986 & Fishman 1989). Factors contributing to language maintenance or language shift and the use of Chinese in different domains will be examined on the basis of a survey of 67 Chinese background children. A tendency of language use in this group of Chinese children can be observed and a hierarchy of factors determining language maintenance and shift has been found out.

### **Introduction**

Since mainland China opened up to the outside world in 1987, a number of Chinese people have come to Australia seeking personal and social betterment. Among them, 1/3 came from Beijing, 1/3 from Shanghai and the rest were from other cities throughout mainland China. 2/3 of them received tertiary education in China. 80% of them came here as self-funded students studying at either language schools or universities. They usually do casual or part time jobs to afford the tuition fees and living expenses. About 20% are mostly government-funded students or visiting scholars. Because of the Tiananmen event on June 4, 1989, over 20,000 Chinese who came here before June 20 were entitled to a "four years' temporary visa"; and were later granted permanent residency status in November, 1993. Another

20,000 Chinese students and scholars came to Australia after the event. Most of them also gained permanent residency after years of struggles and difficulties. As a consequence, their partners and children were able to come to Australia to be reunited when they did. The survey of this paper aims to target these Chinese-born children ranging in age from 4 to 12.

### **Methods of Collecting Data**

In an effort to understand better the related factors of Chinese language maintenance and shift toward English at a variety of levels and in different domains, two approaches are adopted in the study of variations in the language proficiencies, choices, and attitudes of Chinese-born children and their parents. These are qualitative interviews/activities and quantitative questionnaire. The participants in the study live in the inner city, southwest, east, west and north regions of Sydney. Fourteen children and their parents have participated in case study interviews and activities investigating their language proficiency, attitudes, and choices. In addition, I have observed five of these 14 children and recorded observations of how they went about their everyday activities at home and at school. Five children and their parents were interviewed on the phone. The rest of the data were collected by means of questionnaire. The copies of the questionnaire both in Chinese and English were sent to the children's residential addresses.

The addresses were obtained from friends and acquaintances. Questionnaires, based on observations were filled out by parents on behalf of their children (under seven years). Out of the 80 questionnaires, 48 were answered and returned. Answers to the interviews and questionnaires were classified and have been analysed in this paper. By eliciting their background information, language proficiency and preference, as well as their language choice in different domains, the study aims to explore the reasons for language maintenance and shift among these children.

### **Profile of Children and their Parents**

Of 67 children surveyed, 36 are female and 31 male. Among them, 13 range from 4 to 6 years old, 31 from 7 to 9 years old and 23 from 10 to 12 years old. Their length of stay in Australia varies from less than one year to more than six years. All could speak Chinese before they came to Australia. Their respective speaking abilities are rated either as very good (22.4%), or good(46.3%) or average (26.9%) and poor 4.5%. All children can understand Chinese well. Their reading ability covers very good (10.5%), good (17.9%), average (34.3%), poor (16.4%), very poor(11.9%) to nil (9%). It is obvious that their ability of written Chinese is not good generally. 28.4% are ranked average and 55.2% below poor (See Table 2). All but 13 have received some primary schooling in China ranging from several months to six years. 5% of them have learned English in China. All the children

above 6 attend public schools at Sydney. Their parents' ages range from 30 to 45, 2/3 of them have obtained tertiary education and secured a professional job in China but 2/3 of them have to take skilled or semi-skilled jobs in Australia. All of them are highly proficient in Chinese but few of them could speak native-like English. 90% of the fathers can speak English but only 42% of the mothers can speak English.

**Table 1: Age Range and Length of Stay in Australia of 67 Chinese Children in the Current Survey**

Length Of Stay	Age	4-6	7-9	10-12	Total
<1		4	5	4	13
1-2		4	6	5	15
2-4		5	11	7	23
4-6		0	9	7	16
Total		13	31	23	67

**Table 2: Rating of Chinese Language Proficiency**

	very good	good	average	poor	very poor	nil
Speaking	15	31	18	3	0	0
Listening	51	14	2	0	0	0
Reading	7	12	23	11	8	6
Chinese writing	4	7	19	14	11	12

