CHILDREN'S PRODUCTION OF THEIR HERITAGE LANGUAGE AND MULTILINGUALISM

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ABSTRACT

Children are very unique. They can learn more than one languages at very young age. They have ability to do it since the brain is very active in absorbing kinds of languages through the work of neuron. It is a sign that young learners can be bilingual or multilingual children. They will learn languages from their milieu and society around them. If they are exposed since they were toddlers, the result will be good as their brain still developed within their golden period. They even can maintain their heritage language with the help of society while they are learning another new language. It helps them to communicate to their peer and adult properly. By participating in social and cultural practice children acquire the linguistic and cognitive orientation of their elders. Children who have the opportunity to learn multiple languages from early childhood and to maintain them throughout their lives are fortunate indeed, and families that can offer this opportunity to their children should be encouraged to do so.

Key words: *neuron, bilingual, multilingual*

A. INTRODUCTION

More children in the world grow up speaking two or more languages than only one (Baker, 2006). Children are born with their own capacity to learn everything including language. People often hear that exposing children to two or more languages will lead to the children being confused about the different languages and not be able to tell them apart (Lanza, 1997). Parents and adult in certain community want their children to learn both their vernaculars and other languages, like English. Being bilingual or multilingual themselves, they know that it is realistic for their children to be proficient in both, their own vernaculars and English.

In some situations, the languages may not be equally valued, and where one language is dominant, a person's bilingual ability might not be valued so highly. In these circumstances, most attention is given to the development of the dominant language. For the bilingual, the social benefits in being able to communicate effectively in situations involving more than one culture and more than one language (Shannessy, 2008). In addition to the social benefits, psycholinguistics research shows that being bilingual has some cognitive benefits over being monolingual (Bialystok, 2007). In some linguistics tasks bilinguals perform more slowly than monolinguals (Gollan etal., 2002), but on higher level functions they perform better. Research shows that the representations of both languages in the brain are active even when only one language is being used (Brauer, 1998; Chen and Ho, 1986; Dijkstra et al., 1999; Gollan et al., 1997; Hermes et al., 2003; van Heuven et al., 1998).

A bilingual person must be able to pay attention to each language, inhibit the language not being used in the conversation, monitor both languages and switch between languages. In combination, these functions are part of what is called executive processing (Bialystok, 2007; p.212). Executive processing is part of all of our thinking-controlling our attention, planning and categorizing, and knowing how to avoid responding inappropriately. Bilingual children develop control of this function earlier than monolinguals, show superior control in adulthood, and lose the control later than monolinguals as they age (Bialystok, 2007; pp.291, 220). Bilinguals have been shown to perform better than monolinguals on spatial tasks (McLeay, 2003), have better metalinguistic knowledge (Randsdell et al., 2006), and perform better in tasks requiring memory (Haritos, 2002).

In areas where most people in the society do not value both or all of the languages equally, the value of being bilingual or multilingual is sometimes not recognized. When people are bilingual in English and a minority language, the social and cognitive benefits of being bilingual are not always appreciated by the dominant English-speaking group in the society. (Shannessy, 2008).

B. NEUROLINGUISTICS

Neurological and psychological functions are two sides of a coin, and different aspects of each are joined in the organic wholeness of the individual. Two things are particularly striking about these links. First, the links among bodies of knowledge that heretofore have remained largely separate are straightforward. Second, important new aspects of human individual and social behavior become apparent through these links.

The first sets of knowledge to consider relates to the period of development between birth and early adulthood. During this period the brain depends upon sensory stimulation to develop physically, and the functional and structural organization of the brain is strongly influenced by the nature of that stimulation. The period of brain maturation and associated environmental influence is much longer in people than in other animals, and the parts of the brain that most distinguish the human brain from those of other primates are the last to mature and subject the longest to shaping by the environment. Stimulation from other members of the species (e.g., parents, siblings, and peers) is a particularly important factor in shaping neuropsychological development.

