

Promotion of Child Bilingualism in a Monolingual Society

Rebecca Lindsey Parsons

Griffith University

2 May, 2005

INTRODUCTION

For various reasons, many families need and/or want to raise their children bilingual while living in a monolingual society. They may employ one of several language use strategies to try to accomplish this, and may or may not meet with success. It is important to note that success to one family could mean failure to another. While one set of parents may be happy if their children simply understand a second language (receptive bilingualism), another may be hoping to have children who appear to be native speakers in both languages. I will be reviewing the strategies and issues in promoting bilingualism in children up to primary school age, as well as case studies of families who have tried to raise their children bilingual.

To begin a study on the promotion of bilingualism in children, it is first necessary to define bilingualism. There are many possible definitions of bilingualism, ranging from the mere use of two languages, regardless of proficiency, to complete mastery of both languages to the level of a native speaker. The former allows for even those with poor language skills to be included and does not imply the level of nativity a child bilingual would ideally acquire in both languages. However, the latter definition may go too far, for as Saunders (1988) points out, it is very rare for someone to attain complete mastery in two languages. When one considers all the various domains in which we use language, it is extremely unlikely that even a balanced bilingual would not have areas of dominance in each language. However, I would tend toward a more demanding definition of bilingualism, such as that of Thiéry (1976, cited in Liddicoat, 1991) “being taken for a native speaker by native speakers of both languages”. When applied to children, this would mean that they have attained a level equivalent to that of native speaking children of the same age in each of their languages, and that their pronunciation is such that they would be mistaken for native speakers, with perhaps a small allowance for some amount of syntactic, lexical, and phonological interference from their dominant to their non-dominant language. I will also allow that this is the ultimate goal, and that at various points in his or her development, a child may not live up to this definition. However, for the purposes of this paper, attaining only competent but non native-like skills in the second language and receptive bilingualism will be considered failure to become bilingual, which will be grouped with cases in which children ultimately lose their second language skills completely.

ISSUES IN BILINGUAL DEVELOPMENT

Language Use Strategies

One of the most common and recommended methods for parents wishing to raise their children bilingual is the one person one language (OPOL) method (Grammont, 1902, cited in Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). This simply involves each parent speaking one language to their children. It may or may not be their own native language. Minority language parents (or non-community language parents) employing this method may differ in how strictly they apply it. Some will speak to their children in the minority language in any and every circumstance and provide a translation for monolingual speakers. Others will switch to the majority language in front of monolingual majority language speakers. As children grow older and parents feel more secure about their language abilities, parents may become less strict in the exclusive use of the minority language (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). While Romaine (1989) suggests that one of the most common outcomes of OPOL is receptive bilingualism only, many case studies show that active bilingualism is possible (Harding-Esch & Riley,

2003; Saunders, 1988; Taeschner, 1983; Zierer, 1977). However, as Romaine (1989) points out, most successful cases are with children from advantaged backgrounds.

Another common approach is called minority language at home (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). This is usually the natural tendency for immigrant families, but is also frequently used in mixed-language couples, where one parent uses their non-native language with the children so as to give them more exposure to the minority language.

Another approach to raising children bilingual has been called a mixed strategy (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004), where one or both parents switch frequently between two languages, known as code-switching. Code-switching may take place at the lexical level, mid-sentence or paragraph, or based on location or interlocutor. This approach is seen most commonly in bilingual and immigrant communities (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). Finally, some families choose strategies of time and place, with one or both parents speaking a minority language to their children in specific places (e.g., at home) or at designated times.

Stages in Bilingual Language Development

Volterra and Taeschner (1977) have documented three stages through which bilingual children pass as their speech develops. In the first stage, children use words from both languages, but will only identify any item with only one word from one language, with no corresponding word in the other. This is similar to the phenomenon with monolingual children in which they have few synonyms in their early vocabularies. As a result, when children in this stage begin to speak in short sentences, they will often contain words from both languages. Sometimes it will appear that children have a word in each language for the same thing, but it turns out that they may be associating, for example, the dresser in mommy's room with a word in one language, but the dresser in their room with a word in their other language. During this first stage, Saunders (1988) warns, some parents may begin to worry that the children are confused, or not learning one of the languages sufficiently. This can cause them to abandon their efforts, especially if given poor advice from doctors, teachers, or other outside observers.

In the second stage, Volterra and Taeschner (1977) found that the children they observed had begun to distinguish between the two languages, and had names for items in both languages, but they applied the same syntactic rules to both languages. However, Padilla & Liebman (1975) found to the contrary that the bilingual children they observed (ages 1.5-2.2 at the beginning of the study) showed differentiation between their languages at the phonological, lexical, and syntactic levels at a very young age. In this second stage, children also begin to be able to translate from one language to the other. When children in this stage attempt to use a word and do not meet with success in being understood, they will often try to use the same word from the other language (Saunders, 1988).

In the third stage, children speak both languages correctly both at the lexical and syntactic levels, although examples of interference may continue for a long time thereafter. At this point, they will be able to select the correct language based on the interlocutor (Saunders, 1988; Volterra & Taeschner, 1977).

Junker and Stockman (2002) found that bilingual German-English 24-27 month olds already had two separate languages, at least on the lexical level, demonstrating translation equivalents for 43.8% of the vocabulary for which they were tested. Ninety percent of the families in this study were practicing OPOL. When pooling the vocabulary from both languages, the bilingual children had a vocabulary comparable in size to that of the monolingual control groups. However, the community language was already dominant in the majority of cases, with many more lexical items than in the minority language.