### **Analysis of Data and Findings: Sociolinguistic Factors**

#### ***Generation***

Appel & Muysken (1987) describe language shift as a multi-stage process that should be interpreted in terms of domains and generations. In the face-to-face interviews, questions were asked mainly in Chinese to the parents since they felt at ease with their mother tongue. All the parents talked with me in Chinese. Some mixed Chinese with several English lexical items. Both Chinese and English were employed during the interactions with the children according to children's preference. 5 out of 14 children responded in English sometimes mixed with Chinese. 8 out of 14 replied in Chinese sometimes mixed with English. 1 used Chinese exclusively since he just came to Australia one month ago and did not know English. Concerning the returned questionnaires, 86% of the children chose the English version while 96% of the parents used the Chinese version. The data showed a clear generation difference in the choice of language. Generation is an important factor in the language shift from minority language (Chinese) to dominant language (English). Children tend to assimilate to their environment than their parents. The interviews showed that children's English-speaking competence is superior to that of their parents. Apart from the fact that they speak more fluency than their parents, they have acquired a native-like accent. The relatively high figure of the choice of English version of the questionnaire indicated that these children felt more at ease and more confident in using the dominant language than their parents.

#### ***Mass Media***

Clyne (1982) indicated that multicultural TV is potentially of great significance for language maintenance. His assumption is proved by Putz in his study of German-Australian migrants in Canberra. Unfortunately, it does not seem to be the case in the Chinese children surveyed. To assist Australian residents from all ethnic groups to maintain their language and develop their cultures, the Australian government established the SBS channel. According to the 1986 census, the number of hours per week which SBS offers programs in Chinese are 34.77 (Cantonese, 19.45; Mandarin, 15.29) (Clyne,1991).

The figures (see attached Table 3) from the survey revealed that almost 93% of the parents watch the news program in Chinese and sometimes films produced in Chinese on SBS.

However, only 6.7% of the children sometimes watch films in Chinese on SBS. 13.3% of the children reported that they occasionally watch videotapes in Chinese.

It seems that the establishment of multicultural TV does not contribute a great deal to maintaining Chinese language and culture for the Chinese children. The multilingual television service does provide a great deal of help to the parents but indicates little effect in encouraging and facilitating the children in learning Chinese. Interestingly, TV programs in English seem to have strongest impact on language shift. 100% of the children reported that they watch Children's programs in English and enjoy them very much. Actually they have acquired many of the colloquial expressions of English from the TV. The low rate of children viewers of SBS may be partly attributed to following several factors: 1. Children are far less keen than their parents on current news. 2. Children' programs on SBS such as cartoons and movies are far fewer and less colourful than those on other channels 3. The time allocation of Chinese programmes on SBS is too late. Chinese children are generally required by their parents to go to bed not later than 9.30 pm. The same situation applies to other mass media: much fewer listeners and readers among children. This is mainly due to the fact that very few Chinese children's videos, newspapers, magazines, and picture books are available in Australia and even those seen in bookshops and video shops are imported from mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan and have little relevance to children's daily life in Australia.

Instead of generating positive feelings in children about themselves as Chinese Australians, the mainstream media tend to stereotype the Asian image, for instance, a criminal has 'an Asian look', 'gangs from Hong Kong' and 'drug problems in Cabramatta', etc. These are all related to Chinese ethnic groups. Children respond quickly to the negative stereotypes so they refuse to identify themselves with Chinese. One of the 12 year old informants described her situation at day school and home, 'I feel different, inferior, like a black sheep in the white sheep. I try to hide my Chinese identity and be more Australian. I don't have a good relationship with my mother and my sister because I feel alien and don't want to be close to them and to identify with them.'

One of the mothers told me about her daughter's reaction: when her Australian classmates called out to her 'You are a Chinese'. The six year old girl felt humiliated and shouted 'Don't treat me like a Chinese. No, I'm not a Chinese.' When the girl went home, the mother told her, 'You are a Chinese, you'd better accept it.' This kind of identity confusion and conflict bring more Children into a mother tongue learning crisis.