Research on human parenting has documented the remarkable degree to which the mother and her infant become an integrated dyadic unit in which the infant develops. L. S. Vygotsky, writing from Russia as a developmental psychologist, and Sigmund Freud in Vienna as well as subsequent American psychoanalysts arrived at virtually identical conclusions about the role of social interaction in creating internal psychological structures. This wonderful expanse of neurobiological, psycho Introduction logical, and social-psychological knowledge all rests on the deep and extended sensitivity of the human brain to shaping by psychosocial and other sensory inputs.

Two important implications emerge when these bodies of work are considered together. The first is the great increase in functional variability among individuals that results from environmental influences on development of the brain. The second implication is even more important. In addition to having the longest period during which brain growth is shaped by the environment, human beings alter the environment that shapes their brains to a degree without precedent among animals. These human alterations in the shared social environment include physical structures, laws and other codes of behavior, food and clothes, spoken and written language, and music and other arts.

The second set of knowledge to consider relates to the period of life beginning with young adulthood when the degree of neuroplasticity and the associated environmental shaping of brain function is much reduced. The greater recovery of function after brain injury in children than in adults, and the greater ease with which children learn new languages compared with adults, have long been recognized as signs of a decrease in brain plasticity after childhood. More recent research has shown that the chemical mechanisms of neuronal growth and learning that are so active during childhood are much less evident in adult brains, and learning in adults depends largely on different cellular mechanisms.

Beginning with a description of the ways in which neurons, the cellular building blocks of the brain, form the multicell ensembles and multiensemble systems that constitute the basic functional units of the brain then considering mechanisms of learning and memory through which the brain is altered to create lasting representations of its environment.

Neuron

Neurons are individual nerve cells. There are 100 billion in the human brain, and they are functionally linked with one another by a combined chemical and electrical communication system. Each neuron has thousands of receptors or chemical “docking stations” on its outer surface or membrane. Chemicals released from one neuron attach to the receptors on neighboring neurons. When the chemicals, known as neurotransmitters or neuromodulators, attach to a neuron, they initiate a series of chemical reactions that alter the electrical state of the neuron’s outer membrane. Some of these reactions increase the voltage differential across the cell membrane, while other reactions decrease the differential. When this voltage differential reaches a critical value, an electrical signal is transmitted down the length of the neuron. This electrical wave then causes the release of neurotransmitter or modulator molecules that affect the electrical state of other neurons.

In this way, neurons serve as functional building blocks of information-processing modules. When the combination of excitatory and inhibitory inputs to an individual neuron reaches the right mix, the neuron fires its electrical system and sends chemical signals to its neighbors. The complexity of the networks of functionally interconnected neurons is almost beyond comprehension. On average, each of the 100 billion neurons receives direct input from a thousand

other cells and may receive hundreds of signals from other neurons within a millisecond. Moreover, some scientists think that there are functional processes in addition to neurotransmitter release and electrical transmission that influence the state and firing of groups of neurons, adding more dimensions of complexity.

First, processes such as thinking, remembering, and feeling arise from the integrated action of many neurons and are not properties of individual neurons. Second, the specific patterns of all the intricate connections among neurons that constitute these functional systems are Schematic drawing of nerve cell bodies and shorter dendritic branches that interconnect them.

It is thought in the brain itself, information, knowledge, and skills are represented in multimodular functional and representational systems that develop through lasting modification of connections among units produced by interaction with the external world. This aspect of brain development is not predicated on an inborn or preexisting correspondence between the brain and the external world, but through this development the brain is altered to bring about such a correspondence. There are two key points here. The first is that brain functions such as thinking, feeling, and remembering result from the integrated action of many brain cells that through networks of interconnection form functional systems. Second, sensory stimulation and its associated neuronal activity create the networks of connections among neurons, and thus shape the functional systems.

The functional units of the human brain consist of modules that each includes thousands of nerve cells connected to one another via networks of branches. Functions such as perception, recall, and thought arise from integrated systems of modules distributed throughout the brain. Thus injuries to a particular location in the brain affect multiple functions, and each function is

affected by injuries at multiple locations. The specific connections among nerve cells are determined by sensory stimulation and other environmentally induced neuronal activity, and differ uniquely from person to person. The human brain is most distinguished

from the brains of other primates by the number of brain cells and the patterns of their interconnections.