Minority Language Exposure

Some case studies give detailed information on the percentages of minority and majority language exposure the children have had at various stages of their lives (Saunders, 1988; Taeschner, 1983). This may be an important factor in ultimate minority language attainment. Kamada (1997) notes that children with minority language mothers tend to have more success in becoming bilingual than those with minority language fathers. While she attributes this to the mothers' determination to pass on their own language, it seems more likely to be the result of the mothers spending more time talking with their children than the fathers, even if they work away from the home. Pearson, Fernandez, Lewedeg, and Oller (1997, cited in Barron-Hauwaert, 2004), after studying toddlers aged eight months to two and a half years, concluded that children need to be exposed to the minority language 40-60% of the time in order to become a balanced bilingual.

Minority Language Resistance and Techniques for Reinforcement

At some point during their early development, bilingual children will likely show some resistance to speaking the minority language. This may appear in one of several forms: responding in the majority language, avoiding minority language speakers, using only gestures, or using only one word answers (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004). For Saunders' (1988) two eldest children, the peak of this resistance occurred at ages 3;5 and 2;7. For Taeschner's (1983) two children, this occurred around ages 2;9 and 2;4. At this point, Taeschner theorises that children attempt to use various words from each language. If they are only exposed to monolingual speakers in the majority language, they discover that words in the majority language are understood by everyone, while words in the minority language only work with one or very few people. As a consequence, they begin to use more and more of the majority language. It is at this stage that both Saunders and Taeschner documented their efforts to encourage greater minority language usage. For Taeschner, this consisted of simply asking "Wie?" (What) repeatedly in German, each time her children said something in Italian. Soon they came to realise that this meant to switch languages. However, she warns that this technique should only be used when children have reached stage two, and actually possess vocabulary in both languages. It is also best used when the children are interested in talking about something and they are not tired or in a hurry. She also did not continue to pursue this technique when her girls were recounting things experienced primarily in the majority language, as it usually resulted in a return to the majority language or an end to the conversation.

When Saunders' children began to show resistance, his technique was to either to pretend not to understand the majority language, or to prompt the children with questions in the minority language. In response to his second child's dominance in English, he also established a German only afternoon once a week for the two boys beginning at ages 2;1 and 4;0. Saunders believes that had he not persisted in insisting that the boys speak German at this stage, they would have become only receptive bilinguals.

Juan-Garau and Perez-Vidal (2001, cited in Barrow-Hauwaert, 2004) used a similar technique to encourage their son to use more of his rapidly vanishing English at age three. After spending three weeks in England, the father became strict in asking for translations and clarifications when his son used Catalan. He also bought two puppets and told his son that they only spoke English. After imposing this strategy, his son's English levels improved dramatically.

Supporting the importance of a strategy to counter resistance, Döpke (1992a, cited in Barron-Hauwaert, 2004) believes that there are two main factors for successful bilingualism:

parents consistently adhering to the appropriate language and their insistence that children do as well. Of the six German-English bilingual families Döpke studied in Australia, the children of the highest proficiency were those whose parents showed consistency and separation in their language use. Probably not coincidentally, these parents also were those who made the greatest effort to bring the children into contact with the minority language through books, music, other people, and trips to Austria.

Although some type of false monolingual strategy can not be continued long-term, and eventually the children will be old enough to realise that their parents do in fact speak the majority language, normally children will settle into a pattern of language usage with each parent. Once a certain language is established, a child normally will feel uncomfortable speaking a different language with their parents (Saunders, 1988). The primary exception to this is in mixed strategy families, in which children typically take on the manner of speaking of their parents, freely switching between languages (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004).

Minority Language Relatives and Country Visits

For many families, frequent visits from monolingual relatives and/or visits to the minority language country seem to be an important factor in the children's ultimate attainment of bilingualism. Hoffmann (1985) suggests that around the age of five, when children are beginning primary school and looking more toward their peers for models of behaviour, a visit to the minority language country may be an important reinforcement of that language. Kamada (1997) reports of one English-speaking family living in Japan whose children spoke Japanese together until a one-year furlough in New Zealand at ages 5 and 7, after which time the children spoke English together. Similarly, a visit to the minority language country during the earlier period of minority language resistance can also prove a significant boost to minority language production. Kamada (1997) reports on another couple in Japan (both bilingual, one dominant in Japanese, one in English) whose son by age 2;6 was producing Japanese almost exclusively. A visit to New Zealand around age three for three and a half weeks initiated a marked improvement in his English output. During his stay, he spent two to three mornings a week in a playgroup, as well as time with relatives. By age three and a half his output in Japanese and English was about equal. Arnberg (1987) cited an example of a bilingual child whose English went from 12% to 73% during her observations after a visit to an Anglophone country where he attended a summer day camp. Kamada (1997), based on multiple case studies she conducted (some of which are described below) has concluded that either frequent or less frequent but longer trips overseas are important in acquiring bilingualism.

Minority Language Childcare and Playgroups

Three other methods of reinforcing the minority language are minority language babysitters, day care/preschool, and playgroups. In one case study, a child whose minority language production was minimal until age three began to blossom after her parents enrolled her in a minority language international school two days a week and switched from majority to minority language au pairs (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004).

Arnberg (1984) studied the effectiveness of English-language and Serbo-Croatian language playgroups in Sweden. Despite several problems and obstacles with the groups, including a wide range of ages (2-6), a wide range of home language use patterns, and the children using Swedish as soon as the adults were not present, the playgroup seemed to have helped with minority language output at home. One third of the parents reported that there was much more English used at home following group meetings, and for the rest, slightly

more. The parents in the English-language playgroup decided that it was best to have a non-parent that the children were led to believe was a monolingual English speaker lead the group, as otherwise the children were tempted to use Swedish with them. Sometimes the primary benefit of these playgroups is to inspire the parents to persist in using the minority language at home, when they see other parents addressing their children in the minority language (M. Levy, personal communication, April 20, 2005).