**Table 3      Influence of Mass Media**

Mass Media	parents	children
watch Chinese programs on SBS	93%	6.7%

watch English programs on T.V.	84%	100%
watch Chinese videos	46.7%	13.3%
Read Chinese newspapers and magazines	97%	2%
read Chinese picture books	N/A	33.3%

### ***Education***

Education plays an important factor in either language shift or maintenance as far as either majority/minority school education, family education or self-education concerned. All the children surveyed, with the exception of those under 6 years of age, attend public school at Sydney. The medium of instruction in the school is totally English. They have to speak, read, write, and even think in English. The peers around them are mostly English speaking children. "I speak English at school because they all speak English", as several children claimed in the interviews. It is obvious that many children have taken speaking English for granted. Many of them have begun to identify with the English language and its accompanying culture. Those public schools, which offer Chinese as a subject, often cannot cater for background Chinese students' needs. There is not an appropriate curriculum for them. Materials serve only for non-background speakers: Nihao and Hanyu are the most commonly used textbooks for secondary school Chinese teaching. In some cases, teachers' Chinese competence is far less than the native students. As a consequence, the background students are learning what they have already learnt. The knowledge and skills are not built on their difficulties.

Teachers and administrators have consistently cast background speakers themselves as disincentives for non-background speaker learners, rather than seeing this ludicrous situation as a major disincentive for teachers and students who should be using their time to learn more advanced linguistic and cultural skills (Smith, Chin, Louie & Mackerras, 1991, p63). The situation like this is even worse at junior levels. This fact shows that majority schools really act as agents of language shift. Since 1983, more efforts have been made in maintaining and developing minority languages (Clyne, 1991). Currently, a number of public and high schools offer Chinese as a subject. Chinese is also provided as a subject in the weekend schools. The table (see Table 4) shows that almost 22% of the children surveyed attend Chinese weekend schools. Among them, the children who have stayed in Australia longer outnumber those who have just come here.

This may be attributed to the fact that the latter have just left the Chinese-speaking home country and maintain Chinese better than the first. So their parents have not felt the threat that their children might lose Chinese. Parents who send their children to weekend schools are nearly all those who have children living in Australia more than one or two years. During the interview, those parents showed their worry about their children's language education in

Australia: a few secondary public schools offer Chinese as a subject, even fewer at primary schools. Parents, who want their children to maintain Chinese either as an identity symbol, a skill, practical use or a relationship developer, have no better choice but to send their children to weekend schools although they admit these weekend schools do have problems such as lack of materials, of methodology, of funding, of information and communication, and some of them, of public transportation. These difficulties are real but 'they seem trivial to parents who love their children and are concerned for their future.' as one of the parents put it. In addition, ethnic schools can become another channel for children to establish social networks with children who speak the same language and with the same background. This gives them an alternative social network to the one they encounter at school, and an alternative means of self-identification and Chinese cultural sharing. So the weekend ethnic/Saturday/church schools play an important role in maintaining Chinese.

The table shows clearly that most of the children learn Chinese from their parents or grandparents. The children below 4 to 6 learn Chinese totally from their parents/grandparents. It proves many researchers' theories that family education is the strong factor to aid the retention of a minority language (Saunders, 1988). Parents who succeed in retaining Chinese in their home share common experiences: a belief in bilingual education, a firm attitude toward established rules like 'Chinese is the only language to be spoken at home', determination, perseverance, time devotion, patience, teaching skills, practical expectation and hope.

But many other parents feel it is hard to insist on passing Chinese on to their children in an English-speaking country for the following reasons:

1. The host country does not always show a positive attitude toward people who acquire another language, especially the Chinese language.
2. The education policy in NSW does not seem to encourage native Chinese to retain their mother tongue, ie. the discriminatory classification of background and non-background students, the new syllabuses for background students and the HSC exam.
3. Children have no social and cultural affiliation with the Chinese language and Chinese community so that they feel learning Chinese is irrelevant to their life.
4. Children can survive easily without Chinese but can hardly live without English.
5. Children treat learning Chinese as an extra when they are occupied by other school subjects.
6. Parents have a lack of commitment, time, patience, persistence, skills and information.
7. Parents find it especially difficult to go on with children's literacy development in Chinese since Chinese writing is very hard and demands more practice and effort. Besides, after years of disuse of writing Chinese, parents' own Chinese writing skills become rusty. All

these factors can result in parents' making compromise with their children's reluctance to learn Chinese and work against the retention of Chinese in the family. Another aspect of education is private tutoring and self-learning. It is revealed by the table that the rate of tutoring and self-learning is fairly low. Several reasons could account for this

8. The economic condition of the family;
9. The Chinese proficiency of the child;
10. The child's interest in learning Chinese;
11. The extent of importance which the parents attach to the Chinese language.