C.BIOLINGUISTICS

In the spring of 1955, the first version of *The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory* was completed, duplicated, and circulated, although a version of the manuscript was not published until 20 years later (Chomsky, 1975a). In the introduction to that version, Chomsky notes:

LSLT [The Logical Structure of Linguistic Theory] is an attempt to develop a theory of transformational generative grammar. The "realist interpretation" of linguistic theory is assumed throughout, and it is argued that the competence attained by the normal speaker-hearer is represented by a transformational generative grammar, which determines the representation of each sentence on the levels of phrase structure and transformational structure (inter alia).These

representations are then employed in the use and understanding of language, and provide the basis for the more general theory of language that will be concerned with meaning and reference, the conditions of appropriate use of language, how sentences are understood, performance in concrete social situations, and in general, the exercise of linguistic competence in thought and communication. The principles of this theory specify the schematism brought to bear by the child in language acquisition. They define the linguistic universals that constitute "the essence of language" (as distinct from accidental properties or properties determined by the exigencies of language use), and thus can be taken as one fundamental element in the characterization of the innate "language faculty." (Chomsky, 1975a:45)

Thus the basis for the study of biolinguistics, specifically for questions (1) knowledge of language (5competence), (2) acquisition of language, and (3) use of language, are laid out in LSLT. And once we have asked questions (1)–(3), questions (4) brain mechanisms, and (5) evolution, are automatically implied; see the discussion below of Lenneberg's work along those lines.

What Chomsky realized early on was that linguistics could now suggest core internal properties of the language faculty, that in turn posed important questions for biology. These properties were discussed in various settings, as, e.g., the language acquisition device (LAD) and universal grammar (UG). It has taken quite a while for it to sink in that the syntactic computations of the language faculty are the biological evidence.

What linguists do is to define the term "I-language" to denote the biological object under study, but to continue to use the term "language" (instead of "I-language") where the context leaves no possibility of confusion. Similarly, in exactly the same way, we use the term "biolinguistics" for roughly the study of the five questions posed in the Introduction, but where the context is clear, we often use the shorter form "linguistics." "Mind" is meant to be understood in a similar fashion: "By 'mind,' I mean the mental aspects of the world, with no concern for defining the notion more closely and no expectation that we will find some interesting kind of unity or boundaries, any more than elsewhere; no one cares to sharpen the boundaries of 'the chemical.'" But if "mental" and "mind" are understood in this way, then the thesis McGinn is attributing to Chomsky comes down to something like: I-language, or more generally, the language faculty, is a component of mind/brain. Stated this generally, there is no point in elevating it to a "Chomskian thesis." It could just as well be called a "Cartesian thesis," for example. In fact, the notion that the language faculty is a component if the mind/brain is not a particularly controversial thesis and is tacitly assumed in much work on language.

D.PSYCHOLINGUISTICS

As written in The Linguistics Encyclopedia that Psycholinguistics is a discipline in which the insights of linguistics and psychology are brought to bear in the study of the cognitive aspects of language understanding and production (2006:487). The main impetus for psycholinguistics

research in the 1960s was the wish to explore psychological reality of grammars produced by linguists, that is, to try to show that these in some way mirrored what went on speakers' and hearers' minds. The two most famous controversies within this framework was produced by the derivational theory of complexity (DTC), according to which a sentence would be more difficult to process the further removed of its surface structure was from its deep structure, and the theory of the autonomy of syntactic processing, according to which the syntactic analysis of sentences constitutes an independent stage in their perception. (2006:487).

Another linguists researchers, Clark and Clark (1977) said that psycholinguistics include a study of children's acquisition of language. Many linguists would agree that both first and other language learning and also linguistics disabilities are the province of psycholinguistics. While according to Lyons (1981) artificial intelligence is also an area of psycholinguistics.