Bilingual and minority language day care or preschool/kindergarten is also a good supplement to in-home language use that, like minority language playgroups, has the additional positive effect of exposing children to other children who speak the minority language. This exposure can help with children's self-confidence, as bilingual children may be sensitive to being different from other children or embarrassed about their minority language parent (Barron-Hauwaert, 2004; Saunders, 1988). The parents in Arnberg's (1984) playgroup study reported positive results in their children's willingness to use the language and pride in their abilities.

Language Prestige and Support

Two factors that have come to light in various studies are the support for and prestige of the minority language. If friends, family, and neighbours are unsupportive or even hostile to bilingualism, then it is possible that such factors will inhibit a child's ultimate attainment in the minority language, or may even lead to the parents giving up their efforts to raise their child bilingual. Sondergaard (1981) recounts his family's attempt to raise their son bilingual in Danish and Finnish in Denmark. A combination of delayed speech, lack of production of Finnish and the severe pressure from monolingual Danish family members to give up their efforts finally led the family to do so at age three. These family members felt that the child would suffer permanent damage from their efforts, and the parents did not know how to refute these allegations at the time. Sondergaard also comments on the lack of prestige of the Finnish language in Denmark, and how he felt that it would ultimately have become an obstacle to his child, who turned out to be lacking in self-confidence and showed a great need for conformity. Even as a monolingual Danish speaker, his son eventually suffered teasing for his "half-Finnishness" (p. 301). This was clearly connected to political/economic issues, as other children suggested his mother was a " 'guest worker' who took jobs from Danes" (p. 301). Romaine (1989) supports this theory in her analysis of families using the OPOL strategy. She only found success in bilingual acquisition in children from advantaged backgrounds and in which the minority language was not stigmatised.

Christian (1977) theorises that there are several ways to bring prestige to a minority language in the eyes of a child. The first is connected to the person who uses the language with the child, with the father being the person of greatest prestige and the family servant the person of least prestige. Secondly, he emphasises the importance of developing literacy in the minority language, with abundant exposure to written materials in that language. Thirdly, he regards restricting the use of mass media, especially television in the majority language, and exposure to television in the minority language, if available, to be important in increasing the language's prestige. Finally, he postulates that because academic subjects, as opposed to those with artistic or emotive sensitivity, hold higher prestige in the United States, a child should be taught academic subjects, other than just the language itself, in the minority language. He attempted to use these principles in raising his daughter. As a non-native Spanish speaker in the U.S. married to a native speaker, they practiced minority language at home, kept no TV in the house, and had begun to teach their daughter to read Spanish by 36 months. At that age, and after several visits to Spanish-speaking countries, she showed a clear

dominance in Spanish. However, because the article ends at age 36 months, the ultimate usefulness of his theories is not verifiable.

Saunders (1988) also emphasised literacy skills and exposure to books as important in creating prestige for the minority language in the eyes of his children, as a language that is only spoken will seem less important to children than a language that is both written and spoken. All Saunders' children ultimately learned to read and write in German, their minority language, two at the same time they learned to read in English, one before, starting at age 2;2. Past (1976, cited by Saunders, 1988) also used literacy skills to aid in his child's language development. Past and his wife, who were both non-native speakers of Spanish, taught their daughter Spanish with only 60-90 minutes exposure per day. However, they taught her to read in Spanish from age 1;11 and gave her opportunities to watch Spanish TV and play with Spanish-speaking children. By the time she started kindergarten, she was rated as a balanced bilingual on an Oral Language Dominance Measure.

While literacy and exposure to books may help with language prestige, it also is without question useful in the areas of vocabulary development, the introduction of formal register, and poetic uses of language (Saunders, 1988). Saunders also points out the utility of other audio-visual materials, such as videotapes and cassettes of songs and stories, for acquainting children with various accents and varieties of language.

Child-Centred Communication and Correction

Döpke (1986) adds another dimension to the question of successful bilingual acquisition through a study on discourse strategies in bilingual families. Borrowing from the literature on monolingual speech development, she theorises that success in eliciting the minority language will be more likely if the minority language parent uses more child-centred communication than the majority language parent. In her study of six German-English bilingual children ages 2;4-3;2 in OPOL families, a combination of child-centred communication strategies by the minority language parent and sociolinguistic factors (in this case, having many German friends and relatives visit regularly) drew the difference between the only two children who "originally and intentionally" (p. 499) used German during her two recordings. The minority language parents who met with greater success were more likely to be responsive to the child's contributions to the conversation, worked on maintaining already introduced topics, and were more oriented towards conversing with than controlling the child than their partner.

As with communication styles, correction strategies for speech disfluencies and/or stuttering can have an effect on the ultimate success of bilingualism. Johnson (1960, cited by Saunders 1988) offers advice for monolingual children, which can be applied to bilingual children as well. When stuttering or disfluencies arise, he recommends that you not criticise your child's mistakes in grammar or pronunciation, but help them by supplying words and by using books and other means to help them increase their vocabulary. The child should not be made to feel self-conscious or stuttering could become ingrained. While these stages usually pass without intervention, like monolingual children, bilingual children can have speech problems (Saunders, 1988).

Parents' Language Ability

There are two additional issues of interest with regard to the language ability of the parents. The first is whether it is possible to teach your child a language when you are not a native speaker of that language. Saunders (1988) is one of the best examples that this is possible, as he was not a native speaker of German but successfully raised three German-

English bilingual children. However, he clearly had a very high level of German with only a very slight accent and a wide vocabulary. Nevertheless, he admitted to looking words up in the dictionary when necessary, and encouraging the children to do so as well. The children ultimately took on his accent and assumed it as proper, and found other German speakers' pronunciation quaint or amusing.

Past (1976, cited in Saunders, 1988) is another non-native minority language speaker, who along with his wife successfully brought up their child (at least to age five) as a Spanish-English bilingual with only 60-90 minutes of Spanish exposure per day. Past and his wife, who lived in the U.S., took a Foreign Service Institute type Spanish language exam in which 5 indicates a native speaker and received scores of 2+ and 3+. However, because of additional language input from TV and Spanish-speaking playmates, it is hard to determine how much of their success can be attributed to the community versus the parents.