**Table 4 Sources of Learning Chinese**

Age	Number of Informants	Length of Stay in Australia	Sources of Learning Chinese					
			Day School	Weekend Chinese School	Parents/ Grand-parents	Tutors	Self-learning	Not Study
4-6	4	<1	0	0	1	0	0	3
	4	1-2	0	0	2	0	0	2
	5	2-4	0	0	0	0	0	5
	0	4-6	-	-	-	-	-	-
7-8	5	<1	0	1	1	0	0	3
	6	1-2	0	3	3	0	0	2
	11	2-4	1	3	5	0	0	4
	9	4-6	1	2	2	0	0	4
9-11	4	<1	0	1	1	0	1	3
	5	1-2	0	2	3	0	1	2
	7	2-4	2	4	4	0	0	2
	7	4-6	1	2	2	0	0	3

## **Domains of Language Use**

Domains are social-cultural constructs abstracted from topics of communication, relationships between communicators, and locales of communication (Fishman, 1972). Language choice is determined by the aspects of the role-relationships with the speech partner, the social venue, the interaction type and the medium (Clyne, 1982; McGregor and Li, 1991).

### ***Home***

The figures from the survey show that 59 children keep in touch with their grandparents who only speak Chinese (Table 5). "The presence of grandparents in the home or who visit regularly greatly helps maintain the language ... in their grandchildren" (Saunders, 1991). Apart from the grandparents who are in Australia for a visit, most grandparents are contacted on the phone. When speaking with their grandparents, 64.4% of the children mix Chinese with English (Table 5). The reason why they mix with English is that they have too much exposure to English and have difficulty in finding certain Chinese words to express themselves. Out of the respect for the aged, children are required by their parents to use only Chinese. Those who use Chinese exclusively comprise 35.6% (Table 5).

As to the language choice with parents, the issue has been emphasised throughout my interviews in personal communication with parents and their children. As shown in Table 5, all parents who converse with their children in Chinese sometimes laced with English lexemes tend to receive replies in English (22.4%), in Chinese (14.9%), or in a mixture (62.7%). The reason for one of the two children who only uses English is because his parents urge him to assimilate in Australian society and this leads to the factor of language shift. A few children who are early arrivals use Chinese only since they do not know much English. 14.9% of the children speak Chinese mostly because their parents expect that their children should maintain Chinese and Chinese culture (Table 5). 3/4 of the parents (father, or mother, or both) have received tertiary education in China and they have high expectations of their children. Some of them insist that their child use Chinese only at home, which leads to the factor of language maintenance. The number of children who mix Chinese with English at home seems to cover a large proportion. There are several reasons which may account for it: (1). They use English for emphasis. (2). They use English for clarification. (3). They use English for quotation. The fourth reason may be that the children are in the process of 'losing some of their Chinese' and 'gaining more English'. Some of the daily Chinese expressions are gradually replaced by the English ones.

Younger children who are between 4 and 6 years old simply do not know the Chinese equivalents for certain concepts. "He could understand every word I said. He simply did not know how to put some words into Chinese", was how one mother put it on the reverse side of

the questionnaire. Interestingly, a five year old girl whom I observed referred to the "kettle" in English but did not know how to say it in Chinese.

**Table 5 Language Choice at Different Situations**

	English	Chinese	Mix	
with grandparents	0	21	38	8 has no contacts with grandparents
with parents	15	10	42	
at school	57	0	5	5 not go to school
With Chinese friends	37	12	18	
with neighbours	53	7	7	
Playing computer games	54	0	1	13 not playing
Talking to pets/animals	46	2	4	15 not sure
expressing anger	37	11	8	11 not sure
dreaming	16	7	26	18 not sure

### ***Neighbourhood***

The neighbourhood domain can be regarded as a factor which may promote language maintenance or shift. High demographic concentration, adjacency of concentration areas and dominance in a particular language would contribute to language maintenance, while dispersion, non-adjacency of concentration areas, and clustering in mixed or predominantly monolingual English-speaking areas would lead more to language shift (Clyne 1982). 10.5% of the children surveyed live among Chinese-speaking residents. These children stated that they have to speak Chinese with Chinese neighbours. According to Chinese tradition, neighbours usually have contact with each other very frequently. It is unusual for Chinese people not to know each other if they live in the same building. They can visit each other without appointment in advance.