Based on the research methods on language acquisition, there are three approaches that can be found namely: Theory Driven, Observational and Experimental. In theory driven, a researcher adopts a theoretical framework then seeks support it in the data. This approach is particularly favored by those who subscribe to Chomskyan theory, and who seek (for example) to trace evidence of infants setting parameters in the direction of the target language. The children might be asked to make grammaticality judgements indicating whether they regard a sentence as grammatically acceptable or not. (Field, 2004:143)

The other is observational, this approach in analyzing the data without prior assumptions. Diary studies have proved informative-thought their disadvantage is that they do not preserve a record of the actual speech event. Video and cassette recording have been widely used. They are obtained during regular meetings between researcher and infant, or by use of a timer. The last approach is experimental, it is obviously difficult to engage very young subjects in experimental tasks. Two types of methods have proved useful, they are the high amplitude sucking procedure and the operant headturn procedure. (Field, 2004:144)

E. SOCIOLINGUISTICS

There are many scholars have defined sociolinguistics, one among them is Trudgill (1974) who defines sociolinguistics as part of linguistics which is concerned with language as a social and cultural phenomenon. It investigates the field of language and society & has close connections with the social sciences, especially social psychology, anthropology, human geography and sociology." As language developed, there many changes have been made. The mainstream in learning a language is also changed.

The current mainstream in learning a language is emphasizing on the connectedness between language and the society which stress the significant function over form. Sociolinguistics constitutes such current. Its history can be seen as a gradual move away from a position in which a language is seen as an autonomous system, discrete from the social, and an increasing insistence

throughout the latter part of the century on the shaping significance of the social, and on the close connections of the linguistics and the social. (Paul Cobley, 2001:66)

The concerns of linguistics have been many and they have reflected the changing of social and political concerns of its era. They have ranged from language planning, to the exploration of regional and social dialects, of social codes, code switching, language use in interpersonal communication or in communication across cultures, an interest in the language used in institutions, the variability of language with situation, politeness phenomena, the structure of spoken interaction as in conversation analysis for instance, the effects of power in language, and the exploration of social issues such as gender, race and other forms of inequity, and many more. Increasingly, the focus has been towards larger level units: whether seen from a more social point of view as discourse, or from a more linguistics point of view as text. (Paul Cobley, 2001:67)

According to Downes (1984:15) "Sociolinguistics is that branch of linguistics which studies just those properties of language and languages which REQUIRE reference to social, including contextual, factors in their explanation." While Janet Holmes said that "The sociolinguist's aim is to move towards a theory which provides a motivated account of the way language is used in a community, and of the choices people make when they use language." Therefore language has a very tight connection with the society as it is regarded a social discourse or even more than that.

F. MULTICULTURALISM

As the spread of English progresses, English is bound to reflect a diversity of disparate culture. Every language has an indefinite capacity of structural and functional modulation and expansion. There is no language that has used up its inherent potentiality. The portion that the native speakers have explored is very limited. On a global scale, the nonnative speakers are exploring those areas based on their own linguistic, cultural, and cognitive experiences. (Honna, 2008:57)

The multiculturalization of English is further reinforced by various socio-pragmatic patterns introduced to the language by speakers of different languages of Asia and other parts of the world. Multicultural use of English yields a multitude of problems in intercultural communication. Since the concept of English as a multicultural language is a new idea, it has to be appropriately introduced to English language teaching (ELT). As a matter of fact, pedagogy must play a decisive role. Its results can be encouraging. (Honna, 2008:58-59)

What is important in intercultural communications by means of English as a multicultural language is one's capability and willingness to impose one's values and norms upon the other. Actually with some degree of intercultural awareness, one is capable of dealing with the other even if the two persons' communication styles are different. (Honna, 2008:61)

Intercultural awareness is explored in terms of intercultural literacy in which teaching awareness of language plays an important role. Teaching awareness of language aims at our clear

understanding of how language is designed and how people use language. Thus, it can be useful for student multicultural settings, thereby enhancing intercultural literacy, which is needed for improved mutual communicability among different varieties of English. (Honna, 2008:71)

People tend to believe that a common language is a uniform language. But, this is not true. English can be a common language on a multinational basis only when its cultural diversity is accepted. A common language has to be a multicultural language (Honna, 2000, 2003).