The remaining issue of interest is the language ability of the majority language parent, in OPOL families. It is clear from the literature that in most of the case studies in which a child becomes an active bilingual, both parents understood (at a minimum) the minority language. Harding-Esch & Riley (2003) offer the general rule that when "one parent does not understand one of the languages, attempts to maintain bilingualism in the family are most likely to fail" (p. 39). However, one would imagine that it would be possible to compensate for such a situation through other means, such as exposure to other minority language-speaking adults or children, or visits to the minority language country. Taeschner (1983) is one good example of this. Her Italian husband only understood minimal German, yet she succeeded in raising two bilingual daughters with the aid of German-speaking relatives, visits to Germany, and much persistence.

CASE STUDIES

Research Sample

The families described in the case studies below have used a variety of methods to raise their children bilingual. For clarity in my analysis of the factors supporting successful bilingualism, I have limited the types of families studied. Only bilingual (as opposed to tri- or multilingual families) have been included. In all the families, children have been raised bilingual from birth or shortly thereafter. In addition, children from bilingual or immigrant communities have not been included, as the focus is on children being raised bilingual in monolingual communities. However, immigrant families who are not surrounded by other speakers of their language, but may have some minority language speaking friends or family, have been included. I have also excluded families who have moved for extended periods of time to the minority language country, or who have moved permanently from the majority language to the minority language country. Finally, where possible, my analysis will be limited to the establishment of bilingualism in the first years of a child's life, prior to starting primary school (around five years of age).

Case Studies: Successful Bilingual Acquisition

All of the bilingual case studies described here are summarised in Table 1 (pp. 8-10). They are arranged with the examples of success at the top and examples of least success at the bottom, divided by a thicker line. They are further arranged with OPOL families listed first, with mothers using the minority language first, followed by fathers, followed by

Table 1. Summary of Case Studies

Key: ml-minority language; ML=majority language; BL=bilingual

Author, Year	Language Use Strategy	Birth Order	Language Between Parents	ml Relative Visits: Age / Duration	Visits to ml country: Age / Duration	Level of achievement by age 5	Other issues
Taeschner, 1983	OPOL* (Mom ml)	First	ML (Dad understands only basic ml)	0;6 / 4 weeks 1;6 / 4 weeks 2;0 / 8 weeks 3;1 / 4 weeks 5;0 / 3 months	4 / 2 months	BL	*But uses ML in front of ML speakers other than partner. Sister born at age 1;1. Mom began “Wie?” strategy at 2;9. Began Italian nursery school at 3;3.
Barron-Hauwaert, 2004 – Cornelia & Denis	OPOL (Mom ml)	First	ML (Dad speaks ml)	Unknown	Three times a year since birth.	BL*	*Reported on daughter at age 6. ML-speaking nanny for first three. At 3;0 started at an International School two days/week and had a ml nanny.
Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003 – Ronald & Martine	OPOL (Mom ml)	First and second	ml	Unknown	Frequency and age known / up to 6 weeks	BL (ML stronger)*	*Reported on children at ages 3 & 5; report from later age noted younger child felt ml basic and lamented lack of slang when talking with cousins.
Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003 – Peter & Anne Marie	OPOL (Dad ml)	First and second	ML (Mom speaks ml)	Unknown	Child 1: 3;9 / duration unknown* Probably others	BL**	*During this visit, older child first spoke to dad in ml, previously spoke in ML. **Reported on children at ages 3,8. Older child loves being BL and finds it useful for communicating with cousins.
Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003 – Jan & Liisa	OPOL (Dad ml)	First and second	Unknown (Mom speaks ml)	Sees grandma frequently (who is BL)	Unknown	BL*	*Reported on children at ages 3 & 5. Dad was raised BL. Lots of ml exposure on TV and radio, but no peer contact.
Saunders, 1988 – Thomas & Frank	OPOL (Dad ml non-native)	First and second	ML (Mom speaks ml)	None	None under age 5	BL (ML stronger)**	Dad established German only afternoon for boys when 2;1-3;2 and 4;0-5;1.

Author, Year	Language Use Strategy	Birth Order	Language Between Parents	ml Relative Visits: Age / Duration	Visits to ml country: Age / Duration	Level of achievement by age 5	Other issues
Saunders, 1988 – Katrina	OPOL (Dad ml non-native)	Third	ML (Mom speaks ml)	None	3;4 / 6 months*	BL (ML stronger)**	*Child never spoke German to adults other than her dad during this trip. **Less fluency and accuracy in German but high level of vocabulary.
Caldas & Caron-Caldas, 1992	OPOL to 1;6 (Mom ml); ml at home after	First	Mixed to 1;6; ml after	Unknown	3 / 2 weeks 4 / 2 weeks	BL	Twin sisters born at age 2. In English-speaking day care starting at 0;3, then attended English-speaking kindergarten.
Kamada, 1997 – Paul & Leah	ml at home (both parents native)	First and second	ml	Unknown (probably none)	Child 1: none before 5 Child 2: 5 / 1 year	BL	Children were home schooled in ml curriculum and ultimately had dominant ml literacy skills.
Kamada, 1997 – Leah's family	OPOL to age 2;6 (Mom ml); primarily ml at home after	First	ML (Dad speaks ml)	Unknown but probably frequent / BL grandparents live in country	2;9 / 3.5 weeks	BL*	*At about age 4;3. Child in ML day care for ages 0-2. At 2;6 child was producing only ML and mom started staying home with him.
Kamada, 1997 – Rui	Mixed: 60 ml / 40 ML (both parents native)	First	Mixed	0;0 / 6 months	1;3 / 6 weeks and every year after for about 6 weeks*	BL (ML stronger and produced 60-70% of time)	*By the end of third visit to ml country at 3;6, child had native-like inflection and pronunciation.
Arnberg, 1987 –Ulf & Nancy	ml at home (Mom is native ml speaker)	First	ml (Dad speaks ml)	Each summer / 3-4 weeks	Age unknown / 1 week* After age 2;6 – exact age unknown / 3 weeks	BL (ML stronger)	*After this visit, child started to speak English consistently. Child listens to lots of ml tapes and heard many ml books when young. Child will speak ml with younger sister upon request.