Under such circumstances, Children have more opportunities to interact and communicate with neighbours. 10.5% of the children live among people of different language backgrounds which include Chinese-speakers (Table 5). They use both English and Chinese according to the different audience. 79% of the children mainly speak English (Table 5) since they must adapt themselves to the surroundings where the majority of neighbours speak only English.

### ***School***

English is the only dominant language at school. The prevalence of peers from English language backgrounds also creates a need for English in order to facilitate communication among the children. Not surprisingly, 95% of the children reported that they speak English at school (Table 5). Only two claimed that they use mixed languages at school. One is recently-arrived and he has to use mixed languages with his Chinese peers for better understanding of the class. The other one explained that he uses Chinese to his Chinese peers if he attempts to prevent other English-speaking peers from knowing certain things. No children use only Chinese at school because they have no options. Currently, there are no schools in New South Wales offering bilingual education to Chinese children. That is, Chinese is not used as medium of instruction at any schools. Although Chinese is provided as a subject in a number of public and private schools and also Saturday schools, the reinforcement of the maintenance of Chinese is relatively weak.

### ***Friends***

Friends seem to either promote language maintenance or reinforce language shift. This depends on whether the friendship networks are based on English-speaking children or Chinese-speaking children. The parents usually construct their friendship networks along the Chinese ethnic lines. But this is not the case with the children since they have less sense of ethnicity. Living in a society where English is the dominant language, children have more opportunities to play with English-speaking children. The songs and games learnt at schools are all taught in English.

In order to have a sense of sharing, 55.2% of the children communicate with their friends in English, while 26.9% of the children do so by mixing the languages (Table 5). 17.9% of the children have more access to Chinese (Table 5), so they retain Chinese as the medium of communication.

### **Spontaneous Language Use**

Of 54 children who play computer games, 99% claimed that they use English, while the rest mixed languages (Table 5). Of 52 children who play with either a dog or cat or imaginary characters at home or with animals in the zoo, 88.5% speak in English, 7.7% in a mixture of the languages while only 3.9% in Chinese (Table 5). This reflects that children tend to use English as a language for wider contexts. The reason may be that they regard English as the language for the wider world (Kwan-Terry,1992).

The two children who talk with their pets in Chinese are special cases: their parents adopted these pets before they came to Australia and the parents trained the pets in understanding

Chinese, so the only medium for their children to communicate with the pets is Chinese. In this respect, pets can become an aid to stimulate children's desire to speak Chinese. As to the language selection for expressing spontaneous feelings, the figures show that 66.1% use English, 19.6% Chinese, 15.4% mixed (Table 5). In the interview, one mother mentioned that once her daughter became very angry with her grandma and she shouted in English "Go back to China". It is significant that most children tend to demonstrate their resistance, refusal, or defiance through the medium of English. Concerning language use in the dreams, one girl whom I interviewed replied that "I never dream". 49 children supplied answers. Some responded that they do not know. It turns out that 32.7% (in English) have adopted English at a subconscious level (Table 5). Maybe it indicates that English has become an indispensable part of their life. The reason why 53.1% use a mixture of languages may be that they still live in a world consisting of both English and Chinese (Table 5). For those (14.3%) who dream only Chinese, maybe they are more Chinese bound at heart (Table 5).

### **Attitudes**

It is revealed in the survey that parents' attitudes toward their children's maintaining the Chinese language and culture is dual and sometimes contradictory. This kind of attitude has something to do with parents' contradictory economic and political situations in Australia. On the one hand, parents feel lucky, for they can choose a democratic land to live in. Parents regard Chinese language and culture as part of themselves, their ethnic identity. They feel humiliated when their language and culture are threatened or discriminated against by the host country or their own children. They want their children to have a knowledge of their language and culture in order to understand them and identify with them. On the other hand, it is painful for parents to become rootless. A sense of loss follows them like a shadow: no belonging, no security, less personal development and less opportunities. It is even more agonising for a well-educated skilled person with ambition to accept an unskilled job in order to survive because of the language barrier. Since it is very hard for parents in their middle age to acquire native-like English, they regard Chinese as a setback in the light of environment adaptation and personal development. So they project their hope on their children and wish them to become more Australian through assimilating into Australian culture and acquiring native-like English.