Honna (2003:165-170) defines intercultural literacy:

1) Intercultural literacy is an attitude, preparedness, and competence to transmit one's message and understand others' appropriately in a cross-cultural encounter;
2) It involves an ability to adjust intercultural differences in a mutually beneficial manner;
3) Intercultural literacy is the literacy of the fourth of the fourth kind after basic literacy (reading and writing plus arithmetic), media literacy, and information literacy, and;
4) It is expected to be introduced to the school curriculum across disciplines from primary, through secondary, to tertiary education.

Smith's (1983:vi) notion of English as an international language, refers to the international 'functions of English, not to any given form of the language […and of course to], the use of English by people of different nations and different cultures in order to communicate with one another'. Widdowson (1998:400) defines EIL as a 'composite lingua franca which is free of any specific allegiance to any primary variety of the language'. Modiano (2001:170) views EIL from a different perspective. He suggests it is more accurate alternative to 'Standard English'. His notion provides an avenue for speakers to be culturally, politically and socially neutral in a way that earlier notions of Standard English did not. EIL, he continues, should consist of internationally intelligible features contributed by both L1 and L2 speakers.

Over 20 years ago Kachru (1982) found out that the first enemy of indigenized varieties of English were their nations-speakers of these national varieties. He found himself, with many others, fighting the battle for the 'linguistic human rights' of these varieties on two fronts: against home-grown enemies and against the foreign conservative native speaker who nursed the 'fear of seeing his language disintegrate in the hands of non-native users'.

Still in line with finding a benefitting terminology, 'the term indigenized' Mufwene (2001:108) explains 'reflects the struggle for legitimizing them, a stand that is consistent with the position that every dialect has its own set of distinctive features and norms by which a speaker is identified as a typical or non-typical member of the community'. This term reflects a process-nominalization of the impact of the local ecology on the language and, although the term itself does not imply this, it could be interpreted somehow, as Schmid (2007:136) does as, 'this is what proper native English has been turned into the mouths and minds of African speakers'.

G. CHILDREN'S HERITAGE LANGUAGE

All children acquire their first language or mother tongue through social interaction and language behavior patterns are acquired through language socialization (Romaine, 1984; Snow and Ferguson, 1977; Wells, 1979). Language plays a critical role in the 'construction of social identity' (Ochs, 1993). It also acts as an 'agent' for the transmission of culture and it is through language socialization that children acquire 'the ways and world views' of their culture (Romaine, 1994; Schieffelin, 1990).

Studies of baby talk suggest that simplified registers or modifications of adult speech assist in scaffolding the language learning process for young children (Ferguson, 1977). Linguistic studies on Aboriginal child language development note the early stages of verbal communication (Hamilton, 1981; Lowel etal., 1996), including baby talk (Bavin, 1993; Hoogenraad, 2005; Laughern, 1984). Observers characteristically describe an incremental scaffolding approach to language acquisition in the use of diminutives, word reduplication and a specific baby talk lexicon, as well as regular phonological modification of standard adult speech: consonant elision and substitution with accompanying gestural interaction.

Caregivers are conscious that through baby talk children learn to speak. Adults intentionally scaffold language to assist young learners in acquiring difficult sounds. This process allows learners to first understand the semantics of the utterances and then learn a mature way of articulating words. After a certain age children will be teased if they have not acquired standard dialect language (ex,Ngaanyatjarra forms), that is, proper adult talk.

By participating in social and cultural practice children acquire the linguistic and cognitive orientation of their elders. Storytelling and language play (including speech arts such as rhyming, metaphor, alliteration and onomatopoeia) are intrinsic to everyday discourse (Douglas, 1979). Children are immersed in this language-rich environment and acquire the speech styles and oral narratives of their culture by listening to and interacting with those who speak 'tjaa yuti' and increasingly with those who 'code-swicth' or 'code-mix' between Ngaanyatjarra and English. Children also acquire the lexical and gestural vocabularies that denote kinship relations and the rules that govern social organization.