Author, Year	Language Use Strategy	Birth Order	Language Between Parents	ml Relative Visits: Age / Duration	Visits to ml country: Age / Duration	Level of achievement by age 5	Other issues
Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004	ml at home (Mom is native ml speaker)	First - fourth	ml	Unknown	Unknown	2 are BL, 2 speak ml as second language*	*Reported on children at ages 10-17; all children were ml dominant upon entering pre-school at age 3 then became ML dominant. The two children who are balanced BLs both attended bilingual classes/schools in elementary school.
Arnberg, 1987 – Polish woman	OPOL (Mom ml)	First	ML (Dad speaks no ml)	Age and duration unknown, but ml grandma does visit	None mentioned	Basic level of ml*	*Reported on daughter at age 6. Child replies in ML to mom but speaks ml to grandma
Kamada, 1997 – Ann	OPOL (80-90% of time for ml mom)	First and second	Mixed	Unknown, but probably frequent; BL grandparents live in country	Child 1: 1 / 1 month twice 3 / 1 month Child 2: 1 / 1 month 5 / 1 month	Mostly passive BL only*	*By age 6, girls started using ml regularly but only with ml cousins. Children cared for by ML babysitters from birth.
Sondergaard, 1981	OPOL (Mom ml)	First	ML (Dad has poor ml abilities)	Unknown, but probably frequent; ml relatives in nearby country	Summer visits are mentioned, although no more information is given.	Monolingual*	*Just before age 3, parents gave up bringing up son BL because he did not voluntarily say anything in ml and his language production in ML was below average. ML relatives were very negative about BLism.

minority language at home and mixed strategies. I will describe these case studies in the order presented in the table.

Taeschner (1983) offers one of the more detailed accounts available in a case study of her efforts to raise her daughters as German-Italian bilinguals in Italy. For the first two years of the first child, Lisa's life, Taeschner, who is a native German speaker, stayed home during the days and thus Lisa had greater exposure to German than Italian. When Lisa was 1;1, her sister Giulia was born. By 1;6 Lisa was showing equal output in both languages (as measured by number of words uttered in each). However, at 1;11 after a time of greater Italian input, she showed a slight dominance in Italian. By the time Lisa was 2;0, her output was again balanced. It is at this point that her knowledge of German began to outstrip that of her father, and he understood less and less of her German. From 2;0 to 2;2, after a visit with her maternal grandparents, Lisa's German showed clear dominance. However, after more intense contact with Italian from 2;7 to 2;10, her Italian began to dominate. At 2;9 Taeschner began to pretend not to understand Italian some of the time, asking "Wie?" until Lisa responded in German, and also began to use German exclusively with the girls, even when monolingual Italians were present. Within two months of these new initiatives, Lisa's languages were

again balanced. From age 3;1 to 3;2 Lisa had a one-month visit by a German-speaking aunt and uncle, and by then was capable of speaking entirely in German. By 3;3, Lisa was aware that her mom spoke Italian, but had grown accustomed to speaking German with her, and would seem surprised if she spoke Italian. It was at this age that she began Italian nursery school. However, her German continued from this point without problems. After a two-month visit to Germany to stay with her grandparents at age 4;0, Taeschner noted that Lisa's syntax and morphology was not significantly different than before the trip, although she did show some lexical improvement. It seems that by this age, her use of German was stabilised and although visits of relatives and trips to Germany were good for language maintenance and lexical improvement, Taeschner had successfully negotiated Lisa through early resistance and greater exposure to Italian through nursery school. The story of Lisa's upbringing demonstrates that her language output was clearly related to her language input, at least in her first years. Second, it demonstrates the effectiveness of the "Wie?" technique in encouraging her minority language use. Finally, it demonstrates the importance of her visits by minority language relatives and to the minority language country in developing and stabilising her minority language skills.

Barron-Hauwaert (2004) wrote the case study of Cornelia and Denis, a German-French couple living in France and practicing OPOL with their one daughter, Ophélie, who was six at the time of reporting. Both parents could speak the other's language, however the parents used French between themselves. For the first three years of Ophélie's life, they had an Algerian, French-speaking nanny while Cornelia worked. However, this French exposure was somewhat balanced by three annual trips to Germany each year. Unfortunately, by age three, Ophélie was rather unwilling to use German. At this point, her parents enrolled her in an International School two days a week (presumably with classes in German), and she attended a French school the remaining days. It was this influence, and getting to know other bilingual children, that finally turned the tide. In addition, they hired a German au pair and continued to have German au pairs until the time of reporting. By age six Ophélie was at a stable state of bilingualism, feeling very comfortable even while in Germany, allowing her mother to relax about her German language skills

Ronald and Martine, an American-French couple living in England, had two children, ages three and five at the time of reporting (Harding-Esch & Riley, 2003). While the parents spoke French together, they practiced OPOL with the children. Both children attended nursery school from the age of 14 months. Anne, their older child, had delayed speech and was originally dominant in English, but after various trips to France for six weeks in which she stayed with her grandparents and spoke only French, she became a balanced bilingual. After these trips, she even spoke French to her Anglophone father. Their younger child, Dominic, was also described as bilingual by his parents.