Parents' dilemma and their dissatisfaction with their social conditions give children a message: English acquisition is more important and useful than Chinese. Parents' contradictory attitudes toward Chinese language and Chinese identity more often counteract their efforts in helping children maintain Chinese. A father describes his experiences with his 9 years old son's loss of Chinese:

When the boy was two years old, one day he uttered the first word in English: 'car'; we are overjoyed. Then he spoke more English once we sent him to the day care centre. We were surprised by his pure native pronunciation of English which we can never reach ourselves. His mother even practised English with the son at home in order to catch up with her study of English in TAFE. Gradually, our pride and joy with my son's English was replaced by a certain worry because I found my son was more willing to respond in English even if we talked to him in Chinese, and his mother felt more and more threatened since her English was less and less compatible with her son's.

One year later, we adopted a rule to force our son to speak only Chinese at home. We struggled to put the rule into practice for another half year then had to give up since we were too busy with other affairs and had no time, even had not enough Chinese to continue teaching him the equivalent expressions of English like 'McDonald's', 'chips', 'fizzy drinks' etc.. Besides, we could not see the social rewards for my son's keeping Chinese. We were too tired to combat the outside English-speaking environment.

The investigation of the children's attitudes toward speaking and reading shows that there is a tendency of decline in English in preference of Chinese. With lengthening residence in Australia, the number of children preferring Chinese decreases. The older the children are and the longer they have stayed in China, the later they prefer to use English. The younger the children are, the more they feel like using English. This reflects the fact that younger children are more likely to adapt and assimilate themselves to the surroundings and they have fewer ties with Chinese language. Regarding writing skills, there is a significant decline in preference of Chinese with the increase number of years of stay in Australia. Many of them are reluctant to learn to write Chinese. This may be attributed to the fact that the Chinese characters are totally different from the English alphabet and far more complicated. Unlike English words which only consist of 26 letters, Chinese characters are composed of different strokes. The decline in interest in the Chinese language reflects the fact that children's attitudes to the language are influenced by their competence in the language (which is also discovered in Lebanese children in Australia, Taft, 1989).

It is assumed that attitude to a language and competence in a language are two interactive factors. Negative or positive attitudes toward a language can have profound effects on the

users of the language (Grosjean, 1982; Grin,1993). Most of the children claimed that they like to learn English and speak English. They love to take part in the classroom activities and peers' games and would feel miserable if excluded from others because of the language. Many children who have received education in China reported that they like Australian schools more than Chinese ones since they have more freedom, fun and less homework.

## **Conclusion**

It is important to mention that the survey is directed to one of the sub-groups of Chinese children in Australia. Further research and follow-up exploration need to be carried out to address the wider context. Having analysed the data of the survey and their relevance for assessing the domains and situations promoting language maintenance and shift, we may observe a hierarchy of factors determining language maintenance and shift.

Education is one of the most important channels which can promote language maintenance (Fishman,1989; 1991). The factor which influences language maintenance at present may presumably affect language change in the future. Therefore, much remains to be improved regarding language maintenance through education. Chinese is the third strongest mother tongue spoken in Australia (after Italian and Greek). Although private, public and weekend schools offer Chinese as a subject, the number of such schools and the efforts put into the maintenance of Chinese are limited. Without adequate learning, which will be gained only via bilingual education, the future of Chinese in Australia can be bleak. Only with bilingual education, will children be put in a better position of cognitive development and the language development of both English and Chinese. It is strongly advocated by linguists and sociolinguists (Cummins,1979; Clyne, 1964) that acquisition of the mother tongue should be given priority for cognitive development. There is a need for bilingual education to be established in Australia for Chinese migrants. Social efforts in enhancement of migrants' political and economical status is an important area to improve, in order to generate in the public and immigrants the value and worth of minority languages as a national resource. Adequate national and state language policy planning, professional competence and commitment in community action should be combined to promote an educational change.

They are both needed for the full rehabilitation of minority languages and a complete understanding of the potential of societal bilingualism and mother tongue teaching by the several sectors concerned (Tosi, 1984)

From the survey, we can conclude that the home domain represents a fairly important Chinese-speaking setting, and consequently determines language maintenance to a great extent. However, this mainly indicates that parents/grandparents have a great influence on the

speech behaviour of their children but relatively less impact on their reading ability and especially their ability of writing skills. The support of bilingual families is both important and urgent. Bilingual families should be provided with social values, more information, sufficient training and useful skills in order to overcome their limitations and activate their potential.