In many indigenous cultures oral narrative has been central to instruction and learning (Basso, 1984; Rogoff, 2003). Alongside the dissipation of contexts for oral storytelling, the transformation of oral genres into simplified written versions for children (or English translations) is also reducing the function of oral narrative as a moral or metaphorical culture guide. Developmental studies on the acquisition of narrative competence indicate that 'narrative discourse structures are commonly acquired and internalized by age 10 in a child's process of socialisation' (Klapparoth, 2004).

In families where literacy has become a taken-for-granted cultural process it is more likely that children will acquire the habits and values of literacy than in other families, as indicated in the 'special situation' described where emergent literacy practices are exemplified.

H. CHILDREN BILINGUALISM AND MULTILINGUALISM

Early children, perhaps the majority of children in the world, are exposed to more than one language in early childhood. Children who hear more than one language virtually from birth are sometimes referred to as 'simultaneous bilinguals', whereas those who begin to learn a second language later are referred to as 'sequential bilinguals'. There is a considerable body of research on the ability of young children to learn more than one language in their earliest years. The evidence suggests that, when simultaneous bilinguals are in contact with both languages in a variety of settings, there is every reason to respect that they will progress in their development of both languages at a rate and in manner which are not different from those of monolingual children. Nevertheless, there seems to be little support for the myth that learning more than one language in early childhood slowdown the child's linguistic or cognitive development.

There may be reason to concerned, however, about situation where children are virtually cut off from their family language when they are 'submerged' in a second language for long periods in early schooling or daycare. In such cases, children may begin to lose the family language before they have developed an age-appropriate mastery of the new language. This is referred to as substractive bilingualism, and it can have serious negative consequences for children from minority groups.

There is no evidence that a child's brain has a limited capacity for languages such that their knowledge of one language must shrink if their knowledge of the other one grows. Most minority language children do eventually master the majority language, but second language acquisition takes time. Children who have the opportunity to learn multiple languages from early childhood and to maintain them throughout their lives are fortunate indeed, and families that can offer this opportunity to their children should be encouraged to do so.

It is obvious that children born having their own capacity to adapt. It covers physically and mentally condition. The flexibility that they have would affect the way of their thinking. The *flexible mind* is about extending the capacity to think. We can consider this in terms of the human body. A person who exercises and is physically fit is more able to adapt to different situations, like the need to swiftly walk up a steep hill. In a similar way, a flexible mind is an adaptable mind that responds to the demands of different situations. Monolinguals obviously have flexible minds, but there appear to be changes in the types of flexibility found in the multilingual mind. (EU, 2007:5)

Linking multilingualism to some form of specific added value such as 'creativity' is complex. One reason is due to the multi-dimensionality of language and the brain. Individuals do not live in a vacuum. Their capacity to think and act is determined by many surrounding influences. Indeed,

some would argue that creativity is not an innate quality which individuals have, but something which is largely generated through interaction with the environment, including other people. This interaction is particularly supported by the ability to communicate through more than one language. (EU, 2007:5)

There has been much work done on creativity from different perspectives, particularly in the field of artistic expression. But relatively little has been achieved with respect to knowledge of languages and the inner workings of the mind. It is highly likely that a multilingual mind differs in some respects from a monolingual one, but in what way and with what outcomes is at present an open question. It is obviously not the case that creativity can only be achieved through multilingualism. (EU, 2007:5)

I. CONCLUSION

After doing critical analysis based on the theoretical framework, there are some conclusions that can be drawn as follows:

a. In addition to the social benefits, psycholinguistics research shows that being bilingual has some cognitive benefits over being monolingual
b. Bilinguals have been shown to perform better than monolinguals on spatial tasks, have better metalinguistic knowledge, and perform better in tasks requiring memory
c. The current mainstream in learning a language is emphasizing on the connectedness between language and the society which stress the significant function over form.
d. A common language has to be a multicultural language.
e. By participating in social and cultural practice children acquire the linguistic and cognitive orientation of their elders.
f. Children who have the opportunity to learn multiple languages from early childhood and to maintain them throughout their lives are fortunate indeed, and families that can offer this opportunity to their children should be encouraged to do so.

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