Harding-Esch & Riley (2003) also reported on Peter and Anne Marie, an English-French couple living in France. Their children were three and eight at the time of reporting. They practiced OPOL and spoke French together, although the mother understands English. Both children first spoke French to both parents, but at 3;9, their older child began speaking to her father in English during a trip to England. The father made a particular effort to expose the children to English, through conversation, books, records, songs, and rhymes. At the time of reporting, the parents described their older child as bilingual, and said that she enjoyed being so and found it useful for speaking to her cousins in England.

The final couple described by Harding-Esch & Riley (2003), Jan and Liisa, are both Finnish and live in Finland, but Jan comes from a Swedish background. They practiced OPOL with their two children, ages three and five at the time of reporting, although Liisa understands Swedish. The children also had frequent contact with their grandmother, who also spoke Swedish with them, as well as exposure to Swedish TV and radio. However, they

had virtually no peer contact in Swedish. Their older child mixed both languages until age four, but afterwards was able to separate them and learned to read in both. At age three, the younger child was still mixing languages, and putting Swedish words into Finnish constructions, but presumably would follow the path of the older child.

Saunders (1988) wrote a very detailed account of the bilingual upbringing of his three children. An Australian with an excellent, albeit non-native command of German, he was the sole regular speaker of German in the children's lives until they spent six months in Germany at ages 10;7 (Thomas), 8;9 (Frank), and 3;4 (Katrina). Their mother was also a fluent German speaker, but the family always practiced OPOL, with the mother using English. By the age of five, all of Saunders' children could be described as bilingual, and used exclusively German with their father, although they were clearly dominant in English and were less accurate and fluent in German when he tested them periodically. When tested at age five, the children made more errors in German (4.7 – 8.3) than in English (0.7 – 1.5), and also produced fewer words in the same space of time. However, they did score between the 71st and 98th percentiles (as compared to monolingual English speakers) in vocabulary tests of English and German, exhibiting a high level of both.

Saunders' was particularly strict and exacting in his use of OPOL, never mixing languages and always looking for and sometimes inventing new words in German in order to keep the language pure. When Anglophone children were visiting, he would use German to his children and translate, if necessary, for the other children. He also taught his children to read and write in German, although only Katrina started to learn before beginning school. His children also adopted this strict view of language separation, and were speaking to him primarily in German by the ages of 3;9, 3;0, and 2;6 (oldest to youngest). Although the children used primarily English together, there were times when Thomas used German with Frank to aid his father combat the younger boy's language resistance, and when the two older boys spoke with their younger sister in German, because of the novelty of her understanding it and being able to do tricks in response.

Saunders' attributes his ultimate success in raising his children actively bilingual to the efforts he made when the two older children offered resistance to German (the third never showed any resistance). In fact, until the age of 4;9, Saunders insisted to his oldest child Thomas that he only understood German (despite him speaking English with their mother). What is particular noteworthy about this story is that the children became bilingual with a much greater input in English than in German. Saunders estimates that the children heard three times more English than German before starting school and six times more afterwards (at ages 4;3, 3;4, and 4;0). However, Thomas and Katrina did have the opportunity to be exposed to German speakers outside the family during their younger years. At 3;8 Thomas was enrolled in a German kindergarten for two and a half hours on Saturday mornings. From age 2;6, Katrina attended a German playgroup one afternoon/month. Contrary to most accounts of bilingual children in a monolingual society, the children involved in this playgroup would speak German together when they met on other occasions. Katrina also benefited from the family's trip to Germany during her younger years (3;4 to 3;10). However, she would not speak to any adult other than her father in German during the entire six months. She did attend kindergarten for two hours a week and was exposed to other children for a few more hours a week on a casual basis, and would use German with these children.

Caldas and Caron-Caldas (1992), an American-Quebecois couple wrote about their experience raising their son bilingual in Louisiana. They began using the OPOL approach, but as their son attended English-speaking day care from 0;3 and was also exposed to English through TV, relatives, and neighbours, they soon realised that his French input was insufficient. When he was 1;6 they decided to practice a strict minority language at home approach. Their son began speaking quite a bit by age 2;0, initially using a mix of French and

English. Within several months he clearly differentiated between the two languages, and rarely mixed after that. Shortly after this third birthday, the family travelled to Quebec for two weeks. While previous to this visit the parents had noted a preference for English, after this visit they noted a preference for and improvement in his French. This preference lasted until he started day care again in the fall, after which point most of his utterances to his parents and new twin sisters were again in English. As a consequence, the parents planned another trip to Quebec at age 4;0. John stayed with French-speaking relatives for the entire two-week trip. After this trip, John completely abandoned his use of English at home and by five years of age, his parents felt that he spoke both languages equally well. Caldas and Caron-Caldas added that they were living in an atmosphere in Louisiana in which there is nostalgia for the rapidly disappearing French language, and as a consequence, the positive attitudes towards their son's bilingualism may have made him more comfortable using the language. This case study demonstrates how important and influential minority language country visits can be in the development and maintenance of bilingualism.

Kamada (1997) interviewed several families in Japan regarding their experiences raising their children bilingual. The first family were missionaries from New Zealand who met, married, and raised their children in Japan, except for occasional furloughs to New Zealand. They spoke English at home, except when there were Japanese guests. Neither of their children, Paul and Leah, left Japan until a furlough in New Zealand at ages seven and five. After this furlough, the children's language to each other changed permanently from Japanese to English. Because they were home schooled by their mother, they ultimately came to be balanced bilinguals with dominance in English literacy.