Another aspect of education is the weekend schools which serve as a factor improving children's reading and writing abilities. Parents who have high expectations of their children's Chinese language proficiency and positive attitudes toward maintaining Chinese language and culture can provide part of the determination; children's attitudes towards Chinese learning and children's efforts put into Chinese learning cannot be neglected. The results of the survey further indicate that living with Chinese neighbours can greatly contribute to the reinforcement of the maintenance of Chinese. What is regrettable is that Chinese programs on SBS and other media sources seem to have little impact on language maintenance for children.

Regarding language shift, it occurs in the youngest generation. Children are more ready to assimilate to the majority society. Majority education at school serves as the strongest power of language shift. This leads children to draw away from their minority language--Chinese, but close to the majority language--English. In addition, the massive amount of broadcasting of English programs on TV acts as an agent for language shift. English-speaking neighbours and friends may also be regarded as one of the factors for language shift.

Interestingly, the children's attitudes to language choice seems to be closely related to the length of stay in Australia. It indicates that their liking for the language is associated with their competence in the language. Since their Chinese competence declines with the amount of time in Australia, the preference of Chinese to English goes down as a consequence.

In some other cases, attitudinal factors may be related to language choice and are not necessarily related to language proficiency. Students who adopted from their parents a maintenance attitude toward Chinese reported that they used it more than children who accepted from their parents a more assimilationist view.

To conclude, it is important to stress that no one single factor accounts for the children's maintenance and shift away from Chinese. The many factors affecting maintenance and shift interact in complex ways so that maintenance and shift may occur (Grosjean, 1982). The survey in this paper has provided evidence that there is a tendency that Chinese children are experiencing a process of language shift from the minority language--Chinese to the majority language--English, via various socio-linguistic factors and in different domains. The prospect

of the loss of Chinese in the third generation can probably be predicted if efforts are not put in to prevent it from occurring. As discovered in the interviews, parents have expressed their worries that their children might lose Chinese or that their Chinese language proficiency might decline. Writing Chinese serves as the best case. If a bilingual family is supported in every way, 'if children's proficiency in the minority language is fostered at school, and they are given opportunities to learn to read and write, it will contribute a lot to the maintenance of minority language' (Appel, 1987). It remains to be seen if Australia and the public are able to realise such a threat as minority language loss and cultural stagnation. If bilingual education is established for the Chinese minority and more efforts are put into the Chinese language maintenance, the process of language shift will presumably slow down. I hope that the information provided in this paper will contribute towards the broad goal of maintenance of minority languages and enrichment of multiculturalism in Australia and will be of particular use to those involved in bilingual education and language policy planning.

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## Appendix: Questionnaire

(English Version)

To the Children

1. Your age? \_\_\_\_\_
2. Your sex? M F
3. At what age did you come to Australia?  
Years\_\_\_\_\_ Months\_\_\_\_\_
4. How long have you stayed in Australia?  
Years\_\_\_\_\_ Months\_\_\_\_\_
5. Have you received primary education in China? Yes No  
If yes, please indicate: Years\_\_\_\_\_ Months\_\_\_\_\_
6. Have you received secondary education in China? Yes No  
If yes, please indicate: Years\_\_\_\_\_ Months \_\_\_\_\_
7. Do you go to school in Australia? Yes No  
If yes, please indicate: Private Public
8. How many years have you been studying in the school in Australia?  
**Years\_\_\_\_\_ Months\_\_\_\_\_**
9. How would you rate your knowledge of the Chinese language before you left China?
  - a. Speaking  
very good good average poor very poor Nil
  - b. Listening  
very good good average poor very poor Nil
  - c. Reading  
very good good average poor very poor Nil
  - d. Writing  
very good good average poor very poor Nil
9. At what age did you begin to learn English? Years\_\_\_\_\_ Months\_\_\_\_\_
10. Do you receive any part of your education in Chinese medium at day school in Australia  
Yes No
11. Do you study Chinese as a subject at Australia school? Yes No  
If yes, please indicate:

public school   private school   weekend school

If yes, how many hours a week? \_\_\_\_\_

12. Do your parents/grandparents teach Chinese to you at home?   Yes   No

If yes, how often? \_\_\_\_\_

13. Do you learn Chinese by yourself?   Yes   No

14. Do you learn Chinese from tutor?   Yes   No

If yes, how many hours a week? \_\_\_\_\_

15. How do you rate your Chinese language proficiency now

a. Speaking

very good   good   average   poor   very poor   Nil

b. Listening

very good   good   average   poor   very poor   Nil

c. Reading

very good   good   average   poor   very poor   Nil

d. Writing

very good   good   average   poor   very poor   Nil

16. Which language do you speak at home?

With father:   English   Chinese   Mix

With mother:   English   Chinese   Mix

With siblings:   English   Chinese   Mix

With others:   English   Chinese   Mix

17. Which language do you use when you speak with your grandparents face-to-face or on the phone?

English Chinese Mix

18. Which language type do you use at Australia day school?

English Chinese Mix

19. Do you watch Chinese programs on SBS? Yes No  
If Yes, please indicate:

Which programs? \_\_\_\_\_

How often? very often often occasionally

20. Do you watch Chinese videos? Yes No

If Yes, please indicate:

Which programs? \_\_\_\_\_

How often? very often often occasionally

21. Do you watch English programs on TV? Yes No

22. Do you read Chinese newspapers and magazines? Yes No

If Yes, please indicate: very often often occasionally

If No, please state the reason: \_\_\_\_\_

23. Do you read Chinese picture books or books? Yes No

If Yes, please indicate: very often often occasionally

If No, please state the reason: \_\_\_\_\_

24. Which language type do you use when you speak with your neighbours?

English Chinese Mix

Please state the reason \_\_\_\_\_

25. Which language type do you use when you speak with your Chinese peer friends who can speak both English and Chinese?

English Chinese Mix

Please state the reason \_\_\_\_\_

26. Which language do you use when you feel angry or anxious?

English    Chinese    Mix

Please state the reason \_\_\_\_\_

27. Which language do you use when you play computer games?

English    Chinese    Mix

Please state the reason \_\_\_\_\_

28. Which language do you use when you speak with your dog or cat or with animals at the zoo or with the imaginary characters?

English    Chinese    Mix

Please state the reason \_\_\_\_\_

29. Which language type do use when you are in your dream?

English    Chinese    Mix

30. Which language do you prefer to use more?

Speaking:        English    Chinese

Reading:         English    Chinese

Writing:         English    Chinese

31. How important is it for you to be bilingual/use two languages?

very important    important    don't know    not important    a disadvantage

32. What is the most important reason for you to learn Chinese?

\_\_\_\_\_

33. What is the most important reason for you to learn English well?

\_\_\_\_\_

**To the Parents**

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of arrival in Australia: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest educational qualification: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How would you rate your Chinese language proficiency?
  - a. Speaking  
very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil
  - b. Listening  
very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil
  - c. Reading  
very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil
  - d. Writing  
very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil
  
2. How would you rate your children's Chinese language proficiency?
  - a. Speaking  
very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil
  - b. Listening  
very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil
  - c. Reading  
very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil
  - d. Writing  
very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil
  
3. Can you speak native-like English?    Yes    No

4. How would you rate your English language proficiency?

a. Speaking

very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil

b. Listening

very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil

c. Reading

very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil

d. Writing

very good    good    average    poor    very poor    Nil

4. Which type of language do you use when speaking with your child?

English    Chinese    Mix

5. How important do you think knowledge of Chinese is to maintaining your ethnic identity in Australia?

very important    important    unimportant    a disadvantage

Please state the reason: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Do you think that your child should maintain Chinese language and culture?

Yes    No    Indifferent    Others: please indicate:

\_\_\_\_\_

7. What efforts have you put into your children's keeping Chinese language and culture ?

\_\_\_\_\_

8. Do you insist that your child should speak only Chinese at home? Yes    No

What is the reason \_\_\_\_\_

9. How important do you think your children should learn English well?

very important    important    don't know    not important

a disadvantage

Please explain: \_\_\_\_\_

10. How would you feel if your children lost Chinese? Do you think that will happen?

\_\_\_\_\_

11. What type of neighbours do you live with?

mainly Chinese-speaking people

mainly English-speaking people

mix

12. Do you watch Chinese programs on SBS? Yes No

If Yes, please indicate:

which programs? \_\_\_\_\_

How often? very often often sometimes

13. Do you watch Chinese videos? Yes No If Yes, please indicate:

Which programs? \_\_\_\_\_

How often? very often often sometimes

14. Do you watch English programs on TV? Yes No

15. Do you read Chinese newspapers and magazines? Yes No

16. Do you read Chinese picture books? Yes No