The second family described by Kamada (1997) is that of Leah (the daughter from case study above), who married a Japanese national. Because Leah worked full-time during the first two years of Willy's life and he had Japanese-speaking baby-sitters for 10-11 hours a day, his Japanese input was clearly dominant by age 2;6. At this point, Leah stopped working and the family decided that they would begin a minority language at home strategy, although the father sometimes had to resort to Japanese to express himself. Leah made an effort to spend a lot of time speaking and reading to Willy in English. She also pretended not to understand Japanese, or cued Willy to respond in English. At age 2;9, the family took a three and a half week trip to New Zealand, during which Willy attended a playgroup two to three mornings a week, and also spent time with English-speaking relatives. After this trip, his English output and quality continued to increase. At the time of the interview, Willy, who was 4;3, was described by his mother as a more or less balanced bilingual with near-peer level ability in both languages.

The final family interviewed by Kamada (1997) was a Chinese couple who met and married in Japan. Their son Rui was cared for by his grandmother until 0;6 entirely in Chinese, and after that time entered Japanese day care. The parents tended to mix languages at home, speaking about sixty percent Chinese and forty percent Japanese. By 0;10 Rui began speaking in both Chinese and Japanese, but Japanese soon became dominant. At 1;3 when the family first visited China, Rui was not speaking Chinese at all. After six weeks there, he returned speaking Chinese, however, it was described as foreign by his father. Each subsequent year the family has gone to China for about six weeks, and each time his language has improved. By 3;6, his father no longer found his Chinese foreign-sounding. At five years old, the parents consider Rui bilingual, but with clear dominance in Japanese, and with Chinese at less than peer level. Normally, Rui speaks Chinese about 60-70% of the time with his parents, however he uses exclusively Chinese for about a month after his visits to China.

The final of the successful case studies (Arnberg, 1987) is of Ulf and Nancy, a Swedish-American couple living in Sweden. As Ulf is very proficient in English, the family uses a minority language at home strategy. Amy, their first child, originally started speaking

in Swedish, but after a one-week stay with her American grandparents, she began speaking English consistently and has continued to do so until the time of reporting at age five. A second daughter was born when Amy was 2;6. The parents not only use English with the children but when they hear the girls speaking Swedish together, ask them to switch to English. As a result, the children speak both languages regularly to each other, however they do use more Swedish than English. The English-speaking grandparents visit the family for three to four weeks every summer, and the family has taken two visits to the U.S. during Amy's life.

Case Studies: Unsuccessful Bilingual Acquisition

In the first case study where the level of bilingualism achieved was less than was hoped by the parents, two of the children in the family did eventually become balanced bilinguals, while two speak English as a second language (Cunningham-Andersson & Andersson, 2004). The authors have four children who at the time of writing ranged in age from 10 to 17, with the second and fourth children being balanced bilinguals. The mother, who is from Northern Ireland, is married to a Swede and they live in Sweden. The parents speak English together and practice OPOL. All the children were originally dominant in English, but after entering Swedish pre-school at age three, became Swedish dominant. It was only in later grades when two of the children attended bilingual schools that they became balanced (one in sixth grade, the other in primary school, grade not given). The two who did not attend bilingual schools will still answer their parents in English, and can speak English without interspersing Swedish words, but speak with a Swedish accent and were described as competent but not native by their parents. I would conjecture that had the parents reported on all their children at age five, they would not have described them as native-like. However, it is clear from this account that if there is a significant minority language input at some point during the children's lives, the base formed from the early years can be activated into a balanced bilingualism. The question that remains is the age by which that input must be achieved in order to become native-like.

The next case study (Arnberg, 1987) is of a Polish mother and Swedish father living in Sweden. At 2;6 the mother wrote the author for help due to the fact that her daughter was only replying to her in Swedish. At that time, the family was practicing OPOL, although the mother would use Swedish with her daughter in front of Swedes. The father spoke no Polish. The daughter was immersed in a Swedish-speaking environment, including nursery school, and hardly had any contact with other minority language speakers. Encouraged by Arnberg to continue speaking to her daughter in Polish, the mother wrote again at age six. At this point, the daughter could communicate at a very basic level in Polish, but with many grammatical errors, and continued to address her mother primarily in Swedish. However, during her grandmother's visits (age and duration not mentioned), she would speak Polish with her and use more of it with her mother, even serving as a translator for her father. However, after the visits, she would return to using Swedish with her mother. At the time of writing, the mother had resigned herself to the fact that Polish would only be a second language for her daughter.

The next case study by Kamada (1997) is of a Japanese – Japanese-American couple of which the mother, Ann, is a balanced bilingual (of bilingual parents whose parents were also bilingual) and the Japanese father is very fluent in English. The father uses English about 60-70% of the time with his wife, and the family practices OPOL (except in front of Japanese speakers) or when helping with Japanese schoolwork. Both girls were cared for by Japanese babysitters from birth until they entered Japanese kindergarten. The older daughter, Aiya, has had four one-month visits to the U.S.: twice in her first year and once at ages three and seven. The younger daughter, Eka, has had two one-month visits to the U.S. at ages one and five.

Neither daughter produced English regularly until age six, and then primarily only in the presence of their English-speaking cousins or maternal grandparents (although the grandparents are bilingual). At the time of reporting the girls were 12;0 and 9;9, and responded to their mother in English twenty percent and five percent of the time, respectively. Ann described their English as well below peer level. However, she was not concerned about their language abilities, as she herself spoke little English before a year-long stay in the U.S. from ages six to seven, and she was planning for a similar trip for their family in the near future.

The final case study by Sondergaard (1981) is a striking example of what can happen when there is delayed speech and significant antagonism towards the idea of bilingualism. The author, a Danish man, married to a Finnish woman and living in Denmark, tells the story of their attempt and failure to raise their son bilingual. The family practiced OPOL, but the parents spoke Danish together, as the father had a poor command of Finnish. Although their son appeared to understand both languages, he had minimal linguistic activity until age 2;1. Once he began to talk, he never voluntarily said anything in Finnish. During the entire time the family attempted to raise their son bilingual, their Danish relatives put severe pressure on them to stop, insisting that their son would suffer permanently from this experiment. At the time, the parents did not have access to experts on this question, and as a result, gave up on their efforts just before age three. It seems that at some point they did take trips to Finland. However, the age of these trips is not given, and ultimately, their son did not end up speaking enough Finnish to communicate with his relatives in Finland using Finnish.

While there are not many case studies of failure to produce bilingualism in the literature, it is clearly very prevalent. In a study of 25 English-French families living in France, only 19 of the 42 children were described as bilingual (Métraux, 1965, cited in Arnberg, 1987). In another study of German-Australian marriages in Australia, in families with a German mother, only 4.4% of the children spoke German, and only 3.6% of those with a German father did so (Prace, 1977, cited in Saunders, 1988). Still another study in Australia of German-speaking families (presumably with two native parents), where the children were either born in Australia or arrived before age five, 23.2% of the children spoke no German to their parents.

Discussion

Looking at the ensemble of case studies described above, it seems that any number of strategies can ultimately lead to success in raising bilingual children in a monolingual culture. However, the one that stands out the most is the influence of minority language family and minority language country visits during the formative language years (2-5). These visits appeared to be the determining factor in numerous case studies. However, absent additional strategies for language exposure or use, this alone did not appear to lead to success by age five. This seems particularly evident in OPOL families, in which the minority language parent is the only regular source of minority language input for the child. In those families, only those who employed additional means, such as a false monolingual strategy or minority language playgroups, schools, or babysitters, achieved success by age five. In contrast, for minority language at home families, trips to the minority language country or regular visits with minority language relatives appeared to be sufficient to lead to bilingualism. Nevertheless, it also seems clear from several case studies that bilingualism can be achieved after age five, if there is at least receptive bilingualism established by that age. But the evidence seems to point to the fact that the input after that point needs to involve a larger amount of immersion of longer duration if the children are ultimately to become native-like in their second language. On the whole, these case studies point to the importance of parental

persistence in helping children to become bilingual. This persistence leads parents to continue using the minority language in the face of resistance, seek out help, change strategies, and employ new measures when they see that their children are not developing in their minority language use. Factors such as family and community support can ultimately influence parents in their persistence.

Limitations and Recommendations for Future Research

While there are a large number of case studies of success available for examination, and reasonable conclusions can be drawn from analysis of these studies, future researchers could better contribute to this literature in more carefully documenting the factors contributing to success or failure in each case. Studies of this nature should include information on the percentage of minority language exposure at all ages; the languages use patterns between all parents and children; age and duration of minority language country visits; age and duration of minority language family visits; amount of exposure to minority language media; age and duration of use of minority language schooling or playgroups; age and duration of use of minority language au pairs or babysitters; prestige and support issues; and ideally, objective measures of language attainment at regular intervals during a child's early years. Many of the studies cited above lacked one or more of these details, which ultimately means that we can only make educated guesses about what led to success or failure in certain cases. In addition, because most of the studies lacked objective means of measurement of children's language skills, parental expectations and standards may have led some parents to underestimate their children's abilities, and others to overestimate them. It is entirely possible that there are cases described as failure to achieve bilingualism in which the child has language abilities similar to ones described as successful. In addition, more studies on failure to achieve bilingualism would greatly help to fortify the conclusions drawn from the few studies available in this area.

References

- Arnberg, L. (1984). Mother tongue playgroups for pre-school bilingual children. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 5, 65-84.
- Arnberg, L. (1987). *Raising children bilingually: The pre-school years*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Barron-Hauwaert, S. (2004). *Language strategies for bilingual families*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Caldas, S. J., & Caron-Caldas, S. (1992). Rearing bilingual children in a monolingual culture: A Louisiana experience. *American Speech*, 67, 290-296.
- Christian, C. C., Jr. (1977). Minority language skills before age three. In W. Mackey, & Andersson, T. (Eds.), *Bilingualism in Early Childhood*. (pp. 94-108). Rowley, MA: Newbury House.
- Cunningham-Andersson, U., & Andersson, S. (2004). *Growing up with two languages: A practical guide* (2nd ed.). London: Routledge.

- Döpke, S. (1986). Discourse strategies in bilingual families. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development.*, 7, 493-507.
- Harding-Esch, E., & Riley, P. (2003). *The bilingual family: A handbook for parents*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hoffmann, C. (1985). Language acquisition in two trilingual children. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development.*, 6, 479-495.
- Junker, D. A., & Stockman, I. J. (2002). Expressive vocabulary of German-English bilingual toddlers. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, 11, 381-394.
- Kamada, L. D. (1997). Bilingual family case studies (vol. 2). *Monographs on Bilingualism* (No. 5). Tokyo: Japan Association for Language Teaching. (ERIC Document Reproduction Service No. ED422750).
- Liddicoat, A. (1991). Bilingualism: An introduction. In A. Liddicoat (Ed.), *Bilingualism and bilingual education* (pp. 1-20). Melbourne: National Languages Institute of Australia.
- McLaughlin, B. (1978). *Second-language acquisition in childhood*. Hillsdale, New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Padilla, A. M., & Liebman, E. (1975). Language acquisition in the bilingual child. *Bilingual Review*, 2, 34-55.
- Romaine, S. (1989). *Bilingualism*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd.
- Saunders, G. (1988). *Bilingual children: From birth to teens*. Clevedon, England: Multilingual Matters Ltd.
- Sondergaard, B. (1981). Decline and fall of an individual bilingualism. *Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development*, 2, 297-302.
- Taeschner, T. (1983). *The sun is feminine: A study on language acquisition in bilingual children*. Berlin: Springer-Verlag.
- Volterra, V., & Taeschner, T. (1977). The acquisition and development of language by bilingual children. *Journal of Child Language*, 5, 311-326.
- Zierer, E. (1977). Experiences in the bilingual education of a child of pre-school age. *IRAL*, 15, 143-149.